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One of the major strengths of this book is the excellent reference materials presented in the notes and bibliography. Many times I found myself turning to the back of the book to look for the original sources and noting that I wanted to read the sources to obtain more information about a specific event. Because of Dippie's careful research, other researchers in Indian studies will be able to use this book and many of the references for other studies.

Leona M. Zastrow

EPIC, INC.

Educational Planning for Individuals and Communities

Mother Earth Spirituality: Native American Paths to Healing Ourselves and Our World. By Ed McGaa, Eagle Man. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990. 232 pages. \$14.95 paper.

Blending elements of the modern ecological movement with traditional Plains Indian beliefs and practices, McGaa has produced what will be appreciated as a religious primer or guide to worship. "Religion for the Twenty-first Century" might then be an additional subtitle for a volume testifying to a religious movement that is alive, creative, and thriving.

So powerful has been the public presence of Christian missionizing that the casual observer may overlook the presence in the West (Euro-America) of alternate traditions, contrary to Christianity and critical of its morality. In this alternate perspective, American Indians (and kindred peoples) become exemplary; their very existence testifies to the possibility of a mode of life embodying the truly human (non-Christian) virtues. In this fashion, American Indians become a "chosen people" who will guide the confused, self- and planet-destructive people of the West into a new world (superior to the New Jerusalem).

McGaa's text is divided into four major parts, titled "Water," "Earth," "Air," and "Fire." That four-part division was first enunciated by Empedocles, a fifth-century (B.C.E.) Greek philosopher. The book's use of this division is testimony to the rapprochement that has been developing between Indian and non-Christian Western traditions. (True, the four-part division was incorporated within the cosmological system of medieval

Christianity, but it has nothing inherently to do with that religious system, and indeed it fits better into McGaa's system than the medieval.)

The great voyages of discovery by European navigators brought to their society knowledge of the existence of a world of peoples different in their customs, morals, and mode of social organization. The critics of Christianity used these peoples as the imaginary basis for earthly paradises. In the eighteenth century, French philosopher Denis Diderot used what little he had heard of Tahiti to fashion a "natural" and therefore happy society whose members were unencumbered by the edicts of Christianity. He advised his readers to learn from nature. Diderot's work was part of a critical tradition that was called "the Enlightenment"; in recent times, that same critical tradition—now not so much anti-Christian as anticapitalist and anti-industrial—has been called environmental and countercultural. For participants in the modern movement, "the perspective of Native Americans in regard to Mother Earth spirituality holds great potential" (p. xiii) states Jan Hartke (described as "Environmental Liaison for Earth Day, 1990") in the introduction to McGaa's book.

As Eagle Man, McGaa describes traditional Lakota ceremonials, together with myths and symbols. But his perspective is not that of a mid-nineteenth-century migratory inhabitant of the Great Plains, living on bison and other game and conducting deadly raids upon other tribes. McGaa prefers the speculative account that envisions the prehistoric Sioux as peaceable corn planters in the Carolinas. That vision symbolizes his distinctly modern transformation of Lakota legend, for historically much of it concerned the acquisition of the spiritual power to hunt the bison or to succeed in warrior exploits. As a student of religious movements, I salute the vitality with which Eagle Man has synthesized the traditions of the Lakota with those of environmentalism; however, as an ethnohistorian, I find that I must respectfully dissociate myself from some of his claims.

Among the distinctive elements of Plains societies is a sense of humor epitomized by Old Man Coyote; that he should be a major figure in Indian legend reveals the Plains understanding that life is so disorderly as to be comic. Despite human endeavors to be heroic and virtuous, our schemes sometimes lead to bizarre humiliation; when they do succeed, they often seem to do so despite our efforts, not because of them. The very notion that the

earth might have been created as an accident by the casual adventures of Old Man Coyote is a useful astringent for the Western (and Christian) inflated sense of human importance. Given the absence of humor in so much of the literature of the environmentalists (as in Judeo-Christian tradition itself), it would have been salutary for some of the Coyote legends to be incorporated in McGaa's gift of Sioux tradition.

Part 2 of McGaa's book is titled "Earth: The Seven Mother Earth Ceremonies." Here he summarizes and interprets materials about the pipe (and the crystal), the sweat lodge, the vision quest, the sun dance, the *yuwipi*, the making of relatives (*huniapi*), the give-away. Throughout, the text is enriched by vignettes drawn mostly from his own religious experiences, in which often he was guided by venerated elders such as Frank Fools Crow, Bill Eagle Feather, John (Fire) Lame Deer. Further enrichment is provided by vignettes of non-Indians whom he has assisted in becoming ritual participants.

"Chief Sitting Bull advised me to take the best of the white man's ways and to take the best of the old Indian ways" (p. 206). By his efforts to do just that, Eagle Man has produced a book that will be a source of inspiration to many Indians and to members of the environmental movement.

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Word Ways: The Novels of D'Arcy McNickle. By John Lloyd Purdy. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990. 167 pages. \$27.95 cloth.

Word Ways breaks new ground by presenting an historical overview of the career and works of D'Arcy McNickle, the Salish-Cree writer and anthropologist who worked for the Commission on Indian Affairs and directed the Newberry Library's Center for the History of the American Indian. McNickle's grandfather and mother, Philomene, were among the Métis (descendants of Cree Indians and white French trappers) who in 1885 fled from Canada to the United States after a thwarted attempt to save their homelands. In Montana the family was adopted into the Salish tribe, and each member was "allotted eighty acres of farmland"