
See also www.brontaylor.com
Earthen Spirituality or Cultural Genocide?: Radical Environmentalism's Appropriation of Native American Spirituality

BRIAN TAYLOR

The appropriation by non-Indians of Native American religious practices has become a highly controversial phenomenon. The controversy stems from the centrality of the question of whether it has unfolded within the 'Deep Ecology' or 'Radical Environmentalist' movement(s) in North America. Taking as its central case study Earth First!, the radically revisionist of environmental movements, it describes the diverse forms such borrowing takes, the plural American Indian and non-Indian views shaping the emerging phenomenon, and the threats this controversy poses to a nascent and fragile Indigenous-Environmental Alliance.

Concluding reflections address the ethics of appropriation with the aim of reducing the tensions attending these phenomena.

The problem is one of cultural appropriation. Euro-Americans intellectually take the knowledge of indigenous peoples and incorporate it into their own thinking, usually without attribution. In the process they tend to devalue it beyond recognition, bending it to suit their own social, economic and political purposes. Unfortunately, this has, with very few exceptions, proved to be true of prominent 'allies' of native people as it has of those served elsewhere. M. ANNEE JUSTICE, ALAN TURCOTTE

This epigraph introduces a scathing critique of Jerry Mander's In the Absence of the Sacred by Ward Churchill, an American Indian Movement (AIM) intellectual and activist, who has been sharply critical of the appropriation of Native American ideas and spirituality by Euro-Americans. Mander has argued that Native American wisdom could help us discern how to live in harmony with nature 'if only we'd let it be seen and listen to what they say'. Churchill concludes that despite Mander's stated desire to learn from Indians, by borrowing from them largely without attribution, and by appropriating Indian ideas 'as their own intellectual property while synthesizing new (ad therefore inherently superior) understandings'. Mander 'embodies the worst of what [he] opposes to', namely, the destruction of indigenous culture and wisdom. It is easy to assemble examples where New Age devotees or others drawn to Native American spirituality have stolen sacred artifacts, trespassed and desecrated places considered sacred, or disrupted ceremonies while insisting that they have a 'right' to be present. There are writers who have been accused of profiting from Native American cultures by diluting experiences or appropriating them with indigenous themes. There are non-Indians who are profiting off sweat lodges or other ceremonies purportedly derived from Native American traditions. Some of these practices already closely parallel the Euro-American consumption of Native American religious practices. Yet such abuses to Native American religious practices seem small compared to the policies of federal and state governments which fail to protect, or directly destroy (often through road building and subsequent commercial enterprise) the land base and specific places considered essential for ceremony, herb gathering, and so on. Many, however, recognize that Native American spirituality is where it is difficult to find agreement about what constitutes proper conduct or easily discuss social impacts. The following case studies and reflections are motivated equally by the belief that deviant to Native American cultural integrity and religious practice are real and should be forthrightly resisted, and by a fear that blanket condemnations of the 'appropriation of Native American cultural practices may hinder the nascent os fragile alliances developing in some regions between Indians and non-Indians', and thereby erode the survival prospects of native peoples, their culture, and places.

The primary purpose of this paper is to provide careful descriptions of the specific dynamics involved, and of the arguments about, the appropriation of Native American spirituality, so that readers can form their own views about these phenomena. A secondary purpose it to submit my own views about the implications of these dynamics for the reader's consideration, with the understanding that I consider them to be tentative and subject to further revision. Ultimately I hope the development of my view and reflections on this paper will contribute to dialogue and behaviors that will reduce the tensions attending these phenomena.

I began this inquiry with three main perspectives on the appropriation of Native American spirituality in mind. To overgeneralize, one view argued similarly to Churchill that, however well intended, such borrowing represents a form of cultural genocide, either destroying such traditions by 'sacralizing' them or selectively borrowing from them, and/or directly challenging Indian survival by assuming that native spiritualities are dead and in need of reenactment by whites. A second view contended that the appropriation of Native American religion is impossible, since the resulting phenomenon is no longer Native American religion. A third view held that, since the borrowing of myths, symbols, and rites from one group by another is a central characteristic of cultural and religious evolution, it is inapposite for religious scholars to categorically condemn such developments. Such condemnation would inevitably privilege one form of religion over another.

Some readers would like to know something about my own views at the outset. For now, I hope it will suffice to say that I have found in various ways to be specified later—that there is more to legislative consequences expressed in each of the preceding three views. Other readers will be content to know whether and to what extent I have participated in ceremonies held by or borrowed from Native American traditions. My participation in Native American spiritual activities has been sporadic since the mid 1970s. Mander 'embodies the worst of what [he] opposes to', namely, the destruction of indigenous culture and wisdom. It is easy to assemble examples where New Age devotees or others drawn to Native American spirituality have stolen sacred artifacts, trespassed and desecrated places considered sacred, or disrupted ceremonies while insisting that they have a 'right' to be present. There are writers who have been accused of profiting from Native American cultures by diluting experiences or appropriating them with indigenous themes. There are non-Indians who are profiting off sweat lodges or other ceremonies purportedly derived from Native American traditions. Some of these practices already closely parallel the Euro-American consumption of Native American religious practices. Yet such abuses to Native American religious practices seem small compared to the policies of federal and state governments which fail to protect, or directly destroy (often through road building and subsequent commercial enterprise) the land base and specific places considered essential for ceremony, herb gathering, and so on. Many, however, recognize that Native American spirituality is where it is difficult to find agreement about what constitutes proper conduct or easily discuss social impacts. The following case studies and reflections are motivated equally by the belief that deviant to Native American cultural integrity and religious practice are real and should be forthrightly resisted, and by a fear that blanket condemnations of the 'appropriation of Native American cultural practices may hinder the nascent os fragile alliances developing in some regions between Indians and non-Indians', and thereby erode the survival prospects of native peoples, their culture, and places.

The primary purpose of this paper is to provide careful descriptions of the specific dynamics involved, and of the arguments about, the appropriation of Native American spirituality, so that readers can form their own views about these phenomena. A secondary purpose it to submit my own views about the implications of these dynamics for the reader's consideration, with the understanding that I consider them to be tentative and subject to further revision. Ultimately I hope the development of my view and reflections on this paper will contribute to dialogue and behaviors that will reduce the tensions attending these phenomena.

I began this inquiry with three main perspectives on the appropriation of Native American spirituality in mind. To overgeneralize, one view argued similarly to Churchill that, however well intended, such borrowing represents a form of cultural genocide, either destroying such traditions by 'sacralizing' them or selectively borrowing from them, and/or directly challenging Indian survival by assuming that native spiritualities are dead and in need of reenactment by whites. A second view contended that the appropriation of Native American religion is impossible, since the resulting phenomenon is no longer Native American religion. A third view held that, since the borrowing of myths, symbols, and rites from one group by another is a central characteristic of cultural and religious evolution, it is inapposite for religious scholars to categorically condemn such developments. Such condemnation would inevitably privilege one form of religion over another.

Some readers would like to know something about my own views at the outset. For now, I hope it will suffice to say that I have found in various ways to be specified later—that there is more to legislative consequences expressed in each of the preceding three views. Other readers will be content to know whether and to what extent I have participated in ceremonies held by or borrowed from Native American traditions. My participation in Native American spiritual activities has been sporadic since the mid 1970s.
within this subculture venerate and seek to learn from and emulate the world's remaining indigenous cultures, especially those cultures untainted by the global market economy. They generally consider such cultures to be spiritually and ecologically wise.1

The desire of many deep ecologists to learn from indigenous cultures produces an impetus to borrow visual practices. In North America, this has been facilitated by the increasing openness of some Native Americans to such cultural sharing and by the proliferation of new Age practitioners and interchange among authentic bearers of such practices. The following case study examines such appropriation within the Deep Ecology movement and explores the ensuing controversy among those Indians and Earth Firsters who are attempting to work out an alliance in defense of places that both consider sacred.

