



Fictional Worlds: Traditions in Narrative and the Age of Visual Culture, Vols. I-IV (Storytelling on Screen)

L.A. Alexander

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“Create Your Own World!” is a motto of visionary artists. We all enjoy escaping into, and journeying within, fictional realms. Some aspire to create their own unique artistic worlds. *Fictional Worlds*, intended for all readers who love literature and film, and especially for writers, filmmakers, and videogame designers, points at new ways of navigating, exploring, and creating entrancing fictional universes. This book’s promise is to make its readers more confident fictional world travelers and compelling storytellers. A holistic and evolutionary study of narrative from ancient rituals, myths and fairytales to the current day, this book blends a creative and intellectual approach to writing. The themes of journey, the wonderworld, quest for knowledge, symbolic death-rebirth, conflict resolution, family, and community are at the core of this inquiry into the nature of narrative, its politics and poetics. Teaching nuts and bolts of writing fiction, this book connects the “cultural” dots in the trajectory of the dramatic arc, elucidating the power of storytelling. With Odysseus as a guide, *Fictional Worlds* is a journey through the landscape of narrative traditions, emerging practices and artistic debates. The four books of this volume explore key genres such as action-adventure, drama, mystery, and comedy.

“This brilliant book is far more than a screenwriting manual. Ranging across the globe and throughout history we have here a dazzling survey of the intellectual foundations and possibilities of the cinema. This is must-reading for anyone who is interested in how and, more importantly, why we tell stories on screen.” — David Desser, author of *Eros plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*; co-author of *American Jewish Filmmakers*

“A new theory of narrative, which I find both convincing and uplifting. Illuminating and useful anthropological theory of genres. Terrific choice of examples, as well as the analysis. ‘Dos and Don’ts: Creative Solutions for the Formulaic Plot’ will be immensely helpful to practitioners.... Among interesting ideas: the murder mystery—as tragedy in reverse! And the role of film noir... And ‘Ulysses as a Peter Pan for grownups’!! — I love it!” — Linda Hutcheon, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, author of *A Poetics of Postmodernism, The Politics of Postmodernism, and A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*

“An innovative approach to teaching screenwriting, based in original scholarship of real importance. The book’s ideas are of impressive originality and practicality, and expounded with exemplary clarity. Dr. Alexander does a splendid job making a case for the new and more productive understanding of genre. The book features an elegant commentary on the distinction between film as ritual and ceremony. There is much to recommend this fine volume, the writing is generally elegant. The chapter on mystery is so brilliant that it alone would make this book worthy of a semester’s study.” — R. Bruce Elder, filmmaker; author of *Harmony and Dissent: Film and Avant-Garde Art Movements, and DADA, Surrealism and the Cinematic Effect*

“There’s much I admire about *Fictional Worlds*, starting with the core project of bridging between narrative theory, anthropological perspectives on myth and ritual, and work in screen studies. I have never seen the books addressing Joseph Campbell’s ‘Hero’s Journey’ with relation to screenwriting in the exhaustive detail

and with the nuance that Alexander deploys here, and with such a rich array of examples. What I admire is Alexander's insistence on historical and cultural specificity, even while tracing connections in the kinds of stories that have emerged across times and cultures.” — Henry Jenkins, Professor, University of Southern California; author of *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*

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