tivation, before European disruption of the tightly integrated Polynesian belief system, social organization, means of subsistence, and system of land tenure, mutely attests to the efficacy of the Polynesian land ethic.

AMERICAN INDIAN LAND WISDOM

More than ten thousand years ago, Asiatic big-game hunters wandered across the Bering land bridge into the Western Hemisphere. These so-called Paleo-Indians were the ancestors of the American Indians, who eventually became a distinct race. There is, of course, no such thing as *the* American Indian worldview. North American Indian peoples, to say nothing of those in South America, were divided by hundreds of mutually unintelligible dialects of several distinct language stems, and they inhabited and culturally adapted to biomes ranging from dense wet cypress forests dripping with Spanish moss in the southeastern quarter of the continent to hot dry deserts in its southwestern quarter, and from rich grassy prairies in the Great Plains to the barren tundra of the far north. For each tribe there were a cycle of myths and a set of ceremonies, and from these materials one might abstract for each a particular view of nature.

However, recognition of the diversity and variety of American Indian cultures should not obscure a complementary unity to be found among them. Despite great differences, there were common characteristics that culturally united the American Indian peoples. The comparative theologian Joseph Epes Brown claims that

> this common binding thread is found in beliefs and attitudes held by the people in the quality of their relationships to the natural environment. All American Indian peoples possessed what has been called a metaphysic of nature; and manifest a reverence for the myriad forms and forces of the natural world specific to their immediate environment; and for all, their rich complexes of rites and ceremonies are expressed in terms which have references to or utilize the forms of the natural world.[20]

The historian Calvin Martin confirms Brown's conjecture:

> What we are dealing with is two issues: the ideology of Indian land-use and the practical results of that ideology. Actually, there was a great diversity of ideologies, reflecting distinct cultural and ecological contexts. It is thus more than a little artificial to identify a single, monolithic ideology, as though all Native Americans were traditionally inspired by a universal ethos. Still, there were certain elements which many if not all these ideologies seemed to share, the most outstanding being a genuine respect for the welfare of other life-forms.[21]

The religious genius of Nicholas Black Elk, a Lakota (or Sioux) shaman, and the poetic genius of John G. Neihardt combined to create *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, a masterpiece of American literature, published in 1932.[22] American Indian activist Vine Deloria, Jr., recently observed that *Black Elk Speaks* has been "elevated . . . to the status of an American Indian Bible."[23] Echoing Deloria's observation, the scholar Raymond J. DeMallie comments that "Black Elk's teachings appear to be evolving into a consensual American Indian theological canon."[24] In addition to the environmental attitudes and values native to the Lakota of the Great Plains (attitudes and values which are increasingly also the touchstone of a latter-day Pan-Indian belief system), the very different environmental attitudes and values implicit in the worldview of the forest Indians of the Great Lakes region, represented by the Ojibwa, are also considered in this chapter.

Lakota Shamanism

There is some similarity between the most basic elements of the Lakota worldview and the Polynesian origin myth of Wakea and Papa. Wakea is a sky-father and Papa a cosmic mother. According to Lakota cosmology, the sky is also a father, but the earth is a mother. Thus, unlike the Hawaiian worldview, in which the landmasses are offspring, the Lakota worldview represents the land itself as the procreative matrix. In the words of Black Elk (as interpreted by Neihardt), "Is not the sky a father and the earth a mother, and are not all living things with feet or wings or roots their children?" And, again, he speaks of "the earth, from whom we came and at whose breast we suck as babies all our lives, along with all the animals and birds and trees and grasses."[25]

As Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa points out, if a people believe themselves to have been born of divine, cosmic parents, then the other beings believed to have been born of the same parents will explicitly or implicitly be regarded as siblings. In Black Elk's narrative account of the Lakota worldview, the relationship is explicit. The prayerful prologue of *Black Elk Speaks* begins with these words:

> My friend, I am going to tell you the story of my life, as you wish; and if it were only the story of my life I think I would not tell it; for what is one man that he should make much of his winters, even when they bend him like a heavy snow? So many men have lived and shall live that story, to be grass upon the hills.
>
> It is the story of all life that is holy and is good to tell, and of us

> two-leggeds sharing it with the four-leggeds and the wings of the air and all green things; for these are children of one mother and their father is one spirit.

