

Supervisory Report: BA Thesis

Wednesday, 12 June 2019

Katerina Mudrova: *The Origin and Legacy of J.R.R Tolkien's Character; Gandalf the Wizard*

Supervisor: Colin S Clark MA

General remarks:

The general thrust of this work is an analysis of the various sources of Tolkien's wizard character of Gandalf especially viz a vis the standard tropes of Fantasy and the body of research surrounding Tolkien's letters and memoirs.

This thesis was submitted timeously and after consultation, although it still retains a rather fuzzy and diffuse structure which is somewhat distracting, although the student is clearly highly engaged and responsive to advice and criticism, while also demonstrating independent academic awareness with a curiosity to match. If anything, the paper does tend towards compendiousness and survey rather than pursuing a narrow line of enquiry to prosecute the thesis goals, lending the work a rather 'baggy' aspect.

There is however, clear evidence of assiduous research and engagement with the thesis goals, albeit they remain rather indiscriminate.

The dissertation has a number of typographical and referencing issues which remain even after consultation and still require proofing. The standard of academic English employed is generally readable but the prevalence of errors of grammar and style, detract from the overall effect (which is that of a confident work) sufficiently to make grading in the excellent category impossible.

There is, in the analysis of the selected texts, clear evidence of academic synthesis and a reasonably mature and if somewhat muddled and circumspect consideration of the topic of the development and position of Gandalf as a character in Tolkien's work and as a variation on the wizard character in Fantasy Literature. The choice of secondary texts is uneven but interesting and questions, as posed, are answered – often repetitively- but answered.

In terms of extension, this BA thesis is competent and while not exceptional, posits themes which would perhaps lend themselves to further consideration at MA level.

In conclusion and pursuant to the foregoing, a grade of 2 or Velme Dobre is recommended subject to successful defence.

Colin S Clark MA