



POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: ***Marriage and Class in Jane Austen's Novels***

Autorka práce: **Veronika Grant**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **Doc. PhDr. Ladislav Nagy, Ph.D.**

Oponent bakalářské práce: **Mgr. Tomáš Jajtner, Ph.D. et Th.D.**

Short characteristics of the thesis

Veronika Grant's thesis analyses the treatment of marriage and class in the novels of Jane Austen (1775-1817). It starts with a historical introduction discussing the social and historical context of the Regency Period and the life and work of its most famous writer, moving on to the central topic of the thesis, i.e. morals and social conventions (Chapter 2), "principles of marrying" (Chapter 3) and "the pursuit and economics of marriage" as reflected in Austen's novels. The main findings of the thesis are summed up in a short conclusion (Chapter 5).

Overall assessment

Veronika's thesis is based on with a relatively voluminous corpus of texts, it is well-researched, and the extracts chosen to document her points are relevant. On the whole, it is written in good English, however, there are some poorly edited bits with clumsy or altogether obscure formulations (e.g. on page 12 "The Georgian era, the period between 1714 and cca 1830-1837, was an era named after the kings of Hanover, yet it is mostly regarded as its sub-period, the Regency era, defined by the regency of George IV, Prince of Wales, who officially assumed the throne in 1811, the formal beginning of the Regency era, after having held the status of Prince Regent for nine years.")

However, my main reservation concerns other aspects of the thesis: **the historical context of the period is presented very poorly, and its discussion is based mainly on websites of rather dubious quality.**

The above-mentioned formulation obscures a relatively simple fact, i.e. the historical time span of the period, which usually stretches back to the final years of the 18th century (1795) and the death of George IV (i.e. the former Prince Regent). The Regency period may now seem an idyllic, elegant period (partly due to the lasting legacy of Austen's novels), but it was a very dramatic era in British history. Indeed, the British had to put up with the loss of America, with the challenge of the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon. At the same time, it is a period of the "poetic revolution" of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and major scientific and technological improvements, which later contribute to the great economic success of Victorian British Empire.

Veronika's use of established historical terms is sometimes quite shaky ("The Regency era, also known as the Age of Enlightenment, represented a time of immense social



changes, advanced ideals, variety of movements and last but not least a period that undermined the authority of the monarchy and the Church, the Church that Jane Austen was so bound to. The Age of Enlightenment was the time when the patriarchal power was terminated but it was still seen as necessary for children to obey their parents, which brings us back to the issue of parents' rights for the forcing of their children into suitable marriage in order to secure the family status.") Part of the problem as I understand it is the fact that Veronika uses relatively few truly relevant, scholarly sources on the historical context of Austen's period. Websites, such as Wikipedia, are not usually considered proper academic materials.

Given the extensive treatment of the various social and family issues in the novels, the conclusion is rather disappointing, because of its brevity. One would expect a more thorough summary of the main points and perhaps some final twist.

However, I **do** recommend the thesis for defence and suggest the following grade: **very good (velmi dobře)**.

31.5.2020

Datum

Podpis