

ENP11034 *This and Other Worlds: Global Children's Fantasy*

Module type Optional (approved module: MPhil in Children's Literature)

Term / hours Hilary / 22

ECTS 10

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Lecturer(s) Dr Jane Carroll

Cap Depending on demand

Module description

Focusing on texts for younger readers, this module explores children's fantasy from around the world from 1950 to 2022. Taking a range of texts from around the world, we examine the ways texts engage, play with, and subvert ideas of place and assess the strategies authors use to establish their temporal and geographical settings and to lend a sense of verisimilitude to their worldbuilding. At the heart of our discussions is the moment of encounter between the familiar and the strange, the known world and the other world, the journeys that enable characters to move between worlds, or the magic that allows strange worlds to encroach upon the primary world of consensual reality. Looking at the interaction and integration of people, stories, and cultures, we will investigate the role globalisation plays in modern children's fantasy. We interrogate what fantasy offers that other genres do not and ask whether building an imaginary world enables authors – and child readers – to engage more fully with ideas of place, power, cultural identity, racial identity, colonialism, and otherness. This is a research-led module that springs from my work on landscape in children's literature and spatiality in children's fantasy. In our discussions, we will draw on literary geography, postcolonial theory, and critical race theory, as well as critical material relating to fantasy as a genre and to children's literature as a broader discipline. There will be opportunities to work with Trinity's vast collection of translations of Terry Pratchett's work. Key questions include: How can we read invented landscapes? What strategies are used in worldbuilding? What are the tensions between escapism and analogy in modern fantasy writing for young readers? How does fantasy enable global identities to interact with national and local identities? How do these texts engage with ideas of sameness and difference? How are ideas of familiarity and ordinariness established? How do they construct a sense of otherness? Which stories can travel and which ones are so deeply localised they cannot be detached from their source landscapes? How do translations impact on the representation of sameness and difference in these texts?

Assessment

The module is assessed through a 5,000-6,000-word essay.

Indicative bibliography

Ursula Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968)

Diana Wynne Jones *Howl's Moving Castle* (1986)

Terry Pratchett, *The Carpet People* (1992)

Timothée La Fombelle, trans. Sarah Ardizzone, *Toby Alone* (2008)

Sonia Nimr, trans. Marcia Lynx Qualey, *Wondrous Journeys in Strange Lands* (2013)

Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu, *Zahrah the Windseeker* (2005)

Peadar O'Guilin *The Call* (2016).

(Full bibliographical details on the above works to be provided in class.)

Learning outcomes

Please contact the module coordinator for the learning outcomes of this module.