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**USE OF NATIVE AMERICAN ORAL TRADITION  
IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

by  
Clayton T. Russell  
B.S., Western Illinois University, 1978  
M.A., Ball State University, 1983

Presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science  
in  
Environmental Studies  
University of Montana  
1988

Approved by:

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May 23, 1988  
Date

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## **Acknowledgements**

Before coming to the University of Montana in 1985, I was given an arrow by my friend, Paul Arnold. More than a piece of art- it has been both a path and a direction.

I am extremely grateful to my committee, Joseph Epes Brown, Tom Roy, and Rich Clow for their understanding, guidance and support. I would especially like to thank Joseph Epes Brown, whose scholarship, writing, and stories continue to inspire me.

I would also like to thank my entire extended family, especially my parents, for their support and encouragement throughout this project. Thanks also to the Apple River Singers whose phone calls were welcome.

Special thanks to Caroline Byrd, Dave Plummer and Carla Homstad for their technical assistance.

This is for the children...

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## **Introduction**

Many environmental education programs, as well as school science programs, emphasize the teaching of information about the environment. The attention to details and to facts has the effect of keeping students at arm's length from nature by occupying their time with measuring and counting. During the ten year period, 1975-1985, in which I taught environmental education, I found myself doing fewer and fewer traditional measuring activities while incorporating more and more wholistic and experiential activities into the curriculum. Many of these activities drew upon statements from the Native American oral tradition.

While we were directing our educational effort towards understanding the workings of the environment, we had failed, and are still failing, to introduce to our students an understanding of their being involved as a part of those workings. We have largely overlooked the importance of our relationship to nature, our sense of participating with it or as Aldo Leopold said our being a "citizen within the land community" (1949:204). It seemed that this feeling or sense of a relationship with nature, a human-to-land ethic, could best be introduced using literature from the Native American



cultures. Their rich and diverse traditions have developed within the community of nature for thousands of years, and continue to do so. At the time of European contact, there were over 2,000 cultural groups, exhibiting a wide diversity of customs and lifestyles, a plethora of values, beliefs and languages. It is from these dynamic cultures that a clear voice concerning an experience with the land has been coming into environmental education as well as modern environmental writing. The message of long term survival with the land comes from a diverse group of people, who have lived for generations close to the earth with a "metaphysic of nature" (Brown 1985:110). It was their words, more so than any other, that were having a noticeable impact upon my students.

Most environmental issues are issues regarding our long term survival. The message in oral traditions is carried by a voice that has had great experience living with the land over the long term and has in turn been influenced by it. It is likely that the Native American voice we hear speaking for the land, is the voice of the land itself. With regards to our long term survival, an understanding of the Native American human-to-land ethic would benefit us all. By exposing ourselves and our students to ideas from other cultures, we

can compare and contrast the Native American ideas with our own. This juxtaposition may act to broaden our understandings of diverse cultures as well as suggesting some ideas for improving our own human-to-land ethic and our long term survivability.

In our search for a relearning of place within the natural community we can also incorporate other lessons from the oral tradition. The literature's complexity or simplicity, thoughtfulness, rich description and humor are a part of the message for the ever wondering human. We must also exercise caution when using these stories, so that we do not sacrifice a more complete understanding of the Native American lifestyle simply for our own benefit. For if we happen to better understand our place in Nature's community because of their teachings- we will owe them a great debt.

I do not in any way speak for or represent Native Americans. Within the context of this paper and in the recommended readings you will "hear" them speak for themselves. By looking closely at the Native American human-to-land ethic, their dynamic and reciprocal relationship with nature and the proper role of humans as citizens of nature, as taught through the oral tradition, we can learn both about and from the Native American cultures.

This paper will provide insights into the existence of a Native American human-to-land ethic: how the Native Americans regard the many layers of meaning within the narratives as well as how a good storyteller presents a story. Finally, there will be suggestions for environmental educators as to how they can use selections from the oral traditions in their programs and where they can find appropriate Native American oral literature.

## Part I

### The Native American Relationship to the Earth: Examples of a Human-to-Land Ethic

This first section will provide insights into the Native American human-to-land ethic. It is this ethic, this sense of being a citizen of the land community that governs the ways in which Native peoples have used the land and relate to it. Often times today, the only access we as educators have to this Native land wisdom is what has been recorded in the oral traditions of the various peoples. Oral literature can be used by environmental educators to present the Native American human-to-land ethic in contrast to our modern relationship to and use of the earth.

Joseph Epes Brown, in his book The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian, explains why so many people today are seeking illumination from the Native Americans regarding the current spoiling of the environment. Native American cultures, diverse as they are, have integrally existed within the American landscape for thousands of years. Common to all Native American cultures are beliefs in and attitudes toward a complex relationship or ethic regarding their use of the natural world. Native Americans...

... lived, and many still do live, what one

might call a metaphysic of nature, spelled out by each group in great detail, defining responsibilities and the true nature of that vast web of humankind's cyclical interrelationships with the elements, the earth, and all that lives upon the land (Brown 1985:110).

Brown's experience of living with Oglala Sioux holy man, Black Elk, and experiencing first hand the Native American human-to-land ethic, as explained by the holy man, is singular in the world today. Brown notes in The Sacred Pipe that for the Siouan culture "... the whole of creation is essentially One, all parts within the whole are related" (Brown 1953:15). This explains why traditional Sioux refer to each other with a relational term as opposed to a common name. For example, a young person would refer to an older man as Ate or Father and to a much older man as Tunkashila or Grandfather. Similarly, an older woman would be called Ina or Mother and Unchi for Grandmother. In addition to the human reference, these terms also define the relationship between humans and Great Mysterious, as well as the human relationship to the living and reproductive powers of the earth.

The ideas and writings of Kiowa author, N. Scott Momaday, coincide with Brown's and explain further the relationship that

exists between Native Americans and the earth. According to Momaday, the relationship involves "reciprocal appropriation", to give and to receive, in which humans participate in the landscape while at the same time they incorporate the landscape and its inhabitants into the most fundamental human experience and understanding. For example, before, during and after a hunt, the hunter refers to and treats the animal with respect. The Native American, Momaday notes "... is someone who thinks of himself in a particular way and his idea comprehends his relationship to the physical world." (Momaday 1976:80) So, when Native Americans imagine themselves, part of that self is the relationship to nature. This imagining originates in the Native American cultural experience with the land and has evolved successfully over the course of thousands of years.

While non-natives cannot imitate or think like traditional Native Americans, they can study Native beliefs and, in so doing, better see a way to a healthier relationship with nature. For many people today, there is no sense of a relationship to nature, no idea of how to be a plain citizen of the land community, to a large degree we are without a human-to-land ethic. Momaday describes this feeling

of non-attachment to the earth as "unimaginable". Supporting Momaday, William Cronan writes that "... all history is a long standing dialogue between human beings and the earth" (Cronan 1986:25).

For environmental educators to attempt to understand how Native Americans conceive of self in relation to the natural world they must try to get their minds around their conception of what is "appropriate". Momaday explains that "... that which is appropriate... is that which is natural" (Momaday 1976:82). A few short stories may further explain this idea of "reciprocal appropriation".

My father says that every morning when Chaney was there as a guest he would get up in the first light, paint his face, go outside, face the east and bring the sun out of the horizon." In Chaney's understanding "... the sun was the origin of his strength... and... through the medium of prayer, he returned some of his strength to the sun. He did this every day. It was a part of his daily life. It was as natural and appropriate to him as anything could be (Momaday 1976:83).

There is a nut native to the plains which, when ground, provides an excellent seasoning for various types of foods. Unfortunately, this nut grows in the center of an extremely thorny bush. Gathering them can be painful. The field mouse, however, being very small, slips inside the bush, gathers the nuts, slips out of the bush

and hurries to its burrow and hides the nuts there. Indian women, knowing the habits of this creature, simply go to the mouse burrow when they need some of the nuts, dig around with a stick, uncover the cache, take some, but never all, and leave the mouse a juicy piece of bacon as payment for the nuts. Even the mouse has power and the Indian respect for all of life decrees that no animal may be robbed or deprived of its food without payment in kind (Bunge 1984:184).

Momaday asserts that in the mind of the Native American, nature is not something apart from the human; nor is it to be isolated and studied. Rather, nature is part of that greater whole that gives the human life. Stated in another way:

The implicit overall metaphysic of the American Indian culture locates human beings in a larger social, as well as physical environment. People belong not only to a human community, but to a community of all nature as well (Callicott 1982:306).

Examples of cultural experiences which promote the idea of a community of all nature exist throughout Native North America. Franz Boas, observing and writing about the Eskimo people in 1888, indicated how early the lessons of relationship begin:

One is struck by the great efforts of the mother, especially, to confirm the child immediately in a complex and intricate



relationship with the land (Lopez 1986:265).

During the first days of life, a child wears a cap made from the fur of arctic hare, underclothes made of feathers and a hood made from the caribou fawn, complete with ears.

Barry Lopez writes that this idea of community relationship is similar to an expanded sense of self. He explains that the Native American person is not finished at the skin, the self continues into nature via the senses. This idea of a relationship that pervades nature fills not only the Native American culture, but also the Native memory across time, their imagination as well as their dreams. Permeation of the Native American relationship, indeed responsibility to the earth, was re-membered recently to Onondaga Oren Lyons by his uncle.

I was fishing with my uncle, he's an old chief from home, and we were out there in a boat in the middle of the lake and talking about this and that, I had just graduated from college at that point, you know. And I was kind of feeling my oats a little bit. And we were talking and he said, 'My you are pretty smart, you know. You learned a lot of things.' I said, 'Yeah.' I was surprised. And he said, 'Good. Then you ought to know who you are then.' 'Sure,' I said. 'I am Farland Lyons.' He said, 'Yeah, that's who you are, I guess. Is that all?' So I started to suspect right away something is going on

here. Here I am in a boat, and I can't get out. And we were out in the middle of the water. He said, 'That's your name alright. We know that. Is that all you are?'

