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A Dictionary of Symbols: Revised and Expanded

Janet Brennan Croft
University of Northern Iowa

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A Dictionary of Symbols: Revised and Expanded

The values that Tolkien saw in old Sarehole—community, freedom, craft and intimacy with nature—speak eloquently to people worldwide when embodied in the Shire. So does his ideal of craft, not least because he put it so superbly into practice himself. (184)

Garth concludes:

Middle-earth was created to reflect what [Tolkien] most loved and detested in his own world. It folds into itself a multitude of real landscapes and locations, wild or nurtured or despoiled. Indeed, you might say that upon the pages of Tolkien's legendarium, landscape itself has written an impassioned message. That is why this is not ultimately a mythology for England or for Britain only, but for a planet that sorely needs every inspiration to save itself. (184)

Admirers of Tolkien's art will find much to appreciate in *The Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien*, including many hitherto unpublished drawings, maps, and paintings. Biographical tidbits add new information. The sidebars enhance its prodigal detail.

In all, Garth's command of the life and works of the maker of Middle-earth make this book an essential work for those who wish to increase their understanding of the author. Tolkien scholarship is much the richer because of it.

—Mike Foster



BRIEFLY NOTED

A DICTIONARY OF SYMBOLS: REVISED AND EXPANDED. Juan Eduardo Cirlot; translated from the Spanish by Jack Sage and Valerie Mills; foreword by Herbert Read; afterword by Victoria Cirlot. New York Review of Books, 2020. pbk. 978-1-68137-197-9. 553 pp. \$34.95.

DICCIONARIO DE SÍMBOLOS TRADICIONALES was first published in Spanish by the poet and critic Juan Eduardo Cirlot, active in Barcelona in the mid-1940s through early 1950s, in 1958. The first English translation was in 1962, and it went through several more editions, expansions, and translations before his death in 1973. A member of the Dau al Set artistic movement in Catalonia, Cirlot was contemporary with the Surrealists and Dadaists and influenced by Jung and

Eliade. The book is a standard reference for anyone interested in studying, using, and interpreting symbols, and therefore important to readers and scholars of mythopoeic literature. Its entries can read as somewhat dated now, though, and should be supplemented by other dictionaries of symbols for a fuller understanding. For example, I find, in dipping into various entries, that the distaste he expresses in his introduction for Freudianism also plays out in a certain fastidiousness about sexual symbolism. While his entry on LINGAM mentions that it is a representation of the phallus, his entry on YONI completely avoids any mention of the female sexual organs, and the two entries do not refer to each other.

Cirlot's introduction is a dense piece of writing about the importance of symbolic thought in human development, and sets out the limits of his project. There is a great deal of resonance here with Owen Barfield's thinking on the developmental stages of human language in *History in English Words*; as with language, the evolution of the meaning of symbols "reveals the evolution of consciousness" (Barfield 14). To Cirlot, everything has layers of symbolic meaning behind and around its actual existence: "Symbolism in no way contradicts natural or utilitarian reality, but only serves to transform it by imbuing a spiritual sense" (Cirlot 94). A useful reference source for those who like to have physical books on their shelves.

—Janet Brennan Croft

WORKS CITED

Barfield, Owen. *History in English Words*. 1926. New edition, Faber and Faber, 1954.



REALITY, MAGIC, AND OTHER LIES: FAIRY-TALE FILM TRUTHS.

Pauline Greenhill. Detroit MI: Wayne State University Press, 2020. 265 p. ISBN 9780814342220. \$32.99.

PAULINE GREENHILL'S *REALITY, MAGIC, AND OTHER LIES: Fairy-Tale Film Truths* is organized into two distinct sections, movies and books, followed by an analysis of popular western fairy tales and fairy tale figures in popular media. The first section focuses on stop-motion and live action films. This is particularly interesting because of the range of media that Greenhill chooses to focus on. LAIKA's "Box Trolls," Tarsem Singh's live-action "The Fall," and Fred Pellerin's "Babine" all sit comfortably in the same section. Greenhill's pattern is a brief contextualizing summary preceding analysis of each one's place within the fairy tale telling tradition, magic versus reality, and then the interplay between the two for each title.