Gary Snyder: Early Appropriation as an Elder of the Deep Ecology Movement

Gary Snyder is considered an 'elder' within the Deep Ecology movement. His Pulitzer prize winning book, Turtle Island,23 borrowed its title from a Native American name for North America. Snyder hoped to promote what he saw as Native wisdom regarding the sacredness of the landscape, believing that ultimately all people are capable of becoming psychologically and spiritually Native Americans.24 During his most formative years a Native American path was inseparable from him to the extent that he did not consider himself Buddhist, eventually calling himself a 'practicing Buddhist, or Buddhist-shamanist'.25 Snyder was subsequently credited for 'cultural imperialism' in the adoption of the practices under the influence of Peyote or hallucinogenic mushrooms, 'tribal unity' and war dances characterized by ecstatic dancing and prolonged drumming (which bear no resemblance, as far as I can discern, to Native American dancing).26 Neo-pagan58 ritualizing that sometimes borrows elements from Native American religions such as prayer to the Great Spirit in the four directions; a variety of themes such as 'how to express agreement during tribal meetings, and haka-hey', an exclamation sometimes spoken to register approval of expressions of militant defiance against the oppressors of nature. A small number of these activities live in secret and do not conduct their sharing, the belief held by some Native Americans that their strength would be disrupted were they to cut it. Shamanic healing can be practiced by shamans trained in traditional ways, but is sometimes found, as a movement phenomenon, song, or art.

The sweat lodge appears to be a form of borrowing and is often called 'some Earth First gatherings. We have participated in these ceremonies as interviews and by observing the sign-up sheets, it is clear that they contain a variety of visual practices. Our sweat lodge at woman's retreat, for example, we led by an American Indian woman, who indicated that she was in training as a Native American spiritual leader and was authorized by her to lead this sweat. A participant indicated that the sweat lodge resembled a traditional Navin-Apiw ceremony.

At the 1993 Earth First! 'rendezvous', at least three different sweats were advertised, working on similar visual processes. We're trying to find a middle ground between our interests—like I'm a fairly orthodox Buddhist—but I can recognize a lot of value in other traditions. Snyder and his community's selective borrowing from Native American spirituality and blending of it with religious practices from other traditions presage the type of
Ambivalence pervades the movement with respect to sweat lodges. One woman chose not to attend an Earth First! sweat after the 1993 rendezvous because it was not led by Native American and therefor was not "traditional" enough. (She conceded, however, that it was meaningful for the participants.) Others will only attend "non-pagan" sweat because, they believe, such events do not "rip-off" Native Americans. Still others attend non-pagan sweat simply because criticisms of Native American style sweat has become so fierce.

Some of the confusion about what to do results from differing perspectives among Native Americans. Among Native Americans themselves, most Indians would prefer that non-Indians explore their own heritage as a spiritual resource rather than borrowing from Indian traditions. Yet I have also heard Indians say that Native American religious practices are crucial if the world is to be preserved. Some believe that it is only pure, unmediated native craft that can save the world. But a significant minority argue that non-Indian participation in "the red road" is necessary if humans are to rehumanize life on earth. Still others believe that borrowing from Native American traditions is nothing but another incident of Euroamerican culture.

For example, one deeply spiritual Earth First! musician who has always worked to forge alliances with Native Americans was told by a Native American friend that non-Indians should not participate in sweat ceremonies. This Earth First! activist responds with active concern about the integrity of their culture, and quickly indicates that such ceremonies have facilitated his most formative spiritual experiences, drawing him closer to the creator and all creatures. I have heard such testimony from numerous participants in the movement. Although he is willing to forgo such ceremonies in the presence of Indians who might object, he is emphatically certain he would not entirely forgo this cultural practice, because "nobody's going to lock me out of my spirituality."

This example shows how the hope of most Earth First! activists to preserve the natural world becomes intertwined in a complicated way with their respect for Native American spirituality and their feelings of kinship with the natural world, their counterconvention to preserve the indigenous cultures they revere, and their own tendency to find meaning in indigenous myth and ritual practice. These related but not easily reconcilable tendencies can be illustrated by discussing some of the complications resulting from the effort to forge an alliance among Earth First!, traditional Indians, and militant American Indian Movement activists.

A Morning Circle
Earth Firsters chose Mr. Graham as their national rendezvous site in the summer of 1993 partly because they consider sacred the University of Arizona telescopes project there is on site of destruction. Moreover, the Earth Firsters hoped that their defense of the mountain would promote a broad alliance with Native Americans.

Although traditional Apache spiritual leaders had invited Earth Firsters to ceremonies on their reservation and on Mr. Graham itself, tensions flared during a morning meeting at this rendezvous. These tensions reveal diverse views among Earth Firsters and Indian activists about the appropriate ways to respect Native American culture and religion.

B. Taylor

Punctuating the long, emotionally wrenching discussion was an evening where imbibed Earth First! revelers' exulted upon an "alcohol-free campus." Others will only attend "non-pagan" sweat because, they believe, such events do not "rip-off" Native Americans. Still others attend non-pagan sweat simply because criticisms of Native American style sweat has become so fierce.

Some of the confusion about what to do results from differing perspectives among Native Americans. Among Native Americans themselves, most Indians would prefer that non-Indians explore their own heritage as a spiritual resource rather than borrowing from Indian traditions. Yet I have also heard Indians say that Native American religious practices are crucial if the world is to be preserved. Some believe that it is only pure, unmediated native craft that can save the world. But a significant minority argue that non-Indian participation in "the red road" is necessary if humans are to rehumanize life on earth. Still others believe that borrowing from Native American traditions is nothing but another incident of Euroamerican culture.

For example, one deeply spiritual Earth First! musician who has always worked to forge alliances with Native Americans was told by a Native American friend that non-Indians should not participate in sweat ceremonies. This Earth First! activist responds with active concern about the integrity of their culture, and quickly indicates that such ceremonies have facilitated his most formative spiritual experiences, drawing him closer to the creator and all creatures. I have heard such testimony from numerous participants in the movement. Although he is willing to forgo such ceremonies in the presence of Indians who might object, he is emphatically certain he would not entirely forgo this cultural practice, because "nobody's going to lock me out of my spirituality."

This example shows how the hope of most Earth First! activists to preserve the natural world becomes intertwined in a complicated way with their respect for Native American spirituality and their feelings of kinship with the natural world, their counterconvention to preserve the indigenous cultures they revere, and their own tendency to find meaning in indigenous myth and ritual practice. These related but not easily reconcilable tendencies can be illustrated by discussing some of the complications resulting from the effort to forge an alliance among Earth Firsters, traditional Indians, and militant American Indian Movement activists.

A Morning Circle
Earth Firsters chose Mr. Graham as their national rendezvous site in the summer of 1993 partly because they consider sacred the University of Arizona telescopes project there is on site of destruction. Moreover, the Earth Firsters hoped that their defense of the mountain would promote a broad alliance with Native Americans.

Although traditional Apache spiritual leaders had invited Earth Firsters to ceremonies on their reservation and on Mr. Graham itself, tensions flared during a morning meeting at this rendezvous. These tensions reveal diverse views among Earth Firsters and Indian activists about the appropriate ways to respect Native American culture and religion.

B. Taylor

Punctuating the long, emotionally wrenching discussion was an evening where imbibed Earth First! revelers' exulted upon an "alcohol-free campus." Others will only attend "non-pagan" sweat because, they believe, such events do not "rip-off" Native Americans. Still others attend non-pagan sweat simply because criticisms of Native American style sweat has become so fierce.

Some of the confusion about what to do results from differing perspectives among Native Americans. Among Native Americans themselves, most Indians would prefer that non-Indians explore their own heritage as a spiritual resource rather than borrowing from Indian traditions. Yet I have also heard Indians say that Native American religious practices are crucial if the world is to be preserved. Some believe that it is only pure, unmediated native craft that can save the world. But a significant minority argue that non-Indian participation in "the red road" is necessary if humans are to rehumanize life on earth. Still others believe that borrowing from Native American traditions is nothing but another incident of Euroamerican culture.

For example, one deeply spiritual Earth First! musician who has always worked to forge alliances with Native Americans was told by a Native American friend that non-Indians should not participate in sweat ceremonies. This Earth First! activist responds with active concern about the integrity of their culture, and quickly indicates that such ceremonies have facilitated his most formative spiritual experiences, drawing him closer to the creator and all creatures. I have heard such testimony from numerous participants in the movement. Although he is willing to forgo such ceremonies in the presence of Indians who might object, he is emphatically certain he would not entirely forgo this cultural practice, because "nobody's going to lock me out of my spirituality."

