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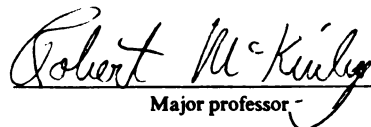
NO MORE SCREECH OWL: PLAINS INDIAN ADAPTATION
AS PROFILED IN THE LIFE OF BLACK ELK

presented by

Michael F. Steltenkamp

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Doctoral degree in Anthropology


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NO MORE SCREECH OWL: PLAINS INDIAN ADAPTATION
AS PROFILED IN THE LIFE OF BLACK ELK

By

Michael F. Steltenkamp

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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1987

ABSTRACT

NO MORE SCREECH OWL: LAKOTA ADAPTATION TO CHANGE AS PROFILED IN THE LIFE OF BLACK ELK

By

Michael. F. Steltenkamp

The life of the famous Sioux holy-man, Black Elk, as revealed by those who knew him best, will show that it is itself still intriguing, and that it is also instructive of the Lakota social network at large. Implications of this work bear on widespread assumptions common to both Euro-and Indian America which have been bolstered by Black Elk material already in print, and a byproduct of this work will be to show how the holy-man has been incorporated into significant social movements, how he has become a symbol for them, and how this usurpation is actually a transformation of who the man really was.

The tendency has been to compartmentalize Black Elk's life and thought into an era untainted by non-Indian social or religious currents. In point of fact, however, the holy-man lived well beyond the Wounded Knee tragedy, and he did so with much vitality. His life goes beyond the neat construct of total nativism on the one hand, or complete absorption of Western ways on the other. His biography is not a profile in syncretism but is, rather, an example of reflexive adjustment to new cultural landscapes that had not been previously explored.

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CHAPTER I

1. "FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE MOST LASTING"--STEREOTYPES OF AMERICAN INDIANS: AN ISSUE FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

"The people of the island . . . all go naked . . . as their mothers bore them." (Berkhofer, 1978, 6). Such was the observation of Columbus in 1492 upon first contacting Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere. Ever since this first blush, the identity of these American "Indians" has baited inquiring minds. Time has transformed a pristine wilderness from terra incognita to topographic clarity. But the land's original inhabitants have remained a sui generis population that still begs survey.

Until recently, for example, the image of a "granite-faced," "grunting," "stoical," "cigar-store" Indian was part of the popular imagination--and not without reason. Enroute to "winning the west" (plus the north, south and east), Euro-American delegations regularly treated with vanquished leaders for the purpose of redefining territorial claims. Negotiations imposed constraints on Native groups who, in time, reluctantly admitted their inability to resist encroachment. Since early observers described Indian languages as "animal-like," we can appreciate why the above stereotype achieved staying-power (Driver, 1969, 25). This caricature, however, is only one of many that culture-contact has spawned.

Cub scouts and conservationists fell heir to a deeply-entrenched idea concerning Native America that

originated with Rousseau (1712-78). Referred to as the "noble savage" concept, it has been used to plea on behalf of environmental protection. The conventional images associated with this romantic notion picture Native people as being one-with-nature--swimming with sister-salmon, running with brother-deer, singing harmony with the birds, and knowledgeable of every forest sound. Indeed, many present-day Americans (regardless of whatever other, perhaps conflicting, notions they carry about Indian identity) suspect Native people are experts on ecology." And in its quest for truth, anthropology does well to address such stereotyping, as the following incident should illustrate.

Not long ago I drove a friend home. He lived some distance out in the country and he came from a traditional Lakota background.* In fact, English was his second language. Driving over dry roads on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in ninety-degree weather made us thirsty, so we bought a can of soda prior to our journey. As we drove along, the can was emptied, and my friend turned toward his window, then stopped. In a crisp, deep, monotone, he asked: "Mind if I throw this out?"

The question took me by surprise. Here was a young man whose usual behavior reminded me of the pre-reservation period--times when the Plains were free of twentieth-century pollution. A rare moment had presented itself, so I responded

*Lakota and "Sioux" will be used interchangeably throughout this text, the former is the preferred, more technical (linguistic), usage.

by asking: "Did you ever see the television commercial which showed an Indian man in buckskin paddling down a river? When he landed, someone threw trash at his feet, and the Indian man was pictured with a tear on his cheek?" My friend, pensive for a few moments, answered: "Yeh, what's he crying about?"

I said: "The commercial seems to be showing that years ago, before settlers came to America, an Indian man could paddle down a river and not see any trash laying around at all. And if an Indian from a long time ago looked at America today, he would cry in realizing how polluted it had become." That was the point of the television commercial as I understood it.

I awaited my friend's reaction. He did not reply immediately, but instead was taken up in thought. With a look of bewilderment, and voice with no inflection, he asked: "You mean I'm not supposed to throw this can out the window?"

I told him that I would throw it away when I got home, and so he set it on the seat between us.

The matter was closed, but my friend seemed perplexed by the decision. Carrying an empty soda can back home was peculiar--a nice thought, perhaps, but a bit foreign to his experience. My friend could not identify with his television counterpart. Never again would I view that commercial with my same, previously-unchallenged, assumptions.

My experience reported above is an illustration of the larger issue already raised, viz., that we have inherited a legacy of stereotypes which have obscured the flesh-and-blood

individuals who comprise Indian identity. Hence, one of anthropology's tasks is to foster research which promises a more reliable sense of cultural configurations (Stedman, 1982), and not allow stereotypes and caricatures to wield the influence they do.

The pages that follow will, then, address the issue of Indian identity by focusing upon the life of one prominent person. This analytical genre was appropriated long ago by anthropologists (Kluckhohn, 1945), but the utilization of life-stories for purposes of social inquiry has remained a "generally untapped vein for cultural analysis" (Bourguignon 1979: 19). Emphasis within this field of study is upon the individual persons who undergo the rites, maintain subsistence patterns, conduct aggression, supplicate spirits, and fashion the inventory of material goods. In this way, a given life is studied for what it can tell us about the larger, more complex, social system to which it belonged (see Appendix I "The Life-Story in Anthropology").

A. THE ROLE OF "LIFE-STORIES" AND SOME EXAMPLES OF THEIR USE

In the recent past, a novel approach to illuminating Native worldviews via one informant was introduced by Carlos Castaneda--an anthropologist who is himself shrouded in mystery.* This reclusive observer mesmerized a wide reading

*Time magazine devoted its cover and feature-story to Castaneda who, among other things, would not permit his picture to be taken.

public by reporting his experience of spiritual sonship to Don Juan, a Yaqui "sorcerer" (1968). In the course of five books thus far (based on the author's "voluminous field notes"), we are introduced to alien perceptions of the world through Don Juan's ability as a magician, and his use of peyote, jimson weed, and a hallucinogenic mushroom. The esoteric worldview of Castaneda's mentor seems to both estrange and tantalize its readership, for Don Juan's vision is at once compelling yet obscure. If nothing else, the author's presentation of one man's thought has expanded the parameters of narrative analysis. It further stimulated development in a field that one commentator describes as only now at the level of a "modest beginning" (Bourguignon, 168).

Concurrent with the Castaneda cycle has been the disclosure of two life-histories of present-day religious practitioners among the Lakota. Richard Erdoes (1972) interviewed John Lane Deer of the Rosebud Reservation and presented the several "worlds" within which modern medicine men labor. Similarly, Thomas Mails persuaded "ceremonial chief" Frank Fools Crow to relate his life experiences (1979). By doing so, readers were provided an unusual portrait of a man whose social identities suggest caution to those who might speak of roles and statuses in overly-broad terms.

Fools Crow enjoyed unique genealogical, political, and religious prominence among the Sioux. As a result, his words are authoritative in regard to Lakota social institutions.

Apart from addressing the United Nations on behalf of all (?) Indian America, this elder statesman acquired prestige and notoriety among his people for being the repository of sacred information that he was at first unwilling to discuss. Ultimately, however, his disclosures were contingent upon information supplied by Mails, viz., that the revered Black Elk, an uncle to Fools Crow, had recounted his own life-history years earlier.

According to Fools Crow, it was common knowledge among traditional Sioux that Lane Deer's death was the result of his collaborating in the publication of a book.* And yet, to learn that Black Elk had done the same thing demanded serious reconsideration. After all, so Fools Crow reasoned, his uncle's stature dwarfed all modern religious practitioners.

