

## **Posudek vedoucí**

### **na bakalářskou práci Terezy Říčné „Humour and Irony in Jane Austen: novels and film adaptations“**

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Every year hundreds of films are produced which recreate the world of the past. It is the realist literary tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century novel that has most frequently provided source material for film-makers, particularly in British and American cinema. Realist novels are rich in plot and strong in characterisation. Among these, Jane Austen's novels have in many ways proved to be fruitful models for cinema aspirations.

In adapting a novel, the screenwriter is always faced with the difficult choices: what to include/exclude, how to compensate for necessary excisions, how to conflate characters and incidents, how to SHOW what the writer TELLS. Underlying these decisions are the contrasting circumstances of reading and watching. The issues of the different semiotics of film language in relation to film are, nevertheless, somewhat to the dismay of at least one reader, left rather aside in this thesis.

From the beginning it is clear that Tereza Říčná is more interested in the fact that contemporary film adaptations of Austen's novels change the implications of the heroine – typically making her more radically challenging the patriarchal status quo. Costume drama of today is indeed interested in the needs and fantasies of the present (see page 12), but the fantasy of a feminist Austen heroine may not necessarily imply a post-feminist state of contemporary affairs, i.e. a society of “those who have already achieved independence ... and are respected” (page 11). How would we then explain the romance appeal Tereza talks about? What precisely is the focus of the romance appeal of Austen's novels and of the films? Romance appeal has indeed changed over time, just compare the film versions from the 1940s and 50s. To adapt a classic quotation, “we dream differently from our mothers”. Also, how can we explain any possible appeal these films may have for the male viewer? Therefore, I suggest that the thesis may have profited from a more detailed analysis of the character of romance (esp. feminist romance) and of their contemporary appeal (type of audience) – and a link made to the exact character of the adaptation (what aspects of the novels are stressed in this sense).

In the main, the film and novels selected for discussion have been chosen appropriately and do yield some interesting results. Since so much space is spent indeed on the feminist appeal of Austen heroines and the cultural translation of Austen's values, the more revolutionary adaptations like *Clueless* may have received some attention, though.

The structure of the thesis is logical and organized according to the main types of ironies. The irony of the narrator does not necessarily have to involve only dramatic irony, though.

Also, in many cases, though comic elements are frequently added to enhance the humorous aspects of the film, also contrary tendencies occur. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Donald Sutherland proves to be a somewhat more involved and emotionally engaged father than in the novel. This, of course, changes the entire message of Lizzie's awareness of her family's defects.

The final conclusive remarks upon modern mythologies open to consumption and social usage are also valuable, as they open up new connections between Austen today and popular adaptations of texts with romance appeal (e.g. *Pamela*, read also as a cultural public mythology by many cultural historians because of its range of adaptations etc.) already at the beginning of urban popular culture.

To conclude, the requirements for a BA thesis have been fulfilled . Therefore, I recommend the thesis for defence with the preliminary grade of very good to good (**velmi dobře až dobře**) The final result will depend on the defence.

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