

(Gunderson et al. 1995). Chapter 7 is a detailed human ecological analysis of one resource system in one area; it is an outsider's academic interpretation, an *etic* view, using the Cree Indian fishery management system as the illustration. Taken together, these three chapters provide one case study that uses three different approaches to illustrate some of the principles and issues introduced here in chapter 4.

Chapter Five

Cree Worldview

“from the Inside”

According to the beliefs of the Cree of eastern James Bay, it is animals, not people, who control the success of the hunt. Hunters have certain obligations to fulfill toward the animals, maintaining a respectful relationship. A continued, proper use of resources is important for sustainability. Cree social values such as reciprocity apply to human-animal as well as to social relationships. These beliefs indicate a cosmology in which humans are part of a “community of beings” within the ecological system.

Not all cultures in the world share the dominant Western view of a secularized, utilitarian, depersonalized nature. The existence of alternative views of the natural environment is important as part of the cultural heritage of humankind. This cultural diversity is akin to biodiversity as the raw material for evolutionarily adaptive responses (Gadgil 1987). Indigenous worldviews are both diverse and different from the dominant Western worldview. This chapter provides a look into the worldview of one North American aboriginal group from the Canadian subarctic.

The Cree people of Chisasibi survived three centuries of fur trade as essentially hunter-gatherers. After settling into permanent communities in the 1960s and coming into close contact with the industrial society in the 1970s (due to the construction of the James Bay hydroelectric project), their lifestyle came to maintain an uneasy balance between being independent hunter-trapper-fishers and being rural North Americans at the margin of the dominant society. Although their philosophy of the natural environment was changing rapidly, in pace with their integration into the dominant society, they still professed and practiced a distinctly different view of the world as of the 1980s.

The material presented in this chapter is based on focus group discussions with a volunteer, self-selected working group of senior hunters from the local Cree Trappers Association (CTA). The work was initiated by the CTA to provide educational material on Cree culture for youth, to record and strengthen traditional practice, and to educate the outside world in defense of Cree culture and subsistence economy. The report of the project was published by the Cree themselves (Bearskin et al. 1989); parts of it were published by the researcher as well (Berkes 1988b). The quotations are from the original report prepared for the Cree. Brackets are used as asides to the reader.

The report was prepared through five sets of meetings and five drafts over a year and a half, and it was corrected by members of the group through re-

visions at each step. Hunters' statements were written in standard English, as requested by them, and the text modified by them as necessary. The text of the chapter preserves the Cree narrative form and contains direct quotes. The researcher/compiler comes in merely to provide context, mostly at the beginning and the end of the chapter. The material is based on the then-current practice of mature hunters in Chisasibi; it is not an elders' account of past practice.

In the belief system or religious ideology of the Cree, the living environment is a community of beings that are supernatural as well as natural, as previously noted by other researchers working with Cree groups elsewhere (Preston 1975; Tanner 1979; Feit 1986; Scott 1989; Brightman 1993). These beings possess what Westerners might consider extranormal powers. They have spirits that are sentient; they are watchful and aware of people's behavior. This belief in animal spirits persists among the Chisasibi Cree despite the best efforts of missionaries to eradicate it (Berkes 1986b), and it shapes their worldview.

The chapter focuses on a selection of three Cree beliefs to illustrate their unique worldview: (a) it is the animals, not people, who control the success of the hunt, (b) hunters and fishers have obligations to show respect to the animals to ensure a productive hunt, and (c) a continued, proper use is necessary for maintaining production of animals. The hunter's obligations toward animals are intertwined with social obligations, so that the environmental ethic of the Chisasibi Cree is an integral part of a comprehensive philosophy of life.

ANIMALS CONTROL THE HUNT

In Western science and its applications to fish and wildlife management, it is assumed that humans can control animal populations. In Cree worldview, by contrast, "human management" of animals and environment is not possible. Rather, it is animals who control the success of the hunt. The Cree believe that animals know everything humans do; they are aware of hunters' activities. In the past all living things talked, communicated with humans. Many Cree legends carry this theme, and the idea is alive among contemporary hunters as well:

I had a fish net out in a lake and at first I was getting quite a few fish in it. But there was an otter in the lake and he was eating the fish in the net. After a while, fish stopped coming into the net. They knew there was a predator there. So similarly game know about the presence of hunters as well. The Cree say, "all creatures are watching you. They know everything you are doing. Animals are aware of your activities." In the past, animals talked to people. In a sense, there is still communication between animals and hunters. You can predict where the black bear is likely to den. Even though the black bear zigzags before retreating into his den to hibernate, tries to shake you off his trail, you can still predict where he is likely to go to. When he approaches his den entrance, he makes tracks backwards, lower his tracks in the bush, and makes a long detour before coming into the den. The hunter tries to think what the bear is thinking. The hunter and the bear have parallel knowledge, and they share that knowledge. So in a sense they communicate.

