



Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

Posudek vedoucí na bakalářskou práci Lucie Jiráňkové

“I am no bird; and no net ensnares me”: Female Independence in the English Novel
1795-1820

The submitted BA thesis is a very useful contribution to eighteenth-century literary studies and the mapping of the contribution of women writers to the developments in English fiction. Moreover, the thesis displays a highly mature sense for logical organization and development of argument. Language and style is fluent and quite appropriate. That is to say, that formally and in content, the text fully meets all the requirements for a BA thesis.

The aims and objectives posed at the outset (i.e. tracing the beginnings of “feminist awakening”) are more than appropriately and persuasively met. I appreciate the contextualization within the whole debate about constructions of gender, concepts of romantic love, the literary and philosophical discourse of sensibility and ideas on education. Moreover, I find the specific readings of the selected novels (whose selection is justified) as highly nuanced and very sensitive to the text. It may be disputed whether, perhaps, several examples of novels from the opposite, more conservative camp could have been included, for example texts by Hannah More, or Jane West.

I have only a few comments and questions:

1. The translation of sensibility as “citovost” could be deemed problematic. Are there other options and what were the reasons for selecting this?
2. Perhaps a clearer tracing of the tradition of women’s polemical writing in the eighteenth century could have enhanced, by comparison, the place of Wollstonecraft. Also, Mary Hays is claimed to have contributed to these debates by her *Appeal*.
3. The Jacobins were influenced by period debates of natural rights. What is the place of Locke, or the Scottish Enlightenment in this? Where, how, as a result of what changes, does the transition in vocabulary from rights to duties (Jacobins vs Austen) actually occur?
4. What is the notion of independence built upon? Does the claim mean that only in shedding the constraints of dependency can woman achieve a truer sense of self?
5. Wollstonecraft is a very paradoxical writer. Can we relate *The Wrongs of Women* to her previous novel *Mary, A Fiction*, with its excesses of sensibility terminated in multiple tableaux of death?

As mentioned above, I find the submitted thesis fully in keeping with the standards. This is a BA thesis about female independence which displays a healthy amount of academic and scholarly independence of thought. I certainly **recommend it for defence** with the preliminary suggested grade of excellent (**výborně**).

V Praze dne 17.8.2015

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