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Tallymen Talking: "On Work in the Land" -- The Cree tallyman as an ecologically-embedded business manager

INTRODUCTION

The earth, a living self-regulating system (Lovelock, 1989), has suffered widespread ecological degradation alongside global economic development. While global GNP continues to rise impressively (+2.4 trillion US dollars) since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, ecological damage also continues (World Bank, 1997a). For example, the World Bank estimates that between 10 to 40% of the world's species will become extinct in the next 50 years primarily due to loss of natural habitat -- 0.5% to 1.0% of all wetlands and forests are being lost each year (World Bank, 1997b). Environmental degradation is at a crisis stage (World Bank, 1997a). Admit this destruction, business organizations play a key role. Yet organizational theorists have only recently recognized the need to seriously examine environmental issues (Shrivastava, 1994). Prior to the 1990's, the natural environment had not been seriously investigated by organizational scholars (Shrivastava, 1994); the Earth, and matters affecting the Earth, had largely been ignored or taken for granted.

The need for sustainable business management is pressing. By studying indigenous peoples, we have the opportunity to learn from economic and environmental management techniques that have historically demonstrated their ecological sustainability (e.g., Berkes, 1997). Indigenous knowledge is already recognized to have important implications for wildlife or resource management, which typically adopts a 'conservationist' approach (Berkes, 1995). In addition, international policy makers have recognized the importance of traditional knowledge in the management of development and natural resources (e.g., Chapter 26 of Agenda 21, and Article 8 of the UN Biodiversity Convention). However, the value of traditional knowledge has yet to make serious impact on business management theory or practice. Consequently, there exists an opportunity to examine indigenous management approaches from a business perspective.

This empirical study examines the management approach of the Cree tallymen in James Bay, northern Quebec and identifies managerial dimensions which have applicability for sustainable business management. In particular, this study emphasizes the importance of *ecological-embeddedness* as a critical element of sustainable business management. In addition, *social-embeddedness* is identified as a significant complementary characteristic.

RESEARCH DESIGN - *Ethnography*

Field research commenced in James Bay in October, 1995 and continued until July 1997. In total, I was in the field for approximately a year and a half. The majority of the data for this study was collected over a 9 month period commencing in the Fall of 1996, and concentrated during the Winter, Spring, and early summer of 1997. During this period, I resided on the Cree reserves of Nemaska and Eastmain on the east coast of James Bay. I also lived on a Cree trapline for two and half months during the Winter of 1997, which was located an hour outside of Nemaska.

My ethnographic study followed an emergent research design (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Throughout the study, I have utilized both ethnographic participant-observation and in-depth ethnographic interviews. Formal and informal interviews were undertaken across a variety of people, including Cree trappers, elders, tallymen and members and staff of Cree organizations such as the local Bands and Band Councils (including two Chiefs); the president, vice-president, special projects officer and local administrator of the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA); the Director of Traditional Pursuits for the Cree Regional Authority (CRA); and the Youth Grand Chief. In addition, a large number of informal conversations across a myriad of local inhabitants (both Cree and non-Native) contribute to this research.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Traditional Knowledge in Management

Cree approaches to management offer "distinctive features in both thought and practice ... that could not have come from a Western source" (Berkes, 1995: 99). As Shrivastava (1994) notes, indigenous cultures may provide a living example of "nature-linked pre-industrial societies [which] were in more harmonious relationships with nature than modern industrial societies" (p. 719). By its very essence, traditional knowledge is embedded in the earth. Handed down through generations, its teachings focus on the complex relationship of all living beings with each other and the environment (RCAP, 1997). In the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP 4: 454; from Berkes, 1995: 100), traditional knowledge is defined "as a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs, handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment." In addition, "traditional systems of knowledge are characterized by a mixture of knowledge, practice and belief" (Berkes and Henley, 1997: 30).