And it ends with these:

> Hear me four quarters of the world—a relative I am! Give me the strength to walk the soft earth a relative to all that is! . . .
>
> Great Spirit, Great Spirit, my Grandfather, all over the earth the faces of living things are all alike. With tenderness have these come up out of the ground. Look upon these faces of children without number and with children in their arms that they may face the winds and walk the good road to the day of quiet.[26]

Notice that for Black Elk the only essential difference between human beings, birds, and beasts is their different modes of locomotion. The "two-leggeds," "four-leggeds" and "the wings of the air," and all the plants "are children of one mother and their father is one spirit." Therefore, "the faces of living things are all alike." That is, all living things are kin; they share a common parentage and heritage. Black Elk's principal prayer is to "walk the soft earth a relative to all that is"—a kinsman of all living things and a child of the earth and sky.

It is hard to imagine a simpler foundation for an environmental ethic than this. To provide an analysis where none is needed, one may say that the Lakota worldview pictures nature as a large extended family, and therefore mutual duties and obligations analogous to those governing family relations should also govern human relations with the earth and sky and with all the other forms of life.

Sky and earth are father and mother; therefore, a filial piety should be exhibited in one's relations with one's cosmic parents. This mother-earth ethical precept was articulated by the Wanapum spiritual leader Smohalla, who was under pressure to cede territory and adopt a Euro-American lifestyle:

> You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? You ask me to dig for stone. Shall I dig under her skin for bones? You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it, and be rich like white men. But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?[27]

Relations between species should, in sum, be relations of mutual care and mutual dependency. Hunting-gathering Plains Indians felt no practical contradiction between their need to appropriate animals and plants for their survival and their belief that animals and plants were their siblings.

Mutual care and mutual dependency imply mutual sacrifice. Provided that plants and animals were taken in response to genuine need and with demonstrative respect for the feelings of the victims, and that care was taken not to waste the harvest, then the Plains Indians—at least, in their view—did nothing that contradicted their family-model environmental ethic. Wooden Leg, a nineteenth-century Cheyenne (the Cheyenne were neighbors of the Lakota and shared their basic outlook), puts this point nicely and embellishes it with a small detail:

> The old Indian teaching was that it was wrong to tear loose from its place on the earth anything that may be growing there. It may be cut off, but it should not be uprooted. The trees and the grass have spirits. Whenever one of such growths may be destroyed by some good Indian, his act is done in sadness and with a prayer for forgiveness because of his necessities, the same as we were taught to do in killing animals for food and skin.[28]

Despite the simplicity and directness of what one might call the Lakota familial environmental ethic, Lakota natural philosophy was not lacking in abstract sophistication. Besides the sky-father and earth-mother, Black Elk also refers in kinship terms to the Great Spirit—as "Grandfather" (significantly, note well, not as "Father")—in the remarks quoted above. He mentions, further, "the four quarters of the world." The full text of Black Elk's prayer and the narrative in which it is embedded explain the sacred pipe and its adornments, which symbolize all the essential elements of the Lakota cosmos: in addition to the sky and the earth, Black Elk prays to the spirit-winds associated with the cardinal points of the compass—south, west, north, and east—each of which represents a "power" (growth, death, strength, and wisdom, respectively) symbolized by an associated color (yellow, blue, white, and red, respectively).

