La Sapienza

Revisione esterna tesi dott. GIULIA MAGRO (37 ciclo)

MAGRO GIULIA

Evaluation form for PhD dissertation

Evaluation form

Title of the thesis

"Let the Past Teach You": An Ecocritical Analysis of Medievalism in Selected Works of Twentieth-Century United States Science Fiction

Affiliation of the reviewer

Università degli studi di Urbino Carlo Bo

Report

Giulia Magro's thesis is interesting and reads well, is written in short, well-written periods, and is well organized into chapters and paragraphs. It is based on a robust theoretical foundation, with good analysis and use of key concepts (medievalism, science fiction, anthropocene, etc.). The topic is excellently summarized by a sentence on p. 12: "This study is thus concerned with the triangulation of medievalism, SF, and ecological concerns." The bibliography is very rich and it is a pleasure to scroll through it. In the bibliography I would distinguish the works of the authors analyzed in an opening paragraph, to be kept separate (these are in fact the sources of the thesis).

The thesis is very good and can certainly be discussed as it stands. What follows, then, are just a few further suggestions, to be taken up especially with a view to eventual publication.

Since the word medievalism is even found in the title, it would be appropriate for the status quaestionis to be a bit more articulated. Recent studies that deal with the topic from the perspective of the history of medievalism and that are not limited to the English-speaking world might include the recent open access article: Ionut Costea, "Medievalism. Historiographic Markers," in Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai - Historia,1 (2023), 131-160. On the concept of "presentism," rightly addressed through the studies of Louise D'Arcens, and temporality in general, one could also add the interpretation provided by François Hartog, Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time.

Little I can say about the analysis of the authors, which, moreover, seems to me to be very well done and which covers a wide exemplification of medievalisms; among these writers, I am especially familiar with Ursula Le Guin. Regarding Carter, since the book is from 1917, perhaps some work on the relationship between medievalism and World War I could also be mentioned (e.g., St. Goebel, The Great War and Medieval Memory).

The topic of the relationship between literature and film can be explored further, since it is the one in which science fiction and medievalism relate most prominently and is the one best known even to the general public. On the relationship between medievalism and American science fiction, for example, the mention of Lucas's Star Wars is correct, just as Flash Gordon, Star Trek, and the post-apocalyptic genre films (especially in relation to Russell Hoban's book) are rightly nominated. The connection between these and literature could be explored further in a hoped-for continuation of the research. Thus one may perhaps also propose an analysis of Frank Herbert's Dune (cited on p. 117), since that is another series of U.S. novels (and films) in which medievalism (indeed, precisely ecomedievalism) and

science fiction are very much interconnected, and in which one observes a great interest in the aspect of the relationship between man and more-than-human.

That said, it only remains for me to offer the nominee my congratulations and best wishes for the discussion.

Confidential report (it will not be shown to the candidate)

Evaluation file (optional)

Presentation and clarity

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The reviewer should be able to read the text without difficulty. This implies that the dissertation is clear and 'user friendly', without duplications or repetitions.

Integration and coherence

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The manuscript should present logical and rational links between different parts of the thesis.

Introduction to scientific background

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The text should contain a satisfactory introduction to the scientific background which is relevant to the research, preparing the reader to the exposition of the problem.

Review of relevant literature

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The candidate must have a detailed knowledge of original sources, have a thorough knowledge of the field, and understand the main theoretical and methodological issues.

Statement of research problem

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

A clear statement of the research problem should be made, together with specific hypotheses, predictions, or questions which the research is designed to address.

Originality

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [X] Good   [ ] Excellent

The research must be the candidate's own work. The degree of independence may vary according to the research topic.

Contribution to knowledge and scientific relevance

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [X] Good   [ ] Excellent

The dissertation should be substantial enough to be able to form the basis of two articles on refereed journal, a book or research monograph.

Mastery of the English language

[ ] None   [ ] Poor   [ ] Average   [ ] Good   [X] Excellent

The candidate must be proficient in written English and show mastery of appropriate scientific/technical language.

The thesis can be considered for a 'cum laude' award

[X] Yes   [ ] No

A major goal of the review process is to evaluate if the present version of the thesis is:

1) adequate as is

2) require minor revision

3) require major revision

for admission of the candidate to the defense of the work in front of a national evaluation board.

[X] Accept as is   [ ] Minor revision   [ ] Major revision

Date: 12/15/2024
Reviewer: Di Carpegna Gabrielli Falconieri Tommaso