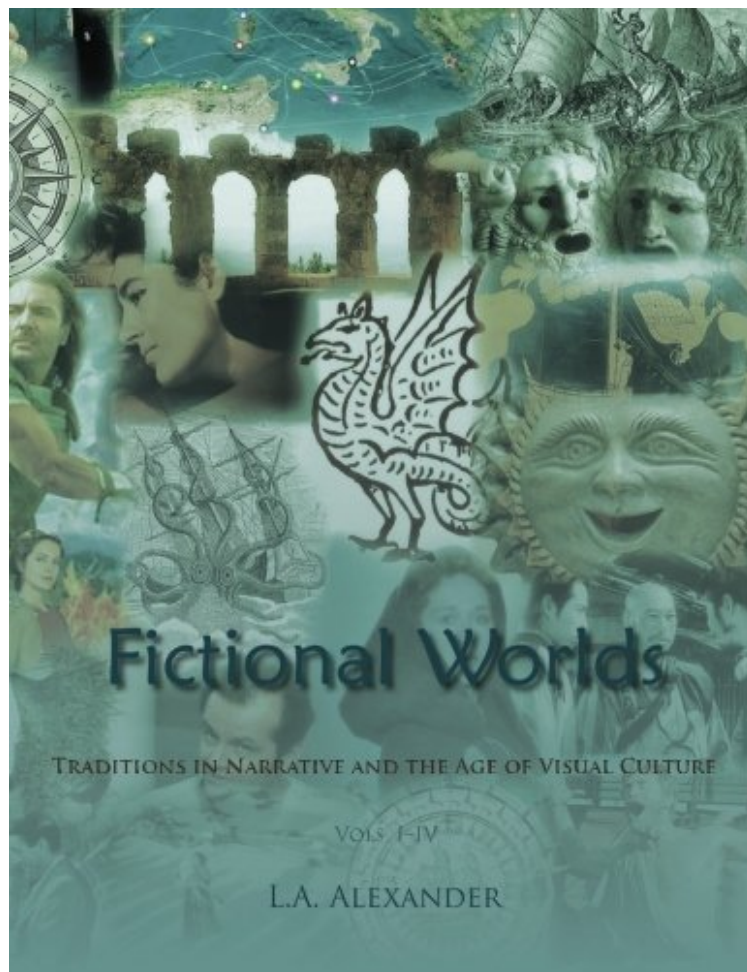


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Fictional Worlds: Traditions in Narrative and the Age of Visual Culture, Vols. I-IV (Storytelling on Screen)

L.A. Alexander

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L.A. Alexander : Fictional Worlds: Traditions in Narrative and the Age of Visual Culture, Vols. I-IV (Storytelling on Screen) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fictional Worlds: Traditions in Narrative and the Age of Visual Culture, Vols. I-IV (Storytelling on Screen):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A fantastic read! The author provides clear explanations and interesting ...By SamanthaA fantastic read! The author provides clear explanations and interesting ideas that open up our minds and expand our existing perceptions of the world. The book is filled with an abundant amount of various ideas that allow us to view the world around us in a different way, forgetting that this book is not a novel, even though

