



# The Ring of the Nibelung

*Richard Wagner , Andrew Porter (Translator)*

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Richard Wagner's vast **Der Ring des Nibelungen** cycle comprises four full-length operas (**Das Rheingold**, **Die Walkure**, **Siegfried** and **Gotterdammerung**) and is arguably the most extraordinary achievement in the history of opera. His own libretto to the operas, translated by Andrew Porter, is an intricate system of metric patterns, imaginative metaphors and alliteration, combining to produce the music in text.

'Andrew Porter's utterly natural, often poetic, faithfully rendered English text should be a revelation...The immediacy of instant comprehension gives the entire drama an added dimension.'--The New York Times

## The Ring of the Nibelung Details

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**Download and Read Free Online The Ring of the Nibelung Richard Wagner , Andrew Porter (Translator)**

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# From Reader Review The Ring of the Nibelung for online ebook

## Greg says

Wagner's epic is simply outstanding. I have never seen the work performed, although like most I've heard some components of The Ride of the Valkyries in movies and other pop culture. Knowing very little of the work itself, I was blown away by the scope and compelling nature of the story.

The drama takes it's material from Norse mythology, in an age of gods, dwarfs, giants and heroes. The plot is similar to Tolkien's trilogy, although having read some popular critique I'm not sure the linkages are as tight as some claim (similarly, I think Shaw reaches quite a bit in his representation of this work as a piece of socialist literature). Siegfried and Brunnhilde are fantastic characters, both with unexpected depth. This translation was a fantastic read - highly recommended.

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## Neil says

Haymes gives a very good introduction, more a study of Wagner's source material and introduces the reader to the books which Wagner had in his possession. Then he gives the German texts with facing English translation of both Der Nibelungen Mythos and Siegfried's Tod, both accompanied by a short introduction. Essential reading for anyone interested in the evolution of Wagner's Nibelungen drama.

Warning! This is a review of Wagner's Ring in 1848: New Translations of the Nibelung Myth and Siegfried's Death by Edward Haymes and not a review of Richard Wagner' Der Ring des Nibelungen. Someone at goodreads in their infinite wisdom as decided to combine this with translations of Der Ring des Nibelungen. This is a translation and study of Der Nibelungen Mythos and Siegfried's Tod.

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## Ellen says

I initially picked this book up to read the English text of the operas that I loved to listen to, but I soon became mesmerized with the poetic language that is so gracefully translated. This is a must for poetry lovers, Wagnerians, and mythology fanatics alike. This translation made the music come to life and I got a chance to see the story full on. This is for people who love a good battle between good and evil. Don't let this "modern" Greek tragedy slip away into the Rhine!

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## Alethleia says

El mundo de los hombres queda sin dominadores; pero el hombre debe buscar por sí lo la senda de su destino, alumbrado por una luz divina, no la del poderío y la riqueza, sino la del amor. Sólo el amor traerá la dicha y la eternidad a la raza liberada a través del holocausto de los héroes y de los dioses inmortales.

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## **Dana says**

PopSugar Reading Challenge 2018: "Un libro que también es una obra teatral o musical."

No he leído El Señor de los Anillos, pero he visto las películas y he leído El Hobbit, y se puede apreciar desde la primer línea de este libro la inspiración que tomó Tolkien para crear su propio mundo, basándose desde el anillo del Rhin hasta el amor entre Brunhilda y Sigfrido.

Me gusta mucho saber que existe esta obra tipo cuento, porque ahora que escuche la ópera de Wagner tendrá un mayor significado.

Además me encanta la mitología nórdica así que fue bastante entretenido leer este libro.

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## **Barnaby Thieme says**

I don't expect Porter's translation of Wagner's libretto will be surpassed or even matched any time soon. It makes following along with recordings extremely easy, rendered as it is in a "singable" meter matching the scansion of the original. It is a highly readable vernacular English, lyrical and at times matching the marked consonance of Wagner's text.

Re-reading this fine translation is a delightful preamble to my current in-depth study of Wagner, in preparation for seeing the full cycle in Seattle this summer.