The hunter always speaks as if the human is the passive partner in this relationship. The hunter is successful if the animal decides to make himself available. The hunter has no power over the game; animals have the last say as to whether they will be caught. The hunter has to show respect to the animals because the hunter is dependent on game. The game is not there for the taking. There is no guarantee of a kill; the game has to be pursued. The increase in the hunter's success, as he reaches his prime, goes hand in hand with the increase of his respect for the animals. Another way of putting this would be that he develops respect for game as he becomes a better hunter. The two factors are mutually related. The Cree notion of "success" or being a "good hunter" is not measured by the size of the hunter's kill; it is measured by the ability of the hunter to "get what he/she needs."

Young people are taught early on to show respect to the animals. If a hunter does not follow the expected practices of respect, it happens very easily that the disrespectful individual will kill nothing. For such a person, game would be scarce. Even if he sees game in the bush, the Cree believe, something happens, something prevents him from getting the game. This includes all animals, not just big game and fur animals, but also small game and fish. This is a fundamental belief shared by almost all hunters. A hunter never gets angry at game. If a hunter has no luck, he looks at himself to blame, not the animals. When the animals are not making themselves available, quite often, they are only "returning the discourtesy," as the Cree see it. Sometimes a hunter may be unlucky for no reason, but this is rare. In a community of hunters, it is an obligation of the more successful hunters to share their catch with the unlucky hunter. Sometimes a hunter is disrespectful to animals without intending to be.

My brother was trapping otter. He had left his trap in the water a bit too long. Normally, one checks traps quite often. There was an otter in the trap, but it has been in the water too long. The fur was coming off. My brother was really worried: he had caused the fur to spoil, and knew that this was a crime against the animals. He said the otter would retaliate for this by not being caught. He thought it would take perhaps three years before the otter will decide to come back to his traps again.

Since hunting success ultimately depends on the willingness of animals to be caught, a hunter familiar with an area will often have the best success. Conversely, a stranger in an area will have poor hunting success, for, as the Cree say, "the land is unfamiliar with him."

I once invited a coaster [someone who has a hunting territory on the James Bay coast], a good hunter, to my trapline north of the Chisasibi [La Grande] River. He was a stranger there. Even though he was a good hunter and had done nothing wrong to the animals, he did not have much luck. There is a saying, "the land and game would feel unfamiliar or uneasy with you if you are a stranger there." Such a person may have poor luck at first, but later on game will get to know him.

According to Cree beliefs, the success of a hunter peaks with age, up to a point. After this peak, a hunter's success would be expected to decline, and his sons or other hunters in the group are thought to inherit part of an older hunter's success. When an old man passes away, some younger people will inherit his animals. The whole process may be considered a cycle, from child, to hunter at his peak, to old man. During this cycle, the amount of animals available remains constant, but the distribution of success varies.

As a hunter gains experience, he becomes better and better in hunting. He reaches a peak and after that his hunting success goes down. An old man would not be expected to hunt as well as he did when he was at his peak. It is common knowledge that an old man's hunt declines. This often happens after a man reaches 50 or 60. But an old hunter does not worry about his hunting success because he knows he has had his day, that he used to kill many. My uncle was a good trapper, but in his old age he did not catch many. He used to say jokingly that "the game were letting go of him." He would say that he was being ignored by game: the game were leaving him alone. He did not care to kill any. But he set traps anyway. For him, it was a way of life.

When an old man dies, another person takes on from him. It is almost as if that the old man's game is now passed on to a younger person in that group. It is a fundamental belief of the Cree people that a young man would inherit an old man's game.

My father used to catch lots of game. He used to say that once his sons started to hunt, his own hunting success would go down. And in fact, so it happened. My brother, who was an exceptionally successful goose hunter when he was young, now hunts fewer geese. But his sons make up for his losses. It can be said that his four sons inherited part of his catch.

