Diana Wynne Jones
Conference Schedule

Friday 3rd July

2.00-3.15pm, Room 3D36

Registration and Refreshments

3.15-4.30pm, Room 3D33

Charlie Butler: Welcome to the Conference!

Charlie Butler is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of the West of England, Bristol. Charlie is the author of six fantasy novels for children and young adults, as well as the academic study Four British Fantasists: Place and Culture in the Children’s Fantasies of Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Diana Wynne Jones and Susan Cooper (2006), and numerous articles and chapters on children’s literature.

Deborah Kaplan: Disrupted expectations: young/old protagonists in Diana Wynne novels.

The works of Diana Wynne Jones consistently break genre expectations regarding the age of the protagonists and a secondary characters. Some texts, such as Dark Lord of Derkholm with its cross-generational heroes, violate the genre’s expected relationship between the age of the implied reader and that the protagonists. In other other texts, including Hexwood, the protagonist’s true age is hidden from everyone, including the protagonist himself. These two texts aren’t unusual in a body of work which includes timeshifting flashbacks, adults regressed to toddlers, and a century-old adolescent. This paper explores the function of age and expectation in Jones’ works, primarily focused on this pair of texts. It examines how a text with an adult or age-shifting protagonist implies a child reader in a genre with fairly solid conventions for protagonist age. It examines the texts’ building of sympathy for mixed-generational groups, instead of presenting adults as antagonists, mentors, or parental figures. It explores how the reader’s interpretation of a protagonist does or doesn’t change when that character belatedly shifts from young adolescent young adult. Finally, this paper examines the unusual nature of all of these treatments of age, and examines them in the context of fixed genre expectations.

Tui Head: The Girl in Adventure Fiction

One of the central dilemmas of modern feminism is the desire to adequately value unpaid “women’s work” while simultaneously affirming the abilities and rights of women to succeed in paid work outside of the home. Marilyn Waring wrote, in her book Counting for Nothing, that women’s work – cleaning, cooking, childcare – is vital to continuing prosperity (of all kinds, including economic), but is invisible in all the ways we attempt to account for productivity – usually because it is unpaid. Unpaid labour, usually domestic, usually done by women, represents a significant fraction of the economy but goes uncounted and unvalued. Even as women have entered the workforce in increasing numbers, and they begin to be understood to be economically valuable, domestic labour remains undervalued (as evidenced by the comparatively low pay rates of housekeepers, cleaners, nurses, and so forth, as compared to carpenters, plumbers, or doctors.) I am interested in the ways young adult and children’s fiction affirms or criticises women’s work and women’s roles, especially in adventure fiction. In these stories children are left to more-or-less to their own devices, and their means of taking care of themselves are illuminating.

I will explore, first, the motherly girl in mid-twentieth-century adventure stories, looking at Susan Walker (of Arthur Ransome’s “Swallows and Amazons”, published between 1930 and 1947), Anne Kirrin (of Enid Blyton’s “Famous Five”, 1942-1963), and Susan Pevensie (of C. S.
Lewis’ “Chronicles of Narnia”, 1950-1956). These girls take on a maternal role, supervising and caring for their siblings and friends in the absence of adult figures; their labour epitomises the concept of “women’s work”, as it might be applied to children’s fiction. They are the voice of common sense and of regular meals, but rarely do they have an active role in the narratives. I hope to pay particular attention to Susan Walker and Anne Kirrin, and their opposite halves, tomboys Nancy Blackett and George Kirrin; the interplay between the domestic role and the tomboy role is a microcosm of, and unintended metaphor for, feminism’s vacillation between the paid worker and the unpaid labourer.

Secondly, I hope to explore the ways modern adventure fiction interrogates the standard maternal girl role that the Susans, and Anne, exemplify, particularly in the work of Diana Wynne Jones. Jones’ work rests firmly in the tradition of the earlier novels, albeit with an increased presence of adults (who are, instead of entirely absent, generally metaphorically absent, fumbling, disbelieving, or actively antagonistic towards child protagonists. Here, Jones’ work conforms to a more modern tradition of casting children against adults.) Her novel The Merlin Conspiracy explores gender and difference in a wide range of ways (for example, her elaborate setting of “male” and “female” magics in the Merlin/Magids, and the Dimbers; her emphasis on the “balance” of magics speaks to a strong valuation of women’s work, but an equally strong gender essentialism). Most pertinent to my thesis, however, is Arianrhod Hyde and her relationship with Grundo, a younger boy she had more or less adopted as a child. When Jones eventually reveals that Grundo has been enchanting Roddy to take care of him, she creates a powerful criticism of the way the maternal role might act to hijack young women from their own purposes (as well as a potential implied criticism of social strictures which encourage young women to take these roles.) Meanwhile, in the recent novel House of Many Ways, Jones depicts an amusing reversal of women’s and men’s work, as Charmain goes out to work, deputising the stranger Peter to fulfill her responsibilities towards housework (she is house-sitting for an ill relative.) The novel is surprisingly invested in domestic labour; Charmain’s struggles with the rather dirty and messy house represent a significant fraction of the book’s tangential material. I believe the complicated ways Peter and Charmain echo and satirise typical attitudes to women’s work may present interesting explorations of the feminist dilemma I mentioned.

5.00-6.00pm, Room 3D33

Keynote Address: Nicholas Tucker

“Diana Wynne Jones - Life into Art”

6.00-7.00pm, Felixstowe Court

Buffet Supper. (Cash bar available from 6.00-11.00pm.)