Black Elk was a beacon even for him, Fools Crow (from whom others were taking their cue). In this regard, Fools Crow was not unlike countless other Indian and non-Indian people. His admiration for Black Elk simply replicated (but more intimately) an already widespread sentiment. Unknown to Fools Crow was that Black Elk, holy-man of the Oglala, had attained perhaps the greatest popularity of any Native American to date, and it is his story, his special role in the panorama of Indian culture, that the rest of these pages will address and analyze.

*Lane Deer died in a car accident on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

II. THE IMAGE OF BLACK ELK IN POPULAR CULTURE AND ITS SHORTCOMING

Attention to Black Elk's life and thought was first brought to the public forum through the poetic craftsmanship of John Neihardt in 1932.* After this initial introduction, Joseph Epes Brown ably transmitted the holy-man's knowledge of Lakota religious tradition in a work entitled The Sacred Pipe (1953). The numerous editions of both books in America and Europe attest to the fact that herein lies a captivating appeal.

Neihardt and Brown found in Black Elk a man who remembered far happier times than those which came with the reservation period. Born when buffalo was still the staple of plains tribes, he shared in the victory of Little Big Horn (1876) and the heartbreak of Wounded Knee (1890). Throughout these summer and winter years, Black Elk grew into manhood and learned especially well the religious traditions of his people. However, it will later be shown that the presentations of Neihardt and Brown both erred by depicting the man solely as a nineteenth-century figure--as DeMallie has also noted (1984, 124).

Largely comprised of first-person narratives, Black Elk Speaks portrays Sioux Life as it existed during the last half of the 1800's. Like other works of its kind, the biography is

*The edition of Black Elk Speaks cited in this text is the Pocket Book reprint, New York, 1972.

a story-like recounting of boyhood memories and early adult experiences, village and family life, religious ritual, and sober reflection. Historical personages like Crazy Horse (a "cousin"), Buffalo Bill Cody, and George Armstrong Custer, all come alive in the powerful simplicity of Black Elk's account (N.B., he is joined in the text by friends who add their remembrances).

Except for an incident reported in the "Postscript," Black Elk Speaks restricts itself to the downfall of the Sioux as a self-sufficient people. Pre-reservation days are adequately reflected through the recollection of more-or-less carefree times, and the Indian victory over Custer becomes a death-knell boding confinement rather than freedom. The 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee is shown as a coup de grace to an entire way of life, as Black Elk's "dream" is said to have died with those who fell in this final conflict. In effect, Neihardt casts Black Elk in the role of spokesman for all Lakota--if not all Indian people, as Dee Brown (1970) has proposed (i.e., his best-seller, Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee, concludes with Black Elk's grim reflection on the demise of his people).

At the conclusion of Black Elk Speaks, the holy-man is quoted as praying to Wakan Tanka (Great Spirit): "Maybe the last time on this earth, I recall the great vision you sent me" (1972, 233).* He is presented as a very old man, nearly

*The Lakota reference to God is "Wakan Tanka." Although a precise translation is difficult, "Great Spirit" is commonly employed by translators--today interchangeable with "God."

blind, who might well pass away at any moment. That Black Elk experienced so much heart-break along with his beloved people only adds greater emotional impact to the closing pages of this book. Resonances of the "noble savage" and "vanishing American" motifs reverberate throughout the final passages.

Some sixteen years after Neihardt sketched this portrait of Black Elk, however, Joseph Epes Brown came upon the very same man who was still very much alive. With the publication of The Sacred Pipe, the holy-man's knowledge of ritual was brought to the fore. Once again, readers were understandably touched by the sublime narrative Black Elk related.

The Sacred Pipe focused on "Black Elk's account of the seven rites of the Oglala Sioux"--traditional religious ceremonies which Brown asked Black Elk to reconstruct. Although practiced irregularly in recent times, the rites were depicted as belonging to an historical period which is no more. In sum, the two books portray Black Elk and the social institutions he socherished as paralyzed victims of western subjugation. Doomed to live out his years as a relic of the past and prisoner of irreconcilably foreign ways, the holy-man (and his people) becomes an object of pity. Readers are left to conclude that Black Elk's first thirty years were productively lived, while his last sixty were tearfully endured. But was this the case?

A lamentable void existed on the man's life during the forty years not treated by John Neihardt. And except for

Brown's eight month visit in the winter of 1947-48, nothing is known of Black Elk's last twenty years. Essentially, then, sixty years of a prominent man's life are unaccounted for, and we are left to wonder if Black Elk participated at all in the twentieth century reservation world (fifty years of which he knew!).

To what extent Neihardt embellished different observations (he was a nationally acclaimed poet) will perhaps never be completely clear, as Sally McClusky, among others, drew attention to this in her aptly titled article "Black Elk Speaks, and So Does John Neihardt" (1972). And yet, Neihardt himself stirs some wonderment on this point when he qualified his authorship by saying "as told through" instead of "as told to"/*italics added*/ for later editions of the "life-story." DeMallie's publication of Neihardt's field-notes (1984) helped clarify this issue, but the fact remains that Black Elk Speaks--as literature claiming to describe a culture's world-view--is still a classic (regardless of who spoke).

Brown's 1971 Preface to The Sacred Pipe rightly suggests that what has so far been revealed in the two books on Black Elk only "raises the question as to who, in fact, Black Elk really was" (Brown, xiii). We might, in addition, ask the same about the culture he represents. Such questions have no doubt confronted most readers of either work due to the moving, though enigmatic, commentaries ascribed the man. Readers are prompted to wonder if people like Black Elk exist anymore or if, in fact, they ever did exist (in the manner

described).

So evocative is Black Elk's characterization that it has been expropriated and utilized on behalf of diverse forms of special-pleading. Environmental activists, Indian militants, anthropologists, historians, religionists, and students of Americana can glean from Black Elk (as they have) particular passages that bolster or refute whatever conventional, Native theme they choose because, it appears, his representation has become the conventional stereotype par excellence. Those aware of this larger frame of reference are thus confronted with the task of separating the wheat from the chaff--discerning if Black Elk was a kind of modal man of the Sioux, a mystic, or myth.

Norman Perrin, one-time biblical scholar at the University of Chicago, drew upon Black Elk for purposes of cross-cultural comparison vis-a-vis New Testament writers (1974). Willoya and Brown invoked the holy man to support their doctrine of a universal religion (1962). Steinmetz (1980), updating Duratschek (1947), then made a case for regarding the holy-man as exemplifying a kind of evolutionary phase in theological reflection. Turning the tables on this line of development was Vine Deloria who, as a leading spokesman of Native America, made use of Black Elk to argue that "God is Red" (1969). Here the holy-man was portrayed as the embodiment of a pan-Indian spirituality that is incompatible with notions associated with "white man's religion."

Sculptor Marshall M. Fredericks has honored Black Elk with a bronze monument, while artists F.W. Thomsen and Paul Goble have graphically expressed their indebtedness to Black Elk by producing sketches of Native life on popular greeting cards now found nation-wide. Poet Donna Duesel de la Torriente produced Bay is the Land (1982) which parenthetically included the dedication "to Black Elk" in its title--the work itself claiming to be "an astounding proclamation made by a white American about the long-awaited dream of Black Elk." "Leanin' Tree" publications (a "back-to-nature" motif accentuating their work) has likewise peppered their products with quotations from Black Elk material. Where psychologist Carl Jung theorizes about and directly refers to Black Elk (1970, 206), novelist Thomas Berger is more surreptitious. His Little Big Man (1964) cast considerable appeal to readers (and later on, moviegoers) who were entranced by the story's pivotal character, Old Lodge Skins--a pseudonym, it seems, for Black Elk a la Neihardt. Such gnosticism was not required in 1979 when Broadway playwright Chris Sergel cast actor David Carradine in the lead role of a largely fictionalized Black Elk.

