上海市高等学校教育高地建设项目
上海市教育委员会重点课程“英美文学”资助项目(KZ0805)

英美文学名作研读丛书

Appreciations of Selected Readings of the American Literature

美国文学名作研读

上海交通大学出版社
SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

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内 容 提 要

本书是上海市高等学校教育高地建设项目，是为普通高校英语专业本科生编写的美国文学教材。本书根据美国文学史各阶段的划分——殖民地时期与早期美国文学、浪漫主义、现实主义、现代主义和后现代主义，分为五章，精选了34位名家及其代表作品或作品节选，每篇选文均配有1～2篇名家评论，为学生鉴赏解读提供借鉴与指导。作品选文后还为学生进一步思考研读设计了思考题，并提供了相关参考书目。

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前　言

以“美国文学选读”或“美国文学导读”之类名称命名，作为普通高校英语本科专业《美国文学》课程的教材在国内已有十多个版本，这是由“美国文学”课程在英语专业中所具有的专业性和重要性以及美国文学在现当代世界文学中的领先地位等诸因素决定的。不同版本的教材在编写体例上大同小异，所选作家、作品因时代特征、评论界研究方向的转移以及编者个人的喜好略有差异，再编此类教材是否有必要、有意义是我们考虑的首要问题。

在多年教学经验的基础上，我们发现英美文学教师面临的重大问题是学生毕业论文文学方向的选题和写作质量与国内英语教学质量普遍提高的状况不成正比，究其原因是学生阅读原著和相关评论的数量严重不足。在此我们不再探讨英美文学课程在各高校日益削减的实际情况，也不探讨高校扩招后班级人数的增加，教师工作量的加大，还有学生关于英文资料难以获得的种种抱怨，再加上英特网为“复制”、“粘贴”论文提供的巨大便利。我们考虑的是在大学课堂我们应该教会学生辨别英特网上免费资料的良莠，让学生知道在强大的搜索引擎上键入怎样的关键词才能找到美国文学的相关资料，让学生明白作为语言学习者从低级的鹦鹉学舌发展到高级的具有独立思想的知识分子应具有的分析性阅读和评判性阅读的能力。为此我们编写了本教材。

本教材的创新之处是所选的美国经典作家、作品均配有一到两篇相应的名家评论。评论的方法、角度各不相同，目的是为学生提供一种解读方法，也为使学生了解评论写作的方法，了解文学理论的具体运用提供具体实例，更为学生研究性学习指明一条探索的方向。需要强调的是读者对原著的理解不必受制于评论家的理解，我们可以把评论文和原著看成是评论家和作者之间跨越时空的精神对话，同样我们作为读者也可以和作者进行跨越时空的对话。

本教材内容涵盖面较广，时间跨度从美国殖民地时期到后现代主义时期，首次在国内同类书籍中全面展示美国文学的全貌，其中包括美洲土著印第安文学和各族裔文学，体现美国文学鲜明的杂糅性。全书共分五章，包括 34 位经典作家。每章由时代背景简介、作家简介、选文评论、选文、注释、思考题、选文概要、拓展阅读书目八大部分构成。诗歌和短篇小说尽可能保留完整的原文；长篇小说和戏剧因篇幅限制而有所删节，删节处用省略号表示；评论文一般只节选与选文相关的段落，删节处用省略号表示；参考文献中提供查看原评论文的相关信息。本教材主要目标对象是英语专业本科生，因此教材编写非常注重教学的互动，并充分考虑学生的实际情况。教师可根据具体课时情况选择授课内容，不必一一覆盖，但是讲授的内容应该研读到位，同时鼓励学生课后大量阅读，建议以小测验的方式检查学生课后阅读情况。英语专业研究生、高校教师及非英语专业本科生、研究生和热爱美国文学的广大读者也都可将此书作为教参和了解美国文学与文化，

提高英语水平的扩展性阅读材料。

本教材的第一、第二、第三章由卢敏教授编写，第四、第五章由陈怡均讲师编写。本教材的编写受上海市教育委员会“英美文学”重点课程项目资助。本教材的付梓得到上海师范大学外国语学院和上海师范大学教务处的鼎力支持，上海师范大学外语学院院长蔡龙权教授和“英美文学”重点课程负责人叶华年教授及退休教师王新球教授对本教材编写提出了很多宝贵意见，在此一并谨表诚挚的感谢。

