Calvin Martin's Theory of Despiritualization
Applied to the Swampy Cree

ABSTRACT:

Martin posits that animals were overexploited by Eastern Subarctic Indians, not as a consequence of economic motivations occasioned by the fur trade, but as a result of epidemic diseases which had the prior effect of corroding the Indian-animal spiritual relationship. Indians were said to participate in the overhunting attendant on the fur trade in order to wreak revenge on the treacherous animals thought to be the cause of these diseases. Martin's critics focus on the historiographic, economic and ecological shortcomings in his argument. In the case of the Swampy Cree, it is argued in this paper that, far from being corroded, there is evidence that the spiritual relationship between man and animals continued throughout the period under consideration (and in continuity to the present) because this ideology could easily accommodate the intensified exploitation of animals in the fur trade. Belief in ritual regeneration of game animals, combined with the ecological results of a flexible migratory lifestyle precluded the need for any conception of ecological relationships or conservation of animal resources. Martin's model of "despiritualization" does not apply to the Swampy Cree.

INTRODUCTION:

Calvin Martin has stimulated a good deal of interest in, and reaction to, his novel approach to the analysis of the effects of the fur trade on the Algonkians of the Eastern Subarctic. Martin argues against the exclusive dependence on the traditional "economic motivational acculturation" explanation of Indian participation in the depletion of animals in favour of an emphasis on the "despiritualization of the Indian-animal relationship."

Although Martin (1978a:7-8) cautions that his theory is not necessarily applicable outside Eastern Canada, there exists that implication, and he does employ data on the Swampy Cree
Chipewyan and even Koyukon to support his case. Since data on
the Swampy Cree has been utilized in the argument, and since
there has been criticism of Martin's theory, the purposes of this
paper are as follows: 1) to briefly outline Martin's argument,
2) to present criticisms of the theory, and 3) to test Martin's
model in the case of the Swampy Cree.

The hypothesis of this paper is that, contrary to Martin,
overexploitation of fur-bearing animals did not occur as a re-
sult of despiritualization among the Swampy Cree, but as a direct
result of a positive continuation of the ideology that, as long
as proper ritual was carried out and certain restrictions and
respect maintained, animals would continue to give themselves
up to the hunter, regardless of the numbers taken.

Since there is a dearth of ethnographic information on the
Swampy Cree, this paper will depend to a large degree on the
ethnohistorical method. The scope of the paper will be narrowed
to fit the time constraints by utilizing only published documents
of the Hudson's Bay Company and others in contact with the
Swampy Cree. Archival research is of course the next logical
step. Historical data on Swampy Cree-animal relations will be
interpreted in light of the ethnographic information available.
The temporal scope of this paper is restricted roughly to the
period of exclusive trade contact from the beginnings of York
Factory in 1682 until the introduction of the complicating factor
of missionization in the area after 1840. This study will
focus on the Swampy Cree of the Cumberland House and The Pas
regions since these two locales have been major anchor points
for historical documentation on the fur trade among the Swampy
Cree.

**MARTIN'S THEORY:**

Martin has widely disseminated his arguments in journal
articles (1974; 1978b), at conferences (1980) and in detailed
book form (1978a), *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relation-
ships and the Fur Trade*. The following outline is derived from
these sources.

Briefly, Martin's main thesis is that the supernatural world view of the Indian must be taken into account when analysing his response to the fur trade. Martin is critical of past analyses which have attempted to explain Indian behaviour in terms of an empirical, objective, physical environmental (i.e. "operational") model while ignoring the Indian's own "cognized" model. It is claimed that the traditional economic explanation of Indian motivation in the fur trade is "artificial" and "misleading". In concert with Rich (1960) and Ray (1974), Martin argues that Indians were not in fact responsive to the traditional market forces of supply and demand, and that, therefore, the idea of Parb (1968:83-2) and others that the Indian quickly adopted the motives of Western bourgeois capitalism is false. Far from being caught up in a "Western market place conceptual framework", Indians followed the "Zen way to affluence" by limiting their desires. Martin argues against Parb's contention that it was the Native's "impotent" technology which precluded overhunting.