This example shows how the hope of most Earth First! activists to preserve the natural world becomes intertwined in a complicated way with their respect for Native American spirituality and their feelings of kinship with the natural world, their counterconvention to preserve the indigenous cultures they revere, and their own tendency to find meaning in indigenous myth and ritual practice. These related but not easily reconcilable tendencies can be illustrated by discussing some of the complications resulting from the effort to forge an alliance among Earth Firsters, traditional Indians, and militant American Indian Movement activists.

A Morning Circle
Earth Firsters chose Mr. Graham as their national rendezvous site in the summer of 1993 partly because they consider sacred the University of Arizona telescopes project there is on site of destruction. Moreover, the Earth Firsters hoped that their defense of the mountain would promote a broad alliance with Native Americans.

Although traditional Apache spiritual leaders had invited Earth Firsters to ceremonies on their reservation and on Mr. Graham itself, tensions flared during a morning meeting at this rendezvous. These tensions reveal diverse views among Earth Firsters and Indian activists about the appropriate ways to respect Native American culture and religion.

B. Taylor

Punctuating the long, emotionally wrenching discussion was an evening where imbibed Earth First! revelers' exulted upon an "alcohol-free campus." Others will only attend "non-pagan" sweat because, they believe, such events do not "rip-off" Native Americans. Still others attend non-pagan sweat simply because criticisms of Native American style sweat has become so fierce.

Some of the confusion about what to do results from differing perspectives among Native Americans. Among Native Americans themselves, most Indians would prefer that non-Indians explore their own heritage as a spiritual resource rather than borrowing from Indian traditions. Yet I have also heard Indians say that Native American religious practices are crucial if the world is to be preserved. Some believe that it is only pure, unmediated native craft that can save the world. But a significant minority argue that non-Indian participation in "the red road" is necessary if humans are to rehumanize life on earth. Still others believe that borrowing from Native American traditions is nothing but another incident of Euroamerican culture.

For example, one deeply spiritual Earth First! musician who has always worked to forge alliances with Native Americans was told by a Native American friend that non-Indians should not participate in sweat ceremonies. This Earth First! activist responds with active concern about the integrity of their culture, and quickly indicates that such ceremonies have facilitated his most formative spiritual experiences, drawing him closer to the creator and all creatures. I have heard such testimony from numerous participants in the movement. Although he is willing to forgo such ceremonies in the presence of Indians who might object, he is emphatically certain he would not entirely forgo this cultural practice, because "nobody's going to lock me out of my spirituality."

This example shows how the hope of most Earth First! activists to preserve the natural world becomes intertwined in a complicated way with their respect for Native American spirituality and their feelings of kinship with the natural world, their counterconvention to preserve the indigenous cultures they revere, and their own tendency to find meaning in indigenous myth and ritual practice. These related but not easily reconcilable tendencies can be illustrated by discussing some of the complications resulting from the effort to forge an alliance among Earth Firsters, traditional Indians, and militant American Indian Movement activists.
drink—just as I would ask them not to use tobacco, their sacrament, in many of our pagan ceremonies'. She also reminded the assembly that Ola Cusack Davison, the Apache elder leading the opposition to the telescopes, had requested that each morning and night, they all take a moment alone to listen to the Spirit of this mountain. 'If we do that,' she suggested, 'we'll get much fitter and many 'Hot' that voice will make the decision for us'.

Dennis Davison, a man who heads no-pagan sweat ceremonies at some San-Féndret retreats argued similarly, 'It seems to me that, despite the fact that the entire Earth is sacred, this place is especially sacred. We must remember why we're here, what our duty is. Respect and not to be too much in our enemy, later on of the day, and to study a lot about nature. You get to go to the Universities. We need to help ease, but you can't just be uselessful, it is implied, you have to understand our own spirituality and our culture if we're going to work together.'

Daniel Zapata also assured the Indian community needed the talent of educated earth peoples. He described how alcohol had helped many Native American men: 'I have been drinking with alcohol for ten years, and that his participation in the Sun Dance helped him realize that he should seek an honourable death, not in a brown bottle, but in an act of resistance against those who would destroy his culture and all their non-human relations. Zapata then described the predictions that had been emerging among the Sun Dancers and in other Native American communities. 'We're seeing many prophecies saying the same thing. This is a most critical time. We all have a purpose and a meaning here.' He explained that the elders of the Sun Dance believe 'all struggles were one struggle, and that if we 'sage ourselves off' and sit in a circle [we can] work it out. Therefore 'go to the sweat lodges, purify yourselves, and the medicine people are tending the time is at hand.' Later in the discussion he again urged the assembly, 'Go out, get naked... come to the sweat lodge, play with the pipe. Give me some of that Earth Fire! And for don't that with a bone in your heart. Act not out of guilt, what's done is done.'

Several times, during interviews with different Native American activists, I was invited to attend a Sun Dance following the ceremony, including by Tom Beddor, a spokesperson for the Traditional Independent Dieth (Navajo Nation). He stressed that one must bring 'a proper spiritual attitude and that one's attending must be questioned before admission'. Here the concern was not that Euroamericans should achieve sharing in Native American ceremonies, not that they do so sincerely. It seemed to be assumed that those who attended the Sun Dances were fighting for endangered species and for the religious freedom of the Apaches, who would be wondrously blessed by the invitation.

Such invitations to sweat lodges or Sun Dances confused some of those assembled who were familiar with criticisms of Euroamerican participation in such ceremonies. One asked if this was appropriate. Another man explained that he was confused about its own identity—detached from his own heritage—which at one time was pagan. He said he didn't want to impinge Indian spirituality. Patricia responded that Tom had forgotten his own people. I've made alliances with all sorts of people everywhere. But he nevertheless urged them to 'try to go back to your traditions, your family places. Be true!'

To this another man complained that he can't go back and find a Druid for a teacher because non-Native paganism has been systematically suppressed. Our teachers have all been internal, but this is not enough, he explained. Reluctively he continued, 'We need
to turn to Native American elders. How else (given the extremities of our own pagan heritage) can we find an earth way? We're asking how to live on this land and we're not trying to rip-off Native Americans. But I am not saying you are, while another Earth First'er declared that Divisibility is alive in England and Ireland, recommending a new book on Divisibility as a way to steer native. To this, after agreeing that it is valuable in one's own room, another man quoted that now, we are all from Turtle Island, the 'remonstrance and prophecies are here now,' the dream time is for all people.23

Jim O'Connor, who often facilitates the Council of All Being entities at Earth First gatherings, injected another idea that Earth First'ers were a tribe developing in own nature spirituality. Although he borrows from Native American religion, he means that he is in a different tribe. I'm an Earth Firster,' he proclaimed. Lone Wolf Circle, another Earth Firster involved in Divisibility Earth First'ing, also thinks that Earth First'ers are developing their own forms of tribal nature religion and thus, in the alliance between Indians and Earth First'ers, both can contribute to each other's spirituality. He believes that a prerequisite to such reciprocity is a recognition that both Indian and Earth First' spiritual practice deserve respect.

The alliance workshop was reenacted when Calvin Hecox suggested that the key to Spirituality is to go out and talk to the land. That is how we learn about spirituality, he explained. We are programmed to wait for others to guide us, but, you find it within your own space. Don't wait for guidance. Only the Creator can do it. Do your own work, alone. Go ask for permission. Ask for permission. Let the world know you are asking. You find that somewhere in this land. We're looking for the biggest expression, the most people there to witness this. We'll come to the point, the place, all of it, all the beings, so important that we'll protect it. I'm watching for that place now. A major expression will take place. A place the greatest spiritual and material corporations wax and wane. Will you be the people? Let's show them what we are capable of doing. We're doing it, but not everyone knows. We do share an alliance of nations, the seas nation, plains nation, animal nation, people nation. Raise your hands in solidarity with the white world. The white world is the white world. It is the children who are the future. The future is in our ancestors.

Dennis Martinez; Ambassadors, Culture Cops and Hot Heads

A month prior to this workshop, in the Sinkhole Wilderness of Northern California, I spoke with Dennis Martinez, who is a board member of the Society for Ecological Restoration and a Native American (an O'odham-Chumash) activist involved with the Takoma Incidental Project and the American Indian Cultural Center, located in southern Oregon.24 Martinez advocates the use of 'traditional ecological knowledge' or 'Indian stewardship' as a model for land management. He has fought alongside other members of the small Indian bands of Northern California who have sought to preserve sacred places in northern California wilderness areas. In such struggles, Martinez has worked closely with Native American organizations. Consequently, he is well aware that many of these actions are drawn to Native American spiritual pre-forestry. During the interview, after he mentioned the poetry of Gary Snyder, I asked him to respond to Snyder's view of the wilderness and the implications of this view for Native American spiritual activism.

