

Multiple Approaches to Children's Literature: An Introduction

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This selection of papers by early career researchers at the University of Cambridge, UK, reflects a variety of approaches to children's literature, but they all share some common features. Firstly, children's literature scholarship is viewed as a part of literary studies, even though educational dimensions of children's literature cannot be totally dismissed. The implication is that scholars are free to employ a wide range of literary theories adapting them to the specifics of texts written and marketed for a young audience. Secondly, "children's literature" is understood in a broad sense, encompassing texts from picturebooks to young adult novels. While this does not necessarily demand taking the age of potential readers into consideration, it does pose questions about what children's literature is and what it does, how it crosses boundaries either over time, as does *Alice in Wonderland*, or across cultures, as do crossover picturebooks by Jimmy Liao. Thirdly, Cambridge children's literature scholars focus on classic as well as contemporary texts, from *Alice in Wonderland* again to the bestselling dystopian young adult novel *The Hunger Games*. Finally, a distinct feature of Cambridge scholarship is its international focus, where British and American texts are studied side by side with Taiwanese and Brazilian. The intersection of these dimensions creates a vibrant, dynamic field in which emerging scholars are encouraged to find inspiration in each other's work, to be inclusive and open-minded, and to bring the best of their knowledge and abilities to promote the area of inquiry that we are all passionate about.

It is my hope that the selection offers the reader of *Forum for World Literature Studies* a glimpse of the scope and nature of our research and opens a dialogue for future collaboration.