



Paweł Frelik

SCIENCE FICTION, COMICS, AND VIDEO GAMES: Emergent disciplines and the thing previously known as popular culture

November 26th, 9:00, room 243.

The system of academic disciplines was, for a very long time, frozen within a structure dating back to the 19th century and intimately intertwined with the larger circulations of knowledge and culture. New fields of study within universities emerged relatively rarely, while the establishment and reproduction of the canon was central to many disciplines, particularly in the humanities. The rise of cultural studies in Great Britain in the 1960 and its spectacular adoption in the United States in the following decades dramatically changed how we think about, teach, and write knowledge. One of the many consequences of this transformation has been an unceasing flow of new fields, disciplines, and specializations. While many of them have been tied to the institutional contexts of college programs, academic journals, and tenures, they also say a great deal about the changing perceptions and valorizations of culture.

In talking about these transformations, I will use three case studies of cultural phenomena that have emerged as recognized disciplines in the last several decades: science fiction studies, comics studies, and game studies. I will briefly outline their character and demarcate their boundaries. Secondly, and more importantly, my contention is that they exemplify changes in how we think about culture in general and so-called popular culture in particular. Finally, I will suggest why and how we should study and teach science fiction, comics, and video games.

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