While most of Miyazaki's references, like the Grimault one, are not exactly news to connoisseurs of the director, this is the first time they have been systematically discussed. Moreover, other than exposing the inner workings of Miyazaki's narrative creativity, Greenberg's research makes for a good historical contextualization of the director's career. In this respect, the book can easily become a teaching tool for courses in animation history. The plentiful mentions of animated works can provide the students with a good picture of how Miyazaki is situated in relation to other important authors and studios, while also giving them a chance to get curious about less famous works that might not have been introduced in class.

In all, *Hayao Miyazaki: Exploring the Early Work of Japan's Greatest Animator* is a solid and enjoyable critical description of the roots of Miyazaki's storytelling that will appeal to scholars, students and fans alike.

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## Author biography

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## Raz Greenberg
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Animation and the fantasy genre share a relationship that could be described as almost symbiotic. The essence of animation is widely perceived to be associated with the fantastic (as opposed to the realistic) – as evident, for example, by film scholar Siegfried Kracauer's (1973: 89–90) attack on Disney's expression of 'fantasy in realistic terms', referring to 'fantasy' as an all-encompassing trait of animation. For Kracauer, the use of cinematic art to make the fantastic look real was a dangerous crossing of lines. Animation, for Kracauer, stood in fantastic opposition not just to realistic cinema but to what he considered to be the essence of cinema as a whole. It was – along with the fantastic – an almost separate art form. This perception is echoed by animation scholars such as JP Telotte and Donald Crafton, who are quoted in *Fantasy/Animation: Connections between Media, Mediums and Genres* arguing that animation possesses an 'invariably fantastic aspect' and is a 'fantastic medium', respectively (p. 6).

And yet, as editors Christopher Holliday and Alexander Sergeant note in the book's introduction, animation and the fantasy genre also tend to be categorically separated, for example, in the American Film Institute's decision to publish two different 'Best of' lists for animated films and fantasy films. As the editors point out, the AFI's list of fantasy films includes titles such as *King Kong* (Merian C Cooper, 1933) and *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (Peter Jackson, 2001) that rely heavily on animation to visualize their fantastic elements. So, can we argue that animation is also essentially fantastic? Holliday and Sergeant provide a wealth of examples to support a positive answer to this question, but they practise caution when defining the goals of the book: the slash that separates 'Fantasy' and 'Animation' in the title is meant to represent 'a fluid channel through which fantasy and animation are permitted to intersect, collide and intermingle' (p. 13). However, the eclectic yet consistent collection of articles in the book does an excellent job of demonstrating how animation and fantasy are, in essence, inseparable, mostly through the analysis of different works that gained much attention from critics and the audience but have been the subject of little animation-related research.

*Fantasy/Animation* contains three sections: 'Ontology and Spectatorship', 'Authors and Nations' and 'Culture and Industry'. The first section could have alternatively been titled 'Theory', as most of the articles in it, even when discussing specific case studies, take a broad approach towards the relationship between fantasy and animation. Setting the tone for the rest of the section's deep explorations of different themes in animated fantasy, the opening article is an excellent analysis by Paul Wells about the link between the literary mechanisms in Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and cinematic forms of expression such as slow-motion and metamorphosis. Wells is followed by: Barnaby Dicker, who examines Pierre Mac Orlan's concept of the 'social fantastic' and attempts to decipher the somewhat elusive term in the context of Disney animation; two separate articles by Meike Uhrig and Lilly Husbands that discuss different strategies of evoking empathy shared by the fantasy genre and animation; and Ben Tyrer's analysis of how animation creates a balance between the fantastic and the realistic in the television series *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019). With the exception of Tyrer's article, all the articles in the book's first section suffer somewhat from a thin discussion of specific case studies, but they do lay new, solid theoretical foundations for further discussion and research of animation in the media – and these foundations demonstrate the strong connection between animation and the fantasy genre.

The second section of the book, 'Authors and Nations', places a greater emphasis on the use of case studies. The three opening articles here focus significantly on texts that, while relatively widely known, have not been sufficiently examined in academic research (in English, at least). Caroline Ruddell discusses Lotte Reiniger's fairy-tale adaptations in the context of Weimar-era politics; Francis Agnoli analyses national elements in the French–German production *Le Roman the Renard* (Ladislas Starevich, 1937); and Sergeant analyses Ralph Bakshi's films *Wizards* (1977) and *Lord of the Rings* (1978) as counter-culture texts. These three articles provide much-needed insight into important works that have largely remained outside the scope of English animation studies so far. Two essays that break slightly with this thread are Susan Napier's analysis of different modes of fantasy in the films of Studio Ghibli and Carolyn Rickards' examination of the meeting between the fantastic and the realistic in the animated segments of the British drama *Electricity* (Bryn Higgins, 2014). Studio Ghibli films, unlike the other case studies examined in the section, has been the subject of many previous studies, although Napier certainly manages to find a fresh perspective in examining the studio's films as examples of Japanese fantasy. Rickards' article focuses on a more contemporary film and arguably would have been a better fit for the following section.

   The last section, 'Culture and Industry', is mostly devoted to the examination of animated texts from the current century. The three strongest articles in this section complement each other: Sam Summers on Dreamworks Animation's *How to Train Your Dragon* (Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders, 2010) and its mix of high fantasy with the studio's trademark reliance on modern pop culture; Samantha Langsdale and Sarah Mayers on feminism in the fantasy of Disney's *Tangled*; and Holliday on how the merger between Disney and Pixar led to mutual influence between the two studios – pushing the former studio to infuse more contemporary elements into its fantasy productions, while encouraging the latter studio to experiment with fairytale fantasy. Taken together, all three articles provide a fascinating picture of the current creative state of Hollywood animation and the dominance of CGI within it. The other two articles by Peter Krämer and Martin Harker explore the use of CGI within live-action productions in the fantasy genre (James Cameron's 2009 film *Avatar* and Peter Jackson's 2012–2014 *Hobbit* trilogy, respectively), and while each article presents a thoughtful analysis, neither quite comes together the same way the other three articles in the section do – perhaps because, unlike Hollywood's current environment of animated features, its live-action production of popular fantasy cinema is harder to categorize.

   Bringing together contributions from both animation and general cinema scholars, *Fantasy/Animation* opens the door for future research on two fronts: the connection between the fantasy genre and animation, as well as the contribution of animation to the development of the fantasy genre on cinema and television. With its presentation of new theoretical foundations and analysis of key works in the genre, I suspect the book will become required reading for many future animation scholars.

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## Author biography

Raz Greenberg received his PhD from the Hebrew University in 2014. His main research interests are the definition of animation across the media, animation history, Japanese animation, and Israeli and Jewish animation and comics. He teaches a class on Japanese animation at Tel Aviv University and is the author of the book *Hayao Miyazaki: Exploring the Early Work of Japan's Greatest Animator*, published by Bloomsbury Academic in 2018.

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