Such spiritualities, Martinez noted that Native American has a legitimate concern about non-Native introduction of 'other cultural influences' at participating in Indian ceremonies and that given the diverse threats to Native American cultural survival, such blending can be destructive. Nevertheless, he acknowledged Snyder's point about the universality of Native American spirituality.

Everything is alive and has a spirit. It's universal, that's how all, the tribal people [have this experience]. But [also], you don't have to go way up in the mountains, way out of the spruce of the spruce, or go to sweat lodge, or things like that. In the old days, the Indian people used to sit down, get in touch with the earth, the Indian people would meet up publicly today that they [would be like that]. It's really kind of dangerous to go too public because you're going to all sorts of other cultural influences. If you are long in this tribe, as a spiritual, reverence, the Creator, and the tribes of the last, you can talk to them, a whole mess of them. I'm just not sure how you can respond to you, and just sit a spirit like you can respond to that. That's about all you. You don't need a group... coalitions can be taken to sit out of the, that are powerful and healing takes place, but to communicate a Native American, you can do that and only the earth old people are always there. In the wind. We are old people always there a lot of time alone. There are Indians who say that the white people can go back to change the [radical] rules, but for all practical purposes the idea that land would be a very long time... [but] requires Gitxsan elders; to be spiritual, in all very simple, you can just go direct back to the land.26

I then reenacted Churchwell's critique of non-Native borrowing and profiteering from Native American spiritual-practices and suggested that even though, and certainly the Traditional Ecological [which has confirmed such profiteering], seemed to leave room for respectful not-for-profit participation in, and learning from, Native American spirituality and wisdom.27 Martinez replied, I don't know any medicine people, from South Dakota or Minnesota, or Southern Arizona who don't have that many who, people going to their sacred lodge but there are many who only have Indians, but even those can't have white people involved in the ceremony at any point. I would say that the way the land is we can not go to the door, but you have to direct the process. Martinez seemed to feel that the home was out of the band or at minimum was not that the use-copied could be possible. Martinez believed however, that it is unlikely the outcome will be positive unless 'legitimate medicine' people oversees the more widespread extension of Native American spirituality. Martinez does not think, however, that the people are selling the practices. 'that will come back on them.28 He relates a story about Walter Bresee, a member of the Pie'ed Pig Island of the Lake Superior Reservation and the American Indian Kinni Cultural Center, located in treaty rights and co-founder of the Green Party in Wisconsin, who has worked hard to forge alliances between environmentalism and Native American in the Great Lakes region.29 When someone asked Bresee about whites taking the spiritual ways, he recounted a time when he attended a pow Wow immediately after being called a 'woods stinger' by the rednecks in Northern Wisconsin. There he was invited to address the pow Wow; he verbally sneaking a white woman for reading Tarot cards. Bresee stated listing the thing in the pow Wow that were modern and not so modern, and he said, 'how do we know that the Spirit hasn't not left her to do it, she has the right to the pursuing of.' Martinez commented, 'That's a real spirit person talking. Most culture cop are not personally very spiritual people... I don't believe in culture cop'.
Of course Martinus understands why people are upset; it seems like their religion is 'the last thing [Indians] people have that's theirs'. He agrees that the introduction of non-Indian influences can be destructive. And he understands why people think that the commercialization of Indian practices is dangerous, why people are 'squashed' about more changing hands, 'even though in the old days there was always an exchange for healing'. But he insists that,

really really spiritual people are not culture cops, they don't exclude. The bittersness is understandable. But the commercialization will come back on those who allow the ways, you have to have faith in the Spirit. It's not a human thing, it's a spiritual thing. People everywhere are not removed from the idea of what spiritual is. Spiritual people are scattered everywhere throughout all ethnic, racial and cultural groups. Although there is a lot of anger about feeling ripped-off, Martinus concluded that, in the Indian way, you pray for everybody... The real tragedy is that the really spiritual people, the elders, are doing, and that there are too many bitters.

Vision Quests—for a Fire
I have entered into the discussion of the appropriation of Native American spirituality with reservations, cognizant of the legitimate fears, sensitivity, and anger about such appropriation. Certainly there are examples within the deep ecology movement, including within Earth First!, that are troubling for anyone concerned about the fouling of Native American people and culture. For example, during the spring of 1993, Lone Wolf Circles (mentioned above as one who thought that Indians and Earth Firsters were tribal nations whose people could learn from one another), and a group calling itself the 'Earth/Wise Tribe', advertised a series of wilderness workshops: some deals with practical wilderness skills, others apparently borrowed from Native American spirituality. The brochure described Lone Wolf as a shaman of 'No-dic descent' who 'draws from the wisdom of twenty years of visionary wilderness experience to teach a consciousness once common to all people'. Lone Wolf was to lead vision quests and races of passage, drawing on 'traditional tracking skills, ceremonial sweat... a pipe ceremony... ritual, drumming, walking meditation, personalized study of the medicine wheel [including the mapping of one's growth on it]', and the immensity of the wilderness experience [and] to reconnect, to remember our place in the sacred flux... The flyer explained that 'The quest ends with silent time on a power spot, and for those who are willing, a solo of one to four nights on the Kachina Cliffs, place of animal spirit.

Perhaps anticipating objections, the brochure also asserted, in a way reminiscent of Gary Snyder's defense of white shamanism that, 'Throughout the history of humankind, our primal ancestors have turned to the wilderness for instruction and empowerment. On every continent, every cultural group, indigenous Africans, Celts and Vikings all engaged in some form of Vision Quest, instigating and celebrating the transitions in an individual's life. As a result the tribe was blessed with shared insights available nowhere but the source itself; new, inspirational images. Indeed.

Lone Wolf planned to charge between $350 and $475 for these ceremonies, bringing down the wrath of several Earth Firsters who took to calling him a charlatan, mostly behind his back. One public rebuke, a scathing letter published in the Earth First! journal, clearly identified Lone Wolf in everything but name. The letter began by decrying the physical and cultural genocide waged against the native people of this land. Then, borrowing from Ward Churchill's classic attack on 'plastic medicine men,' the author vented.

Everywhere, (even-fucking-where) one looks plastic medicine men/ women and pseudo shamans are popping up calling up spirits (as Kiliogol) or selling sweat lodge ceremonies, vision quests or races of passage. Their new age ancestors... are ripping off native cultures and their native sources. Ironically, the supposed belief on individual basis (sic) is false, not wrong, but exploiting Native religious belief for personal gain whether it be for money, or to get the pain or skirt off some native new age waists is being fucking wrong.

The letter's author concluded, 'just because one is a long time E/First activist doesn't give one an unquestioned right to exploit Native American culture.' The workshops did not occur and Lone Wolf's attempt to change some of the.ws was a mistake by many Earth First! activists, even those who valued tribes to tribal unity and spiritual understanding.

I know of no other examples within Earth First! where activities charged for rituals inspired by Native American spirituality. Lone Wolf responded to these criticisms in the subsequent issue of Earth First!, arguing that there was

...a fine line... between protecting the exclusivity and privacy of one's cultural practices and avoiding another's period, (spiritual connection to the earth). While we Indians who have grown up on the reservation, and a particular tribal world-view our own, that should'st see Indians do it admired by a Native American leadership. The line is further blurred when we consider the real value of sweat lodge, drum and vision quests, which are common to peoples of every race and people of origin.

Lone Wolf noted that most people are of mixed lineage with no single point of origin to return to (and therefore) it doesn't serve anyone, or the Earth, to make them feel out of place. Since we have lost our Piatissiame shamans [and] had our Cree/No-dic rituals stolen from us, he continued, we must listen to the elders of North America... after all we have no elders to turn to for our instructions, no one to call [out] own. This why, the deep ecology and land based environmental communities have begun to fashion rituals relevant to... the planet's fate... So to be camps must be informed, in every reservation, and even in county jail...[they piece together pieces of] proven, mythical and also... They called up their closest medicine circle, sacred and burning sage. They gather happiness, share, retail, a saxophone---and open themselves to giving voice to Spirit, to Gaia.