The cycle of hunting success is one of many cyclic phenomena in the Cree worldview. Another one concerns cycles of animal abundance. The cyclic disappearance and reappearance of game animals is thought to be related to the willingness of animals to be hunted. The Cree believe that almost all animals go up and down in abundance, some in shorter cycles and some in longer cycles. For Chisasibi hunters, animals known to disappear and reappear include:

- Caribou, which disappeared around the turn of the century and reappeared in the 1980s;
- Beaver, which were scarce in the area between about 1930 and 1950 and increased thereafter;
- Marten, which declined twice since the turn of the century. In the 1980s it was very scarce in the inland traplines. However, in the coastal traplines it began to reappear in 1982-83;
- Porcupine, which were last plentiful in 1960-70 and declined in the 1970s; and
- Small game animals—snowshoe hare, rock and willow ptarmigan, spruce and sharp-tailed grouse, which are known to have eight- to ten-year cycles, from one peak of abundance to the next.

While the shorter of these cycles (e.g., hare and ptarmigan) are recognized by Western science, longer cycles such as those of the caribou are not. Many biologists believe that management or lack thereof is responsible for the increase or decrease of caribou. By contrast, the Cree believe that animals who disappear for a time sooner or later come back by themselves, not as a consequence of management by humans. Disappearing animals such as caribou and marten are said to go under the water or underground. This is thought to be something similar to the disappearance of animals such as ptarmigan, fox, lynx, and snowshoe hares in very cold weather. The belief in the eventual return of disappearing animals is very strong.

My uncle who would have been about 90 [in 1984] missed the caribou. By the time he was old enough to hunt, caribou had already declined. An old man told him not to worry, the caribou would be back some day. And they are back now. Sometimes my uncle did not believe the old men. He asked them, "Where do they go when they disappear?" They answered that it has been known in the past that caribou disappear under the water. There would come a time when they would reappear later. He was at first amazed to hear this, but believed it later on. He came to know that all the animals you see, porcupine, fur animals and others, disappeared from time to time. In his early hunting days, marten were plentiful. He saw them decline and later come back again, all in his lifetime.

He was hunting. He came to a little pond. There were fresh caribou tracks on the new snow. The tracks were leading into the lake. He walked across to the other side of the lake; he thought caribou had swum across. But here were no caribou tracks on the other side. Caribou had submerged. When he went back to the camp, the older men said, "Yes this is how big game and fur animals disappear. But they will someday come back again."

A young trapper was checking his muskrat traps in the Sakami River area. He found one of his traps had sprung underwater. He thought it was a muskrat because there was a muskrat den nearby. But instead, he found a marten in his trap. There were no marten tracks in the area; he must have come up under the water. The young trapper was scared. He thought it was unnatural, a bad omen. He returned to the camp [to consult the elders]. The old men reassured him. They said it was not a bad sign, but marten lived under the water, too. I have seen marten tracks coming out of a fishing hole in the ice. The tracks went out of the lake, around a clump of trees, as if the marten was looking for other martens, and back to the lake and into the hole again.

OBLIGATIONS OF HUNTERS TO SHOW RESPECT

Since animals control the hunt, lack of respect for the animals will affect hunting success because animals can retaliate by "returning the discourtesy." The Cree say that the main reason for showing respect to animals is that humans and animals are related, they share the same Creator. Just as one respects other persons, one respects animals. Cree culture is rich with rituals related to respect

When a hunter approaches a black bear den in winter, he does not make an exhibition of himself. He announces himself simply and with humility: "I am here." ... There is similarity between the hunter announcing himself at the camp, and the hunter announcing himself at the bear's den. The hunter shows as much respect to the bear as he shows to people. It is almost as if he is arriving at the den as a visitor, hoping that the bear will accept him.

After every successful hunt, the first thing that the Cree hunter does with the animal is to check the fat content. This is a hunter's "quality control" of the game: the more fat the better, for it shows a healthy animal. With a goose, one pinches the fat layer under the skin [the subcutaneous fat] after removing a handful of feathers from the belly. With a black bear, one cuts the skin in front of the chest, just over the breast bone, to check the fat. This done, the animal is ready to be carried to the camp, and there are rules of respect at this stage as well.