尽管编者做了最大努力，书中错讹之处一定仍然不少，敬请各位专家、学者、读者等拨冗不吝指教。

编　者

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Contents

Chapter Ⅰ American Colonial and Early National Literature (1620-1820) 1

1. **Native American Voices** 5
   Literary Review 6
   Selected Readings 8
   How the World Began 8
2. **Anne Bradstreet** 13
   Literary Review 14
   Selected Readings 15
   Verses upon the Burning of Our House 15
   To My Dear and Loving Husband 17
3. **Edward Taylor** 18
   Literary Review 19
   Selected Readings 21
   God's Determinations 21
4. **Benjamin Franklin** 24
   Literary Review 25
   Selected Readings 27
   The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin 27
5. **Thomas Jefferson** 30
   Literary Review 31
   Selected Readings 33
   The Declaration of Independence 33

Chapter Ⅱ Romanticism (1820-1865) 38

6. **Washington Irving** 42
   Literary Review 44
   Selected Readings 45
   Rip Van Winkle 45
7. **James Fenimore Cooper** 52
   Literary Review 54
   Selected Readings 57
   The Last of the Mohicans 57
8. **Ralph Waldo Emerson** 60
   Literary Review 62
   Selected Readings 64

The American Scholar ····· 64
9. Nathaniel Hawthorne ····· 69
Literary Review ····· 71
Selected Readings ····· 75
The Minister's Black Veil ····· 75
10. Edgar Allan Poe ····· 86
Literary Review ····· 89
Selected Readings ····· 92
The Tell-Tale Heart ····· 92
11. Walt Whitman ····· 97
Literary Review ····· 98
Selected Readings ····· 100
Song of Myself (1881) ····· 100
I Hear America Singing ····· 101
12. Herman Melville ····· 103
Literary Review ····· 105
Selected Readings ····· 106
Moby Dick ····· 106
13. Emily Dickinson ····· 111
Literary Review ····· 113
Selected Readings ····· 117
67 Success is counted sweetest ····· 117
249 Wild Nights-Wild Nights! ····· 117
288 I'm Nobody! Who are you? ····· 118
1129 Tell all the Truth but tell it slant— ····· 118

Chapter Ⅲ Realism (1865-1914) ····· 120

14. Mark Twain ····· 123
Literary Review ····· 126
Selected Readings ····· 128
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn ····· 128
15. Henry James ····· 135
Literary Review ····· 137
Selected Readings ····· 140
Daisy Miller: A Study ····· 140
16. Stephen Crane ····· 147
Literary Review ····· 149
Selected Readings ····· 151
The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky ····· 151
17. Theodore Dreiser ····· 161
Literary Review ····· 163

Selected Readings 166
Sister Carrie 166

Chapter Ⅳ Modernism (1914-1945) 174

18. Robert Frost 178
Literary Review 179
Selected Readings 181
Mending Wall 181
The Road Not Taken 183
Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening 184
19. Sherwood Anderson 185
Literary Review 186
Selected Readings 189
The Egg 189
20. William Carlos Williams 198
Literary Review 199
Selected Readings 201
The Red Wheelbarrow 201
This Is Just to Say 202
21. Ezra Pound 203
Literary Review 205
Selected Readings 206
In a Station of the Metro 206
A Pact 207
22. Eugene O'Neill 208
Literary Review 209
Selected Readings 211
The Hairy Ape 211
23. F. Scott Fitzgerald 214
Literary Review 216
Selected Readings 218
The Diamond as Big as the Ritz 218
24. William Faulkner 231
Literary Review 232
Selected Readings 234
A Rose for Emily 234
25. Ernest Hemingway 243
Literary Review 245
Selected Readings 249
Cat in the Rain 249
26. Langston Hughes 252

Literary Review ····· 254
Selected Readings ····· 255
The Negro Speaks of Rivers ····· 255
Theme for English B ····· 256
27. John Steinbeck ····· 258
Literary Review ····· 259
Selected Readings ····· 261
Breakfast ····· 261