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## **Robert Sheppard says**

A TALE OF TWO RINGS: EPIC AND ARCHETYPE IN TOLKIEN'S "LORD OF THE RINGS" & WAGNER'S "THE RING OF THE NIBELUNGEN"---PLUS "THE NORSE PROSE EDDA," "THE VOLSUNGA SAGA" AND THE "NIBELUNGENLIED"-----FROM THE WORLD LITERATURE FORUM RECOMMENDED CLASSICS AND MASTERPIECES SERIES VIA GOODREADS—  
ROBERT SHEPPARD, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE TALE OF THE TWO RINGS: TOLKIEN'S "LORD OF THE RINGS" AND WAGNER'S "RING OF THE NIBELUNGEN"

J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" is one of the most beloved fantasy epics of modern World Literature, celebrated in the film adaptaion of Peter Jackson, read and re-read by devotees from childhood to old age, bringing to life through its magic not only the creation of the epic imagined world of "Middle Earth" inhabited by such immortal characters as Gandalf, Frodo, Bilbo, Sauron and Aragorn, but also a complete alternative history and spiritual cosmology of the universe. I enjoyed reading all of Tolkien's works immensely as well as re-experiencing them in film, and have always felt in the presence of greatness with his works. But that grand creation was not made from the whole cloth of Tolkien's pure imagination alone but rather built upon a great tradition derived from World Literature, most notably drawing upon the "Ring of the

Nibelungen" (Der Ring des Nibelungen) or Ring Cycle operas of Richard Wagner, as well as the many forerunners Tolkien himself studied and taught as a Professor of Anglo-Saxon literature at Oxford, such as the Norse and early Germanic "Prose Edda," the "Volsunga Saga" and the "Nibelungenlied."

Noticing the many similarities and shared motifs between Wagner's Ring Cycle operas and Tolkien's epic, some harping critics even went so far as to claim that Tolkien had plagiarized much of his creation from Wagner. This unfair accusation ignores the reality that all great writers build upon a "Great Tradition" as referred to by T.S. Eliot which is bequeathed with generosity to them to freely utilize and adapt as the common heritage of mankind freely invested in its own future development. Horace in his "Ars Poetica" (Art of Poetry) boasted that he often "stole" working materials from the classics, qualified by his mitigating insistence on exercising the good taste to "steal only from the best."

Indeed, great writers not only have great license to take from the Great Tradition in order to extend and strengthen it, but also find common roots in the myths and archetypes of the "Collective Unconscious" identified by the celebrated psychologist C.G. Jung also as the common spiritual capital of humanity. Thus Vergil's "Aeneid" drew heavily upon Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, the great plays and tragedies of Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides drew freely upon such sagas and mythic lore as Oedipus and the Greek Gods, and the Chinese epic "Journey to the West" of the Monkey-King drew on the similar figure of Hanuman from the Indian classic "The Ramayana" of Valmiki. Indeed the Bible itself, a most plundered source of borrowings, counsels us to judge value by the fruits of the borrowing rather than by mere roots and fertilizing: "By their fruits you will know them." Matthew 7:16.

Tolkien himself, questioned on the similarity, said "The two Rings have in common that they are both round, and beyond that they are completely different." In this he was being a bit rhetorically disingenuous, as the common elements in both great works are more fundamental than superficial. First, the central quest and plot device of a struggle over a Ring of Power, capable of conferring on its bearer mastery of the world, but also bearing a curse of corruption and self-destruction necessitating its removal from the world gives to both works a common central dynamic. Tolkien, who once undertook a common project with C.S. Lewis, author of the Narnia Saga, to translate Wagner's Ring Cycle together, was intimately aware of Wagner's narrative, along with the sources from which Wagner himself borrowed, such as the Nibelungenlied and the Norse Volsunga Saga.