7.00-8.30pm, Room 3D33

Archer’s Goon (BBC, 1992): Episodes 1-3
Beth Lockwood: Monstrous Mothers and Gumptious Grannies: Female Caregivers in the novels of Diana Wynne Jones

As long as there have been fairy tales, there have been monstrous mothers; women who represent the antithesis of all that motherhood purports to be. Many of Diana Wynne Jones’ novels tap into this long established tradition with some truly diabolical mothers at the centre of her texts, who have anything but their children’s best interests at heart. This paper examines the depiction of the inadequate mother figure in this author’s novels.

Fairy tale protagonists usually have to rely upon their own ingenuity to protect themselves from their mothers’ evil intentions. Diana Wynne Jones however often offers help to her heroes in an unlikely form. A strong patriarchal figure, Jones’ gumptious grannies are a force to be reckoned with. Any notions of hovering sedately in the background are firmly dispelled as the often marginalised older female character comes into her own in her novels.

With a range of examples but focusing mainly upon Ivy, Laurel and Gran in Fire and Hemlock, this paper discusses some of Jones’ most complex creations proving appearances can be extremely deceptive.

Beth Lockwood is a PhD student based at Bristol UWE, under the supervision of Dr Charles Butler. Her research focuses on the relatively new theory of fantastic realism in Children’s Literature, combining reader response with traditional literary theory. Diana Wynne Jones is one of the four authors which her thesis focuses on. She also works as a visiting lecturer in the Education Faculty at UWE teaching on a variety of Children’s Literature modules.

Iain Emsley: The portrayal of the wizard as father figure

Wizards are often portrayed as all knowing figures to whom the central characters turn in times of crisis. The guide their charges through the difficulty that they face at the time, becoming surrogate fathers. In Diana Wynne Jones’s novels, as Farah Mendlesohn notes in her study of Diana Wynne Jones’s work, father figures often ignore their charges, creating a self delusion of grandeur.

In this paper I am going to look at how Wynne Jones constructs the wizard as a father figure in Hexwood, The Merlin Conspiracy, Howl’s Moving Castle and Charmed Life. In each novel she constructs the father as a threatening figure though impenetrability or violence. Deconstructing these positions, she shows the wizards to either be absent or neglectful fathers, trying to govern their children without giving them the agency to function as themselves, usually allow the child to fall into harm. Whilst this happens, they are reconstructed as somebody who cares for their children and recognise their own failings. They give their charges the agency to act on their own through knowledge and the ability to challenge them. The wizard is forced to recognise and act on their own neglect of their parental duties and pass on information to their child.

Ika Willis: ‘Mum’s a silly fusspot’: the queering of family in Diana Wynne Jones

In Four British Fantasists, Butler cites Diana Wynne Jones saying that her novels ‘provide a space where children can... walk round their problems and think “Mum’s a silly fusspot and I don’t need to be quite so enslaved by her notions”’ (267). That is, as I will argue in this paper, Jones’ work aims to provide readers with the emotional, narrative and intellectual resources to achieve a critical distance from their families of origin. I will provide a brief survey of the treatment of family in Jones’ children’s books, with particular reference to Charmed Life, The Lives of Christopher Chant, The Ogre Downstairs, Cart and Cwidder, Drowned Ammet, The Homeward Bounders and Hexwood, and then narrow my focus to two of Jones’ classic
treatments of family: Eight Days of Luke and Archer’s Goon. I will read these books in terms of the ways in which their child protagonists reposition themselves in relation to family in the course of their narratives. Drawing on Esther Saxey’s recent narratological analysis of the coming-out story in Homoplot, I will argue that the way in which Jones shows her protagonists both coming to terms with their families of origin and creating new kin networks or ‘chosen families’ makes her books particularly hospitable to queer readers – or at least to this queer reader.

9.00-10.30am, Room 3D36

Susan Ang: “It’s getting a little stuffy and mouse-ish in here”: Dogmata, Catastrophe and the Renaissance of Fantasy
This paper proposes to consider the way in which the notion of renewal/rewriting is put to work in the fantasy of Diana Wynne Jones. As theme, this drives many of her works -- Hexwood, Fire and Hemlock, Dark Lord of Derkholm, Tale of Time City, Archer’s Goon - the list could go on indefinitely. But it is also there as an energy shaping what she is doing with regard to the genre itself, whose tropes and structures are dismantled, critiqued and re-assembled in new forms to renew what is in danger of becoming/ has become stale and tired. Renewal is thus present as performance as much as theme.

The paper will examine how these ideas are played out in the larger body of Diana Wynne Jones’s work, while concentrating on a few texts, particularly Hexwood, in which fractured narrative and use of the wasteland motif are put to useful effect, Fire and Hemlock in which the notion of ‘rewriting’ has an especial aptness, Dark Lord of Derkholm in which the traditional shapes of fantasy may be read as the real ‘Dark Lord’ against which Jones’s text pits itself, and Deep Secret whose Escher-esque coils are both symbol of stagnant loop and path towards renewal.

Margaret Williamson Huber: Authority And Power In The Worlds Of Diana Wynne Jones
This paper explores Diana Wynne Jones’s conception of the proper relationship between king and mage, or secular authority and sacred power, that figures so prominently in her work. Anthropologists call this form of governance dual sovereignty, a separation of powers between the spiritual, usually construed as authority, and the secular, usually regarded as power. It is found all around the world in a wide variety of cultural contexts. In most cases, authority ordains but is impotent; power unregulated is unproductive. Although in some ways the two are equal, in most of these cases the authority is in some sense superior because, in the opinion of those constrained by the system, authority must regulate power, but the reverse cannot be true. This hierarchy is not universal, though; and indeed Diana Wynne Jones’s imagined kingdoms reverse it. The analysis considers the logic of such an arrangement, and suggests that it has its motivation in the British relationship between the monarch and the lords spiritual.

