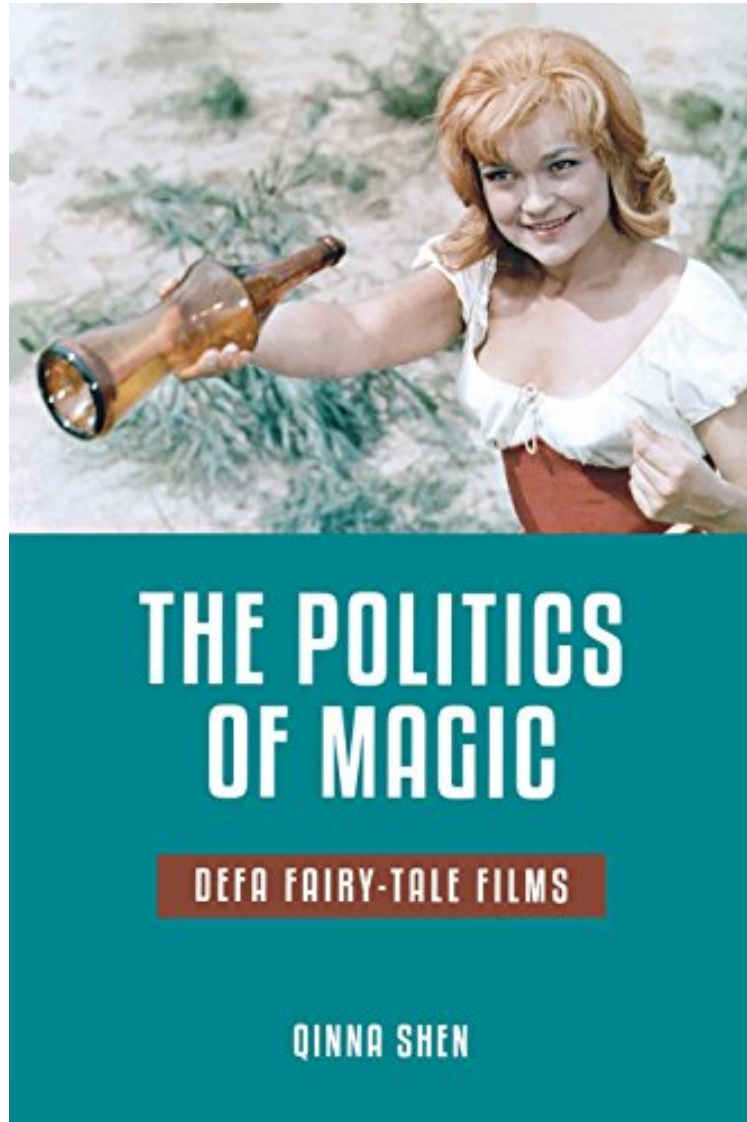


[Library ebook] The Politics of Magic: DEFA Fairy-Tale Films (Series in Fairy-Tale Studies)

The Politics of Magic: DEFA Fairy-Tale Films (Series in Fairy-Tale Studies)

Qinna Shen

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#3337055 in Books Ingramcontent 2015-06-15 2015-06-15Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .75 x 6.00l, .0 #File Name: 0814339034352 pagesThe Politics of Magic Defa Fairy Tale Films Series in Fairy Tale Studies | File size: 60.Mb

Qinna Shen : The Politics of Magic: DEFA Fairy-Tale Films (Series in Fairy-Tale Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Politics of Magic: DEFA Fairy-Tale Films (Series in Fairy-Tale Studies):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Once Upon a Time in the GDR...By Jim M.This is, admittedly, a

pretty specialized field: the study of fairytale films in the former East German Republic. Qinna Shin has put in more research in this subject than anyone in the world, and it shows. The volume is extremely well referenced and is a must for anyone interested in the films of East Germany. It is clearly intended for the university audience, and is a bit dry at times. Nothing here is said offhandedly, or in jest. Nor does the book convey even try to convey the sheer nuttiness that infuses these East German fantasies. Also, the book does not take into consideration the English-language titles for films as they were used in distribution. As a consequence, you'll find "Drei Haselnüsse für Aschenbrödel" listed as "Three Hazelnuts for Cinderella" (which is its literal translation), but not as "Three Wishes for Cinderella" (which is how it appears in IMDB and the name under which it is available from). It would have been nice to have alternative titles listed in the appendix at least, but they are not. These are minor quibbles, though. This is a good book, and it comes in at a price that most university press publications can't match, so kudos to Wayne State for that.

From Paul Verhoeven's *The Cold Heart* in 1950 to Konrad Petzold's *The Story of the Goose Princess and Her Loyal Horse Falada* in 1989, East Germany's state-sponsored film company, DEFA (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft), produced over forty feature-length, live-action fairy-tale films based on nineteenth-century folk and literary tales. While many of these films were popular successes and paved the way for the studio's other films to enter the global market, DEFA's fairy-tale corpus has not been studied in its entirety. In *The Politics of Magic: DEFA Fairy-Tale Films*, Qinna Shen fills this gap by analyzing the films on thematic and formal levels and examining their embedded agendas in relation to the cultural politics of the German Democratic Republic. In five chapters, Shen compares the films with earlier print versions of the same stories and analyzes revisions made in DEFA's film adaptations. She also distinguishes the DEFA fairy-tale films from National Socialist, West German, and Disney adaptations of the same tales. Her archival work reconstitutes the cultural-historical context in which films were produced and received, and incorporates the films into the larger narrative of DEFA. For the first time, the banned DEFA fairy-tale comedy, *The Robe* (1961/1991), is discussed in depth. The book's title *The Politics of Magic* is not intended to suggest that DEFA fairy-tale films were merely mouthpieces of official ideology and propaganda. On the contrary, Shen shows that the films run the gamut from politically dogmatic to implicitly subversive, from kitschy to experimental. She argues that the fairy-tale cloak permitted them to convey ideology in a subtle, indirect manner that allowed viewers to forget Cold War politics for a while and to delve into a world of magic where politics took on an allegorical form. The fact that some DEFA fairy-tale films developed an international audience (particularly *The Story of Little Mook* and *Three Hazelnuts for Cinderella*) not only attests to these films' universal appeal but also to the surprising marketability of this branch of GDR cinema and its impact beyond the GDR's own narrow temporal and geographic boundaries. Shen's study will be significant reading for teachers and students of folklore studies and for scholars of German, Eastern European, cultural, film, media, and gender studies.

About the Author Qinna Shen is Assistant Professor of German at Bryn Mawr College in the suburb of Philadelphia. Her research interests concentrate on the areas of German Studies (20th century), Film Studies, and Transnational Studies with a focus on German-Asian cultural relations. She has co-edited *Beyond Alterity: German Encounters with Modern East Asia* (Berghahn, 2014). Her monograph entitled *The Politics of Magic: DEFA Fairy-Tale Films* (Wayne State UP, 2015) is the first comprehensive, critical, book-length treatment of the live-action fairy-tale films from former East Germany. Her next book project is tentatively titled "Raising the 'Bamboo Curtain': Film Exchange between China and Divided Germany." It will focus primarily on international film trade, genres, cultural politics, censorship, reception, as well as on German-Chinese co-productions.