Well, I started thinking. I started to feel a little track already, and I went to my father's line, my mother's line, my clan. I searched, and he chased me all over that boat for two hours. He wouldn't let me out. I was ready to swim. I was getting mad. Then I said, 'Well, who the hell am I then?' And he said, 'Well, I think you know, but I will tell you.'

'If you sit right here and look right over there, look at that. The rocks. The way they are. The trees and hills all around you. Right where you're on, it's water.' And he said, 'You're just like that rock.' And I listened. He said, 'You're the same as the water, this water.' I waited and listened again, as he said, 'You are the ridge, that ridge. You were here in the beginning. You're as strong as they are. As long as you believe in that,' he said, 'that's who you are. That's your mother and that's you. Don't forget.' I never have (Nabokov 1980:11).

In these writings, the idea that a Native American person is not apart from nature, and lives with a human-to-land ethic, is obvious. It indicates that respect for nature and respect for oneself is similar, if not the same. Anthropologist Richard Nelson has spent much time among the Koyukon people and has written several books detailing their lifestyle. In Make Prayers to the Raven, he describes the Koyukon relationship with the environment as one filled with

respect for all things in nature. For Nelson, the Koyukon's respect for the earth is important because nature is "... aware, sensate, personified," (Nelson 1983:14). Nature watches and has power, indeed, the natural world has a special kind of life. As Nelson explains,

... all actions towards nature are mediated by consideration of its consciousness and sensitivity. The interchange between humans and environment is based on an elaborate code of respect and morality, without which survival would be jeopardized (Nelson 1983:31).

Hence, the Koyukon people live in a world of power, where they view natural events as signs of this power. The natural world is more than a study object; it is to be lived with properly, in close proximity - a community where relationships are based on an environmental morality. J. Baird Callicott agrees that a relationship with nature is an ethical or moral one, not limited to modern definitions of ecology or conservation. He maintains that the members of the individual's natural community- plants, animals, insects, rocks, water, etc- are... "treated as persons, and conceived to be coequal members of a natural social order" (Callicott 1982:310).

It is worth quoting Callicott at length because he combines Native American land wisdom with ideas from traditional environmental thinking.

The American Indian, on the whole viewed the natural world as enspirited. Natural beings therefore felt, perceived, deliberated, and responded voluntarily as persons. Persons are members of a social order... Social interaction is limited by (culturally variable) behavioral restraints, rules of conduct, which we call, in sum, good manners, morals and ethics. The American Indians, therefore, in Aldo Leopold's turn of phrase lived in accordance with a 'Land Ethic'. This view is also maintained by N. Scott Momaday: 'Very old in the Native American world view 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.' (Callicott 1982:310).

As suggested here, Native Americans have seen and do find themselves as a part of the community of nature. J. Donald Hughes and Jim Swan remind us that both contemporary Native Americans and environmental writers are encouraging people to learn or regain the idea that the earth and its creatures are our "fellows" (Hughes and Swan 1986:256). If we are all related, then a more thorough understanding of this relationship, this relearning of our place, can

only enhance the collective health and wisdom. Perhaps none have said it more simply than Black Elk: "Mitakuye Oyasin". This humble prayer as translated by Arthur Amiotte, a Lakota speaker, artist and author, means,

"All my relatives."  
or  
"I am related to all things."  
or  
"I am related to all that is."

In order to share insights, and to convey more directly the American Indian relationship to the land, the following selection of quotes reflects the sentiments of the peoples themselves.

Luther Standing Bear Lakota	The old people came literally to love the soil. They sat on the ground with the feeling of being close to a mothering power. It was good for the skin to touch the earth, and the old people like to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing and healing (Nabokov, 1980:11).
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Luther Standing Bear Lakota	... very early in life the child began to realize that wisdom was all about and everywhere and that there were many things to know. There was no such thing as emptiness in the world. Even in the sky there were no vacant places. Everywhere there was life, visible and invisible, and every object gave us a great interest to life.
--------------------------------	--

Even without human companionship one was never alone. The world teemed with life and wisdom... (Brown, 1974:60).

Unknown

A Native upon seeing an otter swimming across a river said, 'Look how beautifully I am swimming across the river.' (DeFaveri 1984:5).

Lone Man  
Lakota

When I was a young man I went to a medicine-man for advice concerning my future. The medicine-man said, 'I have not much to tell you except to help you understand this earth on which you live. If a man is to succeed on the hunt or the warpath, he must not be governed by his inclination, but by an understanding of the ways of animals and of his natural surroundings, gained through close observation.' (Brown 1974:61).

Chief Seathl  
Duwamish

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself (DeFaveri 1984:1).

Black Elk  
Oglala Sioux

We know that we are related and are one with all things of the heavens and the earth, and we know that all the things that move are a people as we (Brown 1953:97).

Black Elk  
Oglala Sioux

The earth is our relative.

... above everything else, we should

remember that our closest relatives are our Grandfather and our Father, Wakan Tanka, our Grandmother and Mother, the earth. The four Powers of the universe, the red and blue days (much more than a wish for good weather), the two divisions of the day [light and darkness], the morning star, the Spotted Eagle, who guards all that is sacred.. and also our pipe, which is as a relative, for he guards the people: and it is through him that we pray to Wakan Tanka (Brown 1953:112 and 109).

Black Elk  
Oglala Sioux

Peace... comes within the souls of men when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells Wakan Tanka, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us (Brown 1953:115).

Black Elk  
Oglala Sioux

With all beings and all things we shall be as relatives (Hughes 1983:17).

Intiwa  
Hopi

The whole universe is enhanced with the same breath (Hughes 1983:15).

Alfonso Ortiz  
Tewa  
Professor of  
Anthropology

To be alive and to be a son or daughter of the mountains and the deep canyons, then, is to be the living embodiment of a tradition which extends from deep within the good earth to the mountain tops where the earth meets the sky. It is to be the repository of a spiritual heritage which draws from each of these, and from everything between. It is to be a thousand years old, a part of the beginning. In an otherwise disturbing and changeful world we have these, and so we endure (Ortiz 1974:103).

Popovi Da  
former Governor of  
San Ildefonso Pueblo

One basic value which has had a high survival rate among Indians is their view of Nature as an organic whole... (Popovi Da 1970:25).

Carl Gorman  
Navajo Artist

It has been said by some researchers into Navajo religion, that we have no Supreme God, because He is not named. This is not so. The Supreme Being is not named because He is unknowable. He is simply the Unknown power. We worship Him through His creation. We feel too insignificant to approach directly in prayer that Great Power that is incomprehensible to man. Nature feeds our souls' inspiration and so we approach Him through that part of Him which is close to us and within reach of human understanding. We believe that this great unknown power is everything in His creation. The various forms of creation have some of this spirit within them... As every form has some of the intelligent spirit of the Creator, we cannot but reverence all parts of the creation (Brown 1974:58).

It is certain that Native Americans, even in their great tribal and cultural diversity, regard the land very differently from Western culture. In the daily patterns of their life the Native Americans have taken possession of the land and the land in turn has deeply influenced them. They have utilized their senses, their mind, imagination, morality and indeed, their humanity to perceive what is in the land and in turn what they are in the landscape. This lifestyle



gives us insight into the contemporary challenge posed by Momaday:

We Americans must come again to a moral comprehension of the earth and air. We must live according to the principle of a land ethic. The alternative is that we shall not live at all (Chapman 1975:102).

How is it that the Indian people have remained close to the land throughout these many turbulent years? Their relationship to the land remains imbedded in the memory, in traditional practices, language and stories. From Boas' early observations of the Eskimo in the 1880's to the observations of Nelson in the 1980's, from the Black Elk story to the contemporary Lakota, Arthur Amiotte, it is still clear that these people exhibit an intimacy with the land, a practical knowledge of the land, great sensitivity and regard for it, as well as humility before it. Knowledge of the land and the particulars of landscape have been incorporated into the traditional stories and teachings of the Eskimo, the Sioux and all other Native American cultures. As Lopez noted, this affinity for the land is not unique to our continent, but also may be true for all traditional peoples who live close to the land. Amos Rapoport reports that among the Australian Aborigines...

The stories that unfold against the local landscape... are as critical for people as food or water. The mythic landscape is not the natural landscape... but the mythic and natural landscape overlap at certain visible points in the land (Lopez 1986:296).

Exposure to the rich lore of relationship with the land and personal experience with the Native American human-to-land ethic influenced and was an important example for several early environmental writers. John Muir spent time with the Stickeen band of the Tlingit, while Thoreau hosted the Penobscot at Walden, Sigurd Olsen speaks of the Cherokee and Eskimo, John Wesley Powell learned from the Paiutes and Calvin Rutstrum the Chippewa. The Native American relationship to the land can teach us all. Its ideas should be used as a contrast to our modern ways of thinking and valuing as well as a challenge to inspire us towards creating a healthier and more stable environment. Consider, for example, this brief exchange between prairie farmer and Sioux Indian in the late 1800's.

In 1883, in the Dakota territory a farmer was plowing up the soil on his homestead. He had done it before, back where he came from, he would do it here. Then he noticed a Sioux on horseback staring at him as he continued his plowing. Becoming bothered, he asked the Indian what he wanted, the answer was simply: 'Wrong side up.' (Fertig 1973:5).

## **Part II**

### Insights into Understanding Native American Oral Tradition

Using oral tradition in environmental education programs requires that we as educators understand where the stories come from and what they mean for the Native American people. The fact that these stories are effective in the Native American world view was simply stated to me recently by Blackfeet traditionalist, Woody Kipp, "The stories teach us how to live" (Kipp pers. com:1988). The oral tradition comes from nature and the Native American people's relationship to nature. By telling and hearing the stories, the Native American people begin to understand what the world is around them, how they came to be, how they are related and can inter-relate to nature as well as why animals and plants are what they are.

