



FACULTY OF ARTS
OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Supervisor's Review

Ilona Procházková, "Psychological Aspects of the Gothic in Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's Fiction," BA thesis

Choice of Topic:

The topic area selected for the thesis is a relatively familiar one but is not without potential. Ms. Procházková has clearly attempted to define the limits of her project through her selection of primary material.

Thesis statement / aims and objectives:

The project is constructed around an oblique hypothesis: that Le Fanu's best work has a rich psychological dimension. The proposed structure of the investigation is well described. What is markedly absent is any attempt to theoretically or conceptually engage with what the term 'psychology' might mean – either in terms of Le Fanu's Victorian context, or as an interpretive tool. This lack of conceptual underpinning often leads to a vagueness in the analysis of the selected stories, and more importantly an ambiguity with regard to the purpose of the project as a whole.

Structure and development:

The structure of the work is methodical, the basic nature of headings and sub-headings indicate a rudimentary critical approach. The project develops in a highly descriptive mode. Observations made about the primary materials are generally correct but reach an interpretive impasse that would only be overcome with recourse to some crucial psychological / psychoanalytic terminology. A good deal of what emerges in the various readings of the selected stories is the dynamic role of desire, repression, condensation and displacement, for instance. Ms Procházková manages a rough integration of multiple viewpoints and comparison of ideas or perspectives. These ideas are investigated and integrated, but in a limited way.

Research:

Ms Procházková's research on Le Fanu is extensive given the parameters of the project. She has certainly shown initiative in assembling materials.

Use of sources:

Generally there are few formal or stylistic issues concerning the use of sources. Materials have been carefully cited throughout. At times use of secondary materials is scant (as in chapter 3) while in other chapters differing critical views of the stories vie with each other.

Stylistics and language:

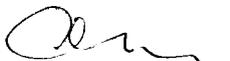
This is one of the weaker aspects of the thesis. Ms Procházková's writing is less than fluid. Expression is at times awkward and word choice is an issue.

Format:

A great deal of care has been taken with format of the project.

I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade the work "very good" / 2.

8.9.2009


Clare Wallace, PhD