

Veronika Kostrouchová, *Portraying Pride and Prejudice: Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice on Film*

BA thesis

Opponent's Review

The BA thesis of V. Kostrouchová maps the history of film adaptations of J. Austen's most popular novel and focusses on selected works from different periods to discuss specific conceptions in transferring a literary text with its characteristic features onto the screen. The selected visual versions are: the R. Z. Leonard 1940 feature film, two TV mini-series (1979, 1995), the Joe Wright 2005 feature film, and the 2012 YouTube adaptation. It is clear then that the value of the submitted thesis is prevalingly historical: it shows how the novel has inspired film-makers across decades.

The critical method the student uses follows two lines: first, it provides a well-researched account of the circumstances under which a version was made and its impact on the audience and reviewers; second, it attempts to comment in details on the characteristic features of each version. In other words, V. Kostrouchová is most of all concerned with the question how the film-makers read an Austen novel and to what extent they are able to be true to the book. Also, she reflects how they transform the elements typical of verbal media (such as ironic narrative voice) into visual ones. In these parts she pays attention mostly to the presentation of the principal characters, Eliza and Darcy, which, however, seems to be a limiting factor because other aspects (scene, camera work, costumes, minor characters, etc.) are mentioned only occasionally and rather inconsistently. On the other hand, her comments prove that she is able of adequate critical analysis especially of those moments in which the visual versions deviate from the novel, i.e. she is an attentive reader capable of distinguishing Austen's intentions and the goals (sometimes dubious) of the film-makers. What I also find valuable is the fact that she included a recent YouTube adaptation, demonstrating how new visual media appropriate canonical literary texts, and the two tables concluding the thesis: one listing film and TV adaptations, the other theatre adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*.

The thesis is very well structured, the only problematic part, from the conceptual point of view, is the sub-chapter on Austen's presence in some film versions. It is a general issue of representing the narrator's irony on screen and should be discussed separately; here it makes an impression of an afterthought following the previous sub-chapter on the 1940 film. This is a minor flaw, however. What actually mars the thesis is its purely formal aspect: the language should be brushed up on occasion and frequently missing spaces between words and oddly represented apostrophes should be corrected.

To conclude: I **recommend** the submitted thesis for defence and suggest its preliminary mark to be **excellent** (1).

PhDr. Zdeněk Beran, PhD.

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