

Klára Nekvasilová, BA Thesis, *Setting in Poe's Short Stories and Its Relationship to Characters*, Supervisor's Report

The main contribution of this thesis is the innovative use of methodology for the interpretation of Poe's short stories. The main problem of this use is the insufficiently explained relationship between "secret places" and "characters with a secret".

The thesis was produced in haste, though the author strove to do her best in the short time she had at her disposal (from the beginning of July to 8 August). I was not happy about these circumstances but I have decided accept the time constraint, taking into account the author's unusual dedication to the topic and also the hard work she did during the many required revisions. Nonetheless, the main theoretical problems of the thesis have not been addressed in sufficient consistency and depth. These problems are:

1. the already mentioned lack of detailed and theoretically consistent explanation of the relationship between "secret places" and "characters with a secret". For this purpose you should produce a deeper and more thorough criticism of Hodrová's methodology (considering its usefulness for the interpretation of Poe's works) and also discuss the possibilities of theoretical approaches which are Hodrová's sources (Bakhtin, Lotman and Bachelard). In my opinion, you should deepen your knowledge of Lotman's cultural-semiotic approach and try to use it for individual cases. You should also make use of recent theories of "symbolic landscapes", see Backhaus, Gary, and Murungi, John (eds.) *Symbolic Landscapes* (Springer, 2009) <https://www.springer.com/gb/book/9781402087028>.
2. the insufficient theoretical justification of the last chapter dealing with temporal analysis. Here deeper analysis of Bakhtin's chronotope would be necessary and also the problem of secret and its revelation in temporal terms (discussed especially in Derrida's philosophy). The individual sub-chapters in the last chapter are interesting, but are pointing more towards the archetypal theory which reduces the understanding of temporality to unchangeable mythical patterns. This also concerns the problem of "circular" vs. "cyclic" time, which I pointed out in my comments, but again there was not a sufficient time to develop it.

In spite of these shortcomings, the submitted thesis is a promising attempt to combine advanced theoretical methodology with a close reading and innovative interpretation of Poe's short stories. I propose to grade it either "výborně" or "velmi dobře", depending on the quality of the defence.

Prague, 29 August 2018


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thesis supervisor