Native spirituality is an integral part of traditional knowledge (Berkes and Henley, 1997). Shamanic practices fuse practical and spiritual understandings of nature to help restore holistic balance to environmental systems (Egri, 1997). Unlike our modernist business approaches, traditional knowledge is grounded in nature-centred philosophies and practice (Shrivastava, 1994; Egri, 1997). Similar to radical environmentalism, traditional knowledge demonstrates how economics and environmental management can be woven together into an inseparable, holistic approach. While not adopted by many Western organizations, such approaches may act as spiritual templates or pathways for environmental change (Egri, 1997). An empirical examination

of the traditional knowledge and approach of the Cree tallymen may be useful for understanding how non-Native organizations can practically incorporate ecocentric philosophies.

The Cree Tallymen¹ & their management approach

The tallyman is the designated senior hunter who is recognized as the head of the family hunting ground. The tallyman, or steward, occupies this role for several decades and is typically a senior hunter between 40 and 60 years of age (Feit, 1985). If possible, a tallyman is chosen by the previous tallyman of a given trapline.² In the event of sudden death (without an identified successor), the successor will usually be chosen by the group of tallymen who hunt in the surrounding areas, or by the family. While a father often chooses his elder son, the role is not necessarily inherited. It is a practical decision that is based on a high level of competence and an in-depth understanding of the land, the animals, and the Cree traditional way-of-life. The idea is to utilize the land effectively, so the man who is most capable of this would typically 'get the job'.

The tallyman cannot, by tradition, dispose of 'his land' to other groups (Feit, 1985). While the tallyman is recognized as an 'owner', the Cree perspective of land ownership implies that the "tallyman is not really given the animals but the responsibility for the distribution of the wealth of the land. (CTA, 1989: 10). Furthermore, "no [other] trapper can trap in a trapline unless he has been given permission by the owner of that trapline" (CTA, 1989: 12). As a general rule, the tallyman is under a strong 'cultural obligation' to ensure the productivity and sustainability of his trapline (Feit, 1985).

Berkes (1995; 1997) provides a compelling description of the power of Cree approaches to ecological management. With a documented example of the Cree fishery in Chisasibi, Berkes presents Cree traditional knowledge as an effective yet alternative resource management system. The Chisasibi fishery is shown to be sustainable over the long term, yet Cree fishing practices do not follow established 'conservationist' approaches. By relying on (and contributing to) traditional knowledge, the Cree have an in-depth understanding of their environment. They are also fully prepared to adjust their methods according to oscillations in the system. By doing so, the Cree help maintain the resilience of the fish population. By not concentrating their catch on large fish (and conserving young fish as per popular conservation techniques), the Cree harvest more naturally -- that is, they take a mix as any natural predator would.

In general, Berkes (1995) identifies the following dimensions to Cree management: it is non-hierarchical and non-dominant; it is based on respect for other living beings; it is based in reciprocity and sharing; and it pays greater attention to environmental feedback. In essence, the Cree operate with "a 'community-of-beings' worldview" (p.107). That is, the Cree see themselves as part of a larger ecological community of 'beings'. Unlike many business cultures, the Cree way is not anthropocentric.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

In general, my research findings indicate that the Cree tallyman is an important example of a grassroots business manager, a role that demands a first-hand, concrete understanding of the interrelation between economics and ecosystem sustainability.

In particular, the results of this study emphasize the *physical location* of the tallyman as a critical dimension of Cree management. More specifically, the tallymen's high degree of *ecological-embeddedness* gives rise to a number of managerial approaches: the land itself teaches sustainable management practices; an emphasis on land stewardship; emotional and spiritual dimensions of management; and self-interested yet sustainable managerial goals. In addition, the cultural location of the tallymen -- that is their *social embeddedness* -- works in a complementary fashion to reinforce these ecological teachings and maintain a humble, respectful managerial posture.

The Cree tallyman -- A sustainable business manager

Native approaches to natural resource management have become increasingly recognized. Yet the job of the Cree tallyman, like many native stewards, encompasses more than natural resource management. Managing a trapline is a lot like managing a business. But in many ways, the tallyman's approach is highly advanced: he integrates ecology with economics, business with society, and self-interest with both the needs of the larger community and of the local ecosystem. "I think management in general is the same," says Robert Jimiken, a tallyman from Mistissini, an inland Cree village. "But it's the approach and the understanding of the situation and the environment that is different."

