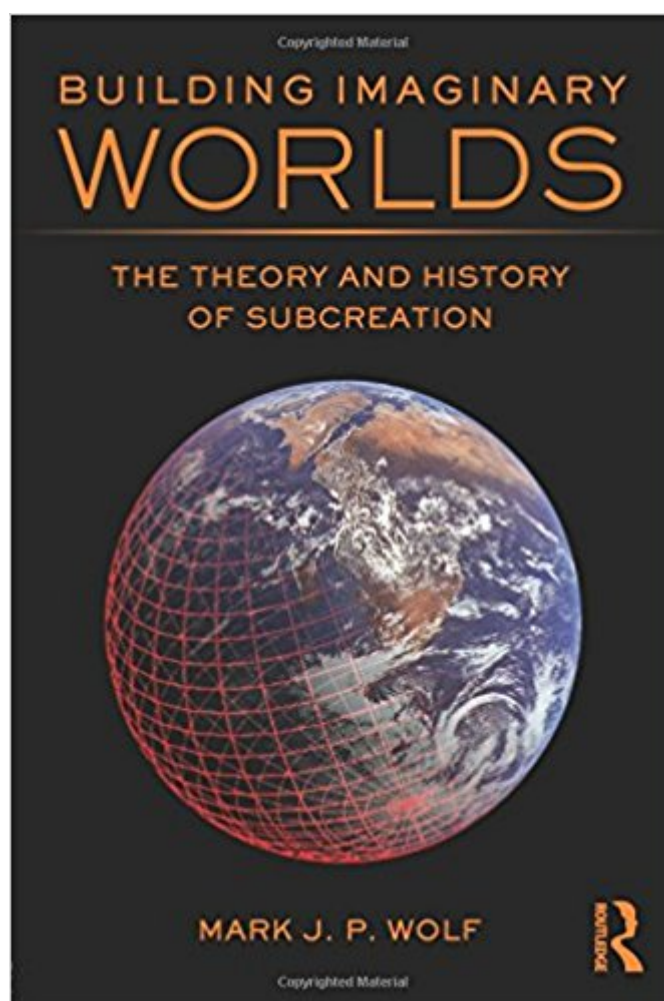


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# Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory And History Of Subcreation



## Synopsis

Mark J.P. Wolf's study of imaginary worlds theorizes world-building within and across media, including literature, comics, film, radio, television, board games, video games, the Internet, and more. *Building Imaginary Worlds* departs from prior approaches to imaginary worlds that focused mainly on narrative, medium, or genre, and instead considers imaginary worlds as dynamic entities in and of themselves. Wolf argues that imaginary worlds—which are often transnarrative, transmedial, and transauthorial in nature—are compelling objects of inquiry for Media Studies. Chapters touch on: a theoretical analysis of how world-building extends beyond storytelling, the engagement of the audience, and the way worlds are conceptualized and experienced a history of imaginary worlds that follows their development over three millennia from the fictional islands of Homer's *Odyssey* to the present internarrative theory examining how narratives set in the same world can interact and relate to one another an examination of transmedial growth and adaptation, and what happens when worlds make the jump between media an analysis of the transauthorial nature of imaginary worlds, the resulting concentric circles of authorship, and related topics of canonicity, participatory worlds, and subcreation's relationship with divine Creation *Building Imaginary Worlds* also provides the scholar of imaginary worlds with a glossary of terms and a detailed timeline that spans three millennia and more than 1,400 imaginary worlds, listing their names, creators, and the works in which they first appeared.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Building Imaginary Worlds is a stunning work of scholarship, encyclopedic in its scope, well-informed in its theory, and totally infectious in its enthusiasm for its topic. It will go down as the Bible of imaginary worlds." —Marie-Laure Ryan, author of *Avatars of Story* —"Wolf shifts our focus from particular stories and media to the fantastical contexts we have created. Imaginary worlds express our deepest hopes, but we don't merely imagine these places. We try to live there, and in this choice lies tremendous social disruption." —Edward Castronova, author of *Synthetic Worlds*

Mark J.P. Wolf is Professor of Communication at Concordia University Wisconsin. He is the author of *Myst and Riven: The World of the Dâ™ni*, editor of the two-volume *Encyclopedia of Video Games*, and co-editor with Bernard Perron of *The Video Game Theory Reader 1 and 2*, among other books.

I'm using it as a text in a Grad Seminar I'm teaching. It's the best book of its kind! Highly recommended.

Solid compendium on an under-explored subject. New classic text for world-building. Just wish it weren't so expensive.

Very informative. Chapters could have been divided a little more, but overall it's well written and very educational.

Fantastic work on imaginary worlds. It may seem a bit detailed for authors, in contrast to scholars, but as a writer, I would say that if you really want to create great fantasy worlds, this is a great resource! One of the best things I got from it was how it showed that the best selling books typically had a well developed world and not necessarily the best stories. If we could create more stories that had well developed worlds and great stories, then we would provide more of what people are searching for. This goes into what kinds of worlds have been created fantasy, sci-fi, utopias, distopias, etc. and the components of those worlds such as language languages, cultures, maps, timelines, etc. It covers trans-media studies, porting story from one medium, such as book, to another, such as movie. It goes over a history of imaginary worlds and levels of authorship--including fan fiction and multiple authorship, though not in that order. So, yes, it is a bit involved, so if you love imaginary worlds in their various forms and/or someone who loves to create them and wants to create ones with more life, this is a book I highly recommend.

Mark J.P. Wolf does exactly what he advertises in the title. He provides a thorough and comprehensive theory and history of subcreation. This is the benchmark for those who want to work with world-building theory in literary studies or similar fields. From Tolkien's theory of subcreation or Nelson Goodman's philosophical approaches to the contemporary paths of medial studies; it's all gathered and explained. Along with James DiGiovanna's essay on "Worldmaking as Art Form", Mark J.P. Wolf justifies the incorporation of many works of fantasy and science fiction into serious philology by providing the theory and history of subcreation. Maybe one day, authors like Tolkien will belong to the classical canon of English literature, mentioned alongside Shakespeare or Chaucer, and if this ever happens it is the result of the work by people like Wolf and his forerunners! However, if you are looking for a "how-to write a science fiction novel" kind of book, this is not what you are looking for, although IMO, any author of fantasy/science-fiction would benefit from this knowledge.

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