โลกมหัศจรรย์ของคนตัวจิ๋วในวรรณกรรมแฟนตาซีสมัยใหม่[1]

The World of Little People in Modern Fantasy Literature

โอยฐ์สุมา ชุมพงศ์ (OothsumaChumphong)[2] *บันลือ ถิ่นพังงา (BanlueTinpangnga)*[3]

ศิริรัตน์ สินประจักษ์ผล (SiriratSinprajakphol)[4]

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to analyze modern fantasy literature dealing with tiny characters, fantasy world settings and themes in five modern fantasy books. The five books chosen for analysis were: Gulliver's Travels: A Voyage to Lilliput by Jonathan Swift, The Minpins by Roald Dahl, The Gammage Cup by Carol Kendall, The Borrowers by Mary Norton, and Horton Hears a Who by Theodor Seuss Geisel.

From the study, it was found that the authors created tiny fantasy characters to have credible human personalities as in the real world. For the fantasy world setting, the researcher found that the authors reasonably created these fantasy worlds which we cannot find in the real world. The worlds of little people were set in the imaginary worlds full of marvels. For the themes of the study, the research found five main interesting points. First, we learned that the writers of these modern fantasy books put a major emphasis on the existence of other worlds, especially the worlds of little people. Second, we learned that friendship was a major theme in the works of modern fantasy for children. Third, the writers of fantasy books indirectly use 'good versus evil' as a didactic theme for the reader. Fourth, most writer paid particular attention to children readers by emphasizing the fact that children want to learn and explore the world by themselves. Finally, these

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[2] Student, Master of Education in English , Thaksin University

[3] Assistant Professor, English Programs , Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thaksin University

[4] Lecturer, English Programs, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thaksin University

authors portray the ways of life, customs and beliefs in these works of modern fantasy literature. The readers, especially children, have an opportunity to learn about ways of life and customs. They can also use these themes to enhance experiences in their own lives.

Key Words

 Modern fantasy literature, Little People, Fantasy World Settings

บทคัดย่อ

　　　　วิทยานิพนธ์นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์วรรณกรรมแฟนตาซีสมัยใหม่โดยวิเคราะห์ตัว ละครคนตัวจิ๋ว ฉากในโลกจินตนาการ และแก่นเรื่องจากวรรณกรรมแฟนตาซีสมัยใหม่ จำนวนห้าเล่ม หนังสือทั้งห้าเล่มที่เลือกวิเคราะห์ได้แก่ กัลป์ลิเวอร์สเทรเวล:อะโวยาร์ด ทู ลิลลิพุท โดยโจ นาธานสวิฟท์   เดอะมินพินโดยโรอัลดาลล์ เดอะกัมเมจคัพ โดยแครอลเคนดัลล์ เดอะบอโรเวอร์ส โดยแมรี่ นอร์ตัน และ ฮอร์ตัน เฮียร์สอะฮูโดยธีโอดอร์ซูสไกเซล

　　　　　ผลการวิจัยพบว่าผู้แต่งสร้างตัวละครแฟนตาซีคนตัวจิ๋วให้มีบุคลิกลักษณะเหมือนมนุษย์ ในโลกแห่งความจริงได้อย่างน่าเชื่อถือ สำหรับฉากในโลกจินตนาการผู้วิจัยพบว่าผู้แต่งสร้างโลกของ คนตัวจิ๋วซึ่งไม่มีอยู่จริงได้อย่างมีเหตุผลโลกของคนตัวจิ๋วถูกสร้างขึ้นในโลกจินตนาการซึ่งเต็มไปด้วย สิ่งมหัศจรรย์ต่าง ๆ ด้านแก่นเรื่องผู้วิจัยพบแก่นเรื่องสี่ประการดังนี้ประการแรกนักเขียนหนังสือแฟน ตาซีสมัยใหม่เน้นความสำคัญในการดำรงอยู่ของโลกอื่น ๆโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่ง โลกของคนตัวจิ๋ว ประการที่สองมิตรภาพเป็นแก่นเรื่องสำคัญในงานวรรณกรรมแฟนตาซีสมัยใหม่ ประการที่สาม นักเขียนหนังสือแฟนตาซีสมัยใหม่ใช้ความดีและความชั่วเป็นแก่นเรื่องในการสอนผู้อ่านทางอ้อม ประการที่สี่นักเขียนส่วนใหญ่ให้ความสนใจต่อผู้อ่านเยาวชนโดยเน้นว่าเยาวชนต้องการเรียนรู้และ สำรวจโลกด้วยตัวเอง ประการสุดท้ายนักเขียนเหล่านี้แสดงให้ผู้อ่าน โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งเยาวชนได้เห็น วิถีชีวิต ขนบธรรมเนียมและความเชื่อในงานวรรณกรรมแฟนตาซีสมัยใหม่และมีโอกาสที่จะเรียนรู้ และสามารถใช้แก่นเรื่องดังกล่าวในการเพิ่มพูนประสบการณ์ในชีวิต