As a general rule, the tallyman is under a strong cultural obligation to ensure the productivity and sustainability of his trapline (Feit, 1985) for both his immediate and extended family, future generations and for the land itself. The tallyman is motivated, in part, by the self-interest of survival. But he also recognizes the interests of others within the community (demonstrated through sharing) and other inhabitants of the ecosystem (demonstrated in a cultural commitment to give back to the land in the form of prayers, offerings and caretaking). Trapline management also involves the management of many different stakeholders. Chief William Mianscum of Mistissini explains: "Traditionally, when they [the tallymen] looked after the land, they had respect not only for themselves and the people they invited to their territory, but they had respect for the animals, and the hunt itself. Nothing is ever wasted. And I think that in the business world it's different."

In many cases, tallymen are successful -- the ecosystem is managed sustainably for its human and non-human inhabitants. Furthermore, these skills are transferable. Robert Jimiken, tallyman and Director of Public Works at the Mistissini Band Council, explains: "What my parents taught me in the bush to this day, I still use it to work out any type of situations I get into, be it in the office, or in negotiations. I'm able to *relate*, says Jimiken. "What I've been taught in the bush is more than just hunting and fishing. It's life skills -- skills that you'll need to grow as a person. You can pass that on to your children as much as possible. I found that by having this relationship with my children through my experiences in the bush, I have a better control on giving them the necessary directions to where they want to go in life."

Research findings suggest that the tallyman's physical and cultural location are key elements behind their managerial success. Subsequent sections outline these dimensions.

I. Ecologically-Embedded:

Physically Located in the Ecosystem

The tallyman works outside -- all day, every day. In contrast, most corporate executives spend little, if any, regular time outdoors. Even executives in charge of the environment typically work indoors. Outside time is leisure time -- a non-essential component of the job. Unlike these urban approaches, Cree tallymen utilize an experiential form of business management. Bush life relies on more than abstract reporting. Freddy Jolly, tallyman from Nemaska, explains: "As a tallyman, I travel. I travel all over my trapline in the winter, in the summer and in the fall and in the spring. Because I *know*. I see. I have five senses. My trapline is like an office to me." In contrast to the office-manager who largely identifies the natural environment as an abstract entity, the tallyman sees the office building in metaphorical terms (not the land).

The tallyman manages by walking outdoors. He lives where he works -- in the bush. He understands the ecosystem as a concrete, living entity. "Here in our land, our trapline, we know the hills," says Freddy Jolly, "We know where the lakes are, we know where to go in our trapline." To the tallyman, managing behind four walls seems unnatural. "If you look at the tallymen," explains Thomas Coon, Vice President of the Cree Trappers' Association, "they're not people that can work in an office. They're trappers. They're people that are on the land... The tallymen themselves are actually people on the land."

Over time, tallymen develop an incredibly detailed understanding of their trapline. "My dad used to tell me about his trapline," explains tallyman Freddy Jolly. "He never used a [store-bought] map. One time he showed me a map [that he had made himself]. He drew every lake, every lake that he goes on, the mountains, the hills. Then comparing the map I have with his map, they look the same." While exact replication may be an exaggeration, the ability to mentally map a trapline is not unusual. Tallyman and elder, Charlie Etapp from Mistissini, concurs, "I go straight to the place where I want to go." This skill is highly impressive, given that traplines range in size from approximately 230 sq. km to several thousand, with an average trapline size of 1200 sq. km (Feit, 1985).

A key advantage of this approach is that the tallyman gains a concrete understanding of the impact of unsustainable activities on the bush. Tallymen do not see the sense of corporate and governmental management styles. "How can you control when you just sit in your office -- when you're not walking around on the land?" asks Freddy Jolly. Furthermore, tallymen resist the pressure of development that brings them off the land. As traplines become clearcut, the tallymen have no place except the village to make a living. "I know that [the federal department of] Indian Affairs has been trying to pull us forward, to assimilate us to a speed where we would be

comfortable in a fenced little building, the same as everybody else,” worries tallyman Murray Neeposh from Mistissini. “But we don’t want that kind of assimilation.”

