

POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Jméno a příjmení studenta: Matyáš Rucki

Název bakalářské práce: The Graveyard Book, The Canterville Ghost: proměny gotického žánru v dětské próze / Transformations of the Gothic genre in the Context of Children's Literature

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: PhDr. Alice Sukdolová, PhD.

Oponentka bakalářské práce: Mgr. Renata Janktová, MA, PhD.

I. Cíl práce a jeho naplnění:

- ~~1. Cíl práce byl stanoven a naplněn v souladu s tématem~~
2. Cíl práce byl naplněn s drobnými nedostatky
- ~~3. Cíl práce byl adekvátní, ale jen částečně naplněný~~
- ~~4. Stanovený cíl nebyl naplněn~~

II. Struktura práce:

- ~~1. Logická, jasná a přehledná~~
2. Přiměřená
3. Uspokojivá
- ~~4. Nevhodná~~

III. Práce s literaturou:

- ~~1. Výborná: zvoleny a použity vhodné prameny v patřičném rozsahu~~
- ~~2. Velmi dobrá práce s adekvátními prameny v patřičném rozsahu~~
3. Průměrná práce s literaturou
- ~~4. Slabá, chybná nebo nedostačující~~

IV. Formální stránka:

- ~~1. Odpovídá všem stanoveným požadavkům~~
2. Obsahuje drobné formální chyby
- ~~3. Nesplňuje některé zásadní požadavky~~
- ~~4. Nesplňuje většinu stanovených požadavků~~

VI. Jazyková úroveň práce:

- ~~1. Výborná~~
2. Velmi dobrá
3. Dobrá
- ~~4. Podprůměrná~~

VII. Náročnost zpracování tématu:

- ~~1. Velmi vysoká~~
2. Vysoká
3. Střední
- ~~4. Nízká~~

Vyjádření oponentky bakalářské práce:

The bachelor thesis aims to capture the transformations of the Gothic genre across history, with a special focus on the adaptations of the Gothic genre for young readers, exemplified by two texts, Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* and Oscar Wilde's 'The Canterville Ghost'. The theoretical part introduces the Gothic genre and its evolution, intertwined with the evolution of children's literature, based on a selection of secondary sources. It feels somewhat sketchy and repetitive as it jumps from one source, and subject, to another, nevertheless, it does provide the most important background information of the topic. Regrettably, very poor paraphrasing and insufficient referencing further degrade the quality of this part of the thesis. Sometimes, Mr Rucki's paraphrasing bends the original meanings. For example, on p. 2 the claim that children today like reading Gothic stories does not really contradict the situation in the 18th century, as, elsewhere on the same page the source text asserts that the children then "were no less likely to prefer these stories". However, they were, as Mr Rucki does say, diligently prevented from doing so. Paragraph 2 on p. 3 is, on the other hand, an amalgamation of different concepts without any obvious linking. A very important point is made (derived from Cross, p. 58) on p. 11 about "incongruous" forms of humour, incl. parody and play with genre conventions. It is of high relevance for the primary texts analysed in the thesis, regrettably, this useful part of "theory" is left unexploited. The primary texts are first handled separately and then compared in a special section. The analysis of *The Graveyard Book*, widely supported by quotes from the primary text, comments on most of the important Gothic elements and features, particularly the cemetery setting, linked with the central theme of death, and a host of Gothic characters such as ghosts, witches, vampires, and werewolves. Mr Rucki notes that Gaiman reimagines the latter as privileged creatures tasked with hunting down villains. Similarly, most ghost residents in the cemetery are depicted as kind and generous rather than evil, inhuman creatures. In his analysis of 'The Canterville Ghost', Mr Rucki claims that Sir Simon was, as opposed to Gaiman's ghosts, initially a bad character because he haunted the house and scared people. Yet, Sir Simon had actually been a bad person when alive, which he must redress after death. Mr Rucki's references to Sir Simon are fairly confusing as he sometimes claims that Sir Simon is dead, another time that he is stuck between life and death, and even that "haunting is his sole purpose in life" (p. 29). In the comparative section, Mr Rucki suggests that the ghost as a comic element is supposed to entertain the reader. Is that the main reason why Sir Simon appears ridiculous in the story? Mr Rucki finds practically no similarities between Wilde's and Gaiman's ghosts. In relation to the female characters, the figure of Scarlet in *The Graveyard Book* brings in the theme of friendship across two different worlds. Could we say that about Virginia too? Both Wilde and Gaiman work with the theme of death. Does it happen in line with the conventions and reader expectations? Do the Gothic settings only fulfil their conventional Gothic function of being scary and spreading fear and unease, or do Wilde and/or Gaiman also subvert the "rules" in any way? The last subchapter 3.3.5 successfully discusses the themes of isolation and belonging. I would just add that there are more characters, especially in *The Graveyard Book*, that fall into the category of outsiders, or outcasts. One of them is Liza the witch, who was an outcast in life, and remain a loner after death too. Another may be Virginia, due to her difference from the rest of her family. While some of the transformations are indicated in the thesis, more explicit conclusions Gaiman's and Wilde's creative adaptations of the genre in general and in relation to the target audience could be drawn and presented in the Conclusion.

The thesis is written in good English, nevertheless, there are numerous language issues, such as disagreements in number, missing or misplaced punctuation, especially in relative clauses, and wrong verb tenses. There are inconsistencies in capitalisation, most visibly in expressions Gothic/gothic. Mr Rucki's referencing practice is rather poor, mainly due to

insufficient paraphrasing where his sentences copy too closely the original texts (e.g. pp. 1-5). In some places, references are missing even though it is obvious that the thoughts and wording are derived from a source cited elsewhere in the thesis (e.g. 2.1. opening sentence mirrors Jackson, p. 3; 2.1 para. 2 opening sentence derived from Turco). Some footnote references do not point to relevant text locations (e.g. p.18, n.53). There are confusing inconsistencies in titles (use of capitals and italics). Texts by Coats, Crandal, and Cross are all chapters in Jackson et al. and should be cited accordingly.

Práce splňuje základní požadavky kladené na tento typ prací, a proto ji doporučuji k ústní obhajobě.

Navrhovaná známka: velmi dobře

Otázky k obhajobě:

1. How do you understand the claim that „Gothic is a language, often an ,anti-historicising language, which provides writers with the critical means of transferring an idea of the otherness of the past into the present“ (p. 3)?
2. Do Gaiman's ghosts and Sir Simon have anything in common considering the usual depiction of a ghost in most Gothic or horror stories?
3. How do Wilde and Gaiman transform the genre and which of the transformations are determined by their young audience? Do they subvert any conventions of the genre and work with generic reader expectations? If so, how?

Podpis oponentky bakalářské práce:..... Datum: 18.6. 2023

