

Posudek oponentky na bakalářskou práci Kristiny Pěčnickové

Alternatives to the Married State in the Works of Margaret Oliphant

The work of Margaret Oliphant is influenced by her own life of hardship. Paradoxically, in spite of the fact that she explicitly denounced what she called the Anti-Marriage League of writers and was downright reactionary when it came to sexual ethics, and for example, absolutely deplored *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, matrimony rarely brings salvation or a happy end in her fiction. Her capable and enterprising heroines either shoulder the burdens imposed on them by ineffectual men, be they brothers, fathers, cousins, or, in defiance of the men around them, find fulfilment through their own careers. Such as when Catherine in *Hester* runs a bank, while the heroine of *Kirsten* escapes from home to set up a thriving dressmaker's establishment.

Margaret Oliphant is best known for her *Chronicles of Carlingford*. One novel from that series is *Miss Marjoribanks*. Not only, as mentioned in the thesis, is the title of the *Chronicles* indebted to Antony Trollope, it can also be argued that the heroine and the style of *Miss Marjoribanks* may have some affinities with Jane Austen's *Emma*. Could Ms Pěčnicková possibly attempt such a comparison? In terms of character, her family situation, decision to stay unmarried and role as the centre of social community life. Since the thesis is primarily content and character analysis based, it may nevertheless be interesting to also look at the narrative style. It is often remarked that a lot of the meaning of the novel comes from the author's use of irony. It is a pity that we do not get many examples of that. Can Ms Pěčnicková explain how irony works in the novel and in what way is it different from the later novels, and why that would be the case?

Another question pertains to Margaret Oliphant's Scottishness. To what degree was she influenced by this cultural background?

Overall, I find the BA thesis fully in keeping with all standards for such academic work. It is logically organised, well structure and written in excellent language. Therefore, I can only recommend it for defence with the grade of excellent, i.e. **v ý b o r n ě**.

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