

fostered in New York City by journalist–theorizer Johann Most. A longtime exile in 1919 (her pacifism during World War I sealed that fate), in death Emma was returned to America. She was buried in Chicago near the late-nineteenth-century Haymarket martyrs, whom many believed were railroaded into prison and execution. To commemorate her gravesite, Rudahl cleverly limns a giant hand from which a glass falls. Above it is the famous Goldman quotation: “I had drunk the cup to the last drop.”

A defining moment, of course, was Goldman’s political and sexual alliance with Alexander Berkman (“Sasha”). Imprisoned for the botched 1892 assassination of the Homestead Strike villain, Henry Clay Frick, Berkman is a frequent focus of Rudahl’s visual scenario, as is Goldman’s own contentious US tours as an orator for anarchism, birth control, free love, and “bread and roses.”

As Rudahl’s book draws to a close, she has dramatized Emma’s radical trajectory from sweatshop seamstress to nurse to public intellectual embracing and subsequently rejecting Bolshevism to her boots-on-the-ground support in 1936 for the Spanish Civil War (at age 67). Like her hero, Rudahl is an American original. She translates Goldman’s beliefs into comic balloons above the major and bit players in Emma’s life. Each cartoon panel is popular culture at its most political, a clever pastiche of actual photos and comic exaggeration, quotes from Goldman’s autobiography and distinctly American vernacular. It is fitting to end on this representative exchange:

Emma, on the dais at a theater lecture: “Ibsen is the uncompromising demolisher of all false idols [marriage, capitalism, and the agency of the state].”

Policeman, Anti-Anarchist Squad: “Yer under arrest!”

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*Superheroes and Gods: A Comparative Study from Babylonia to Batman.* Don LoCicero. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007.

In *Superheroes and Gods: A Comparative Study from Babylonia to Batman*, Don LoCicero examines the archetypal heroes of several traditional mythologies and literary works as a means for discussing

their evolution into the heroes of modern-day popular culture. LoCicero's colloquial and witty style is inviting to readers unfamiliar with mythological studies, and as an introduction to comparative mythology, this book provides a basic foundation for reading myths and modern literature through the lens of archetypal interpretation. The most promising aspect of this study is its use of ancient, modern, and postmodern heroes to discuss myths across culture and time, especially in its relevance for present-day readers.

In this book, Babylonia, Persia, India, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Scandinavia, Germany, and Finland are represented, portraying a strong attachment to the ancient world of the Mediterranean and Middle East. LoCicero should be commended for his accounts of the frequently overlooked Persian and Finnish myths, and for moving beyond western centrism in his discussion of Indian mythology. Furthermore, his discussions of modern-day heroes—and figures from the trope of what LoCicero calls the “super antihero” (201)—span a wide variety of texts, including Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and an array of DC and Marvel comics, interwoven throughout his text in a manner that stresses the concept of mythic archetype as simultaneously culturally timeless and present.

Unfortunately, as an introduction to archetypal mythology, *Superheroes and Gods* falls short in its scope as a comparative study. LoCicero's Mediterranean-centered study sadly disregards a number of world mythologies too often relegated to the fringes of comparative mythology, including Irish, African, North and South American, Chinese, Japanese, and Aboriginal traditions. Even considering the focus on the western literary tradition, there are surprising absences from the study, such as discussions of the heroes of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, or the especially prominent medieval figures of Beowulf, King Arthur, and Robin Hood—all of whom still greatly influence postmodern popular conceptions of heroes.

Throughout his comparisons, LoCicero draws on the concept of archetypes established by psychologist Carl Jung and the field of comparative mythology based on archetypes developed by Joseph Campbell, and welcomes readers into this view of literature, though their literary theories are rarely explored explicitly. The most pedagogical values of *Superheroes and Gods* are the introduction and epilogue, in which LoCicero explains the significance of archetypal comparison, and the structure of his comparisons

through mythic narratives, historical backgrounds, and interpretive commentaries.

As an introductory text, LoCicero's endnotes do provide readers with further resources for more in-depth studies in mythological studies. The bibliography, however, unfortunately omits a number of important works in the field of comparative mythology—such as works by James Frazer, Georges Dumézil, and Claude Lévi-Strauss—and only one title each is provided under the names of Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Campbell.

In his epilogue, LoCicero writes, “We of the twenty-first century, although unable to believe in the literal reality of such heroes, nevertheless still dream our myths onward, clothing them in modern dress . . . We dream them onward, give them colorful costumes, and pseudoscientific origins, but we no longer consider them real. Or do we?” (229). In this question we find the importance of his study, that as we continue to dream, we must also seek to understand our heroes. In LoCicero's approach, we find the merit of *Superheroes and Gods*, an appropriate text for undergraduate world literature courses, as it acts to engage readers and to draw them into a serious, scholarly field relevant to our popular culture.

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*The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible.* A. J. Jacobs. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007.

Jacobs's first line in his introduction to *The Year of Living Biblically* gives readers an important insight as to the kind of experience the author got himself (and his readers) into. Jacobs does not write that he has met with Hasidic Jews and the Pennsylvania Amish, or that he has cast stones at adulterers in Central Park. No, the author merely states that he sports a beard like Unabomber Ted Kaczynski. The reader soon learns that Jacobs's terrorist-esque facial hair is a result of his quest, of course—the “most noticeable physical manifestation” of his spiritual journey.

A. J. Jacobs, an *Esquire* editor, chooses to take his religious quest after the birth of his son, Jasper. An agnostic liberal of Jewish descent,