As Black Elk says, however, the six major spirits—sky, earth, south, west, north, and east—"are only one Spirit after all": the Great Spirit. The relationship between the Great Spirit, the four quarters, sky, earth, and the myriad other spirits and powers animating the Lakota world is best described as pan*en*theism. Pantheism—"all-[is]-God," literally translated—is the view that nature collectively is divine. Pan*en*theism—"all-[is]-*in*-God"—is the view that the divine both transcends and is immanent in all things. Here is how John Fire Lame Deer, an Oglala Sioux shaman of a generation or so younger than Black Elk, attempted to capture the particular Lakota spin on this theological option:

> Nothing is so small and unimportant but it has a spirit given it by Wakan Tanka [the Great Spirit—or, more carefully rendered, the

> Great Mystery]. Tunkan is what you might call a stone god, but he is also a part of the Great Spirit. The gods are separate beings but they are all united in Wakan Tanka. It is hard to understand—something like the Holy Trinity. . . . The Spirit split itself up into stones, trees, tiny insects even, making them all *wakan* by His ever-presence. And in turn all these myriads of things which make up the universe flowing back to their source, united in one Grandfather Spirit.[29]

Thus in the Lakota worldview we find a deeper metaphysical concept of natural unity, reinforcing the straightforward familial environmental ethic. Though expressed in very different terms, the Lakota panentheistic principle of oneness among all creatures great and small is not altogether unlike the concept of *atman-brahman* or *bhutatathata* in the Hindu and Mahayana Buddhist philosophies, respectively. For the Lakota, in each thing—be it animal, vegetable, or mineral—hides a splinter of the Great Spirit, animating it and giving it life and consciousness.

There is no evidence that the Lakota holy men pursued the logical and psychological implications of this idea anywhere near as far as the thinkers of South and East Asia. Nor is there evidence to suggest that any Lakota were in the least interested in transcending their fragmentary state of spirit-being and achieving an experiential unity with the Great Spirit. To be sure, the Lakota shamans practiced a kind of spiritual regimen—the Vision Quest—which involved fasting and isolation, but the successful experiential terminus of this practice was nothing like *nirvana*, *satori*, or enlightenment. Rather, its aim was contact with a power broker from the spirit world in the form of a bird, animal, or natural phenomenon (such as thunder), experienced in an altered state of consciousness like a dream or hallucination. This difference may reflect not only a temperamental difference between the occidental Indians and the oriental; it may also reflect a slight but significant metaphysical difference in their respective concepts or principles of unity. The Great Spirit both stands apart from and at the same time "splits itself up into . . . the myriad of things which make up the universe" (the very definition of panentheism). Therefore, to "flow back to the source," as Lame Deer styles the process of death and spiritual recycling, would not be to merge oneself with an undifferentiated state of being-consciousness, since the Great Spirit is, in its transcendental mode, not undifferentiated.

Neither is there any evidence that anything quite like *ahimsa* characterizes the Lakota environmental ethic. To be sure, the Lakota respect other forms of life, and that respect flows directly from their worldview. But the Lakota expression of respect for the other fully conscious beings abounding

in their universe has nothing of the passivity or of the patronizing and pitying quality of *ahimsa* about it. That may be because the Lakota do not regard themselves as in any way morally superior to or more spiritually advanced than other natural beings. Nor does their own future welfare depend on not accumulating bad *karma*. Traditional American Indians seem to have had no compunction about taking the lives of animals and plants, under the conditions mentioned above. But as evidenced by the kinship terms used to address animals and plants, they regarded nonhuman lifeforms as, if anything, superior to themselves. Indeed, animals and plants, in permitting themselves to be taken for legitimate human needs, are said to "pity" people and to voluntarily sacrifice themselves for the sake of their younger siblings, the human beings.

As noted, the Lakota worldview represents a more or less conventional profile of American Indian natural philosophy—for contemporary American Indians as well as for non-Indians. The Pulitizer Prize–winning American Indian poet, novelist, and scholar N. Scott Momaday supports this generalization: " 'The earth is our mother. The sky is our father.' This concept of nature, which is at the center of the Native American worldview, is familiar to us all. But it may well be that we do not understand entirely what that concept is in its ethical and philosophical implications." Momaday then goes on to draw out those implications, and concludes, "Very old in the Native American worldview is the conviction that the earth is vital, that there is a spiritual dimension to it, a dimension in which man rightly exists. It follows logically that there are ethical imperatives in this matter."[30]

As also noted, American Indian traditions of thought are at least as varied as the environments of the North American continent. Fortunately for all concerned, the Polynesian people of Hawaii were not discovered by Europeans until the mid–eighteenth century. The Western Enlightenment was at its height, and while Western colonialists were certainly not universally disposed to indulge Hawaiian "superstitions," at least there was some recognition of the existence of a Polynesian intellectual culture—which was recorded even as it was being eroded by missionization and other less deliberate but no less abrasive forces. Much was lost, but not nearly as much as was lost of American Indian cultures, which suffered three centuries of foreign hostility, intellectual pollution, and neglect before there existed any systematic and sympathetic interest in recording them. Hence, just what the American Indian environmental attitudes and values were before the European landfall is a highly problematic and to some extent speculative matter.