There are proper ways of carrying game. For example, a beaver is normally pulled on its back in the snow. A stick is placed through the nose and a cord is attached to it. However, if there is ice stuck on the back fur, then the hands would be tied, and the animal flipped over and dragged on its front side. Similarly, there are proper ways to carry geese (tied by the necks and draped over the shoulders of the hunter). With black bears, two people can carry a bear with a pole, with the bear's limbs tied. Or a hunter can carry a bear on his back, paws over the shoulder, legs held under the hunter's arms, like a child, and the limbs tied in front over the hunter's chest.

Carrying a bear has symbolic significance for the hunter. My friend and I killed a black bear. My friend gave me the bear [that is, a gift of respect]. I tried to carry the bear but it was very heavy. I tried to lift it, but I tumbled and fell down, time and again. My friend said, "Now it is *really* yours." The point is that the human hunter is not all-powerful. Even though I tried hard, the bear prevailed over me. This way, I really earned the bear. It was now truly mine.

Once carried to the camp, offerings may be made to the animal as a show of respect. In the past, offerings were made to all animals, even including fish. In the 1980s, offerings were being made only to the more powerful animals such as the black bear. When a hunter makes an offering to animals and to old men, he is, in effect, entering a reciprocal relationship, asking them to give him game. In the practice of Cree hunters of Chisasibi, offerings can be made with tobacco [not indigenous to the subarctic] and with pieces of meat or skin thrown into the fire.

Offerings made to an animal indicates respect. It also means that the hunters are asking the animal to provide game for them. Similarly, offerings can be made to dead men [that is, respected elders]. Offerings to old men in their graves are fairly common, sometimes even to not very old men, and occasionally to women, too.

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(see Tanner 1979). Among the Chisasibi Cree, respect for the animal is shown in several ways:

- The hunter maintains an attitude of humility when going hunting;
- The animal is approached and killed with respect;
- The animal is carried respectfully to camp;
- Offerings are made to the animal;
- The meat is butchered according to rules signifying respect;
- The meat is consumed according to rules signifying respect; and
- The remains of the animal are disposed of properly.

The rule about an attitude of humility is both important and universal. Hunters should not boast about their abilities. Otherwise, they risk catching nothing because they are being disrespectful of game.

While fishing with a group of people to the south of my area on the James Bay coast, I once boasted that I could catch as many trout as anyone else. It was a good area for speckled trout, and the fishermen were pulling out some 50–60 fish in each of their nets. My net was in the middle of all the other nets. But when I pulled it out, there was only one trout in it! In similar ways, many people have experienced a loss of hunting success after boasting.

The hunter had a cord which he used for carrying black bear. But on this one hunt, he left his cord behind in the camp, laughing and boasting that he could carry any black bear without the cord. He did in fact kill a black bear on that trip. But he found out that he was not able to carry it. [The speaker is saying that this bear was too big for the hunter to carry without the benefit of a rope to tie its limbs over his chest and hips]. The moral of the story is that whatever fun you make of a black bear, this will backfire on you.

The hunter should also maintain an attitude of respect when approaching game. The killing will be done quickly and simply, without mess. The hunter should use a gun appropriate for the size of the animal. For example, a small bore gun is used for the smaller animals. A hunter wants an animal to look its best. One does not want blood all over the place. If a hunter used an oversized gun, for example, on a beaver, this would be a transgression.

The Cree see similarity between social relations among humans and those among humans and animals, especially those animals considered particularly powerful and worthy of respect.

When a hunter visits a camp, he lets it be known that he is a visitor (*maantau*), a person from another camp. He approaches respectfully and modestly; he announces himself simply, (*niitukushin*) [I am here]. People in the camp come out to greet him as soon as they hear him. When they come out, he has already taken his snowshoes off and put them upright in the snow. People in the camp admire his snowshoes. They say, "These are beautiful snowshoes," they admire the craftsmanship, the good material and design. They note that he is a successful, able hunter.

Fish heads are boiled, fish internal organs including liver, eggs, and intestines (but excluding stomach contents and gall bladder) are stir-fried; fish bones are sometimes eaten, pounded into *pimihkaan* (fish pemmican). Blood is used in blood pudding and stews; this is a delicacy. However, there are certain parts of animals that are *not* eaten. For example, caribou brains are not consumed but used in tanning skins. Polar bear liver is not consumed because it is poisonous [due to the extremely high content of vitamin A].