Margaret Williamson Huber received her D Phil in social anthropology from Oxford University. She teaches anthropology at the University of Mary Washington, where she founded the anthropology program in 1974. Her areas of specialisation include native North America, peoples of the South Pacific, American popular culture, gender, and symbolic systems. Her book Powhatan Lords of Life and Death was published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2003.

Martha Hixon: Power Plays: Paradigms of Power in Three Jones Novels
As Charles Butler has noted, Diana Wynne Jones’s work “has always been characterized by an interest in power and its abuse” (Four British Fantasists 267). This paper will examine some of the power paradigms evident in The Pinhoe Egg (2006), The Merlin Conspiracy (2003), and The Game (2007).
In *The Pinhoe Egg*, the use and abuse of power in terms of personal relationships occurs throughout: for example, the emotional as well as magical manipulation of others by Gammer Pinhoe, and Joe’s control over adult expectations through his sulky nature. Established hierarchical authority structures are both challenged and reified in the novel, as for example, the local witch tribes’ antipathy to “The Big Man” (Chrestomanci), as well as the idea of tribal authority that the various Gammers and Gaffers have and misuse. There is also the misuse of physical boundaries of magical power, as for example, the hexed fence erected by the witches that imprisons the faery world.

These same issues underlie the earlier *Merlin Conspiracy*: Grundo exerts power over Roddy by emotional (and magical) manipulation, as do The Izzies over others, and physical boundaries of magical power are erected, violated, and reconstituted throughout this novel. Like *The Pinhoe Egg*, *The Merlin Conspiracy* examines the power of governmental authority structures and the potential for disaster that abuse of that power can bring.

In *The Game*, Jones plays with a different sort of power structure, that of a structured game ostensibly “for children,” which those same children eventually use to destroy the corrupted adult power over their world.

10.30-11.00am, D Block Foyer

*Refreshments*

11.00-12.30am, Room 3D3

**Gili Bar-Hillel: Of Moving Castles and Flying Houses**

L. Frank Baum and Diana Wynne Jones are both pioneers, each in their own way and in their respective times, in the field of children’s fantasy literature. In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), Baum set out to reinvent the fairytale for the modern American child. He ended up creating one of the earliest examples of a children’s novel following the “there and back again” formula: a regular, mortal child with no special powers is whisked away to a magical alternative existence, and there encounters fantastic adventures and joins the ranks of the good in a fight against evil, before returning to her non-magical home. Over the decades dozens of children’s classics have followed a similar formula: from *Peter and Wendy* (1911), *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) and *The Neverending Story* (1979) through to *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (1997).

One of the most innovative of contemporary children’s fantasy authors, Diana Wynne Jones seems also to be preoccupied with reinventing the fairytale in the opening passages of her novel *Howl’s Moving Castle* (1986), set in a land where the tropes and conventions of fairytales are tedious facts of life. In fact the novel reinvents not the fairytale, but the “there and back again” tradition of 20th century children’s literature itself, by the simple act of reversing many of the conventions of this newer form of literature. Instead of a young child, the protagonist is an old lady; rather than travel from our world to a world of magic, the protagonist takes an opposite route; and so on. Throughout the novel we are treated to fleeting images that seem to wink and hint to *The Wizard of Oz*: a wicked witch called “The Witch of the Waste”, an animated scarecrow, a humbug wizard and more. It is as though Jones is consciously rearranging the fragmented story elements of *The Wizard of Oz* to create a new model of children’s literature.

My proposed paper will demonstrate the unique intertextual technique deployed by Jones, in effect the literary equivalent of trencadis: creating a new work of art from the shards and fragments of old works. The paper will also argue that both Baum and Jones, each in his or her own way, have introduced significant innovations to the children’s fantasy literature tradition.
Andy Sawyer: The Howl/Sophie “trilogy” and the Need for Knowledge

There is enough complexity in House of Many Ways to make it, in the words of one character, “a labyrinth of many ways”. The three “Howl/Sophie” books, in many ways not a conventional “trilogy”, separately and collectively link together through parallels of setting, spatial links, and the connection of Fairytales themes with character so that actions determine consequences, role determines fate, location determines action and nothing is what it seems except, of course, when it is. Howl’s Moving Castle, set in a world where “seven-league boots and cloaks of invisibility really exist”, suggests how it is possible to overcome being the eldest of three, and therefore predestined NOT to achieve. The “exotic” setting of Castle in the Air offers another version of fantasyland in which, like so many fairytale moralities, the story and the growth of the characters go hand in hand. In House of Many Ways Charmain’s fascination with the knowledge to be obtained from books and archive records is the key to her growth away from the well-meaning protection of her family. The paper will therefore explore the dynamic between Knowledge and Protection which is a feature of the book. Safety is a question of “knowing what is going on.

Junko Nishimura: House work: Order and Chaos

My paper will contend that the house setting and housework are important in Diana Wynne Jones’ books: Howl’s Moving Castle and its sequel House of Many Ways A brief comparison will show that they describe two aspects of housework.

Howl’s Moving Castle is about Sophie Hatter, the eldest of three daughters, who was forced to leave her house by the Witch of Waste and becomes a cleaner in the wizard Howl’s castle. While trying to purge her curse, Sophie learns about the castle’s secret and about herself. During this process, her housework abilities provide an excuse to stay in Howl’s castle. It also brings the household a kind of order from the previous chaos.