Social scientists have not been immune to Black Elk's influence. David Humphreys Miller produced two books (1957, 1959) which illuminated the Ghost Dance and Custer's fate from the view point of Sioux witnesses--the holy-man being one of his key informants. Hassrick's standard ethnography of the Sioux (1964) notes Brown and Neihardt as basic resources,

while a contemporary analysis of Oglala religion (Powers, 1975) cites Black Elk as an eminently quotable authority. Other books and articles (e.g., Capps, 1976; Tedlock & Tedlock, 1975), too numerous to list here, simply corroborate what this overview has suggested. The holy-man's life, as presented by Neihardt and Brown, has provided fertile reflection for a host of people far removed from Black Elk's reservation borders (e.g., Moon's 1982 best-seller Blue Highways, a first-person account of travelling across modern America, quotes Black Elk Speaks as a kind of intimate, literary travelling-companion).

Do his books represent a kind of personal and societal death-rattle? Do they prohibit inquiry of post-Wounded Knee cultural forms because such forms were resisted by means of a lifeless resignation to non-Indian ways? What was the reality of adaptation for persons like Black Elk--the Sioux of nomadic times who, through historical circumstances, found themselves on a markerless path to sedentism? These and other questions surface forcibly to readers earnestly seeking Black Elk's credibility as a flesh-and-blood human being. Brown raised the question as to who, in fact, Black Elk really was, and this question has long been in need of an answer.

The holy-man's recollection of years-past has elicited commentary on Plains Indian life which has been regarded as applicable to Native America at large. But where non-specialists might construe Indian ways in this manner and leave their perspectives generalized, anthropology is not so

loose. Consequently, Brown's question can only be satisfactorily answered through analysis of Black Elk's entire life, within the constraints of the nineteenth and twentieth century Siouan milieu. Not until this is accomplished can cross-cultural comparisons be attempted or, for that matter, can Black Elk's socialization and worldview be adequately interpreted.

A. PERSONAL BACKGROUND ENROUTE TO DISCOVERING WHO BLACK ELK WAS

While in college, I became acquainted with Joseph Epes Brown through a course he offered on religious traditions of Native North America. When he spoke of his work with Black Elk, Brown fanned within me a desire to seek out and listen to "defining voices" from the Indian world. My hope was to eventually seek out and listen for Native American self-reflection and learn from it.

When I assumed a teaching position on the Pine Ridge Reservation, I was anxious to learn more about the life and vision of Black Elk which Brown had partly shared with me. My education in this matter would occur on the very same terrain which was home to the holy-man for most of his life--five-thousand square miles in the southwest corner of present-day South Dakota on land comprised of lunar-like Badlands, imposing buttes, rolling plains, and clean air (see Map 1).

After only a short time at Pine Ridge, I learned to my great astonishment that Black Elk's prestige in the reservation community was not attributable to the popularity

of his two books. Prestige he indeed had, but it was due, surprisingly enough, to his very active involvement with priests in establishing Catholicism among his people! Older persons remembered him as "Nick" Black Elk, and most knew little (if anything) about the two books based on his life and thought. Those who were familiar with the literature thought it was the work of Nick's son, Ben--himself a man of some fame.* For years, Ben was known as the "other face" on Mt. Rushmore because of his popularity there with tourists. And too, Ben had appeared in motion pictures. This was the Black Elk some associated with books, as they knew Ben to be a media favorite.

Neihardt had made passing reference to Black Elk as a "preacher" in his Introduction (1972, X), but had suggested the word be understood merely in terms of his role as a traditional holy-man (wicasa wakan) of the Lakota. When Neihardt related he heard Black Elk "was a kind of a preacher," he perhaps little realized what dimensions such a characterization took in the minds of local Pine Ridge residents.** To my amazement, I learned that Black Elk had, in fact, preached Christian doctrine to his people for the greater part of his life--and that he had been formally

*Healing of Memories by Dennis and Mathew Lynn (Paulist Press, Ramsey, N.J., 1974) quotes The Sacred Pipe and does, in fact, erroneously attribute authorship (in a footnote) to Ben.

**Gretchen Bataille's article "Black Elk--New World Prophet" misinterprets Neihardt by stating the holy-man was "kind of a preacher"--a significant distortion of both Neihardt's meaning and Black Elk's style (1984, 139).

invested with the office of "catechist."

Readers of The Sacred Pipe were initially made aware of Black Elk's basic familiarity with Christianity, but knew nothing of the background against which the holy-man's utterance was made. The simplicity of his testimony is easily glossed over when juxtaposed to the wealth of Lakota religious tradition he goes on to relate. For example, Black Elk is quoted as saying:

"We have been told by the white man, or at least by those who are Christian, that God sent to men his son, who would restore order and peace upon the earth; and we have been told that Jesus the Christ was crucified, but that he shall come again at the Last Judgement, the end of this world or cycle. This I understand and know it is true . . . (Brown, xix)/italics added/.

Apparently, this creed seems to have been read in terms of Black Elk's only being acquainted with Christian doctrine. As I later learned, and as will be shown, much more was involved.

When Ben Black Elk died in February of 1973, and as I sang with the Lakota choir at his burial, I felt a great loss had occurred. To my knowledge, a direct family link with the Oglala holy-man could no longer be made (now that Ben was gone). The child of so venerable a parent as Nick Black Elk might well have shed some light on the questions raised by the old Sioux patriarch. I had barely known Ben, and now he was dead. The book seemed closed on Nick Black Elk's life, and further illumination of it seemed pretty much left to anyone's speculation (see Appendix II, "Eulogy").

Such were my feelings when just three months after Ben's

funeral, I happened to meet an unci (grandmother) who was seated on a bench in front of the Holy Rosary Mission.* I asked her if she perhaps had attended school at the Mission years earlier when only one building served as the entire educational complex.

The question prompted her to take a long look at the grounds, and seemed to take her back many years to another time, another style of life--less mobile and slower paced than today. Her wrinkled face bespoke a glimmer of nostalgia as she replied: "When I was just a little girl, I came to school here--and so did my brother Ben. Since he passed away, this school dedicated its yearbook to his memory." Such was how I met Black Elk's only surviving child, Lucy.

We spoke for awhile, and I asked if I might visit her someday. I explained that I was a teacher at the Red Cloud Indian High School, and was attempting to relate her father's thoughts to the students. I felt that she might be able to help me understand more deeply just who her father was.

Lucy said she would be happy to explain as much as she could about her father, and that I could visit her whenever I wished. We shook hands and parted until two weeks later when the spring rains had ceased and country roads permitted

*Holy Rosary Mission, founded by the Jesuits in 1888, continues today as a major educational institution of the Pine Ridge Reservation. Reference to an older person as "grandmother" or "grandfather" is being respectful in Lakota tradition. This will surface again in a consideration of Lakota prayer that begins "Tunkashila Wakan Tanka" or, "Grandfather Great Spirit."

passage.

B. VISITING BLACK ELK'S DAUGHTER: REVELATION OF A LARGER STORY

Lucy's home was an old log house roughly four miles north of Manderson, South Dakota--a small town on the Pine Ridge Reservation (see MAP 2). When I arrived for our first meeting, Lucy suggested we sit under a shade of pine boughs which her husband, Leo, had constructed. There we could speak--uninterrupted by the smaller grandchildren who were playing around the house.

As I interviewed her, I based my questions on material drawn from Black Elk Speaks and The Sacred Pipe. Lucy brought me up short by saying she had never read either book, and that she knew very little about her father's life as a young man. The more I referred to either book, the more I realized Lucy had other things on her mind. I was beginning to think she did not really wish to have me visit, or to ask questions about anything. Finally, sensing our encounter would soon be over, I asked if there was anything she felt should be known about her father that was not already known to people.

It was then I learned of a dream Lucy had carried with her ever since her father's death. For years she had waited to have her father's life fully recorded. So far, it had not. So far, it had only been partially told by John Neihardt, and The Sacred Pipe did not capture what she felt was most significant. Moreover, Lucy was disappointed that her father was now being misunderstood, and that people were using the material from his books in a way he never intended.

I told Lucy of my desire to learn what she had to say, and of my willingness to help put together a conclusive biography of her father. At the time, I little realized what this task would entail. Joseph Epes Brown corresponded with me during this period, and his words were a source of encouragement over the next few years. He wrote:

"I have felt it improper that this phase of his life was never presented either by Neihardt or indeed by myself. I suppose somehow it was thought this Christian participation compromised his 'Indianness,' but I do not see it this way and think it time that the record was set straight."