Chapter Ⅴ Postmodernism (1945-) ····· 265

28. Arthur Miller ····· 270
Literary Review ····· 271
Selected Readings ····· 272
The Crucible ····· 272
29. Robert Lowell ····· 283
Literary Review ····· 284
Selected Readings ····· 285
Mr. Edwards and the Spider ····· 285
Skunk Hour ····· 287
30. Joseph Heller ····· 290
Literary Review ····· 291
Selected Readings ····· 292
Catch-22 ····· 292
31. James Baldwin ····· 301
Literary Review ····· 302
Selected Readings ····· 303
Sonny's Blues ····· 303
32. Flannery O'Connor ····· 317
Literary Review ····· 318
Selected Readings ····· 320
A Good Man Is Hard to Find ····· 320
33. Allen Ginsberg ····· 333
Literary Review ····· 335
Selected Readings ····· 337
Howl ····· 337
34. Toni Morrison ····· 344
Literary Review ····· 345
Selected Readings ····· 346
The Beloved ····· 346

Bibliography ····· 352

Chapter I American Colonial and Early National Literature (1620-1820)

The United States of America grew out of religious controversy; out of the desire of monarchs to expand their empires; out of the human longing for land, adventure, and gold; even out of nations' efforts to rid themselves of surplus populations, as well as thieves, murderers, paupers and runaways. The growth of colonial America into the United States is recorded in a literature that began as reports of exploration and colonization. Early colonial writers did not think of themselves or their writings as American. English settlers in the New World did not regularly call themselves Americans until the 1760s, when they were well on their way to creating the national identity that finally emerged during the American Revolution. Before that time the colonists thought of themselves as Europeans: Frenchmen, Swedes, Dutch men, Germans, Scotch-Irish, and Spaniards. There were African Negroes and American Indians as well. All contributed to the forming of the American civilization, but the colonies that became the first United States were for the most part English, sustained by English traditions, ruled by English laws, supported by English commerce, and named after English monarchs and English lands such as Georgia, Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New York, New Hampshire, and New England.

By the time Columbus arrived in 1492, Native Americans had developed hundreds of different cultures and languages. They spoke a thousand different tongues, each so distinct that the speakers of one could not understand the speaker of another. And they had no written languages. As a result, the Indians lacked the kind of unified cultural tradition. Theirs was an oral culture, and their traditions and religions were preserved in oral tales and myths. North American Indians lacked true written languages until they were purposely created early in the nineteenth century. Spoken literature was handed down from generation to generation, to speakers and talkers, who memorized the stories, shaping and adapting them to meet the changes they experienced. Like the people of all cultures, they developed myths and legends that explained their origins and the origin of the worlds they lived in. Stories, poems, and orations were part of their daily lives, essential to their cohesion as a people and as guides to life—and to death.

Until the twentieth century the literature of Native Americans in the United States

was overshadowed by the culture and the literature of the European settlers who had come to the new Eden across the Atlantic. The stories, poems, biographies, and speeches of Native Americans had remained largely the concern of anthropologists, ethnologists, and cultural historians who were interested in recording the varieties of native culture before they were completely engulfed by the dominating civilization of the intruding Europeans. But the last half of the twentieth century has seen a rebirth of interest in the culture, the art, the literature of Native Americans. Just as all Americans have come more fully to understand and to emulate the Native Americans' profound interest in preserving the land and its animals, so modern-day Americans of all cultural varieties are beginning to understand and to value more fully the verbal and written art of America's first immigrants.

The first permanent English settlement in North America was established at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. Among the members of the small band of Jamestown settlers was Captain John Smith, an English soldier of fortune. His reports of exploration and settlement, published in the early 1600s, have been described as the first distinctly American literature to be written in English. His vision of a new and abundant world helped lure to America the Pilgrims and the Puritans who saw themselves as people elected by God to flee from the Old World to a new Promised Land in America.

The Puritans and Pilgrims who settled in New England in 1620s were extreme reformers. They believed that the Church of England's break from Rome had not gone far enough. They wanted to purify their English church still further. Whereas the Puritans initially were willing to work within the confines of the established Church of England, the Pilgrims thought it so corrupt that they wished to separate themselves from it completely. In 1620, 201 of them sailed to the New World in a ship called Mayflower and they arrived at Plymouth and built the Plymouth colony. And like the Separatists at Plymouth, the Puritans came to New England to establish a colony based on the Bible law. But unlike the Separatists, the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay believed that the English Church was not wholly beyond reform. They believed that it could be purified of its errors, and thus, when they migrated to the New World, the Puritans came not as Separatists but as official members of the Church of England.

