



Indian from the Inside

*Native American Philosophy
and Cultural Renewal*

SECOND EDITION

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into annually rotated quarters — to permit the recovery of populations of game animals” has been cited as “evidence of conservation among *aboriginal* northern woodland hunter-gathering peoples” (Callcott 1989, 207, italics in the original). He rejects this evidence because current research suggests that such family hunting territory “was a post-contract development” and hence it is at least possible “that conservation was expressly taught to the Indians by whites” (Callcott 1989, 208). Although others have made similar claims (e.g., Bishop 1970), here we suggest that Callcott is being just a little bit too cautious. He is granting too much to the other side, to the skeptic. After all way back in 1992 we celebrated the five hundredth anniversary of contact between Europeans and the aboriginal peoples of the Americas. Just how long does a way of life have to be followed before it becomes a tradition? If a Native person has lived all his life in the family hunting territory where his father lived and his grandfather before him, is this not part of Native American Indian tradition? Whether or not they learned this form of rotation from whites, the fact that they readily accepted it, and have maintained it for generations, suggests that such practices were at least compatible with traditional Native ways.

We do, however, agree with Callcott that the concept of “conservation” does not adequately capture the Native attitude. Native people are not really interested in calculating the optimum sustained yield of natural resources. Doing so would hardly show the appropriate respect for these “other-than-human persons.” As Callcott discovered teaching Ojibwa students with fellow philosopher Tom Overholt at the University of Wisconsin: “Animals, plants, and minerals are not ... rightless resources, as is the case in Western economic assumptions.... Human beings must assume appropriate attitudes toward the non-human members of their polymorphous community.... Above all non-human beings must be respected” (Overholt and Callcott 1982, 154–155).

Learning Respect

In order to explore more deeply this important notion of respect, including respect for the other-than-human, we like to compare one well known analysis of the acquisition of respect offered by modern mainstream philosophy with a Native American account of the same thing. Here, we believe the differences, and, interestingly enough, some similarities become most apparent. The non-Native account we use in our comparison was first

articulated by the very influential German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). He was just analyzing a commonly accepted underlying attitude in Western moral thinking and did not suggest that he was proposing anything new or radical, except perhaps in the philosophical terminology he used to describe it, which is, itself, quite revealing. Kant claims that the concept of person applies only to human beings who can act on universal moral principles that they rationally accept and impose upon themselves. Each person thus becomes, according to Kant, “a law-making member in a universal kingdom of ends” by “always choosing his maxims from the point of view of himself—and also of every other rational being—as a maker of law” and, Kant adds, “this is why they are called persons” (Kant 1964a, 106). In this way, says Kant, human persons (the only kind of persons there are on earth) acquire a “dignity ... above all mere things of nature” (Kant 1964a, 105). This is, of course, very different from the Native American notion of a deep respect, perhaps even a religious respect, for a nature which consists for the most part of other-than-human persons, perhaps even more-than-human persons. Kant has his own reasons for wanting to draw such a sharp distinction between nature and humanity. By his day science had advanced far enough that it was obvious to him that a scientific explanation, i.e., a causal explanation, could ultimately be given for every natural event including the behavior of human beings. But problems arise concerning ascriptions of moral responsibility if causal explanations can be given for moral behavior. After all, how can we blame or praise someone for something if the action in question was caused by prior events completely beyond the agent’s control? Science has attempted to show that all human action is subject to this sort of causal explanation. Kant himself thought he had justified the application of causal explanation to everything in what he called the phenomenal world, the world we discover through sense perception. Human beings are, of course, part of this phenomenal world, “*homo phenomenon*.” As such human beings are thus subject to causal laws.

In what sense, then, is our behavior free, as opposed to being causally determined? In what sense can we be held morally responsible for what we do? Kant attempts to answer such questions by speaking of a noumenal world, a world other than the phenomenal. Such a world is so extra-ordinary that Kant argues that it is impossible to describe using our ordinary concepts of reality—thing, substance, causality, etc. This means, of course, that it is very difficult to say anything meaningful about it at all. We discover this noumenal world, not through scientific reason, but through what Kant calls, practical reason, through our moral action. When we act on universal moral

principles which we make and impose upon ourselves then, for the first time, we are acting with freedom, with autonomy. Through acting on principle, as opposed simply to giving in to desires, we achieve autonomy and become genuine persons with intrinsic worth, with dignity. We become, in Kant's terms, "*homo noumenon*" as opposed to "*homo phenomenon*." It is, Kant thinks, this ability to rise above our phenomenal nature, which sets us apart from the other animals and indeed apart from the rest of nature. Insofar as our phenomenal natures are concerned, even though we are rational animals, we are really no better than, have no more moral worth than, the lower animals: "Man in the system of nature (*homo phenomenon*, *animal rationale*) is a being of slight importance and shares with the rest of the animals, as offspring of the earth, a common value (*pretium vulgare*)" (Kant 1964b, 99). The concept "vulgar," which Kant uses here in its Latin form, originally just meant common, but due to the disdainful attitude Kant is expressing here both the terms "vulgar" and "common" have taken on a negative connotation. He contrasts the common vulgar animals with morally responsible persons. "But man regarded as a person — that is, as the subject of morally practical reason — is exalted above any price; for as such (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued as a mere means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in himself" (99). Such persons, Kant argues, have "*dignity*," which he defines as "an absolute inner worth," and therefore a person can and should "extract respect for himself from all other rational beings in the world: he can measure himself with every other being of this kind and value himself on a footing of equality with them" (Kant 1964b, 99, italics in the original).

One of the things Kant is doing here is making explicit an implicit and widespread very non-Native, Euro-Western, attitude toward nature. It seems to be one of complete alienation from the earth. The offspring of the earth have only a common value (*pretium vulgare*), whereas man alone (by which Kant means the human or rational animal) has dignity, an intrinsic value worthy of respect. For Kant, it is of course our rational side, not our animal side, that confers upon us intrinsic value or dignity. It is not difficult to see why Callcott, for example, would prefer the Native American world-view as a foundation for an environmental ethics, a land ethic. In spite of this obvious difference, however, a closer examination of Kant's notion of respect will show that it is not all that far removed from what we may call the Native view, though, who or what is thought worthy of respect differs widely. A comparison of the two applications of the concept of respect will provide a deeper understanding of both worldviews.

Kant's concept of respect seems to be closely bound up with his notion of autonomy, with the self as free (*homo noumenon*). The self is free only in so far as it is self-disciplined, i.e., only in so far as it acts for the sake of moral principle instead of giving in to desire. This is the true Western meaning of "autonomy" which comes from the Greek "autos" meaning self, and "nomos" meaning law (think of "astronomy" which is the study of the laws of the heavens). Just as an auto-mobile (autonomous) is something that is self-moving, so an autonomous being is one that imposes its own law upon itself. If laws regulate our behavior, then, by imposing such laws upon ourselves, we become self-regulating (autos-nomos), autonomous. We therefore have freedom, provided, of course, that the laws are ones that we freely accept or are of our own making. If the laws that regulate our behavior are imposed on us by someone else, someone other than ourselves, then we have not achieved autonomy. We then have, or rather are under, what Kant insists on calling "heteronomy" (from "heteros" the Greek word for "other," as in heterosexual, being attracted to "the other" sex, for example). Instead of using our own will power, we have submitted ourselves to the will of another, whether that other is society, God, or another person. According to Kant "*Autonomy* is ... the ground of the dignity of human nature and of every rational nature" (Kant 1964a, 103, italics in the original). We are, however, always in danger of losing our autonomy in one of two ways: (1) by giving in to a desire instead of exercising our own will power and acting on principle, on the moral law, in which case we become merely part of the causal order (*homo phenomenon*); or (2) by submitting to a law imposed by another, in which case though our behavior is law-governed, it is not autonomous since the law is not self-imposed. Still, it is important to learn to govern our behavior according to laws or moral principles. As children we are governed by rules imposed by parents, teachers, and so on — by adults. As we achieve adulthood ourselves, having already learned law-like behavior, we continue to impose upon ourselves such laws as we still accept. In short, heteronomy is considered the first step toward autonomy. As John Watson (1847-1939), a famous Kant scholar, puts it: "At first everyone is under apparent bondage to his superiors in the family relation, but in reality this is the means by which a measure of freedom is attained. It is true that he must render implicit obedience to those in authority over him, but in so doing he learns to free himself from an undue accentuation of his own individual desires, and to seek his freedom where alone it can be found — in the subordination of his own will to the good of others" (Watson 1988, 37-38). Would many Native American Indians agree with Watson on this?