Despite these rational for borrowing from Native Americans, at the 1993 Earth First! residence, after two Indian activists, indigenous American, Celts and Vikings all engaged in some form of Vision Quest, instigating and celebrating the transitions in an individual's life. As a result the tribe was blessed with shared insights available nowhere but the source itself; new, inspirational images. "Lone Wolf explained that these activities that medicine sweat practices were 'practiced by my own Nodic and Sami ancestors', he nevertheless added a European refrain from returning to a sweat with his Floscape medicine pipe. Instead, he urged him to conduct the sweat 'with only things the sweat provides. Act out no ritual that doesn't stem from our own tribe and our own experience, and no song in any language not channelled through us by the spirit'. Describing his approach in Earth First!, Lone Wolf explained that in this endeavor,

I was giving voice to sentiments I'd heard from [Witoke LaDuke], a powerful native activist who said... It is essential that people connected to Earth/held guides, and many times people are trying to practice Lakota vision quests (sic) or other practices
Earth's Spirituality or Cultural Genocide? 195

out of context. You can't practice Lakota without being in the context of a Lakota community?"

These apparently contradictory impulses—defending the borrowing of Native American wisdom and practices while eliminating obvious Native American elements in a sweat ceremony when objections arose—illuminates how difficult it has been for Lone Wolf sisters and others to appropriate elements from Native American spirituality while simultaneously appealing to those critical of such appropriation. Recent events suggest that the problem has become personal. Sweat lodges were again controversial as the February 1995 Earth First! activism conference near Austin, Texas. One planned sweat was labelled 'spiritual—not Native American', a second was set aside for women 'in their month', and a third for children and parents. A fourth was labelled 'pure sweat' and scheduled because some of the organizers felt that activists who do not consider themselves to be religious should have an opportunity to 'enjoy' the lodge. At a meeting a week later, Lakota activist Gay Lopez objected to the party sweat. She asserted that this sweat was sacramental (especially since alcohol was permitted) and was more than just a way to ensure that Native American traditions would not work with Earth First! In a low key manner he nonetheless proclaimed that he was 'ready for an action', and threatened to tear down the lodge and widely publicize the offense.

To impose a meeting was arranged with the lodge builder who, upon hearing the objections, decided to dismantle the sweat. He said that he viewed this area as holy ground and he apologized for giving any offense. Still, he defended the lodges arguing that, as an anthropologist, he knew that all religions borrow. He added a personal testimony regarding how sweat lodges had transformed his own consciousness and bonded him to the Earth. Nevertheless, in the end of the conference, the organizing committee had drafted a formal apology that was delivered to Mr. Lopez.56

Mr. Lopez responded by supporting the decision to take down the lodges, indicating that he did not want such harm to cooperative relations. But he also indicated that he was not opposed to their participation in sweat lodge ceremonies, only sacramental ones. He said that the gathering that indigenous people could have been present 'naming this meeting and holding sweat here for you.' There is nothing like having traditional elders support your work. Without such support, he said, something is missing here. Underlining that alcohol and a woman's moon time should never be mixed with the sweat ceremonies he warned that if the American Indian Movement were present, the lodges would have been dismantled. He concluded offering the hope that these difficulties could be overcome.57

A Mountain Hermit

Lisa Gold provides a contrasting example. A burnt-out social activist and professor of urban sociology, Gold returned after seeking personal healing and regeneration. There she heard a talk by Oren Lyon, a traditional chief of the Onondaga Nation. As Gold recalls in, Lyon said 'Indians are the only people who speak for the trees, for the water, for all beings, and when you lose that, you've lost everything.' Lyon inspired Gold to get involved politically and soon he was arrested and convicted for blocking logging trucks.

Gold rejected the condition of his probation, that he stay out of the forest, telling the judge, 'The forest is my church, and you can't exorcise my religion. . . I'm going to go back in there.' He had brought him home, Native American friend with whom he had participated in sweat lodge ceremonies 'to witness my authenticity and sincerity.' He also issued a press release as he set off for a vigil on Bald Mountain (within the Kalmipiaus wilderness of southwestern Oregon) explaining that it was 'for peaceful and religious purposes'.

Gold spent 56 days on the mountain, falling in love with it. In an act of commitment he set up a medicine wheel and began praying every sunset on the mountaintop, resolving to return every summer as an act of religious devotion. He recalls magnificent discoveries during a second summer on Bald Mountain. On one occasion, standing in the medicine wheel during a thunderstorm with 'lightning . . . striking everywhere, earth wide open . . . singing at the top of my lungs a malevolent Indian chant . . . my vision of it . . . as these lightning bolts were burning everywhere'. Afterward the mountain, settled down into this outrageous peacefulness (including what I had been looking for: that in the wild in not one period, not a choice between violence and non-violence; (after all), what can be more peaceful than to gaze upon lightning?)

This experience led Gold to conclude that the 'challenge to human beings was to walk in balance to experience [all these elements] intelligently. Expect the snake to be the snake, don't be angry at it'. Gold recognized that through this experience he saw that the 'expression of goodness in a natural system was the intricate web of life itself; it included everything, including the fact that one organism eats another organism. . . it was all good.'

Gold was not practicing Native American religion but was influenced and inspired by it; yet he did not do so lightly. When asked how he Native American religion had influenced him, he initially denied that he knew much about it. Nevertheless, he stated that native ceremonies had played an important role in his path to forest activism. Shortly after moving to Oregon he attended Lakota-based sweat ceremonies with Ed Little Crow, reporting that 'the sweat lodge just connected me with Earth, the mother.' After describing the ceremony, and how the heat forces one to hug the earth, Gold explained how it enhances one's connection to the earth, 'in like you underneath the winds of the Earth and the rocks are actually referred to as the Ancient Ones.'

He recalled how when standing on the top of Bald Mountain, he felt the need for a ritual, and that making a medicine wheel seemed appropriate. On the mountain, you want to talk to the four directions, to the sky above, to the Earth below . . . you need sacred and conventional.' The most important thing that I do (to really bend with the mountain) is giving up to the mountain's top every name, lighting one candle, making a circle, and doing a little ritual, in which I thank the West for the darkness, the North for the struggle, the East for the struggle, the South for the animals that grow, and the sky above you and the Earth, and then I acknowledge that there is something greater than me, the mystery, the Great Spirit. And I mean a relationship by doing the ritual, and that in fact creates the relationship.
Gold believes that ritual is very different depending on how grounded people are in their relationship with the Earth. He believes that usually, hippies doing sweat lodges are not grounded in such a relationship, but that it is different with an Indian medicate man. Even though Gold obviously prefers that Indian spiritual leaders lead sweat ceremonies, in his view, not all ceremonies must be led by them. People like my ceremony on Bald Mountain... this is my fourth summer, and I have seen people do the ritual [even] in driving storms.

Many Native American ways and ideas seem comfortable to Gold. ‘I use them and try to do so in ways that will be serviceable to those who are listening.’ Nevertheless, Gold said that ‘I don’t consider myself a follower of Native American religion... my spirituality is in a sense new and but in my time to find the right metaphors, I find [Native American] metaphor can easily lead me to [and have become] a source of genuine religious experience.’ Native American cosmologies give me an ability to access what I’m calling ecological consciousness... feeling the relationship to all this magnificent stuff we call the ‘creation’.

When asked if he was such a metaphor in his talk in order to promote ecological consciousness, Gold answers, ‘In a sense, if my mission were to promote detachment, I’d go the Buddhist direction, but my mission is teaching people about our relationship to the Earth, and trying to foster the development of scientific based cosmologies.’ Thus, all ‘metaphors and ceremonies and rituals from the aboriginal world [are important] but the only one I have access to are Native American.

Furthemore, Gold explained, Native American symbols are prelate to the philosophical and abstract potential of deep ecology. Promoting spiritual breakthroughs is a poetic challenge for Gold to stand up in front of a group of people and talk about biochemistry, because it won’t reach them [effectively]. It is more effective, Gold insists, to use the Lakota medicine wheel ‘to envision a vision of the harmony of all parts.’ This EuroAmerican deep ecology activism believes that Native American symbols and ceremonies are the most effective means of tapping into human spiritual potential and facilitating activism in defense of the natural world.

From this perspective, the appropriation of at least some elements of Native American religion is an important prescriptive for the future harmony of life on the planet.