Ecology and Economics

Trapline management involves production and consumption, and is based on the economics of survival. Both of these activities occur in the bush and not in an abstract marketplace. Traditionally, the tallyman is responsible for both the economic and environmental welfare of his hunting ground. Indeed, according to Rick Cuciurean of the Cree Trappers’ Association, these two functions (economic and environmental management) may not be a meaningful distinction. “Our first role,” explains Robert Jimiken a tallyman and the Director of Public Works for the Mistissini Band Council, “is to look after the land, to *maintain* the land. To make sure there’s always game within that area that we can use, and that the children can use for future generations.”

Daily exposure to the natural environment gives the tallyman an indepth awareness of the surrounding ecosystem, as well as a first-hand appreciation of the impact of development.

Managerial Style: Stewardship

The role of the tallyman reflects a ‘stewardship’ orientation, rather than a ‘private property’ orientation, where land can be disposed of as the owner or business sees fit. Similar to many native belief systems, the Cree concept of land ownership reflects a strong, intimate, and biocentric connection with the forest. This concept of land ownership is not parallel to our Western conceptions (see Feit, 1985, 1995; Berkes, 1995, 1997). Land cannot be sold or disposed of by the tallyman (Feit, 1985). As literature from the Cree Trappers’ Association explains,

In the traditional Cree sense, the ‘ownership’ (*nitibaihta*) of the land and animals is different from the ‘ownership’ (*nitibiwaawsiun*) of personal property of things that can be bought and sold. To ‘own’ (*nitibaihta*) land and animals may be more accurately translated into English as being the steward or the custodian of the land and the animals. (CTA, 1989: 10, emphasis in original).

This means that unlike personal belongings, the land and the inhabitant animals cannot be bought or sold. Thus the Cree distinguish between different types of ‘ownership.’ This cultural differentiation stems in part from Cree spirituality which is embedded in their conceptualizations of land. That is, “land and animals cannot be bought and sold, they cannot be personal property. Land will still be there after people die. Land really belongs to God, and he put the animals there.” (CTA, 1989: 11).

Furthermore, the CTA explains that: “The ownership of the land rests with the tallyman, the senior trapper who knows the area best and who is also recognized... as the person in charge of a registered trapping territory (trapline)” (CTA, 1989: 10). Thus, tallymen have the cultural power to make harvesting decisions, but they do not have the right to dispose of the land -- it must be kept for future generations. “He has to learn to respect the land and he has to learn to respect the animals and to respect other people,” says Jimiken.

The land teaches sustainable management

The tallyman’s management approach emerges from the land, from his own particular trapline. Management approaches do not rely simply on eco-friendly techniques imposed on the environment and developed elsewhere. As Francis & Morantz (1983) explain, the Cree developed both a technology and social organization that was suited to the demands of land surrounding them. As opposed to changing or controlling the natural environment, the Cree learned to exist successfully within it. As Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come writes, “We [the Cree] have always lived in harmony with our physical environment” (GCCQ 1995: 1).

Walter Jolly from Nemaska, explains how the land itself teaches the tallyman how to manage: “The bush taught me how to trap, how to survive, how to raise my children, how to manage the land, how to harvest the land, not how to slaughter it, overharvest. It taught me to use wisdom and common sense.” Sustainability is a core ethic of the bush. To satisfy human needs is necessary, but to selfishly maximize current consumption is unacceptable in subsistence living. The health of future generations and the ecosystem itself has an impact on the tallyman’s daily decisions. Walter Jolly elaborates, “Some people, they slaughter the land and then they go to another trapline. They were never taught to take just what you need, not too much. That way, the land will keep on and will have animals. Sometimes, when I see a beaver house, I go and touch it and then save it for next year. Just take enough for that year. You just take what you need. Even the moose.” In the old days, it was the same. Hunting and trapping have always provided the basic necessities. Sam Blacksmith, a tallyman in his 80s, says, “I hunted all winter. All winter, I didn’t see anybody. Even though we didn’t have anything, just a half a bag of flour and one pail of lard. Even though, I had only those things, I wasn’t very poor. I had everything in the bush -- beaver, bear, porcupine, rabbit, partridge.”

