



POSUDEK OPONENTKY DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura**

Název práce: **Narrators in Horror and Detective Stories by Edgar Allan Poe**

Autorka práce: **Bc. Anna Tušlová**

Vedoucí diplomové práce: **doc. PhDr. Mariana Machová, Ph.D.**

Oponentka diplomové práce: **Einat Adar, M. A., Ph.D.**

Quality of Research

1) Please rate the following statements about the thesis on a scale of 1 (insufficient) to 3 (excellent)

1. The topic of the thesis is suitable for the scope and well defined: 3
2. Sets clear goals or questions for research: 3
3. Delivers significant research findings: 2
4. Demonstrates conceptual clarity and accuracy: 2
5. Demonstrates a good understanding of the literary work(s) discussed: 2
6. Demonstrates a good understanding of the critical field: 1
7. Engages with sufficient scholarship in a meaningful way: 2
8. Shows independent thinking and originality: 1

2) Comment briefly on the quality of the research presented in the thesis:

The thesis employs a theoretical framework to interpret selected short stories by Edgar Allan Poe. Although the subject is well-defined, it is not clear from the analysis and the conclusion what has been gained by this research. The place of the thesis with respect to previous studies of narrators in Poe is not explained, and in fact the author quotes other studies at great length, raising the question of the contribution made by this particular thesis. Moreover, while the author cites multiple academic sources, especially theoretical ones, they are not well-integrated and there is an imbalance between the author's own discussion and observations, and the over-extensive use of quotations.

Quality of Writing

1) Please rate the following statements about the thesis on a scale of 1 (insufficient) to 3 (excellent)

1. Has a clear and suitable structure: 3
2. Employs appropriate register and academic style: 2
3. Uses correct and relevant terminology: 3
4. Adheres to academic thesis guidelines, format and MLA style guide: 3
5. Written in correct and fluent English (both grammar and vocabulary): 3
6. Carefully edited with few typos or mistakes: 3

2) Comment briefly on the quality of the writing presented in the thesis:

The thesis is generally written well, with a clear structure and appropriate use of academic norms. The main issue is a tendency to repeat similar observations with almost similar words. To take but one example, the author observes for each of Poe's narrators that they would be classified as an "I" as a Protagonist with the explanation that this "means that he is a character in the story being told" on pages 22, 23, 32, 36, 47, 48, and 52.



Overall Review and Assessment

(short description of the thesis and its findings, what has been achieved, and areas for improvement)

The thesis sets out to analyse the role of the narrator in six short stories by Edgar Allan Poe. As the author correctly observes, narrators play a key role in creating the effect of Poe's narrative, and questions surrounding their reliability are particularly interesting. More specifically, the thesis engages closely with the distinction between sanity and insanity which is sometimes difficult to trace in Poe's psychological horror.

The proposed tri-partite classification of narrators who are themselves suffering from mental illness, narrators who observe madness in others, and narrators who are part of a detection story (to use the term Poe would have known) makes sense and gives the analysis a clear structure. The particular readings of the stories closely follow the unreliability of the narrators and outline the sources of ambiguity concerning their narrative.

The discussion is informed by the review of theoretical sources about fictional narrators and various systems for classifying them, as presented in chapter 1. This chapter covers a lot of material but lacks any sense of cohesion or synthesis. The theories are presented sequentially without any explanation of their relative merits or what the author considers the useful features that would be most suitable for Poe's stories. As the thesis progresses into readings of particular stories, some of the theories covered in chapter 1 are referred to, but again without any attempt at synthesising them into a meaningful statement about the particularity of the narrator discussed.

Moreover, following the review of the various terminologies and typologies of narrative situations in fiction, the author goes on to offer her own typology for describing narrators in the stories. While this typology makes sense on its own, no attempt has been made to use the theories covered at such length or connect them in any way. Unfortunately, the conclusion only summarises the contents of each chapter, but does not specify any particular insight that has been gained into the role of narrators in Poe's story more generally. Eventually, the reader is left wondering what has been gained by the overall analysis.

Another issue that is important to mention, is the extensive use of quotation, often at the expense of any statement by the author. The interpretation of the first two stories, "The Tale-Tell Heart" and "The Black Cat" is almost wholly quoted from a single source. At the M.A. level there is an expectation of some originality which is not fulfilled here.

Despite these shortcomings, it is clear that the author has conducted research at a level sufficient for M.A. and is able to write at an academic level, and therefore merits a passing grade.

Questions for Defence

(please provide two questions for the student to answer during their defence)

1. What would you describe as the main findings of the thesis? What does it say about the role of narrators in Poe in general?
2. Can you explain your division of narrators in Poe in light of the theory of narration you presented in chapter 1? How did you arrive at this division and what are its advantages?

Práci doporučuji k obhajobě.

Navrhovaná klasifikace: **velmi dobře**



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Datum

Podpis

* Numerical assessments are provided as a guideline for recommending the final grade following an indicative scale:

over 38 "výborně"

32-38 "velmi dobře"

28-32 "dobře"

below 28 points the work is in danger of failing.

The final grade will be determined by the committee following the thesis defence.