Secondly, from Wagner Tolkien also took as models or sources of inspiration several other key elements of the Hobbit cycle, including outlines of some of the key characters. In Wagner's Nibelungen Ring perhaps the most central character is a dwarf who initially possesses the Ring of Power, Alberich. Alberich initially creates the Ring of Power in the first opera, "The Rhinegold" (Das Rheingold) from enchanted gold stolen from the river-spirit Rhinemaidens, which he is able to do only after renouncing all love, which he does after the beautiful Rhinemaidens spurn his love, berating his ugliness and smallness. Next, the king of the Gods, Wotan/Odin forces Alberich to give the Ring to him, later losing it when he is forced to give it as payment to the giants Fafner and Fasolt for their work in building Valhalla, the palace of the gods. Fafner kills his brother Fasolt over the Ring, and then transforms himself into a dragon to keep watch over it. Thereafter, both the dwarf Alberich and Wotan struggle and plot over decades to recover the lost precious Ring, Alberich exhibiting many of the characteristics of Gollum in Tolkien's saga in his obsession with it. In Wagner as in Tolkien the fate of the Ring is also tied to a looming Apocalypse as its destruction will also usher in a New Age on earth and the departure of the gods or other celestial agents such as the elves or Valkyrie. Both works are populated by an analogous hierarchy of beings or races: the Gods, men, dwarves and Valkyrie Riders in Wagner, and elves, men, dwarves, ents, orcs and malign personages such as Sauron and the Nazgul Riders in Tolkien. In Wagner as in Tolkien diverse parties plot to get possession of the Ring, such as Alberich's brother the dwarf Mime, who raises Sigfried, the product of the incestuous union of

Siegmond and Sieglinde in the second opera "The Valkyrie," Wotan's grandchild, who will have the power to recover the Ring. Siegfried, like Aragorn, must search for his ancestry and repair the broken sword of his forefathers, Nothing, to complete his quest. In both sagas an immortal female being is transformed into a mortal who will die alongside her lover, namely Arwen who chooses mortal life and marriage to Aragorn, and Brunhilde, the lover of Siegfried. Both sagas end with the destruction of the Ring, which in turn ushers a New Age and the departure of the gods or spirits of the old order.

## THE TWO RING SAGAS AS "EPICS"

Both the "Lord of the Rings" and the "Ring of the Nibelungen" constitute "epics" in their scope and impact. An "epic" as a genre may be defined as a narrative in verse, prose or other form which includes extensive history such as to define the character or destiny of a nation, people even humanity as a whole. Tolkien's classic famously extends for several thousand years, from the "First Age" to the "Fourth Age" which commences at its conclusion, covers at least three generations of its protagonists and defines the formation or reconstitution of a nation, the united Kingdom under Aragorn, and its relationship with "the divine" or supernatural powers--elves, Valar, and evil forces such as Sauron and Morgoth, and with the natural environment. Wagner's saga also spans three generations from Wotan to Siegmund and Sieglinde and the grandchild Siegfried and embraces a backstory of cosmic proportions, including the famous "Gotterdammerung" (Ragnarok) or fall of the Norse gods led by Odin/Wotan and the burning of Valhalla and Igdrasil, the Tree of Life and the World. Their sagas concern not only their protagonists or even their peoples, but the entire condition of the world and the conditions of its physical and spiritual continuation, regeneration and renewal. (Parenthetically, I also include my own work, the contemporary and futurist epic "Spiritus Mundi" in the epic genre as it spans in its backstory the history of the Sartorius family from the 1600's to the present and, through time travel, the history of the human race into the 23rd Century in the wake of the founding of the United Nations Parliamentary Assembly in our own time, and defines the character of the emerging "people of the world" newly and necessarily united in our globalized age, including their relationship with the cosmos and the divine.)

## ARCHETYPES AND JUNGIAN MOTIFS IN THE RING SAGAS

Archetypes, according to C.G. Jung and others are universal archaic patterns and images that derive from the collective unconscious and are the psychic counterpart of instinct. They are autonomous and hidden forms which are transformed once they enter consciousness and are given particular expression by individuals and their cultures but exist independently of them as part of our genetic and instinctual heritage. Common examples in literature are the archetypal figures of the Mother, Trickster, Magician, Warrior, King and Devil, or situational archetypes such as the Quest, the Flood, the Fall, Re-birth and Transformation or Apocalypse. Importantly, an archetype is not just a symbol or image in the abstract, but rather a concrete living force within the mind, sometimes referred to as a "complex," which acts as a source of energy or intensity around the archetypal nucleus and which may drain or augment energy from or to the Ego, and which may exist in either the personal unconscious of an individual, the collective unconscious of the whole human race, or

both. The operation and experience of the archetypes, both in their narrative or symbolic form and within the psyche of the protagonist or the reader serve to catalyze psychic growth leading to greater awareness and greater psychic wholeness, maturity and health, and a resultant enhanced capacity for life in the world.

