

the first people or gods into everything which is in the world, including the world itself—is succeeded by another in which are described the various changes, phenomena, and processes observed throughout nature.

In this second cycle, as I have just stated, light and darkness, heat and cold, opposing winds, heavenly bodies appear as heroes and leading actors. For ages the reverence, sympathy, and enthusiasm of primitive men have been given to those heroes, and are given to them yet, by every tribe which preserves its ancient beliefs and ideas.

In this cycle is one small group of myths which to the Indian is very sacred, a group which in many tribes is revered beyond others. This group associates the earth with the sky and sun considered as one person, or the sky and sun considered as distinct from each other. To these are added one, and sometimes two personages born of the earth. In the simplest version of this myth the earth maiden through being looked at by the sun becomes a mother, gives birth to a great hero, the chief benefactor of Indians. This hero gives the race all gifts that support existence, and it is through him that men live and prosper. Under whatever name he appears this benefactor is really that warm light which we see quivering, waving, and dancing above the earth in fine weather. He is the son of the virgin earth, of that mother who has never known a consort save the one who looked from the height of heaven on her.