Brown suggested that the record be set straight, and it was clearly Lucy's intention throughout the course of my relationship with her to do just that. She had long desired to undertake such a project and, from that time on, looked forward to my visits. In her declining years, Lucy knew that not much time remained for her to fulfill the vision of relating her father's life-story.

C. COMPLETING BLACK ELK'S BIOGRAPHY AND THE PROBLEMS THIS ENTAILED

"Setting the record straight," understanding "who Black Elk really was," or writing up "the final chapters" of a famous person's life might sound like a simple enough task. These are, however, descriptive but facile characterizations of what turned out to be a very complex enterprise. Biographical sketches of other Lakota religious had already appeared (Sandoz, 1942; Vestal, 1932; Walker 1917; Wallis, 1919), and my presumption was that Black Elk's story would

pose few difficulties. After all, his daughter was the most qualified authority to speak, and she was anxious to cooperate in the effort. However, my naivete' evaporated shortly after we began our visits.

My initial desire was to replicate the model proposed by Oscar Lewis (1961). I wanted to avoid putting Lucy's words through "the sieve" of my mind. I wanted to let them stand alone (with the force and flavor they originally carried). To her satisfaction, this was accomplished, but to the non-Lakota much was still needed.* Besides, her narrative suggested theoretical directions I had not previously thought of pursuing. Hence, "thick description" became an ethnographic imperative--not only for purposes of amplifying vague references, but also for fully depicting the curious puzzle Black Elk's life revealed (Geertz, 1973). In attempting to flesh out the skeletal features of Black Elk's lived-experience, in trying to spell out his confrontation with social upheaval, and in ordering my analysis of how his life interlocked with micro- and macro-environments, I found myself confronted with the methodological question of how to structure and present findings that appeared so multidimensional.

Acknowledging this problem, it would be unrealistic of me to think anthropologists would all espouse one strategy of analysis. And so, the following is offered as an admission of

*After my interviews with her, I read to Lucy the narrative she provided, and it appears in this text as she wanted it.

where my own analytical instincts only tend to move. That is, Black Elk's life will here be set forth through the words of those who knew him best--my remarks being a frame, as it were, for the portrait they sketch. The "humanization of scholarly writing" goes hand-in-hand with such an approach (Parssinen, 1974, 1975).

As to the trajectory of this work, a word is in order concerning Lucy's perspective. It triggered an incremental buildup of scope, and forced me to investigate depths that I had not planned to fathom. Whatever all their reasons were for not telling about Black Elk's later life, Neihardt and Brown perhaps realized how much effort its adequate disclosure would entail.

Over twenty years had elapsed since Lucy's father was alive and, too, her account extended back into the last century. Although I hoped for the opposite, it did not surprise me to find that Lucy's recollections showed little concern for chronology--a phenomenon that Kluckhohn had earlier noted among Native informants (1945, 81-2). To Lucy, emotional impressions and indelible memories were the constitutive elements of a very special, daughter-father relationship. And so, my persistent request for a "play-by-play" account of one-year-to-the-next often seemed to her a bewildering pre-occupation with calendrical events.

This was my way of harnessing disparate observations, of focusing nebulous sentiments and, in short, of translating essence into substance. As time passed, it was both amusing

and frustrating to be part of a process that consisted of my forcing Lucy to make empirical declarations instead of stating abstractions--only for me to then conceive abstractions of my own based on the "facts" she supplied. This pattern was, albeit time-consuming, a necessary kind of ethnographic winnowing and reconstituting. A composite sense of Black Elk was finally, to our satisfaction, produced.

With the above design achieved, it became apparent that I elucidate other issues that were suggested by Lucy's account. Moreover, I needed to cross-check references so as to insure the accuracy of what she reported. With her permission, I interviewed other Lakota and combed through archives that seemed pertinent. The former included friends and family of Black Elk, while the latter consisted principally of Jesuit journals, Neihardt's field-notes, and ethnographic literature.

III. PUTTING TOGETHER BLACK ELK'S BIOGRAPHY

Although exceptions exist, it is not uncommon to find narratives by Indian people which read as if the speakers were fluent in English. Even those which are known to be translations lose something of their original flavor (Ekvall 1960). Intended perhaps for clarity, such versions actually tend to misrepresent the individual, or melt down the uniqueness of Indian life-stories into a pan-cultural artifact. That is, a kind of Native voice arises from all these works which sounds basically the same, even though time-periods and thousands of miles separate the persons and their groups. We have, then, life-stories presented in

Standard American English--removing us a bit further from the life and culture we seek to understand.

Kenneth Lincoln (1983, 12) reflected on this problem of translation as it bore upon Black Elk Speaks, and his comments are worth noting so as to indicate what has been operative vis-a-vis not just this earlier portrait of the Lakota, but also other, perhaps all, fieldwork harvests:

" . . . the reader, still half a century later assimilates the published account into his own life. From Black Elk's memories through Neihardt to the reader's present spans a century. The process moves from visionary-healer-singer-teller through poet-translator to literate recipient; from spoken recall through written translation to reading a book; from field anthropology, the where and when of each person involved to the next; from the cultural transitions and histories of each to another; from informant through creative writer to reader. To note these passages stimulates care for the translative detail; it raises questions about how one moves toward, or slides away from genuine translations."

"Genuine translation" here might just as well refer to any type of information that one seeks to discover within another's world-view. And this call to consciousness, or appeal for fieldwork accuracy is actually a canon of anthropology. It deserves repetition, however, since charges are often made which claim it has been violated.

Like Langness and Frank before him (1981, 61), Arnold Krupat pointedly stated that the fieldworker need be wary of how information about life-stories is eventually pieced together (1981, 223). He wrote that they are:

" . . . collaborative efforts, jointly produced

by some white who translates, transcribes, compiles, edits, interprets, polishes, and ultimately determines the 'form' of the text in writing, and by an Indian who is its 'subject' and whose title may bear his 'name.' Although they are unfortunate, these quotation marks are necessary to indicate the problematic status of the terms they enclose."

After several years of interviews, visits and correspondence, I read to Lucy my translating, transcribing, compiling, editing, interpreting, and polishing--a methodological luxury which her father (and other Native informants, I am sure) did not enjoy. She was quite satisfied with our "collaborative effort," and I was pleased to have mediated the preparation of a written text that had included many disparate, and sometimes disconnected, means of inquiry (i.e., taping sessions, planned and unplanned visits, solicited and unsolicited letters, family gatherings, chance meetings, etc.).

As with other "classics of American Indian ethnography," this research has also been "constructed largely on information provided by tiny numbers of elderly informants" (Barrett 1984, 18). Unlike them, however, it will attempt to preserve the uniqueness of each informant-personality (and still retain, I would hope, the potential for also being a "classic"). This reliance upon the aged probably has as many drawbacks as does reliance upon younger folk, but my experiences with older persons have been quite rewarding--both on a friendship basis and in terms of acquiring special information known only to them. On this positive aspect of relating to the elderly, one commentator humorously noted the advantages of such encounters (Cranford 1983):

"To get old in any century takes guts and resiliency, not to mention plain dogged perseverance . . . You just can't get the same quality of insight into the past from any other source as you can from the mouth of someone who's been back there and come out alive.

"So let us assume that very old people are distinguished and venerable simply because they've come so far through so much. Old people have been in the woods so long they know where the bears are hiding, and some of them even know good recipes for bear."

Any fieldworker worth their salt can discern "good recipes" from those which are bland.

The informants upon whom this work depends, apart from Lucy, were those who knew Black Elk personally. His intimates were either long dead, infirm, or in their declining years. Hence, necessity required my adverting to the senior generation, and it was within their camp that I felt most on firm ground in terms of what might be called "data reliability."

A. LUCY'S SENSE OF URGENCY

Initially, Lucy tape-recorded her father's life-story such that it would include the many years not treated by either Neihardt or Brown. As mentioned, I did not realize that hers was a decades-standing dream. I was gladdened to meet with so positive a response. Eventually, though, I came to learn that her father's well known vision and thought were not, in her opinion, all that particularly well-known! What I had anticipated as being an elaboration became, instead, an important clarification. Lucy was most able to do what Brown later suggested be done, viz., "set the record straight"

(Brown 1975)--the very words used by General Chuck Yeager when asked why he decided to write an autobiography (Walter 1985). Whether told to or through someone else, whether written by others or by one's self, life-stories are perhaps supremely suited to repetitive scrutiny--be they the thought and actions of a Lakota holy-man or a twentieth century jet test-pilot. It may be that persons turn to such literature because it is thought to contain life-giving responses to life's special questions--as answered by the world's special people.

