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Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy (Paperback)

By Geraldine Heng

Columbia University Press, United States, 2004. Paperback. Condition: New. Revised ed.. Language: English . Brand New Book. Empire of Magic offers a genesis and genealogy for medieval romance and the King Arthur legend through the history of Europe's encounters with the East in crusades, travel, missionizing, and empire formation. It also produces definitions of race and nation for the medieval period and posits that the Middle Ages and medieval fantasies of race and religion have recently returned. Drawing on feminist and gender theory, as well as cultural analyses of race, class, and colonialism, this provocative book revises our understanding of the beginnings of the nine hundred-year-old cultural genre we call romance, as well as the King Arthur legend. Geraldine Heng argues that romance arose in the twelfth century as a cultural response to the trauma and horror of taboo acts—in particular the cannibalism committed by crusaders on the bodies of Muslim enemies in Syria during the First Crusade. From such encounters with the East, Heng suggests, sprang the fantastical episodes featuring King Arthur in Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle *The History of the Kings of England*, a work where history and fantasy collide and merge, each into the other,...



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