When asked if he has been criticized by Native Americans for anything related to his affinity for Native American spirituality, Gold replied ‘not at all [although] I was worried about it’. He then told a story: ‘There is an incredible song from the Sun Dance. I tried to sing it, but couldn’t remember it well, and I evolved it in my own way. Later [in a sweat lodge], I asked to sing the Sun Dance song the wrong way, and my Indian friend said ok. Then I sang as I had done on Bald Mountain. Afterward they said, “Lou, you didn’t sing the song the wrong way, you sang the Bald Mountain song the right way.” Inevitably, Gold said, Indians who hear my [public presentations] say, “good work, keep doing it.” When I asked Ed Little Crow how to pray with the medicine culture, he said that there are two ways to do it. Do it like your grandfather taught it, or come from your heart. People will know and will recognize it [as authentic], and you’ll know.’

Summary and Reflections on the Ethics of Appropriation

Moral reflection on the appropriation of Native American spirituality requires an in-depth understanding of the diverse ways it occurs and the complex social contexts from which it emerges. By illustrating the complexity of the controversy the preceding examples evoke quick judgments about such appropriation. Reflections on the ethics of appropriation follow. Some of the analysis and suggestions will be controversial: they are designed to spur constructive dialogue about the ethics of appropriation and promote understanding among those engaged in the defense of diverse lands and cultures.

There certainly are controversial examples within radical environmental subcultures of the appropriation of Native American religion: even though these groups are generally sympathetic to or not romantic about Native Americans. Yet as we have seen—many of these activists express concern about cultural imperialism and stigmatically object to any profiting associated with borrowing Indian religious practices—and still others object to any borrowing whatever.

Generally speaking, I have not found comprehensive attempts to appropriate Native American religious practice but rather a piecemeal approach from such practices and then to market. The activists engaged in such activities do not present themselves as they are, or they are practising Native American religion. Rather, they tend to believe that they are developing their own traditions, that their ‘tribe’ is different from but has spiritual affinity with what they take to be the spiritual perceptions of traditional Native Americans, namely, a sense that the land and all its inhabitants are sacred, related as kin, capable of communicating, and worthy of defense.

Similarly, I have not found Euroamerican Earth Firsters pretending to be Indians or Native American spiritual leaders, as has occurred within the New Age movement. The closest thing to this was an occasion when an Earth First! women’s gathering, a Euroamerican woman led a sweat after asserting that she was in training under a Native American spiritual leader. Given the controversial nature of such occurrences, the desire by Earth Firsters to build an alliance with Indian traditionalists and activism and recent confrontations about sweat lodges, this occurrence would be less likely today.

A somewhat similar case involves the few Earth Firsters who consider themselves to be shamans and who engage in what they take to be Shamantic practices. Such claims are greeted with suspicion and even derision by some within the movement. Nevertheless, these experimenting with Shamantic ritual can plausibly argue that to ethnic group can claim ownership of such spiritual practice. This is amply documented in ethnographic literature.

Although there have been examples of borrowing from Earth First! that are insensitive or ignorant of native custom, thoughtful reflection on these phenomena, and the effort to construct mutually respectful relations between Indian and EuroAmerican, Indians require more than demanding that people shun practices from that some (or many) find offensive. An effort to resolve these issues might require that those must humble to cross-cultural borrowing and use what is not the best order but yeast and ritual is a common and rarely escaped dimension of religious life—especially in the modern period—since few societies today remain isolated.

The academic study of religion has focused significant attention on syncretic processes. The emerging consensus suggests that syncretism (the blending of elements of two traditions) and bricolage (the amalgamation of many bits and pieces of diverse cultural systems) are prevalent in the production of religion, and that often these processes are unsanctioned and subject to negotiation. David Chidester puts vividly such an understanding when says that conflict over the ownership of sacred symbols is so common that religion may be seen as ‘that dimension of culture involving the stealing back and forth of sacred symbols, when stealing is understood as a “harmfid" designation for complex negotiations over the ownership of symbols’. Many studies attend to power and power relations in such contestations over the ownership of sacred symbols. Simon Harrison describes how in Melanesia deposits and the ritual related to
there are termed 'a category or property or whatnot' and are translated into mathematical expressions from which quantitative data can be derived. For example, such criteria can be used to price a house or an automobile. By using these criteria, one can arrive at a price that is based on a set of predetermined factors. This process is known as hedonic pricing.

In this context, the term "hedonic pricing" refers to the use of statistical techniques to determine the value of a property based on various characteristics. The characteristics are often referred to as "hedonic" factors, and the price is determined by assigning a value to each factor. This approach has been used in various fields, including real estate, insurance, and consumer goods.

An example of hedonic pricing is the use of a computer model to estimate the value of a house based on features such as the number of bedrooms, the size of the lot, and the location. The model would assign a value to each feature and then sum them up to arrive at a total value for the house.

Hedonic pricing is used in a variety of contexts, including the real estate market. For example, a real estate agent might use hedonic pricing to determine the value of a house based on the characteristics of the property, such as the number of bedrooms, the size of the lot, and the location. This information can be used to make informed decisions about buying or selling a property.

Another example of hedonic pricing is the use of a computer model to estimate the value of a car based on features such as the make, model, and year of the car. The model would assign a value to each feature and then sum them up to arrive at a total value for the car.

Hedonic pricing is used in a variety of contexts, including the car market. For example, a car dealer might use hedonic pricing to determine the value of a car based on the characteristics of the car, such as the make, model, and year of the car. This information can be used to make informed decisions about buying or selling a car.
Stewart and Stew urge attention to the agency of colonized and subordinated peoples in the construction of identities, adaptations, assimilations, incorporations of appropriations, reengagement and Sometimes denied and disassembled. Furthermore, they further problematize understandings of agency and gender which underlie much anthropological

Anthropological frameworks are frequently bound up with the construction of 'authenticity,' which is Is thus often linked to notions of 'pure.'

The anthropological framework is often seen as a separation between tourism, power, and the other. Thus both power and powerlessness can be seen as antagonist forces. What makes them distinct, however, is their separation: a discourse on power, politics, and the other. Thus both, positively and negatively, are intertwined and can be seen as antagonist forces.

By recognizing the potential for agency among diverse social actors and by recognizing that the power relations are not inherently more valuable than relatively 'pure' ones, we can see that power is not only about domination and subordination, but about the construction of power relationships.

Certainly no one should see themselves as part of the dominant society and their interests in promoting or ignoring the dominant society that results. This is a more nuanced understanding of power and the construction of identities.

By recognizing the potential for agency among diverse social actors and by recognizing that the power relations are not inherently more valuable than relatively 'pure' ones, we can see that power is not only about domination and subordination, but about the construction of power relationships.

Certainly no one should see themselves as part of the dominant society and their interests in promoting or ignoring the dominant society that results. This is a more nuanced understanding of power and the construction of identities.

By recognizing the potential for agency among diverse social actors and by recognizing that the power relations are not inherently more valuable than relatively 'pure' ones, we can see that power is not only about domination and subordination, but about the construction of power relationships.

Certainly no one should see themselves as part of the dominant society and their interests in promoting or ignoring the dominant society that results. This is a more nuanced understanding of power and the construction of identities.

By recognizing the potential for agency among diverse social actors and by recognizing that the power relations are not inherently more valuable than relatively 'pure' ones, we can see that power is not only about domination and subordination, but about the construction of power relationships.

Certainly no one should see themselves as part of the dominant society and their interests in promoting or ignoring the dominant society that results. This is a more nuanced understanding of power and the construction of identities.

By recognizing the potential for agency among diverse social actors and by recognizing that the power relations are not inherently more valuable than relatively 'pure' ones, we can see that power is not only about domination and subordination, but about the construction of power relationships.

Certainly no one should see themselves as part of the dominant society and their interests in promoting or ignoring the dominant society that results. This is a more nuanced understanding of power and the construction of identities.

By recognizing the potential for agency among diverse social actors and by recognizing that the power relations are not inherently more valuable than relatively 'pure' ones, we can see that power is not only about domination and subordination, but about the construction of power relationships.