In House of Many Ways, Charmain Baker, an only child, is useless at chores. Nevertheless this story mainly deals with housework because Charmain accepts the responsibility of managing her Great-great uncle’s house during his absence. Charmain helps with the ordering of documents at the Royal Palace. Concurrently, she learns to manage the chaos within the house. Knowledge of housework brings her some personal insight. From the viewpoint of housework, I will also explore the Mother-Daughter-relationship themes and their development in Jones works.

Junko Nishimura teaches Children’s Literature and English at Shirayuri College, Ferris College, Kanto Gakuin University and Tamagawa University in Japan; she is also a Guest Researcher at Shirayuri College. Her research interests include fantasy and picture books, and food culture in children’s literature. Though most of her papers are written in Japanese, she has contributed in English to Jack Zipes’ Oxford Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature (2006). As a translator, she has translated into Japanese Jones’ Howl’s Moving Castle and Castle in the Air in 1997; the former became the basis for the animated film directed by Hayao Miyazaki. She is now working as the overseer to Andrew Lang’s 12 fairy books.

11.00-12.30am, Room 3D36

Ying Yi Fong: A Study of Literary and Interpersonal Connections in Diana Wynne Jones’s Online Fandom Community Homeworld8

While there has been research done on Diana Wynne Jones’s works, there has not been any studies done on her fan activities. This paper is a contribution to that field, exploring her online fan community of Homeworld8. Fandoms have benefitted much from using the internet as their main mode of communication. Through looking at ways of using the virtual space as the mode of connection, we can better come to understand the nature and politics of the Homeworld8 fandom. This paper is an exploration of the relationship between fan, community, and text, in order to gain an understanding of how fans identify with and feel
like they belong in the Homeworld community. The text is taken from both the medium and the work, and reading these texts reveals how the structure of the fandom is shaped. Analyzing and interpreting the connections made of the work to the medium enable us to see the social meanings fans have created, the importance of the shared experience, and how interpersonal relationships are established. Exploration of the literary connections and identification of replicated literary structures within the fandom will demonstrate how they help to generate a sense of belonging within the Homeworld community.

**Jameela Lares: Discovery as Virtuous Action in the Fantasy of Diana Wynne Jones**

I am currently working on the extent to which the rhetorical duty of *movere* (Latin, “to move”) is missing in most critical paradigms of children’s fantasy literature, hamstringing discussion between *docere* (to instruct) and *delectare* (to delight). Because *movere* has as its end virtuous action, this duty is particularly appropriate for fantasy literature with its emphasis on moral choice. I am not yet sure how I can apply my discussion of *movere* to the work of Diana Wynne Jones, since her protagonists rarely have enough information to act until the crisis. But the process of discovering the truth is surely itself a virtuous action. I intend to explore *movere* in three different works by Diana Wynne Jones—*The Lives of Christopher Chant*, *A Tale of Time City*, and *Hexwood*—to see what a consideration of *movere* might tell us about Jones’s construction of fantasy.

**Shana Worthen: Stew in Context:**

This paper will explore how stew came to be endemic in modern fantasy literature. Diana Wynne Jones’ observation on the overuse of STEW in fantasy fiction established it as a hallmark of clichéd fantasy writing. It is one of the most cited entries in *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland*.

Stew’s presence in fantasy is indebted to long-established influences, such as its use in fairy tales and in popular culture stereotypes of medieval - and thus medievalesque - diets. Its use in *The Lord of the Rings*, where Tolkien describes its slow, careful cooking, further ensconced it as an element of field-cooking for Quest fantasy in particular. The changing cooking technologies of the twentieth century, particularly the innovation of the slow cooker, seems to have mentally freed authors to conceive of it as a more casual food that can be prepared with minimal attention. (I hypothesize that its growing use in the latter part of the twentieth century also reflects increasing distance from World War poverty diets.)

That stew’s use in fantasy-related works has grown over the course of more recent decades is typified by its appearance in the third edition - no earlier - of the Dungeons and Dragons Player Handbook. Its ubiquity in places such as Pern, Shannara, Valdemar (to name a few of the most obvious examples) was further exacerbated by the general nature of fictional food naming conventions in English, which err on the side of words which sound the most neutral, versatile, and fundamental in order to encompass the alien or foreign foods within less specific English ones. By briefly tracing the development of stew’s usage in fantasy literature and the dish’s wider history in the twentieth century, I intend to account for how it came to be “the staple FOOD in Fantasyland”.

12.30-1.30pm, Felixstowe Court

Lunch

1.30-2.30pm, Room 3D33

**Tina Rath: The Ghost and the Machine**

This paper considers the books of Diana Wynne Jones in general, examining *The Time of the Ghost*, *Eight Days of Luke*, the Howl books and the *Chrestomanci* series, and exploring the ways that Jones brings the Gothic in the modern world, making the familiar strange without
making the gothic tropes prosaic. Sometimes this can happen literally, as when the sorcerer Howl’s castle has an exit that leads to a modern street in Wales, or when the heroes of Valhalla are discovered playing the pinball machines in a shabby fairground, sometimes it is a conventional Gothic figure — the ghost — which is used to illuminate and solve the problems of a real life dysfunctional family.

Tina Rath’s PhD is from London University (Bedford and Royal Holloway College) and her thesis, *The Vampire in Popular Fiction*, examined YA and children’s’ fantasy fiction along with the adult. She has lectured at various venues, including Salford University, and run or appeared on panels at various Fantasy Conventions.

