

POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Martin Vaclík

Název bakalářské práce: Comparison of the Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant with Recent Biographies / Analýza memoárů Ulysses S. Granta v kontextu současné literatury

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: PhDr. Christopher Koy, MA, PhD.

Oponent bakalářské práce: Mgr. Renata Janktová, MA, PhD.

I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění:

1. Cíl práce byl stanoven a naplněn v souladu s tématem
2. Cíl práce byl naplněn s drobnými nedostatky
3. Cíl práce byl adekvátní, ale jen částečně naplněný
4. Stanovený cíl nebyl naplněn

II. Struktura práce:

1. Logická, jasná a přehledná
2. Přiměřená
3. Uspokojivá
4. Nevhodná

III. Práce s literaturou:

1. Výborná: zvoleny a použity vhodné prameny v patřičném rozsahu
2. Velmi dobrá práce s adekvátními prameny v patřičném rozsahu
3. Průměrná práce s literaturou
4. Slabá, chybná nebo nedostačující

IV. Formální stránka:

1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům
2. Obsahuje drobné formální chyby
3. Nesplňuje některé zásadní požadavky
4. Nesplňuje většinu stanovených požadavků

VI. Jazyková úroveň práce:

1. Výborná
2. Velmi dobrá
3. Dobrá
4. Podprůměrná

VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu:

1. Velmi vysoká
2. Vysoká
3. Střední
4. Nízká

Vyjádření oponenta bakalářské práce:

The thesis brings a comparative analysis of Ulysses S. Grant's *Memoirs* against a selection of major biographies of U.S. Grant focused on the rendering of his Civil War experience. Additional sources include several contemporary newspaper articles. The opening section focused on Grant's life captures Grant very well as both a great commander and statesman and a private person faced with his own dilemmas and struggles. His and his wife's attitudes to slavery are examined in a separate chapter, and justifiably so. Not only was the division over slavery the chief cause of the war, but the Grants' family situation itself mirrored the profound ideological split in the nation. (When speaking of the young Julia Dent, Miss Julia would be more appropriate than Mrs Julia.) The main comparative part focuses on four major battles of the Civil War. Mr Vaclík reads the *Memoirs* alongside three modern biographies, searching for and commenting on divergencies and omissions. Mr Vaclík identifies numerous differences, especially in dates and figures, but also interesting omissions in Grant's text. In the Conclusion Mr Vaclík offers very sound critical evaluation of the omissions informed by his engaged study of the texts and insight into Grant's personality. The omission of many of his "heroic acts" (p.44) may indeed be the result of weakened memory but also of his personality: a disinclination to brag about successes not only due to the immense toll paid but also due to personal humbleness indicated by the general tone of understatement in his text? Mr Vaclík's also makes a relevant point about the potential impact of Grant's memoirs on his contemporaries after the publishing. Did Grant deliberately avoid naming people and is it made explicit anywhere, or is simply a trait of his autobiographical writing? This brings me to the language and style of Grant's text: it is a pity that Mr Vaclík does not pay more attention to its literary quality (though it would be a deviation from the comparative focus). I like his comment on the "humorously simple" description of the Chattanooga battle, which captures Grant's storytelling brilliance.

The thesis without doubt achieved its aim in identifying and interpreting omissions and inaccuracies in Grant's memoirs and synthesising the information from the multiple sources studied. By doing so, it portrays U.S. Grant as a remarkable and fascinating person and his memoirs as both informative and captivating reading. It is highly readable, well-structured, and written in excellent English. There are occasional accuracy issues (e.g. missing articles, punctuation, improper morphological forms) and a few typos. The language is sometimes too informal for an academic text (esp. the use of "get" in passive voice).

The only significant problem I encountered during reading was confusion over sources: I suppose that Mr Vaclík's accounts of the battles are derived from Grant's text unless other sources are cited, nevertheless, this needs to be clearly stated. As it stands, sources are cited only for verbatim quotes. Where appropriate, biographer names are mentioned in the text without citations. Otherwise, there are whole paragraphs or even pages without any source cited, which may leave the reader wondering. It also makes it hard to double-check or follow information up. (The quote on p. 13, n. 13 and the Lincoln remark seems to come from Chernow, p. 155, rather than McFeely, p. 153). As this is a comparative essay using multiple texts, accurate referencing is key.

Práce splňuje nejen základní požadavky kladené na tento typ prací, a proto ji doporučuji k ústní obhajobě.

Navrhovaná známka: výborně

Otázky k obhajobě:

1. Does Grant mention any significant disagreements over slaves and slavery with his wife that would affect the couples' everyday family life?
2. What source does the information about Grant weeping (p. 14) come from? Are any distinct emotions recorded in the memoirs?
3. Grant's memoirs are considered a literary masterpiece. From your reading experience, would you agree with that view, and why (not)?

Podpis oponenta bakalářské práce:..... Datum: 18.5. 2023