Would any? Certainly beings with freedom deserve respect. Certainly the good of others is at least as important as, and usually more important than, the satisfaction of my individual desires. But could anyone *really* expect to achieve freedom by giving it up? When we put it like that it sounds completely contradictory. Heteronomy may well be an implicit part of the Western philosophical tradition stemming from ancient Greece. However, it most certainly is *not* a concept native to North America. A great deal of research has been done on the education of Native children. One point on which all researchers seem to agree is that Native children are given much more freedom than their non-Native counterparts.

This point, which is crucial to our argument, is well documented in a major book-length study, titled *Native Literacy and Life Skills Curriculum Guidelines* and produced by a special committee of the British Columbia Ministry of Education. The committee (made up of both Native and non-Native members) was charged with "the task of developing guidelines to provide, in addition to basic literacy materials, materials directed toward the teaching of pre-employment skills and life skills, computational skills, and Native cultural awareness" (1989, v). The report contains a sympathetic and well documented discussion of Native culture, particularly as it relates to education. The members of the committee indicate that they are very much aware that "any discussion of cultural learning styles is fraught with danger because of the tendency toward stereotyping" (13). Nevertheless, they do provide a useful comparison of "Indian and non-Indian characteristics that may impinge upon the classroom" (13). Insofar as the different attitudes toward children are concerned, they suggest that "at the age of mobility" the Native Indian child is "considered a person" and is "free to explore his own environment" whereas the non-Indian "is watched and controlled by parents throughout childhood." The word "autonomous" is used to describe the Native American Indian child whereas his or her non-Native counterpart is said to be "dependent." In comparing learning styles, once again the Native American Indian child is said to be "independent and autonomous" while the non-Native child is "dependent and controlled." The "flexible and often non-existent" routines of the Native American Indian child are said to be "child-determined," for example, "meals served on demand, bedtimes vary with sleepiness and family activity." The non-Native child is raised with more rigid routines dominated or controlled by adults. In the extended family of Native American Indian society "rarely is a child punished in a systematic way" whereas the non-Native child can expect "punishment for failure to comply with adult expectations" (14-15). The

comparisons between Native American Indians and non-Natives made here by the *Native Literacy and Life Skills Curriculum Guidelines* draw heavily on quite a large number of other classic studies, including: *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada*, ed. H. B. Hawthorne (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967); R. Barnhardt, *Culture, Community, and the Curriculum* (Fairbanks: University of Alaska, 1981); F. Erickson and G. Mohart "Cultural Organization of Participation Structures in Two Classrooms of Indian Students" (1980), an unpublished study cited often in *Native Literacy and Life Skills Curriculum Guidelines*; and S. Philips, "Participation Structures & Communicative Competence: Warm Springs Children in Community and Classroom," in *Functions of Language in the Classroom*, ed. D. Hymes (New York: Teachers' College Press, 1972).

Obviously all these comparisons between Native American Indians and non-Natives contain rather general observations and we would invite readers to agree or disagree on the basis of their own experience. However, we do suggest that the general tendency is clear and is probably in accordance with the experience of most Native American Indians. As *The Native Literacy and Life Skills Curriculum Guidelines* conclude: for the Native American Indian child, his "autonomy allows him his own decisions" (15). It seems to be clear that in the Native American Indian tradition young people do not have to endure a period of heteronomy in order to gain autonomy as is the case in the Western philosophical tradition explained by Watson and Kant.

We have discussed in some detail how, in the Kantian tradition, the individual first acquires autonomy and respect for other persons through "the subordination of his own will to the good of others," through heteronomous relationships with family, teachers, and other adults. How does this occur in the North American Indian tradition(s) where autonomy seems to be granted "at the age of mobility?" How does such an individual learn respect for other persons? Here we cannot turn to, and draw upon, a full philosophical analysis of the problem by a Kant or a Watson. No such philosophical analysis of Native American Indian tradition(s) has been attempted as yet. Indeed, a full analysis lies far beyond even the scope of this study. The best we can do here is suggest what sorts of things ought to be included in the analysis, and hence in the answer to our question about respect for other persons. Certainly the examples set, and the stories told, by elders are of vital importance. As Native elder Ron Geysnick puts it, "In my stories, I try teach young people respect for everything: other people, trees, water and the spirits" (Geysnick and Doyle 1989, 31). Indeed, the entire narrative tradition plays an important role in helping the individual formulate a view

of the world and thus decide what sorts of things deserve the respect accorded to "persons." Fortunately the Native American Indian narrative tradition, at least that of the Ojibwa people, has been subjected to a preliminary philosophical analysis in Thomas W. Overholt and J. Baird Callicott's *Clothed-in-Fur and Ocher Tales: An Introduction to an Ojibwa World View*. This, we believe, makes it a little more accessible to those not raised in the Native tradition. As Callicott has often observed: "Ojibwa narratives consistently represent the natural world as a world of other-than-human persons organized into congenies of societies ... [where] animals give their skins and flesh to human beings, who in return give the animals tobacco" (Callicott 1989, 214–215). It is not difficult to see how children raised on such narratives would gain a natural respect for those other-than-human persons who give themselves willingly to the hunter. They would also learn, from the example of the hunter himself, to share what they had with others: "The fact of the matter is that the more meat a forager distributes the higher his social status" (Driben and Auger 1989, 20).

Finally, we suggest that the vision quest plays an essential role in at least re-enforcing traditional values. In the previous chapter on the phenomenology of the vision quest we noted that one of the things discovered during the vision quest is that we are not really *apart from* the earth and other people. We are rather a *part of* the earth and other people. As Douglas Cardinal put it: "The elders say, 'You ask all the living beings for strength because they are at one with the creator and you are part of creation' ... It seemed like I was part of everything, and I felt very, very powerful" (cf. Chapter Three, R8). With this realization comes the knowledge that willing the good of others is not in any sense a form of self-sacrifice given the enlarged sense of self acquired in the journey into non-ordinary reality. The expression "enlarged sense of self" which we have used here may be a little misleading. This notion may convey a sense of arrogant individualism which is not intended and is certainly not present. After saying, in the passage cited above, "I felt very, very powerful," Cardinal adds, "I just wasn't there." In our phenomenological analysis of the vision quest we suggested that with this mysterious expression Cardinal is attempting to put into words his felt experience that there is just no distinction between the individual and the rest of the community, indeed, the rest of the universe. Even this analysis is still misleading since it is quite wrong to suggest that the individual self dissolves into the greater whole. The exact relationship of the individual and the community, and the greater whole, requires further analysis. As a special instance of this, the relationship, or rather the inter-relationship,

between the vision quest itself and the narrative and other traditions also requires further analysis. We noted in the previous chapter that Cardinal did not accept as authentic all the visions that came to him during his fast: "All the sounds at night made you hallucinate. You had all these demons you had to deal with that were just part of your imagination. You couldn't deviate for one second from holding the sacred pipe and always asking for strength. If you let yourself go and let your mind go, you'd be confronted with some nightmare monster in your own head" (cf. Chapter Three). What implicit criteria are being used here to distinguish the nightmare monsters, the hallucinations of one's own imagination, from the authentic visions, from the truly "magical experiences" as Cardinal calls them? Obviously the sacred pipe is an important link to the tradition. Certainly the teachings of the elders play an equally important role: "The elders say, 'You gotta watch because now the forces will turn on you. The bad forces will start sweet-talking you' ... They were trying to sweet-talk me out of my commitment. I just held on, kept that pipe."

In a great many ways, then, which are in need of much more analysis than we can attempt here, the tradition feeds into and to some extent governs the vision quest, just as the vision quest in its turn feeds into and re-enforces the narrative and other traditions. We can, however, say something more about the *result* of this mutual interaction. It results in individual persons who, in active ways, will the good of other persons, both human and other-than-human, in their mutually shared community. Further, these individuals in turn expect each individual in the community to do the same. "When a gift is made a return is expected, but the type of return and the time when it should take place vary with the particular individuals involved" (cf. Driben and Auger 1989, 12; Rogers 1962, C7).

