



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

CHORONG KIM

BSc (University of Victoria, 2013)

**“Storytelling Tricksters: A Reader’s Coming-of-Age in
Young Adult Fantasy Fiction in German”**

Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies

Wednesday, May 23, 2018

1:30 P.M.

Clearihue Building

Room D241

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Elena Pnevmonidou, Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, University of Victoria
(Supervisor)

Dr. Megan Swift, Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Lisa Surridge, Department of English, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Sheila Rabillard, Department of English, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

In this thesis, I examine three works of modern German fantasy fiction for young adults, their common grounding in the Romantic aesthetic framework and in particular the Romantic notion of creativity, and the implication of their unique fantasy fiction paradigm in our modern day. The novels are Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story* (1979), *Inkheart* (2003) by Cornelia Funke and *The City of Dreaming Books* (2006) by Walter Moers. They represent a Germany-specific narrative paradigm which can be seen in the protagonist readers' transformation from mere readers into storymakers/storytellers, and in the conflict between a book-loving hero and antagonists who are against literature. The protagonists embody the Romantic notion of creativity that involves the sublimation of a poet's crisis into an exploration of the self. The mundane is infused with fantasy, thereby elevating reality to an idealised state. These Romantic storytelling readers act as tricksters, a fairy tale archetype that shares similarities with the figure of the Romantic poet. I employ the theoretical frameworks of German Romanticism, Frankfurt School critical theory, and postmodern models, including those by Deleuze and Guattari. I argue for a modern version of the trickster archetype which explains how a complacent, passive reader becomes an active storyteller.