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# Review. Characters on the Couch: Exploring Psychology through Literature and Film

Robin Imhof

University of the Pacific, rimhof@pacific.edu

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***American Myths, Legends, and Tall Tales: An Encyclopedia of American Folklore.*** Edited by Christopher R. Fee and Jeffrey B. Webb. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 3 vols. \$310 (ISBN 978-1-61069-567-1). E-book (978-1-61069-568-8) available, call for pricing.

Compilations of American folklore are constantly being rewritten to reflect the increasing diversity and variety of American culture. Many readers grew up with Benjamin Botkin's classic collection *A Treasury of American Folklore* (Crown 1944), which featured a foreword written by Carl Sandburg and stories about Pecos Bill, Johnny Appleseed, Brer Rabbit and other popular myths, legends, and tall tales. Today, new legends are entering the folklore lexicon to reflect the influence of urban myths, historical events, science fiction, conspiracy theories, and mass media. This three-volume set offers a fascinating look at both traditional and newer folklore, including "Internet Hoaxes," the "John Lennon shooting," "Roswell," and "Slender Man."

Entries in the encyclopedia are arranged in alphabetical order, with a table of contents listing all entries in the front of each volume. Volume 3 contains a thorough and well-constructed subject and name index, as well as a list of editors and contributors. Each of the nearly five hundred entries gives an overview of the myth or legend, a brief bibliography, and cross references as appropriate. Special features include a brief time line of significant events in the world of folklore, transcripts of primary documents, numerous images, and sidebars from the editors offering interesting related topics. Entries cover not only individual stories, but also key people in the study and history of folklore and broad topics such as "Women in Folklore," "Fakelore," and "Racism in Urban Legends." In addition, particular emphasis is paid to cultural traditions that have received somewhat less coverage in other studies, including Asian and Pacific American, African American, Native American, and Hispanic American legends.

In addition to its well-researched and clearly written material, this set's easy-to-use indexes, table of contents and topic listings make it a good resource for high school students and early undergraduate researchers. *American Myths, Legends, and Tall Tales* is a useful addition to public and college library reference collections.—Jennifer A. Bartlett, *Head of Reference Services, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky*

***Characters on the Couch: Exploring Psychology through Literature and Film.*** By Dean A. Haycock. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2016. 334 p. Acid free \$68 (ISBN 978-1-4408-3698-5). Ebook available (978-1-4408-3699-2), call for pricing.

Inspired by what appears to be a growing trend for training mental health care professionals, the author (Dean A. Haycock, a freelance science and medical writer) conceived of this work as a resource guide to help students assess psychological conditions and psychiatric disorders using

fictional characters drawn from literature and film. The entries contain 101 profiles of mostly well-known fictional characters found in novels, novellas, short stories, plays, poems, graphic novels, comic books, and films. The characters' psychological profiles are highlighted by using key quotes to demonstrate their particular disorder. For example, the diagnosis of Dorian Gray in Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* from his uttering, "How sad it is! I shall grow old and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. . . . If only it were the other way!" (134) indicates that his most defining trait is (surprise!) narcissism. Charlie Brown, from the comic strip *Peanuts*, with his declaration, "My anxieties have anxieties" (146) is evidently a neurotic with avoidant personality disorder, and so forth. It may be helpful for the non-specialist to know that the arrangement of the selections in the "Mental and Personality Disorders" subdivision is presented in the order found in the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and that the six "Positive Psychological Traits" are those identified by Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman in their pioneering work in the field of positive psychology.

The helpful appendixes contain lists of characters and their psychological traits, the VIA Classification of Character Strengths, a bibliography of sources consulted and recommended reading, and a glossary of psychological and literary terms. Users looking for a separate list of the works or characters referred to in this volume will need to consult the general index.

As best as this reviewer can tell, there is no other comparable work for this purpose and it is recommended for libraries supporting clinical psychology programs—Robin Imhof, *Humanities Librarian, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California*

***Conflict in Ancient Greece and Rome: The Definitive Political, Social, and Military Encyclopedia.*** Edited by Sara E. Phang, Iain Spence, Douglas Kelly, and Peter Londey. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2016. 3 vols. Acid free. \$310.00 (ISBN 978-1-61069-019-5). E-book available (978-1-61069-020-1), call for pricing.

*The glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome.*  
—"To Helen" by Edgar Allen Poe

Classical civilization represents the foundation upon which rests all of modern-day Western society. The English language, in particular, is larded with allusions to the Greeks and Romans of yesteryear, from "Achilles's heel" to "*deus ex machina*" to "Trojan Horse," which make reference to the many influences that these cultures have had on our art, literature, theater, and, unfortunately, war and military (mis)adventures. For all these reasons, it behooves the modern reader to have at least a passing familiarity with what transpired all those thousands of years ago. The editors would appear to agree with this assessment, as they state