We have been attempting to explain how Native American Indian children arrive at the notion of respect for persons and responsible, morally appropriate behavior without having to endure the heteronomous domination of adults throughout their childhood. The *result* of traditional Native Indian upbringing, through what we might call noninterference, the example of elders, the narrative tradition, the vision quest, and so on, seems not unlike Kant's universal kingdom of ends, though without the emphasis on moral laws. Kant sums up his position in the following words: "[R]ational beings all stand under the *law* that each of them should treat himself and all others, *never merely as a means*, but always *at the same time as an end in himself*. But by so doing there arises a systematic union of rational beings under common objective laws—that is a kingdom. Since these laws are

directed precisely to the relation of such beings to one another as ends and means, this kingdom can be called a kingdom of ends (which admittedly is only an ideal)" (Kant 1964a, 101). Kant, of course, has a much more limited notion of person than the Native American concept which includes other-than-human persons. In fact in this passage Kant limits persons, those who deserve respect, to "rational beings." These persons are all law-making members of this kingdom of ends. No one is under the laws of another. They all have autonomy. Since the laws are universal, "common objective laws," it is *as if* each legislates for all. What are these laws of morality all about? They are about treating persons as ends in themselves, as each having their own dignity and intrinsic value. Even though they can be treated as means, according to Kant, persons must never be treated *merely* as means. The laws of morality, for Kant, "are directed precisely to the relation of such beings to one another as ends and means." Such persons cannot be treated *only* as means for they must be treated with respect. In other words, if you are always accepting favors and gifts from people and never do anything for them in return, then you are treating them only as a means to your own happiness, satisfaction, or whatever. Comparatively, the Driben-Auger report, which we discussed above, found, of the members of the Whitesands Indian Band who live in the town of Armstrong, that "if they gave ... gifts to the foragers without receiving gifts of food in return, they would shame not only the foragers but also themselves" (Driben and Auger 1989, 31). The two worldviews share in common a respect for the autonomy, the dignity, of persons. However, as we have seen, they reach this common view by very different paths. The one seems to require heteronomy in order to develop autonomy whereas the other makes no use of heteronomy in any way. It is important to realize that what we have been discussing here is not merely how respect for persons is cultivated, but how the person himself or herself is developed within the particular culture.

There is one interpretation of our position here which is a little misleading. Addressing it will help to clarify our comparison of Native and non-Native worldviews. The interpretation appears in the posthumously published book *How It Is: The Native American Philosophy of V. F. Cordova*. Viola Cordova discusses our paper, "Some Thoughts on Articulating a Native Philosophy," which we presented at the American Philosophical Association (APA) Pacific Division meeting in Seattle in 1996 (McPherson and Rabb 1997, 11-30). Cordova was also presenting in the same session so that we were able to discuss each other's presentations at the time.

As we understand it, although the occasional paper on aboriginal issues

had been presented to the APA in the past, this was the first full concurrent session devoted entirely to Native American philosophy ever presented at the APA annual meetings. We are pleased that Dr. Cordova (Apache), the first Native American ever to earn a Ph.D. in philosophy (University of New Mexico, 1992), was able to receive at least this level of recognition from the APA before her untimely death in 2002.

As part of our presentation we did indeed compare Kant with Native American philosophy and child-rearing practices, though not in the detail we have attempted here. Cordova, in her essay "What Is It to Be Human in a Native American Worldview?" which appears in *How It Is*, makes it quite clear that it is our interpretation she is addressing. To be clear, this is not the paper she presented at the APA and does not reflect the discussion that went on there. She begins her argument here by noting that "J. Douglas Rabb and Dennis McPherson, Canadian professors in Native American philosophy at Lakehead University, have written on the method of creating autonomous actors within a Native American society" (Cordova 2007, 148). She then references the published version of our APA paper cited above. She is not attacking our position. She seems largely in agreement with us. She acknowledges that we are more than familiar with Native American child rearing practices, citing, with approval, some of the studies we have also referred to above. She does say that we "make a claim, that on the surface, seems incredible to those who are not familiar with child-raising techniques among Native Americans" (148). That seemingly incredible claim, our claim as detailed in Cordova's book, is "that the methods that eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant proposed for making adults into autonomous thinkers and ethical agents are the same methods used in raising Native children, with one very important difference" (148). Now, this is the misleading statement. This is not our position, though we can see how even our presentation above, in which we were trying to be exceedingly careful, might be possibly read as such. Cordova, as might be expected, singles out Kant's use of "heteronomy" as the "one very important difference." As Cordova herself puts it: "According to Kant it is necessary for an individual to go through a period of *heteronomy*—of dependency wherein one is guided by external rules and authorities—before one can become truly autonomous" (148). We agree that this is one important difference. However, Kant's use of heteronomy is not the only important difference. As we made clear above, it is the *result* of traditional American Indian upbringing, noninterference, that we are saying is not unlike Kant's universal kingdom of ends, though without his emphasis on moral laws. It

is not, as Cordova seems to suggest, Kant's *methods* for making adults into autonomous thinkers and ethical agents that are the same as those traditionally used in raising Native American children. The *results* may well be similar but what we actually consider incredible is that the *methods* used to achieve said results differ, and differ radically. Certainly the use or non-use of heteronomy is one important difference. But there are other equally important differences as well. There is no place in Kant for the vision quest, for example. In fact he would be against any kind of experiential learning of this kind in moral thinking. As we noted above he argues that ethical thinking involves moral laws, principles laid down by pure practical reason, quite independent of (not polluted by) sensory experience. Kant is a principlist in ethics. There is no place in Kant for the stories told by elders or for modeling behavior based on their example.

Native Ethics as Narrative Ethics

Given the emphasis on story and the narrative tradition we are tempted to say that a narrative ethics, rather than a Kantian or principlist ethics, would be more compatible with a Native American approach. This, we contend, is confirmed by such studies as Keith H. Basso's *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*, and David B. Morris's "Narrative Ethics and Pain: Thinking with Stories." In arguing for his rather anti-Kantian thesis that "[t]he emotion implicit in narrative provides a valuable resource ... in the formation of moral knowledge and ethical action" Morris actually cites Basso's study of Apache narratives to lend support to his thesis (Morris 1996, 207). Morris admits that he draws on the Apache tradition in order "to put us in contact with valuable resources for moral thought and action" (Morris 1996, 197). Now, the principal purpose of Basso's study, as the subtitle makes perfectly clear, is to show how story and place, language and landscape, are so interrelated that the "Apache people in the U. S. Southwest live today in a local world richly endowed with narrative meaning—where the reference to specific places (such as Line-of-White-Rocks or Red-Ridge-with-Alder-Trees) instantly evokes tales of what happened there" (Morris 1996, 197; Basso 1996, 80). We discuss the relation between traditional narrative and specific place in more detail in the following chapter. Here we want to concentrate on the role of narrative in ethics, specifically the transformative impact of story. J. T. Banks, in his study of narrative ethics "The Story Inside," observes, "Narrative inevitably

expresses and transforms who we are at every level of our being: the organic, the symbolic, the social, and the spiritual" (219). This ties narrative to the transformative nature of ceremonies like the vision quest discussed above, confirming, we contend, how very un-Kantian the Native American narrative traditions really are. Basso notes how in the Western Apache tradition one would never directly criticize another person, regardless of age. That would be considered rude. We should point out that it follows that a Kantian use of heteronomy would also be considered rude. As Morris explains referring to the narrative tradition examined in Basso's study: "In a culture that avoids direct rebuke, these narratives, as Basso demonstrates, provide unobtrusive and gentle but steady moral guidance" (197). Basso cites Apache people explaining how stories can "work on you," "get under your skin," "make you want to change," or "make you want to replace yourself" (Basso 1996, 59). This notion of "replacing yourself" in the face of moral misconduct is obviously transformative. It is a recognition that radical change is required. But these conclusions are arrived at on your own after hearing, and reflecting on, specific stories. No one has told you that you need to change, or even that you have done anything wrong, much less that you have violated one of Kant's moral laws or ethical principles. This is an indirect manner of instruction which is a manifestation of what we might call an ethic of inter-ventive-noninterference, the very opposite of a Kantian ethic. Native elders, for example, are not known for offering advice, at least not directly. In actual fact they have the reputation of never giving a straight answer. You will often be told a story which seems to have nothing whatsoever to do with whatever question you asked or problem you raised. You are given the autonomy, the complete freedom, to discover the relevance of the reply, and hence to work the problem out for yourself. This is a sign of respect. It is also a method of instruction which fosters self-reliance and independent thinking. Further, it is consistent with a narrative ethic, not a Kantian one based on moral principles. As Morris explains: "In contrast to principle alone, narrative in its detailed, emotion-rich representation of experience can help us recognize implicit values and negotiate conflicts of moral action" (213).

