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Vera Cuntz-Leng (ed.): Heaven, Hell, and Everything In-Between: Critical Perspectives on *Good Omens*

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Vera Cuntz-Leng (ed.): Heaven, Hell, and Everything In-Between: Critical Perspectives on *Good Omens*

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Heaven, Hell, and Everything In-Between: Critical Perspectives on Good Omens is a collection of interdisciplinary essays, edited by Dr. Vera Cuntz-Leng and written by academics who specialise in a range of fields, including fan fiction studies, gender/queer studies, videographic criticism, and popular culture. The contributors' broad spectrum of research interests is clear from the outset, and the text provides an engaging, diverse exploration of Pratchett and Gaiman's novel and the consequent television adaptation. *Heaven, Hell, and Everything In-Between* is an accessible route into critical analysis for non-academics, while engaging with critical theory across multiple fields to challenge those who have a more scholarly interest.

The relationship between art and artist is a prevalent discussion in the fields of media studies and fandom studies, and this is of particular relevance to this collection, which concerns art produced by a co-author who is at the centre of ongoing allegations of abuse that directly impacted the third and final season of *Good Omens* (2019-2026), downsizing it from a full season order to a single feature-length episode. Cuntz-Leng references this in the introduction, asserting that the collection takes a Barthesian approach to the role of the artist and suggests that the death of the Author is "an opportunity to free the Good Omens story from an overpowering author persona" (11) and, instead, focus on Good Omens' vibrant, diverse fandom. This direct acknowledgement of the controversy surrounding Gaiman and application of Barthes' theory provides a potential framework for other scholars looking to engage with works created by artists whose personal actions loom large over their art.

Heaven, Hell, and Everything In-Between comprises four sections that cover gender and queerness, intertextuality, self-determination and morality, and fandom and celebrity culture. The book tackles an ambitious breadth of disciplines across these four key themes, creating a collection as varied as *Good Omens* and its fandom itself. Essay topics oscillate from mythological tricksters to gaze politics, from the role of the colour yellow on screen to the use of Queen's music in both the novel and television adaptation. Those with a broad academic interest in fandom studies and popular culture will likely find immense value in the collection as a whole, while those working in fields such as post-colonialism or music theory may be drawn to specific essays like Paushali Bhattacharya Acuña and Elías Acuña's "Omnia Vincit Amor: Decolonizing Love in Good Omens" or Bojana Vujin's "Beelzebub Has a Devil Put Aside for Me: Good Omens, Postmodernism, and Queen", respectively.

There is much to enjoy in this well-researched and persuasively-argued collection but particular highlights include Valerie Estelle Frankel's "Gaiman's Death, Pratchett's Death, or the Classic Four Horsemen: Considering Compassion and Free Will" and Vera Cuntz-Leng's "Look at You, You're Gorgeous: Gaze Politics and Queer Longing in Good Omens." The first explores representations of the character of Death across the co-authors' combined bodies of work, including Gaiman's *The Sandman* graphic novel series

and Pratchett's beloved *Discworld* series, aligning these representations of a compassionate, loving Death more closely with *Good Omens'* Aziraphale and Crowley than with traditional Grim Reaper archetypes. In the second, Cuntz-Leng meticulously deploys Laura Mulvey's gaze politics to assert *Good Omens'* queer-coded gaze that has garnered the television adaptation, in particular, a dedicated queer fanbase.

Ultimately, Heaven, Hell, and Everything In-Between is an ambitious and rigorously-argued collaboration that succeeds in deepening scholarly understanding of both the literary and audiovisual world of *Good Omens* and the passionate fandom that surrounds the text and show. Positioned to appeal to non-academics and scholars alike, this collection is a valuable addition to the field.