it reads like one. L.A Alexander references films and stories that can take one back as far as to early childhood, triggering all kinds of memories and associations that made me learn more about stories and films that I thought I completely knew from reading and watching countless times. Through her thoroughly explained concepts of family structures, the hero's journey, the importance of signals and pattern recognition for survival, among other interesting ideas, I was able to apply most of these concepts to every day life. Fictional work has the power to give our minds a little break from reality, we get to unwind and temporarily step away from the real world because we encounter fictional characters and magical, fictional beings and creatures. This book does all of this, except, it always keeps you on your toes and intact with real surroundings. It uses these films, stories, myths, and case studies as a means to dissect the background and purpose of these stories and how they relate to our present day and how they will eventually relate to our future. I learned so much from this book and I was able to do it calmly even with the abundance of information that might make one feel overwhelmed. On the contrary, though it may look like a textbook, it most definitely does not read like one. The words, ideas, and concepts flow one after another, making it an easy, page turning read. Although I enjoyed many, one of my favorite topics was the reliance on patterns, symbols, and signals as a means of surviving and progressing both on individual levels and as a society collectively. I believe people live through associations and the connections they make. We learn by seeing and hearing things, and make our decisions based on that. I think this is a powerful tool. Animals, for example, interact through pattern recognitions, and synchronization. It symbolizes a collective action and cooperation that is essential or continuance of life. Meerkats have a variety of whistles that they communicate to each other when there is a sign of threat. The main goal is survival and they work together in their community to ensure the continuation of life. Each whistle is different and can be distinguished from the other, and each whistle tells a story that helps the meerkat know the right course of action. Like the animals, humans also collaborate and synchronize. We are constantly making associations with things and our memories are triggered in a way that allows us to make certain choices. These ideas helped me understand many of the stories, films and myths that I thought I was really familiar with, but also the book introduced many that I have never heard of before, further expanding my knowledge. It was genuinely a pleasure reading this book, and I hope that others will have a chance to read it and make their own personal connections to it.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very Informative Book about Films and Storytelling Patterns By VTI was not a film student in college, but I really enjoyed reading this book. The author covers a vast array of topics, ranging from the origins of storytelling patterns (and how gender roles influenced them) to a thorough discussion about the hero's journey, which is probably the most prominent way that most stories are structured. She also makes connections across differing genres, which are very interesting to read about. For instance, one idea that I, as a voracious reader, appreciated was that science fiction evolved from myths and fairy tales by replacing "magic" with "science". Furthermore, as a person who has never liked horror movies, the author's discussion about how they don't fit a traditional story pattern (the hero doesn't learn anything!) was very interesting for me as well. Each point that is suggested is backed up with many examples of popular movies and books that illustrate how it can be applied. At the same time, chapters are followed by case studies, where particular movies or stories are analyzed in depth in order to further show how the ideas of the chapters can be applied. There are also useful charts that help summarize key ideas such as the hero's journey. Fictional Worlds is one of those rare textbooks that are accessible and useful to students who are researching a specific subject and to readers who want to explore a new topic during their free time. It provides readers with many ideas that offer new ways to look at the movies and books that are part of our culture. It's been three months since I read this book, and I am still applying the ideas that I've found in it to the books and movies that I watch. Overall, a very enjoyable and informative read.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An amazing find! I was looking for books that featured ...By chadAn amazing find! I was looking for books that featured the progression of the hero's journey through the medium of film and stumbled upon Fictional Worlds: Traditions in Narratives and the Age of Visual Culture, by L.A. Alexander. In the biography page in the back of the book, it states that Alexander has been teaching film and screenwriting at NYU and in the CUNY system for over ten years. It doesn't surprise me. By the first chapter, it is clear that she possesses an inherent knowledge of progressions in visual storytelling that range from popular movies of the last few years to the film noir classics of the forties and fifties. Every chapter is steeped with rich and essential tidbits of knowledge from scenes and juxtaposes them with the symbolic construction of the community and the traditions that the stories follow or enhance in its image. In the back of every chapter, there are case studies that further our understanding of the principles that she is relating. I am a film buff myself and consider my knowledge of films respectable and with saying that I found myself taken back by the sheer breadth of her text. Her understanding of movies and what they mean and are supposed to do are bar none. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn the framework of storytelling and how to relate them to any audience in progressions that make sense and have an impact. Also, to anyone who is needing assistance or inspiration in their visual storytelling careers.

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 Dents: 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 book 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*