For us from Western culture, outside the Native American culture, it is a difficult task to begin to see these connections and recognize the legitimacy that these stories give to the traditional way of life. As educators we realize that we cannot adopt the Native American world view in its completeness, however we can read and share these stories which detail the people's relation to nature. In hearing the stories and in observing nature we may begin to see for

ourselves how the oral tradition works in teaching a human-to-land ethic. The stories explain how the landscape took its present form, why the animals look and behave as they do, how the hunter should approach, hunt and treat game, and which plants should be eaten and which should be used in medicine. The Native American people live with the natural processes according to an elaborately spelled out human-to-land ethic.

It is the lessons from this diverse oral tradition which teach young people in Native American cultures how to live with nature as fellow citizen, humble and open to the natural wisdom. These stories can also provide insights for us today in our contemporary relationship to the earth.

This section discusses the Native American oral literature from the viewpoint of both scholars and Native Americans. In this way teachers will have an insight into how the Native world view is perpetuated and legitimated, as well as sources for further research concerning the oral tradition.

Throughout Native North America, Indian people still in contact with their traditional lifeways, find in the myths, stories and oral traditions models for human behavior. In these stories, told time

and time again, or ritually enacted, the people are able to participate in their origins and to understand human existence. The stories and their telling define for the people elements of the sacred and teach them how to align their life with it. The following Yokuts prayer demonstrates the richness of the Native American human-to-land ethic.

My words are tied in one  
With the great mountains,  
With the great rocks,  
With the great trees,  
In one with my body  
And my heart.  
Do you all help me  
With Supernatural power,  
And you, Day  
And you, Night!  
All of you see me  
One with this world! (Tedlock n.d.).

In Native American cultures, words are each understood as containing or being discrete units of power. As Brown has described, "... to name a being or any element of creation is actually to make manifest the power or quality, soul or spirit, of that which is named." (Brown 1985:88). Among the Navajo, for example, when the name of a yei (a word inadequately translated into English as "gods") is mentioned during a chantway, the creative power causes those yei

named to be "immediately present." (Brown 1985:89).

In his article on "Verbal Art", Dennis Tedlock in the forthcoming Handbook of the North American Indian, Vol. I, explains the power ascribed to the word in Indian culture. "The spoken word is rooted in the breast." (Tedlock n.d.) We find both lungs and heart in the breast, in English we refer to the heartbeat and the breath as "vital signs". Another English expression is to say something from or by heart. For the Native American people this means not only from memory but that you say it from the very core of your being. The words that come from this core are carried on the breath and by this act, according to Tedlock, words are of the spirit. Consider that during the most powerful of Hopi prayers, all that can be heard is a faint whistling of the breath as the speaker forms the words. Tedlock explains the relationship between breath and spirit further:

The triple association of breath, speech and soul is obscured in English... although words like 'spirit' and 'respiration' do have the same root. But in Amaasalik Eskimo, 'breath', 'poem' and 'soul' are all the same word. By means of the breath the 'poem' connects innermost being with outer cosmos, and when the speaker acts in the full consciousness of this, his act is a spiritual, a sacred one (Tedlock n.d.).

Accompanying this sacred understanding and use of words is a very high regard for silence. Luther Standing Bear explains that a silent pause was the most courteous way of beginning and ending a conversation.

Silence was meaningful for the Lakota, and his granting a space of silence to the speech maker and his own moment of silence before talking was done in the practice of true politeness and regardful of the rule that 'thought comes before speech' (Tedlock n.d.).

In addition to politeness, words that follow a thoughtful silence are "powerful words". Besides being chosen well and thought out, according to Tedlock; these words for the listeners "... come into existence suddenly, out of nothing." (Tedlock n.d.). Tedlock also claims that words can be used too much, thus, the Native speaks with conservation, in order to save or preserve the power of the words. Charles Eastman, a mixed blood Sioux, in his book the Soul of the Indian, claims that silence is the voice of Great Mysterious (Eastman 1911:89). The emphasis placed by Native American peoples on such things as the power of words and the importance of breath and silence are done in order to make the natural and spiritual worlds into ones that can be understood and participated with more

meaningfully.

Rodney Frey reports that among the Crow, words serve as a means of exchanging ideas and knowledge of the world as well as acting to create that world. Songs, prayers, conversations and vows are "physically real" to the Crow. These elements are an active force, as active as any physical behavior when publicly expressed. For the Crow, words have power that can affect the environment. A literal translation of the Crow word dasshússuua, means "breaking with the mouth", or "that which comes through the mouth- words- has the ability to break- alter- that which is in the world" (Frey 1983:132). Thus for the Crow, words do not only describe, they can in fact create.

The powers ascribed to words, breath and silence make possible this perpetual condition of creation, which is a continuing form of participation by the Native American person with the environment. Brown explains that this power of the word to create and the participation by the Native American person in this creation occurs within the realm of "sacred time". Sacred time is understood among the diverse Native American cultures to be:

... time outside of time, that is the sacred



time of the hierophany of the now. The recitation of a myth defining creation, for example, is not experienced in terms of an event of linear time past, but rather of a happening of eternal reality, true and real now and forever, a time on the 'knife edge between the past and the future' (Brown 1985:84).

In the American Indian oral traditions there is a repository for the people's wisdom- a wisdom deeply rooted in the soil, a wisdom born of a long term and continuing relationship with the earth. These traditions, these stories, in part, teach people where they come from- their origins and the continuing origins of the world, stars, fire, water, flying beings and animals. The stories outline complex ritual procedures, detailing the people's reciprocal obligations to uphold their world view.

Other lessons include how light became divided from darkness and how death came to be. Peggy Beck and Anna Walters, writing for the Navajo Community College Press, note that through these stories "... we are given the basic tools and ways of knowledge with which to survive in the world: healing ceremonies, prayers, dances, games, herbs and models of behavior." (Beck and Walters 1977:58). Oral literature, in its many forms, helps the people to wrest the answers to the perpetually vexing questions and paradoxes of the human

condition.

Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz have stated that the oral literature reflects a common belief among Native American peoples; they are a living part of the world, "... brother and sister to the grain and the trees, the buffalo and the bear." (Erdoes and Ortiz 1984:3). Henrietta Whiteman, director of the Native American Studies program at the University of Montana, also agrees that oral literature provides a people with an orientation to the world, an orientation that promotes harmony with nature and a recognition of the many interdependent relationships that exist between humans and the environment (Whiteman 1985:lecture).

In his studies among the Koyukon, Nelson found that oral traditions provide for the people an understanding of the natural world, and more importantly, guidelines for human interaction with the many beings in nature. The stories contain not only models for behavior but also patterns of relationship, ethical, moral and ritual instruction along with references to the spirit power of nature. As a Koyukon told Nelson,

Nobody made it up, these things we're supposed to do... My Grandfather said he told the stories because they would bring the people

good luck, keep them healthy, and make a good life (Nelson 1983:18).

Standing Bear, in his book Land of the Spotted Eagle, relates the importance of oral tradition in this fashion:

These stories were the libraries of our people. In each story, there was recorded some event of interest or importance, some happening that affected the lives of the people.

Some taught the virtues- kindness, obedience, thrift and the rewards of right living.

... a people enrich their minds who keep their history on the leaves of memory.  
(Beck and Walters 1977:59)

A special genre of tale is that of the Coyote story or Trickster.

Coyote is also referred to as Nanabozo the hare by the Chippewa, Iktomi the spider by the Siouan people and Napi, the old man among the Blackfeet. In spite of the tribal diversity concerning the Trickster Coyote there are broadly recognized characteristics with regards to his transformings and abilities for creation. The Trickster is the interpreter of all possibility and it is through his actions that we can more closely understand the natural world, ourselves and the moral implications of our thoughts. The Coyote or Trickster demonstrates and teaches the Native American

human-to-land ethic. Whiteman describes the purpose of Coyote as representing the dualities of life, a bringer of humor and order; he teaches us the consequences of excess and shows us our ego and conceit. By listening to Coyote stories we learn of the history and culture of the Native American people as well as the origins of the universe (Powers 1987:83-84). Brown sums up succinctly the purpose of Coyote stories, which must always be told during the winter after the last thunder.

At appropriate times and places the narrator of these tales, through rich and dramatic means, brings to life before the hearer these beings who, in their devious and exciting ventures, define for young and old the perimeters of acceptable behavior. The less-than-human qualities of greed, avarice, selfishness, uncontrolled passions and sneaky, deceitful and unaesthetic behavior are graphically and eloquently spelled out. Children and adults get the point and remember in a manner that lecturing and moralizing never accomplish (Brown 1985:126).

Among the Navajo, one such Coyote story describes how Coyote lost his eyes in a gambling match or sometimes gets them caught in a tree during a game whereupon he replaces them with amber pitch balls. The storyteller concludes with, "That's how Ma'i (Coyote) got

his yellow eyes" (Toelken and Scott 1981:81). Barre Toelken in discussions with Navajo elder, Yellowman, discovered that Coyote doesn't actually see with those amber pitch balls; rather, the story allows us to picture the possibility of life without eyes, due to injury, disease or blindness. Toelken explains that the Coyote stories teach us about our humanness.

Coyote tales are not simply entertainment; that they are phrased consciously in such a way as to construct an interesting surface plot which can act as entryway to a more subtle and far more important area of consideration, that the telling of, and listening to, Coyote stories is a serious business with serious consequences (Toelken & Scott 1981:81).

When Toelken asks Yellowman, "Why tell the (Coyote) stories?"

If my children hear the stories they will grow up to be good people; if they don't hear them, they will turn out to be bad (Toelken & Scott 1981:80).

Again Toelken asks Yellowman, "Why tell them (Coyote stories) to adults?"

Through the stories everything is made possible (Toelken & Scott 1981:80).