Certainly no one should see themselves as part of the dominant society and their interests in promoting or ignoring the dominant society that results. This is a more nuanced understanding of power and the construction of identities.
gather. At a recent university conference focusing on grassroot environmentalism, for example, Walter Benner, the Ann Arbor lawyer who has done much to promote native-activist alliances, 'hijacked' the conference. As he shut the doors telling people to sit in a circle he noted that he did not want any one to escape. Assisted by Scottish and Irish activists playing instruments from their homeland, Benner burned a log and performed a purification rite. He then ceremonially allowed the assembled Euro-Americans for the crimes committed by their people against this land and its first peoples, and then welcomed them to his homeland. He concluded urging the Euro-Americans to come to this land and live as native peoples.

Again in this example, shared ceremony can be viewed as a strategic negotiation for a specific form of compensation, in this case reciprocity and solidarity in ongoing eco-political struggles and again, at the popular level, participation was not really optional. Similarly on Mt. Graham, there was no expectation among some Indians that their non-native allies would respect and value the mountains—the devastation and consumption of the natural beauty away that the Indians would themselves, but at least by reframing this as an act of alcohol consumption. Such examples underestimate the extent to which Native Americans are more worried if others do not participate in religious practices encouraged or sponsored by them than they are worried about the possible negative impacts of cross-cultural borrowing and blending.

Another reason why popular religiosity is relatively receptive to appropriation processes can be found in the idea expressed by some Indians and shared by many in the Deep Ecology movement (such as Lou Gold) that Native American symbols and practices are especially good as evoking a proper perception of the value of the natural world. Native American symbols are anticipated to be a re-harmonization of life on planet earth. Moreover, the widespread extension of such spirituality is precisely what the world needs. 88

View Deloria, however, is a suspicious of such extensional ideals. In a well-nuanced essay he contends that any such missionary imbue is 'contrary to every known intent of any tribal tradition' because 'no demand existed...for the people to go into the world and inform or instruct other people in the rituals and belief of the tribe.' Nevertheless, he acknowledges that there 'may be a new revelation given at the end of this world'. But he remains sceptical and worried about the trivialization of native spiritual practices, suggesting 'we should examine the nature of the various teachings and practices that are emerging'.

Taking his own advice, Deloria arrives at different conclusions about different practices: 'I cannot find much real disrespect and exploitation in the way the pipe is presently passed between Indians and non-Indians', suggesting that such ceremonies may even model individualism and greed. He argues that sharing a sweat ceremony is probably a major violation since it is often used as a consecration before ceremonies which have a deeper significance. Yet he opposes the extension of other ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance, outside their original tribal context. 89 Deloria's case by case approach provides a broader basis for constructive dialogue about how to develop mutually respectful relations between Indian and non-Indian people than do blanket condemnations of cross-cultural borrowing and blending.

The present reflections are also based on a case study approach. One plausible reading of these data is that Native American myth, symbols, and ceremonies do have an ecologically salient effect by motivating Indians and non-Indians alike toward deeper ecological commitments. The view that Native American cultures may embody insights and practices that, if extended widely, could promote ecological sustainability, is a view held by many Indians and non-Indians and ought not be dismissed a priori. More constructive dialogue could ensure if critics of appropriation would at least entertain the possibility that some current spiritual practices might promote, in perhaps unexpected ways, the well being of native communities, and their wider relations in nature. One reason such shared and blended commoning might promote cultural survival is, at we have seen, that the Indians involved in such practices often exercise agency and demand reciprocity in such multicultural encounters.

The possibility that borrowed and appropriated forms of Native American spirituality might have a salutary effect for native cultures, however, is a little addressed empirical question. But if we are to assess the overall impact of such borrowing, it is important to discuss the possible positive impacts as it is to illuminate negative ones. Too few of those who condemn such appropriated forms to critical dialogue contain the possibility that there could be positive dynamics that might offset or moderate the negative ones they perceive. 90 It may be that some appropriation of Native American myth and rite by non-Indians does increase tolerance of and sympathy for Native Americans in U.S. culture, perhaps with concrete but difficult to measure beneficial results to them.

To even raise this possibility will seem counter intuitive to some and preposterous to others. Such a suggestion will understandably raise suspicions, since one of the major complaints about 'borrowing' is that they take and rarely give back—and most generally of all—do nothing to defend American Indians and their religious practices from commercial and governmental abuse and domination. The Native American religions have come to respect the sincerity of such non-Indians and, as a result, have become more tolerant of Euro-American interests in Indian ritual. Perhaps the interest of activist Euro-Americans in native American spirituality (even if they portray an imperfect portrait of 90) causes other Euro-Americans to entertain the possibility that native cultures have value. Perhaps the images of Indians that are consequently conveyed are intercultural and permiscuous. In either case—more likely, in both cases—the overall impact remains an unanswered, empirical question that deserves further inquiry. But the possibility that some contemporary spiritual combinations are adaptive, promoting the long-term survival of native cultures, should not be dismissed out-of-hand.

As we have seen, plausible arguments have been voiced describing social processes that may well harm native American cultures. This possibility alone is a huge but far from the only difference from this borrowing. But since the social processes producing such appropriation is apparently quite strong, it is unlikely that people will continue to produce such cross-cultural combinations. Compelling calls for abstinence from such ritualizing would more clearly demonstrate that such practices are unambiguously, or at least hinder, destructive. Only then will it be possible to convince all well meaning people to abstain.

Rather than threatening to repress newer religious forms in the case of free religious practice, a dubious proposition even if evaluated charitably, it makes more sense to respect, or at least tolerate, diverse expressions of spirituality by motivating Indians and non-Indians alike toward deeper condemnation for those cases where it can be clearly demonstrated that religious practices threaten humans and/or their wider relations.
Conclusions

The comments presented in some pages paint a normally modest landscape and leave me with significant ambivalence. Nevertheless, I suggest several conclusions for the three themes of this presentation of reflections about spirituality and spirituality.

1. There is serious threat to Native American cultural integrity and survival. At least with regard to smaller and weaker native nations, it is likely that the appropriation of Native American spirituality can contribute to cultural decay (the first view). The more serious threat, however, comes from being found in the relations European-American people for land, largely backed by Federal and State powers, which threaten to erode the land base upon which Indians depend for survival and free religious practice.

2. Appropriation does lead to something new and different (the second view), but these are reasonable arguments and evidence to suggest that the use of all of what results is derives, in so small measure because often times the Native Americans who witness or are actively involved in these processes exercise agency and demand reciprocity.

3. Some cross-cultural borrowing reciprocal influencing, and blending is an inevitable aspect of religious life—thus if some of this hand-wringing over appropriation and syncretic process is simplistic and over-broad (the third view).

Finally, I add a further thought, that it may be (and we own research provides some evidence for the proposition) that at least some of such borrowing process respect for and concrete political solidarity with Native Americans. Such a dynamic may play a role in mitigating the possible negative impacts of appropriation from Native American religions.

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge a research fellowship provided by the Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, which during 1994 and 1995 provided a wonderful opportunity for interdisciplinary dialogue, as well as extended time for reading and writing about these issues. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the Faculty Development Board of the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, for their support of my field work and, most of all, to those who generously shared their time and thoughts with me.

Notes


5. Many terms are currently employed to refer to North America's native peoples. As no consensus has emerged I ask the reader's patience if I use various terms in various paragraphs today, including Native American, American Indian, Indian, and Indigenous peoples.


7. See Wendy Rose, ibid., for examples of such ethnocentric anachronism and for a typical and representative argument against cultural appropriation. For another thoughtful native perspective that is a complement to all judgmental is Rose or Churchill, see Vince Deloria Jr., "Religion Possible: An Evaluation of Parent Efforts to Revive Tribal Religious," Issues in

References: 206 B. Taylor

Eastern Spirituality or Cultural Genocide? 205

It is also important to recognize that at least some of what is happening is perfectly human and to be expected. Many Earth Firsters are essentially home-grown native mystics. Since a sense of connection and kinship with human nature is a relatively universal human experience in Native America today, it is not surprising that those with such perceptions and experiences should seek out others. Nor surprisingly, Euro-American Truth Seekers often feel affinity with and reach out to Native Americans, whom they often perceive, sometimes accurately, to share similar religious and mythological sentiments. And since Native American spirituality has been suppressed in various ways, severing many Indians from their land and traditional religions, it is not surprising that some Indians who revere nature would find some common ground, at least in the area of spirituality, with certain Euro-American earth activists. Thus these people draw together, sometimes sharing their spiritual understandings and ceremonies. When observing and reflecting on such dynamics, I find it hard to pass judgmental judgments upon those who reach out in this way.