.com "It is beautiful and most ambitious work. *Fictional Worlds* is especially suitable for screenwriting students, and this book's ideas on genre are very good as well. A formidable achievement." Professor Stephen Mamber, Chair, Cinema and Media Studies, University of California, Los Angeles Five stars! Well-engineered and easy to follow *Fictional Worlds* was created with moviemakers in mind. It would easily fit into most film curricula and would be useful resources for classic literature and fiction writing courses. This book's true value lies in its universal appeal: there is truly something of interest to anyone. Intriguingly, Alexander argues that our methods of storytelling are connected to the very heart of human society and culture. As our species navigates its way into a globally integrated era our stories will continue to grow and evolve with us.- Red City Literary This sober, thoughtful resource speaks to the writers of all backgrounds, while exploring symbolic storytelling, the hero's journey, the elements of a finely crafted tragedy, film noir as a breakout new genre, or the talent of comedy that creates amazing mirth from the foibles of ordinary people. "Drama, tragedy, and the dystopian fictional worlds allow us to examine possible paths that humankind should not take, creating a narrative encyclopedia of missteps, or an extended list of Commandments: the demonstration of the logical consequences of doing what 'Thou Shalt Not.'" - Midwest Book "Fictional Worlds" offered a wholly original approach to studies of narrative and is noteworthy as well for its cross-cultural, cross-historical, and interdisciplinary scope, along with its rich range of examples and its clear accessible style. - Ellen E. Berry, Professor of English and Critical and Cultural Studies, Director, Institute for the Study of Culture and Society, BGST, author of "Postcommunism and the Body Politic"; co-author of "Transcultural Experiments""Groundbreaking... Compelling... A page turner. Wonderfully accessible! One of the most impressive recent books, [it] imaginatively takes on anthropology, cultural history from ancient Greece to the present and storytelling theory from a global perspective... [This book] also succeeds in providing helpful practical suggestions for developing and improving visual narratives. *Film History: An Interdisciplinary Journal*" Alexander's exploration sheds decisive light on the foundations, characteristics, and possibilities of fictional worlds Particularly interesting [are] such topics as the Munchausen Effect... the Reverse Pathos technique, the Second Hero's Journey or the murder mystery as a tragedy in reverse. *Semiotica: Journal of International Association of Semiotic Studies*" Richly detailed, generous-spirited and inspiring book... filled with many intriguing ideas... Profoundly useful... A dynamic evolutionary approach to narrative from ancient rituals and myths to present. In a global digital age, storytelling offers a new

transcultural algebra ... In developing this striking thesis, Alexander draws on an astonishing range of authors (including Homer, Euripides, Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Joyce), directors (from Eisenstein, Vertov, Kurosawa, and Hitchcock to Lumet, Scorsese, Tarkovsky, Sokurov, and the Coen Brothers), world cinema and American television series. The Russian "The scope of this book is enormous. It has a lot to say about theoretical issues concerning fiction and various fictional genres especially films. Observations about video games make clear that they are hugely interesting philosophically. Kendall L. Walton, Professor of Philosophy; author of *Marvelous Images: On Values and the Arts*, and *In Other Shoes: Music, Metaphor, Empathy, Existence* About the Author L.A. Alexander, Ph.D., a recipient of academic fellowships and awards, has been teaching screenwriting, film, literature, folklore, media, and communication for fifteen years; including for the last ten years at New York University and City University of New York. The author's diverse experiences envelope traveling and studying narrative cultures in many countries; learning directing, and writing for the media; as well as conducting research in the fields of symbolic anthropology and international media. The print version of this book was commissioned by an academic publisher, peer-reviewed, and accepted for publication. Shortly thereafter, due to the unforeseen and rapidly changing circumstances in the publishing industry, the publisher and author decided to amicably part ways. The current print edition was followed by the digital edition as a four-part set of Kindle ebooks. The volume on the practices and theories of fictional worlds is intended for writers, both experienced and aspiring, and for scholars, educators, and students. This tome is designed to be easy to read and useful to creative artists by enhancing their expertise and skills. It is hoped to prove fruitful to scholars encouraging discussions on such fundamental categories as narrative and genre; as well as to educators as a textbook for advanced studies in the types of courses that explore literature and film, world cinema, narrative and genre, creative writing, media and society, and general humanities. In April 2014 one of the world's top academic websites, visited by people from many countries, henryjenkins.org, posted the discussion of the book "Fictional Worlds" and a six-part interview series with its author, titled by Henry Jenkins, the Provost's Professor at USC, "Why Do Humans Tell the Stories They Do": <http://henryjenkins.org/2014/04/why-humans-tell-the-stories-they-do> The author welcomes feedback from the readers. To learn more and contact the author, visit storytellingonscreen.com