

Better and happier and freer than before:
agency and subversion of genre in Diana
Wynne Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle*,
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Creator [Eastwood, Janet Elizabeth Robbins](#)

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Description This thesis examines the ways in which Diana Wynne Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Castle in the Air*, and *House of Many Ways* challenge and subvert the genres of fairy tale, Arabian Nights romance, and Victorian sensibility, respectively, and the ways in which the protagonist of each tale defies the constraints imposed by family and her or his own internal narrative to gain self-knowledge and agency. Jones's protagonists, Sophie, Abdullah, and Charmain, are initially stifled by cultural and familial expectations and by their own internalization of these beliefs. It is not until they are forced into circumstances far different from those they are used to that Sophie, Abdullah, and Charmain begin to question their beliefs about their own potential and about the world around them. During their adventures, they apply pre-existing skills and gain new practical abilities and knowledge, developing a stronger sense of identity, a surer command of language, and the ability to perceive truth amid pretense. Sophie, Abdullah, and Charmain subvert their own expectations and genres to gain agency. Jones uses wordplay and humour throughout her protagonists' journeys, and visually represents magic, creativity, and freedom through the use of colour, particularly blue and multi-coloured objects, and through flowers and gardens.

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