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OUTLINE OF AMERICAN LITERATURE



美国文学概况

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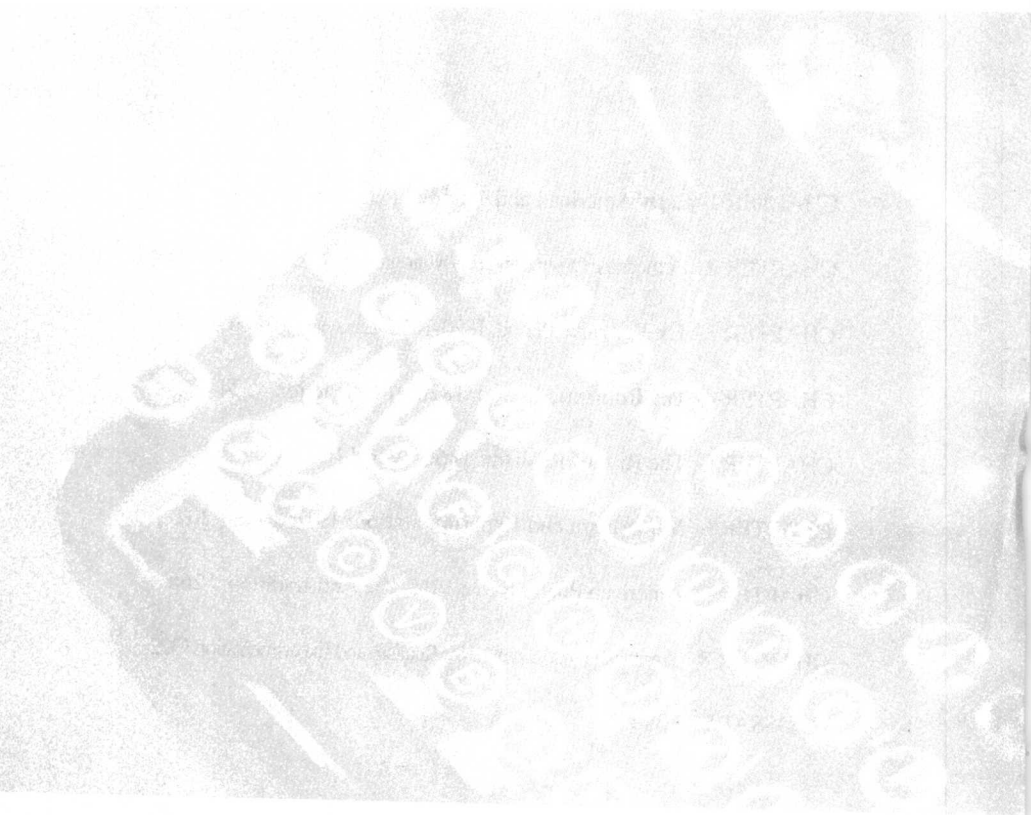
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CHAPTER 1

EARLY AMERICAN AND
COLONIAL PERIOD TO 1776

American literature begins with the orally transmitted myths, legends, tales, and lyrics (always songs) of Indian cultures. There was no written literature among the more than 500 different Indian languages and tribal cultures that existed in North America before the first Europeans arrived. As a result, Native American oral literature is quite diverse. Narratives from quasi-nomadic hunting cultures like the Navajo are different from stories of settled agricultural tribes such as the pueblo-dwelling Acoma; the stories of northern lakeside dwellers such as the Ojibwa often differ radically from stories of desert tribes like the Hopi.

Tribes maintained their own religions — worshipping gods, animals, plants, or sacred persons. Systems of government ranged from democracies to councils of elders to theocracies. These tribal variations enter into the oral literature as well.

Still, it is possible to make a few generalizations. Indian stories, for example, glow with reverence for nature as a spiritual as well as physical mother. Nature is alive and endowed with spiritual forces; main characters may be animals or plants, often totems associated with a tribe, group, or individual. The closest to the Indian sense of holiness in later American literature is Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendental "Over-Soul," which pervades all of life.