It is said that the whiskey jack, or gray jay, hovers about hunting camps, checking to see that nothing is wasted. In the case of some animals, respect is shown by consuming the meat only in the camp [presumably because it is a sacred place]. For example, black bear meat is eaten only in the camp; one is not allowed to take bear meat as lunch when checking traps [and one does not usually take it to the village, not a sacred place]. Similarly, lynx is shown respect by consuming the meat within the camp.

Proper disposal is the final stage in showing respect. After the edible parts have been consumed, hunters take proper care of the bones and other remains. The following are hung on trees or placed on top of wooden platforms: all black bear bones, and all skulls (including beaver, lynx, porcupine, muskrat, marten, otter, and mink). The following are returned to water because they are water animals: bones of beaver, otter, mink. There are no general rules for the disposal of the bones of waterfowl species, but some hunters hang the throats [trachea] of geese on trees or camp posts. Dogs are not allowed to eat black bear, beaver, and porcupine meat or bones. Other animal remains, including fish remains, would be buried. Another recommended way of disposing of fish remains is to collect them and place them where scavenger birds can feed on them.

Campsites are to be left tidy and clean. All garbage would be cleaned up and burned before breaking camp. [Some of these rules seem to be recent adaptations. Traditionally, the only waste in the camp consisted of animal remains, bones, and wood, which are natural materials that easily go back to nature. In modern life, however, there is also plastic, metal cans, glass, and paper which create a disposal problem in campsites.] Good hunters take special care to burn and/or bury these materials also, so that the young generations will inherit a clean environment.

IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED USE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

It is the animals who control the success of the hunt, and hunters have obligations to show respect to the animals. Another important principle that characterizes Cree worldview is the belief that the continued use of resources is important to achieve a sustainable, productive harvest.

The tallyman [a senior hunter in charge of a territory, a steward] takes care of a trapline so that the beaver continue to be productive. Taking care of a trapline means

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There was a respected old man who died on the point of a particular lake. He was buried there. When people went by his grave, they would make an offering to him. They rolled tobacco in tree bark and left it there. They were asking the old man to provide game for them in return for the tobacco.

A black bear is brought into camp. Hunters sit in a circle, with the bear in the middle. Someone smokes a pipe beside the bear and makes a gesture of offering the pipe to the bear. Or a piece of tobacco is placed in the bear's mouth as an offering. Once the bear is skinned, a piece of the meat is thrown into the fire. These offerings mean that the hunters are thanking the Provider.

Respect for animals is shown also in the way meat is butchered and distributed. There are special ways to cut every kind of animal, and for different uses of the animal's meat. For example, a loon is butchered differently from a goose. The pattern of cut will be different if a whitefish is going to be smoked as opposed to one that is going to be fresh-boiled. Some of the methods of cutting and preparation are related to showing respect for the animals. For example, when dismembering a goose, women are supposed to cut the wing off the body [and not to break it off]. Otherwise, it is said, the husband's luck in the goose hunt will be affected. In butchering a black bear, first the men cut the patterns on the bear. After that, the women skin the bear, and finally the men cut the limbs. There are special cutting patterns especially for the big game.

The owner of the game, say a black bear, decides as he starts to cut it on how to distribute the meat among the families sharing the camp. [In the case of a group hunt for a large animal, the general rule is that the "owner" is the person who has made the "crippling shot."] He may keep the skin for the fur and may give portions of the meat to others to distribute further. The first hunter may give the bear to a second hunter, and the second hunter may decide to pass the meat to a third. This kind of ritual sharing is considered important for social relations. Commonly, a young hunter would give the meat to one of the old men or old women in the camp, who would then do the honors in distributing it. This signifies deference and respect for the elders. Especially with big game animals, the custom is that an elder would distribute the food, thus showing respect for the animal.

Respect is also shown with the consumption of the game. The major principle is that everything is consumed and there is no waste. It is important that everything that is killed is eaten. Killing for fun [or for "recreation" or "sport" without eating it] is a transgression. What one kills, one keeps for eating. Young boys who kill small animals, when they are learning to hunt, make a gift of these animals to an old woman who prepares them. The food will then be consumed by the old woman and the boy and symbolically by the whole family. One elder says, "We are done for as a hunting society if we ever reach the point of taking only the haunch of a moose or caribou, as white hunters do."