The religious doctrines of the Puritans and Separatists had been strongly shaped by the teachings of two great religious leaders: Martin Luther (1483-1546), a German monk who was a professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg; and John Calvin (1509-1564), a French theologian who lived and taught at Geneva, Switzerland. Luther and Calvin asserted that all men have the right and the obligation to read and study the Bible, for it alone is the word of God. Pilgrims and Puritans literally believed that all

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humankind was stained by Adam's fall. But they also believed that after condemning Adam and all his descendants, God had later relented. He had made another agreement, this time a Covenant of Grace with Abraham. Under that Covenant of Grace a special few, the "seed of Abraham," were chosen to escape eternal damnation and be taken to heaven. And the Puritans believed that they were among that special few, the elect, that they were, as Edward Taylor put it, "Encoached for heaven" with hearts "Enfired with holy flame!"

The written expression of religious ideas became New England's great contribution to American literature. Sermons and numerous biographies of New England's worthies, such as Cotton Mather's *Life of William Bradford*, were created to serve as moral lessons, to encourage piety and holiness. Diaries emphasized the importance of the individual's spiritual health and the need for constant self-examination. Poems by Michael Wigglesworth, Anne Bradstreet, and Edward Taylor were filled with expressions of devotion and faith. Even terrible tales of Indian captivity, such as Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative*, were read as lessons that showed how true Christians could be delivered from red-skinned agents of satanic evil.

Religious ideas were expressed in a biblical style of writing. It was meant to be simple and useful, like New England churches scoured free of needless decoration. Writing was to be as clear as fine glass, free of distortions, free of dull scholars. Devotion to the simple style is apparent in the stark lessons of the *New England Primer*. Plain and simple language brightens the ungarnished diaries of Puritan stalwarts such as John Winthrop and Samuel Sewall. The Pilgrim William Bradford declared that he would write the history of Plymouth Plantation in "a plain style, with singular regard unto the simple truth in all things." To such Puritans, the human desire for rich, artistic embellishment found easy expression only privately—as in the metaphysical poetry of Edward Taylor—or publicly in complex theological disputes and in the death's heads, ornate symbols of human mortality, that they carved upon their gravestones.

The eighteenth century saw enormous changes—economic, social, philosophical and scientific— that inevitably affected the influence and authority of clergymen and transformed the ways in which they understood the world. Most important, many intellectuals now believed in the power of the human mind to comprehend the universe as never before, particularly through the laws of physics as they recently had been described by the great man Isaac Newton (1642-1727). Second, and of equal importance, through the influence of the English metaphysician John Locke (1632-1704) there arose new psychological paradigms that promulgated human sympathy, rather than supernatural grace, as the basis for the moral life. Such challenges to the theocentric world of the colonial clergy were part of the immense changes in Western thought described by

historians as the Enlightenment.

The eighteenth century brought a new world into being in the most basic and striking ways. The increase in population alone helps account for the greater diversity of opinion in religious as well as in political life that marked it and its literature. In 1700, the settlers in British North America numbered little more than 250,000. By 1800, there were more than 5 million. The demand for and price of colonial goods increased in England, and vast fortunes were to be made in New England with any business connected with shipbuilding: especially timber, tar, and pitch. The rapid expanding trade linked the colonies to other areas: Europe, Africa, the Caribbean basin as well as North and South America. With the economic take-off, the colonists better understood what was special or unique about their experience in the New World. United by the common experience of ocean passage and the desire to make new lives for themselves, these thousands of emigrants slowly but inexorably began to realize that they had more in common as inhabitants of America than they did as citizens of a Europe that rapidly receded into memory. In 1702 no one would have dreamed of an independent union of colonies, but by 1750s it was a distinct possibility.

The Stamp Act of 1764, taxing all newspapers, legal documents, and licenses, had infuriated Bostonians and resulted in the burning of the governor's palace; the Virginian Patrick Henry had taken the occasion to speak with passion against taxation without representation. In 1770 a Boston mob had been fired on by British soldiers. Three years later was the famous "Tea Party," when colonists dressed as Native Americans and dumped English tea into Boston harbor as a protest against paying taxes on it. This event tested the limits of British rule. In adopting the costume of Native Americans, these protesters declared themselves anti-thetical to everything British.