The stories contained within the oral literature of Native

Americans describe for them a reality of living with nature and with their fellow humans. The stories describe ever-widening circles of relationship. They define who we are as humans: the self, the community and the sacred. In response to the telling of stories is not just listening, but an involvement and participation in the natural and spirit worlds. Frey has described, specifically, the value of oral literature to the Crow (Apsaalooke). In the telling of their stories,

... the basic world-view qualities that organize a people's conception of time, space, being and causation, and the effective ethos that colors these qualities are presented to the listeners (Frey 1983:129).

Brown also points out values of the oral tradition, historic and current. He notes that members of the dominant culture are increasingly aware of the "... powerful effectiveness of oral transmission for educational purposes" (Brown 1985:55).

The importance given to the frame- that is, the time, the season, and the immediate environment in which the narration takes place- serves to place, reinforce and intensify what is communicated (Brown 1985:55).

Brown asserts that regardless of the type of story, or the age of the

listeners, each story contains many levels of possible meanings. In addition to having a specific message, stories have relevance to young and old alike and can create "bridges of understanding between the generations" (Brown 1985:55).

In the next few pages, samples from the Native American oral tradition and their specific messages will be discussed. Only the lessons pertaining to the development of a human-to-land ethic will be highlighted. When switching from an oral to a written medium and from a Native language over to English there is a substantial loss of meaning. Nonetheless, within these few selected stories we can see strong support for the Native American rights to hunt and take game for their survival. It is within the stories that the Native Americans learn the ritual procedures by which they can properly use the land, ensuring their long term survival. Many modern writers have mistakenly called these practices conservation when actually they represent the Native American human-to-land ethic- an act of participatory citizenship within the natural community.

This first story, from Walter McClintock's The Old North Trail, describes the relationship between the elk and the Blackfeet people.

### Old Man Takes Part in an Elk Dance.

Old Man come to a herd of elk having a dance. They were following their leader in single file. Old Man persuaded the chief elk to allow him to be the leader. When they became tired, and it was so dark that they could not see where they were going, Old Man led them to a precipice, and throwing his rattle over, to make it sound as if he himself had jumped, he hastened to the bottom. The elk were at first suspicious but when Old Man called to them to follow him, they jumped over one after the other and were all killed, excepting one, which was a cow. Old Man told her to go away, in order that there might be more elk. Old Man then ate his fill of elk meat, keeping the tongues to the last by placing them upon poles to be safe from the animals (McClintock 1968:340).

In this story the Blackfeet recognize their rights to hunt elk as passed on to them by the culture hero, "Old Man". A Blackfeet hunter would also recognize his responsibility to communicate in some ritual fashion with the leader of the elk tribe before beginning the hunt. In this story, Old Man instructs the Blackfeet on how to hunt and kill the elk. He also tells them how to treat the female elk so as to ensure the long term survival of Elk as a "people" and as a food source. The potential hazard to the Blackfeet for not following these prescribed actions is the disappearance of the elk. As McClintock notes, "Old Man told her (the elk cow) to go away, in order that there



might be more elk" (McClintock 1968:340). By adhering to the lessons in these stories the people were assured of the continued availability of elk. The stories are valid, not for reasons of ecology or game conservation, but because they promote an ethical relationship to the land. The people believe in the stories and the stories have worked for the people reinforcing their beliefs.

The following story from the Lillooet people describes how the Bear gives a hunter, all hunters, the right to hunt game successfully if they follow the proper ritual procedure, particular to their land. The story reveals a human-to-land ethic and a complex ritual procedure for hunting deer. When this ritual is followed successfully by the hunter and his family, the story is recapitulated.

#### The Man Who Lived with the Bear

A man lived at the mouth of Bridge River who had a wife and three children. He always went hunting with the other hunters; but, as he was never able to kill anything, the other men, when dividing the game, never gave him any share. The people were camped in mat lodges.

One evening, when the father was away, the children began to cry for meat; and their mother said in a sarcastic manner, 'When your father comes home, you will have lots of fat to eat.' Her husband was nearby, on his way home, and heard what she said. He felt so ashamed, that he turned back and went up to a place in

the mountains called Npaa'nk, where there are bare, burnt hillsides and bluffs of rock, with a small lake on top. Here he slept. Next morning early he travelled in an aimless manner toward the lake, saying to himself, 'I will wander around until I die.'

When near the lake, he saw a male black bear sitting in front of him. He went toward it, but never attempted to shoot it, although his quiver was full of arrows. Bear said to him, 'Come, friend! I am glad you do not try to shoot me. I know how the people have treated you, and the bad luck you have had in hunting. If you come with me and do as I direct, I will teach you, and you will become very wise.'

It was the fall of the year; and Bear went into his den, taking the hunter with him. It was a large cave, in one end of which Bear defecated and urinated. In another place there was a small pool of water, at which he wet his lips. Bear said, 'I am going to stay here all winter, and I wish you to remain with me.' The hunter looked around, and, seeing no food, said to himself, 'I wonder what we shall eat!' Bear knew his thoughts, and said, 'You need not think of that. I will provide food for both of us.' Now Bear gathered fir branches, and made a bed; and the man did likewise. Then Bear closed the entrance to the den, and said to the man, 'You will sleep in that corner, and I will sleep here. Take off your clothes and lie down. It is now dark, and we will go to sleep.' The hunter divested himself of his weapons and clothes, and lay down. He felt quite warm, for there was no draught, and the breath of the Bear kept the place warm. Bear said, 'I will wake you when it is time to eat.' At the end of one month, Bear wakened him, and gave him one paw to suck, while he himself sucked the other. Thus Bear wakened and fed him at the end of

each month for four months.

Now it was spring-time; and Bear, opening the den, gave the man his bow and arrows, and bade him good-by. Taking four of his arrows, he fixed them so that they became different, and said, 'Take care of these! If you shoot them at game, they will always kill. Never try to shoot any black bear. No shaman will ever be able to bewitch you, or take away your luck. You will be lucky, and kill all kinds of game, and will never be hungry. You will be a great hunter. Don't give the people anything you kill at first.' Then he told him where to find deer; and the man did as directed, and shot a buck, which he carried home on his back.

Coming to where the people were camped, he passed by above them, and went to his wife's house. She had cut her hair as a sign of widowhood. He ate the meat with his family. The people came to see him, but he would not give them any meat to eat. They were angry, and said, 'He has been out five months, and only killed one deer: it is well if he eats it all himself.'

Again the man went hunting, gathered the deer all in one place, and shot forty. He took home a piece of one. The people said, 'The poor fellow has killed another deer.' They went out hunting; but each time they returned without seeing any deer, and feeling very tired. Then an old man said to the others, 'He has learned the 'mystery' of the deer: talk nicely to him, and he may give us meat.' Now he asked the people to go and carry in the deer. They laughed, and said, 'It does not require us all to carry in one deer.' At last, however, they all went, and were so surprised to see so many dead deer. It took them all of one day to skin and cut up the carcass, and all of the next day to carry home the meat. The man became the most famous

hunter of the tribe (Teit 1912:360).

This next story from the Winnebago Trickster Cycle represents a stage in the development of Wakdjunkago, as well as in the development of all people. Trickster is learning, through various processes of education and socialization, those skills necessary to be a more responsible citizen of the whole community, both natural and cultural. This story teaches us how to hunt buffalo using the surround technique and how to kill buffalo without the use of bow and arrow. This story also shows the importance of recognizing the individuality of animals being hunted. Like other Trickster stories this one reveals the need for respecting other groups within the natural community.

As he, Trickster, walked along, suddenly, he came in sight of a knoll. As he approached it, he saw, to his surprise, an old buffalo near it. 'My, my, what a pity! If I only hadn't thrown away that arrowbundle, I would now be able to kill and eat this animal,' he exclaimed. Thereupon he took a knife, cut down the hay and fashioned it into figures of men. These he placed in a circle, leaving an opening at one end. The place was very muddy. Having constructed this enclosure, he went back to where he had seen the buffalo and shouted, 'Oho! My younger brother, here he is! Here he is indeed eating without having anything to worry about. Indeed let nothing prey on his mind! I will keep watch

for him against intruders.' Thus he spoke to the buffalo who was feeding to his heart's content. Then he continued, 'Listen, younger brother, this place is completely surrounded by people! Over there, however, is an opening through which you might escape.' Just then the buffalo raised his head unsuspectingly and, to his surprise, he seemed really to be completely surrounded by people. Only at the place Trickster had designated did an opening appear. In that direction, therefore, the buffalo ran. Soon he sank in the mire and Trickster was immediately upon him with his knife and killed him. Then he dragged him over to a cluster of wood and skinned him. Throughout all these operations he used his right arm only (Velie 1979:61).

In the above story, originally recorded by Paul Radin, the Trickster, Wakdjunkago, refers to the buffalo as "younger brother". Just as the Native people recognized their relationship to all things, they also realized that all things are in a circle, and through death comes new life. Hunting, done with the proper mental and spiritual preparation and carried out within the ritual guidelines passed down through the oral traditions is viewed by the people as a sacred or "holy occupation" (Hughes 1977:2). Hunting and the taking of life is done with great humility, respect and attention to ritual detail.

One final story from McClintock's book, The Old North Trail, speaks powerfully of the ability of oral tradition to provide for the people an understanding of the natural world. The concluding

comments in this story tell us of the great observational skills and natural history information collected by the Blackfeet people. One can sense from this story the many skills required of storytellers, who in shaping the stories and embellishing certain parts with their own information not only made the tale interesting, but ensured the delivery of an important message.

#### Legend of the Lost Children. (Pleiades)

There is also a family of six small stars we call the 'Lost Children' (Pleiades). These children were lost a great many years ago from a large camp of Blackfeet, during the moon, when the buffalo calves are yellow (spring). The Indians had been running buffalo over a piskun and had secured a large number, among them many buffalo calves. The little yellow hides were given to the children, who played with them a game of buffalo. There was a poor family of six children who were unable to secure any of the yellow skins and went naked. One day, when many of the children were on the prairie, playing buffalo together, putting the skins over their heads and running after each other, they made fun of the poor children, calling them 'scabby old bulls', and shouting derisively that 'their hair was old and black and coming out.' The six children did not go home with the rest. They were ashamed because their parents gave them no yellow skins. They wandered off on the plains and were taken up to the sky. They are not seen during the moon, when the buffalo calves are yellow (spring, the time of their shame), but, every year, when the

calves turn brown (autumn), the lost children can be seen in the sky every night (McClintock 1968:490).

