

Undergraduate Thesis Assessment Rubric

Department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia

Thesis Author: Tříkačová, Klára

Title: ALVIN SCHWARTZ'S SCARY STORIES TO TELL IN THE DARK: ORIGINS, HORROR ELEMENTS AND CONTROVERSY

Length: 28

Text Length: 34

<i>Assessment Criteria</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1. Introduction is well written, brief, interesting, and compelling. It motivates the work and provides a clear statement of the examined issue. It presents and overview of the thesis.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	The thesis argument does not really direct the organization of the thesis. Why did parents and critics pick on Alvin Schwartz when his competitors were left alone? This question is hardly addressed at all.
2. The thesis shows the author's appropriate knowledge of the subject matter through the background/review of literature. The author presents information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources. Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources are included (if appropriate).	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
3. The author carefully analyzed the information collected and drew appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. Ideas are richly supported with accurate details that develop the main point. The author's voice is evident.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	There is little analysis here. The thesis is primarily descriptive.
4. The thesis displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	Again, the thesis is mostly plot summary and description.
5. Conclusion effectively restates the argument. It summarizes the main findings and follows logically from the analysis presented.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	The answer, Schwartz's competitors were not as popular as he was, was completely obvious.
6. The text is organized in a logical manner. It flows naturally and is easy to follow. Transitions, summaries and conclusions exist as appropriate. The	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient	

author uses standard spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Very deficient	
7. The language use is precise. The student makes proficient use of language in a way that is appropriate for the discipline and/or genre in which the student is writing.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	
8. The thesis meets the general requirements (formatting, chapters, length, division into sections, etc.). References are cited properly within the text and a complete reference list is provided.	Outstanding Very good Acceptable Somewhat deficient Very deficient	

Final Comments & Questions

The author is congratulated on her knowledge of the primary subject matter. I am sorry there are not more secondary sources of an academic nature. The thesis is primarily descriptive, and the plot engages in a handful of summaries of famous urban legends and campfire stories. The author writes what might be termed an anatomy of horror, which dutifully deconstructs the structure or kernels of the horror narratives, much like Russian critics at the turn of the twentieth century deconstructed fairytales. Sadly, this does not address our program's intercultural curriculum or the methodology of teaching children. The thesis question is, why is Alvin Schwartz controversial, whereas his less famous contemporaries were more or less ignored?—is never addressed. And even if it was handled, what would be the academic importance of asking such a question? If the thesis had been focused on the psychological challenges of children reading horror stories or consuming horror literature and films, the thesis would better serve educators in a position to teach horror and expose children to fun but chilling media. Many child psychologists have written books and articles that see the stress of the horror genre (if not too stressful) as developmentally beneficial for children. The intense emotions created by scary stories (even terrifying ones that depict realistic death and dismemberment) help build resilience and strength of mind in children. Like tragedy, as Aristotle describes in *The Poetics*, horror allows us to experience “pity and fear” in the safety of a theater or, these days, from our couches. Teachers and librarians should entrust children with age-appropriate horror to facilitate this strength.

BANTINAKI, K. (2012). The Paradox of Horror: Fear as a Positive Emotion. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 70(4), 383–392. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43496533>

Cornell, C. E. (1993). Language and Culture Monsters That Lurk in Our Traditional Rhymes and Folktales. *Young Children*, 48(6), 40–46. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42726479>

Swenson, E. J. (1972). The Treatment of Death In Children's Literature. *Elementary English*, 49(3), 401–404. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41387117>

I found three such articles in a few minutes' search of “Children's horror” on JSTOR. This is the kind of research you should have consulted in addition to all the journalism you used in the composition of the thesis. Many books I found on Google Scholar would have been equally helpful in providing context and understand as to why we love scary stories in the dark.

While I am glad to pass this thesis, I am afraid I can only give it a grade of 3 using this rubric.

Suggested mark: Dobře.

Supervisor/Reviewer: Br

Date: 28.08.2023

Signature: