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such as Lawson have moved beyond 1945 to emphasize topics relevant to the problems of today's Indian people.

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American Indian Environments: Ecological Issues in Native American History. eds., Christopher Vecsey and Robert W. Venables. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980. 36 pp. index, illus. \$18.00 Cloth. \$9.95 Paper.

It is no coincidence that the interest in Native Americans during the 1970s and early 1980s parallels the rise of the "ecology movement." Many Americans were concerned with what they saw as a deterioration in the environment brought on by Western values and technology that encouraged destructive exploitation of resources in the name of progress. In the search for solutions many looked to other cultures, notably Medieval Europe and Buddhist China, for answers to how society could exist in harmony with its natural surroundings. Most "environmentalists," however, choose a model from their own heritage: the American Indian. These Americans fell back on a traditional "Noble Savage" motif which since the fifteenth century has seen the Indian as a child of nature. It should not be surprising, then, that a volume entitled *American Indian Environments* should appear. Nor should it be surprising, given the wide range of interests in this topic, and the traditional tendencies of such collections of presented papers, that the volume is of decidedly uneven quality. Without detailing the case, let's look at the extremes.

The best essays in the volume cannot be categorized neatly. The essays by Wilbur R. Jacobs ("Indians as Ecologists and other Environmental Themes in American Frontier History") and William T. Hagan ("Justifying Dispossession of the Indian: The Land Utilization Argument") and Calvin Martin ("Subarctic Indians and Wildlife") are very different but each in its own way is useful. Jacobs' essay analyzes Euro-American expansion in the New World with its repeated theme of despoliation and it seems at first glance to be out of place in this volume because the editors did not place it nearer the beginning of the volume where it could serve to provide a solid basis for the rest of the essays. Hagan's

contribution, which describes the long history of how the concept of "vacuum docilium" was used to justify dispossession of the American Indian, is an excellent examination of how White attitudes have shaped American Indian opportunities by denying that Indians could use the land as effectively as other Americans. Martin's essay is a fine counter to the assumptions that Hagan describes and the results that flowed from White attitudes which Jacobs point out. Martin argues that the man-land relationship of Cree hunters was highly regulated "according to the norms and regulations of kinship" and that conversely human relationships were mediated by animals. Not everyone, however, will agree that this mediation was restricted only to animals. Nevertheless, the essay suggests just how complex and vital American Indian relationships with their landscape can be. Two other essays are worth mentioning: Peter Iverson's sound narrative of tribal chairman Peter McDonald's efforts to develop Navajo natural resources without destroying either Navajo culture or the landscape; and Laurence M. Hauptmann's examination of the diaspora of Iroquois Peoples out of New York. Hauptmann rightly notes that the Iroquois emigration began in the eighteenth century.

The weaker contributions are easier to categorize: invariably they tend to impose White categories on Native American cultures. Nowhere is that tendency more reflected than in Christopher Vecsey's "American Indian Environmental Religions." In this essay Vecsey surveys the Northeastern Woodland ethnographic record to "examine," as he says, "the integration between environmental relations and religion among American Indians." The relationships, Vecsey asserts, are so profound that he quotes Hickerson in labelling them "the religion[s] of nature." There is nothing new in this assertion. What is disturbing, however, is Vecsey's methodology. Vecsey does not compare material from various cultures—Ojibwe, Cree, Iroquois—but rather homogenizes the information into a composite that resembles too much the "Noble Savage," the more positive view of what Robert Berkhofer has recently called the "White Man's Indian." Thus he refers repeatedly to "Indian" religion having this or that particular attribute, without explaining or showing the wide variation in belief that was a part of the eastern woodland world. In short, he creates his own Indians.

The other essays do not go so far in this process but they all tend to justify Indian concerns rather than explain them. The best example is Robert Venables' "Iroquois Environments and 'We the People of the United States.'" Relying on the nineteenth century German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies' distinction between "Gemeinschaft" (community, reciprocity, morality) and "Gesellschaft" (Legalism, self-interest, profit), Venables seeks to show that the Iroquois in their relations with the United States, especially with respect to land, have suffered because the two cultures have fundamentally different perceptions of sovereignty. While there is no doubt that Iroquois society has always placed emphasis on consensus to reach decisions, this does not mean the record is without evidence that the League has—and had—formal legalisms or that Iroquois People did not act from self-interest.

This tendency to take sides is perhaps understandable but it does little to further our understanding of the complex relationships between Native American cultures and the landscape they inhabit. Perhaps such essays might be used for heuristic purposes to goad undergraduates into reexamining their own basic assumptions and values but that is all.

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