It is generally recognized that scholars have not given enough attention to the skills of individual storytellers. Oral tradition, being a performance genre, requires that the storyteller structure the tale to the specific needs of the audience (Walker 1983:29). In actual oral performances, narrators use a variety of techniques and personal information to animate or bring the story to life. A sampling of these techniques and their vital role in oral tradition is discussed in the next section.

### **Part III**

#### **Insights Into The Telling of Stories**

'The best storyteller is one who lets you live if the weather is bad'- in other words, if the story is about ice fishing, there should be some instruction in it that the hungry listener might one day put to use (Matthiessen 1981:11).

This section provides information for the environmental educator on how the stories have been and are being told. A good storyteller involves the listener in the story through a variety of skills, including voice manipulation, gestures, descriptions that bring the imagination into play, silence and many others. Being able to bring to life a story from the oral tradition helps children to more clearly "see" and begin to understand the Native American human-to-land ethic.

For educators, this use of imagination is vital to the development of students. The importance of imagination is explained below. A Zuni storyteller once asked of Tedlock: "When I tell these stories do you picture it, or do you just write it down?" (Tedlock and Tedlock 1975:xxii). Both parents and teachers claim that radio helps students to be more creative. Listening to radio shows acts to stretch the imagination by picturing landscapes, characters, cities



and exotic settings. Research in neuroscience concurs with these claims.

... with their eyes closed, people activate parts of their brain-mind systems that are left unstimulated without (imagination)". And further, the "... use of (imagination) enhances a person's capacity to remember concepts, words, names and ideas (WREEC 1987:206).

Good storytellers are able to not only entertain their audiences but also communicate to them the "universality and timelessness" of such themes as creation, the realities of our existence, and the potentialities in the human condition. The stories are not limited to everyday physical facts, ordinary events or plots. Rather, they teach us through abstract notions of behavior, incredible events, and often employ non-human teachers. Many of the stories are like a code; the more you listen to them over the years the more they reveal. Brown tells us that the recounting of stories "... is made special through the insistence that the telling of the account is serious and potentially dangerous, so that there must be both an appropriate time and place for such telling" (Brown 1985:98).

An Anishnabe (Chippewa) relates that among his people stories are told during the long winter nights of the Great Lakes woodlands.

There are other things to do in the summer and by telling tales in the winter they can be relatively sure that the trickster is not listening in the guise of an animal or in the face of a flower. Brown explains that true myths can be told only after the sun sets and usually only in the winter season, "... after the last thunder of summer and before the first thunder of spring" (Brown 1985:98). Among the Crow, Coyote stories can only be told from the first frost in winter to the first lightning of spring. The long winter evenings, when activities center around the warmth in the home, provide an ideal setting for storytelling. Kiowa storytellers must also follow certain rules, for if a Kiowa were to tell a coyote story during the day, the coyote might appear and bite off the narrator's nose.

Losing your nose is not the least of dangers associated with storytelling. Tedlock notes that the telling of stories about the gods can be dangerous. Among the White Mountain and Jicarilla Apache, Yavapi, Kiowa, Skidi Pawnee and Eastern Algonquians "... the gods do not necessarily like being talked about" (Tedlock n.d.). Besides the wrath of the gods, one risks the danger of becoming a hunch back, especially among the Zuni, Pomo, Wintu, Klamath and Coast Salish audiences. Thus, during the story, members of the audience try to

keep their spines straight, says Tedlock. "The Zunis try to keep straight by sitting up stiffly, but the others do it by lying down flat, and among the Coast Salish even the narrator must lie flat" (Tedlock n.d.).

In addition to these precautions storytellers will often disclaim personal responsibility for what they say. The Cree narrator will begin a story by saying, "For sure I am lying." Tedlock explains other forms of disclaimers:

... speakers of Siouan, Athapaskan and Eskimo languages, attach an affix to the end of every second or third sentence which has the effect of 'they say', thus attributing the story to general hearsay, while others sprinkle in words like 'perhaps' or 'it seems' and 'as the story (or account) goes' (Tedlock n.d.)(Brown 1986:lecture).

The manner in which a story is told is part of its message.

Myths that begin "In the long Ago," according to Brown, do not refer to a distant time past with regards to linear time. Rather, it refers to...

... qualitative conditions of earlier existence which, through the telling of the myth, may be mysteriously reintegrated and realized in the immediacy of the timeless now. Analogous is the 'Once upon a time'... of

European fairy tales, which may be translated as 'nowever and forever' (Brown 1985:98).

Amiotte notes that it is the responsibility of the storyteller to reveal to the audience where the story is located in time-worldly or mythological. The storyteller must also state the significance of the story to be told and provide safe transportation for the listener, both to and from the story.

According to Dakota/Lakota scholar, Ella Deloria, Lakota stories are classified into two major categories. The first major category of Ohunkakan deals with the best known and most often repeated myths which are from the Sioux mythic past or when the world was forming. Another group of tales within this category is from a more recent time but still relate amazing events. The second category of stories is called Woyakipi, these stories are of actual happenings and are told as if they are within the historical memory of the tribe. One group of Woyakipi stories relates events in which someone was aided by supernatural power. The second group of stories within this category is simple accounts of events that took place in the local band. These stories are told to recall the past or to entertain someone who has not heard them (Walker 1983:25).

The Ojibwa, according to A. Irving Hallowell, also distinguish two major categories of oral narrative. The first category deals with news, anecdotes, and stories about the lives of human beings. The second category deals with myths or sacred stories which can only be told in the winter. The characters in these myths are regarded as living and have influenced events on earth since time immemorial. These characters are referred to, by the Ojibwa, as "our Grandfathers" (Tedlock and Tedlock 1975:49).

Whatever time period storytellers are operating in, it is their responsibility to make the story come alive for their audience. Tedlock relates what a Zuni storyteller described as the requirements for "Verbal Art": "You're right with the story, like you were in it." And another example, "If you're really true to a story- you make it like it's right in front of you" (Tedlock 1976:126). Tedlock further describes responsibilities in the "Verbal Art" of storytelling,

The successful (storyteller), then, through fast moving or scene painting words, through sound effects and direct quotation, through gestures and even props, transports his audience into the long ago: 'People can see it right in front of them' (Tedlock n.d.).

The storyteller uses a variety of techniques and modes of expression to enhance the listener's involvement in the story. Deloria has called the oral literature a "performance genre" in which the presentation itself has meaning as well as the message of the story (Walker 1983:29). By incorporating a variety of embellishments the storyteller vividly details each scene and character in the story. Despite having heard the story before, this detail and variety of embellishment keeps the listener's attention. While at times extensive detail, sequence repetition, and a variety of addendums may seemingly obscure the plot, Frey reminds us that, "... the significance of storytelling is as much the revealing of a specific plot as it is the process of movement of the listener into the world of the story" (Frey 1983:33). Careful development of characters and background helps greatly to place the listener into the story. Brown notes that:

Skillful manipulation of language and delivery is utilized to fit the character in question. The rich use of metaphor as well as metonymy- where something is named through its distinctive attributes- serves as a stimulus to the listener's reconstruction of the episode. The beaver, for example, may be referred to among the Western Shoshone as 'big-tail owner' (Brown 1985:99).

Placing the listener in the story is important so that they can re-experience the event. The audience may participate in the storytelling through a variety of means. Among the Papago the listeners must remain awake as well as repeat the last word of each sentence. Rich Clow notes that the Lakota offer guttural grunts of approval or disapproval, providing the storyteller with immediate feedback (Clow pers. com.:1988). Using stories from the Native American oral tradition in environmental education would promote student feedback and participation in a variety of forms.

In addition to monitoring the audience response and manipulating language, storytellers also utilize all the powers of human voice. The Cherokee and Wind River Shoshone imitate the sounds and calls of birds. Klikitat storytellers use a falsetto voice to portray Coyote and a bass voice for Grizzly Woman. The Couer d'Alene and Teton Dakota use onomatopoeic words (words sounding like what they refer to- buzz, for example) in their own language to represent the grizzly bear and snow squeaking under foot. Size, length of time or distance may be represented by lengthening the vowels in the appropriate words. For example, in English we may say, "Its been a looooooong time." The loudness of the voice can

also be used to emphasize certain actions. White Mountain Apache storytellers lower their voice during dangerous or holy scenes. The Wintu progressively lower the voice as someone walks or rides into the distance and whisper to indicate stealth. Zuni storytellers speak loudly to indicate surprise, anger or violence while speaking softly to portray sleeping, death or nursing children. A few examples from the book Storyteller may help to illustrate these techniques.

All night she listened to him describe each breath the man took, each motion of the bear's head as it tried to catch the sound of the man's breathing, and tested the wind for his scent. He had talked all winter, softly and incessantly, about the great polar bear stalking a lone hunter across Bearing Sea Ice. After all the months the old man had been telling the story, the bear was within a hundred feet of the man (Silko 1981:26).

... when Aunt Susie came to the place where the little girls' clothes turned into butterflies, then her voice would change and I could hear the excitement and wonder and the story wasn't sad any longer (Silko 1981:15).

Beck and Walters report that the Papago told stories in the following fashion.

My father went on talking to me in a low voice. This is how our people always talk to their children, so low and quiet the child thinks



he is dreaming. But he never forgets (Beck and Walters 1977:60).

Storytellers also make use of the power of silence. The Klamath often pause just before a dramatic word. The Zuni use pauses to create suspense and tension in addition to actually representing quiet parts of the story, such as after a battle. Storytellers may also sing and use gestures to further animate their stories. Some obvious gestures are those that indicate direction, size or posture of the character. Some narrators may act out various scenes or indeed the entire story. Familiar gestures include the widely known arrow release and that of a...

