

this world arose. He gave this history by projecting existence into a past which was remote and passionless. Out of that harmonious past he evolved the present world and its order by describing in the past world the play of all those passions, desires, and appetites which he saw at work in life around him. Such was the method employed in producing the American creation myths. The task required much time, long observation, careful thought, and no small constructive power. These creation myths with the next, which I have mentioned already and called action myths, are the great result of mental toil and effort in the old time on this continent. In these two sets of myths the Indian has told what he thinks of the universe.

When Europeans came to this hemisphere, the American myth system was unbroken and perfect. There was no second order of thought here. The continent was untouched by foreign conquest or ideas. The inhabitants had lived in mental isolation, in absolute freedom from every outside influence. Human history has no second example of a single system of thought developed over such a vast area. Inhabited America extended at least nine thousand miles from north to south, more than one third of the earth's circumference and considerably more than the earth's diameter. This territory where broadest was at least three thousand miles from east to west, both in North and South America. Over this immense portion of the earth's surface with its endless variety of soil, climate, scenery, and