Bush life teaches sustainability and subsistence. At a basic level, the tallyman’s management approach is all about survival. Tallyman Murray Neeposh discusses this point: “As far as I’m concerned, whatever you do wherever you do it, you’re trying to survive, you’re trying to live. With the land it’s the same thing. I’m trying to live. I’m trying to survive. And it’s teaching me. It’s showing me the things around me, the trees, the animals, the rain, the snow, that I have to learn.” In general, tallyman expertise stems from experience and knowledge gained over generations. It is also learned from first-hand experience. “We never get books, never read the books about animals. All we see is our land. The tracks of the animals, that’s our book,” says Freddy Jolly. While most Cree appreciate that ‘western’ education has some benefits, it cannot replace traditional learning. “For us, up here, to be *properly* trained is to be out also in the bush. You can talk about it in a room but if you really want to do it, you’ve got to go out there and do

it,” says Neeposh. “You’ve got to go out and experience it. You’ve got to go *out* and *be* a manager.”

Managing outdoors is critical if the tallyman wishes to understand the lessons from the bush. And this means sleeping out too -- preferably in a tepee or a cabin with a tarpaulin roof. According to Lillian Moses, Cree culture teacher in the village of Eastmain, one of the most critical aspects of the Cree culture that is being lost is the practice of sleeping in tepees (though they are still frequently used for cooking). “When you sleep on spruce boughs, you sleep in *medicine*,” she explains. This medicine helps the Cree connect with their environment. To the tallymen, there are other benefits as well. “When you sleep inside a tepee you hear the rapids, you hear the geese flying or the ducks. You hear the trees moving. But when you have a cabin with a roof, with windows, you don’t hear anything,” says Freddy Jolly.

Emotional & Spiritual Dimensions to Management

Besides a keen knowledge of hunting and trapping, the Cree tallymen also have a strong emotional and spiritual connection to the land. Unlike their rational counterparts in business, tallymen recognize the benefit of a multidimensional approach. The emotional dimension to the tallyman is most easily displayed in discussions about development. As Walter Jolly, a tallyman from Nemaska suggests: “It [development] weakened the trapper. He doesn’t have the full strength to go on. It’s like you wounded the man when he sees his land all chopped [clear cut].” Emotional identification with the bush appears as a broad aspect to Cree culture. Thomas Coon, of the CTA, shares his feelings on the subject: “Why do we make so much fuss about the forestry, about clearcutting, why do we cry about the reservoirs built in James Bay...? It’s because it hurts us. It really hurts me. The land is part of me, and I’m part of the land. And when you hurt the land, you hurt me too.”

Similarly, the spiritual side to management stems, in part, from intimate, experiential moments in the bush. It is the type of revelation that cannot easily occur inside. This is exemplified in the following quote from Freddy Jolly, a tallyman from Nemaska:

“One time I went out and I was walking. I think it was the Fall. I was walking in the woods. Then I was tired and I just knelt at the tree there. And it was windy. I was moving at the same time as when the tree was moving. It was very windy. And then I began to think, ‘It’s God. It’s God everywhere. This tree is *living*.’”

When you look at the land, at what the Creator had built, everything is alive. Everything is living. What God had made... So everything is life. Even if you look at the trees when it’s windy, they move. The branches, they move. The leaves, they move. Me and bush lady walking, we move. We breathe. It’s the Creator. So everything here on this earth is alive. But man is destroying it, what the Creator has made. God takes care of everything here on this earth. So what man is doing to this earth is destroying it, what God had created for us, non-natives and natives. We have to watch what God has created.”

II. Socially-Embedded

The Cree identify themselves with their traditional way-of-life; they are a hunting, fishing, and trapping people (GCCQ, 1995). According to Willie Iserhoff of the CRA, such traditional pursuits are still socially, culturally, and economically integral to the Cree world. Furthermore, traditional Cree spiritual beliefs are tied in with the land itself, and their kinship with the bush (Tanner, 1979). In addition, the tallymen view their role as an important continuation of a socio-cultural historical tradition. “The role of the tallyman has always been to look after the land, the animals, the fish, the birds and the Cree people” (Jolly, 1997: 13).³

Family life is an important part of the business of managing a trapline and an essential factor in the economics of subsistence. Parents and elders teach the younger generation. Cree tallymen respect this tradition. “When my dad taught me, he was old and not able to do some things for himself,” says tallyman and elder Charlie Etapp. “He told me, ‘the way I’m teaching you, it’s just like the way you teach a young child. And when you’re a good teacher, teach it to a young child. Don’t keep it to yourself, tell it to the child. If you’re strong enough to go out there in the hunting ground, take the child with you. You walk ahead.’”