As an alternative to the pure economic explanation, Martin directs us to the world view of the Indian. Graburn (1973:7) reports that animism was a universal circumpolar trait, and Jenness (1930:191-3), Driver (1961:98, 397), Jennings (1977) and Speck (1935:10) indicate the presence of the animistic interpretation among the Algonkians in question. All things animate and (what Western thought classifies as) inanimate were possessed of a soul and accompanying power. Specifically, animals were regarded as the spiritual equivalents of man and deserved the highest respect. Herein lies the basis of Martin's theory.

Following the early but obscure ideas of Macleod (1936:562), Martin postulates that in precontact times Indians were involved in a spiritual compact with animals. This "social contract" encompassed mutual respect and counterposing sanctions which proscribed disrespect, waste and overhunting upon pain of forfeiting success in hunting as well as the possibility of disease.
Upon the arrival of the Europeans in the New World, Martin asserts that the advance of newly-introduced diseases outstripped that of the newcomers themselves and even the flow of their technology. New diseases, for which the Indians had neither strategies for cures nor explanations, were integrated into their cosmology by blaming a traditional source of disease -- animals. By the time European traders reached the Indians they were already "predisposed" to "wage war" upon the animals in revenge for the unwarranted visitation of disease upon an unsuspecting and undeserving people.

In short, Martin argues that Indian values and beliefs were inconsistent with overhunting until European epidemic diseases "corroded" the traditional Indian-animal relationship. This caused the Indian to "apostatize" from his spiritual concept of the world, allowing him to participate vindictively in the slaughter of animals for the fur trade. For this reason Martin concludes that the myth of the Indian as conservationist is exactly the wrong model to be brandished in the fore of the modern ecological movement.

Many of those responding to Martin agree completely that the concept of the "Noble Savage" should not be resurrected in the form of picturing the North American Indian as the original noble conservationist. However, there the agreement ends and a number of criticisms emerge.

**MARTIN'S CRITICS**

Martin's efforts have been eagerly received, if not similarly accepted, by scholars in the field. His book has been termed "interesting", "stimulating", "fascinating", "well researched", "carefully conceived", "brilliant", even "elegant". Most commonly however, it is described as "provocative". *Keepers of the Game* has drawn reaction from many of the currently pre-eminent figures in the history of the fur trade and Subarctic ethnology. In general, although presenting a novel and refreshing outlook, critics find Martin's argument unsatisfying and unconvincing. Problems are identified in the following areas:
methodology, hypothesis formulation, structure, accuracy, and
historiographical validity in his use of data; all leading to
what are described as unwarranted interpretations and conclusions.

On the literary level, Wishart (1979:242) is critical of
a lack of cohesion resulting from Martin's failure to overcome
the problem of the book being an amalgam of four different
articles. Heidenreich (1980:230-1) laments the failure to deal
with alternative explanations while tending to concentrate too
singlemindedly on developing his own hypothesis. Spry (1979:212)
is not happy with the way Martin marshals his evidence.

Cornelius J. Jaenen, who has done important work on the his-
tory of French-Indian relations (1976), presents an historiogra-
phical critique. In concert with Heidenreich (1980:281) and
Kania (1980:204), Jaenen (1979:376) asserts that:

The precise chronology, required in order to verify
the sequential order and causal relationships postu-
lated in the argument, is never clearly established.

Jaenen questions whether Martin's so-called "nebulous histori-
cal documentation" can be considered to be unequivocal or even
sufficient to prove his case. Charles Bishop (1979:914) is also
critical of the "unwarranted" and "unsubstantiated" assumptions
in Martin's argument.

The common historiographical criticism termed "selectivity"
in historical reconstruction "as if all history was not "se-
lective"" is offered by Wishart (1979:242), while Kania (1980:204)
challenges Martin's accuracy and predicts that his explanation
will not endure subsequent scholarly scrutiny.

