

Edited by Susan L. Austin

# Arthurian Legend in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries

SERIES IN CINEMA AND CULTURE

*This is a wide-ranging overview of numerous transformations of the King Arthur Romance as it grew out of medieval stories, most famously brought together in Mallory's "Mort de Arthur", into contemporary expressions ranging from fantasies to comic books, science fiction films, and television series. This makes it an excellent reference for those wanting intertextual comparisons and an exploration of how a story that was originally used by the Catholic Church to attempt to reform real-life knights in western Europe, by providing an image of these rough warriors more in line with church policies, gets revised to express contemporary, often non-Christian views.*

*It has a clear feminist voice, consistently highlighting underlying masculine assumptions built into the story. Of course, the Catholic Church held such assumptions, so it is not surprising to find them in the main Romances they embraced (the etymology of romance literally means "little stories out of Rome meant to spread the word of Christianity"). [...] I applaud books such as this study for helping all of us become more sensitive to outdated views.*

**Dr. Harry Eiss**  
Eastern Michigan University

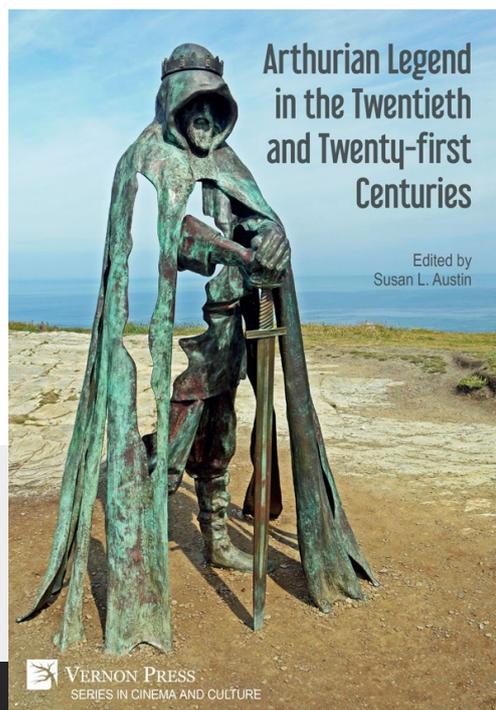
## Summary

The King Arthur we imagine did not exist in history. He is the result of stories told and retold, changed and added to by storytellers for centuries, each making the story reflect the storyteller's time and values. The chapters in this book look at movies, manga, comic books, a television show, and traditional books released since 1960 to explore some of the ways King Arthur has been reimagined in the past 60 years. Interpreting Avalon High and The Kind Who Would Be King, Camelot 3000 and King Arthur vs. Dracula, Fate/Zero, John Steinbeck's The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights, the influence of Arthurian legend on Harry Potter, Terry Gilliam's The Fisher King, John Boorman's Excalibur, Jerry Zucker's First Knight, Antoine Fuqua's King Arthur, Guy Ritchie's King Arthur: The

Legend of the Sword, Matthew Vaughn's Kingsman: The Secret Service, Iris Murdoch's The Time of the Angels, and the BBC series Merlin, the authors find that while we are still interested in the idea of King Arthur, we may also want his story to be more racially and gender inclusive, less elitist, and in some cases, more secular.

## About the editor

**Susan Austin** has worked at Landmark College, Vermont, for over a decade. There, she pursues her research interests, which include film adaptations of literature and modern and contemporary fiction. She teaches a course that uses Arthurian and related materials as sources for analysis and synthesis essays, and then sends students off to research and write about related topics in literature, history, archaeology, science, and popular culture. She holds an MA in English Literature from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Associate Professor Austin has presented several papers at the Northeastern Modern Language Association Conference in the last decade and she has chaired five sessions, one of which is the basis for this volume.



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