Although the drama of these events and the personal suffering they caused cannot be underestimated, colonists also were transformed into revolutionaries through the power of the word. Thomas Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense*, published in January 1776, has been credited with tipping the scales toward revolution. Paine appealed to basic tenets of the Enlightenment. His clarion call to those that "love mankind," those "that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth!" did not go unheeded. In December 1776, when Washington's troops were at their most demoralized, it was again, Paine's first Crisis paper—popularly called *The American Crisis*—that was ready to all the regiments and was said to have inspired their future success. Thomas Jefferson's *The Declaration of Independence* stirred the world and helped form the American republic.

The eighteenth century was, in fact, the great age of the newspaper and the moral essay. By the time of the revolution, there was the great cry for a "national literature" (meaning anti-British) and the political events of the 1770s were advantageous for a

career in letters. Even women writers like Judith Sargent Murray, Sarah Wentworth Morton found eager audiences for their works in periodicals and their literary efforts added to the campaign for a true realization of the principle of equality.

In 1783, the year the United States achieved its independence, Noah Webster declared, "America must be as independent in literature as she is in politics." The beginning of literary independence was evident in such celebrations of the American scene as Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), and Bartram's *Travels* (1791). Yet American literature throughout the century was largely patterned on the writing of eighteenth century Englishmen. Phillis Wheatley and Philip Freneau, the most important poets of the period, derived their power and style, their sentiments and regular couplets from English models. Franklin shaped his writing after the *Spectator Papers* (1711-1712) of the English essayists Addison and Steele. An ever growing and largely feminine reading audience created a rising demand for novels that was met by the importation of large numbers of English books. The first American novel, William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy*, did not appear until 1789. The first popular American novel, Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791), was first published in England although it was eventually reprinted more than 200 times in America. The moral temper of the colonies discouraged development of the drama. The first American play to appear on the American stage, Thomas Godfrey's *The Prince of Parthia*, was not presented until 1767. Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, the first American drama on a native theme and the first American comedy, appeared in 1787. It helped introduce the American "Jonathan," the "stage Yankee" who became one of the stock characters in the American drama of the next century.

1. Native American Voices

Stories about the creation of the world tell people who they are by telling them where they come from. Native American creation stories, although never written down or gathered into a bible, serve for native cultures in much the same way as the Book of Genesis serves for the Judeo-Christian world: they posit a general cultural outlook and offer perspectives on what life is and how to understand it. All native peoples have stories of the earliest times. These peoples encountered European explorers, missionaries, and colonists very early in the period of contact, and information and conjecture about the native peoples appear in European texts that go back almost four hundred years. But these early records offer only bare sketches of what native people said, sang, chanted,

and narrated; and of course, North American Indians did not themselves write down their stories.

The people known collectively as the Iroquois were made up of the Mohawk, Seneca, Oneida, Onondaga, and Cayuga nations. Joined in the early eighteenth century by the Tuscarora of North Carolina, the Five Nations became the Six Nations. The original Five Nations occupied lands that ranged from the area northeast of lakes Ontario and Erie around the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, then south of the lakes, and eastward almost to the Hudson River. Named Iroquois by the French (the Dutch and English called all these peoples Mohawk, Maqua, or Seneca), the Six Nations called themselves people of the Longhouse, in reference to their primary type of dwelling. Iroquois longhouses were some twenty feet wide and from forty to two hundred feet long, accommodating several families who shared cooking fires. The largest towns of the Iroquois contained as many as two thousand people.

The Iroquois creation myth exists in some twenty-five versions, the earliest of which was taken down by the Frenchman Gabriel Sagard in 1623 from the Huron. Other early accounts derive from the Mohawk and the Seneca. There is, however, no actual transcription and translation of an Iroquois cosmogonic myth—a narrative of the establishment of the world—until that of David Cusick, a Tuscarora, in the 19th century.

Literary Review

Native American Literature

(Excerpt)

Andrew Wiget

The Woman Who Fell from the Sky gives birth to a daughter who grows quickly and is herself magically impregnated, either by Turtle or Wind. During the gestation she hears two arguing inside her. The quarrel erupts into history when the Twins are born, normally in the case of Sprout, Good-Minded, or Sapling as he is variously called, but abnormally in the case of Flint or Evil-Minded, who burst from his mother's armpit, killing her. Various parts of her body provide the first examples of edible plants in the Huron version. The Rival Twins engage in a dualistic struggle to establish the world, Flint creating exaggerations that threaten man's future and Sprout cutting them down to size. Sprout also releases the game animals that Flint has impounded. Throughout their contest the influence of the two women is heavily felt, Sprout being assisted by his mother and opposed by the Woman Who Fell from the Sky, who aids Flint. The world order is finally established, first when Sprout defeats Flint in a gambling contest establishing the seasons and second when Sprout defeats Flint in combat. After marrying

a woman named Hanging Flower and establishing the family from which the contemporary Iroquois are descended, Sprout follows the Milky Way to join his defeated brother in the Skyworld. Among many non-Iroquoian peoples this Twin sequel holds a position independent of and more prominent than the Earth-Diver story and is closely related to the Star Husband tale. Nevertheless, the activities of its hero, like those of Sprout, suggest that he, too, is clearly perceived as a transformer and culture hero.

