FANTASIES OF THE BOOKSTORE

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Fantasies of the Bookstore
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Abstract: This Element surveys the place of the bookstore in the creative imagination (the fantasies of the bookstore) through a study of novels in which bookstores play a prominent role in the setting or plot. Nearly 500 ‘bookstore novels’ published since 1917 have been identified. The study borrows the concept of ‘meaningful locations’ from the field of human geography to assess fictional bookstores as narrative events rather than static backgrounds. As a meaningful location, the bookstore creates the potential for events that can occur both within the place of the store and in the wider space within which it functions. Elements of the narrative space include its spatio-temporal location, its locale or composition and the events that these elements generate to define the bookstore’s sense of place.

This Element also has a video abstract: www.cambridge.org/museabstract

Keywords: bookstore, narrative space, meaningful location, bibliomystery, bookselling

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A further online Appendix: Bibliography of Bookstore Novels can be accessed at:  
www.cambridge.org/museappendix