Miriam Riverlea, "Entry on: Myth Atlas: maps and monsters, heroes and gods from twelve mythological worlds by Thiago de Moraes ", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/899. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

Thiago de Moraes

Myth Atlas: maps and monsters, heroes and gods from twelve mythological worlds

United Kingdom (2018)

TAGS: Gods Golden Fleece Hades Heracles Hero(es) Jason Monsters Odysseus / Ulysses Olympians Olympus Oracles Pegasus Theogony Titans Underworld Zeus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Myth Atlas: maps and monsters, heroes and gods from twelve mythological worlds
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2018
First Edition Details	Thiago de Moraes, *Myth Atlas*. London: Scholastic, 2018, 96 pp.
ISBN	9781407178134
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover (Children and adults)
Author of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com
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Creators



Thiago de Moraes (Author)

Thiago de Moraes is an illustrator and author of children's books, picture books, non-fiction and comic books. Born in Brazil, he is now based in the UK with his family. He collaborates with his wife, Ana, who also works as a creative director at the BBC. They co-wrote *The Zoomer's Handbook* (2015), which won the Sheffield Children's Award in 2016, and *The Night Bear* (2019). In addition to these projects for children, he continues to work as a commercial and editorial illustrator and is a creative director for the UK advertising agency AMV BBDO.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: August 5, 2019).

Profile at Curtis Brown (accessed: August 5, 2019).

Bio prepared by Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com

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Additional information

Translation

Norwegian: *Mytologium helter, guder og monstre fra hele verden*, trans. Heidi Sævareid, Oslo: Fontini, 2018.

According to the author's website, *Myth Atlas* has been translated into sixteen languages, including Italian, Spanish, and Polish.

Summary

With its high quality production values, including lavish, detailed illustrations, a hardback cover and generous 33 cm tall pages, de Moraes' *Myth Atlas* has the dimensions and desirability of a coffee table book. The title page "The Worlds of Myth" uses a map of the world to introduce and geographically locate the twelve cultures which are showcased in the text: the Native North Americans, the Aztecs, the Irish, the South American Yanomami, the Yoruba of Western Africa, the Greeks, the Norse, the Egyptians, the Slavic world, the Hindu world, the Japanese, and the Polynesians.

Each of the twelve cultures is given its own section which follows the same format, featuring an introduction, maps, stories, and a page for creatures and artefacts. The focal point is a double page spread map which creatively imagines the topographical features of each religion. The gods and other key figures appear within the landscape, each marked by a number that refers to a small block of text around the outside where their character, powers and main deeds are briefly summarised. For example, in the Slavic world, the gods and heroes inhabit a giant tree, while the page for the Aztecs (which requires the reader to rotate the book ninety degrees), depicts a fertile land bordered by a great river, atop the layers of the underworld.The Greek world is also represented as if it were a snow dome, with Mount Olympus in the centre, and the grim lands of Hades underneath.

The major map is supplemented by a selection of brief tales. The Greek section focuses on the early myths of the *Theogony*, including the war between the Titans and the Olympians, and illustrates the relationship between the gods in a family tree. It showcases the labours of Heracles, accompanied by graphic illustrations of the colourful, sinewy monsters that the hero overcomes. On the final page, Pegasus, Scylla and Charybdis, the Golden Fleece, and the Delphic Oracle are briefly introduced.

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The book comes with extensive instruction for its use, including a detailed pronunciation guide, and seeks to engage the reader with entertaining and thought-provoking material. In the direct address of the Author's Note, de Moraes writes that the "purpose of this book isn't to tell every legend there is, nor to explain every facet of a civilisation or its gods. They are maps for a reason: they are there to help you find your own way through these fantastic places, introducing you to extraordinary characters along the way, and giving you a taste of their stories." (unpag.)

Analysis

Myth Atlas is appealing both for the aesthetics of its design and as a detailed and informative reference work. In employing topography as a means of encapsulating the essence of a world religion, de Moreas highlights the comparative elements of belief systems while also celebrating their diversity and difference. "Where and how people live also shapes their idea of the universe" the Author's Note states, and the text highlights the prominence of divinities associated with natural phenomena – such as the sun, moon, thunder, the sea. The home of the gods and the conception of the underworld are a focal point in each section.

De Moraes' illustrations are evocative and engaging. The gods are anthropomorphised with oversized heads and powerful physiques. Their depiction highlights the typical physical features of the culture which imagined and worshiped them, but the racial stereotyping is offset by the respectful tone of the text and the diverse selection of cultures that are showcased. Interestingly, the book does not make a distinction between the ancient mythology of the Greek, Norse or Egyptian worlds and the living religions of the Hindu or Japanese cultures. Of course, the decision to showcase these twelve cultures must have necessitated the rejection of others, but the emphasis on the world map on the title page helps to highlight how these selected dozen provide a cross-section of world religions. Each of the twelve cultures has a complex pantheon, a rich body of narrative material about the gods, and a unique conception of the afterlife that translates into an impressive and visually appealing spectacle.

De Moraes writes that "for me, having young children was the perfect excuse to start re-reading all the myths and legends I had loved as a child." (unpag.) It is interesting how the experience of parenthood engenders nostalgia for the books and stories of one's own childhood,

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	and in this case, prompts their revival and reworking in a creative and unique format. *Myth Atlas* combines the heft of a reference work with the charm of a picture book and the aesthetics of an original work of art, revealing a new format for retelling old myths.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Gods Golden Fleece Hades Heracles Hero(es) Jason Monsters Odysseus / Ulysses Olympians Olympus Oracles Pegasus Theogony Titans Underworld Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Identity Multiculturalism Nature Philosophy Race Reincarnation Religious beliefs Tradition Travel Tricksters
Addenda	Fun print-out activities based on the book are included at thiagodemoraes.com.

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