

# POSUDEK BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

KATEDRA ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA A LITERATURY PedF UK

<b>Autor práce:</b>	Kryštof Kozák
<b>Název práce:</b>	Killing Tolkien: The Legendarium and Death of the Author
<b>Vedoucí práce:</b>	Mgr. Jakub Ženíšek, Ph.D
<b>Rok odevzdání:</b>	2023
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	62 stran
<b>Posudek:</b>	Oponenta
<b>Autor posudku:</b>	Bernadette Higgins, M.A.

	<b>Posuzovaná oblast</b>	<b>Zvažovaná kritéria</b>	<b>Body (0-5)<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Celková charakteristika</b>	Splnění zásad zpracování práce, adekvátnost titulu práce, naplnění stanoveného cíle, logická struktura práce, vyváženost a propojenost teoretické a praktické části	3
<b>2.</b>	<b>Teoretická část</b>	Stanovení a splnění cílů, prezentace různých teoretických přístupů k řešení problému, jejich kritické posouzení a zvolení relevantní teoretické základny pro realizaci praktické části	2
<b>3.</b>	<b>Praktická část</b>	Vhodnost a aplikace zvolené metodologie, jasnost formulace hypotéz, relevantní a srozumitelná argumentace a interpretace získaných výsledků, jasnost formulace závěrů práce	2
<b>4.</b>	<b>Jazyková úroveň</b>	Gramatická správnost a komplexnost, slovní zásoba, koheze a koherence textu, interpunkce a stylistické aspekty, celková úroveň jazykového projevu	4
<b>5.</b>	<b>Struktura a forma</b>	Přehlednost struktury, členění, řazení a proporčnost kapitol a oddílů, konzistentnost úpravy práce, odpovídající rozsah práce, adekvátnost a provedení příloh	3
<b>6.</b>	<b>Práce s odbornou literaturou</b>	Kvalita, množství a relevance odborných zdrojů, kritický přístup ke zdrojům, odpovídající úroveň citační praxe	2

## Celkové zhodnocení práce (včetně kritických výhrad):

This is a lively and engaging piece of work that is written in a very fluent and readable style. The author is clearly steeped in the work of Tolkien and is familiar with the many debates and controversies pertaining to it from both the past and the present. One of these debates concerns interpretations of Tolkien's work, specifically, those that see his work as allegorical, something that Tolkien himself famously opposed ("I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations...", quoted by the author on p. 9, though as he once described TLOR as 'an allegory of power', he clearly had only a specific kind of allegory in mind). He then introduces Barthes' important essay 'The Death of the Author' and will refer to this work throughout as representing an approach to Tolkien's work that shuns any interest

<sup>1</sup> Bodové hodnocení na škále 1-5 (5 bodů maximum), 0 bodů z jedné či více posuzovaných oblastí automaticky znamená, že práce není doporučena k obhajobě.

in biographical information or authorial intent. There is rather a simplification and reduction in the approach to the ideas of Barthes - suggesting that critics/readers apply the "Death of the Author" approach rather schematically, like a filter applied with varying degrees of intensity (e.g. talking about "absolutist application of the Death of the Author" (p. 25) or (p. 37) "anyone reading *The Lord of the Rings* as a story of a homoerotic relationship between Sam and Frodo engages in applying the theory of the Death of the Author". There is also a rather dogmatic tone at times, e.g. (p. 41) "Neither *Lord of the Rings* nor *Chronicles of Narnia* are allegorical works". The critic Andrew Hallam addressed those insisting on the absence of allegory by claiming that "the essentialist perspective does not consider the possibility of "a multigeneric text"... in which allegory may often play a prominent role" (*Thresholds to Middle-earth: Allegories of Reading, Allegories for Knowledge and Transformation*, 2011) and a less gladiatorial approach to Tolkien's texts might have been more fruitful than the author's at times combative stance, rousing though it is. As Tolkien himself, in the foreword to *Fellowship of the Ring*, pointed out: "the ways in which a story-germ uses the soil of experience are extremely complex, and attempts to define the process are at best guesses from evidence that is inadequate and ambiguous" and, though the lust for clarity displayed by the author is admirable, there is a lack of subtlety in the management of theoretical concepts.

The final part of the theoretical part comprises information about Tolkien and includes a refinement of his ideas about allegory, fairy tales etc.

The practical part provides an engaging look at topics that have proved in some way problematic in Tolkien's work in terms of filmic and other representations of it, namely race, gender, sex and queerness, faith, and war/politics. Though this is interesting, and it displays the up-to-datedness of the author's knowledge of what is going on with Tolkien's work today, it does not really connect with the focus in the theoretical part on allegory. More interesting would have been a focus on one of the topics – say race – and a more in-depth analysis of the text/s in the light of this (also given the author's obvious extensive knowledge of Tolkien's work), which would have allowed for sections discussing matters such as authorial intent, allegory etc. There is very little of Tolkien's actual work discussed in the thesis.

As already noted, the work is expressed well and engagingly, almost in a journalistic manner (and indeed, the bulk of the bibliographical sources are journalistic (good though they are) or academic sources which are quite dated) and shows a wide knowledge of Tolkien. The conclusion of the work is not entirely persuasive and is a further indication of the weakness of the theoretical structure on which the author built his work. The author claims that (p. 53) "The influence of Tolkien's life on his works is well documented and has been thoroughly discussed, and ignoring it does not advance the debate" but does not really make clear what it means to 'advance the debate'. And the example he gives, that the love story of Beren and Luthien has more depth if we know that it was inspired by Tolkien's life, is unpersuasive. But, despite the lack of any close analysis of Tolkien's works, the author's solid knowledge of the topic in general is clear and he raises a number of interesting issues with aplomb, so I do not hesitate to recommend it for defence.

### **Témata a náměty k diskusi při obhajobě**

1. Given what the author writes about modern-day changes (in terms of race/gender), to what extent can it be said that Tolkien's writing is "timeless"? (p. 44)
2. Can the author say more about his claim on p. 45 - "Tolkien did not write a story representing the Great War, or the Soviet Union, or the nuclear bomb, yet critics and audience members read this meaning into the work. This can be considered an application of the Death of the Author"?

**Práci tímto  doporučuji  nedoporučuji k obhajobě.<sup>2</sup>**

Datum: 18. května 2023

Podpis:

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<sup>2</sup> Výsledná známka zahrnuje hodnocení posudku vedoucího práce, hodnocení posudku oponenta a hodnocení výkonu studenta v průběhu obhajoby.