



POSUDEK OPONENTA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **Horror Atmosphere in E. A. Poe's Stories**

Autor/-ka práce: **Tereza Kašparová**

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: **PhDr. Mariana Machová, Ph.D.**

Oponent/-ka bakalářské práce: **Richard Stock, Ph.D.**

Stručná charakteristika práce

The thesis seeks to describe the "atmosphere of horror" in a (large) group of stories by Edgar Allan Poe.

Celkové zhodnocení

The writing in this thesis is rather effective, in various ways, and is an achievement that should not be put aside in producing a bachelors thesis. The sentence structure and forming of paragraphs is done quite fluently and reading the thesis from page to page is overall easy and pleasurable. Moreover, the larger structure of the thesis, both the chapter and within-chapter structure, is well chosen and implemented. There are three main topics addressed, but one is indeed more insightful and therefore gains much more attention. Within the "themes" chapter, it works well that in each of the four subsections there is a common structure of specifying the theme (usually more specific than the label, which is welcome), a longer reading of one particularly apt story, and short comments on other stories. Another part of the good writing that should be highlighted is the effective use of secondary sources in this thesis. They are integrated into the writing well, and overall the quotes and references are usually appropriate to the point being made. The format is almost always correct, and the selection of secondary sources is effective: almost all of them are high-quality sources.

This topic is one that attracts many students, especially in thinking about Poe's work. At the same time, it is a deceptively difficult topic, since it really is about the effect that the literature has on the reader, which is something that is difficult to make strong critical conclusions about. This causes this thesis to have something of a circular logic. The atmosphere of horror is early on defined as the reader's feeling of fear. This feeling of fear is then "proven" by citing some conventional thing that usually scares people, such as death or violence, that appears in the story. The fear caused in the reading of story is then used to prove that the story has an atmosphere of horror, when that connection has really only been asserted (not supported) by Tereza.

It was not clear to me throughout the thesis if the group of 19 stories is a discrete group that this thesis addresses, or if the thesis is really more about "Poe's stories" and it is these 19 that were considered for this study.



Insights such as the useful assertion that it is not mental disability or violence itself that we are afraid of, but its departure from the expected, are welcome. There are a few of these in the thesis that are valuable. On the other hand, there are a few more minor mentions of things that do not follow common sense, such as the indication that people with mental or emotional disabilities are always violent and that alcohol abuse usually makes (men) violent.

The "setting" chapter also adds little to the thesis, merely stating that in Poe's scary stories the setting is scary. That is not surprising or insightful, so again it is not clear why there is a whole chapter on it.

The "narrative" chapter is a bit better than these other weaker parts, but it mostly deploys a rather standard narrative analysis to come to rather superficial claims about the stories. In several places the reader is missing a description of how and why a particular narrative strategy produces the effect Tereza says it produces, and this question is usually not addressed.

Práci doporučuji k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: výborně

16. 6. 2014

Datum

Podpis