Reading speculative fiction is more than an escapist past-time: when reading fantasy or science fiction one does not only encounter “strange new worlds, new life and new civilization” but one also learns a lot about (for example) our world, different cultures, ideas, mythologies, the human nature and thus ourselves. The power of speculative fiction should not be underestimated as it can change the way we see things. It also gives us pleasure.

Yet, we sometimes forget to read for pleasure and not just for a term paper or a final exam. **So let us talk books and drink tea without any academic pressure.** However, academic topics (such as queer, feminist or postcolonial issues) might find their way into our discussions as speculative fiction can incorporate numerous topics and enable minorities or (formerly) oppressed groups to (re)gain their voices.

We will meet once a month during the semester and talk about pre-selected books while drinking tea and eating cookies. Reading for pleasure can not only be rewarding for you personally, but also academically: “Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light” (Dumbledore). Let us reclaim our pleasure for reading which made us study literatures in the first place...

“Dragons are more dangerous, and a good deal commoner, than bears. Fantasy is nearer to poetry, to mysticism, and to insanity than naturalistic fiction is. It is a real wilderness, and those who go there should not feel safe.” (Ursula K. Le Guin)

There might be dragons, queer love, Indigenous heroes and feminist topics, so beware!

**In short:**

**What?** Create a speculative fiction reading group at the IAAK.

**When?** First meeting (to see if enough students are interested): Tuesday, April 9, 4pm, Room E (IAAK); and after that maybe once a month. **Group will only be formed if enough students attend the first meeting.**

**Who?** All students (BA or MA) that are interested! We will talk about the books in English, yet students from other fields of study are encouraged to join, too.

**Who² organises it?** Marthe-Siobhán Hecke is a PhD student at the IAAK and consumes unhealthy amounts of books (~200 books/year). She would love to introduce you to some old and new speculative fiction, such as fantasy, sci-fi, utopian or dystopian literature that do things differently. She would love to talk to you about books and reading for pleasure without any pressure. There will also be time to talk about other books that you have read in the past, e.g. an extra session to discuss ‘the classics’ such as HP or LOTR. She is looking forward to meeting you all! If you have questions, contact her: mshecke@uni-bonn.de