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Salem Press Announces the Newest Edition to the *Critical Survey of Mythology & Folklore Series: Creation Myths*

Salem Press's sixth title in the popular *Critical Survey of Mythology and Folklore* series, *Creation Myths*, focuses on stories about the origin of the cosmos and of human life. Even as modern societies have moved away from literal belief, creation myths still illuminate profound cultural truths. The influence of shared mythological belief systems, whether conscious or not, is still a deep current running through civilization that can unite or divide societies. These primal stories have been the inspiration for countless works of art, drama, music, and literature throughout the ages and are still studied by scholars and in the classroom as a way to examine modern life and cultural history.

More recently, scholars have begun to revisit the place of narrative and drama in myths. Though traditionally associated with ritual or other sacred activities, myths are modes of creative thought that have an integrity of their own. They represent cultural storehouses of meaning and value. They can awe an audience, and exhibit qualities of beauty and truth that critical analyses of myth often overlook. Every myth, after all, has something to say, and often it is something significant and is communicated dramatically, aesthetically. In the case of creation myths, in particular, one is dealing with the first and last formulation of things, the ultimate conditions of human beings and the world in which life exists. Myth brings out a continuity between primal events of an archaic past and the immediate here-and-now of lived experience.

Students of myth today can appreciate these human constructions not merely for their functions or effects but for the simple fact that they are works of passion and imagination. While myths may be understood as modes of "primitive" thinking, students and scholars have discovered that a solid understanding of myth can help one better appreciate contemporary modes of thought. After all, in every walk of life today, one continues to encounter stories, symbols, themes, and meanings that were not created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) but rather draw on cultural precedents, that is, on ways of thinking and understanding that still have relevance.

Divided into ten regional sections, readers will find creation myths from

- Africa
- Mesoamerica and South America
- North America
- The Far East
- Norse, Celtic & Europe Mythology
- The Pacific & Oceania
- Egypt
- Greek & Roman Mythology
- India
- The Near East

The 400+ entries in this set cover **Myths and Stories, Gods and Goddesses, and Selected Sources and Authors**. Each regional section begins with a number of **Overview essays** that discuss the literature, mythology, and art of the region. All articles also include a section that surveys films, novels, and comic books that feature the mythical warriors and battles discussed in the write-up. Maps, illustrations, and poetry round out this two-volume set.

As with most mythology and folklore, common themes run throughout the legends of vastly different cultures and time periods, connecting people throughout the ages in their often-universal explanations of the beginnings of life. Topics such as gender, cross-cultural meaning, and religion are explored through the lens of the how the world and humanity came into existence, from ancient tales through modern music and even video games.

SUPPLEMENTAL FEATURES

- Separate **indexes of selected sources and authors** and gods and goddesses help in locating specific subjects.
- A **chronological index** of creation myths and stories places different cultures within specific time frames and offers supplemental information on the overall coverage of the volume.
- An **extensive bibliography** of secondary sources arranged by region rounds out the volume, and lists for Further Reading follow each article.

The *Critical Survey of Mythology and Folklore* series offers analytical articles and plot summaries of the major myths, tales, and other traditional literature for studies in advanced high school and undergraduate classrooms.

Free Online with Print Purchase

In addition, *Critical Survey of Mythology and Folklore: Creation Myths* comes with **free online access** through the Salem Press platform. A single purchase of the printed set is all it takes to gain access to this valuable title online at <https://online.salempress.com>. Free online access includes an unlimited number of simultaneous users and remote access.

Critical Survey of Mythology & Folklore: Creation Myths

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