

## **Is there something in the water? Miracle mutants, drought and domed cities in Australian post-disaster fiction.**

Australia has produced many post-disaster novels since the 1980s, our landscape and anxieties placing water scarcity at the top of a long list of environmental crises. My paper sits in the cracks where ecocriticism, disability studies, and post-disaster novels meet. I examine the miracle births and domed cities of Anthony Eaton's *Nightpeople* (2005), Isobelle Carmody's long running Obernewtyn chronicles (1986-2015), and *The Foretelling of Georgie Spider* by Ambelin Kwaymullina (2015).

Adolescent and child characters are presented as figures of hope in these texts, taking responsibility for the environmental decisions made by their parents. In considering these images of hope, responsibility, and child heroes, I also examine the miracle birth trope that often accompanies dystopian narrative. Post-disaster novels are a rich space for discussions of trauma, worldbuilding and change, and discussions of disability grow particularly dense in any narrative that focuses on scarcity. Sometimes that resource is water. Sometimes, it's children.

Disabled bodies, drowning in air not meant for them, are often held up as a metaphor of environmental decay in Eaton and Carmody's work, leaving them open to crip as well as ecocritical readings. What *sort* of child, I ask, can save the world?