Many if not most critics of appropriation recognize that these dynamics are fuelled by real land needs, by the spectres of maericentric industrial culture, and that they occur because, as Wendy Rose puts it, "the Indian way to try to holy." Nevertheless, the oft-stated preference, even among those more tolerant of borrowing, is for non-borrowing to find their spirituality alone in nature or by recovering their lost traditions. Many non-Indians have taken this preference to heart, enacting borrowing and looking to nature and their own heritage for their spiritualities. Within Earth First, there has been increasing discussion about reviving European paganisms. Yet a constructive dialogue will acknowledge the difficulty faced by those drawn into Native American spirituality. Some who have found meaning in such myths and the new agencies over whether to conduct such practices but are reluctant to abandon them. Further dialogue will also profit from the recognition that confusion about what constitutes respect in this area results, in part, because of the uncomfortable belief about with borrowing found among Native Americans themselves.

Worthy of note is the provision that has provided a far-removed analysis of a variety of perspectives on the controversial question in question. One thing clear seems to be that there is so easy a success to the critical analysis in this paper. Nevertheless, it is possible to view the various opinions on a continuum in which some forms of borrowing and blending are viewed as extra-rutherford by some, while others are deemed laudably by fewer still, and yet other forms are relatively uncontroversial. These tendencies to obtain from appropriated forms of spirituality would be wise to steer their particular toward the least controversial practices. At least they should clearly understand that if there is a tendency to project a superior attitude or any pretense that they know all about Asian American religion—apparent which Vine Deloria bemoans for much of the context in this volume. They should exercise modesty by rising in solidarity with the native communities fighting for survival and governmental plans and laws that threaten to displace them from their remaining lands and territories. The path of least resistance would be for them to accept and support native leadership in these battles for sovereignty and simply wait for invitations to ceremonies from the communities with whom they are asking. Of course, native communities have no obligation to provide such invitations, but in most political struggles, it is not uncommon for allies to come together in prayer.
One key reason that the Marines is less congruent in its news is that some critics argue that it has been too much focused on the loosening of controls that help Indian people and contribute to the emergence of many American cultures. The thought is that the Marines themselves have taken on a role in this process, which may be more likely to be seen as a form of assimilation than as a form of cultural sharing. However, others argue that the Marines have not been as implicated in this process as some critics suggest.

To some extent, this is a question of perspective. The Marines have been involved in many different activities, and it is difficult to say whether they have been more or less responsible for the changes that have taken place. In some cases, they may have played a role in facilitating cultural exchange, while in other cases they may have been more passive observers. Ultimately, the question of responsibility is complex and requires careful analysis.

In conclusion, the Marines' role in cultural exchange with the Navajo people is a complex and multifaceted one. While some critics may see their involvement as a form of assimilation, others may argue that they have played a more positive role. Further research is needed to fully understand the impact of the Marines' activities on the Navajo community and on American culture as a whole.

References:
Feather Spirituality in Cultural Generals

Después, Churchills problemático status, su vivo 'ha sido problemático y ha desencadenado serias controversias. A menos que se haga algo al respecto, la negatividad persiste.

62 See Bringing the Law Home, in "In the Law on 12th", pp. 11-63, for Churchill's way on genocide, esp. pp. 11-15, which has the foundation for the U.S. government's policies as well as all other cultural practices.

63 Although I think empirical statements about this are difficult, we should not underestimate the difficulties involved. There are many in my present in the present and the present to be interested in these problems... pp. 20-21. The volume contains much that we can learn from and is interested in

64 The ideas in this document are drawn from certain sources, and I think that these are still important for the present.

65 See also Dworkin, "Sexuality", pp. 7-18. The work contains much about sexuality, and I think that these are still important for the present.

66 The document is available for free online, and I think that these are still important for the present.

67 I am grateful to Adam Smith and others involved in the First Nations Survival Network for helping me to learn about the importance of spiritual practice.

68 The documents are available for free online, and I think that these are still important for the present.

69 The ideas in this document are drawn from certain sources, and I think that these are still important for the present.

70 I am grateful to Adam Smith and others involved in the First Nations Survival Network for helping me to learn about the importance of spiritual practice.

71 The documents are available for free online, and I think that these are still important for the present.

72 The document is available for free online, and I think that these are still important for the present.

73 The ideas in this document are drawn from certain sources, and I think that these are still important for the present.

74 I am grateful to Adam Smith and others involved in the First Nations Survival Network for helping me to learn about the importance of spiritual practice.

75 The documents are available for free online, and I think that these are still important for the present.

76 The ideas in this document are drawn from certain sources, and I think that these are still important for the present.

77 I am grateful to Adam Smith and others involved in the First Nations Survival Network for helping me to learn about the importance of spiritual practice.
In "Is Religious Passion" Deloria concluded his book about the trivialization of the Sun Dances by suggesting that perhaps false statements by traditional people as to the seriousness of the ceremony and a disregard of authority for people outside the reservation made them perform it. Moreover, the fact that it was a reality in some parts of the country that did not recognize it as a legitimate religious practice led to the problem of "more precise practice of their own order." p. 22.

85. Analyses ought not preclude the confluence of both direct and indirect dynamics at work in emotional processes. For example, a successful alliance between Indians and non-Indians, see Whaley with Bessey, Whaley Connected, and also AI Gadsby. The New Reserve, Native and Environmental Society (Agent Metropolitan Policy, 1993). In short, most of what non-Indians might eventually lead them to be so "more precise practice of their own order," p. 22.

86. In the updated God is a Red Devil sees a salutary effect of some pan-Indian revitalizing. For example, he talks that the emergence of a national Native American spirit, or Indian spirit, can introduce Indians to the "real Indian and real red spirit that can really lead them to the more precise practice of their own order," p. 22.

87. An analysis is preclude the confluence of both direct and indirect dynamics at work in emotional processes. For example, a successful alliance between Indians and non-Indians, see Whaley with Bessey, Whaley Connected, and also AI Gadsby. The New Reserve, Native and Environmental Society (Agent Metropolitan Policy, 1993). In short, most of what non-Indians might eventually lead them to be so "more precise practice of their own order," p. 22.

88. In "Is Religious Passion" Deloria concluded his book about the trivialization of the Sun Dances by suggesting that perhaps false statements by traditional people as to the seriousness of the ceremony and a disregard of authority for people outside the reservation made them perform it. Moreover, the fact that it was a reality in some parts of the country that did not recognize it as a legitimate religious practice led to the problem of "more precise practice of their own order." p. 22.

89. Analyses ought not preclude the confluence of both direct and indirect dynamics at work in emotional processes. For example, a successful alliance between Indians and non-Indians, see Whaley with Bessey, Whaley Connected, and also AI Gadsby. The New Reserve, Native and Environmental Society (Agent Metropolitan Policy, 1993). In short, most of what non-Indians might eventually lead them to be so "more precise practice of their own order," p. 22.
This judgment is based on in-depth interviews to be described in a forthcoming Beacon Press book tentatively entitled *One and Power Provocative: The Spiritual Politics of Radical Environmentalism*. By activists I do not imply supernaturalists but rather, a perception about the relation and possibility of relationship, with all living things.

In active circles I have heard many Indian activists lament the divisions within their communities and describing how much of their struggle is against those Indians who have been severed from their own each ensuing traditions.

*The Great Pretenders*, p. 418.

On reading this in an earlier draft, Dace Bell made the interesting comment that perhaps this indicates that the critics might be right, that the Euroamerican answers to American Indian ceremonies was just a fix.

*Is Religion Possible*, p. 7. Such attitudes reinforce the message that Indians are indeed a conquered people and that there is nothing that Indians possess, absolutely nothing—pipes, land, water, feathers, drums, and even prayers—that non-Indians cannot take wherever and whenever they wish.

See, e.g., Al Gofrich, *New Ravine Way*, pp. 129, 30, for an example of a shared ceremony as a demonstration, and various examples scattered about in Whaley and Breitner, *Wicde Wassen*.

BRON TAYLOR is associate Professor of Religion and Social Ethics at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, where he directs the Environmental Studies program.

Department of Religious Studies and Anthropology, The University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901, U.S.A. email: taylor@auosh.edu

Later, the Samuel S. Hill Professor of Religion at the University of Florida

for more work by professor Taylor see www.brontaylor.com