

Wednesday, 27 January 2021

Univerzita Karlova – Filozofická fakulta

Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

Report on Bachelor's Thesis (Supervisor's Report): "Journey Through Parallel Universes"

Vedoucí práce: Colin S. Clark, MA

Zpracoval: Varditer Arzumanyan

General Remarks:

This work is well-executed and is devoid of any major grammatical or stylistic errors that might otherwise detract from its flow. The work reads well and is cognisant of general academic requirements and of the specific formatting requirements of DALC. Overall, the work therefore conforms to requirements and prosecutes the thesis it proposes at the outset. A suitable and interesting bibliography is attached which sheds light on many of the assertions and conclusions drawn from an informative constellation of texts.

The student has embarked on an analysis of Portal Fantasy, a specific sub-genre of Fantasy literature with specific reference to the writings of Neil Gaiman, Philip Pullman and Seanan McGuire. The texts or series under consideration, *Neverwhere*, *His Dark Materials* and *Wayward Children* are utilised as exemplary and are analysed in a tripartite manner, with a separate preparatory chapter outlining important terminology in this rapidly evolving sub-genre.

Additional consideration is given to the world-building, secondary universes, genre bending/blending and mirroring – all tropes which are crucial within the field of study selected.

By virtue of having conducted a thematic reading of the texts, Arzumanyan is thereby able to extrapolate the uses and importance of a developing critical lexicon within fantasy writing which relies on ostracization, multiversal odysseys, identity suppression and associated trauma and the typical redeployment of the well-worn trope of bildungsroman in novel ways.

Appropriate conclusions are drawn from the material which is relevant and contemporary, and the author is clearly aware of the metatext of fantasy within which this study operates. The parallel development of characterisation and narrative arc between parallel realms is drawn out and the role of portal fantasy as a valid manifestation of 'space for discourse' is then proven.

Recommendation:

Bearing in mind the foregoing comments, I would recommend that this work should be passed at a grade of 2 (velmi dobře) and I commend it for consideration at that level.

Colin S. Clark, MA