## THE HERO'S QUEST ARCHETYPE

One of the central archetypes in C.G. Jung and other archetypal critics such as Joseph Campbell in his "Hero With a Thousand Faces" is that of the hero's quest. In this archetype, the hero is required to undertake a perilous journey into an unknown and dangerous realm to accomplish some task of vital importance during which he will be tested and if successful will bring back some vital boon to the world of his origin. The stages of the hero's journey typically include:

- 1) Separation and Departure---expulsion from a safe haven, home or childhood
- 2) Initiation
- 3) Struggle Against Adverse Forces
- 4) Descent into the Underworld---confronting not only external dangers but his own deepest inner self
- 5) Return and Re-Integration---a return from the mythic dimension to rejoin the mundane world of his origin

In Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* the central hero Frodo undertakes the Quest of the "Ring Bearer" to destroy the Ring of Power in the fires of Mount Doom, which unites him with his brother questers of the "Fellowship of the Ring" who accompany him. In the first stage of Departure the Black Horsemen forcibly expel him from the safe haven of the Shire, a world of innocence, protected child-like existence, harmony and oneness with nature. At Rivendell he is initiated into a larger community of his fellow Questors, who must struggle against a Nemesis, the predatory Sauron and his evil allies and underlings. His journey to both the Mines of Moria and to the evil realm of Mordor challenges not only his physical and external survival and strength but also his inner resolve and willingness to rise to the duty of the quest. In the final chapters after the Ring's destruction, especially the chapter "The Scouring of the Shire," Frodo and his companions must return to the world of his origins bearing the strengths obtained by means of the Quest. Thus Frodo on his return, along with Merry, Pippin and Sam are no longer the passive child-like beings of their innocent youth and their world is no longer an Edenic paradise, but they must confront its evils with adult and active powers derived from their growth during the Quest. They undertake to reform their fallen homeland, driving out the petty fascism of the exploitative capitalist and predatory classes backed by the fallen Saruman/Sharkey and restore their community to freedom, justice and harmony with nature.

In Wagner's Ring Cycle there is little growth of self and insight in the Jungian sense on the part of the hero Siegfried. His quest is defined as "to discover what fear is" in a supposedly fearless heroic self. However Siegfried fails to discover this fear or any measure of inner insight and is led to destruction. It is more the character of Wotan who attains some measure of insight in his unsuccessful quest for the Ring, leading ultimately to his acceptance of his fate of death and downfall of the gods.

## THE ARCHETYPE OF THE SHADOW OR DOPPELGANGER

In the Lord of the Rings trilogy Frodo's steps are incessantly dogged by a creature who uncannily manages to follow his every movement, almost as if he were his own shadow: Gollum. In Jung's concept of the archetype of "The Shadow" such a figure often represents the negative unconscious dimensions of the Self which have been repressed and remain unintegrated within the psyche. Frodo to our eyes and his own appears to be an exemplary character full of idealism, selflessness, courage and love for others. But this benign view ignores what we suspect lies in all human hearts, the capacity for selfishness, love of power, possession and self-importance which are suspiciously absent from his apparant conscious self. Thus until Frodo confronts his own capacity for selfishness and potential evil and tames and overcomes it his steps will be dogged by a demonized being who represents these negative capacities: Gollum. Gollum is craven, selfish, violent and obsessed with his own possession of the Ring and its power. He follows Frodo as closely as Frodo's own shadow, and indeeds comes to represent an alter ego, or a Dr. Jeckle and Mr. Hyde "Doppelganger" repressed other self.