Menominee performer (who) loudly clapped a fist into his palm for such diverse actions as a shooting, a sudden arrival, a person falling to the ground... (Tedlock n.d.).

Another common method of illustrating a story is to use comparisons- comparing the size of children in the story to those in the audience, or weather conditions in the story to current weather patterns outside.

Astrov explains that among Navajo storytellers the emphasis is placed on wandering and travel.

The storyteller likes to dwell with relish on the nature of travel techniques... [and,]... while journeying (topographical peculiarities are described with relish and geographical names never left unmentioned) (Astrov 1950:47-48).

Tedlock notes that Zuni narrators, like many others, tend to keep a story in motion. They achieve this through varied use of the human voice, hand gestures and facial expressions, creating in effect a multi-media show. This variety, existing in story, presentation style and delivery, creates for the audience a tale with textural immediacy- "like it's right in front of you" (Tedlock 1976:126).

When the narrator finishes telling a story, then he or she must transport the audience back into the present time. Penobscot, Menominee, Iowa and Quilleute storytellers bridge the span of mythic time with, "that's when I came home" (Tedlock n.d.). According to Tedlock, this is a "playful way of catapulting the audience out of the story and back to the hearthside, while at the same time insisting that the story does have a connection with present realities" (Tedlock n.d.). Often times this transition from story to present day includes a "that's why" statement, relating to a commonly recognized natural or social phenomena- "That's how the bobcat lost his tail" or

"That's why the raccoon wears a mask". Brown also speaks to the significance of this narration technique:

The use of the concluding "That's why" line again contributes to the impact of experiential immediacy. In versions of the Earth-Diver myth, for example- Earth maker holds the muskrat up by his tail in order to take from his webbed feet that soil of which the earth is made, and in so doing stretches out his tail, just as we find it today (Brown 1985:99).

As Frey discovered on the Crow reservation in the mid 70's, Crow students, as well as their parents, wanted the oral literature included in modern school curriculum. This suggests a renewed and growing interest in oral tradition.

Both Indian and non-Indian are engaged in a quest for the roots of lost heritages now increasingly understood to be essential if we are to reorient our cultures and lives toward values that express real human nature (Brown 1985:47).

We can all benefit from the oral traditions and from the advice of the Rock, who in the Long Ago, gave the Seneca their stories and instructed them in this fashion.

When you visit one another, you must tell these things and keep them up always. [Also,] When you go to a man or a woman to ask for one of these stories carry something to pay for it,

bread or meat, or whatever you have (Chapman  
1975:25-29).

## **Part IV**

### Using Native American Oral Tradition in Environmental Education

Educational questions are ultimately ecological. They require us to go beyond the social order to consider critically the way human existence is involved in and sustained by the larger natural world (Colwell 1973:40).

The community is the supreme educational environment (Colwell 1973:36).

Everything is held together with stories that is all that is binding us together... (Lopez 1973:62).

Every culture has a variety of ideas concerning the universe; in the offering, and sharing of these ideas, each culture is invaluable. To overlook the diversity in either human cultures or the natural world is perilous to our long term survival. To do so would be anti-ecological, and we would become like a monoculture of corn. One of the immediately valuable ways of using stories from the Native Americans is to demonstrate to students cultural variety and the Native relationship to the land. Part of the valuable message in this lesson is that the Native American educational process involves the whole community. It relies on both natural and cultural aspects, it is an ecological approach. The following story demonstrates

clearly the Yup'ik Eskimo view of nature in modern times and their concern for non-Native culture.

A Yup'ik hunter on Saint Lawrence Island once told me that what traditional Eskimos fear most about us is the extent of our power to alter the land, the scale of that power, and the fear that we can easily affect some of these changes electronically, from a distant city. Eskimos, who sometimes see themselves as still not quite separate from the animal world, regard us as a kind of people whose separation may have become too complete, they call us, with a mixture of incredulity and apprehension, 'the people who change nature' (Lopez 1986:39).

Many Yup'ik people living today with an awareness of the modern world still value their traditions and ties with the natural world and see our separation from it as too complete. Within the rich Native American traditions, there is a vision- a vision of living completely as whole beings, as citizens within the community of nature. The oral narratives point out the fact that Native American lifestyles do not dominate nature, rather they tell of living in a dynamic relationship with the natural community. The Native American experience in this country is an irreplaceable and inestimable part of the total human experience.

In lectures at the University of Montana, Brown describes how the Native American way of viewing the world has come down through centuries of successful living close to the land. Theirs is a way of seeing and being which encompasses a whole and practical relationship with living nature, certainly a human-to-land ethic (Brown 1985,1986:lectures). Nelson describes this relationship as it is expressed especially among the Koyukon hunters.

The interchange between humans and the environment is based on an elaborate code of respect and morality without which survival would be jeopardized (Nelson 1983:31).

The oral narratives reveal to the people the interrelationship that exists between humans and all things- an expression of their human-to-land ethic, their particular place in the universe and an understanding that they are not alone in the world. These teachings come from the land and from an introspective people who participate actively with their surroundings through speaking, ritual singing, hunting, silence and other art forms. These lessons can provide a source for discussion and introspection in environmental education settings. The late John Collier, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs, had a sense of the applicability of Native American wisdom

to our contemporary situation.

They had and have this power for living which our modern world has lost- as world-view and self-view, as tradition and institution, as practical philosophy dominating their societies and as an art supreme among all the arts.

They had what the world has lost. They have it now, what the world has lost, the world must have again, lest it die. Not many years are left to have or have not, to recapture the lost ingredient (Brown 1985:129).

There is a call to re-evaluate the modern relationship to nature by Yup'ik Eskimos who have glimpsed both traditional and modern worlds and prefer to remain close to their traditions. This call is echoed by modern scholars. Frey's observations of Crow students and their parents reveal that the standard education is not enough. Crow people are integrating oral tradition into their curriculum for reasons of strengthening cultural identity (Frey 1983:129). The Native American experience and wisdom can be included in any educational setting; through the use of oral tradition. As Frey notes, both history and culture are made available to the students (Frey 1983:129).

To introduce young people to Native American tradition give



them samples of oral narratives, songs, art forms or pictures of art forms and see what their uncoaxed reactions and comments are.

After this, a discussion of how these elements explore a close living relationship with the land will broaden the student's understanding of a Native American human-to-land ethic as well as nurture their own relationship to nature. Children are interested to know how Native American peoples regard their everyday tools of living and architecture in relation to the natural world.

Native American oral literature, by being translated into English, has lost much of its message. As discussed earlier, Native languages have a vastly different understanding of the power of words, the uses of silence and the manner in which they address reality. The Wintu, for example, maintain an attitude of humility and respect towards nature, society and the ultimate realities. They might say, "I taste this to be bread.", whereas in our culture, which is much more aggressive towards reality, we would say "This is bread" (Tedlock and Tedlock 1975:140). So, ideally, the translations available to educators today, and there are more all the time, will contain or reflect some viable seed of the original meaning.

Another activity for environmental educators is to begin to use

the oral narratives along with other historical materials to look beyond what Native peoples have thought about the land to accounts of how they actually used the land. It is then possible to see how their use of the land in turn influenced the culture. Writings by William Cronan and Richard White are extremely useful in this area, especially their 1986 article in "American Heritage".

Another activity with the Native American oral literature is to use those pieces which particularly deal with descriptions of schooling, so that contemporary students may compare and contrast the school settings and types of requirements. The following selection from T.C. McLuhan's book is a passage from the autobiography of Tatanga Mani.

Oh, yes, I went to the white man's schools. I learned to read from school books, newspapers and the Bible. But in time I found that these were not enough. Civilized people depend too much on man-made printed pages. I turn to the Great Spirit's book which is the whole of his creation. You can read a big part of that book if you study nature.

... the Great Spirit has provided you and me with an opportunity for study in nature's university, the forests, the rivers, the mountains and the animals which include us (McLuhan 1971:106).

Another selection about education from McLuhan's book comes from a 1744 treaty negotiation in which the commissioners of Maryland and Virginia invited young men of the Six Nations (Iroquois) to attend William and Mary College. Spokesmen for the Six Nations declined the offer for a variety of practical reasons and in turn offered to educate a dozen young men from Virginia in the ways of the Six Nations.

Amiotte tells a story from his early education which provides a glimpse of the inspiration and imagination available to school aged children exposed to the rich and complex Native American traditions. It also demonstrates a rather common technique in traditional education. That being...

... you don't ask questions when you grow up. You watch and listen and wait, and the answer will come to you. It's yours then, not like learning in school (Tedlock and Tedlock 1975:xxi).

In this story, Frank Black Tail Deer has given young Amiotte a beaver fur cap, which had once belonged to Amiotte's grandfather.

He said that now that I was going to school, I would need some special help. Giving me the cap he said, 'Remember it is the beaver who can make a whole world. In doing so he gives a

place for all creatures to come and live. Now that you are going to school you will be making the world all over again and you should do it in a good way so your relations will be proud of you.'

Years later reflecting on this, I realized what he was talking about, for in building a dam in some places the beaver actually does create a world, a miniature lake with its ecosystem to which many animals could come and drink, from which could arise new and rich flora (Amiotte 1983: photocopy).

Students are receptive to hearing about a variety of schooling experiences. My own field work, during the early winters of both 1986 and 1987, showed that these comparisons stir imagination and creativity in modern classrooms as well as in the outdoor setting.

