

Book Review

World of dreamers: where anything can happen

A review for the novel "*World of Dreamers*" by Alessia Puleo Kimerik, 2015.

Fantasy literature developed in the second half of the twentieth century: its dominant elements are the supernatural, imagination, allegory, symbols. This literary genre is often associated with (or opposed to) other subgenres, like science fiction and horror.

Over time, the fantasy genre has been growing, taking the form of movies, television programs, graphic novels, videogames, music, painting and other media. It is a composite world that contains, in turn, more worlds, as in a Chinese boxes game. This complex structure characterizes as well the fantasy novel "*World of Dreamers*", which marks the young writer Alessia Puleo's literary debut.

"Since I have memories, I remember being always been unhappy with everything, repeating to myself, 'This world is not mine'. I have never met anyone who thought like me, I think I am alone among other people".

The loneliness and the awareness of being different from other people give origin to the journey undertaken by the protagonist, who is looking for herself and for her world, and is willing to find her place in the world, be it this or another dimension, a "refuge" for dreamers like her.

Alida's life is "boring", as she defines it. The girl wishes her biggest hope may become true: moving elsewhere.

The world she approaches is dominated by the "column", an upward symbol that exists only in Alida's imagination, until it appears, becoming the "bridge" to the world of dreamers: from now on, the order of things is subverted, as well as their meaning, the geographical location is distorted.

Alida has to cross the border between dream and reality in order to experience the other aspect of reality itself, the Shadow in the Jungian sense, *i.e.* the hidden part of the personality.

The apparent simplicity of the novel, that sees many similarities with fairy tales and children's stories (first of all, there is the inevitable juxtaposition with the fabulous and complicated "*Alice in Wonderland*" by Lewis Carroll, or "*The Neverending Story*" by Michael Ende), may qualify "*World of Dreamers*" as a teenager story: as the story goes on, there are, however, clear references – intentional or not? – to psychology and to philosophy of language.

Even the choice of the protagonist's name, as well as the denomination of the place where she arrives, is a metaphor for the young girl's fate and the characteristics of the world she starts to explore.

Alida, the protagonist: her name has a German origin, the etymological germanic root "*hildjo*", "battle", qualifies the young girl as a "warrior".

Olthir, the "other" world (does Olthir derive just from the English "other"?), dreamed, desired and then feared, where the journey to come back begins. Knowing Olthir means having to fight against it, playing according to its rules, and accepting, sometimes, to lose.

Alida escapes from such an "infernal" place, which coincides with her "internal" world, made of difficulties and contradictions: after having experienced the knowledge she can truly return home. As in a cathartic journey, the adept must live the hell of self, suffer the "passion" to be able to resurrect in a state of higher consciousness, in order to accept and really understand himself/herself.

The book, another symbol in the novel, is an instrument of knowledge in this process of formation, and contains the tracks to understand how the history can go on and which are the rules of the world, that are revealed only to those ones who can interpret them.

Alida is not alone in her journey: she, the "diverse", the dreamer, is accompanied by other travel mates, dreamers as well. They are both indigenous, belonging to the Lihir race and citizens of Olthir, and humans, who have chosen to remain in Olthir forgetting the real world.

The travellers' group, a reminiscence of Tolkien's Fellowship of the Ring, is soon formed and leaves from the Core of the World, the lake that forms the base of the column, where everything begins and where anything can happen, till the last level, as in a video game, where, from stage to stage, the characters get to the end and find that the reward is the journey itself more than the arrival point.

Alida, at the end of the story, is aware of having traveled, not only in her subconscious. The novel ends with the young protagonist's return to reality.

After having tried to bridge the philosophical gap between the individual and society, she comes back: has her choice to be meant like a failure? If we consider it a failure, it is, nonetheless, tempered by the unexpected conclusion, which sees an unforeseen contact point between the world of dreamers and the real world, with the journey and adaptation in this latter part made by Andy, Alida's Lihir companion. The hope of being able to keep dreaming survives till the end.

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