One of the first philosophical studies of Native ethics was published by the late Mohawk psychiatrist Clare Brant in the *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* (Brant 1990, 535–539). The title of his classic paper, "Native Ethics and Rules of Behaviour," is somewhat unfortunate in that it seems to suggest that a Native ethics would be one based on rules or moral principles making it seem closer to a Kantian ethics than it is in fact. This certainly is not

Brant's intent. When he speaks of "rules of behaviour" he is describing protocols he has observed in the various Cree, Ojibwa and Mohawk communities where he has set up a visiting clinical practice. In other words, insofar as rules are concerned, he is doing descriptive ethics, not normative ethics. The rules do not tell the people what to do. They do not set the norms; rather, they describe values, the most prevalent of which seems to be non-interference. In fact it is from Brant's study that we adopted the term "non-interference" as we use it above. In order to understand Native ethics and Native values, Brant's short paper is certainly a good place to start, particularly because his study included remote Cree and Ojibwa communities where the influence of the dominant society might not yet be a distorting factor. However, we think that a great deal more research is required. As more Native American students complete university with training in philosophy, particularly at the graduate level, it will be possible for such members of specific communities to do research on Native values in their home communities where they in fact formed their own sense of values. They can and should assess their own traditions from their own perspectives. As we argue in some detail in our concluding chapter, Native values should be examined empirically and given specific content through community-based research by indigenous scholars, as these scholars themselves begin to gain a better philosophical understanding not only of their own cultures and communities, but also of themselves.

Here we will give just one example of the kind of research we are recommending. Cree-Métis philosopher Dr. Lorraine Mayer (Brundige), in doing research for her Master's thesis, "Continuity of Native Values: Cree and Ojibwa," returned to her mother's home community, the Chemawawin Band of Easterville and Cedar Lake in Northern Manitoba (Brundige 1997a; See also Brundige 1997b). There she interviewed elders, aunts, and other relatives, and spent a considerable time living in the community and just talking to people. This is a community which had a formative influence on her growing up. Though she did not actually live there, she did spend her summers in the community and considered herself a part of it. Her thesis both confirms and refines Brant's discussion of Native values. She explains the value Brant calls noninterference by noting that "an Aboriginal person does not tell another Aboriginal what to do. The act of directly interfering in someone's life is considered rude" (Brundige 1997a, 42). She quite rightly insists, however, that "this is not to say that people never interfere, but when they do, it is an indirect way designed not to offend" (Brundige 1997a, 46). This is certainly consistent with Basso's findings among the Western Apache.

We would like to see this kind of research carried out in Native communities right across North America. As we argue in Chapter Seven, we think it should be done by philosophically trained members of the communities, as they will know what they are looking for and when they have found it. Given the wide variety of documents concerning child rearing practices among Native Americans we discussed above, we suspect that there will be a certain level of consistency throughout contemporary Native American communities, but no one will really know until the research is actually done. It is also necessary to deal with possible influence by the dominant society that might affect the results of this kind of research. As we argued at length in Chapter One, this can be dealt with, at least in part, by examining historical documents written close to the time of contact, before the widespread influence of Euro-Western ideas and practices in Native American communities. Mayer/Brundige deals with this in her thesis by examining in some detail the *Jesuit Relations*, and concludes that: "these values are continuous with precontact values and they exist and are operating in many Native people's lives today in spite of European influence" (Brundige 1997a: 5). We give here only one example from the *Jesuit Relations*. But it is a quotation we have chosen deliberately because it illustrates the widespread influence of what Kant called heteronomy in European thought and practice at the time. The level of complete autonomy granted by Native American Indian parents to their children was something noticed and remarked upon with much astonishment by the early missionaries, such as Father Le Jeune, in the *Jesuit Relations*: "There is nothing for which these people have a greater horror than restraint. The very children cannot endure it, and live as they please in the houses of their parents, without fear of reprimand or of chastisement" (Thwaites 1959, III, 271). The horror at the lack of chastisement sounds very Kantian. But, as we detailed in Chapter Two, the Jesuit philosophy has ancient and mediaeval origins. As we noted above Kant himself believed he was just explaining a widespread European belief as to how best to teach autonomy by imposing rules upon children so they could learn to impose said rules upon themselves as they became adults. Kant probably thought it was a universal truth, or at least a practice not limited to Europe. Though the *Jesuit Relations* cover the time period 1610-1791 no one would want to say they were in any way under the influence of Kant (1724-1804).¹ They both independently exhibit the widespread European belief that autonomy is imposing rules on yourself, and that this is learned by having others impose rules on you in your youth. With this mindset, it is little wonder that the missionaries like Father Le Jeune, when they saw Indian children

running about like "little savages" with apparently no parental guidance, thought that it was their Christian duty to impose discipline on these poor children so they could learn autonomy the same way Europeans did.

This may well be the origin of Indian residential schools. They may well have been set up with the best of intentions. But however good the intentions, we would argue that such intentions were misguided, wrong-headed, even. In our discussion of philosopher J. T. Stevenson at the outset of this chapter, we have already made reference to his use of Erik Erikson's study of the psychological damage done to Indian children by U.S. government schools. As we also noted above, Stevenson insists that the analysis of this important issue requires the use of "the best scientific evidence available." Though, as we have seen, Stevenson does well enough, he was writing in the early 1980s and some of his scientific sources were drawn from as far back as the 1950s and '60s, Erikson for example. Science has advanced considerably since then, particularly in the past 30-odd years.

Cognitive Science and Native Narrative Traditions

Of particular relevance to our argument here are advances in what is now called second-generation cognitive science and its impact on the discipline of philosophy itself. One of the leaders in this field, philosopher of cognitive science Mark Johnson, in his 1993 groundbreaking study *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*, argues that "there are many things wrong with our received view of moral reasoning as consisting primarily in discerning the appropriate universal moral principle that tells us the single 'right thing to do' in a given situation" (1). Johnson critiques what he calls the "Enlightenment folk theory of Faculty Psychology" which we have inherited from 17th and 18th century science and philosophy (207). It is important to realize that the plausibility of a Kantian ethic — or indeed of any rational ethic based on principles — presupposes this folk theory of faculty psychology which assumes "our mental acts can be broken down into separate and distinct forms of judgment" (207). There are, it is supposed, epistemic or knowledge judgments; theoretical judgments dealing with the way the world is; moral judgments dealing with how we should behave and the way things ought to be; and finally aesthetic judgments "based on *feelings* and *imagination*, expressing our feeling response to certain perceptible forms of natural and artificial objects. It was regarded as crucial

not to confuse moral with aesthetic judgments" (Johnson 1993, 207). Morality after all was thought to be based on the faculty of reason, not imagination. According to the "Enlightenment folk theory of Faculty Psychology" and the correlative "Moral Law Folk Theory," in moral judgment the will uses moral principles or ethical maxims derived from the faculty of pure *a priori* practical reason (duty) to rule our emotions, feelings and desires; to keep such passions in line. Some such view is, as we have seen, certainly apparent in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. It is, however, at least as old as Plato (c. 427–347 B.C.). Although it operates for the most part unconsciously, Johnson observes "this folk theory of Faculty Psychology is shared by virtually everyone in Western culture" (15). What we argue Johnson's work puts beyond dispute is, in his words, that "those folk theories that are based on Enlightenment Faculty Psychology, its distinction among types of judgment, and its correlative distinction among realms of experience (i.e., the theoretical, moral, and aesthetic) are, for the most part, shown to be wrong by cognitive science" (208). This is an extremely important conclusion. It underlines the significance of the subtitle of Johnson's study: *Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics*. Back in 1993, when the *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* was first published, Johnson felt compelled to justify his main title: "I began this book with the observation that many people are likely to regard the term 'moral imagination' as an oxymoron, a juxtaposition of two contradictory concepts." He goes on to explain that "their reason for holding this mistaken view is that they accept the *Moral Law* conception of morality as a system of moral laws derived by pure reason alone, whereas they associate imagination with art, creativity, and our general capacity to *break* rules and transcend our present concepts" (207). Indeed, in striking contrast to the received time honored view that "man is a *rational* animal," Johnson begins his study with the provocative claim: "My central thesis is that human beings are fundamentally *imaginative* moral animals" (1).

In 2006, less than a decade and a half after Johnson's *Moral Imagination*, another internationally recognized ethicist, Margaret Somerville, published a book titled *The Ethical Imagination: Journeys of the Human Spirit*. But Somerville saw no need to justify her title. There is not even a hint that putting the concepts "ethical" and "imagination" together in her title would seem odd, much less ever be regarded as an oxymoron. Of course she too is trying to be provocative in her study. She argues that something more than reason is required in order to deal with complex moral issues, and she says that narrative and myth are important. "From an ethics perspective, we

need to pay close attention to myths" (Somerville 2006, 73) because, as she puts it, "[o]ur primary focus on reason may have deprived us of the ability to deal with complexity" (205). But Somerville makes no mention of either cognitive science in general or Mark Johnson's work in particular. Still, we contend something changed, and changed radically, in the field of ethics in the 15 years or so between these two books. This important change makes the notion of an ethical or moral imagination not only intelligible, but actually an acceptable—and indeed necessary and indispensable—concept. This change, we argue, is bound up with groundbreaking findings in the field of cognitive science over the same decade and a half.