Traditional Cree cooking uses all parts of the animals. For example, goose feet, necks, and head are eaten; goose fat is rendered or boiled down for later use

not killing too many. A trapper paces himself, killing what he needs, and what can be prepared by the women, so that there is no wastage of meat and fur, and respect for the animals is maintained. He should also make sure that the area is rested [by rotating the sectors of the hunted area]. Normally a trapper should rest parts of his trapline for two or three years but no longer than four years. If he leaves it, say, six or ten years, he is not properly using his area, and the beaver will not be plentiful.

The concept of resting the hunting area is fairly well known. Many (but not all) Cree trappers divide their territory into three or four sectors. They hunt and trap only in one sector at a time, and "rest" the others. [Rotation of the hunting territory resembles following in agriculture. Feit (1973; 1986) has shown with another James Bay Cree group that the beaver harvest from a sector rested for two years or more is significantly greater than that from a sector harvested with no rest.] The trapper continually observes the environment and monitors the health of the beaver-vegetation system. He observes vegetation changes, beaver tooth marks on cut wood to estimate the age composition of beaver in lodges, and looks for other evidence of overcrowding, such as fighting among the beaver. The Cree see the interaction between beaver and vegetation as a relationship of balance. It is a balance that can flip if the beaver overharvest their food supply. The Cree practice of resting an area, followed by heavy harvesting of beaver, keeps the system from reaching the critical point at which food would be depleted and the balance will be lost. Thus, not only overuse can lead to a drop in productivity, but in the Cree worldview, so does underuse.

In an area which has not been trapped for a long time, there will be many empty beaver lodges. This may be due to disease because of overcrowding, or it may be due to beavers depleting their food supplies. The trapper knows that in an area which has not been trapped for a long time, various types of beaver food such as aspen would be in low supply. If there has been a fire, this also affects the beaver. Trappers know that three or four years after a fire the beaver will again begin to inhabit the area. At first, however, they would be eating more of the root foods. The trapper may resume trapping again when the willows are half-grown. This may be some eight to ten years after a fire.

The hunter is always watching the environment, monitoring it for signs and signals. Rotation and resting the land is good practice. [The Cree notion of the importance of continued use is superficially similar to that in Western resource management science but probably has different philosophical roots. "Continued use" is not an obligation, in the sense of rules of respect; it is simply good "management" consistent with the ideas of renewability and animal cycles.] The principle that animals control the hunt takes precedence over the principle of continued use:

From the new camp, the hunter set out the next day with his traps. He was lucky to find beaver lodges, four or five of them, and he was quite happy about that. He set out further east the next day. The son checked the traps set the

previous day and brought in the beaver. The next day after that, the son checked the last set of traps but had no luck. They waited several days and checked again: still no beaver. He took the traps out, "let them be, they will increase for the next time," he said. He was not catching anything, and there was a meaning to that. The beaver did not want to be caught yet. Next fall, he would come back to this area, and maybe then the beaver would be ready to be caught.

The principle of continued use has to be tempered also with common sense and good management. The "manager," in the Cree system, is the senior hunter, called the tallyman. [In Feit's (1986) terminology, the steward.] The senior hunter is the observer of nature, the interpreter of observations, the decision-maker in resource management, and the enforcer of rules of proper hunting conduct. He is also the political leader, ensuring for example that no one goes hungry in the group. There is little doubt that in the old days, the steward was a spiritual leader as well (see box 5.1, which is about the Innu who are close relatives of the Cree).

BOX 5.1

SHAMANISM AMONG THE INNU (MONTAGNAIS) OF LABRADOR

In Innu culture, what is the shaman (*kakushapitak*)?

Kakushapitak means a person who can see through, who can foretell, who has authority, power. His power lies in using the "shaking tent" (*kushapitakan*) to foretell events, locate animals and travel through time to learn about families. The shaman masters other techniques to foretell the future such as the chant and drum, the dream, scapulomancy. The shaman is said to be powerful if his predictions, advice or news are correct. The most powerful shaman is the one who always tells the truth. Some shamans were strong, others weak. The strong shaman was always a great hunter, while the weak ones did not have this skill.

How were shamans considered in everyday life?

The shaman was a person like anybody else. No particular deference was paid to him. He was respected because he was a great hunter. He played a leadership role like that of a chief today. He knew where to hunt and the group trusted him.