My chance meeting with Lucy just after her brother's death was an event she considered quite fortuitous. Indeed, the historical context of his funeral is worth spelling out here. It gave impetus to Lucy's desire for clarifying her father's life.

Ben Black Elk's funeral was a well-attended event for several reasons. Not only had Ben appeared in motion pictures, and not only was he the son of the famous Black Elk, but he had also served as a kind of diplomat to tourists visiting the Black Hills in Keystone, South Dakota. Dressed in traditional garb, Ben was pictured on post-cards which described him as a "Souix /sic/ warrior"--perhaps an intentional promotional association of him with the books about his father (see photograph).

Ben's funeral also drew numbers of people because of social unrest created by the murder of Raymond Yellow Thunder in nearby Gordon, Nebraska. The American Indian Movement (called "AIM") was present in the region trying to generate

Lakota resistance to civil rights violations (and so were also present at the funeral wake, services, and "feed"). When Ben was buried, I joined about five other people to sing Catholic Lakota hymns at the graveside. Lucy and I no doubt saw one another on this occasion but we never actually met. Just after the funeral, the 71 day occupation of Wounded Knee took place.

All of this was going on (i.e., the social unrest) when Ben died. Like everyone else's family, Lucy's was also stirred up by the presence of AIM in the community--persons from various news media covering both Ben's passing and the activities of AIM leaders (especially Dennis Bank and Russell Means, well-known activists who had been in the spotlight nationally on other occasions).

Not much has been written about the Wounded Knee occupation, so some references are worth noting here, viz., Milligan (1973) and Zimmerman (1975) present easily readable observations, while Akwasasne Notes (1974) pretty much presents the AIM position. The most scholarly work to date, as yet unpublished, is Jay Furlong's (1980) Master's thesis. And although disclaiming any association "with persons living or dead," the motion picture The Trial of Billy Jack portrayed scenes which had an almost one-to-one correspondence with the events reported for Raymond Yellow Thunder's killing, and happenings which followed it.

Ben was now gone, and Lucy's health was not good. The Neihardt/Brown portrait of her father was, these long years

after his death, being invoked by people who did not really know him--both extended-family members and outsiders. In turn, these people were espousing social actions, religious sentiments and practices she knew her father would not so readily affirm. And so, I was eager to learn more about Black Elk's life and thought, while Lucy was long ready to pass on what had previously been left unreported. To use a contemporary phrase: "all systems were go." But time would deal us unanticipated surprises in the fulfillment of our respective quests.

As I look back on that hope-filled beginning, I think that somewhere within both our minds was gratitude. That is, I had stumbled upon the daughter of a man whose image was that of shaman par excellence, a man whose ties with the supernatural world had captivated the imaginations of countless people like myself. Fueled with romanticism, I hoped that maybe some deeper sense of Black Elk would be communicated to me, and that "the keys to the kingdom" which he knew would now be entrusted to me through his daughter. On the other hand, Lucy expected our task to be fairly straightforward and simple. She would pass on his life-message, and I would be the trustworthy amanuensis. Ultimately, perhaps, this is what has actually come to pass--just not in the way either of us expected.

B. LANGUAGE, TEXT, AND INTERVIEWS

Lucy's first language is Lakota, but most days are spent using English. As a result, the dialect which arises is not

what one would hear outside Siouan settings. For example, verbs tend to be in the present tense, so someone who died long ago might be spoken of as if still alive. Instead of "he did it," we would hear "he does it." Further analysis would reveal correspondences with the mother tongue, but the point here is simply to state why some of the following narratives read, at times, the way they do.

Lucy's speech is representative of older Lakota people, and every effort was made to preserve her (and their) way of speaking. Edited from transcripts were gropings for words, repetitions, and dangling sentences common to any conversation. The mixture of tenses that occasionally occurred has also been eliminated.

Oratorical ability among the Lakota (and other Plains people) was an impressive credential that Black Elk seemed to possess (albeit revealed via Neihardt and Brown). Leadership within Plains social structure was, in fact, often contingent upon one's power of persuasion. However, Lucy's verbal skills (and those of other informants) seem more "down to earth" than what was reported for her father in the earlier books (n.b., The Sixth Grandfather helps clarify what embellishments Neihardt may have provided). Hence, this "new" Plains style may disenchant readers who seek a kind of "duplicate verbal ethnography." This style may be attributable to generational differences, an indicator of what license has been taken by translators in the past, or just the rendering of Lakota thought into English words by persons more "at home" in their

native language.

After her initial recording, many additional visits were arranged so that I could get Lucy to clarify some point, or elaborate on some issue. Over the course of five years, we enjoyed many conversations, and shared our joys and sorrows. Every once in awhile, my tape-recorder batteries would die, or tapes get twisted within the machine, or some other unpredictable nuisance would occur. At such times, one of us would comment that Iktomi (the Lakota Trickster) was trying to interfere; either that, or her father was clowning with us from beyond the grave. More will be said about the unlaboratory-like conditions of many of our encounters. But for now, I merely note that early expectations were short-lived. They gave way to a sobering research task which at times seemed endless.

THESIS AIM

The cumulative result of this work is a compilation of material that stretches the horizon of previously held understandings that pertain to a famous man and the culture to which he belonged. Instead of just being Black Elk's life from the viewpoint of his daughter, this inquiry will illuminate corners of the Lakota world that have heretofore been shadowy or, indeed, misrepresented.

Implications of this work bear on widespread assumptions common to both Euro- and Indian America which, as already indicated, have been bolstered by Black Elk material. Indeed,

a byproduct of this work will be to show how the holy-man has been incorporated into significant social movements, how he has become a symbol for them, and how this usurpation is actually a transformation of who the man really was.

Stated more directly, the tendency has been to compartmentalize Black Elk's life and thought into an era untainted by non-Indian social or religious currents. Such a perspective is understandable since different kinds of analyses would probably be easier to do than if he were exposed to influences beyond the Lakota world. The fact remains, however, that the holy-man lived well beyond the Wounded Knee tragedy, and he did so with much vitality. Black Elk's life goes beyond the neat construct of total nativism on the one hand, or complete absorption of Western ways on the other. The holy-man's biography is not a profile in syncretism but is, rather, an example of reflexive adjustment to new cultural landscapes that had not been previously explored.

The conventional wisdom regarding Lakota history suggests that chameleon-like, a pastel world changed to moribund grey in the aftermath years of Wounded Knee. A "people's dream" had died, and their once-vital lifeblood clotted with each passing year. Poverty and depression hung heavily upon the now-hunched shoulders of a proud "warrior society." This already-fading pulse of a people in despair lessened more and more--a spectral reality that emerged within the heartland of an America whose global supremacy was very much on the rise.

The horror of Wounded Knee in 1890 is not, however, just an event of the distant past. Recollections of the Ghost Dance and the civilization that preceded it are still preserved within the memory of present-day Lakota people. Greatly immobilized since that event through the onslaughts of a multifarious wardship, the Sioux have indeed suffered a malaise of spirit over several decades which has certainly taken its toll on their morale. And yet, the holy-man lived--animatedly, serenely, lovingly, spiritually--through all of it. The contention of this work is not to disprove the anomic realities that characterized so much of the reservation period, but rather to explain how persons like Black Elk were able to face such odds and come to terms with them.

Studies too numerous to mention have catalogued the havoc produced by culture-contact in North America. And of the many domains analyzed within these works, the role of religion seems to be one that elicits much controversial coverage. Perhaps this is why Black Elk himself has been so entrancing a figure, as religion was the central concern of his life from beginning to end.

Frequently, as during the Grant administration, Christian denominations stepped forward and sought to ameliorate social conditions by means of conversion--toward Western religious practice and, presumably, Western modes of production and behavior. At the other extreme are those who have inveighed against such groups, and attributed a kind of home-grown holocaust to these zealous and diverse missionaries.

Although broaching this perennially provocative topic of religion's role, closure of it is not within the scope of this research. In fact, Black Elk's practice of Catholicism is only one focus of this work. The main concern addressed within these pages is to understand how a "stereotypical" Plains medicine-man of the nineteenth century could experience so many perturbations of lifestyle, meaningfully integrate new pattern of activity, and live out his days as a more-or-less happy individual.

The contention that will be forthcoming relates to the cultural context whence Black Elk came. That is, ordinarily, a culture does not easily forfeit well-established customs, or traditions, or social institutions. With the Lakota, in fact, this tendency is apparent vis-a-vis "old ways" still maintained today. Nonetheless, it appears that demographic convulsions of the frontier era created a kind of utilitarian behavioral mode whereby expedience vied equally with convention.

Since we are dealing with many actors in a production that took over two centuries to unfold, and since none of this drama bore the scrutiny of eyewitnesses who could in turn recount every deed found wanting or proven worthy, reasonable conjecture is what we must ultimately rely upon when proposing how people and events came to be the way they are (Oliver 1962). With this in mind, we know that Black Elk's people were one of many who converged within the Plains ecosystem, having been pushed from ancestral lands encroached upon by

well-armed whites and adversarial Indians (Newcomb 1950). The aftershock of such a displacement was somewhat mitigated by finding a bountiful region that provided new opportunities. However, the beacons which guided Lakota adaptation were more the vagaries of experience than the wisdom of tradition. The historic period brought constantly shifting circumstances which forced each generation "to create their own patterns of behavior" (Barrett 1984, 96).

Leadership was fluid, and had to be innovative, under the conditions described above. Standards from the past were not always suitable and were, in all probability, found wanting at times. Militancy, if only for purposes of protection, was a sine qua non of every group who competed for survival in this new locale--a point that needs to be underscored lest we too readily ascribe an inherent bellicose spirit to these peoples. And so, this new relationship to a new environment required new ways to make relatives out of aliens. Hence, there was an expansive quality within Lakota kinship which was itself a mode of adaptation that historic documentation has fixed but which was, in fact, still forming or evolving for this non-static Plains culture.

The biography that follows will detail the story of a medicine man who encountered the Christianity of a German Jesuit priest. Depending upon one's point of view, such was Black Elk's fated destiny, fortuitous chance, bad luck, or Providential call. But whatever one's perspective be on this chapter of the man's life, what needs to be understood is that

the apparent disconnectedness of experience is, rather, a processual unfolding of realities that the holy-man was predisposed to cope with, comprehend, assimilate, and address with considerable satisfaction. Plains culture itself was the source of this predisposition.

Rapid settlement of the West eliminated many of the identifiable features of pre-reservation life. These features truly had a substance of their own, and their loss can only be imagined by we who are removed from those times and places. Nonetheless, by examining Black Elk's life, we can appreciate Lakota experience from perspectives that have been previously overlooked. And so, this biography does not just offer some telling facts about one man's life. It provides new glimpses of how, in fact, an entire group carried on against challenges that are today still menacing.

CHAPTER II

1. BLACK ELK'S CULTURAL BACKGROUND

In order to understand Black Elk's later life, it is important to understand the cultural system within which he was born, and the social organization with which he was familiar. Prior to achieving notoriety as an individual, Black Elk was an anonymous participant in Native American plains life--as that life was conventionally defined by his particular group. These initial pages will provide a handle, as it were, on the identity of his people--a group whose very name has elicited controversy and confusion. This name-issue, along with the people's social configuration and history, will be addressed in what immediately follows.

A. THE PEOPLE'S NAME

Someone visiting the Pine Ridge Reservation today would hear residents variously refer to themselves as "Sioux," "Sioux-s," "Indian," "Lakota," and other, maybe somewhat "faddish" names (e.g., "natural peoples," "Native American," "original people," etc.). The fact is that different persons simply use different terms. However, "Lakota," "Sioux," and "Indian" are the names most commonly employed.

An anthropologist-visitor would know that "Sioux" was actually the shortened form of the Chippewa word "Nadowessiwag" which meant "little serpents," (Baraga 1973, 264). The Iroquois loomed as a larger threat to Chippewa existence, and so were called "big serpents" (or "Nadowe"). Chippewa regard for the Iroquois did not linger,

linguistically at least, as did the well-known, undeleted expletive, "Sioux"--the name which adhered, over time, to Black Elk's people.

Others called them Sioux and, eventually, such was the colloquial "English" word they used when referring to themselves) but certainly not with the connotation intended by the Chippewa). However, Euro-American expansion westward displaced sovereign groups, and these numerous, bloody conflicts postponed scholarly attention to what might now be termed an "emic" (or Native) perspective. In fact, only in recent times have the Sioux (and researchers following their lead) begun to eschew associations with this "foreign" name bequeathed by their Woodland neighbors and reinforced by popular usage (Steltenkamp 1982, 8).

In ages-past, these folk referred to themselves as "oyate" (people) "ikce" (native) "ankantu" (superior). The diverse groups which comprised the nation "considered one-another kin" (taku-kiciyapi), and regarded others as "inferior" (ihukuya). At first glance, such designations seem to imply a heightened degree of ethno-centrism. However, monographs which take this linguistic approach have neglected to show that arrogance, as it were, is not entirely operative within the terminology. Rather, the fuller meaning of "oyate ikce ankantu" relates also to the people's origin story--their genesis being in a lower world, and their appearance on earth implying an emergence on top of, or beyond, the "inferior" realms below. This mythic underpinning of Sioux identity has

been largely overlooked because of the recurrent displays of ego, or bravado, which so often characterized Plains life (Hassrick 1964, 32). Moreover, the earliest visitors to Sioux territory, and those who followed, never failed to mention this people as being exceedingly proud (Chittendon and Richardson, 1905; Catlin, 1973; Devoto, 1953; Parkman 1950).

B. STRUCTURE OF THE NATION

Referred to as snakes by their enemy, "Sioux" by Europeans, and "kin" by themselves, this geographically widespread group of people defined its membership, generically, as being "friends" or "allies" (kola). Herein lies another aspect of nomenclature which needs attention. Namely, three principal divisions exist among this people which, if taken together, constitute the nation as a whole. They did, however, maintain their own unique identities.

Although anthropologists have, for years, lumped these three divisions under the label of "Dakota," this word technically applies only to the most eastern group. Hence, those closer to their Woodland origin were Dakota, while slightly further west were the "Nakota." Finally, the largest and more well-known division was the high Plains "Lakota"--Black Elk's people. The group to which one belonged could be detected (among other ways) by listening for the "L," "N," or "D" sounds in speech (e.g., kola, kona, koda =

"friend").* Furthermore, the divisions (otonwepi) were comprised of sub-groups (indicated below) which came to be known as "the seven council fires" (oceti sakowin) (Little Thunder, N.D.).

Dakota	Nakota	Lakota
Wahpekute	Ihanktonwan	Teton
Mdewakantonwan	Ihanktonwanna	
Wahpetonwan		
Sistonwan		

Just as the nation was thus divided into seven groups, so were the Lakota-Tetons. And like the nation, these Teton groups (called "ospaye") were each assigned a specific place within the camp-circle ("ho-coka").

Figure I illustrates a hierarchical, or place-of-prominence, configuration of the entire nation were it gathered en masse. Figure II illustrates the Lakota camp circle in particular.

In terms of felt-identity, a given individual experienced "belonging" at the most immediate level. This did not negate, of course, a more expansive self-definition. A person like Black Elk, for example, might order their sense of belonging in the following way (Walker 1917, 97-8):

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) ti-ognaka | 1) household |
| 2) wico-tipi | 2) camp |
| 3) ti-ospaye | 3) band |
| 4) ospaye | 4) division |
| 5) otonwe | 5) blood-related tribal division |

*While practicing my Lakota vocabulary, I was corrected by a young person who said I was mispronouncing certain words--whereupon I was introduced to the Dakota dialect with my "l's" replaced by the person's "d's."

C. THE CAMP CIRCLE

As Figures I and II suggest, the camp circle was significant at both a micro and macro level. One knew one's place within it both "at home" in the day-to-day sense, and in a more abstract, conceptual way (i.e., when the "nation" or division would gather). Yet, as central as this notion of "camp-circle" was to Lakota life, its composition has been difficult for observers to pin down. Gordon MacGregor's classic work on the Pine Ridge Reservation called attention to this problem (1946, 52-3):

"The encampments are not always defined in descriptions of Dakota /sic/ social organization because they were not permanent the year round and were constantly shifting in band membership The encampments are also confused in historical literature with the smaller bands and sometimes with the larger subtribes."

