

OEOE 04: Understanding Science Fiction and Fantasy

Some people like to unite science fiction and fantasy under the umbrella of speculation, which is an activity built around curiosity and questions that begin around the phrase 'What if?' Others talk about these genres as ways of thinking about the here-and-now using future or imaginary worlds.

Some readers talk about the two genres as inherently two-for-one. You get the traditional kicks of story-telling, and then you get to build a world and imagine a context around the way details combine at the corner of your eye. Yet other readers believe in looking for the local and the political manifesting itself through these genres. Which means that somebody writing science fiction or fantasy in India is writing about things in India, and is probably doing tis very differently from somebody writing in the same genres in the United States or China or Japan.

Texts: Stories by Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Ursula Le Guin, Harry Harrison, William Gibson, Ken Li, essays by Mimi Mondal and Kingsley Amis.