A strong case can be made against the authenticity of the consensual American Indian theology canonized in *Black Elk Speaks*: First, John G. Neihardt, a neo-Romantic poet, had his own agenda and may have insinuated his own impression of Indian ideas into the words of Black Elk. Adding to doubts on this score, Black Elk spoke no English. His actual words—spoken on the wind and gone forever—were translated by his son, Benjamin, and recorded by Neihardt's daughters, Enid and Hilda. And second, Black Elk had been converted to Catholicism and had spent thirty years as a catechist working on behalf of the Church to spread the gospel among other Indians.[31] One may therefore doubt the authenticity of *Black Elk Speaks* even if Benjamin Black Elk's translation were entirely true, Enid and Hilda Neihardt's record entirely accurate, and Neihardt's redaction entirely faithful. Old Black Elk may have created a syncretic religious vision—a blend of the religions of the pipe and the cross—in which Mother Earth is a transposed Virgin Mary and the union of Father Sky and the four quarters in the Great Spirit is an inspiration based on the Holy Trinity (as Lame Deer's remark suggests).

Questions about the authenticity of *Black Elk Speaks* have been recently resolved, however, by Raymond DeMallie, who has reviewed the transcripts from which Neihardt worked and found that, consistent with Neihardt's professed intention to act as a conduit and not to use Black Elk as a spokesman for his own views, *Black Elk Speaks* is remarkably faithful to the transcribed record—at least, of Benjamin Black Elk's translation of his father's oral narrative.[32] And comparing the Lakota worldview represented in *Black Elk Speaks* (and the raw transcriptions on which the book was based) with *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, an earlier ethnographic record by James R. Walker, one finds that they agree in most details and certainly in overall structure.[33]

However, even if *Black Elk Speaks* gives us a completely faithful record of the Lakota worldview, the irony remains that that worldview is invidiously tainted with Western influence—if not influence from Western ideas, then influence from Western "technology." The religion of the pipe was of recent origin among the Lakota, even by their own account. It was associated with the ephemeral culture of the mounted buffalo hunter, which began with the appearance of the Spanish horse on the plains of North America and ended ("in bloody snow") with the massacre at Wounded Knee. There is little doubt that the Lakota worldview outlined here and widely known in its general contours grew out of and is continuous with a genuinely aboriginal American Indian outlook. As received, however, it can hardly represent an *ancient* American Indian land wisdom.

Ojibwa Totemism

The natural environment of the mounted Plains Indian and that of the pedestrian forest Indian, such as the Ojibwa, differed profoundly. On the Great Plains, the buffalo hunters navigated through a sea of grass. Theirs was a spacious universe dominated by sky and earth. Up/down/north/south/east/west were the principal parameters of experience. By contrast, in the forests of the North American continent people meandered along foot trails and on rivers in canoes beneath an unbroken canopy of leaves. The Great Spirit was a distant and impersonal reality, while closer at hand a multitude of spirit beings animated the rich and diverse natural environment.

The economy of the Plains horse culture was focused on a single game species. The buffalo provided meat and grease, clothing and shelter, bone tools and ornaments. And in the mytho-history of the Lakota oral tradition, Buffalo Cow Woman gave the first sacred pipe (which is still extant) to the people.[34] From a scientific historical perspective, this suggests that the worldview symbolized by the pipe and its adornments originated, at least in its received details, with the commencement of mounted buffalo hunting.