Since MacGregor's time, the social universe of Black Elk has been studied in greater detail (in large measure due to the interest generated by Black Elk himself). These pages distill what clarity has been found.

Having come a long way from simply being known as "little snakes," this Plains folk are now understood to be a geographically widespread, linguistically differentiated, nomadic and semi-sedentary people whose organizing principle was the camp circle. The nation-at-large was conceived thus (oceti sakowin), as were the Teton of the west. Moreover, within this division was Black Elk's sub-group, the Oglala, who also were comprised of seven segments (Figure III). The

Figure 1

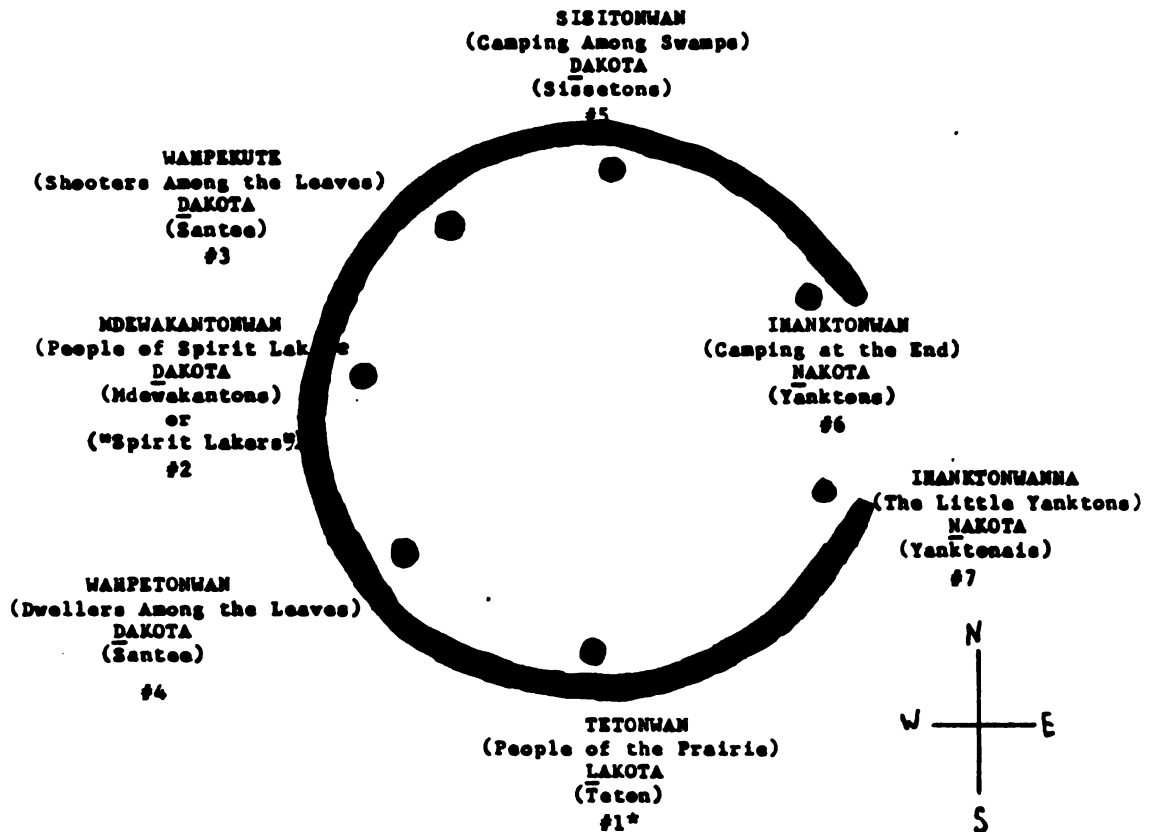
CAMP CIRCLE OF THE SEVEN COUNCIL FIRES

("Wice-Ti")

("Oceti Sakowin")

or

("he-coka")

Key

Line 1: traditional name

Line 2: translation

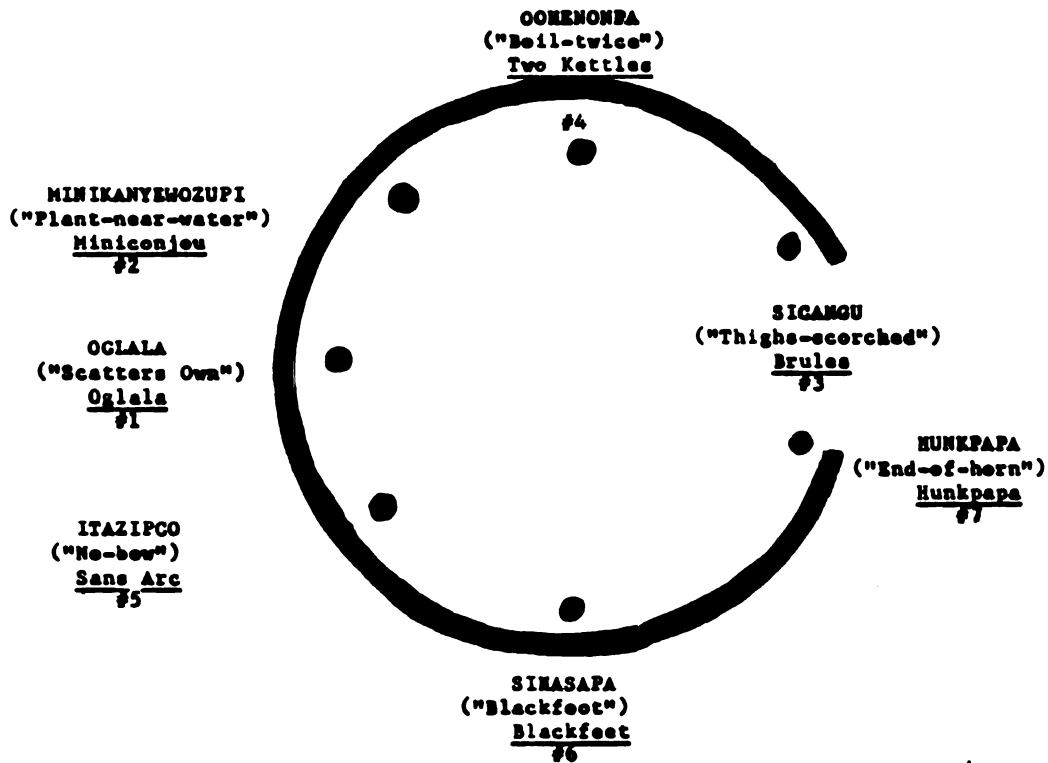
Line 3: dialect

Line 4: anglicized present name

Number: order of precedence

*Tradition has it that the Teton usurped the place of honor from the Mdewakantons (thus modifying the above diagram of the camp-circle).

Figure 2

CAMP CIRCLE OF THE TETONKey

Line 1: traditional name
 Line 2: translation
 Line 3: present name
 Number: order of precedence

