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Politics In Fantasy Media Essays

Fantasy is often condemned as escapist, unsophisticated and superficial. This collection of new essays puts such easy dismissals to the test by examining the ways in which Fantasy narratives present diverse, politically relevant discourses—gender, race, religion or consumerism—and thereby serve as indicators of their real-world contexts.

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Fantasy is often condemned as escapist, unsophisticated and superficial. This collection of new essays puts such easy dismissals to the test by examining the ways in which Fantasy narratives present diverse, politically relevant discourses—gender, race, religion or consumerism—and thereby serve as indicators of their real-world contexts. Through their depiction of other worlds allegedly disconnected from our own, these texts are able to actualize political attitudes. Instead of categorizing Fantasy either as conservative or progressive, the essays suggest that its generic peculiarity allows the emergence of productive forms of oscillation between these extremes. Covered are J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings, George R.R. Martin’s A Song of Ice and Fire sequence, J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter novels, the vampire TV series True Blood, and the dystopian computer game Fallout 3.

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From Tolkien to Star Trek and from Game of Thrones to The Walking Dead, imaginary worlds in fantastic genres offer highly detailed political worlds beyond capitalism. This book examines the complex ways in which these popular storyworlds offer valuable conceptual tools for anti-capitalist participatory politics. A common misconception is that professors who use popular culture and fantasy in the classroom have abandoned the classics, yet in a variety of contexts—high school, college freshman composition, senior seminars, literature, computer science, philosophy and politics—fantasy materials can expand and enrich an established curriculum. The new essays in this book combine analyses of popular television shows including Buffy the Vampire Slayer; such...
films as The Matrix, The Dark Knight and Twilight; Watchmen and other graphic novels; and video games with explanations of how best to use them in the classroom. With experience-based anecdotes and suggestions for curricula, this collection provides a valuable pedagogy of pop culture.

This companion provides a definitive and cutting-edge guide to the study of imaginary and virtual worlds across a range of media, including literature, television, film, and games. From the Star Trek universe, Thomas More’s classic Utopia, and J. R. R. Tolkien’s Arda, to elaborate, user-created game worlds like Minecraft, contributors present interdisciplinary perspectives on authorship, world structure/design, and narrative. The Routledge Companion to Imaginary Worlds offers new approaches to imaginary worlds as an art form and cultural phenomenon, explorations of the technical and creative dimensions of world-building, and studies of specific worlds and worldbuilders.

Fantastic fiction is traditionally understood as Western genre literature such as fantasy, science fiction, and horror. Expanding on this understanding, these essays explore how the fantastic has been used in Western societies since the Middle Ages as a tool for organizing and materializing abstractions in order to make sense of the present social order. Disciplines represented here include literature studies, gender studies, biology, ethnology, archeology, history, religion, game studies, cultural sociology, and film studies. Individual essays cover topics such as the fantastic creatures of medieval chronicle, mummy medicine in eighteenth-century Sweden, how fears of disease filtered through the universal and adaptable vampire, the gender aspects of goddess worship in the secular West, ecocentrism in fantasy fiction, how videogames are dealing with the remediation of heritage, and more.

"These essays combine close analyses of popular television shows including Buffy the Vampire Slayer; such films as The Matrix, The Dark Knight and Twilight; Watchmen and other graphic novels; and video games; with explanations of how best to use these and similar works in the classroom" –Provided by publisher.

Beowulf's presence on the popular cultural radar has increased in the past two decades, coincident with cultural crisis and change. Why? By way of a fusion of cultural studies, adaptation theory, and monster theory, Beowulf's Popular Afterlife examines a wide range of Anglo-American retellings and appropriations found in literary texts, comic books, and film. The most remarkable feature of popular adaptations of the poem is that its monsters, frequently victims of organized militarism, male aggression, or social injustice, are provided with strong motives for their retaliatory brutality. Popular adaptations invert the heroic ideology of the poem, and monsters are not only created by powerful men but are projections of their own pathological behavior. At the same time there is no question that the monsters created by human malfeasance must be eradicated.

Is the world of George R. R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire and HBO's Game of Thrones really medieval? How accurately does it reflect the real Middle Ages? Historians have been addressing these questions since the book and television series exploded into a cultural phenomenon. For scholars of medieval and early modern women, they offer a unique vantage point from which to study the intersections of elite women and popular understandings of the premodern world. This volume is a wide-ranging study of those intersections. Focusing on female agency and the role of advice, it finds a wealth of continuities and contrasts between the many powerful female characters of Martin's fantasy world and the strategies that historical women used to exert influence. Reading characters such as Daenerys Targaryen, Cersei Lannister, and Brienne of Tarth with a creative, deeply scholarly eye, Queenship and the Women of Westeros makes cutting-edge developments in queenship studies accessible to everyday readers and fans.

One of the biggest attractions of George R.R. Martin's high fantasy series A Song of Ice and Fire, and by extension its HBO television adaptation, Game of Thrones, is its claim to historical realism. The author, the directors and producers of the adaptation, and indeed the fans of the books and show, all lay claim to Westeros, its setting, as representative of an authentic medieval world. But how true are these claims? Is it possible to faithfully represent a time so far removed from our own in time and culture? And what does an authentic medieval fantasy world look like? This book explores Martin's and HBO's approaches to and beliefs about the Middle Ages and how those beliefs fall into traditional medievalist and fantastic literary patterns. Examining both books and programme from a range of critical approaches - medievalism theory, gender theory, queer theory, postcolonial theory, and race theory - Dr Carroll analyzes the drive for historical realism affects the books' and show's treatment of men, women, people of colour, sexuality, and imperialism, as well as how the author and showrunners discuss these effects outside the texts themselves. SHILOH CARROLL teaches in the writing center at Tennessee State University.

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