In 2003, exactly ten years after the publication of Johnson's *Moral Imagination*, another important study on the moral imagination appeared. This work, *John Dewey and Moral Imagination: Pragmatism in Ethics* by Steven Fesmire, is obviously inspired by Johnson, and argues that recent empirical findings in cognitive science corroborate much of the pragmatic thought of American philosopher John Dewey (1859–1952). This should not come as a great surprise given the pragmatists' emphasis on actual concrete moral experience rather than more abstract moral rules and ethical theories, which we consider of little practical value. What is important in Fesmire's study, from our perspective, is that he provides evidence to show that "moral deliberation is fundamentally imaginative and takes the form of a dramatic rehearsal" (4) which involves imagining possible courses of action without having to physically endure the negative consequences of paths we decide ought not to be taken. Given that this kind of imagining as storytelling or narrative is also an art, Fesmire argues, for the related thesis that "moral conduct is helpfully conceived on the model of aesthetic perception and artistic creation" (4). Although Fesmire develops these theses in the context of a study of the philosophy of John Dewey, he insists that they stand on their own merit. As Fesmire puts it, "Although I hope the emphasis on imagination and art contributes to a more robust understanding of Dewey's ethics than is currently extant, I draw from Dewey to develop theses that stand or fall independent of him" (4). Following Johnson, Fesmire admits that "approaching moral conduct from the standpoint of art and aesthetic experience may still strike some as, at best, incoherent. Worse, it may appear to be an opening for an anything goes relativism" (122). However, by Fesmire's time, this attitude can be and is dismissed as mere prejudice, a hangover from 17th and 18th century thought shown to be false by the findings of cognitive science. "This prejudice is conditioned by our Enlightenment heritage, which teaches that ... aesthetic and moral experiences are

discontinuous.... Despite growing disrepute and incompatibility with empirical findings, assumptions about reason dominant in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe still set the context for moral inquiries, for both the person on the street and the moral philosopher" (122–123). As a result, Fesmire concludes, "any attempt to decompartmentalize the supposedly autonomous spheres of the moral and the aesthetic ... raises a suspicious eyebrow because it is mistakenly taken to radically subjectivize moral reflection" (123).

However, if we can somehow drag moral thought out of the 17th and 18th centuries and into the 21st century, we will discover, as Fesmire puts it, "far from collapsing into extreme subjectivism, decompartmentalization revitalizes moral theory and opens the door to a more responsible ethic" (125). This is also the kind of imaginative narrative ethic we discussed above in relation to Keith Basso and Apache story telling. Basso reports that the Apache use hunting metaphors to explain the role of stories about the long ago which can be said to stalk individuals and hit them like an arrow (Basso 1996, 58). We find that Native American ethics, indeed, Native American philosophy, is confirmed and corroborated by the most recent findings of cognitive science.

Johnson has published a number of studies with George Lakoff of the Institute for Cognitive Studies, University of California at Berkeley, including *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) and *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999). Lakoff and Johnson have found that most if not all of our abstract thinking is in metaphors using image schemas, prototypes and so forth to facilitate processing impossibly large amounts of information very quickly. The source domain, the origin of these metaphors, they suggest, turns out to be the human body, in particular the sensorimotor system. On the basis of this, they argue that "there is no ethical system that is not metaphorical" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 325). They distinguish between "basic experiential morality," such as "health is good," "everyone ought to be protected from physical harm," and more abstract universal moral concepts such as "justice," "rights," "nurturance," and the like all of which *must* be defined metaphorically. All such moral metaphors, they argue, "are inextricably tied to our embodied experience of well-being: health, strength, wealth, purity, control, nurturance, empathy, and so forth" (331). This is of crucial importance because it avoids the problem of ethical relativism. For Lakoff and Johnson, all moral "metaphors are grounded in the nature of our bodies and social interactions, and they are thus anything but arbitrary and unconstrained" (290). We speak, for exam-

ple, of taking a balanced approach, or of being an upright citizen, meaning someone of good moral standing. These common expressions are metaphorical. They are based on the fact that we embodied beings literally walk upright on our own two feet and must physically keep our balance. Falling down does not contribute to our well-being, staying upright does. It is easier to find our way in sunlight than in the dark, so we naturally associate light with good and dark with the opposite. When we speak about seeing the point of an argument or grasping a difficult concept, we are not talking about literally seeing and grasping. One cannot literally see a logical implication nor physically grasp with one's hands an abstract concept; nevertheless, literal seeing and physical grasping are the source domains of these conceptual metaphors. That is why cognitive scientists say such metaphors are derived from and dependent upon the sensorimotor system. In recent years, neuroscience has made significant advances using breakthroughs in brain imaging technologies such as positron emission tomography (PET scans) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRIs). Lakoff and colleagues are reported to have found that "when we use a metaphor (like 'grasping' an idea) that involves doing something with our physical bodies ... the same neurons light up as if we were in fact performing that act" (Holand 2009, 98). We use temperature metaphors to describe affection ("She is a warm and loving person" or "She is a cold-hearted bitch") because, according to Lakoff, "temperature is publicly discernible while affection is not" (Lakoff 2008, 84). As children in a family we often experience affection and warmth at the same time, for example "feeling warm while being held affectionately" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 50). This is the experiential origin of the "Affection Is Warmth" conceptual metaphor. At least that is how this metaphorical mapping is written in English. "The mapping it names is neural in character" (Lakoff 2008, 83). As Lakoff likes to say: "Neurons that fire together wire together" (83).² It should be noted that this neural mapping will only flow one way. Because we experience warmth through the sensorimotor system the temperature synapses fire more often than those associated with affection and are therefore stronger. "As a result, activation will flow from temperature to affection and not in the opposite direction" (Lakoff 2008, 84). That is why it makes sense to say "She warmed up to me" but not "The soup got more affectionate" (cf. Lakoff 2008, 84).

Lakoff and Johnson note that for most of us our first encounter with morality is in the family as children and that therefore most metaphors about morality have their source domain in the family. In other words, much moral thinking is based on family morality (cf. Lakoff and Johnson

1999, 312–313). But as Lakoff and Johnson also argue, the metaphorical construction of morality based on family can take a number of different forms depending on various different conceptions of the family. They contrast, for example, "the strict father family morality" with the more caring nurturant parent family morality, recognizing that both are idealizations and that many families are a combination of both (1999, 313–316). Lakoff and Johnson describe the nurturant parent metaphor as "a morality of caring and Johnson describe the nurturant parent metaphor as "a morality of caring for others out of compassion and empathy, rather than a "morality of obedience to moral laws given by divine authority" which is much closer to a Kantian account of morality. Kant would, of course, substitute Reason for divine authority (319). Still Kant's is obviously a form of strict father family morality. The strict father is the metaphor for moral authority whether that authority is thought to be God, the Church or pure practical reason. Why do we call priests Father, like Father Le Jeune, the missionary we discussed above who could not tolerate the freedom Indians seemed to grant their children? He was obviously working with a more authoritative model of morality in mind. Priests, like God the Father, are symbols of moral authority in which the strict father family morality metaphor is made quite explicit.

As noted above, we have argued in the past that this strict father family morality in the form of a Kantian heteronomous treatment of children produces equally autonomous, morally responsible adults as those of Native American child rearing practices which employ the value of interdependent-noninterference and seem to treat children as autonomous from the moment of mobility. However, Lakoff and Johnson, drawing on current scientific research in three fields of psychology—family violence studies, socialization theory and attachment theory—argue that "strict father family morality tends to produce children who are dependent on the authority of others, cannot chart their own moral course very well, have less of a conscience, are less respectful of others, and have no greater ability to resist temptations" (327). This, of course, is the exact opposite of the autonomous, morally responsible citizens it purports to develop. We suggest that the nurturant parent model, which we believe is much closer to Native American child rearing practices, would be much more successful. Lakoff and Johnson are correct in saying that this is an empirical question that can be decided by research particularly in the cognitive sciences. The evidence to date suggests that strict father family morality may not be the best method of child rearing because it is not all that "successful in developing the kind of moral agents it prizes" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 327).