**Naomi Wood: The Humorous Numinous in Contemporary Fantasy: Diana Wynne Jones and Jonathan Stroud**

One of the many jokes in *The Lives of Christopher Chant* (1988) is the Living Goddess Asheth’s love for the Millie books, an insipid series set in a mundane girls’ boarding school. Like many of Jones’ jokes, this one defamiliarizes the everyday by comically repositioning the focalizer to challenge fantasy’s tendency to mystification, showing that exoticism might work both ways. Popular fantasy (cf. *The Chronicles of Narnia, Harry Potter*) often depicts the struggle between Good and Evil melodramatically, depicting each side in stark shades of white and black—“color-coding” that Jones parodies in her wonderful satire *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland* (1996). Charles Butler, in *Four British Fantasists*, has noted that writers of the generation that came to consciousness during the Second World War and who live “in a largely post-Christian, though not necessarily secular, Britain” have some interest in identifying “universal principles such as those posited in the notion of the collective unconscious” that might “be brought into direct discourse with both ‘ordinary life’ and the more heterogeneous and fragmentary traditions characteristic of British attitudes towards the supernatural” (Butler 243). Some, such as Rowling, revert to the verities of religion, as it is embodied in the classic structure of quest-Romance. However, other contemporary fantasy writers, among them Jones and Stroud refuse the temptation to dramatize their conflicts in so simple a manner.

This paper studies novels by Jones and Stroud to consider the effects of their choice to depict the manichaean struggle between material and spiritual modes as not between good and evil, but between states of being. The strategy allows these authors to re-orient the definition of good and evil as not a matter of essence but rather one of ethics. Goodness means becoming aware of one’s own subject position and one’s responsibility to the other. Through manipulation of plot and narrative point of view (the third-person narrative of Nathaniel the human and the first-person one of Bartimaeus the djinn), Jonathan Stroud dialogically challenges simplistic and essentialist notions of good and evil; a key strategy is Bartimaeus’ satiric puncturing of magicians’ pious assertions about their right to power. Jones’s humor is less savage; she locates the numinous in the self and its orientation to the Other, as can be seen in *The Lives of Christopher Chant, Year of the Griffin, Dogsbody*, and others. Here I’m particularly interested in the phenomenon Farah Mendlesohn identifies as homo ex machina in such works as *The Homeward Bounders* (Mendlesohn 51); the responsibility mortals have to the gods. Sarah Fiona Winters has argued that Jones’ psychological realism challenges essentialist notions of good and evil (2002 79); I’d like to extend this notion by considering Jones’ genre-bending syncretism as itself a statement about ethical heterogeneity. Using humor, both writers deconstruct essentialist notions of goodness and evil, focusing instead on positionality, psychology, and responsibility. In so doing, they do not completely relativize ethics; however, they do demonstrate that ethics must combine responsibility to the Other with responsibility to the self.

Naomi Wood is an associate professor of English at Kansas State University, U.S., where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in children’s and young adult literature, Victorian literature, and fantasy. She helped to start an M.A. with an emphasis in children’s literature at Kansas State. She has published articles on fantasy writers such as Charles
Kingsley, George MacDonald, Philip Pullman, and C.S. Lewis. She is writing a book about the theological and cultural work of children’s mythopoeic fantasy.

1.30-2.30pm, Room 3D36

Helgard Fischer: A Theory of Magic: The Year of the Griffin

In Diana Wynne Jones’ Year of the Griffin (2001), the theory behind magic withstands our world’s frequently undertaken discrimination between scientific theories of the natural sciences and the humanities though at first it seems to perpetuate it. According to philosopher of science Mittelstraß (2008), the humanities defy the ordering of general scientific systematics. Superficially, the natural sciences want the observer to “look at what we know” while the humanities place ideas above data. Magic at the university resembles a caricature of natural science drawn up by a humanities scholar. Wizard Wermacht, antihero and that caricature’s embodiment, tells the students to “describe” (YotG, 78). Similarly, the university’s head Corkoran thinks that opinions won’t do and that wizards must stick to “known facts” and “proven procedures” (146). Both are unable to work out problems that do not come with a prescribed solution. On the other hand, Wizard Derk, critic of the university’s approach, advises the students to “examine everything [they’re] taught”, to “[turn it upside down and sideways” (48), to have new ideas. Is the theory of magic wholly rooted in creative research, wholly positioned within our world’s humanities? Not so. Derk himself is actually a ‘natural scientist’, a geneticist working on agricultural breeding programmes. So is his wife, who specializes in miniature universes. Magic in its ideal form, as exemplified by Derk and others, thus combines the practical physical realm with ideas to solve problems in entirely new ways. In fact, his approach to magic and magical science succeeds because of its synthesis between natural science, ideas and artistic creativity.

Helgard Fischer is a microbiologist at the University of Konstanz, Germany, where she is currently getting her PhD. During her studies of International Relations at the Finnish University of Lapland she discovered her interest in scientific theories and the philosophy of science and knowledge. English literature has been her grande passion for more than ten years. She has been a reader of Diana Wynne Jones since she found, at the age of six, a copy of Charmed Life at the local library and had to severely restrain herself from taking it out time after time.

Deborah Gascoyne: “Why don’t you be a tiger?” The performative, transformative and creative power of the word in the universes of Diana Wynne Jones.

It is one of the tropes of fairy tale and fantasy that one must be extraordinarily careful when dealing with fairy folk, magical creatures and spells. The slippery nature of language, the difficulty of finding a literal and stable meaning for a word or phrase, and the ease of misinterpretation make it likely that someone with power can wriggle out of a promise or cause a spell to backfire.