Notably, in terms of Frodo himself alone, he finally fails in his Quest as at the critical moment within Mr. Doom he refuses to throw the Ring into the feiry abyss. In a sense he never really recognized that selfish capacity within himself until too late. It is only by the "accident" of Gollum biting off his finger with the Ring on it and slipping into the fire that the Quest is accomplishd, along with the loyal aid of Frodo's more quotidian alter ego, Sam. Thus Frodo as a discrete conscious self balks and fails in the quest, but his extended "composite self" symbolically evolved through growth, experience and and amalgamating his alter egos Gollum and Sam jointly accomplish the Quest almost in spite of Frodo's conscious self, and it is only the fully integrated "greater self" that is capable of fulfilling its mission and promise. The quest is thus ironically accomplished "by accident," but this uncanny accident proves to be no mere accident at all, but the fulfillment of deeper psychic laws and destinies.

## THE ANIMA FIGURE IN THE LORD OF THE RINGS

Jung conceived "The Anima" as the feminine complementary self present in the male psyche that often inspires love and becomes the face of love leading to a man's growth towards wholeness. The anima may also bear a negative shape where this complementary relationship is perverted or obstructed. In the female psyche of a woman, the male complementary "other half" of the conscious self most often takes some masculine shape and face, termed by Jung her "Animus," the masculine counterpart to the feminine Anima. In the Lord of the Rings a powerful "Anima" figure is that of the beautiful elfen queen Galadriel. Notably, Galadriel possesses a magic mirror into which each person looks and sees some aspect of themselves and their destiny. Thus confrontation of the Anima forces the self to a deeper consideration of the male self, revealing hidden or repressed mysteries. For example, the presence of Galadriel leads Gimli the dwarf to realize that possession of wealth and riches, his prior obsession, was less valuable than love and beauty. Another powerful anima figure is that of Arwen, the elven princess and daughter of Elron who is the eternal guide of the heart for Aragorn on his quest. Notably she represents the immortality of the spirit which through love chooses to live and die alongside her beloved mortal man and mate, an idealized feminine virtue.



## THE ARCHETYPES OF MASCULINE MATURITY IN THE RING SAGA: THE WARRIOR, THE MAGICIAN AND THE KING

Our connection with the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* is through the experience of the Hobbits, diminutive human beings who are admirable and lovable, but seemingly immature, partially child-like, passive and little capable of survival in the more dangerous greater world outside the Edenic Shire. Their tale is one of growth to a greater maturity through encounters with such archetypal male figures of Aragorn, first a Warrior and then a King, Gandalf the Wizard-Magician and the array of supporting warriors and allies who lead them to greater powers and maturity in the face of a hostile world. The Warrior archetype is a destroyer of enemies and bears strength and power. Thus the Hobbits grow from child-like impotence to masculine maturity and power as they are initiated into the fellowship of warriors. Gandalf, as a representative of the Magician Archetype further enhances the power of the warrior with the ability to channel the supernatural and hidden magical powers of nature and the universe for human ends. He is a teacher who empowers others as well as wielding superhuman powers derived from the deepest understanding of the world's secrets. In Aragorn is manifest the figure of the King, a more mature reincarnation of the warrior's power, to which is added responsibility, love of people and a "healing power" capable of harmonizing the human community with the cosmic order and nature.

## THE RING CYCLES AND SPIRITUS MUNDI

My own work, the contemporary and futurist epic novel *Spiritus Mundi* also shares the Jungian archetypal heritage of the two Ring Cycles. Its primary moving force and plot device is the Quest of social idealists in our time to establish a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly for global democracy. In the course of this quest they encounter inimical forces that threaten World War III and nuclear Armageddon and are forced into a mythical journey to an Underworld of Middle-Earth, a Jules Verne-like journey to the center of the Earth, plus a celestial ascension to the Council of the Immortals, analagous to the angelic-elven beings of the Ring saga, and a quest to recover the Silmaril Crystal to save the world. Its material draws heavily on the Great Tradition including the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, *Dante* and the work of such modern immortal greats as Verne, Wells, Tolkien and Wagner.

World Literature Forum invites you to check out the great fantasy epics of Tolkien and Wagner, and also the contemporary epic novel *Spiritus Mundi*, by Robert Sheppard. For a fuller discussion of the concept of World Literature you are invited to look into the extended discussion in the new book *Spiritus Mundi*, by Robert Sheppard, one of the principal themes of which is the emergence and evolution of World Literature:

For Discussions on World Literature and n Literary Criticism in *Spiritus Mundi*:  
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### **Andrea says**

what beautiful illustrations!

