Abstract:

Meanings of Literary Childhood Spaces: The Garden in Twentieth-Century Literature focuses on the analysis of selected twentieth-century childhood novels for adults with regard to the relationship between child character and fictional space, and reflects generally accepted cultural concept of paradisal childhood and its images in literature. In theory, the dissertation is inspired by the treatises on spatiality of human existence by phenomenologists, such as Martin Heidegger, Jan Patočka, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and O. F. Bollnow. It also elaborates insights of the Garden archetype in literary history. The critical reading of selected works examines phenomenological issues, such as child specific perception of space, nature as an extension of the human consciousness, sacred space, home, intimacy of space and death of space. Furthermore, it describes features the literary garden acquires by the union with the child in twentieth-century literature (childhood paradisal gardens, character of divine chid, character of child hermaphrodite, dynamism between fictional house and garden, garden as a miniature of the universe and children games as the imitation of Creation).