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# The Impact Of Fantasy Literature In American Popular Culture

## Introduction

A great way to explore a popular culture is through fantasy literature because the nature of imagination 'the real world[footnoteRef:1]' that works around issues that are mostly limited to race. But, this does not mean that the imaginary world and the reality are not related. Those two concepts are just separated by a long rhetorical distance, because of some elements that would never correlate with real-world; elements such as: magic, dragons, fairies, demons, etc. That distance can be a true escape from the real world and it won't make you question every single thing, just like the other speculative genres such as Horror and Science Fiction. Fantasy provides us new ways to look at our own world, examining the mentalities and the assumptions. This genre is engaged to disputes around race, being inspired by Whiteness as a race and racial habit.[footnoteRef:2] [1: Young, Helen; "Race and Popular Fantasy Literature: Habits of Whiteness"; Routledge; 01.09.2015.] [2: Young, Helen; "Race and Popular Fantasy Literature: Habits of Whiteness"; Routledge; 01.09.2015.]

A lot of scholars were engaged to focus on this genre as text embodiment and its literary perspectives. Critics struggled to come up with a definition for Fantasy, trying to delimitate which texts are appropriate to be in or not. Fantasy continues to be one of the most influential genres and has the most useful way to approach most of the issues that are happening in the real world. A classic work like Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion* [footnoteRef:3] saw this imaginary genre as infant, wide, and unbenefiting of getting attention. [3: Jackson, Rosemary; „Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion”; Routledge; 07.03.2008]

The craving of the historians to follow its roots back in the medieval era suggested the continuous desire of Fantasy to represent the writing mode by its genealogy in the catalog. One of the problems that come when we're defining Fantasy is that Cultural Studies major is a big exception where the considerable works need artistic merit. The artistic value of a work is mostly in opposition to the market value.

The 21st-century Western culture is still profoundly saturated with the conviction that a work that has business achievement and is mainstreamed, can't be considered as good art. Characterizing Fantasy in a literary way, the term isn't really inconsistent with considering it a field of huge scale generation, yet the two frameworks of significant worth are consistently in strain and are difficult to accommodate.

Recent work in Science Fiction had detailed the ways in which the processes of creating a genre are made. Mark Bould and Sherryl Vint who discussed science fiction and talking about Rick Altman's work in the cinematographic industry, has stated that: „genres are never, as frequently perceived, objects which already exist in the world which are subsequently studied by genre critics, but fluid and tenuous constructions made by the interactions of various claims and practices by writers, producers, distributors, marketers, readers, fans, critics and other discursive agents.”[footnoteRef:4] Choosing whether a work is viewed as Fantasy by all these 'discursive agents' is, in commonsense terms, inconceivable, because of the unique views

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which may be held even inside those general gatherings. In this way, Fantasy has two key areas: the ways in which it is introduced to the open both by its author and publisher, and the way in which it is perused and collected by critics, fans, and general readers. This applies not only to literary works, but also to different media which have gotten progressively significant during the twenty-first century: computer games, film, TV series, and comic books. [4: Bould and Vint; "There Is No Such Thing as Science Fiction";48.]

With this exchange, this becomes a coherent way in which Fantasy as a genre can be fully comprehended: a cultural genre in popular fantasy that is established a larger set of procedures with fantastic conventions the behaviours of the authors, and the location of the imaginary world, without having politics or economy involved. As a complex network, genre surrounds more than just some creative works. It also requires the comprehension of genre formality.

This genre as a network, requires more than just creative work. It requires an understanding of the complexity of genre conventions, such as: settings, characters and events; which are mostly inspired from the European culture and history from the Middle Ages. In the Fantasy case, there are some stereotypes that are mostly based on race and social class. For example, most of the fantasy books that I've read has as protagonist the white middle-class guy. This genre is not made to delimitate the borders between races or social classes. It is created to give an insight of the ideas that are attached to race and popular culture of the twenty-first century.

It is worth considering the fact that the common habit of Fantasy is creating another white protagonist. In early life, Fantasy created these Whiteness habits, but in the twenty-first century those habits are tried to be broken. Those kinds of habits are shown in multiple forms like the shape of the bodies and some voices that need to be heard louder. But unfortunately, in Fantasy, the habits are dominated by White bodies and voices. Also, this history of domination can be changed by any character in the cultural network.

But, the explosion of the digital era and the rise of media adaptations, has shaped the Fantasy view of the twenty-first century by adding new dimensions to the old habits. As Helen Young said in her book, „ Fantasy habitually constructs the Self through Whiteness and Otherness through an array of racist stereotypes, particularly but not exclusively those associated with Blackness.”[footnoteRef:5] Fantasy is created to give structured worlds which gives us the nostalgia of imperialism. In Urban Fantasy, it was explored slavery, suburbs, small towns and imperial histories. Digital communication had a significant impact in the culture of Science-Fiction and Fantasy, which are twisted and inseparable on any scale that is outside the imaginary world. [5: Young, Helen; "Race and Popular Fantasy Literature: Habits of Whiteness"; Routledge; 01.09.2015]

The online struggles based mostly on individuality, identity and culture is a challenge and a change to the Fantasy's habits that were taken over by the Whiteness. The sigh of people of colour in the both worlds are the main key of changing the habits of gender, and the online spaces allows the support of it.