Arthur J. Ray (1979:485) leads those who are skeptical of
Martin's "premature" discounting of the economic explanation of
Indian overexploitation of fur resources. Carlson (1978:485)
asserts that "...Martin's neglect of economic factors is "un-
convincing", "speculative" and ultimately "unsatisfying".
B. Graymont (1979:533) attacks Martin from the historical ma-
terialist perspective, stating:

Martin has not unequivocally disproved that man's
method of earning a living, his economy, is funda-
mental in shaping his ideology, even in preindustrial
societies.
Ray (1979:486) and economic historian Irene Spry (1979:212) have not been convinced by Martin that Indians did not recognize the "commercial value" of furs or were not affected by what H. A. Innes has called the "penetration of the price system".

On a more substantive level, Kania (1980:208) argues that the economic motivation so easily dismissed by Martin is not only characteristic of "Western bourgeois capitalism" (and therefore by definition non-Indian according to Martin), but is pan-human in nature. As Carlson (1978:1027) states:

There is no need, for example, to assume that Indians had capitalist values to conclude that even without plague and other catastrophes, the introduction of the fur trade would have a profound effect on Indian life, leading perhaps, to excessive hunting.

Regarding Martin's arguments about overkill, Heidenreich (1980:280) reports that overexploitation of game resources in fact preceded the known epidemics in Eastern Canada and that he is aware of no evidence of blame being apportioned to animals. On the contrary, he asserts, Indians were blaming the French [See also Trigger (1969:29-30)]. Bishop (1979:94) argues that increased occurrence of disease would indeed have had the opposite effect to that proposed by Martin, asserting that Indians would logically become even more solicitous toward animals. In fact, Martin (1974:19) weakens his own case here when he indicates that the Micmac recognized that disease was connected to contact with the French.

After concurring with the above, Jaenen suggests further that it was indeed possible that Indians found it economically advantageous to overhunt animals, and that they were simply rationalizing their actions by blaming animals. Jaenen (1979:376) asserts: "It was a rationalization, not an act of spiritual faith." Heidenreich (1980:280) is also critical of Martin for accepting what was possibly an eighteenth century rationalization as the objective state of affairs.

In speaking of his research on the Ojibwa, Bishop (1979:915) agrees with Heidenreich and Jaenen that in many cases disease did not occur until after Indians became intimately involved in the fur trade and he concludes:
Disease as a causal mechanism, then, cannot explain what did not occur, and therefore it cannot explain subsequent overexploitation.

James G. E. Smith (1979:811), a specialist in Subarctic ethnology, complains of Martin's weak documentation of the Indians' idea that epidemic diseases were caused by animals. Ray (1979:485) adds that Martin bases his theory on only two accounts by David Thompson and Alexander Henry the Elder. He observes that although folklore associates disease with malevolent game spirits,

...nowhere does he [Martin] demonstrate conclusively that any Indian group consciously sought revenge against those spirits for such visitations of death by over-hunting local resources....In neither of the only two pieces of evidence advanced to support Martin's hypothesis is there specific reference to disease (Ray 1979:485).

Although many such as Wishart (1979:242) welcome the addition of the factor of spiritual beliefs into the analysis of Indian reaction to the fur trade, Carlson (1978:1027) asserts that Martin has in fact "misinterpreted" the traditional world view of those Indians he studies while Ray (1979:485) denies altogether the need for a spiritual explanation. Carlson does not elaborate further on his statement, but Ray asserts that Indian "dependency, and the increasing demand for, European goods are in themselves sufficient explanations for the increased exploitation of the fur resources without recourse to the concept of "despiritualization".

Many of the scholars reviewing Keepers of the Game were concerned with one particular weak point in Martin's case. Speaking for several others, Smith (1979:811) questions the documentation of the spiritual breakdown in relations and wonders aloud about how the "long dormant" spiritual world view was resurrected in the nineteenth century after having been supposedly disrupted by the fur trade [see Martin 1978a:147]. It is quite clear from recent ethnographic sources such as Tanner (1979) and Preston (1975) that these spiritual traditions exist in present day Eastern Cree culture. Bishop (1979:914) maintains that:
In fact, the Indian belief system throughout much of the eastern Algonkian area appears to have been continuously maintained and adhered to except where Christian proselytization influences were strong and even here as well according to Cooper (1934:70) and Mason (1967:69).

Perhaps the most telling criticism is that raised by Heidenreich (1980:280) who argues that the spiritual belief system was indeed very strong:

However, the natives also believed that if the remains of animals were treated with respect, their spirits would be reborn, and they would tell other animals that they had nothing to fear. In other words, no matter how many animals were killed, as long as their remains were treated respectfully, the spirits were cycled back to be reborn and killed again.

It is clear from the above criticisms that, although provocative, Martin’s theory is not altogether sound as originally conceived in an eastern Canadian context. An attempted application of this theory to the case of the Swampy Cree weakens it even further.

MARTIN’S THEORY APPLIED TO THE SWAMPY CREE:

The ethnographic literature dealing with the Swampy Cree and other northeastern Algonkian peoples describes the twentieth century man-animal relationship in spiritual terms. Only Honigmann (1965:69) reports that one of his Attawapiskat informants denies that hunting is a "holy" activity as Speck (1935:10) has identified it. Nevertheless, Honigmann (1966:38, 41, 57, 69, 73-4) also records other evidence on divination, taboos, ritual, and respect behaviour in connection with hunting which would seem to indicate otherwise. Feit (1973:117) makes it clear that the Waswanipi believe that it is their own prior actions vis-a-vis animals which determines their success or failure at hunting. The hunter therefore becomes responsible for his own "good" or "bad luck" by the manner in which he relates spiritually to the animals.

Skinner (1911:25; 1912:203), Cooper (1930:575), Flannery (1946:264), Mason (1967:31), Rogers (1967:67), and Preston (1975) all record the belief that animal spirits demand respect
and propitiation as well as the continuing efforts at ritually disposing of the remains of animals in order to avoid offending these animal spirits. As Tanner (1979:130) underlines, the central attitude of hunting among the Mistassini is that game animals are "persons" that must be respected. Preston (1975:221) has classed this relationship between human persons and food-animal persons among the Rupert House Cree as one characterized by "love".

Martin would have us believe that there has been a breakdown in the ideological system between the aboriginal form and its modern manifestation without specifying how this might have occurred.

Central to Martin's argument is the contention that the spiritual relationship between Indians and animals was disrupted by the onset of European-introduced epidemic diseases. Indians, therefore, supposedly blamed animals for the diseases and took revenge by hunting and trapping them to the point of depletion. Although Martin uses data on the Swampy Cree to buttress his case, a closer look at the ethohistory of these people shows that they do not fit the proposed model. Bishop (1972:58) argues the necessity of using historical data in support of ecological, demographic and ethnographic data to document change.

To begin with, Smith (1979:811) and Ray (1974:105) indicate that Hudson's Bay Company records show no mention of epidemic diseases among the Cree until 1781-2. Significantly, this is a full one hundred years after fur trade contact was established through York Factory. As late as 1746-7, Ellis (1748:188) reports that the York Factory Cree "...are pretty much subject to some Disorders in the Breast, but to no contagious Diseases..."

On the other hand, Ray (1974:118) asserts that by 1795 (and for some years prior) the Cumberland District had been trapped out. In Swampy Cree territory therefore, the significant relation posited by Martin between epidemic disease and overkill of fur resources does not occur.

As late in the period under consideration as 1820, Dr. Richardson, a member of Franklin's Arctic exploration party,
wintering at Cumberland House, reports rituals undertaken by the Cree of the area to propitiate Kepoochikawan (the north wind -- a "keeper of the game") as well as the animals themselves (Franklin 1823:74). Much of the taboo system and respect relationship noted in modern Cree ethnographies seems to be intact. For example, paralleling Honigmann's (1956:69) report of female food avoidances and ritual disposition of animal bones, Richardson (Franklin 1823:72) reports:

Many of the Cree Hunters are careful to prevent a woman from partaking of the head of a moose-deer, lest it should spoil their future hunts; and for the same reason they avoid bringing it to a fort, fearing lest the white people should give the bones to the dogs.

It is clear from this quotation that, despite being so caught up in the fur trade as to be hired to provision the forts, the Cree did not take this opportunity to jettison their animistic ideology even though they may have been overexploiting the local game resources from an ecological perspective.

Even more significantly, Franklin (1823:53) indicates that, prior to his arrival in 1817, the Cumberland House Cree were indeed deplored, yet there is no mention of them blaming animals for their misfortune. In fact, there was some concern that:

...the season will be far advanced before they can be roused to any exertion in searching for animals beyond what may be necessary for their own support.

Such an attitude is hardly in keeping with Martin's revenge motivation hypothesis.

Martin's thesis finds its primary base in quotations from Henry the Elder (1969:248) among the Ojibwa and from David Thompson who speaks about the Cree. Martin depends heavily on extracts such as the following from Thompson's Narrative concerning his stay among the "Nahathaway" in 1786:

...the avidity with which the fur bearing animals is sought, almost threatens their extinction...(Thompson 1916:77)

...all the fur-bearing animals an Indian can kill can scarcely furnish himself and family with the bare necessities of life...(Thompson 1916:110)
It is quite clear here that the Cumberland District was being denuded of its fur resources, and Thompson (1916:113, 197-9) attributed this to the introduction of European technology. Thompson (1916:113) continues:

The old Indians, when speaking of their ancestors, wonder how they could live as the Beaver was wiser, and the Bear stronger, than them, and confess, that if they were deprived of the Gun, they could not live by the Bow and Arrow, and must soon perish.

Taken at face value, this last statement seems to support Farb's concept of Indian dependence on European trade goods. However, Thompson does not give us the context of this statement. It would have to be considered in a much different light if it was offered during a bargaining session where the Indians were attempting to wrangle more gifts and/or trade goods from the traders as they were wont to do.

Martin also stresses the following quote from Thompson (1916:114):

...the eldest man now makes a speech to it; reproaching the Bear and all its race with being the old enemies of Man, killing the children and women, when it was large and strong; but now, since the Manito has made him, small and weak to what he was before, he has all the will, though not the power to be as bad as ever, that he is treacherous and cannot be trusted, and although he has sense he makes bad use of it, and must therefore be killed; parts of the speech have many repetitions to impress the truth on the Bear...

Despite the antagonism expressed here (Skinner 1911:71-2) seems to be finding a continued undercurrent of hostility as evidenced by the circumlocutions and 'behind the bear's back' comments there exists, nevertheless, the belief that the bear's spirit could hear and understand the comments made to it. Indeed, Thompson (1916:114) continues by stating "On this animal they have several superstitions, and he acts a prominent part in many of their tales." The Cree's spiritual ideology had not been eroded.

Martin relies heavily on Thompson's (1916:204) account of a conversation with an old man encountered near Nut Hill between the Red Deer and Assiniboine Rivers (he may or may not be a Cree):

I have told you that we believe in years long passed away, the Great Spirit was angry with the Beaver and ordered Weesaukejauk (the Flatterer) to drive them
all from the dry land into the water, and they became and continued very numerous; but the Great Spirit has been, and now is, very angry with them and they are now all to be destroyed... We are now killing the Beaver without any labour, we are now rich, but (shall) soon be poor, for when the Beaver are destroyed we have nothing to depend on to purchase what we want for our families, strangers now over run our country with their iron traps, and we, and they will soon be poor.

Here again, it must be pointed out that these references indicate no association with disease-motivated revenge. Indeed, within the context of the 1780-1 smallpox epidemic, Thompson (1916:323) reports:

...it was noted by the Traders and Natives, that at the death of the latter, and there being thus reduced to a small number, the numerous herds of Bison and deer also disappeared both in the Woods and in the Plains, and the Indians about Cumberland House declared the same of the Moose, and the Swans, Geese and Ducks...

Such a situation would seem to reinforce the Indians' conception noted above that animals were supplied as they were needed and as proper ritual and respect was maintained. In a different context, but perhaps an analogous one, Thompson (1916:325) records how the Peigan explained such a situation:

It is justly said, that as Mankind decrease, the Beasts of the earth increase, but in this calamity the natives saw all decrease but the Bears. And dried provisions of meat before so abundant that they could not be traded, were now sought as much as furs. The enquiries of intelligent traders into this state of the Animals from the Natives were to no purpose. They merely answered, that the Great Spirit having brought this calamity on them, had also taken away the Animals in the same proportion as they were not wanted, and intimating the Bisons and Deer were made and preserved solely for their use, and if there were no Men there would be no animals.

It seems clear that Indians continued to view their world in spiritual terms and were not "apostatizing" as Martin would have us believe.

Despite Martin's reliance on the above citations to support his argument, he totally ignores contrary evidence also to be found in Thompson's Narrative. After outlining the animistic ideology of the Cree which included mention of "guardians..."
every genus of Birds and Beasts" (i.e. the "keepers of the game"), Thompson (1916:83, 85) states:

On this account the Indians, as much as possible, neither say, nor do anything to offend them, and the religious hunter, at the death of each animal, says or does, something, as thanks to the Manito of the species for being permitted to kill it...if this acknowledgement was not made the Manito would drive away the animals from the hunter, although the Indians often doubt their power or existence yet like other invisible beings they are more feared than loved...and most of them carry this belief so far, that they believe whatever creatures the Great Spirit has made must continue to exist somewhere, and under some form...

Far from evincing "corrosion" in Martens's terms, these passages indicate a clear and positive continuity of the aboriginal belief system which included the typical ritual disposal of bones of bear and moose (Thompson 1916:83, 97). Respect for the carcass continued to be important as Thompson discovered upon being prevented from measuring the intestines of a freshly killed caribou:

....the Hunters eyed with suspicion what I wished to do. When each of us was roasting a small piece at the fire, one of the Hunters said to me, We did not like to see you measure the Deer, for fear their Manito would be angry, he is soon displeased, and does not like his deer to be killed, and has not many of them.

In fact, after having been critical of their beliefs (Thompson 1916:89), Thompson was forced to adopt the Cree's spiritual approach when his explanation of caribou behaviour through the concept of "instinct" was found lacking. He records an Indian's statement:

You white people, you look like wise men, and talk like fools...and I had to give up my doctrine of Instinct, to that of their Manito /unusual in that Thompson was a "believer"/. I have sometimes thought Instinct, to be a word invented by the learned to cover their ignorance of the ways and doings of animals for their self preservation, it is a learned word and shuts up all the reasoning powers.

Had Martin gone beyond Thompson into other ethnographical sources on the Swampy Cree, he would have discovered further evidence to contradict his theory of "despiritualization".

Writing about a time slightly earlier than Thompson, Andrew Graham (1969:154) recounts the belief of the Home Guards (Coast
Cree): "They kill animals out of wantonness, alleging the more they destroy the more plentiful they grow...". Still earlier is the account written by Henry Ellis (1748:182) describing his stay at York Factory 1746-7 wherein he reports similarly: "They make prodigious Slaughter every Season among the Deer, from an unaccountable Notion that the More they destroy, the greater Plenty will succeed...". Isham (1949:81) writing in 1743 records:

I have found frequently Indians to Kill some scores of Deer, and take only the tongues or heads...

Isham (1949:155) later contradicts himself stating that the Indians use all parts of the deer, "throwing nothing away". It is possible here that the traditionally proscribed "waste" of all but the tongues of the slaughtered caribou in this description is an example of incomplete observation. Using an ethnographic analogue from Tanner (1979: ), hunters do not always butcher their kill immediately after the kill, but merely remove some part of the animal (such as the tongue) as a symbol of their accomplishment. When they return to camp, the women are delegated to return to the carcass to complete the butchering.

Despite the great numbers of animals being killed, it is significant that the Cree continued to be supremely "confident" [as hunters generally were (Sahlins 1972:29)] of their ability to procure food and fur. Thompson (1916:206) states:

The life of a Hunter is precarious, but a provident family will make dried provisions for hard times, and let things be as hard as is sometimes the case, the Indian sees none better than himself, and knows he is master of everything he can secure by hunting, or otherwise.

Such overweening confidence was often interpreted as "improvidence" by the Europeans [and as "monumental improvidence" by Martin (1978a:3)]. Dragge (1748-9:216), Graham (1969:154) and Tyrell (1931:124) all disparage the hand-to-mouth existence of the Cree. In reality however, this "improvidence" demonstrates that the Cree continued to hold to their beliefs and to depend on their "spiritual contract" with animals. As Smith (1979:811) states, "To the Subarctic Indian, game populations were (are) stable since the animal spirits were constantly reincarnated." Bishop (1979:915) notes that Martin himself
recognises that animals could be continuously ritually re-"gnerated, but that he rejects out of hand the idea that this could justify overkill. It appears, as if it did just that.

While on his inland expedition of 1754-55 with his Cree guides, Anthony Hendry (1907:340) reveals no evidence of a vindictive state of mind nor any attempts to "make war on the beaver". His journal entry of October 23, 1754 states that despite the ease of hunting beaver:

Indians killed two Moose, one Buffalo & only ten Beaver; when I am certain they might have killed 200 if they had chused: but they only killed a few for cloathing, & for Beaver feasting (Hendry 1907:341).

Later, on November 14 he adds:

Women making cloathing for cold weather: some families have not got half enough of skins for cloathing them on the approaching winter: & what surprises me most, they never go out of their tents but when they want provisions, altho' the Beaver & Otters are swarming about us in the Creeks & Swamps, not one went out to-day but myself, & I killed two Otters" (Hendry 1907:342).

These observations are supported by Mathew Cocking (1908:110) in his journal describing his inland expedition of 1772: "They have caught a few Wolves & Foxes, but not the number they might...".

It also becomes clear from Hendry's (1907:344-5, 351) comments that his Cree companions were not at all interested in trapping great quantities of beaver, much less taking revenge on them, since their needs were being well satisfied from the proceeds of their middleman status in the trade with York Factory.

Insofar as negative evidence carries weight, no references to anything resembling Martin's hypothetical "war on animals" can be found in references to the Cree in the following journals covering the period from 1690 to 1812: Kelsey (1929), Jeremie (1926), La Verendrye (1937), Cocking (1908), Hearne and Turnor (1934), and Harmon (1957).

CONCLUSIONS:

The above documentation, coupled with the available ethnography on the Swampy Cree, and the information supplied by his critics, leads us to a critical re-evaluation of Martin's theory. The temporal and causal relationship between epidemic
diseases and overexploitation of game resources for the fur trade does not hold true west of Hudson Bay among the Swampy Cree. Historical sources indicate that overexploitation in fact preceded epidemic diseases in the area. In addition, records specify that, although by European eyes a profligate one, the Swampy Cree-animal relationship continued throughout the period under consideration to be predicated on an animistic world view. Animals were the spiritual equivalents of man and had to be propitiated, or at least ritually compelled if they were to continue to give themselves up to the hunter.