The Mexican tribes revered the divine Quetzalcoatl, a god of the Toltecs and Aztecs, and some tales of a high god or culture were told elsewhere. However, there are no long, standardized

第一章

从美国早期和殖民地时期至 1776 年

美国文学起源于口头传诵的印第安文化中的神话、传奇、传说和抒情诗（通常都是歌曲）。在第一批欧洲人到来之前，北美洲已经出现了 500 多种不同的印第安语言和部落文化，但没有用文字表现出来的文学形式。因此，北美土著人的口头文学多种多样。半游牧部落（如纳瓦霍族）的狩猎文化的口头文学与定居的耕作部落（如普韦布洛艾可玛族）的口头文学就不同；北部沿湖居民（如奥吉布瓦人）的传说与沙漠部落（如霍皮族）的传说也有很大区别。

各部落的宗教信仰也各不相同——有的崇拜神，有的崇拜动物或植物，有的崇拜圣人。政体也不尽相同，有的实行民主政治，有的实行族长委员会政治，也有的实行神权政治。部落间的这些差异在口头文学中也有所体现。

尽管如此，还是可以对各部落的宗教信仰进行概括。比如，在印第安传说中，不仅把大自然推崇为物质之母，而且把它推崇为精神之母。在印第安传说中，大自然是有生命的，并具有精神力量；人们崇拜的主要对象可能是动物或植物，常常是与部落、群体或个人相关的图腾。在后来的美国文学中，最接近印第安人神圣感的是拉尔夫·沃尔多·爱默生的先验的“超灵”，他认为超灵遍及所有生命。

一些墨西哥的印第安部落，如托尔特克人和阿兹特克人，崇拜

religious cycles about one supreme divinity. The closest equivalents to Old World spiritual narratives are often accounts of shamans' initiations and voyages. Apart from these, there are stories about culture heroes such as the Ojibwa tribe's Manabozho or the Navajo tribe's Coyote. These tricksters are treated with varying degrees of respect. In one tale they may act like heroes, while in another they may seem selfish or foolish. Although past authorities, such as the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, have deprecated trickster tales as expressing the inferior, amoral side of the psyche, contemporary scholars — some of them Native Americans — point out that Odysseus and Prometheus, the revered Greek heroes, are essentially tricksters as well.

Examples of almost every oral genre can be found in American Indian literature: lyrics, chants, myths, fairy tales, humorous anecdotes, incantations, riddles, proverbs, epics, and legendary histories. Accounts of migrations and ancestors abound, as do vision or healing songs and tricksters' tales. Certain creation stories are particularly popular. In one well-known creation story, told with variations among many tribes, a turtle holds up the world. In a Cheyenne version, the creator, Maheo, has four chances to fashion the world from a watery universe. He sends four water birds diving to try to bring up earth from the bottom. The snow goose, loon, and mallard soar high into the sky and sweep down in a dive, but cannot reach bottom; but the little coot, who cannot fly, succeeds in bringing up some mud in his bill. Only one creature, humble Grandmother Turtle, is the right shape to support the mud world Maheo shapes on her shell — hence the Indian name for America, "Turtle Island."

The songs or poetry, like the narratives, range from the sacred to the light and humorous: There are lullabies, war chants, love songs, and special songs for children's games, gambling, various chores, magic, or dance ceremonials. Generally the songs are repetitive. Short poem-songs given in dreams sometimes have the clear imagery and subtle mood associated with Japanese haiku

神圣的羽蛇神，也有些部落口头流传着崇高的神或文化的传说。不过，没有关于某一个最高神灵的标准化的成套的宗教故事。与欧洲神祇传说最接近的通常是对萨满教教士传教和旅行的描述。此外，还有一些故事描写文化英雄，如奥吉布瓦部落的曼纳博卓和纳瓦霍部落的人形精灵。这些传说中的精灵都受到不同程度的崇拜。在一个传说中，他们可能是英雄，而在另一个传说中，他们却可能很自私、愚蠢。虽然过去某些权威人士，如瑞士的心理学家卡尔·荣格认为那些有关精灵的传说只是表达心中低级及不道德的一面，但是，当代的学者们——有些是北美土著人——指出奥德修斯和普罗米修斯这两位受尊敬的希腊英雄，实际上也是精灵。

在美国印第安文学中，几乎每种口头文学类型的例子都有：抒情诗、圣歌、神话、童话、幽默趣闻、咒语、谜语、谚语、史诗和传奇故事。有大量的对移民和祖先们的描述，也有大量的歌颂神明和消愁禳灾的歌曲和精灵故事。此外，关于上帝造物的故事也非常流行。在一个众所周知的上帝造物的故事中，一只海龟驮起了世界。这个故事在很多部落中流传，有各种各样的版本。在切延内人中流传的故事里，造物主迈休有 4 次机会将世界从水的宇宙中塑造出来，他派出 4 只水鸟潜入水中试图将地球从水底带出。雪鹅、潜鸟和野鸭飞向高空并向水中俯冲，但却未能到达水底；不过，一只不会飞的水鸭却用他的尖嘴叼上来一些泥。只有—种动物——谦逊的海龟祖母能用她的背壳驮起迈休塑造出来的泥土世界——所以，美国在印第安语言中就叫“海龟岛”。