The economy of the forest Indian, on the other hand, was spread over a wide variety of resources seasonally exploited. In the spring and summer, tribes gathered in fishing villages, planted gardens of corn, squash, and beans, and gathered wild roots, fruits, nuts, and berries. In the winter, family units scattered into the forest depths and hunted migrating waterfowl, resident deer, and other game, and trapped beaver and other furbearers.[35]

During long winter nights throughout the woods around Lake Superior, the Ojibwa elders retold rich cycles of stories. These were the principal vehicle for schooling the young in the Ojibwa worldview. In a nineteenth-century history of his people, George Copway writes,

> The Ojibways have a great fund of legends, stories, and historical tales, the relating and hearing of which, form a vast fund of winter evening instruction and amusement. Some of these stories are most exciting and so intensely interesting, that I have seen children during their relation, whose tears would flow most plentifully, and their breasts heave with thoughts too big for utterance. Night after night for weeks have I sat and eagerly listened to these stories. The days following, the characters would haunt me at every step, and every moving leaf would seem to be the voice of a spirit.[36]

In the Nanabushu cycle, Ojibwa social ethics are taught by negative example. Nanabushu, the Great Hare, is the Ojibwa culture hero, and a trick-

ster figure. Nanabushu is continually up to some mischief, and because of it continually coming to grief. He attempts to lie, cheat, steal, and imitate the ways of other creatures without having been blessed with their natures and talents. And he always suffers the consequences of his errant ways, usually getting a second chance to do things the right way and to succeed in the end. Thus the social values and the natural penalty for their transgression are conveyed among the Ojibwa.[37]

Other stories also set out an explicit environmental ethic. In the Ojibwa stories, the flora and fauna are not simply impersonal natural resources to be exploited. Rather, animals and plants are portrayed as nonhuman persons living in their own families and societies. The representation of the relations between human persons and animal and plant persons is modeled on intertribal exchange. Just as one tribe may commerce with another—trading, say, obsidian arrowheads for copper ornaments—so animals are portrayed as enthusiastic trading partners with human beings. The animals willingly exchange their flesh and fur for the artifacts and cultivars that only human beings can produce.

Key to this mythic representation of animal-human exchange is the belief that if the bones of the slain animals are not broken, burned, or fed to dogs, and if they are returned to the element from which the animals were taken—to the earth, in the case of bear bones; to the water, in the case of beaver bones; and so on—then the animals will return to life. The slain animals' spirits are imagined to come into the lodges of the people as dinner guests and to observe and partake of the feast made of their soft parts. Then their bones, returned whole to the forest or the stream, are reclothed in flesh and fur and the literally reincarnated animals go back to their dens and lodges with warm memories of their visit to enjoy their "gifts."

In general, the stories stress the need to respect and honor the spirits of animals and plants. They censure wanton slaughter, cruelty, waste, and above all the ill disposition of bones. Each species was imagined to be tended by a spirit warden, or master. These keepers of the game occasionally revealed themselves as large white specimens. If a hunter broke the rules of interspecies trade, the keeper of the injured species would find out and would withhold further specimens from the offender or sometimes visit a harsher reprisal on him. The animals were bound by corresponding obligations. If a hunter extended an animal all the appropriate courtesies and offered the appropriate tokens of exchange, then the animal was obliged to surrender itself to his weapons.[38] As the anthropologist Frank Speck summed it up,

> The hunter's virtue lies in respecting the souls of the animals necessarily killed, in treating their remains in prescribed manner, and in particular making as much use of the carcass as is possible. . . . The animals slain under the proper conditions and treated with the consideration due them return to life again and again. They furthermore indicate their whereabouts to the "good" hunter in dreams, resigning themselves to his weapons in a free spirit of self-sacrifice.[39]

The Ojibwa stories often involve marriage between a human being and an animal. Correlatively, transformations of outward appearance are commonplace: people become beavers and bears, and vice versa. To a Western audience these stories may seem strange, and almost indecipherable. But their subliminal message to the magic-oriented mind of the forest hunter-gatherer is clear. Just as intertribal social relations and mutual goodwill were cemented by intermarriage between tribes, so the interspecies social relations and mutual goodwill—on which the Ojibwa felt their survival to depend—were cemented by intermarriage between species in the ambiguous past/present of story time. Often the human spouse in such an interspecies marriage will return after a while to his or her own people with information about the species to which he or she is wed—not information that, like military intelligence, is useful to one party seeking to take advantage of another but information having to do with the social sensibilities of the alien species or with its mortuary requirements. The moral of a story called "The Woman Who Married a Beaver" is this:

> Thereupon she plainly told the story of what happened to her while she lived with the beavers. She never ate a beaver. . . . And she was wont to say: "Never speak you ill of a beaver! Should you speak ill of a beaver, you will not be able to kill one."
>
> Therefore such was what the people always did; they never spoke ill of the beaver, especially when they intended hunting them. . . . Just the same as the feelings of one who is disliked, so is the feeling of the beaver. And he who never speaks ill of a beaver is very much loved by it; in the same way as people often love one another, so is one held in the mind of the beaver; particularly lucky then is one at killing beavers.[40]

If the Lakota worldview represents nature on the model of a large family, the Ojibwa worldview represents nature on the model of a multinational community. Calvin Martin expresses the Ojibwa representation of nature most succinctly:

> Nature, as conceived by the traditional Ojibwa, was a congeries of societies. Every animal, fish, and plant . . . functioned in a society

> that was parallel in all respects to man's. Wildlife and plant life had homes and families just as man did.[41]

In the Lakota worldview, the ideal pattern of interaction between human beings and other life-forms is understood to be like the interaction between members of a large healthy family—mutually dependent and mutually supporting. In the Ojibwa worldview, the ideal pattern or interaction between human beings and other life-forms is understood to be somewhat less intimate—more a matter of mutual obligation and mutual benefit, with a distinct quid-pro-quo dimension. Human beings, wildlife, and plant life were trading partners in a multispecies economy of nature.

The economy-of-nature metaphor was the first in a historical series of metaphors governing thought in ecology. It was originally introduced as a working model in proto-ecology in the eighteenth century, by no less important a figure than Linnaeus. In the ecology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Linnaeus's paradigm was eclipsed for a time by an organismic metaphor, in which plants and animals were regarded as cells in supraorganisms and ecology was understood as a kind of exophysiology. The economy-of-nature metaphor was revived and renewed by the great British ecologist Charles Elton, who introduced the concept of the "biotic community" as a working model in ecology in the 1920s. The major sectors in Elton's model of nature's economy are the producers (plants), the consumers (animals), and the decomposers (fungi and bacteria). Further, there exist various community types: wetlands, grasslands, forests, deserts, and so on. Each species fills a niche in a particular biotic community—or, as Elton sometimes puts it, each species performs a "role," or even has a "profession," in one or another biotic community.[42]

Elton's ecological "community concept" became the fulcrum of Aldo Leopold's land ethic, which is the prototype of contemporary environmental ethics. Working from Charles Darwin's scenario of the origin and development of morality in human evolution, Leopold wrote,

> An ethic ecologically is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from antisocial conduct. These are two definitions of one thing. The thing has its origin in the tendency of interdependent individuals to evolve modes of cooperation. . . . All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. . . . The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land. . . . In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land

> community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow members and also respect for the community as such.[43]

The Ojibwa land ethic, as it might now be rather technically styled, rests on the same general concept as Leopold's. Human beings, plants, and animals, if not soils and waters, are members of a single, tightly integrated economy of nature, or biotic community. Human beings are not properly "conquerors of the land community"; neither ought we to be stewards of it. Rather, we should assume the role, as Leopold would have it, merely of "plain members and citizens" of the land community. In the Ojibwa land ethic, as in Leopold's, human beings ought principally to respect their fellow members of the biotic community. Respect is expressed in the variety of attitudes and behaviors just now indicated. In addition to a respectful attitude, respect for plants and animals is evidenced by giving animals payment for their bodies, taking care not to cause them unnecessary suffering, and carefully disposing of their skeletal remains so that they may return to life; and by neither overharvesting nor wasting plants.