There are a lot of authors that created some of the most iconic Fantasy novels of the twenty-first century that gained a lot of popularity.

## **Game of Thrones by George R.R. Martin**

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The American author George R.R. Martin initially released the first book of his A Song of Ice and Fire<sup>[6]</sup> series, 'A Game of Thrones', in 1996. Four additional books followed in the following fifteen years. Motivated by evident notable occasions, for example, The War of the Rose<sup>[7]</sup>s in Tudor England, the arrangement was intensely adulated for its authenticity, assorted variety of characters, and portrayal of topics, for example, war, force, and religion. During the underlying discharge, A Game of Thrones positions neglected to try and hit lower smash hit rankings, a lot to the disappointment of its distributors and Martin. However, through information exchange and advancement by autonomous book shops, the book increased huge fame. This thusly prompted the accompanying books in the arrangement turned out to be nearly moment smash hits, heading up The New York Times<sup>[8]</sup> blockbuster list. [6: A series of 7 books written by George. R. R. Martin, published in the U.S. by Bantam Books, from 1996- present.] [7: A series of English Civil Wars between 22.05.1455- 16.06.1487.] [8: An American newspaper based in New York City and founded in 18.09.1852 by Henry Jarvis Raymond and George Jones.]

This rising popularity carried the arrangement to the consideration of American Television company HBO<sup>[9]</sup>. They previously propositioned adapting the books into a serialized TV program in 2007, with showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss. While many know the tale of the messed up unpublicized pilot scene and reevaluating process, the principal season circulated to TV crowds in April 2011, to both solid surveys and appraisals. It was quickly restored for a subsequent season covering the second book of the arrangement, A Clash of Kings, only two days after the debut scene, 'Winter is Coming<sup>[10]</sup>', at first disclosed. [9: Acronym for „Home Box Office”, is an American Premium Television Network founded on 08.11.1972 by Charles Dolan, owned by WarnerMedia Entertainment.] [10: Name of the first episode from the HBO tv series, ruled on 17.04.2011]

So for what reason is this specific TV show so mainstream? How could it be that this TV program wove its way into the cultural texture of contemporary media while others are scarcely a drop in the ocean?

The response is a large number of perspectives. The dirty authenticity of its storyworld, to its complex ethically uncertain characters and its eye-popping enhancements. Game of Thrones positions had the fortitude, to bring parts of narrating to TV in manners that had never been done, and made it the highest quality level. While other serialized TV shows have avoided any and all risks with unsurprising and standard plots, GoT<sup>[11]</sup> never kept down when subverting customary sort tropes. [11: The acronym for „Game of Thrones”]

Winning many honors and awards, and generating a huge being a fan including various VIP fans, the impact of this show is hard to overlook. As we get ready to launch season eight, we will appreciate the stunning turns, wonderful exhibitions, and dazzling visuals as we approach the start of the finish of this dream epic.

## Conclusion

Escaping one's issues by fleeing is typically not thought about as the most ideal approach to manage issues. As a general public, we fell that standing up and confronting our issues is the most ideal approach to conquer them. In the dream, the fundamental character for the most part embraces an excursion where they can build up the fearlessness and solidarity to face the

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issues they looked in their reality. For the crowd, in any case, idealism is viewed as a type of tacky diversion for the general population and holds almost no scholarly weight or significance. Idealism is utilized to escape from issues for some time however doesn't prompt anything noteworthy like social change. Idealism is planned for the mass culture, not for genuine investigation.

To take a gander at idealism as an objective for mass culture isn't right, be that as it may. Rather idealism ought to be seen as a vehicle or mechanism for the message the motion picture or book is attempting to accomplish. At the point when the crowd is snared and submerged in the story and they care profoundly for the characters they are bound to put stock in whatever social discourse the creator can work into the account. As an abstract pundit one ought not to avoid idealism yet grasp its control over the crowd to show them something savvy. Idealism is the best component of Fantasy and the class' most prominent resource.

### **Sources used in the paper:**

1. Young, Helen; "Race and Popular Fantasy Literature: Habits of Whiteness"; Routledge; 01.09.2015 (Epub Version)
2. Bould and Vint; "There Is No Such Thing as Science Fiction";48.
3. An article named Escape into the Fantasy World, from the Fantasy in Popular Culture blog, written by Christopher in 28.10.2010.  
(<http://fantasyelementsinpopularculture.blogspot.com> )
4. An article named GAME OF THRONES: From Fantasy Novels to Pop Culture Smash from the blog Geek Girl Authority, written by Maisie Williams in 14.04.2019. (<https://www.geekgirlauthority.com/game-of-thrones-from-fantasy-novels-to-pop-culture-smash/>)
5. An article named The Real Purpose of Fantasy, from The Guardian blog, published in 23.04.2007 by Beth Webb.