คำสำคัญ

วรรณกรรมแฟนตาซีสมัยใหม่คนตัวจิ๋ว ฉากในโลกจินตนาการ

Introduction

Nowadays fantasy literature has become extremely popular. Many readers have been enjoying reading modern fantasy books. The popularity of modern fantasy is also tremendous with students demanding sequel after sequel from their favorite authors. Fantasy consists of imaginative stories that conjure up unrealistic happenings such as magic spells, flying witches, and invisible elves, and is a category of fiction. Traditional fantasy refers to stories that are very old and have been handed down orally over generations, usually without an identifiable author. Modern fantasy refers to stories that involve the fantastic but have been written in more recent times and are with identifiable authors. (Tunnell and Jacobs. 2008 :189)

As with traditional fantasy, modern fantasy is distinguished from other genres by story elements that violate the natural, physical laws of our known world--even akin to magic. Modern fantasy is the creation of stories that are highly imaginative story about characters, places, and events, yet these are believable. It has its roots in traditional fantasy regarding motifs, characters, stylistic elements, and themes. Many works of classic children's literatures are classified as modern fantasy. (Lyunch-Brown and Tomlinson. 1996 :120)

Fantasy allows children to live in an imaginary world where anything is possible. It cannot be successful, however, unless it is grounded in logic. Perhaps it is being pulled into a magical world that opens modern fantasy up to controversy. Usually, the controversy concerns a small facet of the story. Writers of fantasy are masters of literature and skillfully bring together scholarly elements of plot, character, setting and themes in their own unique way. (Georgiou.1969 : 242)

Some authors have enjoyed creating strange worlds and filling them with miniature people, as in The Hobbit, The Borrowers, The Minnipins and The Gammage Cup. Other popular

modern fantasy includes Charlotte's Web, Tuck Everlasting, Matilda and the recent and very popular Harry Potter books.

The selected five books portraying little people characters that will be studied in this research areThe Borrowers(1952)by Mary Norton,Horton Hears a Who (1954) by Theodor Seuss Geisel, Gulliver's Travels (1957)by Jonathan Swift, The Gammage Cup (1959) by Carol Kendall, and The Minpins (1991) by Roald Dahl. These five books are selected because they are works of modern fantasy literature consisting of little people who have a distinctly separate personality and society in a strange world. They also have their own cultures in an enchanting world of their own. Second, these books won awards and are remarkable works among imaginative books by popular and outstanding authors. Finally, the study of modern fantasy makes us understand the author's perspective through their literature. In the same way, it helps us to learn more about and better understand our children. As mentioned above, stories of little people delight children because they can identify with the indignities foisted upon little and powerless people and the big people in these stories are invariably outdone by the more ingenious little people.

The objectives of this thesis are to analyze little people characters focusing on their physical appearance and their personalities, to analyze the fantasy settings and themes that appeal to children in the five works of modern fantasy literature.

Methodology

The research methodology is described in terms of instrument and data analysis as follows:

1. Instrument

This research was a descriptive analysis that employs an analytical approach.The framework of this thesis is the analysis of little people characters, fantasy settings and themes that appeal to children appearing in five works of modern fantasy literature.

The books used in the analysis are Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift (from this book, the researcher focuses on only part one, "A Voyage to Lilliput"), Horton Hears a Who by Theodor Seuss Geisel, The Borrowers by Mary Norton, The Gammage Cup by Carol Kendall, and The Minpins by Roald Dahl.

2. Data Analysis:

The data was analyzed according to a technique of literature analysis. The analysis has been done in the following ways.

2.1 Character Analysis

The researcher analyzed the characters by dividing them into three types according to the classification of Buss and Karnowski (2000). The three types were as follow:

1. Round character refers to the main character in a fantasy who is usually a well- develope and complete character because the author designs characters that are believable.

2. Flat character refers to the supporting character who is not well-developed.

3. Fantastic character refers to a character who acts in ways contrary to natural laws. Modern fantasy literature is full of fantastic characters. They can be animals that talk and act like human beings, little people, or characters with extraordinary character traits.

For this research, the researcher analyzed only *little people* focusing on their physical appearance and their personalities. Characters who are not little people were not analyzed.