Lakoff might have some problems with the Native American value of

noninterference, since he is critical of what he calls permissive family moralities. "The permissive family is what Lakoff calls a 'pathological' form of the nurturant parent family, since it mistakenly thinks that letting the children do whatever they please is an appropriate form of nurturance" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 323). But to apply this pathological form to Native American communities (as we have noted missionaries like Father Le Jeune seemed to do) would be to ignore the important role of stories, modeling elders, the vision quest, and many other traditional ceremonies, in their child rearing practices. We agree that many contemporary "urban Indians" may not have access to such community practices. But that is no reason to force their children into schools where Western practices based on strict father family morality predominate. What is needed is something more compatible with Native American values and philosophy. That is precisely why we are encouraging more research in Native American philosophy. That is precisely why we are writing this book.

As we have argued, not only have Western practices based on strict father family morality failed, under empirical scrutiny, to produce the kind of moral agents they prize; but they are also based on outmoded 17th and 18th century Enlightenment folk theories of Faculty Psychology and Moral Law which have been shown to be false by the findings of second-generation cognitive science. It is important to be careful in rejecting Enlightenment assumptions, even obviously outmoded ones, in defending Native American worldviews. There is always the danger that we will be accused of postmodern (pomo) relativism, and have our arguments dismissed as mere "pomospeak" (sometimes equated with George Orwell's "newspeak" from his dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*). For instance, Frances Widdowson and Albert Howard, in their dismissal of traditional and contemporary aboriginal views, *Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry: The Deception Behind Indigenous Cultural Preservation*, assert, "Pomospeak is everywhere in the literature justifying current aboriginal policies" (65). Widdowson and Howard argue that "postmodernism embraces eclecticism; it proudly advocates 'radical scepticism' or anti-authoritarianism ... 'celebrating differences' in opposition to focusing on common principles, claiming that they suppress human freedom and creativity" (64). All this because, in their view, for postmodernism "all assumptions upon which the Enlightenment was based are to be rejected not only because they are supposedly ethnocentric but on the basis that they are oppressive" (64). Now we actually agree with much of what Widdowson and Howard have to say in *Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry* (and we expect this sentence and the next to be quoted extensively out of context). A lot

of nonsense has been generated in the name of aboriginal advocacy. *Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry* has collected a lot of it. It is a book which should be discussed widely by aboriginal students and scholars. We discuss it further in the next chapter. Here we are interested in showing how it is possible to reject outmoded Enlightenment assumptions in defending Native American philosophy without falling into the trap of postmodern relativism. We saw above how philosopher of cognitive science Steven Fesmire recognized that any rejection of the Enlightenment folk theory of Faculty Psychology is seen as "an opening for an anything goes relativism ... because it is mistakenly taken to radically subjectivize moral reflection" (Fesmire 2003, 122-123). Still, as we have seen, Fesmire concludes that this fear of radical relativism is unfounded. "Far from collapsing into extreme subjectivism, decompartmentalization revitalizes moral theory and opens the door to a more responsible ethic" (125). This is because cognitive science has provided good grounds for rejecting the 17th and 18th century Enlightenment folk theory of Faculty Psychology. Today we have a much better scientific understanding of cognition. Of one thing we can be quite sure. Cognitive science does not support, much less lead to, any kind of postmodern relativism. It has, in actual fact, led to just the opposite. With its emphasis on metaphor and narrative in imaginative rationality, cognitive science has led to the development of a new discipline of study, the cognitive theory of literature, which goes far beyond postmodernism. We find, for example, in Mary Thomas Crane's *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory*, that cognitive science is used to counter the extreme relativism of postmodern literary theory such as that associated with Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Drawing explicitly on Lakoff and Johnson, Crane argues that "the Derridean 'There is nothing outside the text,' ... clearly does not fit a cognitive theory. Indeed, from a cognitive perspective, meaning is anchored ... by a three-way tether: brain, culture, discourse" (24). Crane concludes that "cognitive subjects are not simply determined by the symbolic order in which they exist; instead, they shape (and are also shaped by) meanings that are determined by an interaction of the physical world, culture, and human cognitive systems" (12).

Cognitive science itself finds overwhelming empirical support in the form of the convergent findings of a number of disciplines such as linguistics (including Native languages and linguistics), historical linguistics, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and gesture analysis (including studies of Native American sign language) (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 83). Philosopher Mark Johnson, with cognitive scientist George Lakoff, argues

that although it is the virtue of scientific knowledge to be open to revision on the basis of further empirical evidence, the disciplines cited give us converging evidence which make the findings of cognitive science as stable as any scientific knowledge can be: "The methodology of convergent evidence and the masses of different types of evidence minimize the probability that the results will be an artifact of any specific methodology" (89). We suggest that cognitive literary theory, such as that exemplified in the book *Shakespeare's Brain*, and our own work on the narrative character of Native American philosophy, could be added to the convergent evidence corroborating cognitive science. Indeed cognitive science, to its credit, has led to the development of a number of new fields of study. Besides cognitive literary theory, there is now a cognitive theory of medicine, cognitive legal studies, and even a cognitive science of science itself. For example, Theodore L. Brown in *Making Truth: Metaphor in Science*, drawing on the work of Lakoff and Johnson, argues: "The theory of conceptual metaphor provides us with powerful tools for understanding how scientists reason about and communicate abstract ideas" (Brown 2008, 12). In the field of cognitive legal studies Steven L. Winter's *A Clearing in the Forest: Law, Life, and Mind* takes recent advances in the cognitive sciences, such as narrative rationality, radial categories, image schemas and conceptual metaphor, and brings them "in cognitive theory to bear upon the Law" (xi). Winter argues that the narrative or stories that lie behind legislation are what really give the law meaning. "The idealized cognitive models that work in every other aspect of our cognitive and communicative life are no less available to the law. Rights and other legal concepts continue to be meaningful because we can recall and reflect on the lived experience that gave them birth" (Winter 2001, 351). We argue in a forthcoming anthology on aboriginal rights that some of the metaphors that Winter uses, such as "rights are rights of way on a forest path," can be useful in explicating the notion of aboriginal rights (Mayer and Tomsons, forthcoming). We hope that this anthology, based on the 2001 Canadian Philosophical Association international conference *Philosophy and Aboriginal Rights: Critical Dialogues*, will be the beginning of an ongoing cross-cultural dialogue on aboriginal rights.

Here, we will discuss the cognitive science of medicine in more detail because its emphasis on narrative in medicine can be used to give scientific support for the role of stories in Native American teachings. We note in passing that (Western) medically trained Native Americans tend to go back to their traditions to justify using narrative in their medical practice (cf. Mehl-Madrona 1998, 2003, 2007). Physician and cognitive scientist Gary

Wright, in his 2007 book *Means, Ends and Medical Care*, argues that health care professionals need to pay more attention to "the unstructured narratives" of their patients, "to the stories of their illnesses and their efforts to cope ... to their stories of seeking care and trying to find ways to pay for it" (162). To see what he is getting at here, it is helpful to think of diseases and other diagnoses by physicians as metaphors, the way in which cognitive scientists see all abstract thought. Wright notes that some of these metaphors for disease are used in professional conceptualization and discourse, such as "Disease Is Disorder," whereas others, like "Disease Is Being Under Attack," are more prominent in the thinking and conversations of patients and the general public. The important point is that everyone, physicians and patients alike, are speaking metaphorically, not literally. Wright explains, "It is apparent ... that the symptom, such as a 'cut,' a 'bloody nose,' a 'headache,' 'blindness,' 'numbness,' 'vomiting' or 'fever' is the level on which most of us would start to understand the whole system of concepts topped by 'disease in general.' One reason for making this assertion is that symptoms, such as 'stomach ache,' and 'chest pain' are literally embodied, whereas disease entities like 'appendicitis' and 'gastroenteritis' are abstract in that they are a step removed from direct experience" (54). According to Wright, then, patients' symptoms are literally experienced, whereas diseases and diagnoses are metaphorical explanations of these symptoms, pointing to ways of dealing with them.

Wright is stressing narrative and informal clinical judgment because in his over thirty years of medical practice he has learned that "any protocol, guideline or algorithm needs to be supplemented and tempered with compassionate discretion" (158). It is in attempting to counteract what he calls "the creeping formalism in Anglo-American medicine" that Wright calls upon the findings of second-generation cognitive science. Formal protocols and quality of care guidelines require clear classifications and classical categories so that every member of an identified category can be dealt with under the same protocol. Classical categories are thought of metaphorically as containers, and something is either in the container or outside of it, either a member of said category or not. Given that there are clearly specifiable conditions for category inclusion all members of the category can be treated indiscriminately in the same way, making quality of care guidelines and other such protocols relatively easy to formulate and apply. But, Wright argues, according to cognitive science things are not all that simple. Many of the categories dealt with in medicine are not classical categories. They are rather what cognitive scientists have identified as *radial* categories. Such

categories cannot be thought of as simple containers. Membership is “not an all or nothing matter” (14). Members are not treated alike. Some are considered more representative than others. Wright explains the radial nature of such categories: “Representative members ... are metaphorically placed in the centre.... Less and less representative members are imaginatively farther and farther away from the center, giving the category a radial structure” (15).