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### **Jesús Cardaña Morales says**

Me ha gustado mucho. Y eso que había oído críticas muy diversas sobre esta obra: que si era muy buena, que si era muy mala...; a mí me ha encantado. Es la historia de una vida contada de forma mitológica. Se nota de las fuentes que ha bebido Wagner: Juan sin miedo, La bella durmiente y diversos mitos. Me ha hecho gracia el ir dándome cuenta de lo mucho que Tolkien se basó en esta obra para El Señor de los Anillos (por no decir que la copió entera) El personaje de Sigfrido no me ha gustado. Es el antihéroe total: orgulloso, prepotente, malvado... un imbécil, en una palabra. Sin embargo, el personaje de Brunhilda me ha encantado, así como el del enano Mime.

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### **Ed Correa says**

Una de las historias épicas y mitológicas que más ha servido de referencia a nuevas obras y mitos a través de los años. La versión de Wagner es extraordinaria y simple al mismo tiempo. Un clásico, sin duda. Era un pendiente imperdonable y ahora una joya en mi lista de leídos. Recomendadísimo.

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### **James Klagge says**

This is basically the libretto for Wagner's 4-opera Ring Cycle. I read it b/c I realized I knew nothing of the

story line. I've never heard the music or the operas themselves. Apparently this is a case where the composer/writer saw the music as an integral part of telling the story, so I'm sure I've missed some of the force. But the recordings of the operas apparently run about 15 hours, so I'm not sure if I'll do that. The story line is interesting and odd in places. It includes a sword stuck in the trunk of a tree which can only be removed by a special person. It includes a ring that gives great power but brings with it evil. The story ends with the ring being returned to its rightful state, through self-sacrifice. Wagner and this opera were revered by Hitler and the Nazis, but for reasons that were totally wrong-headed and confused.

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## **Víctor says**

Leer una ópera resulta difícil, en especial si es algo compuesto por Wagner.

*"El anillo del Nibelungo"* puede considerarse, junto con los trabajos de Mozart y Beethoven, uno de los mayores exponentes de la música alemana.

Richard Wagner, a diferencia de otros compositores, se encargó de escribir la partitura y el libreto de *"El anillo"*, basándose en algunos aspectos de la mitología nórdica y la cultura alemana.

El resultado es sin duda alguna un trabajo único y sin precedentes que hasta el día de hoy es un factor clave en la cultura musical universal.

Leer *"El anillo"* siguiendo la música de Wagner es una experiencia inusual pero que debería hacerse al menos una vez en la vida - mencionando especialmente *"La Walkyria"*, el cual sin lugar a dudas puede ser el mejor trabajo de la tetralogía.

Desafortunadamente la traducción al español por parte de Ángel Mayo da mucho que decir. La redacción es confusa y en algunos momentos pierde la esencia del poema, obligando al lector a recurrir al alemán para poder comprender de mejor manera.

Fuera de eso *"El anillo del Nibelungo"* resulta una experiencia enriquecedora y armónica para todo aquel que se atreva a sumergirse en las aguas cristalinas y míticas del Rin.

(Claramente Tolkien se inspiró en Wagner para el desarrollo de *"El señor de los anillos"*)

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## **Myles says**

While it took me a little Bit to get into the opera style of the book the story kept me engaged. What struck me the most was the generational aspect of it all.

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## **David Withun says**

I read followed along in this translation of the libretto while watching video of Robert Lepage's 2010-2012 production of the four operas of the Ring cycle at the Metropolitan Opera. It was, to be brief, a tremendous experience. The operas themselves are a remarkable achievement -- in terms of music, story, and, in Lepage's version, visual affect as well. To confine my comments here to only this particular translation: I am quite impressed. The on-screen translation provided on the Met's website did not do nearly as well in either meaning or poetic quality. The original German is provided alongside the English translation as well, which is quite helpful when following along or for purposes of comparison. While the story is good enough to be read, I cannot recommend strongly enough watching these operas as well.