How does the shaman transmit his power?

Ussitshiniush, the sack [medicine pouch] which contains the power, is passed on from generation to generation. For instance, had my great grandfather Toby been a shaman, he would have passed it on to my father who would in turn have passed it to me, Mathieu André. I then could have passed it either to my eldest son or my youngest. If a shaman did not have a son, he would pass it on to his grandson.

How is it that Innu shamanism has died out?

Once the priests arrived, they fought against the ritual. They also prohibited the shaking tent, saying the shaman was helped by the devil, that it was diabolic. The Innu believed that, but I think a superior spirit gave the Innu knowledge of everything that concerns the environment and enables him to act. The old people were afraid of the priests. People say that when old Pukue, one of the great shamans of Sheshatshit, died (and my grandmother witnessed this), his *ussitshiniush*, his sack, was burned. And I think that is one of the reasons why shamanism has disappeared among us.

Source: Nuk André in conversation with his father, Mathieu André, an Innu author and elder (André 1989, 5, 6)

It is the steward's obligation to follow up on the activities of a group that had violated the rules of proper hunting behavior by engaging in unrestrained exploitation.

The tallyman went to trap a part of his trapline. He had not been there for several years, but he had given permission to another group to trap it a few years previously. These people had reported plenty of beaver at that time. But the trapper knew that there would not be many beaver in that area because these other people had killed too many. He knew this because when these people returned to the village that year, their furs had not been prepared properly. Many of the furs had to be thrown out. They had killed indiscriminately—young, old, every animal. Some of the beaver may even have been trapped out of season. The trapper visited, one after another, lakes and ponds which he knew to be good beaver lakes. There were beaver signs, but these were old signs from before that group's visit. Beaver had declined, had not produced because those trappers had not taken care of that spot. They had done wrong to the game. In such cases, game retaliates. Leave nothing behind—and it affects the later hunt. Bad practice has repercussions for later years.

As the enforcer of community norms, it becomes the steward's obligation to expose "doing wrong to the game." In the process, the steward can initiate social sanction on the guilty parties, shaming them publicly [usually done by the use of humor] and using the example to remind everyone else of the rules.

CONCLUSIONS

The general principle that "animals are killed but not diminished" has also been noted by other researchers elsewhere in Cree lands (Tanner 1979; Feit 1986; Brightman 1993). Is this concept in the sense of "ecologically sustainable use," or is it in the sense of a reincarnation of a "constant supply," so to speak, of animals? In contrast to some other groups of Cree hunters—for example, those in Northern Manitoba (Brightman 1993) and the Waswanipi Cree of Quebec (Feit 1986)—the Chisasibi Cree did not articulate the notion of reincarnation of animals.

Historically, the Cree believed that "the numbers of animals available to hunters in the future could be influenced by ceremonial regeneration; the numbers killed or the parts utilized were irrelevant" (Brightman 1993, 289). If Brightman is correct, and the historian Ray's (1975) work also supports that conclusion, the Cree of the 1700s did not associate hunting with depletion. Cree traditional ecological knowledge did not include the consideration of population dynamics of game, and in fact still does not. Brightman (1993) has argued further that the concept of game depletion by overhunting is not aboriginal but represents the influence of Western game management practice. Chapter 6 on caribou examines how the hunting ethic of an aboriginal group itself may change, and chapter 7 on fisheries analyzes how the Cree seem to be able to manage resources sus-

tainably, given that their management system presumably did not include any accounting by numbers.

Another major difference between Cree views and Western views concerns the nature of "killing." The Cree do not consider the killing of game as an act of violence. The hunter loves the animals he kills (Preston 1975); after all, the animals can only be hunted if they agree to be hunted. Similarly, the Cree have difficulty with the Western notions that hunting involves suffering on the part of the animals, and that the best conservation (as some argue) would mean not hunting the animals at all. To the Cree, if the game want to be left alone, they would let the hunters know. Otherwise, the proper conservation of game does include the hunting and eating of animals. The preservationist ethic is not compatible with Cree conservation: "When you don't use a resource, you lose respect for it."