Wright makes it clear that “the overall ‘disease’ category is *radial* not *classical*” (56). At the very core of this radial category are the textbook examples of disease, the prototypical cases, such as ‘pneumonia,’ ‘colds,’ ‘bladder infections’ and ‘gastroenteritis’ (‘stomach flu’) (57). At the extreme margins of this radial category hover such dubious cases as “‘old age,’ ‘weakness,’ ‘crime,’ ‘harm,’ ‘suffering,’ ‘eccentricity’ and ‘infertility’” (56). These and more representative cases of disease metaphorically rotate about the prototypical cases in concentric circles like planets in orbit. This is what gives the category its radial structure. Wright explains: “Analogies and metaphors act cognitively like forces (such as gravity) or links in that the easily identified clear cut central members present a cognitive pull on the marginal examples drawing them into association” (56). Wright’s worry is that if disease is dealt with as a classical category rather than a radial one, given the growing number of “guidelines and criteria for establishing diagnoses and protocols for dealing with diseases,” there is the danger that more and more clinicians will “have a tendency to force their observations to fit pre-existing categories rather than to admit the existence of the doubtful and to deal with it as such” (70). Protocols may work well for the prototypical cases of disease. But cognitive science has shown that disease is a radial category and the protocols may not work so well with the more marginal members of this category. That is why Wright is calling for the greater use of more informal clinical judgment and narrative in medicine.

Mark Johnson’s thesis in the *Moral Imagination*, that ethical thinking requires not moral laws but imaginative narrative, is making a point similar to Wright’s thesis in regard to medicine. “If a good many of our basic moral concepts (such as person, rights, harm, justice, love) and many of the concepts that define kinds of action (e.g., murder, lie, educate, natural, sex) have internal prototype structure, then Moral Law theories must be rejected” (Johnson 1993, 189). Cognitive science has shown that moral principles like medical protocols really apply only to prototypes. Johnson explains, “They work’ for the prototypical cases — the nonproblematic ones — about which there is widespread agreement within moral traditions. What moral laws we

have are precisely those that are formulated to fit the prototypical cases, the central members of a category” (190). To deal with more problematic cases in ethical thinking we do not need more moral rules and principles but imaginative narrative, the ability to tell and contemplate stories. Johnson has learned from cognitive science “that narrative characterizes the synthetic character of our very experience.... The stories we tell emerge from, and can then refigure, the narrative structure of our experience ... because we are imaginative narrative creatures, we can also configure our lives in novel ways” (Johnson 1993, 163). This sounds not unlike the Apache notion of the transformative impact of story reported by Basso which we discussed above. We think cognitive science lends empirical support to such Native American practices. In fact we suspect that if, *per impossible*, science and Western philosophy had achieved this level of sophistication by the time of first contact with the Americas, the history of European–Native relations might well have been very different. The narratives and stories told by Native elders might have been recognized as a legitimate form of philosophy. At the very least, the Indigenous peoples of the Americas might have been recognized as human beings and perhaps even treated with (a little) more respect. But of course the European explorers of the 17th and 18th century were not so sophisticated and, as we detailed in Chapter Two, they brought their own prejudices with them (what we called outside view predicates). Such Eurocentric preconceptions were imposed on the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Such pre-judgments, such Eurocentric expectations had been forged in a Europe with a history of the Spanish Inquisition. Under the notorious *Mallus Maleficarum*, or *Hammer of Witches*, Europeans had been trying and convicting women of witchcraft for years. It was widely believed that such women actually consorted with devils and demons in forest wilderness: “Under torture, suspected witches admitted to all sorts of encounters with Satan and his cohorts ... taking place in the woods far from public view. The image of the devil that emerged from such confessions is often that of a being with a dark or red visage, and if not naked, clothed in the skins of animals or decorated with feathers” (Hoxie 568, cf. Wilson 2002, 10). It is little wonder that European explorers, when they encountered half-naked, dark-skinned beings partly clothed in animal skins and bedecked with feathers, thought the vast forests of the Americas were the homelands of demons and devils, perhaps even of Satan himself. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., confirms this in *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, citing early exploration literature such as *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*

(1598-1600). There we find the first-hand description of an encounter between some European sailors and an old "Eskimo" woman. The Europeans clearly believed she might be a witch or a devil. They even examined her with the expectation that her feet might be cloven like the Devil's: "The old wretch, whom divers of our saylers supposed to be eyther a devil, or a witch, had her buskins plucked off, to see if she were cloven footed, and for her ugly hue and deformity we let her goe" (Berkhof 17).

Cognitive Science, Stereotypes, and the Polycentric Perspective

One of the few philosophers to recognize and use the discoveries of cognitive science in discussing negative stereotyping of Native Americans is Agnes B. Curry in her article "We Don't Say 'Indian': On the Paradoxical Construction of the Reavers." In this critique of the use of the savage redskin stereotype in film and popular culture Curry draws on the schemas and prototypes of cognitive science. She acknowledges that the brain's use of such cognitive shortcuts is normal: "As widely-held cognitive and evaluative schemas linking people to characteristics because of their membership in specific social groups, social stereotypes are results of normal cognitive process" (par. 12). She does, however, warn that this knowledge of the normal working of the human brain should make us cautious: "Stereotypes speed up mental processing, but prompt overgeneralization and foster inaccurate perception of individual cases" (par. 12). We think Curry is quite correct and we agree with her that Hollywood with its B-Westerns has much to answer for. Since cognitive science has shown that the brain naturally uses prototypes and radial categories, how do we avoid stereotyping, racial profiling and other such morally questionable but seemingly natural practices? As Curry explains: "When stereotypical elements operate without foregrounding, at the edge of awareness, with no critical space opened up, they merely trigger pre-existing schemas" (Par. 15). But we can make such pre-existing schemas conscious. In this context we can draw attention to the fact that these particular stereotypes, for example, were brought to the Americas from Europe and tended to frame the observations made by early explorers. We have given a concrete example of this above in which the explorers were actually looking for cloven hooves on the indigenous inhabitants. This is one way to counter negative stereotypes (by making people aware of how they are using them). Cognitive science has shown that it

makes no sense to demand that everyone just give up their prejudices and be objective and unbiased. That goes completely counter to what we now know about how our brains function. Yet this is what is still taught in many of the social sciences. As Lawrence Neuman, in *Social Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, critically reports, "Science is value free, unbiased, and objective... free of prejudice.... With complete value freedom and objectivity, science reveals the one and only, unified, unambiguous truth" (Neuman 2000; 116-117). What is called for is a realistic definition of scientific objectivity, one more consistent with the findings of cognitive science. Philosopher of cognitive science Mark Johnson suggests becoming what he calls transperspectival, by allowing one prototype (or stereotype) to confront another, thus enlarging the overall perspective (in cross-cultural conversations for example): "Here is a vision of a realistic human objectivity. It involves understanding, and being able to criticize, the way in which you and others have constructed their worlds, and it involves ... a limited freedom to imagine other values and points of view and to change one's world in light of possibilities revealed by those alternative viewpoints" (Johnson 1993, 241). Johnson admits that it may well seem odd to combine "imagination" and "objectivity," but he argues it is this kind of "imaginative rationality" discovered by cognitive science which makes human objectivity possible, by allowing us to take up the perspective of others in order to understand their experience (242). As Johnson argues, citing the German philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer, "Our prejudices are conditions for our being able to make sense of things. Without them, we can understand nothing.... Rather than overthrowing all our prejudices, we need to open them up to possible transformation through our encounters with others, whose prejudices may confront our own" (131-132). We think it is significant, in this context, that Johnson's notion of the transperspectival, what we called in Chapter One and elsewhere polycentrism or the polycentric perspective, also turns out to be a traditional Native American value closely related to interventive-noninterference and respect for difference (Rabb 1989, 1992; McPherson and Rabb 2001). This polycentrism is illustrated in an account of the traditional "sharing circle" by Cree scholar Michael A. Hart. He suggests since everyone is sitting in a circle "they will each have a different perspective of the topic" which is metaphorically located in the centre of the circle. "Everyone expresses their views so that a full picture of the topic is developed. Individual views are blended until consensus on the topic is reached. A community view is developed and knowledge is shared for the benefit of all members" (Hart 1996; 65).