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## Beatriz Rosales says

Una lectura difícil pero que captura. La aventura de las correrías del Dios Wotan, procreando hijos con humanas y con diosas, todos fuera del matrimonio. Y el evidente control que tenía sobre él su esposa Fricka. Triste historia la de Siglinda y Siegmund. Y esperanzadora la historia de Brunilda y Sigfried. Me queda el mensaje final de Brunilda " Solo el amor nos da la verdadera vida y la eternidad".

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## Nikki says

Mesmerizing!!! I read this play in two afternoons. I could barely put it down. It's an assigned reading in my Approaches to Myth course, but something I've been interested in. My initial intrigue was based on previously hearing it was the original "Ring" story, preceding Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings." I haven't had a chance yet to dissect the play and analyze the themes that appear in it, but my completely unedited, initial response to this book was that it was simply great mythic storytelling!!!

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## Lucas says

Siegfried is my favorite mythical hero. His might and near invulnerability put him among the ranks of heroes such as Achilles and Count Orlando, but it is what sets him apart from them that makes him my favorite. Fafnir touched on it when he observed that Siegfried has a childish soul. He's a pure warrior who lives on his terms and enjoys life. You won't find him sulking in a tent in the middle of a war, and rather than being overly concerned with glory, he is hardly even aware of his own greatness. In short, he is all heroics and no politics.

I have read three versions of Siegfried's story (this one, The Nibelungenlied, and the Volsung Saga). I have also seen the silent film that came out in 1924. Of all the versions, this one is my favorite. What makes this story interesting is how it revolves around a ring of power. For those reviewers who love to bitch about how everything isn't Tolkien, it is worth noting that this story was also an inspiration for "Lord of the Rings."

While the story tells of Siegfried's heroics, it is but a part of the story of the ring, and Siegfried never understands what is truly going on. There are various forces fighting for the ring. They include the Rhine Maidens (who own the enchanted gold used to make the ring), The dwarf king Alberich (who forged the ring unlocking its powers), the ruler of the gods Wotan, the giant Fafnir (who transformed himself into a fierce dragon), Alberich's brother Mime (who is a treacherous foster father to Siegfried), and Alberich's half-human son Hagen. Their struggle for the ring comes to an apocalyptic conclusion.

I would also recommend a version of this book with Arthur Rackham's illustrations. It shouldn't be too difficult to find, and his illustrations are gorgeous!

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## **Lisa (Harmonybites) says**

Yes, I know, Wagner was a racist SOB. But he also was a genius, and this is one of his greatest works with glorious music--my favorite of his in fact. Dragons, Valkyries and Dwarfs! All good. And yes, recordings come with liner notes, and video with subtitles--even some opera companies now have subtitles projected over the proscenium arch. But yes, I do think it's very, very useful as an opera lover to have a translation like this--to read over before a performance perhaps and get subtleties that would otherwise pass over you. And if you're looking for one, it's hard I think to better this edition of Andrew Porter's translation. It's a graceful, singing translation designed for performances in English--and this edition also includes the original German side by side with the English on the page.

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## **John Bonilla says**

Me encantó, me fascinó.

Al inicio cuesta un poco agarrar el hilo de la historia y más por la mentalidad de que es una ópera es difícil de leer, pero en realidad no, me gustó como Wagner plasmó los escenarios, los eventos.

Un poco corto para mi gusto pero estuvo bien y más porque ya tenía el conocimiento de muchos personajes que salen en la historia (por los caballeros del zodiaco) y me ayudó mucho a comprender esta mitología y que me agradara más lo nórdico.

Al final quedé satisfecho, que es raro que un libro me deje así, pero fue súper genial leerlo y saber de donde surge toda la historia de este anillo y quien fue en realidad Sigfrido. Lo que no me gustó fue que mencionarán a Wotan en vez de Odín pero todo lo demás fue excelente.

Lo que me faltó fue leerlo mientras oía la cabalgata de las valkirias igual de Wagner.

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## **Andrea B. says**

Es un libro excentente. Disfrute demasiado su lectura, aunque al comenzarlo fue una tortura porque sentia que avanzaba muy lentamente.

Pero todo eso se quedo en el pasado pues al comenzar el segundo capitulo ya me tenia enganchada totalmente. Otro de sus insignificantes problemas es que siento que le faltan paginas. Debio ser mas grande.

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