...

William Fenton, the prominent Iroquoianist, has adopted a similar approach for interpreting the Iroquois Earth-Diver story. Among its prominent themes:

> The earth is our mother, living and continually generating life.
>
> Life is regular, cyclical, patterned by twos and fours, and these metaphysical patterns are models for ethical ones.
>
> The world and all that is in it are endowed with Orenda (Power).
>
> It is women who count (the Iroquois are matrilineal); paternity is secondary.
>
> Restraint is important.
>
> Thanksgiving and greeting maintain harmony in a hierarchical system by affirming right relationships.
>
> Dreams compel their own fulfillment.

Finally, according to Fenton, the myth affirms that "culture is an affair of the mind."

Among the essential principles articulated by any cosmological myth are the shape of the universe and the relationship between space and time. Clearly and consistently, in Indian myths three cosmic zones—the Skyworld, the Earth-Surface World, and the Underworld—are imaged. The passage of the mediational figure through these worlds creates different epochs, suggesting that time and space are mutually convertible, that to say "long ago" is the same as saying "far away." A corollary of this axiomatic, three-zone division is that passage between zones occurs along a definite path, an *axis mundi*, which may be imaged as the Milky Way, a sacred mountain, or a cosmic tree, and that passage can be taken in both directions. Finally, through a variety of images of transformation, the passage as fall illustrates the communication of sacred power into this world, where its effects are still visible. The act of communication establishes for all time the prototypical channel of power and provides, therefore, the means of access for all mankind to that power. Together with marvelous births, inner voices, Sky Parents, and a protoworld, these motifs link the Earth-Diver myth intimately with circumpolar, boreal shamanism, the origins of which, as indicated by the bear cult and cave paintings

of man-animal transformations, lie deep in the Paleolithic past.

Besides shamanism, another cultural instruction frequently accounted for in the Earth-Diver myths is the origin of agriculture. Heavy dependence upon the corn-squash-beans complex seems to have come late for peoples like the Osage and the Iroquois, perhaps around A. D. 1000, although they had obtained these foods in small quantities through trade and scattered planting and had always gathered undomesticated plants. Both myths contain starting flesh-to-plant transformations, which, despite their folkloric conventionality, nevertheless suggest the impact of an agricultural revolution upon a predominantly hunting culture. In the Iroquoian myth, this transformation is validated by the resolution in favor of the former pole, in the dualism of Sprout and Flint, Growth and Death, Peace and War, Corn and Meat. In the Osage myth the Elk joyfully gives itself up to the soil, producing from its hair all forms of vegetation, wild plants as well as cultigens.

The Earth-Diver is the story of the Fortunate Fall played out against a landscape more vast than Eden and yet on a personal scale equally as intimate. It is a story of losses, the loss of celestial status, the loss of life in the depths of the sea. But it is also the story of gifts, especially the gift of power over life, the gift of agriculture to sustain life, and the gift of the vision to understand man's place as somewhere between the abyss and the stars.

Selected Readings

How the World Began[1]

Beyond the dome we call the sky there is another world. There in the most ancient of times was a fair country where lived the great chief of the up-above-world and his people, the celestial beings. This chief had a wife who was very aged in body, having survived many seasons.

In that upper world there were many things of which men of today know nothing. This world floated like a great cloud and journeyed where the great chief wished it to go. The crust of that world was not thick, but none of these men beings knew what was under the crust.

In the center of that world there grew a great tree which bore flowers and fruits and all the people lived from the fruits of the tree and were satisfied. Now, moreover, the tree bore a great blossom at its top, and it was luminous and lighted the world above, and wonderful perfume filled the air which the people breathed. The rarest perfume of all was that which resembled the smoke of sacred tobacco, and this was the incense greatly loved by the great chief. It grew from the leaves that sprouted from the roots of the tree.

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