



From Homer to Harry Potter: A Handbook on Myth and Fantasy

By Matthew Dickerson, David O'Hara

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From Homer to Harry Potter provides the historical background readers need to understand this timeless genre. It explores the influence of biblical narrative, Greek mythology, and Arthurian legend on modern fantasy and reveals how the fantastic offers profound insights into truth. The authors draw from a Christian viewpoint informed by C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien to assess modern authors such as Philip Pullman, Walter Wangerin, and J. K. Rowling.

This accessible book guides undergraduate students, pastors, and lay readers to a more astute and rewarding reading of all fantasy literature.

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Editorial Review

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In their informative, highly entertaining examination of the literature of faerie throughout the centuries, Dickerson and O'Hara insist that if literature works at all, it works as story. First defining *myth* and *fairy* story and discriminating their differences and similarities, they proceed to describe the work of such seminal nineteenth-century romantics as the Brothers Grimm, Andrew Lang, Hans Christian Andersen, and George MacDonald; explore how the Bible functions as myth; discuss Homeric myth and "epic" fantasy; and cast a jaundiced eye at *Beowulf*, the Arthurian legends, and the Norse sagas. They even scrutinize some modern work, including Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea Trilogy, Philip Pullman's His Dark Materials, Walter Wangerin Jr.'s *Book of the Dun Cow*, and, of course, Harry Potter. The book is especially intriguing for the links it makes, for example, discussing the effect of *The Odyssey* on *The Hobbit*, and the plot devices borrowed from *Beowulf* in *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*. Dickerson and O'Hara prove reliable guides as they amply confirm that fairy tales aren't just for the young. *June Sawyers*

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About the Author

Matthew Dickerson (Ph.D., Cornell University) is a computer science professor at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, and author of *Following Gandalf: Epic Battles and Moral Victory in The Lord of the Rings*, *The Finnsburg Encounter*, and *Hammers and Nails*. David O'Hara (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University) is assistant professor of philosophy and instructor in classical Greek at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He is co-editor of the forthcoming *Religious Writings of Charles S. Peirce*.

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