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Univerzita Karlova – Filozofická fakulta

Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

Posudek Bakalrské Práce: “Fantastic Society: Social Themes in Terry Pratchett’s *Discworld*”

Report on Bachelor’s Thesis (Supervisor’s Report): “Fantastic Society: Social Themes in Terry Pratchett’s *Discworld*”

Vedoucí Diplomové práce: Colin S Clark MA

Oponent: Mirka Horova PhD

Zpracoval: Jachym Hajek

#### General Remarks:

This is an excellent thesis and an assiduous piece of scholarship as an author who has hitherto not been the topic of a great deal of considered analysis, the supposition being that as a parodic writer, his oeuvre is in some sense of lesser value than ‘purists’ in the genre approve of.

The student’s approach in methodological terms, is solid and logical – not to mention highly knowledgeable and deft. Each of the texts in question is minded exhaustively and the result is a good primer on some of the key texts by Prachett.

The general ecosystem of fantasy as a genre is outlined as a precursor to detailed considerations of major themes as religion, discrimination (in its many guises), feminism (including sexism and cross dressing) and social inequalities.

After a consideration of some canonical secondary texts such as those by Tolkien, Swinfen et al, Hajek then conducts an incisive survey of Prachett’s application of the typical tropes of the fantasy genre. This is reasonably agile scholarship and serves to underline the unusual degree of reflexivity in the *Discworld* series.

The conclusions reached by Hajek are pertinent particularly so apropos of recent fracas within the critical community concerning sexual and social politics and their expression and implications within society at large. Hajek points out the role of tradition in forming prejudice and Prachett’s demand that both writers and readers employ independent thinking. Equally important is the creation within the *Discworld* series of speculative space to sandbox solutions or at least amendments to current attitudes which tend to shield unsavoury racisms behind tradition and hackneyed attitudes.

Lastly, Hajek does a thorough job of highlighting Prachett’s efficient and ubiquitous use of humour to challenge established privilege and persistent but erroneous thinking.

Recommendation

Bearing in mind the foregoing comments, I would recommend that this work should be passed at a grade of 1 (Vyborne) and I commend it for consideration at that level.

Colin S Clark MA