2.2 Setting

Fantasy setting refers to the imaginary world that an author creates in the fantasy world while asking the reader to pretend that it is real.

The researcher analyzed the settings according to the theory in review of literature. For this research, the research analyzed the setting focusing on the settings in the fantasy world in five works of modern fantasy literature. The settings in the real world were not analyzed.

2.3 Themes

Theme refers to the author's underlying meaning or main idea of a piece of literature that the author is trying to convey. These five works of modern fantasy literature are children's

literature so the themes should be appropriate to the reader, in this case children. In this study, the researcher analyzed themes that appeal to children in order to uncover the implicit meanings that the authors wanted to impress upon the reader.

In conclusion, the aforementioned methods were used to obtain data for an analysis of the little people characters, fantasy world settings, and themes appearing in five works of modern fantasy literature.

Conclusion and Discussion

Conclusions

As for little people characters, the researcher found that the authors created these little people as fantastic characters in a believable manner. They are well-developed and behave in believable ways. Little people from the five books are *round characters* because they have credible human personalities, both good and bad, as in the real world. For example, the good personalities are brave, friendly, cooperative and helpful. The bad personalities are fearful, rebellious and nonsense. Moreover these little people have special talents, for instance, Lilliputians are good constructors. The borrowers have the skill to borrow things from the human beings in the real world. Minpins can summon the birds for travelling in the Minpin forest. When readers, especially children, read these works of modern fantasy literature, they can identify with these little people. Furthermore, they can fondly remember these fantastic characters.

As for fantasy settings, the researcher found that the authors reasonably created these fantasy worlds, in opposition the real world. It is interesting that the worlds of the little people in these five books were set in imaginary worlds full of marvels, for instance, a home in the trees, a city on a speck of dust, a dwelling underneath the kitchen floors, a small country on island and a village in an isolated mountain range. These fantasy settings attract the reader to follow along and enjoy the fantastic settings that could not possibly exist in the real world.

As for the major themes of the study, the researcher found five points that appeal to children. First, we learned that the writers of these modern fantasy books put a major emphasis on the existence of other worlds, especially the worlds of little people. Second, we learned that friendship was a major theme in works of modern fantasy for children. Third, the writers of modern fantasy books indirectly use "good versus evil" as a didactic theme for the reader. Fourth, most writers paid particular attention to children readers by emphasizing the fact that children want to learn and explore the world by themselves. Finally, these authors portray ways of life, customs and beliefs in these works of modern fantasy literatures. The readers, especially children, have opportunity to learn about way of life and customs. They can also use themes in these works of modern fantasy literature to enhance experiences in their own lives.

Discussion

From the analysis of little people characters in these five works of modern fantasy literatures, it was found that the authors created little people with different personalities. These little people portray humans in actuality because they have human personalities and way of life similar to that of humans in the real world. The readers, especially children, will identify and fondly remember these fantasy characters.

In the five works of modern fantasy literature, the authors bring the readers into fantasy worlds in different unreal settings. The worlds of little people were set in a fantasy world setting and not in the real world. These fantasy settings were created to be believable with the intent of introducing readers to a magical world .The author created these fantasy settings believably. They use their imaginations and the nature of human beings and small animals make these settings look like places in the real world. In modern fantasy literature, suspension of disbelief is an important element. For these five works of modern fantasy, the authors can suspend the reader's disbelief because they create the settings that are integral to the story and as well as both believable good and bad characters that are round characters. These fantasy settings stimulate the readers' curious and keep them interested.

The Themes in these works of modern fantasy literature appeal to children because the authors convey truth to them by basing on high moral and ethical standards. When children read these works of modern fantasy literature, they can understand today's society more easily through the events they described that cannot happen in that real world. Moreover, they also clarify the world we live in and show an image of ourselves, both the good and the bad sides of humankind. Finally, the authors portray little people's ways of life, customs and beliefs so that the readers can learn and enjoy the fascinating worlds of the little people.

Recommendations

From this research, the researcher has come up with the following recommendations:

1. General Recommendations:

For the general readers, they can have a better understanding of modern fantasy literature. In addition, this research can be used as a guideline for teachers, librarians and parents in selecting quality modern fantasy books for children.

2. Recommendations for further study:

2.1 The study of "The World of Little People in Modern fantasy Literature" can be applied to another related thesis title such as "The World of Toys and Dolls in Modern Fantasy Books".

2.2 Future researchers may conduct a research focusing on the characters, settings, and elements of fantasy in order to analyze some pieces of comparative modern fantasy literature, such as The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter and Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame.

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