像故事一样，歌曲或诗有神圣的，也有轻松和幽默的。有摇篮曲、战争圣歌、爱情歌曲和一些适合孩子们游戏、赌博、各种杂务、魔术或舞蹈仪式用的特殊乐曲。通常这些歌曲都是反复吟唱的。被赋予梦想的短诗歌有时具有清新的意象和微妙的基调，都与日本俳句或受东方影响的意象派诗歌有关。一首奇佩瓦族的

or Eastern-influenced imagistic poetry. A Chippewa song runs:

A loon I thought it was
But it was
My love's
splashing oar.

Vision songs, often very short, are another distinctive form. Appearing in dreams or visions, sometimes with no warning, they may be healing, hunting, or love songs. Often they are personal, as in this Modoc song:

I
the song
I walk here.

Indian oral tradition and its relation to American literature as a whole is one of the richest and least explored topics in American studies. The Indian contribution to America is greater than is often believed. The hundreds of Indian words in everyday American English include "canoe," "tobacco," "potato," "moccasin," "moose," "persimmon," "raccoon," "tomahawk," and "totem." Contemporary Native American writing, discussed in chapter 8, also contains works of great beauty.

THE LITERATURE OF EXPLORATION

Had history taken a different turn, the United States easily could have been a part of the great Spanish or French overseas empires. Its present inhabitants might speak Spanish and form one nation with Mexico, or speak French and be joined with Canadian Francophone Quebec and Montreal.

Yet the earliest explorers of America were not English, Spanish, or French. The first European record of exploration in America is in a Scandinavian language. The Old Norse *Vinland Saga* recounts how the adventurous Leif Ericson and a band of wandering Norsemen settled briefly somewhere on the northeast

歌谣是这样的：

我以为它是一只潜鸟
但它是
我所爱的
溅起水花的浆。

意象歌谣常常很短，是另一种别具特色的形式。意象歌谣出现在梦想或幻想中，有时没有警示作用，只为消愁禳灾、狩猎或表达爱情，它们往往因人而宜，如这首莫多克歌谣：

我唱着
这首歌谣
走到这儿。

印第安口头传诵的传统和它与整个美国文学的关系是美国研究中最丰富和最有待开发的课题之一。印第安人对美国的贡献比人们所知的要大得多。美国日常用语中有成百上千的印第安词语，包括“独木舟”、“烟草”、“土豆”、“鹿皮鞋”、“北美麋”、“柿子”、“浣熊”、“印第安战斧”和“图腾”。当代印第安人也著有非常完美的作品，这将在第八章中讨论。

开拓时期的文学

如果出现另一种形式的历史转折，美国本可以很容易地成为西班牙或法国海外帝国的一部分的。那么现在的美国居民就可能讲西班牙语，与墨西哥一起形成一个国家；或者讲法语，与加拿大说法语的魁北克和蒙特利尔合并。

然而，美洲最早的开拓者却不是英国人、西班牙人或法国人。欧洲人最早对开拓美洲的文字记载是用斯堪的纳维亚语写成的。用古斯堪的纳维亚语写的《文兰英雄传奇》描述的是在 11 世纪前

coast of America — probably Nova Scotia, in Canada — in the first decade of the 11th century, almost 400 years before the next recorded European discovery of the New World.

The first known and sustained contact between the Americas and the rest of the world, however, began with the famous voyage of an Italian explorer, Christopher Columbus, funded by the Spanish rulers Ferdinand and Isabella. Columbus's journal in his "Epistola," printed in 1493, recounts the trip's drama — the terror of the men, who feared monsters and thought they might fall off the edge of the world; the near-mutiny; how Columbus faked the ships' logs so the men would not know how much farther they had travelled than anyone had gone before; and the first sighting of land as they neared America.

Bartolomé de las Casas is the richest source of information about the early contact between American Indians and Europeans. As a young priest he helped conquer Cuba. He transcribed Columbus's journal, and late in life wrote a long, vivid *History of the Indians* criticizing their enslavement by the Spanish.