In taking our lead from ecology, it is important to utilize as much diversity and creativity in our approach to environmental education as possible. As recently as 1973, Roger Hart was able to write in "Natural History" that our modern society knows more about the relationship between baboons and their environment than we know about the activities of children in the out-of-doors (Hart 1973:67). Much of the traditional Native American education, outside of winter storytelling, consisted of time in the great spaces of nature, either alone, with other young people or with a tutor,

learning the skills of survival, hunting and the seeking of wisdom. Henry David Thoreau gives us an idea of why this type of schooling was so common. It was in order to preserve his health and spirit that Thoreau believed he should spend at least four hours per day roaming the woods and field, free from worldly encumbrances but attentive to his surroundings. Thoreau's beliefs along with traditional practices of education among the many Native American cultures lend support to research by Hart showing that children need time alone in the out-of-doors and time to experience personally the order and complexity of nature.

A few modern environmental educators propose programs for young people very much in the same spirit as traditional Native American education. In Thoreau's Method, David Pepi notes that part of the value in walking is to be actively involved with and attentive to your surroundings. Environmental educator Steve VanMatre makes a similar point in his Acclimatization, Sunship Earth and Earth Education programs. Joseph Cornell shares this view of actively and knowingly being in nature. He lists a number of very specific activities in his book Sharing Nature with Children and Listening to Nature which promote participation in nature. In Prejudice Against

Nature, Michael Cohen promotes a human-to-land ethic. Each of the educators, VanMatre, Cornell and Cohen, include Native American oral literature to enhance described activities and to provide a contrast to our modern mundane view of nature. The above listed authors would agree with the educational advice from the following Native American sources: from Lakota, Luther Standing Bear:

Training began with children who were taught to sit still and enjoy it. They were taught to use their organs of smell, to look when there was apparently nothing to see, and to listen intently when all seemingly was quiet (Astrov 1946:39).

A Yurok holy man expands the use of the senses in this way.

To see means to see what is actually there, what actually exists: not what you want to be there, but what is really there. It's all seeing (Matthiesen 1981:15).

And an old Pueblo man had the following comment concerning the art of being observant.

You must learn to look at the world twice. You must learn to look at the world twice if you wish to see all that there is to see (Matthiesen 1981:14).

As an example of this type of seeing and use of the senses while

walking in the woods, Lopez describes from his own experience what might actually be happening with the kids. He describes walking as an old business. A form of business that is conducted slowly, with an awareness of the immediacy to the senses and an electric sense of anticipation for what is yet to come. A few well chosen stories from the Native American oral tradition can prepare participants for this feelingful walk with nature. Thoreau would agree for it was he who thought that the Native American wisdom allowed one to approach nature directly, thus avoiding scientific theories and representations.

The "Verbal Art" of storytelling is an inspiring way to begin an outdoor lesson. An appropriate story from the Native American oral literature can illustrate the history of an area, explore the cultural beliefs of a people, highlight natural features or residents, while at the same time fertilizing the participant's imagination and promoting new ways of thinking about and living with the earth. Concepts covered regarding the human-to-land ethic, once woven by a storyteller into an involved drama, will stay with the students longer (Brazeau 1985:23).

Listed below are situations when a story from the Native

American oral literature would be especially effective. A sample story accompanies each occasion.

1. When demonstrating the variety of human culture and the diversity of ideas concerning nature-

There were seven youths on this world. One of them was red haired. They did not know whether they had any parents. They were having a hard time of it. 'What shall we turn into?' they asked one another. One said, 'Let us change into the earth.' The one named the Wise-one (Ksabe) said, 'No,... the earth is mortal, it gets caved in.' Then another one said, 'Let us become rocks.' 'No, they are destructible, they all break asunder.' A third one said, 'We must change into big trees, into very big ones.' 'No, they are perishable, when there is a storm they are blown down.' Again one of them said, 'Let us change into water.' 'No, it is destructible, it dries up completely.' The fifth said, 'Let us change into the night.' 'No, the night is fleeting, soon the light appears again.' The sixth boy said, 'Let us be the day.' 'No, it is fleeting, when the sun disappears, it is dark once more.' The Wise-one said, 'The blue sky above is never dead, it is always in existence. Shining things live there. Such we shall change into. In that region let us dwell.'

Well, so they do. The smallest of them took them up, hoisting them by means of his spider web. He set three on one side and three on the other, seating himself in the middle. When the last one had gotten up, he tore the web in the middle, threw it down, and gave it to the spider



(Astrov 1946:92).

2. When trying to explain the Native American human-to-land ethic and their collective wisdom for living close to nature-

The Lakota was a... lover of nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth, the attachment growing with age. The old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power. It was good for the skin to touch the earth and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth. Their tipis were built upon the earth and their alters were made of earth. The birds that flew in the air came to rest upon the earth and it was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing and healing.

That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to the other lives about him...

Kinship with all creatures of the earth, sky and water was a real and active principle. For the animal and bird world there existed a brotherly feeling that kept the Lakota safe among them and so close did some of the Lakotas come to their feathered and furred friends that in true brotherhood they spoke a common tongue.

The old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard: he knew that lack of respect for growing, living

things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. So he kept his youth close to its softening influence (McLuhan 1971:6).

3. When exploring how the Native Americans utilized the land and were in turn influenced by it-

It used to be that the Kiowa used only dogs for pack animals. Then one time an old medicine man had a dream in which he saw a strange animal. He began thinking about how he could make it. He took some mud and made a body, covered it with the hair of a prairie dog, gave it the eyes of an eagle, hoofs made from a turtle shell, and wings to make it travel faster. But the horse flew away up into the air and did not return. There it remained to bring cyclones. Later the old man made another animal just like the first, but without wings. It was successful. From that time on the Kiowa have had horses (Ewers 1980:298).

4. When talking about forms of schooling, a story from the Native American literature allows students to compare and contrast their own situation-

On winter nights, when we had finished our gruel or rabbit stew and lay back on our mats, my brothers would say to my father: 'My Father, tell us something.'

My father would lie quietly upon his mat with my mother beside him and the baby between them. At last he would start slowly to tell us about how the world began. This is a story that can be told only in winter when there are no snakes about, for if the snakes heard they could crawl in and bite you. But in winter

when snakes are asleep, we tell these things. Our story about the world is full of songs, and when the neighbors heard my father singing they would open our door and step in over the high threshold. Family by family they came, and we made a big fire and kept the door shut against the cold night. When my father finished a sentence we would all say the last word after him. If anyone went to sleep he would stop. He would not speak anymore. But we did not go to sleep... (Astrov 1962:199).

5. When attempting to focus on a particular sense, way of sensing, or a natural feature before leaving on a walk-

When I was ten years of age I looked at the land and the rivers, the sky above and the animals around me and could not fail to realize that they were made by some great power. I was so anxious to understand this power that I questioned the trees and the bushes. It seemed as though the flowers were staring at me, and I wanted to ask them 'Who made you?' I looked at the moss-covered stones; some of them seemed to have the features of a man, but they could not answer me. Then I had a dream, and in my dream one of these small round stones appeared to me and told me that the maker of all was Wakan tanka, and that in order to honor him I must honor his works in nature (McLuhan 1971:16).

6. During campfires, early morning hikes, sunset watches, rest periods, car trips and about any time when the participants need a change of pace or a new direction for the group energies. In other words, introductions, transitions, and conclusions-

Two hunters camping in the woods were

preparing supper one night when a katydid began singing near them. One of them said sneeringly, 'Ku'it sings and doesn't know that it will die before the season ends.'

The katydid answered: 'Ku! nive. Oh, so you say. But you need not boast. You will die before tomorrow night.' The next day they were surprised by the enemy. The hunter who sneered at the katydid was killed (Underwood 1956:28).

There is a superstition held by the Cree people about the effect of staring at birds in flight. If one stares too long at the skein of fowl flying south, part of the man's soul will disappear from his body and he will live fewer days on this earth.

Often a person will see blackbirds crying madly as they swarm around their enemy, the crow, Ka-ka-gih. When the blackbirds, Ja-ja-kanok, circle the crow, an Indian should not look at this event. The result of seeing this circling battle in the sky will remove the soul or spirit of the Anishinabi and he will live only a short life.

Because of these superstitions our people seldom watch flocks of birds in flight (Ray and Stevens 1984:132).

As for the structure of actual lessons, briefly described below are a few that have successfully worked in my own experience. These are offered to inspire environmental educators to think of many other possibilities. When preparing to use Native American oral literature, read from several sources and find just the right story, that will enhance an already successful program. Beginning

storytellers should practice telling the narrative until the telling becomes comfortable and fluid, and utilizes some verbal and physical enhancements to make the story come alive. After the telling, if appropriate, a more in depth study of the narrative can be conducted.

Anyone studying birds will find the significance of birds to Native American cultures an interesting addition to their curriculums and programs. In the central or plains region of the country one might want to read "The Ornithology of Cheyenne Religionists" by John M. Moore who discusses a number of birds. A chapter entitled "Naming the Sacred" in William K. Powers' book, Sacred Language, discusses the Lakota classification of Eagles. A good story to utilize in this lesson might be a tale known to both Cheyenne and Lakota people as "The Great Race" which discusses the exploits of Magpie found on page 390 in Erdoes and Ortiz. Another very usable story is "Brings-Down-The-Sun Talks About Birds And The Stars" in McClintock's book, The Old North Trail. There is also a whole chapter exploring the Koyukon relationship to birds in Nelson's book, Make Prayers to the Raven.

Lessons concerning insects can be enriched by reading Brown's article "The Unlikely Associates" which speaks of the Lakota

understanding of moths, dragonflies, butterflies and spiders. Some good stories concerning insects can be found in Lakota Myth by James Walker.

Evening sky programs have always been a popular draw for environmental educators. There is a rich and diverse Native American oral literature waiting to be used in this area. In Erdoes and Ortiz see part III for stories of the sun, moon and stars as well as Walker's Lakota Myth. The sun and moon are also covered in The Winnebago Tribe by Paul Radin.

