

Review of the BA Thesis *A Narrative and Thematic Analysis of Selected Stories of Edgar Allan Poe* by JANA HRDLIČKOVÁ

The thesis is unique in two respects: first due to its efficient connection of narrative and thematic analyses of Poe's tales (discussing chiefly the links between characters and an "unreliable", ironic narrator explored by Wayne Booth and Franz Stanzel) with the research of grotesque elements in the tales and the aesthetic of the grotesque in general. The "added value" of the research is the study of Poe's tales in a comparative framework represented by the romantic grotesque fictions of E.T.A. Hoffmann, especially in relation to the notion of "uncanny" (*das Unheimliche*).

Jana is an exceptional, mature student with a remarkable gift of abstract thought. Therefore she needed only minor corrections. In addition, she responded actively to all my criticisms, boldly venturing into difficult areas, such as the problems of irony, grotesque and the uncanny. She also attempted to explore Poe's relations to humour and parody, and to contemporary popular culture (e.g. in her thorough analysis of a rather unknown tale "How to Write a Blackwood Article", a parody of writing in the Scottish *Blackwood Magazine*). In brief, Jana's BA thesis can easily be compared to a good MA dissertation (if not by a word count, then certainly by the complexity of her approach and conclusions).

In the thesis, there is very little to be improved. For further research, a more consistent comparison of the mechanical repetitive nature of grotesque representations (humans reduced to automata) and similar features of Poe's style (attempted in the interpretation of "The Man Who Was Used Up") would be interesting, since it would mediate between the two different viewpoints taken by the examinee: of representation (characters, narrative strategies, grotesque) and of expression (style, "arabesque"). The other possibility of development could trace the ways Poe's writing anticipates modernist techniques: especially the stream of consciousness but also Dadaism and Surrealism.

I propose the grade "**výborně**" and repeat that the thesis stands very high above average in its category.

Prague, 31 January 2012

Prof. PhDr. Martin Procházka, CSc.
vedoucí práce / supervisor