Sharing is an integral part of the trapline system. As the steward of the land, a tallyman does not attempt to maximize his own consumption. Instead,

The main principle in the ownership of the land is to keep traditional law and order in that area, to ensure that the land is not abused, and to oversee the sharing of the wealth of the land. (CTA, 1989: 10).

A tallyman must be “able to share what he has, not just to go out there for himself without considering other people,” explains Robert Jimiken. “He’s taught to do that. You’re always taught whenever you have a stranger come to your trapline, you always offer them something -- coffee, tea, whatever you have.”

The tallyman, as a social leader in the bush, has a high degree of social control. “The way I look at the tallyman,” explains Willie Iserhoff, Director of Traditional Pursuits at the Cree Regional Authority, “is that he’s like a chief. A chief has to work with his people and develop them in the communities. There’s a lot of things the chief has to deal with. Social issues. A lot of stuff... A mediator. And that’s basically how I see the tallyman too.” However, social control moves in both directions -- the community itself has the ability to impose social sanctions on tallyman for unacceptable behaviour.

Tallymen rely on cultural tradition and the need to respect experience and competence in the bush. In return, bush life provides many important social and personal lessons. “Out there I learned a lot from my parents,” says Robert Jimiken. “I think that’s where I really learned who I was.”

IMPLICATIONS -- *The Cree Tallyman as a Role model for business*

As ecological degradation continues despite conceptual progress of the Rio Summit, the business world needs to understand sustainable, eco-centred management approaches such as those of the tallymen. "When you're in the bush," says Robert Jimiken, "you're not just there to learn about how to set a trap, how to hunt moose and caribou or how to set a net. It's about how you take care of yourself and how you deal with yourself in your life. When you're crossing a lake, for example, especially in the spring or early fall, it is very dangerous. You know, there's thin ice. But you're able to almost dictate where you're going after a while, because you've been taught."

"You have to be cautious all of the time," he says. "It's better to go around a shore, than cross a lake. Otherwise you may never *get* there. At least you ensure yourself, that if you go around that lake, you'll eventually get to the point of where you want to go. That's the direction I've been trying to teach my children. Never try and take shortcuts in life." But it isn't easy. "Even our *own* people have a hard time trying to adapt to the Cree way, the Cree lifestyle," says Jimiken. "They spend too much time down south and they kind of lose touch with what's been happening at home and they cannot relate to the land like a lot of us do."

To a Western business audience, it may not be immediately clear how a traditional Native hunter can act as a role model for the modern manager. Western approaches have successfully dominated business culture since the Industrial Revolution. But these practices have also seriously contributed to widespread ecological damage. As Shrivastava (1995a) states:

"To fully appreciate the ecological consequences of organizational activities, the relevant organizational environment must be viewed as an economic biosphere, which includes not only economic, social, technological, and political elements, but also biological, geological, and atmospheric ones." (p.124).

However, managerial appreciation of biological, geological and atmospheric dimensions of business activity will not, in itself, ensure ecocentric approaches, particularly if this knowledge is gained second-hand through abstracted reports. A radical transformation in mental frameworks may require a radical relocation of the management function -- a relocation OUTSIDE. While many environmental approaches attempt to bring the natural environment into management, the Cree tallymen demonstrate the possibility of the obverse.

CONCLUSION

Many ecological impacts are a result of individual and organizational activity. In particular, businesses are responsible for 'using up' large tracts of the natural environment for raw materials and are also responsible for polluting surrounding ecosystems as a by-product of their operations (Daly, 1997). At the root of the problem is the mind-set that corporations and government agencies strive to meet economic growth objectives without regard for the natural environment or for the need to sustainably harvest natural resources (Shrivastava, 1995a). Organizational scholars have also reflected this 'denatured' view of the earth, focused more on improving organizational performance than acknowledging and addressing ecological impacts (Shrivastava, 1994).