Of course, the representation of the personal-social order of nature among the Ojibwa is vastly different from that of contemporary ecologists. The former is mythic and anthropomorphic, while the latter is scientific and self-consciously analogical. Nevertheless, when the mythic and scientific detail is stripped away, an identical abstract structure—an essentially social structure—is revealed as the core conceptual model of both the totemic natural community of the Ojibwa and the biologists' economy of nature. In form, the Ojibwa land ethic and the land ethic of Aldo Leopold are identical.

SUMMARY

From the outset of the twentieth-century ecologic crisis, environmentalists have looked to "the" American Indian as a guru who could show them how to relate more positively to a despised and wounded natural world. In *The Quiet Crisis*, Stewart Udall portrays American Indians (with an ill-chosen metaphor) as "pioneer ecologists." Udall was inspired by Henry David Thoreau, who, apparently under the influence of the "noble savage" element in the Romantic cognitive complex, had declared the American Indian to be a "child of nature."[44]

Not surprisingly, critics of the current environmental mystique surrounding American Indians have suspected that the Indian's status as custodian of a special land wisdom is neo-Romantic nonsense with an environmental spin. These suspicions have been recently abetted by the sordid "Seattle affair"—the revelation that the famous "speech" (or "letter," as

it is sometimes known) of the nineteenth-century Suquamish chief Seattle, which contains a number of environmental pieties, is a forgery composed in the 1970s by a professor of English literature at the University of Texas named Ted Perry.[45] (Perry meant no harm. He had been commissioned by the Southern Baptist Convention to provide a voice-over narration for a documentary on the pollution of the American landscape, called *Home*. Perry used an account of Seattle's supposed words at the signing of the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855, written down twenty-five years later by the physician Henry Smith, who claimed to have been there—embellishing and rearranging it. The Baptist producers, however, did not credit Perry as the author of the narration. His script was transcribed and published under Seattle's name alone, and was subsequently reprinted literally thousands of times.)

The debate over whether or not an environmental ethic was part of the cognitive cultures indigenous to North America has largely proceeded a priori—that is, without benefit of reference to specific Native American intellectual traditions. But when we do put the proposition that American Indians had an environmental ethic to the test of comparison with those of their beliefs preserved in cultural materials, we find that it is confirmed. At least among some traditional cultures—those of the Lakota and the Ojibwa, representative plains and woodland peoples, respectively—there is indisputably an environmental ethic to be found. The Lakota and the Ojibwa environmental ethics, moreover, differ quite dramatically from each other, the former being a kinship environmental ethic and the latter a community environmental ethic (as one might characterize them). Both are, however, capable of adaptation to the prevailing intellectual climate of the twentieth century, and thus relevant and useful in helping us deal with the contemporary environmental crisis. Like the Lakota, Charles Darwin—our modern Hesiod, the author of our contemporary origin myth—portrays other living things as our kin. And the extensions of evolutionary theory confirm, in a general sense, the Lakota intuition that all plants and animals are children of the earth and the sky—the former supplying the materials from which we are made, the latter the energy (sunlight) by which the earthy elements are synthesized into complex organic entities. Furthermore, current ecological theory, like that of the Ojibwa, represents human beings, plants, and animals all as members of one biotic community. We depend on plants and animals for goods and services, and they depend on us for their very existence—since without our respecting them and their needs in something like the way that the traditional Ojibwa did, many of them will be driven to extinction.

Though there has been much less ballyhoo by environmentalists about

traditional Polynesian environmental attitudes and values—except perhaps in contemporary Polynesia—we find that an indigenous environmental ethic also existed in Hawaii and Aotearoa. In Hawaii, a complex agro-ecosystem was supported by a hierarchical social structure and a corresponding belief system in which the health and sustained productivity of the land and surrounding sea were correlated with care for the land (*malama 'aina*) and the maintenance of social discipline and order (*'aikapu*). A mythic equivalent of solar energy (*mana*) was imagined to flow through the land and the people, provided that its conduits remained open and free from pollution by unwise and mean-spirited (un*pono*) behavior. In Aotearoa, the structural elements of a Maori environmental ethic are an intense identity of the individual with the tribe and the tribe with a region of the land, and the consequent institution of collective land tenure.