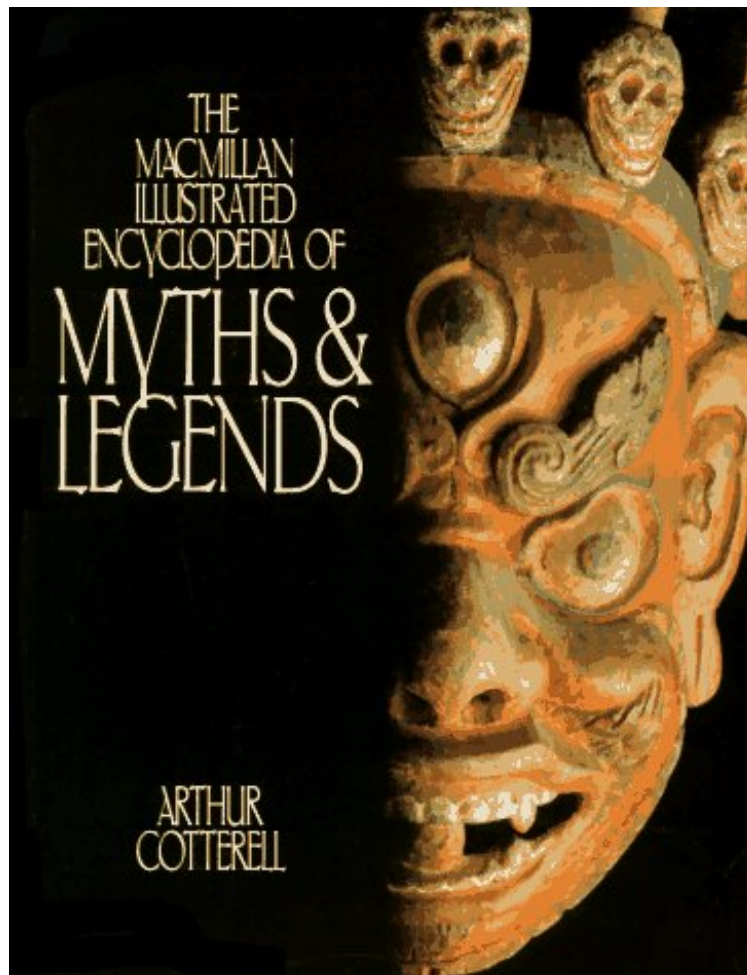


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The Macmillan Illustrated Encyclopedia of Myths and Legends

Arthur Cotterell

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From Publishers Weekly This survey of trends in U.S. religious beliefs compiled by the Gallup Organization presents tables and graphs that delineate Americans in groups and as individuals, and a variety of tallied responses to support the pollsters' conclusion that "despite a strong, typically American independent streak, the degrees of religious orthodoxy found among Americans is simply amazing." Belief in God is expressed by large numbers; Catholics appear to have become more independent in interpretation of dogma; the educated tend to be analytical about religion. There is a wealth of material here that, although informative, is plodding to read and in the form presented is not likely to interest general readers. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This gorgeously illustrated book is divided into three sections: essays on the role of myth in major civilizations, including non-European ones; an encyclopedia of gods and goddesses; and a micropedia. The essays are far too brief, with little acknowledgment that these myths were once part of a viable system of ritual and faith. The definitions in the characters and concepts section are good but do not reflect the complex interrelatedness of the stories and figures. Some of the inclusions and exclusions are perplexing, and the illustrations are not adequately identified by artist or date. Consequently, this is not an adequate source to use as a reference tool or as an overview. - Gail Wood, Montgomery Coll. Lib., Germantown, Md. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.