



# In Service To The Narrative

## *The Buried Giant* through a Folklore Lens

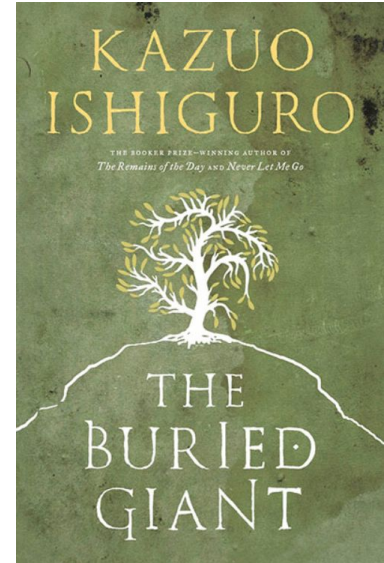
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# *The Buried Giant*: An Overview

- Written by Kazuo Ishiguro
  - Nobel Prize for Literature 2017
  - Many layers of meaning, designed to be reread
- Characters from early Western Canon (literary and folk)
  - *Divine Comedy*, *Beowulf*, Arthurian legends
  - Dragon, mist, forgetfulness, oh my!
  - Axl and Beatrice, Wistan, Sir Gawain, Edwin



# Purpose

- Folklore and modern literature
- Intersections of past and present
- Folklore interpretation of literature uncovers deep connection
- Western Canon has always included folklore influence

# Axel Olrik's Laws- The *Sagenwelt*

- Danish Folklorist active approximately 1880's-1910's
- Studied the oral folktale tradition of Europe
- *Sagenwelt* (Sage World/The Epic Laws of Folk Narrative)
  - More like guidelines than rules
  - Specifically designed for oral tradition



Axel Olrik circa 1916

# *The Buried Giant's Sagenwelt Laws*

- Law of Opening
- *Law of Two*
- *Logic of the World*
- *Law of Opposition*
- Law of Closing

# Law of Opposition

- Wistan and Gawain
  - Past, Future, and Nebulous Time
  - Cycles of violence, old becoming new
  - Not exclusively for violence, but emphasized by violence
  - Narrative demands in opposition to each other
- Beatrice and Axl
  - Narrative demands in consort, but history in opposition

# Laws of the World

- Narrative desires
  - Beatrice through the darkness
  - Sir Gawain to uphold the court
  - Wistan/Beowulf to free his kin and slay a dragon
- Who kills a dragon
- Serving *The Buried Giant's* narrative

## And this matters because...?

- Western Canon *is* folklore
- Aspects of oral tradition in modern literature are a transformative way of continuing an oral tradition in the written world
- Approaching *Buried Giant* from a literary/fiction perspective will not get the same result as a folklore reading



# Bibliography

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