Diana Wynne Jones is, of course, familiar with all the tropes of fantasy, and is known for her ability both to pay homage to and to deconstruct them in her work. In one of her stories, a character is an author who discovers her own characters have taken on independent life. Elsewhere, characters read spells that rewrite themselves, disappear, or work in ways the spell-casters did not intend. It can be demonstrated that the most effective power, in Diana Wynne Jones’ universes, comes from direct will, expressed through the spoken word; after all, Sophie Hatter is able to speak life into things, and that power is able to help her combat the spell sent by the Witch of the Wastes, cunningly hidden in a Donne poem. An exploration of these and other examples will conclude that Diana Wynne Jones’ work reflects postmodern ontological and metafictional preoccupations with interpretation, misinterpretation and the comparative value of the written and spoken word.

2.30-3.30am, D Block Foyer
Jenny Pausacker: The Storyteller: Counsel in Diana Wynne Jones

‘Every real story’, Walter Benjamin writes, ‘contains, openly or covertly, something useful... In every case the storyteller is a man who has counsel for his readers... Counsel woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom. The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out’ (Illuminations, p.86).

Diana Wynne Jones has already been recognized as an author to whom the term ‘wisdom’ can be applied, in the subtitle of the first collection of scholarly essays devoted to her work (An Exciting and Exacting Wisdom). In this paper, however, I examine Jones’s work in the light of the related term counsel. I compare her work to that of other contemporary children’s writers, including the treatment of genocide in The Lives of Christopher Chant as compared to Patrick Ness’s The Knife of Never Letting Go. Through such comparisons, I define ‘counsel’ in contrast to advice (generalizable maxims, didacticism), on the one hand, and themes (broad world-views or statements about the nature of things), on the other. I argue that Jones’ novels stand out in part because, as Butler writes in Four British Fantasists, they ‘resist the kind of universalist claims that would allow them to be co-opted unproblematically into the service of any orthodoxy’ (144-45): yet, without making universal claims about morality or the nature of the human condition, they are able to offer their readers the kind of counsel which Benjamin calls wisdom.

Kyra Jucovy: Little Sister is Watching You: Archer’s Goon and 1984

Diana Wynne Jones has explicitly stated that it is not a coincidence that Archer’s Goon was published in 1984. The most obvious marker of the relationship between her novel and George Orwell’s classic, 1984, is the appearance of the words “Archer is watching you” on the Sykes’ family television screen, paralleling Orwell’s famous “Big Brother is watching you,” as Archer is the oldest brother in the family that farms Howard Sykes’ town. However, the connections between the novels go deeper than this: both books concern government, family, and the relationship between the two. Orwell’s book describes a society in which power - the control of people - is imposed by the state from above, and the family is merely a site of futile resistance, an idealized form that has been successfully perverted by the state. This paper will argue that in Jones’s novel, power, resistance to power, and the family are more complicated in their natures and interrelationships, such that no one power structure can be totalized as it is in 1984.

Kyra Jucovy is an independent scholar with an MA in English literature from Yale University. She currently works in the publishing industry but hopes to find employment as an English teacher. She has previously volunteered as a teacher in Changsha, China, where she convinced at least one Chinese student to read Howl’s Moving Castle.

Teya Rosenberg: Perceiving the Other: Genre, Focalization, and Prejudice in Power of Three

Although published in 1976, Power of Three’s focus on prejudice, conflict, and bloodshed continues to speak loudly to an era familiar with the term ethnic cleansing. While the generic upheavals and continuously shifting focalization of Power of Three serve to convey a variety of themes, this paper focuses on what Charles Butler identifies as an obvious theme, the exploration of “racial prejudice” (Four British Fantasists 139).

The examination first places Power of Three in the context of discussions of genre, such as those of magical realism in adult literature (Chanady [1985], Wilson [1995], Faris [2004], Bowers [2004]) and of fantasy and children’s fantasy (Boyer and Zahorski [1977, 1982], Hume [1984], Attebery [1992], Clute and Grant [1997], Mendlesohn [2002, 2005]), considering how genre might encourage readers to focus on the political. Turning to the
ways narration and focalization work, this discussion does not challenge Rumbold’s assessment of Gair as the main focalizer; however, subtle shifts in focalization throughout the story emphasize the idea that construction of the other resulting in prejudice, conflict, and bloodshed develops from lack of knowledge. This point is hardly a startling revelation, but as with all of Jones’s work, the craft used to convey the message is well worth examining, particularly during our current moment of shifting political winds in which noting nuances might be regaining favour.

Teya Rosenberg is an associate professor of literature at Texas State University-San Marcos, where she teaches courses in children’s literature, magical realism and fantasy, and Canadian literature. She has published articles on magical realism and children’s literature, including discussions of the work of Elizabeth Goudge, E. Nesbit, and Diana Wynne Jones.

3.00-4.30pm, Room 3D36

René Fleischbein: The Power of Language: Metafiction in Fire and Hemlock

In Diana Wynne Jones’s young adult novel Fire and Hemlock (1985), Jones demonstrates the power of language through Polly, the central character, who not only develops her identity through reading, writing, and telling stories, but creates reality by means of the hero-narrative she and her friend Tom Lynn invent. Not only does the story within the story move the plot of Fire and Hemlock, but Jones’s metafiction also enables the reader, like Polly, to understand that language is a tool for creating voice and attaining agency and subjectivity. And like Polly, once the reader understands the power of language, she can create her own story, unencumbered by the limits set by her community or the broader society, and take on the roles that appeal to her. Metafiction is also a means of reader empowerment in other Jones books, such as The Time of the Ghost (1981), Deep Secret (1997), and Enna Hittims (2006), as well as books by other authors of young adult novels.