The Chisasibi Cree view of the living environment as a "community of beings" is not a particularly unusual view. Other eastern James Bay Cree groups such as the Mistassini (Tanner 1979) and the Waswanipi (Feit 1973; 1986) have similar views, as do some of the more distant Cree groups in northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan (Brightman 1993). Many other aboriginal groups of North America have similar beliefs as well. For example, writing of the Koyukon of Alaska, a Dene (Athapaskan) group culturally unrelated to the Cree, Nelson (1982, 218) states that they regard the environment "as a community of entities that are intrinsically supernatural as well as natural. In fact, the strict western conceptual distinction between natural and supernatural would probably make little sense to the Koyukon."

The James Bay Cree worldview, as emerging from this chapter, is consistent with Colorado's (1988) characterization of native science as a holistic and religious perspective grounded in empirical observation. The cosmos has a unity and integrity that is Creator-given, and it is the task of humans to discipline their minds and actions to recognize and understand its workings. The Cree worldview is also consistent with Trosper's (1995) analysis of commonly shared Amerindian attitudes of respect toward nature. Trosper argues that there are four commonly (but not universally) held values that are components of *respect*: community (including the "community of beings" view with social obligations and reciprocity); connectedness; concern for future generations (as exemplified by the Iroquois notion of responsibility for the "seventh generation"); and humility (see box 5.2).

Trosper (1995) observes that many of these values are also found in some Western environmental philosophies; for example, in Leopold's (1949) land ethics, as also noted by Callicott (1989). However, in Leopold's thought there is no human-nature reciprocity. Rather, it is a one-way street in which it is the humans who are to extend their ethics to include nature; animals have no obligations to nourish humans. Also poorly represented in Western environmental ethics is one of the four components of respect, and one that is of great importance to the Cree: humility. Leopold comes close to the notion of humility

Pantheistic traditions still exist in some contemporary groups such as the James Bay Cree (even though they are now formally Christians), as they once existed in pre-Christian Europe and survived for a time in the Christian mysticism of St. Francis (White 1967). The culture and traditional ethics of the Cree are thus significant not only for their own sake but for linking us with a millennia-old human heritage. A community-of-beings worldview is particularly meaningful today, as it signifies a cosmology in which humans are part of the ecological system. The next two chapters explore in some detail how Chisasibi Cree views of the environment translate into actual human-animal relationships in resource use.

BOX 5.2 EXPRESSING HUMILITY: THE KOYUKON OF ALASKA

"When the river ice breaks up each spring, people speak to it, respectfully and acknowledging its power. Elders make short prayers, both Christian and traditional Koyukon, asking the ice to drift downstream without jamming and causing floods. By contrast, some years ago, the U.S. Air Force bombed an ice jam on the Yukon River to prevent inundation of communities. Far from approving, some villagers blamed subsequent floods on this arrogant use of physical force. In the end, nature will assert the greater power. The proper role for humans is to move gently, humbly, pleading or coercing, but always avoiding belligerence."

Source: Nelson 1993, 217

by promoting an ethic that reduces humans from superiority to equality ("from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it," Leopold 1949, 240).

Traditional worldviews of nature are diverse, but many share the belief in a sacred, personal relationship between humans and other living beings. To quote Callicott (1982, 306), "The implicit overall metaphysic of American Indian cultures 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." This community-of-beings worldview is common not only among Amerindians but other hunter-gatherer and horticultural peoples as well (Gadgil and Berkes 1991). In general, these beliefs probably go back to the dominant pantheistic tradition before the rise of monotheistic religions (see box 5.3).

BOX 5.3 IROQUOIS PANTHEISM

"Animism, which permeates pantheism, involves the theory of the existence of immaterial principle, inseparable from matter, to which all life and action are attributable. In the pantheist view the entire phenomenal world contains godlike attributes: the relations of man to this world are sacramental. It is believed that the actions of man in nature can affect his own fate, that these actions are consequential, immediate and relevant to life. There is, in this relationship, no non-nature category—nor is there either romanticism or sentimentality.

"The Iroquois view is typical of Indian pantheism. The Iroquois cosmography begins with a perfect sky world from which falls the earth mother, arrested by the birds, landing upon the back of a turtle, the earth. Her grandchildren are twins, one good and the other evil.... The opposition of these two forces is the arena of life; they can be affected by man's acts in the world of actuality. Consequently all acts—birth and growth, procreation, eating and evacuating, hunting and gathering, making voyages and journeys—are sacramental."

Source: McHarg 1969, 68