There is, in the available literature, an abundance of narratives concerning animals. Erdoes and Ortiz provide a wide survey in chapter eight, Percy Bullchild in the section under "Napi Tales" talks about coyotes, chickadees, prairie chickens, gophers, ants, elk, mice, bobcats, buffalo and the fox. Nelson's Make Prayers to the Raven goes into great detail concerning the Koyukon attention to animals. A collection called Tales of the North American Indian by Stith Thompson has a nice assortment of trickster or coyote stories. John Ewers in The Horse in Blackfoot Culture covers the use of horses extensively as well as stories explaining their origin among the Blackfoot people.

Some additional texts include John Bierhorst's book The Red Swan, which has an entire chapter dedicated to Winter and Spring. American Indian Prose and Poetry, by Margot Astrov, surveys the oral literature by geographical region. This can be extremely useful for teachers just beginning to look for sources in their area.

Two particular activities that many environmental educators use today are guided imagery and Seton Watching, named after Ernest Thompson Seton. Guided imagery allows the instructor to share an experience or place with students by reading a short descriptive story. The students get into a relaxed position and try to imagine their participation in or observation of the event. Seton Watching involves sitting motionless, moving only your eyes, while attentively observing what is going on in the field of vision. This activity lasts ten to thirty minutes. Both of these activities, the first for reasons of its emphasis on imagination, the second for its emphasis on really seeing, are excellent ways to incorporate Native American oral literature, followed up with the similar message from modern ecologists.

Both activities can be used to compare/contrast the Native American human-to-land ethic with our own. Ortiz, in an article

entitled "Look to the Mountaintop" describes how important it is for us to renew our ties to places on the earth and to ourselves (Ortiz 1974:104). We all need to occasionally re-enact the odyssey of our beginnings with humility. To do this we can stand before the sunrise, watching color and warmth spill onto the land, or we can watch that same color recede into the sunset. We may sit by the shore of the lake, by a stream or pond, the mountains, the desert- anywhere natural- to watch, to see, participate, acknowledge and feel renewed.

Guided imagery and Seton Watching enable us to, in the thinking of Ortiz, renew our ties to the earth and re-experience our humility before the expanses of life. It is appropriate to begin both exercises with a reading of Black Elk's description of the power of the circle, which can be found in Brown's The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian, page 35. For the guided imagery trip, have the participants lie down, get comfortable and close their eyes. There are a variety of readings available, but Leopold's "Odyssey", found on pages 104-108 in A Sand County Almanac, works well. For the Seton Watching, after the Black Elk reading, we all find a tree to prop our backs against, then sit for twenty minutes looking out over the



natural setting, moving only our eyes. Both activities are concluded with a sharing circle in which everyone gets a chance to share ideas, feelings, sightings and insights.

This very brief list should provide encouragement for environmental educators to begin to include, comfortably, some aspects of Native American oral tradition in their programs. It is beneficial to continue to include aspects of modern ecological wisdom into environmental programs as well. This is important for several reasons, one being the likelihood of accusations of living in or wishing to return to the past. A link with the contemporary ecological writers demonstrates to the participants that the Native American land wisdom- their human-to-land ethic- has long been associated with a healthy and wholistic lifestyle over the long term. Contemporary ecological writings and the Native American oral literature work together well in developing, for the student, a sense of their human-to-land ethic. In other words, as described by Wendell Berry, "What is good for the world will be good for us" (Berry 1981:98).

A good starting point for modern ecological wisdom is Barry Commoner, especially his four Laws of Ecology found in The Closing

Circle, page 33. Another source that is a wealth of information concerning the importance of a personal human-to-land ethic is George Session's "Ecophilosophy, Utopias and Education" found in the Journal of Environmental Education, vol. 15, 1983. Two appropriate books by Wendell Berry are Home Economics and The Unsettling of America. Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac, Michael Cohen's Prejudice Against Nature and the many writings of Thoreau, especially his essay "Walking", are all standard environmental writings that work well with the oral tradition. Another reason for using modern environmental writers along with the Native wisdom is that both groups speak of a world of things and events as opposed to a world of words about things and events.

Beck and Walters assert that the basic elements of human nature and of the natural world have changed very little since the beginning of human experience. Hence the ways in which we behave toward one another and towards the earth are as important today as in tribal times, maybe more important with regards to the earth, considering that our ability to manipulate and effect change is so much greater today. The Native American oral traditions are an important source for our reflection because the questions regarding

the human condition contained within and posed by these stories, call for answers throughout the ages. The wisdom inherent in these traditions has been cultivating right practice and a human-to-land ethic, among its proponents since time immemorial. Liberty Hyde Bailey adds his voice to this indigenous wisdom in his book The Holy Earth when he notes that a human cannot behave correctly in modern society if "... one does not know how to act rightly towards the earth" (Bailey 1980:6). For a people who are to live close to this earth, learning to do so correctly would be the first lesson.

Our education should teach us, as the natural world has taught the Native Americans, Thoreau, Muir and Leopold, that there is value in opening ourselves and our senses to nature. There is value in being able to frequent the wild places and spaces in order to be influenced by such teachers as the animals, rocks, thunderstorms, silences, sunsets and vistas. Lopez ponders in Arctic Dreams, that to consider the human realm alone, separate from nature, and not to take the time to know and participate with the natural world which is indeed a part of us, is a fatal proposition. Not fatal in the immediate sense, but deadly in the long run- over the course of generations. We should further wonder, why it is that we have strayed so far from the

natural wisdom, so far from a part of ourselves.

It is my hope that through the use of the Native American oral tradition; imagination, inspiration and interest in a relationship with nature will be rekindled, allowing a child a better understanding of self and an appreciation for the diversity of culture. There are innumerable interrelationships in nature pointed out by both the Native American oral literature and modern ecological writings: in recognizing and internalizing these interrelationships the student can further develop his or her own human-to-land ethic. The collective wisdom from these sources tells us that we must, again, be respectfully conversant with the land if we are to live wisely, indeed if we are to continue to live at all.

## Appendix A

These books are recommended for environmental educators who want to incorporate Native American oral tradition into their programs.

Astrov, Margot. American Indian Prose and Poetry: The Winged Serpent. New York: Capricorn Books, 1946. This book surveys the oral literature by geographic regions. Astrov also discusses "the Power of the Word" for Native American peoples in Chapter 1.

Beck, Peggy V. and Walters, Anna L. The Sacred Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life. Tsaile, Arizona: Navajo Community College Press, 1977. Beck and Walters cover a variety of topics in the Native American daily and religious life. Chapter 3 on traditional education is very informative and the whole book is interspersed with direct quotes.

Bierhorst, John, ed. The Red Swan: Myths and Tales of the American Indians. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1974. Some notable chapters in this book include stories about "Winter and Spring", taboos of social relationship and "Tales of the Whiteman". Bierhorst has also assembled stories regarding transformation- emergence onto the earth, the ordeal of puberty, and passage into and out of the animal world.

Brown, Joseph Epes., ed. "The Bison and the Moth. Lakota Correspondances". Parabola 8 (May 1983): 6-13. Brown describes how the Oglala Sioux classify and understand the components of this world. There are insights here as to just how different the Native American world view is.

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The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian. New York: Crossroad, 1985. In this book, Brown defines themes central to Native American peoples. For the environmental educator beginning to use materials from the Native American cultures, this book is a must.

Bullchild, Percy. The Sun Came Down. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985. Bullchild shares the teachings of Blackfeet elders in this book. This collection demonstrates some of the original force of the oral tradition and has been written in a fashion similar to the telling.

Carter, Forrest. The Education of Little Tree. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986. This book describes the upbringing of a Cherokee child in the Appalachian mountains. Carter describes a wealth of woods lore and gives insight into the Cherokee human-to-land ethic.

Deloria, Ella C. Dakota Texts. 1932 Reprint, Vermillion, South Dakota: University of South Dakota, 1978. Deloria's book contains a great variety of Dakota tales. There are Iktomi or Trickster stories as well as local tales. Environmental educators will especially enjoy #14, a story detailing the relationship between meadowlarks and snakes.

Erdoes, Richard and Ortiz, Alfonso. American Indian Myths and Legends. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. This collection details the Native American involvement in nature and the real power that exists in mountains, rivers, rocks, animals and plants. There are "ghost stories", stories of creation, Coyote stories, tales of the sun, moon and stars, and tales of animals.

Grinnell, George Bird. Blackfoot Lodge Tales. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1962. These stories were made available to Grinnell in the late 1800's. They cover a variety of topics and make for good reading around campfires.

Hamilton, Charles. Cry of the Thunderbird. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950. The stories in this collection are all in the people's own words. The first four chapters deal with stories from the campfire, hunting, games and aspects of Native American religion. The last half of the book speaks of the arrival and dealings with the whiteman.

- Lopez, Barry. Giving Birth to Thunder, Sleeping with His Daughter: Coyote Builds North America. New York: Avon Books, 1971. Lopez has rewritten these Coyote stories for the reading public. They still reflect the Native American regard for place and for the sacred. Three especially good stories for the environmental educator are "The Dancing Bullrushes", "The Berries in the Stream" and "Coyote and Spider".
- McClintock, Walter. The Old North Trail. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1968. In this book, McClintock shares with the reader the Blackfeet relationship with the universe; their rich lore, religious beliefs and adherence to ritual.
- McLuhan, T.C. Touch the Earth. New York: Promontory Press, 1971. T.C. McLuhan's book has long been a favorite among environmental educators using the oral tradition. There are a wide variety of quotes covering numerous topics of interest to educators. It is also an informative book to read and speaks to the Native American human-to-land ethic.
- Neihardt, John G. Black Elk Speaks. New York: Washington Square Press, 1959. Black Elk told Neihardt about his vision so that it would be preserved for future generations of Sioux people. This book also gives a wonderful glimpse of the Native American perspective on life. In conjunction with this book, it is helpful to read The Sixth Grandfather by Raymond DeMallie.
- Ray, Carl and Stevens, James. Sacred Language of the Sandy Lake Cree. Toronto: The Canadian Publishers, 1984. These are stories from the Sandy Lake Cree people. Anyone doing environmental education work around the Great Lakes will find this collection invaluable.

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