René Fleischbein is a third year Ph.D. student at The University of Southern Mississippi. Ms Fleischbein’s field of study includes British literature from 1660-1914 though her main focus is children’s and young adult literature. Ms Fleischbein’s MA thesis, written at California State University, Northridge, is on Diana Wynne Jones’s Fire and Hemlock. Ms Fleischbein received her AB in English at the University of California, Berkeley.

Gabriela Steinke: The Game and how it plays with other stories

Commentators on Diana Wynne Jones’s work all sooner or later remark on the importance of stories and the telling of stories in her writing. Texts like Fire and Hemlock which emphasises the need to understand story in order to be able to (re-) write story and The Spellcoats with its deconstruction of history as a changing and changeable narrative are oft-cited examples of the various ways Jones works with story and makes her readers work with story. The more recent novella The Game takes the preoccupation with story to a new level. The mythosphere, central to ‘the game’ itself is “made up of all the stories, theories and beliefs, legends, myths and hopes, that are generated here on Earth” (p.23); the characters operating in the world that contains the mythosphere turn out to be, without exception, characters of myth and story most of whom have either been exiled from or incarcerated in their own stories; notions of time and chronology are unusual, sometimes confusing, in short we could well be in one of DWJ’s parallel worlds. This paper looks at the way the author references fantastic stories by other authors in order to locate The Game firmly “here on Earth”, and what this does to the interplay of fantasy, reality and history in the text.

Gabriela Steinke is Senior Lecturer in English and European Literature at the University of Wolverhampton. She has written on German and Austrian children’s literature and is a relative newcomer to Diana Wynne Jones.

Maria Nikolajeva: Playing Games with the Reader, The Power of Intertexts in Diana Wynne Jones The Game
In “A Note about the Characters” at the end *The Game* (2007), Diana Wynne Jones explains her sources in some figures of ancient mythology. Yet this brief explanation merely touches upon the rich level of allusions and intertexts that address different categories of readers. Depending on encyclopaedic knowledge, literary competence and general level of sophistication, the text will be decoded differently. Some intertexts are explicit (Cinderella, Three Bears), some hinted at (The One Ring, a piece of cake “out of her cottage wall”), sometimes demanding deeper acquaintance with world mythology far beyond the Greek pantheon of gods. Further, there are second-degree intertexts that may refer to myths through other works of literature. The eclecticism of Jones’s “mythosphere” is characteristic of her oeuvre; yet one of the underlying ideas of the novel is that all myths are universal, expressed overtly in the discussion of the golden apples. While intertextuality is frequently regarded as enhancing the artistic qualities of a literary text, it is at the same time a means of manipulating readers toward specific interpretations. On a generic level, the author plays a variation on the archetypal orphan story with a happy reunion, as well as a classical tale of a child delivering the world from evil. Further, many aspects of this particular novel become clearer in the context of Jones’s other works. Games played by higher authorities, affecting fates of ordinary people, is a recurrent theme. In *The Game*, the activity is presented as an innocent children’s pastime, alongside hide-and-seek. However, the game also becomes an instrument of power subversion, leading to the destruction of the established order. This most profound palimpsest of the novel is thus a synergy of the vast spectrum of intertextual narratives about power and liberation.

5.00-6.00pm, 3D33

**Guest of Honour: Sharyn November**
(With a special message from Diana Wynne Jones)

6.00-7.00pm, Felixstowe Court

*Drinks Reception, sponsored by HarperCollins. (Cash bar available from 6.00-11.00pm.)*

7.00-8.30pm, Felixstowe Court

**Banquet**

8.30-10.00pm, Room 3D33

*Archer’s Goon (BBC, 1992): Episodes 4-6*
Jean Webb: States of being in Howl’s Moving Castle and The Time of the Ghost
This paper will discuss Diana Wynne Jones’ representation of differing states of being as imagined into the child experience in Howl’s Moving Castle and The Time of the Ghost. A distinguishing feature of Jones’ work is the ability to write such different experiences into the transformed being of the child. Old age is a period of being which is oppositional to that of the normal healthy child. Activity and physical ability becomes reduced as negative results of aging. Attitudes also change derived of experience and the evolving approach to society. There is a confidence and knowledge which the child does not have which is tempered by the reduction in ability. Sophie has a combined awareness of the state of childhood and also the old woman which both aid and impede her.

In contrast the protagonist in The Time of the Ghost is discovering her revised state of being as a ghost. She has lost the awareness of memory and knowledge of circumstance. Whereas Sophie can apply the combined states of age and youth to her situation, the ghost-child has to discover her identity and the events which led her to this condition.

The discussion will compare the representation in these texts and the implications for extending knowledge of states of being presented by Wynne Jones’ work.

Jenni Tyynelä: The Worlds of Chrestomanci and David Lewis’s Worlds of Modality
In my paper I compare the worlds of Chrestomanci with the possible worlds of modality, as the philosopher and logician David Lewis analyzes them. My focus is on discussing whether the ontology of the fictional system of worlds inside the Chrestomanci novels can be made sense out of in the context of Lewis’s realist and nominalist theory of the ontology of the possible worlds of modality (which has to do with our own actual world and the worlds that are seen as possible alternatives to it). As I examine the novels I come to the conclusion that they in fact do contain a strictly logically structured set of possible worlds, which bears striking resemblance to Lewis’s theories.

