

subject matter of myth" (p. 1; emphasis added). Furthermore, "the essays in this book, as in my prior two books and also in my *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (2004; revised 2015), are comparative. What they compare are not *myths* but *theories*, which come from at once the social sciences and humanities" (pp. 3–4; emphasis added).

Myth Theorized consists of 14 chapters that present an array of theories and theorists. Chapter 1 compares and contrasts the views of myth of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly the theoretical approaches of anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor and philosopher Hans Blumenberg. Chapter 2 presents philologist Friedrich Max Müller's theory on religion and myth. Chapters 3 and 4 address anthropologist and folklorist James George Frazer's arguments on Adonis and Osiris. Chapter 5 compares the nineteenth- and twentieth-century perspectives of Frazer and Joseph Campbell. Chapter 6 illuminates Campbell's non-Jungian approach to myth. Chapter 7 asks if there are such things as modern myths, especially for historian Mircea Eliade. Chapter 8 looks at myth and science from historian Mircea Eliade's theoretical perspective. Chapter 9 compares twentieth-century theorists presented in the foreword of Daniel Dubuisson's work *Twentieth Century Mythologies* (Routledge, 2006 [English translation]). Chapter 10 speaks of myth and literature. Chapter 11 looks at hell and paradise from the views of John Milton and others. Chapter 12 examines the question of gender and heroism in regard to heroes typically being male. Chapter 13 contemplates the aspect of synchronicity and the prospect of bringing myth back to the world view. Chapter 14 examines and compares/contrasts the Bible as a work of myth, science, religion, and philosophy.

The book's primary strength is Segal's thorough presentation of—by way of comparing and contrasting—theoretical approaches to myth. However, because Segal writes primarily for advanced scholars rather than entry-level students, he seems to expect or assume that readers are already familiar with Jacob Arlow, Blumenberg, Rudolf Bultmann, Eliade, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Thomas Kuhn, Bronislaw Malinowski, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown,

Géza Róheim, Tylor, and others, as well as their theories.

In chapter 3, for instance, readers without prior knowledge of Frazer's theory of gods and vegetation (death and rebirth) may have to backtrack and read Frazer's original work. Some readers may require multiple readings to fully grasp the content, especially in differentiating the views from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As the title indicates, *Myth Theorized* leans more toward mythological studies than folklore per se. For example, Segal does not recognize the parameters of myth from William Bascom's article ("The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives," *Journal of American Folklore* 78:3–20, 1965). Although Segal ably compares and contrasts theories and theorists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there are also current (twenty-first century) theoretical works and theorists who not only add new perspectives to mythological studies, but also address theories and theorists of the past. Regardless of these potential weaknesses, this work still presents valuable comparisons and contrasts of theory regarding myth overall.

Myth Theorized is an intriguing collection of theorists, theories, approaches, and views on myth across time. Although Segal does not directly analyze specific characters or mythic narratives, his comparisons and contrasts of significant theorists of myths should be valuable to scholars and researchers seeking broader perspectives.

The Meanings of Enchantment: Wondertale Symbolism Revisited. By Francisco Vaz da Silva. FF Communications No. 326. (Helsinki: Kalevalaseura—The Kalevala Society, 2023. Pp. 218, acknowledgments, author's notes, prologue, works cited, literature, index.)

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The Meanings of Enchantment: Wondertale Symbolism Revisited is an insightful and amazing work that reexamines the symbolism of the wondertale—a term that Francisco Vaz da Silva believes is more meaningful than the "over-

stretched categories” of fairy tale or *Märchen* (p. 22). Wondertales comprise “the overall field of stories—both oral and literary, in their multiple interactions—that keep the wonderous aspects in sight” (p. 22). Accordingly, this volume shines light on wondertales and illuminates their meanings for readers, with Vaz da Silva’s psychoanalysis of the aspects of various tales and comparisons of their common motifs and symbols and their psychological interpretations.

Vaz da Silva’s clear and concise writing style helps readers to understand his purpose, objective, and thesis. Immediately, in the prologue, the author tells readers what inspired the work: “On reading Bruno Bettelheim’s *The Uses of Enchantment* during my gap year before college, back in 1978, I realized that there is a symbolic dimension to fairy tales. That discovery resurfaced from another angle, a few years later” (p. 17). He observes: “This is the book I would have liked to read when I first started thinking about how wondertales encapsulate realms of figurative thought; and why they are good to think with, even today” (p. 19).

According to Vaz da Silva, the book embraces three fundamental principles: (1) “There are no original, fixed texts in traditional setting—all you ever find is a myriad of variants endlessly jostling with one another”; (2) “Each folktale exists in all its variants. . . . That is, no single variant ever represents a tale (meaning that hardly any tale reflects a single socio-cultural setting)”; and (3) “Embracing the variation in the tales is the way to go. If different variants of a tale contain equivalent images, then comparing those images should clarify what the conceptual basis for that equivalence is” (pp. 38–9).

The book contains three parts—“The Basics,” “The Core,” and “The Lessons” of wondertales—divided into seven topical chapters. Chapter 1 examines the symbolism of dragons and maidens, particularly through the lenses of Vladimir Propp, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Bengt Holbek. Chapter 2 revisits and analyzes Propp’s morphology and ideology in wondertales. Chapter 3 discusses the variations and meanings of snakes and dragons especially as related to Alan Dundes’ “allomotifs.” Chapter 4 analyzes the wondertale as a metaphor, particularly with the moon or lunar lover.

Chapter 5 compares and contrasts the relationship between old crones and young maidens. Chapter 6 uses “The Dangerous Night-Watch” (ATU 304) to explore how some enchantment metaphors may have double meanings. Vaz da Silva explains how readers may attach their own meanings to the metaphors, which may make them *seem* nicer or better than what the metaphors may actually represent. For instance, a man entering a sleeping maiden’s chamber may be an *enchanted* metaphor to replace the man’s raping of a sleeping woman. Chapter 7 addresses the unsanitized and uncensored acts found within numerous wondertales, including cannibalism and rape.

Although the author does not specifically identify his intended audience, the book seems suitable for general readers interested in the subject matter, as well as students and scholars alike. It should serve as an excellent teaching tool for aspiring folklore students. Its analysis of symbolism in wondertales is insightful and intriguing. The prose is straightforward, yet also conveys academic depth.

Like many folklorists—including Bruno Bettelheim, the author’s inspiration—Vaz da Silva takes a Freudian approach, that is, with numerous sexual interpretations. Although some of these interpretations may not resonate with all readers, they remain thought provoking. That being said, Vaz da Silva might have issued a disclaimer regarding some of Bettelheim’s dubious credentials and unethical practices, as Alan Dundes documented in “Bruno Bettelheim’s *Uses of Enchantment* and *Abuses of Scholarship*” (*Journal of American Folklore* 104:74–83, 1991). Still, this does not distract from the great value of the overall work.

Twilight of the Godlings: The Shadowy Beginnings of Britain’s Supernatural Beings.

By Francis Young. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp. xviii + 365, list of plates, preface, abbreviations.)

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Independent

Francis Young is the author of some 18 previous books in the fields of folklore and the history

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