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Summary

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SUMMARY

The art of fantastic literature has been nowadays an influential cultural phenomenon. This monograph aims to initiate a broader discussion about the fantastic literature and to draw attention to the inspiring dilemma of its reflection.

The text of the monograph is divided into two parts; in the first part, the theoretical specification of the fantastic literature is laid, in the second part, a typology of the fantastic literature is defined in accordance with the analysis of primary Czech literature as well as with translations of primary sources.

In the first part, various approaches to the definition of the fantastic literature within the Czech and the worldwide context are introduced. Apart from that, the terms under which a text can be considered fantastic are specified: it needs to be a fiction, not a religious or a mythical text, neither an output of a mental defect.

The principal idea of the first part of the monograph is to introduce my own intuitive definition of the fantastic literature which is based on Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances, a prototype theory, architextuality and fuzzy sets and which relates to the fantastic literature's theoreticians Paul Kincaid and Brian Attebery. Within this definition, a fiction or a drama can be considered "fantastic" if its fantastic element (connected through the family resemblances with at least one more piece of fantastic literature) plays an important role in the structure of the fictional world, e.g. it does not occur sporadically while bearing a specific function.

The fantastic element is represented by a deliberate distinction from a consensual reality (e.g. an altered historical development in case of alternative history, setting of an action into a future fictional world), by a physical impossibility in case of characters and entities or by a radical change of natural patterns and rules of the fictional world.

This suggested definition of the fantastic literature is accompanied by chapters on critical reception of the fantastic literature and on specific realizations of estrangement within the fantastic literature; other chapters focus on the relationship between mimetic and fantastic elements in the construction of the fictional

world and on the role of an idea, of a character and of a language in the fantastic fiction. The first part of the monograph is concluded by a concise chapter on the outset of the fantastic literature.

The second part of the monograph is concerned with the typology of the fantastic literature. First, the division of the fantastic literature based on an explanation of the fantastic element is revised (fantasy vs. science fiction). Second, a diversification of various levels of relationship between the natural and the supernatural domain within the theory of fictional worlds is mentioned; last but not least, an alternative approach represented by a concept by Farah Mendlesohn is introduced. Given this, the very attempt at a two-level typology pursuant the function of the fantastic element is presented. At the first place, two categories of fantastic are distinguished in accordance with a level of integration of the fantastic element, considering text-based as well as non-text based aspects: **the pure fantastic** and **the fantastic as a mean of expression**.

To diversify the integration of the fantastic element even more, two non-synonymous terms are used: **a platform** (the fantastic element represents the core of the story development while being authentically integrated into the fictive world; its integration is well elaborated) and **a resource** (in this type, the implementation of the fantastic element into the fictive world is not crucial; it is the consequences of its existence that play an important role). Even higher level of integration of fantastic element is characteristic for texts completely focused on the fantastic element; on the other side, there are texts using the fantastic element as coulisses only that show a relatively lower level of its integration.

As the second step, a diversification of three key functions of the fantastic element in relation to the actual world is presented. These functions create fuzzy sets within a superior concept of the fantastic literature. They are called **an appearance of realismity**, **an evocation of doubt** and **an expression of inner coherence**; their actual implementations are performed through various analyses of Czech and foreign origin texts.

The fuzzy set of the appearance of realismity is represented by texts in which the authenticity towards the actual world creates an essential component provoking a desired perception by the readership.

The fuzzy set of the evocation of doubt reflects an awareness of non-obviousness of the consensual reality and, within a close (but not exclusive) line to postmodern thinking, it impeaches the ability of a human to identify the essence of reality and to distinguish it from an illusion.

The fuzzy set of expression of inner coherence comprises texts that through the fantastic element – very often through generalization and symbols – comment on serious issues and problems of human beings.

This monograph aims at a wider professional reception of the fantastic literature and at providing a potential tool for analyses of individual texts; its aim is not to implement a nomenclature. To explore cognitive aspects of reflection of the diverse and inspiring phenomenon of the fantastic literature, that is a challenge and an ambition for my future research.