Jenni Tyynelä is a post-graduate student at the University of Tampere, Finland. Awarded a Master’s degree (in June, 2009) in Philosophy and English for theses on the philosophy of fictional worlds, and possible worlds theory applied to the novels of Diana Wynne Jones. Her main areas of interest & current research are: possible worlds theories of fiction (i.e. fictional worlds as possible worlds); referring and asserting in fiction; ‘internal’ and ‘external’ perspectives on fiction and fictional worlds; explaining emotional responses to fiction (i.e. “the paradox of caring”) especially in the context of possible worlds theories of fiction.

Caroline Webb, ‘False Pretences’ and the ‘Real Show’: Identity and Performance in Conrad’s Fate
Many of Diana Wynne Jones’s novels have emphasised the importance of role-playing—compelled or chosen—in working out the reality of one’s own identity. This element comes into focus especially in one of her most recent works, Conrad’s Fate (2005), which emphasises the continuing discontinuity many people feel between the roles they are required to perform in society generally, or in particular social situations, and what they take to be the reality of their underlying identity. Conrad’s Fate highlights this discontinuity and its implications through both analogy and example: the mansion of Stallery is in one sense unreal, not just because it is an unlikely probability doomed to dissolution, but because few of its inhabitants are, or think they are, who they appear to be. Stallery, it emerges, is throughout inhabited by actors performing parts with which they do not identify. But this unreality in itself draws attention to the issue of how social roles more generally relate to identity. Conrad’s continuing sense that he is working in Stallery under “false pretences” derives from his belief that he really belongs elsewhere; he nevertheless absorbs not only
the necessary training in his role of servant but also its values, casting into question what it means to be a servant and thereby what identification through performance of an occupation (“servant,” “aristocrat,” “actor”) actually means.

The multiple possible identities of Stallery become an image for the possible identities and choices available to the individual; that Stallery’s possible incarnations are almost all decayed and uninhabited represents the extent to which the “real show,” whether of Stallery or of personal identity, requires the continuing and intense individual and communal performances of which Conrad becomes aware. In this paper I shall examine the extent to which Jones meditates in *Conrad’s Fate* on the idea of identity as emerging from and in tension with the performance of required social roles, and shall demonstrate how this relates to earlier considerations in her fiction of the construction of individual identity.

10.30-11.00am, 3D36

*Refreshments*

11.00-12.30am, Room 3D33

David Rudd: Building Castles in the Air: (De)construction in *Howl’s Moving Castle*

*Howl’s Moving Castle*, both book and film, presciently address postmodern concerns around ‘glocalisation’, posthumanism, hybridity, and ecology, aside from more abiding issues (identity, gender, war, power and knowledge). Howl not only tackles these but makes us experience them by playing on expectations of form and narrative. We are repeatedly wrong-footed, ‘defamiliarised’. This paper shows the interrelation between the issues themselves, their narration and disruption.

Such destabilisations start with Jones’s shift from the stereotypically ‘special’, youngest third daughter, to the eldest – a shift consolidated by intensifying Sophie’s age, drawing her towards another possible stereotype, the wise woman, which – once again – Jones reworks, giving Sophie a sense of ‘double consciousness’ (Bakhtin). We also witness Sophie moving, not Cinderella-like away from the hearth, but towards it, empowering herself in the process. Miyazaki compounds these shifts, taking Jones’s central paradox of a mobile castle – associated with sovereignty and the defence of territory, and adding war to these connotations, made more powerful by the fantastic anachronisms.

In pointing to the fabrication of the castle’s fabric, the richly satisfying narrative of Howl is simultaneously deconstructed: its plausibility shown to be precarious and mutable, as is our everyday world, continually open to disruption by larger forces.


The “Drawing Room” fantasy is a term I have coined, inspired by scenes in *Charmed Life*, to describe a particular kind of English domestic fantasy that formed the core of my reading experience as a child. From Lewis Carroll through Nesbit, Lewis, Blyton, Pearce and Aiken: these fantasies, rooted in a peculiarly (old-fashioned) English domestic setting, were as foreign to me as a child of 1970s Australia as Christmas in winter, and yet as familiar as my grandmother’s plum pudding. They were stories that promised that Tolkien’s “new road or a secret gate” were indeed just round the corner.

Reading Diana Wynne Jones’s Chrestomanci novels in my late twenties restored the power of the English drawing room fantasy to draw me into the world of the novel as surely as if I were twelve years old again. They fully realise, by placing magic at the heart of a world recognisably ours while still “other”, the possibility of magic in the every day which characterised Jones’s fantasy predecessors.
This paper will apply narrative theory to consider the common features of the “drawing room fantasy”, and reader response theory to examine their “drawing in” effect on the young (and not so young) reader.

**Meredith MacArdle: Magical Places: a Slide Show Tour Around Some Speculative Sites**

In this illustrated talk, Meredith MacArdle takes us on a tour of the real places featured in, or inspirational for, the fiction of Diana Wynne Jones.

**12.30-1.30pm, Felixstowe Court**

*Lunch*

**1.30-2.30pm, 3D33**

**Jessica Yates: Loose ends in The Crown of Dalemark and some fanfictional solutions**

A critical look at the *Tough Guide*, noting some ambiguities and asking: “Who is the author of the Guide - is it Diana Wynne Jones or a Dalemark historian?”

**Farah Mendlesohn: Closing Remarks**

Farah Mendlesohn has organized and co-organized several academic conferences and been on the committee of an Easter convention. She is currently organizing the programme for the 2009 Worldcon. In 2005 she published *Diana Wynne Jones, Children’s Literature and the Fantastic Tradition*. She is a Reader at Middlesex University.