



Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

Posudek oponenta na bakalářskou práci Jany Hezinové

“The Legend of the Vampire in the Works of Nineteenth-Century British Literature”

The submitted BA thesis is a useful contribution to nineteenth-century literary studies and the mapping of the evolution and transformation of the vampire figure in English poetry and fiction. Despite some reservations (see below), the thesis displays a sufficient sense for logical organization and development of argument. Language and style is fluent and appropriate. That is to say that in form and in content, the text meets all the requirements for a BA thesis.

The aims and objectives posed at the outset (i.e. tracing the vampire topos, especially with a focus on the social symbolism of the vampire) are fulfilled. I appreciate the contextualization within the debate about East and South-Eastern European folklore, attention to sexuality and extensive work with primary texts. These readings of the selected poems, stories and novels (whose selection is justified) are, in most cases, nuanced and very sensitive to the text. It may be disputed whether perhaps several examples of novels from non-English parts of the British Isles could not have been included, at least to meet the expectations suggested by the thesis' title (and steer away from close associations with the book by Carol Senf).

I have a few comments and questions:

1. The abstract mentions vampire topos will be dealt with in connection to the “urban gothic”. Yet, the term does not appear again. Can we have a clearer link and definition?
2. Although several proofreaders are mentioned, I can perceive that the thesis was finished in a rush. Better editing and perhaps yet another round of proofreading? – to eliminate e.g. ranní instead of raný vývoj (page 3), clumsy constructions (the thesis of this work will attempt to determine... , page 5), Bram Stoker (list of bibliography, page 88), unfinished sentences (e.g. 13) and numerous others, too many to list. It is also clear that the thesis has been reorganised at the last moment. (See page 45: in fact, chapter 3 is not preceded by a chapter on sexuality, but followed by it.)
3. Page 39 – I do not find the automatic and unreserved equation of vampires with leeches convincing, especially in the account of Walpole. Walpole is not vampire-like at all. He is indeed a bloated leech. Not every blood-sucker is a vampire. Leeches are disgusting parasites, a vampire is still more, a seducer/seductress, with a potential to be attractive, not only repulsive. The economic parasitism of the

aristocratic vampire figure is more clearly outlined and explained in the conclusion, but within chapter 2 it remains rather unclear. Page 36 does not provide a clear answer to the question (what kind of economic parasitism is the vampire symbolic of in relation to the loss of British imperial power, does it represent a class, a kind of behaviour – this is answered only in the conclusion. Again, the text would have benefitted from careful editing. As it is, the text is too lengthy and full of unclear and confusing formulations.)

4. Aristocratic names and titles are not merely continental, but often German or Central European. What does this imply?
5. Probably the best is chapter 4 on gender and sexuality. Though, of course, merely socio/economic reading of this can indeed be limiting and fails to take into account an analysis of the vicarious pleasure of reading such depictions and its attractions for the public.

As mentioned above, I find the submitted thesis in keeping with the standards. I **recommend it for defence** with the preliminary suggested grade of very good (**velmi dobře**).

V Praze dne 17.8.2015

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