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At the edge of the worlds: fantastic literature in interdisciplinary exploration : summary

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SUMMARY

At the Edge of the Worlds

Fantastic Literature in Interdisciplinary Exploration

Fantastic literature can be understood as a mode with an important aspect of crossing borders: between the ordinary and the fantastic worlds, between the past, present and future, between scientific and magical thinking, between fantasy and rationality, and between the actual and the fictional worlds. Similarly, the borders within the fantastic literature are being blurred: the number of its genres is mutually connected, they inspire each other, there appear some hybrid genres, and we can perceive some connections between genre and non-genre fantastic fiction.

To a certain extent, this book also deals with crossing the borders. Our aim was to concentrate on the topic of the fantastic from different points of view, approaches and disciplines, not to provide an exhausting insight into only one aspect from many topics of fantastic literature.

We would like to point out the inspirational quality of various approaches to the fantastic, and also to set some ways that can be further used when theorising the fantastic. This also reflects the structure of the authorial team which consists of scholars from various fields and with various interests; therefore, you will learn about both Czech and world fantastic literature not only from the point of view of literary studies, but also from the point of view of philosophy, drama studies, linguistics or history of art.

The book content consists of five thematically connected parts, each having its own introduction and including several chapters:

On the Utopian Quality in Literature

Sharing the Story, World and Language

To the Roots of Not Only the Czech Fantastic

Creativity and Fantastic Quality – Stories Not Only for Children

Central-European Postmodernism

Summary

The five parts of this book concentrate on the fantastic literature from both the synchronic and diachronic, and theoretical and historical perspective, deal with specific texts by well-known Czech and world authors, or aim at a specific approach of fantastic literature to narration, shared worlds, the use of constructed languages, or the presence (absence) of female writing in current Czech fantastic literature. The result – as we hope – is the revealing of the complexity of fantastic literature as not only a literary, but also as a general cultural and social phenomenon that cannot be, in any case, limited to a constricted idea of a minority genre aiming at a not very discerning reader who seeks an evasion from the chains of reality.

To deconstruct the idea of fixed borders between fantastic and mimetic literature, we work with a concept of fuzzy sets and extend the breadth according to the system of division by Brian Attebery from the genre of fantastic literature to the fantastic as a mode of narration. We are therefore interested in changeable and permeable borders of fantastic literature, and in the overlap of the fantastic, mimetic, fairytale and mythical, as well as in the possibility of reflecting the fantastic from the point of view of various scholarly fields.