

**Two Hours**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER**

**PROJECTING FANTASY**

**21 January 2008**

**14:00 – 16:00**

**Answer TWO questions.**

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You must not, in any of your answers, substantially repeat material used to answer another question or in assessed essays. Any such repetition will be penalised. The use of dictionaries is prohibited.

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**P.T.O**

1. *"For as far back as I can remember, the line between fantasy and reality has been hopelessly blurred"* (Roman Polanski). In what ways, and to what ends, do fantasy films seek to either blur or reaffirm the boundary between "fantasy" and "reality"?
2. *"Following the fall of the Twin Towers ... fiction film stayed away from any image that might be linked with 9/11. Indeed, the various elves, wizards, pirate monsters and other fantastical underworld creatures in the blockbuster hit series' that followed 9/11 clearly came from the generic realm known as fantasy. The most obvious explanation for this is that Hollywood was offering a complete and distinct escape from the confusing and changed reality that followed 9/11"* (Christine Cornea). In what ways - and to what ends - do recent fantasy films engage with and/or evade the events of 9/11 and their geopolitical aftermath.
3. *"In the cyborg, that evocative figure of biological and technological combination, in that image of nature altered, constructed, and thoroughly 'engineered', we have obviously found a convenient thinking place for all of our current concerns and theories about the cultural construction of race, sex, gender, and so on"* (J.P. Telotte). How do 'cyborgs' allow us to rethink and re-imagine important social and cultural categories? (You need not restrict yourself to - or cover all of - the categories cited by Telotte).
4. Barbara Creed argues that fantasy films are *"populated by female monsters [and] ... the monstrous-feminine wears many faces"*. Comment in detail upon representations of 'female monstrosity' in any **TWO** films.
5. Phillip Brophy identifies the tendency of fantasy films to play on the *"fear of one's own body, of how one controls and relates to it"*. Providing suitable examples, offer explanations for the body being a site of such visual and thematic significance in fantasy films?
6. *"All monsters are expressions or symbols of some kind of birth process, however distorted or bizarre"* (David J. Skal). What issues are raised by both literal and figurative depictions of 'birth' and 'reproduction' in fantasy films?
7. *"'King Kong' is one of the miracles of cinema, beguiling audiences of all ages and every intellectual pretension. It is a film that abounds with interpretations"* (Noel Carroll). Using suitable examples, demonstrate how fantasy films offer the possibility of multiple interpretations of the same text. (You need not refer to *King Kong* in your answer if you so choose.)
8. *"I am Catwoman. Hear me roar!"* (*Batman Returns*). Assess the progressive potential in representations of gender and/or sexual identity in American fantasy films.

P.T.O

9. In a discussion of the films of Spielberg and Lucas, Andrew Gordon argues that *"the critical prejudice against science fiction, fantasy, and horror may derive not only from a fear of childishness or of the 'wrong' kinds of pleasure but also from a fundamental fear of emotion and the pleasure of feeling emotion"*. Providing suitable examples, assess both the emotional appeal of fantasy cinema and the critical distrust this has provoked. (You need not refer directly to the films of Spielberg and/or Lucas if you so wish).

10. Julia Kristeva defines 'abjection' as *"that which does not respect borders, positions, rules ... that which disturbs identity, system, order"*. Why is abjection such an important concept when discussing the thematic content of many fantasy films?

**END OF EXAMINATION PAPER**