Initial English attempts at colonization were disasters. The first colony was set up in 1585 at Roanoke, off the coast of North Carolina; all its colonists disappeared, and to this day legends are told about blue-eyed Croatan Indians of the area. The second colony was more permanent: Jamestown, established in 1607. It endured starvation, brutality, and misrule. However, the literature of the period paints America in glowing colors as the land of riches and opportunity. Accounts of the colonizations became world-renowned. The exploration of Roanoke was carefully recorded by Thomas Hariot in *A Brief and True Report of the New-Found Land of Virginia* (1588). Hariot's book was quickly translated into Latin, French, and German; the text and pictures were made into engravings and widely republished for over 200 years.

The Jamestown colony's main record, the writings of Captain John Smith, one of its leaders, is the exact opposite of Hariot's accurate, scientific account. Smith was an incurable

10 年，即历史记载的下一位欧洲人发现新大陆之前约 400 年，喜欢探险的雷夫·埃里克森和一群喜欢漫游的古斯堪的纳维亚人是如何在美洲东北部海岸的某个地方——可能是加拿大的新斯科舍——短暂地定居过一阵儿。

不过，我们所知道的美洲与外界第一次接触始于一位意大利探险家克里斯多夫·哥伦布的一次著名的航行。这次航行的资金是由西班牙统治者斐迪南和伊莎贝拉提供的。哥伦布的航海日志以“书信”的形式于 1493 年出版，里面描述了航行中戏剧性的故事，如人们害怕魔鬼，并以为自己会从世界的边缘上掉下去；即将反叛的人们；哥伦布是如何伪造航海日志，以便不让人们知道他们比前人多航行了多远；以及他们在接近美洲大陆时最初看到的景象。

巴托洛梅·德·拉斯·卡萨斯是掌握美洲印第安人与欧洲人之间早期往来的资料最丰富的人。他是一名年轻的牧师，是他帮助征服了古巴，是他抄写了哥伦布的航海日志，并在晚年时，用西班牙语撰写了极其生动的长篇《印第安人的历史》，批判了西班牙人对印第安人的奴役。

英国人最初的殖民尝试是灾难。第一块殖民地于 1585 年在离北卡罗来纳的海岸不远的罗阿诺克建立，当时所有的殖民者都失踪了。时至今日，那里还流传着关于蓝眼睛的克洛坦族印第安人的传说。第二块殖民地詹姆斯敦比较持久一些，它建于 1607 年。那里经历了饥荒、野蛮和暴政。不过，这个时期的文学用浓重的笔墨把那里描绘成了富裕和充满机遇的土地，对殖民地开拓的描述享誉全球。托马斯·哈里奥特在他的《弗吉尼亚新发现土地的简短而真实的报告》（1588）中对罗阿诺克的开拓作了详细的记载。很快，哈里奥特的著作被翻译成拉丁语、法语和德语；正文和图片还被刻成雕版，200 多年来一直翻印出版。

关于詹姆斯敦殖民地的主要记录，当地的统治者之一——约翰·史密斯上尉在他的作品中的描述与哈里奥特精确、科学的表述恰恰相反。史密斯生性浪漫，他似乎对他的冒险经历作了添枝

romantic, and he seems to have embroidered his adventures. To him we owe the famous story of the Indian maiden, Pocahontas. Whether fact or fiction, the tale is ingrained in the American historical imagination. The story recounts how Pocahontas, favorite daughter of Chief Powhatan, saved Captain Smith's life when he was a prisoner of the chief. Later, when the English persuaded Powhatan to give Pocahontas to them as a hostage, her gentleness, intelligence, and beauty impressed the English, and, in 1614, she married John Rolfe, an English gentleman. The marriage initiated an eight-year peace between the colonists and the Indians, ensuring the survival of the struggling new colony.

In the 17th century, pirates, adventurers, and explorers opened the way to a second wave of permanent colonists, bringing their wives, children, farm implements, and craftsmen's tools. The early literature of exploration, made up of diaries, letters, travel journals, ships' logs, and reports to the explorers' financial backers — European rulers or, in mercantile England and Holland, joint stock companies — gradually was supplanted by records of the settled colonies. Because England eventually took possession of the North American colonies, the best-known and most-anthologized colonial literature is English. As American minority literature continues to flower in the 20th century and American life becomes increasingly multicultural, scholars are rediscovering the importance of the continent's mixed ethnic heritage. Although the story of literature now turns to the English accounts, it is important to recognize its richly cosmopolitan beginnings.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD IN NEW ENGLAND

It is likely that no other colonists in the history of the world were as intellectual as the Puritans. Between 1630 and 1690, there were as many university graduates in the northeastern section of the United States, known as New England, as in the mother country — an astounding fact when one considers that