

## Historical Methods

### The Ecological Indian

I really liked the way Shepard Krech organized the book, with each chapter presenting new theses about Indians and their connection with the environment, theses both supporting the idea of the ecological Indian and against it, then refuting the arguments against the theory of the Noble Indian giving reasons why these arguments were not true. He used numbers really well, going through where and how they had gotten the estimates of Indians before Columbus came to America. I had not thought of the idea that the numbers could be skewed because an estimator could be seen as racist if they gave a lower number. He goes over every argument finely and picks out the points of where they are wrong, and even where they are also right, giving both sides to the argument. I most liked the chapter about disease since I think he is right how people fully blame all the deaths of Indians by sickness on the Europeans. True, some Europeans used germ warfare, yet he shows how, for most, it wasn't their intent to kill off the Indian population. They even had selfish reasons to keep them alive, wanting them as slaves and for trade. The Indians were also partially to blame (even though it is thought as racist to say anything bad about them like that now a days) since they also strongly wished to trade and would refuse to get inoculated to the disease when they could be. Some Indians and conservationists had fights over the environment because of different beliefs, e.g. the idea that the animals reincarnate specifically for human's food need. His conclusion was convincing because it showed that although, the ecological Indian ideal is in many of the Indian cultures, yet they do not always want to be stereotyped to only feeling that way, they also have the human emotions of greed and ambition over the earth.