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A Dictionary of Symbols

Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant
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Jean Chevalier, Alain Gheerbrant : A Dictionary of Symbols before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Dictionary of Symbols:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Incomplete But GoodBy Atma WeaponI'm mostly happy with this book, but I'm not 100% satisfied. I do enjoy how the book dives right into the entries without any tedious introductory remarks, but it may have been good to include at least some small explanation as to the definition of symbol or a remark on the methodology used to determine which entries to include. The book seems to cover the sorts of symbols that most people would probably be interested in: animals, plants, gems, astrological, and mythological. However, it's less about the graphic representations than it is about the conceptual and metaphorical aspects. There is scant coverage of mathematical symbols and modern symbols. Then, there are also entries which seem out of place: seemingly modern entries like "automobiles", an entry on "dreams" (which is not really a symbol so much as a context for symbols), and many entries on specific mythological characters (which are admittedly interesting to read about but perhaps not deserving the designation "symbol"). In my point of view, generic types of beings such as centaurs and elves warrant inclusion, while specific characters (e.g. "Daedalus") mostly do not. This is perhaps subjective, but that is my perspective as someone who would rather use a dedicated mythology reference book for those entries. So, for all of those reasons, I would deduct half a star. Then, I would deduct another half star for the quality of the entries themselves. For example, the entry on "eye" described many mythological traditions where the sun and moon are eyes, but failed to mention the ancient Egyptian good Horus. Nevertheless, I have already learned many new things from

this book (including things evidently not known to Google and Wikipedia, which is impressive) and so I do intend to finish it and keep it as a reference. 15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Newer dictionaries with pictures are great, but this is the one I always return to. By Quadradox I purchased my first copy 10 years ago and have been working with my dream symbols for nearly 20 years. I've been enticed to purchase newer ones since then with photos and graphics (I now have nearly a dozen symbol dictionaries) -- thus I am clearly drawn to these things. However, I find there is always a trade off. Publishing costs and space taken up for these visuals means less text and less substance. So while I have an initial pleasure in perusing the ones with pictures I often find these don't really have anything to do with my dream images -- they are indeed usually intriguing works of art but not particularly helpful for serious symbol analysis. Thus the most consistently helpful symbol book, to which I always return when I seriously want to know a range of possibilities for my dream images or concepts is the Penguin Dictionary of Symbols by Chevalier, Gheerbrant and Buchanan-Brown. The authors have done a monumental work bringing so much substance to it, managed to remain relevant for decades even though it was first published in France in 1969 with the second edition in 1982, and by now reading it is like coming home. A another benefit of being all text (seriously the text is not that hard to read, the print is of excellent quality with crisp deliniations between entries, references, etc.) is that the act of researching my dream images does not itself start interfering with the memory of my own visual image, as pictures might. To each his own preference ... but for persons more experienced in working with dreams, I think the substance here will be recognized as highly valuable. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. More like an encyclopedia. Huge and detailed. Very pleased. By Phil Harris Huge book full of thorough explanations on not only symbols, but key terms and concepts related to various cultures mythology, mysticism, practices, etc. This was highly recommended to me by a friend, and I'm very happy to have it. You shouldnt take every definition or explanation as the only possible meanings for each one, but it will give you detailed information to think about and do further research on if needed.

This is an inventory of symbols and the symbolic imagination. The editors and their fifteen contributors are drawn from a variety of scholarly backgrounds, from anthropology and ethnology to psychotherapy and art history. This diversity of approach is responsible for the book's character, a reflection of the multiplicity of symbols and signs and the phenomenal range of possible interpretations they offer. The book draws together folklore, literary and artistic sources, and focuses on the symbolic dimension of every colour, number, sound, gesture, expression or character trait that has benefitted from symbolic interpretation. The conscious and unconscious minds are explored, desire and dreams are treated alongside the known and the chronicled. Its 1600 entries are indexed to a comprehensive bibliography.

Language Notes Text: English Original Language: French About the Author Jean Chevalier (1906-1993) was a French writer, philosopher, and theologian. Until 1964, he was director of the Bureau of Relations for Member States at UNESCO, a post he left to research and write *Dictionnaire des symboles* with famed explorer Alain Gheerbrant. A compendium of more than 1,600 articles about the symbolism of myths, dreams, colors, habits, etc., found in folklore and mythology, this encyclopedia of cultural anthropology is published as *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* in English. Alain Gheerbrant (1920-2013) was a French writer, editor, and explorer. He was the founding editor of *Kailash*, which published works by Antonin Artaud, Georges Bataille, and Aimé Césaire. In 1948, he left France with his team to explore a dense part of the , including Sierra Parima, and wrote of his travels in *L'expédition Ornoque-e* (1952). In 1982, in collaboration with author Jean Chevalier, he published *Dictionnaire des symboles* (*The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* in English), an encyclopedia of cultural anthropology about the symbolism of myths and folklore. He released his memoir called *La Transversale* in 1995. John Buchanan-Brown is a long-established and gifted translator of French books. He is best known for his translations of *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* by Alain Gheerbrant and Jean Chevalier and *The Secret of the Missing Boat* by Paul Berna.