

THE DEPICTIONS OF DRAGONS IN PAOLINI'S *ERAGON*

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Abstract

This paper focused on the characteristics and depictions of dragons in Christopher Paolini's *Eragon* (2002) in order to understand the roles that dragons play in human culture and how human culture changes the ways in which dragons are depicted. Said's theory of oriental representation was used as theoretical framework in this study. The analysis revealed that Paolini's dragons were unique and different from the past dragons. Paolini humanized his dragons by giving them more regal appearances, diverse colors, higher intelligences and superior morality, all of which were not seen in past depictions of dragons which focused more on their animalistic and reptilian natures. The role of dragons was also changed from the past depictions which painted dragons as evil antagonists or side characters. Paolini instead introduced many of his dragons as both main and supporting characters, one of which is also the deuteragonist of the story. Furthermore, Paolini's dragons were the driving force behind the plot conflict, contrary to the past depictions which saw dragons as only an object to be killed. In addition, unlike the depiction in the past which dragons were employed to present negative aspects of human nature, Paolini's dragons were the metaphors of various real-life historical events and the real human society. Lastly, the dragon depiction in the story suggested that different races could live together in harmony.

Keyword: dragons, *Eragon*, Christopher Paolini, fantasy

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