

MONDAY, 21 JUNE 2010

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA – FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

ÚSTAV ANGLOFONNÍCH LITERATUR A KULTUR

Report on Bakalářské Práce(Oponentsky posudek): Manipulation of Children in the Prose of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: Clare Wallace PhD

Oponent: Colin S. Clark MA

Zpracoval :Marek Linhart

Manipulation of Children in the Prose of Aldous Huxley and George Orwell

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General Remarks:

Aside from minor spelling, phraseology and formatting niggles, this Thesis is well written, logical and convincing prose. The student has intelligently engaged with his chosen texts and made good use of the theoretical texts in order to pursue what is essentially a comparison and contrast essay.

The absence of technocracy and the conceptualization of the future is particularly missed in a thesis which specifically addresses two texts which are claimed by utopian /speculative and science-fiction canons alike. I note that James Burnham's "Managerial Revolution " is also omitted and while not a work that addresses the Manipulation of Children per se , it does synthesize Marxist and neo-Marxist concerns about the future of society and, by geo-political comparison, predicts various phenomena which also occur in Orwell and Huxley's texts such as the cynical deployment of conflict and division.

In the section dealing with Children's Safety Needs and psychology (3.2) I would recommend a marginal reading of Peter Hunt and Bruno Bettelheim(both authors with wide application in Children's Literature and Psychology) in terms of childhood resilience, problematic psychologies and conditioning. It is also

notable that no reference is made to the plethora of experimental literature that emerged in the wake of Huxley 's writings in particular-a raft of psychology/psychotherapeutic/ pharmacopeia texts, many of which address the nature of conditioning and the child as a systemic product (R.D Laing for example).

In section 3.5 it would be useful to reinforce the fact that Maslow's esteem needs are relevant in terms of totalitarian states across the political spectrum, especially as the student more than once highlights that Orwell's status as an arch-critic of Stalinism is not a universally accepted viewpoint.

Section 4 of the dissertation concerns itself specifically with the relevance of the selected texts to reality; how prescient they have been. It seems sensible, in this regard to consider modern derivatives of Orwell and Huxley (in the form of Wolfgang Sofsky(Privacy: a manifesto)) and philosophers who have developed parallel notions of the state's uses of torture, punishment, discipline and prison –Michael Foucault for example in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* or *The Spectacle of the Scaffold*.

I would suggest the addition to the Bibliography of two texts which I feel would have enlivened the discussion yet further:"Modern Utopian Fictions from H. G. Wells to Iris Murdoch" by Peter Edgerly Firchow and the non plus ultra in terms of Utopian thought systems, Manuel and Manuel's "Utopian Thought in the Western World". That said, this dissertation is perfectly functional without these and applying Orwell's own maxims for writers;

Recommendation

The foregoing is not in any way intended to detract from the student's achievement here: a solid, well-wrought and thoroughly readable exegesis of two classic texts. I concur with the supervisor 's grade suggestion and recommend a grade of Vyborne(1).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin S Clark', with a small dot to the right.

Colin S Clark MA