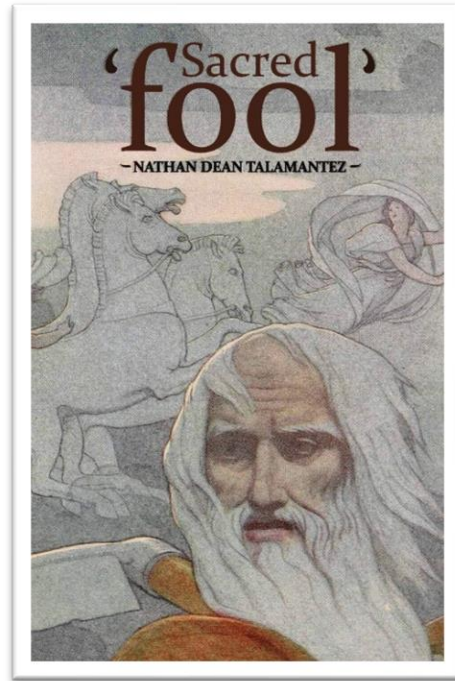




“Book Review: *Sacred Fool*”

By Joshua Ryan Bligh



Something between an homage, love letter, and literary catasterization, *Sacred Fool* is a joyful expression of Alejandro Jodorowsky’s impact on the world.

Nathan Dean Talamantez’s *Sacred Fool* begins as a letter directly addressed to Chilean-French creative powerhouse Alejandro Jodorowsky, in which the author expresses the man’s brilliant impact on his life. It then continues to alternate between this epistolary style and a unique narrative retelling of Jodorowsky’s life set against a backdrop of magic, myth, and interstellar communication. In turn, the reader encounters cursed treasure, ancient gods of revelry, and Hel broken loose.



By using iconic figures from various mythology and religions, Talamantez creates a surreal experience that is over almost before you know it. Instead of allowing the tropes and mythical beings to stagnate, they whistle by in a flash, making for the most adventurous pseudo-biography I've ever experienced.

Where does the fact end and the myth begin? Frankly, it doesn't matter. And that's kind of the point. As a reader, my only knowledge of Jodorowsky prior to *Sacred Fool* was a brief encounter with a graphic novel in a store and watching half of *Jodorowsky's Dune*, a documentary exploring the artist's failed *Dune* project of the 1980s. But you don't need to be a Jodorowsky fan to appreciate *Sacred Fool*, not when Talamantez's adoration bleeds through every page, skillfully conveying the power of Jodorowsky's opus without ever becoming bland or doting.

Talamantez walks a delicate line, yet he praises without turning sycophantic. This is not the feverish letter of a hopped-up fan, but a sympathetic expression of gratitude for a man who has overcome adversity yet still impacted his audience with life-changing lessons and awe. Though the fantastical retelling of Jodorowsky's life very nearly deifies him, it is far from reverent. You get the sense that for all the powers and wisdom *Sacred Fool*-Jodorowsky shows, he is never above being deeply human.

In one of the letter-style chapters, Talamantez describes one of Jodorowsky's films, *The Holy Mountain* and the revelation it brought to the author, of how art must *show* something rather than represent hardline reality. And Talamantez brilliantly recreates this lesson in his fantasy-retelling of Jodorowsky's life. While reading, I was sorely tempted to look up a biography of Jodorowsky, to see what parts were true or to understand what real facts were metaphorically represented on these pages. I resisted, for it would have ruined the experience, and I advise any reader to do the same. Instead, look at what Talamantez is showing you through his tale, and you will better understand Jodorowsky, not as a person, but as an effect. Do not let that spell dissolve by glumly reading through Wikipedia.

For all the eccentricity of *Sacred Fool*, Talamantez shows taste and restraint, and the brief work (only several dozen pages) never overstays its welcome. Despite having plenty of material to work with (Jodorowsky being over 90 years of age at this writing), Talamantez tactfully stops once he has achieved his purpose.



Whether you are deep in the throes of Jodorowsky fandom or you have never heard of the man, *Sacred Fool* is a work you need in your life. It is a warm reminder of the power of art, the strength within people, and the invisible ripples one life sends out to another. Now excuse me as I walk down to the bookstore to finally pick up a copy of Jodorowsky's *The Incal*.