In addition to short-term market pressures, I believe that environmental degradation continues, in part, because of our inability, as business managers and as individuals, to understand a fundamental relationship -- that business systems operate within broader social systems which, in turn, are ecologically embedded within local and global ecosystems. This is a reflection of our larger cultural context -- that is, a Western cultural adherence to a dualistic worldview which mentally and physically separates Human Beings from Nature (Oelschlaeger, 1991). This is similarly reflected in the field of business studies. "Modern management theory is constricted by a fractured epistemology, which separates humanity from nature and truth from morality" (Gladwin, Kennelly and Shelomith Krause, 1995: 874). In essence, much of current management theory and practice focuses on human activities which remain 'inside' (physically located in buildings) and hence 'away from' the natural environment.

Nevertheless, the *practice* of environmental management is a growing concern for a wide variety of stakeholders, including the corporation (see Stead & Stead, 1992). However, many business managers, like their scholarly counterparts, continue to perpetuate the division between humans and nature by departmentalizing 'environmental management' as a function which is separate from (although potentially related to) the more traditional job of economic management. Or, in a broader sense, continuing to separate 'economic-work' from 'green-work'. In addition, environmental departments of organizations typically operate inside. Such work does not usually entail extensive excursions into the natural environment. Instead, the natural environment becomes a physical site for leisure or an abstract location for managerial decision-making. For much of our lives, business managers act as 'denatured' people.⁴

I believe that the task of ecological sustainability is difficult, particularly when we continue to view ourselves and our corporations as physically separate from the earth. That is, we may intellectually recognize the need for sustainable management but the actual integration escapes us, as we struggle to perpetuate (or to tear down) a dualistic paradigm. Such a fractured epistemology allows organizations to evaluate performance on economic terms and to externalize environmental impacts. And it is this "failure to consider the long-term consequences of economic activities" (World Bank, 1997b: 5) that helps to perpetuate environmental degradation.

Yet business organizations, and their managers, need to become part of the solution if ecological degradation is to end. Thus, a key "challenge facing organizational scholars is to flesh out organizational pathways to ecological sustainability" (Shrivastava, 1995b: 956). This paper focuses on one indigenous pathway -- the management approach of the Cree tallyman -- and provides insights into an ecologically-embedded approach to sustainable business management. The James Bay tallymen offer hope. Robert Jimiken reminds us that: "You've got to learn to respect the people. By respecting the people, then in turn you have to also respect the environment, and the *land*."

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Endnotes:

¹ There is some debate about the origins of the Cree system of land management, and the role of the tallyman. While the Cree suggest that this system comes from their indigenous ways (Iserhoff, 1997, in conversation), other anthropologists (see Bishop & Morantz, 1986) suggest that it stems more from the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, which (with the Department of Indian Affairs) set up Beaver Preserves in the 1930's and 40's to address a serious decline in beaver population in the region. The word '*tallyman*' is the English designation for the Cree word '*amiskuchimaaw*', which is literally translated as Beaver Man. 'Tally' refers to the fact that part of the tallyman's job was to tally (count) beaver houses within his hunting area. Under the Beaver Preserve system, these tallies were then used to assign annual trapping quotas back to the tallyman (who distributed them across his hunting group). The tallyman's job was also to ensure that the quotas were met but not exceeded.

While the name 'beaver man' or 'tallyman' explicitly links this cultural leader to the times of the Beaver Preserves, the role of the tallyman within Cree culture appears to pre-exist these institutions. While the designation 'tallyman' may come from HBC terminology, its form of management does not appear as a 'Western' invention (see Berkes, 1995). Indeed, Hudson's Bay Archives (1947: 689) support Cree claims. Nevertheless, the current system appears to be a mix; that is, while based in indigenous ways, it has also adopted some Western approaches such as the quantification of animal populations (see Berkes, 1995).

² This is a gendered position for Cree men only. There are no female tallymen.

³ While there may be some historical debate about the roots and scope of the tallyman's role, this paper emphasizes the perspectives of the tallyman -- that is, how they see and historically interpret this role.

⁴ I know that for myself this dualism runs deep. I did not grow up in Nature; I grew up predominately in a house, in a school, and in organizations. Interestingly, my dissertation work has both made me aware of this gap and has helped me integrate myself; that is, to narrow the divide between myself and "Nature."