We believe this notion of polycentrism to be fairly pervasive in Indigenous philosophy. The concept was picked up by Cherokee philosopher Jace Weaver. Citing the first edition of our *Indian from the Inside*, he argues: "Given the diversity of Indian cultures and worldviews, Native theology is what McPherson and Rabb call 'polycentric'" (Weaver 1997, 32). He goes on to explain the polycentric perspective with the help of a story by Osage scholar George Tinker. In Tinker's story, an anthropologist visits two tribal communities separated by a mountain. In one she learns "that the tribes' council fire is the center of the universe and creation myths are told to demonstrate this concept" (Weaver 1997, 33). She then visits the other community guided by elders from the first and is told the same thing, to which her guides from the first community "nod their assent" (33). When she says to her guide from the first tribe, "I thought you said that your fire was the center," she receives the reply "When we're there, that is the center of the universe. When we are here: this is the center" (33). This story is taken from Tinker's article "An American Indian Theological Response to Eco-justice." It is said to "illustrate the polycentric approach" (Weaver 1997, 33). Weaver cites with approval Tinker's conclusion "sometimes a single truth is not enough to explain the balance of the world around us" (33). As only Jace Weaver can put it, "Ultimate reality, which we see through a glass darkly, is like a child's kaleidoscope. How it is perceived depends on how the cylinder is held, even though the bits of glass that form the picture are unchanging. The task must be to learn as much as one can not only about the given pattern but about the individual bits of glass, so that when the cylinder is shaken we can know something about the new image when it forms.... We need to examine as many different cultural codes as we can to re-create the structure of human life — self, community, spirit, and the world as we perceive it" (Weaver 1997, 33).

Husband and wife team Marie Battiste (Mi'kmag) and Să'kej' Henderson (Chickasaw) confirm that "indigenous communities accept more diversity than most linguistic communities" (Battiste and Henderson 2000, 105). This, of course, follows from the Native American values of noninterference and polycentrism. We argued above that cognitive science avoids any kind of postmodern relativism. It is important to note here that the polycentrism or indigenous pluralism defended by Hart, Tinker, Weaver, Battiste, Henderson, and ourselves, also avoids the charge of relativism. As historian Michael Ignatieff argues, defending what he calls his "patchwork-quit vision" of Canadian identity: "Pluralism does not mean relativism. It means humility" (Ignatieff 2000, 104).

We think it is significant that Ignatieff, in his discussion of Canadian identity, feels compelled "to acknowledge that it is the very essence of national states that they harbor within them incompatible visions of the national story" (2000, 136). Though he does not mention Native American historians like George Tinker and Jace Weaver, like them Ignatieff sees no need to reconcile such inconsistent stories: "Holding a nation together does not require us to force these incompatible stories into one, but simply to keep them in dialogue with each other and, if possible, learning from each other" (2000, 136). We seem to find here the respect for difference we identified above as a traditional Native American value. In fact Ignatieff argues that what he calls the "rights revolution" in Canada "has made us all aware how different we are, both as individuals and as peoples" (2000, 137). Ignatieff claims that differences rather than similarities are of most importance. "Our differences, small as they may seem, are the basis of our identity" (Ignatieff 2000, 137). He seems to attribute this respect for difference and for the rights of the other, at least in part to our Native American (First Nation) heritage: "We are a community forged by the primal experience of negotiating terms of settlement among three peoples: the English, the French, and the aboriginal First Nations. This gives us a particular rights culture and it is this rights culture that makes us different" (Ignatieff 2000, 14). His thesis is not unlike that of John Ralston Saul in *A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada*, which we discussed briefly in Chapter Two. Saul, like Ignatieff, also argues that Canada has "a triangular foundation of Aboriginals, francophones and anglophones" (Saul 2008, 119). But Saul goes much further. He wants to argue that the wording of some of the foundation documents of Canada such as the Royal Proclamation and the Quebec Act were actually influenced by Native American (First Nation) values like noninterference and respect of difference. On the face of it, this claim does not seem all that plausible. At the time Canada was under British control, France having surrendered its claim at the end of the seven-years'-war. These documents, the Royal Proclamation and the Quebec Act would have been written in Britain and sent over to and imposed upon "the colonies." Where, then, is the opportunity for aboriginal influence? With the large francophone population, all such documents were translated into French, and that was done in Canada by local officials, many of whom Saul repeatedly tells us had aboriginal wives. Saul argues, "If you want to understand the intent of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Canadian legal documents, read the French versions" (123). These documents seemed to contain an aboriginal respect for difference. Saul notes that the first British governor, James Murray, "was a Catholic

Scott, a great supporter of the francophones and an opponent of the Boston traders and the few English traders who arrived from England. This alliance of English-descendent Protestants in Boston and English Protestants in England thought it should inherit all business in Canada—a reward for the fall of France in the Americas” (123–124). Saul correctly notes that they were furious that the Quebec Act gave the Catholics full rights of citizenship and religion, that the welfare of these Papists was protected. This would not have been the case back in England (124). In the French version of the Quebec Act, “*welfare* became *bonheur* and *le bonheur future*. So *welfare* meant happiness in the eighteenth-century sense ... the fulfillment of the self within the shared well-being of society” (Saul 2008 124). As Saul points out, “This was the *happiness* of the American Declaration of Independence and the *bonheur* of the French *Déclaration des droits de l’homme*” (124). Of course the legal terms “peace, tranquillité, welfare, bien-être, bonheur, good government” were being used in documents around the world, not just in Canada. But as Saul says, “Whether they were empty formulae or took root with real local meaning depended on the society and its situation” (124–125). Though Saul does not say so, this is reminiscent of the methodology used in the field of cognitive legal studies and Steven Winter’s point in *A Clearing in the Forest: Law, Life, and Mind*, that it is the story behind the legislation and not the written document itself that is important in the interpretation of local meaning. Concerning the use of these important terms according to Saul, “in Canada they fed directly into the debate over how to build a non-monolithic and atypical system ... and ... the need for some sort of fair arrangement in Canada” (125). This helps to explain the title of Saul’s book: *A Fair Country*. This is also why Saul claims that Canada, with its bilingual documents, leans more toward an oral culture. The meaning hovers just over the page somewhere between the English and French written versions. So, for example, a legal loophole based on the “letter of the law” in one language “tends to evaporate in the other” (cf. Saul 2008, 128). As Saul astutely points out, in the Canadian courtroom “only an argument of substance stands up.... Reality seen through two languages can protect us from the demeaning of justice by technical acrobatics. As a result, the meaning of the law in Canada floats slightly off the page in an almost oral manner” (128).

We think the distinction between written and oral cultures is interesting and important in understanding Native American philosophy. We discuss it at some length in the next chapter. However, Saul’s thesis about the influence of Native values on Canada’s semi-oral bilingual culture requires

a good deal more research into the nature and intent of these values before it is possible to discuss the plausibility of his claim in any meaningful way. For example, the whole notion of respect for difference and noninterference including polycentrism or indigenous pluralism, is still not fully understood. As we will see, these concepts are still regarded by some as, to say the least, somewhat controversial.

Callicott and the “Savages”

We began this chapter discussing two philosophers, J. T. Stevenson and J. B. Callicott. We argued that their work taken together contributes to our understanding of the relationship between Native values, the Native concept of land and the Native concept of person. It is our belief that the arguments Callicott presents in support of his Leopoldian land ethic also provide evidence in support of Stevenson’s thesis that there is an essential and too often overlooked connection between the Native American concept of land and the psychological as well as physical health of the indigenous peoples of North America. We also believe that Stevenson goes well beyond Callicott in insisting “that the native belief that the natural world forms a complex, interdependent system of which the native peoples are an integral part should not be dismissed as mere primitive or magical thought.... Although not expressed in our theoretical terms and differing in many details, the general approach is consistent with our most advanced biological science. In their own way, the native peoples got there first” (Stevenson 1992, 303). Callicott has been criticized by what he calls his “indigenous critics” for insisting that “indigenous thought is *validated* by the land ethic” (Hester et al. 2000, 278). This, of course, devalues indigenous views. “The task of indigenous thought is [only] to *express* the abstractions of the land ethic in the ‘rich vocabulary’ of indigenous cultures.... Indigenous thought [merely] provides the color commentary in the local vernacular, and indigenous practices show how to put the land ethic into practice in the local bioregions” (Hester et al. 2000, 278). Callicott’s response is to amend the position he adopted in his book, *Earth’s Insights*, saying: “In retrospect, I wish I had suggested that the ecological insights I found in prescientific religious and indigenous world views and the contemporary scientific world view were *mutually validating*. Indeed they are, I think, mutually reinforcing” (Callicott 2000, 308).

This change puts Callicott much closer to Stevenson than he was in