The "confidence" inspired by this ideology allowed the Swampy Cree to overhunt the available animal resources because it precluded the need for any conception of ecological relationships or conservation of animal resources. Although perhaps in pre-contact times such an ideology might happen to have the same effect as a scientific, ecological one [especially when combined with a migratory subsistence pattern] (Feit 1973:117), the introduction of the European fur trade into the system and the overexploitation it occasioned allowed animal overkill to be subsumed under a traditional spiritual ideology. Rogers and Black (1976:22n.) indicate that traditional patterns evidenced the same basic characteristics as basic ecological survival strategies. As Tanner (1979:104) asserts:

This abstract spiritual thought can reach conclusions about ecological conditions which are more sophisticated than the non-spiritual concepts about the individual ecological determinants on which they are said to be grafted.

In closing, Professor Lee Guemple (personal communication) recounts an anecdote from his research on the Belcher Islands in which Ontario game wardens descend on two Inuit men hunting the protected eider ducks. After carefully explaining the ecological reasons behind the ban on hunting these particular ducks, and receiving the traditional cheerful deference from the Inuit hunters, the officers trundle off convinced that they had done their jobs. For their part, the two Inuit men sanguinely returned to their eider duck hunt with their animistic ideology remaining unassailed. If this account can transcend both time
and culture as Jennings (1977:397) suggests it might, then we have a clear analogue as to how the Swampy Cree viewed their relations with animals.

Martin is indeed correct in pointing out the absurdity of setting up pre-Columbian Native people on the pedestal of "Golden Age Conservationist". However, he has misconstrued the reasons behind this absurdity. Native people did not renounce their spiritual religious ideology to wage war on treacherous animals as Martin suggests. If any did, as reported by Thompson and Henry, they were in a definite minority, and there exists no empirical connection between this apostasy and epidemic disease.

The spiritual ideology and respectful relationship with animals was in fact maintained throughout the period because it could easily accommodate the intensified exploitation involved in the fur trade through the belief in the mechanism of reincarnation.

The Swampy Cree of the Cumberland House District certainly did not apostatize to turn against their spiritual fellows. They have continued to act as if they had a personal and spiritual (if unecological) relationship with animals right up to the present day.

approximately 5,500 words  pct/81/12/13
Bibliography

Bishop, C. A.


Carlson, L.

Cocking, W.

Cooper, J. W.


Dragge, J. S.

Driver, H. E.

Ellis, H.
1748 (1969) A Voyage to Hudson's Bay, by the Dobbs Galley and California, in the Years 1746 and 1747... London: H. Whiteridge (Johnson Reprint Corp.).

Farb, P.

Feit, H. A.
Flannery, R.  

Franklin, J.  
1823 Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea in the Years 1819,1820, 1821 and 1822. London: John Murray.

Graham, A.  

Graymont, B.  

Harmon, D. W.  

Hearne, S. and Turnor, P.  

Hendry, A.  

Henry, A.  

Heidenreich, C. E.  

Honigman, J. J.  

Isham, J.  

Jaenen, C. J.  
Jaenen, C. J.

Jennings, J. D. et al.

Jenness, D.

Jeremie, N.

Kania, R. R. E.

Kelsey, H.

La Verendrye, P.

MacLeod, W. C.

Martin, C.


Mason, L.


1974 Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay 1660-1870. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.


1911 "Notes on the Eastern Cree and Northern Saulteaux". Anthropology Papers of the American Museum of Natural History 9/1.


Sunder, J. E.

Tanner, A.

Thompson, D.
1916 David Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western America 1784-1812. Toronto: Champlain Society.

Trigger, B. G.

Tyrrell, J. B. ed.

Wishart, D.

Addenda

Graburn, N. H.
Footnotes -

Distrib of Swumpy Cree

* mr. ?

Bioq data on major positions authors

Martin
Ray
Bishop

Tighten 1st Section -

1) Re Martin's Thesis + Assumptions
2) Then note Attacks by point
3) Lead into your own argument re Swumpy Cree

? 1 brief review of major lit on Swumpy Cree

* Their distribution + note commonalities to E. Cree

Your counter arg. to Martin