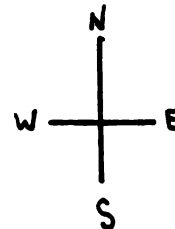
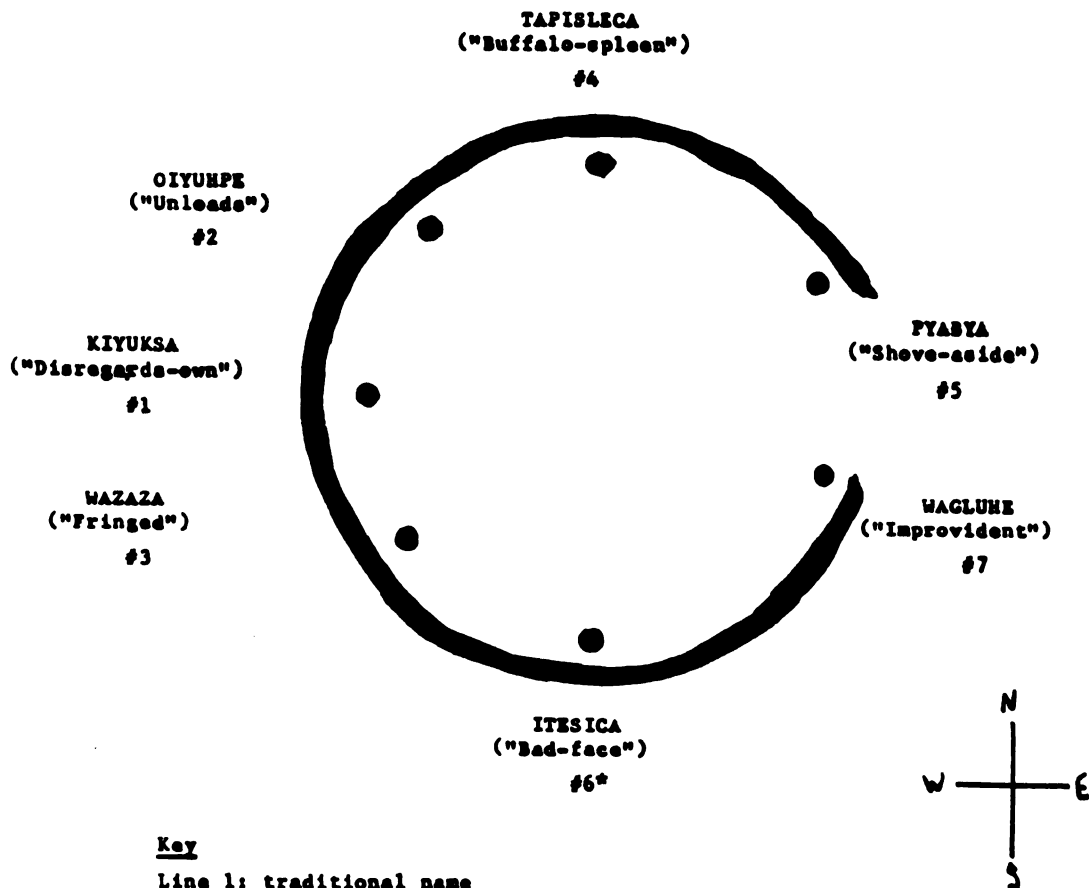


Figure 3CAMP CIRCLE OF THE OGLALAKey

Line 1: traditional name


Line 2: translation

Line 3: order of precedence

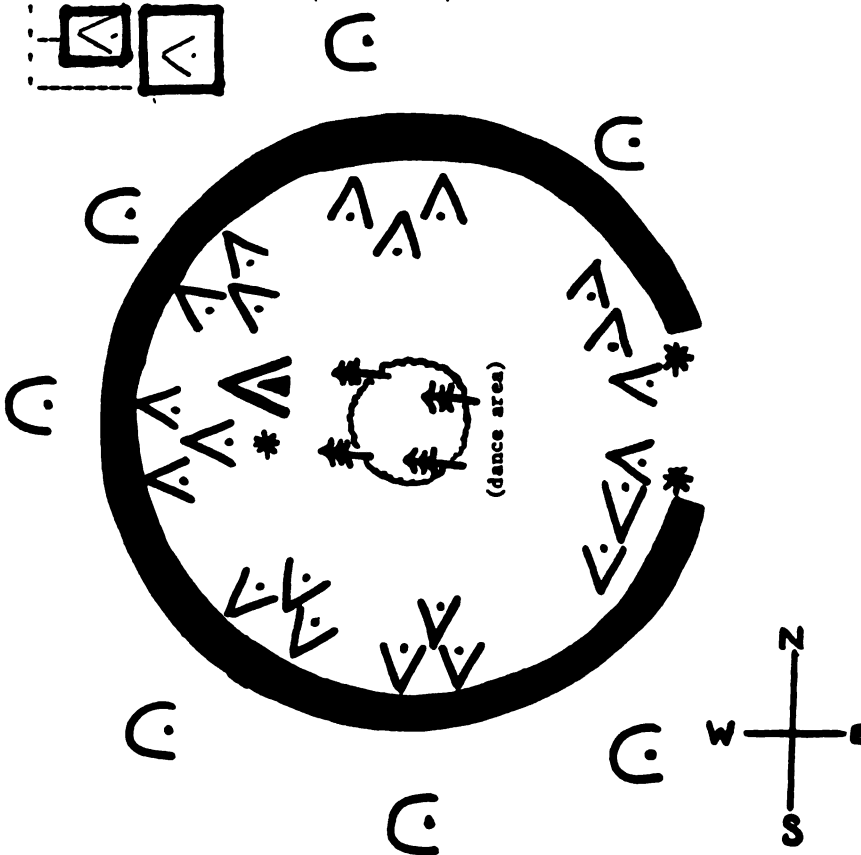
*Tradition has it that the Bad-faces usurped the place of honor from the Kiyuksa.


Figure 4A Formal Camp

Ini-tipi (sweat-lodge): placed outside the camp circle; dome-shaped 

Tiyotipi (council-lodge): unoccupied; large lodge wherein the otioyotipi (i.e., lodge headmen) preside over the peta ooniciye (council fire) and transact communal business 

Tipis pitched outside the camp-circle indicate people in disgrace or resistant to camp leadership



 Indicates highest places of honor. Warriors of renown were entitled to occupy places at the entrance (oinapa)--their tipis facing the rising sun while others open to the camp center (hocoka).

eastern divisions, with whom the Lakota had sporadic contact, were similarly arranged. Hence, daily life was carried on within a local camp (Figure IV), and the social configuration of this grouping expanded outward to eventually include all of the oyate ikce ankantu.

A given individual's first-hand experience was that of a kinbased social network embodied in the local camp. Radiating from this were progressively inclusive identities which ultimately completed what might be considered a national portrait. Person's like Black Elk might have described this totality as follows: "I belong to the Bad Face camp--one of seven Oglala groups, and my Oglala group is one of seven divisions among us Teton. We recognize as relatives and friends six other large family-wings to the east."

It should be noted that such a conceptualization did not play a particularly prominent role in most people's lives. In fact, old-time Lakota might match the caricature of a present-day person from New York who only has a vague sense of what lies west of the Hudson! Both, however, could describe something of a national identity comprised of neighborhoods or camps which eclipse their own immediate experience. Naturally, the accuracy of such descriptions would vary from person to person.

Regardless of one's competence in describing the overlapping social structures of their nation, the more immediate reality of camp-life made everyone an authority. That is, within a given band, relationships were well-defined,

and one's privileges, responsibilities, and status were known to all.

Whereas semi-sedentary villages were not uncommon to the eastern Dakota (earthlodges maintained, in some instances), their presence among the Teton was unknown (Eggan 1966, 45-77). Lakota camps did not remain in one spot year-round, and never enjoyed a fixed membership. Fluidity of composition was due both to internecine struggles and climate--the latter producing an overall pattern of warm-weather fusion with large groups disbanding into smaller parties come winter. This aggregation/dispersal motif was, appropriately enough, the very same seasonal behavior of the buffalo--the people's primary subsistence resource (see Chart I).

Because of the fission/fusion nature of Teton camps, early observers found it difficult to fully understand their structure. Diligent research and countless interviews have, though, provided a fairly good understanding of how camps "worked"--knowledge of which has benefitted both the academic community and heritage-minded Lakota. Black Elk's generation derived their identity from, and themselves defined, the lifeblood of camp-tradition that would eventually coagulate to produce the contemporary reservation settlement pattern.

D. CAMP LANDSCAPE

As if to replicate in miniature form the nation as a whole, camps were pitched in a circle whose entrance (oinapa) faced the rising sun. Tipis faced toward the camp-circle (hocoka), and like the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires),

Chart 1

THE ROLE OF THE BUFFALO IN LAKOTA CULTUREBEARD

Ornamentation

BLOODSoup
Pudding
PaintBONESFleshing-tools
Pipes
Knives
Arrow-points
Shovels
Splints
Slids
War-clubs
Scrapers
Quirts
Awls
Paintbrushes
Game-dice
Tablewear
Toys
JewelryBRAINHide preparations
FoodBUCKSKINCradles
Moccasins
Winter-ropes
Bedding
Shirts
Belts
Leggings
Dresses
Bags
Quivers
Tipi-covers
Tipi-liners
Bridles
Backrests
TapestriesSweatlodge-coversDolls
MittensCHIPSFuel
Diaper-powderFATTallow
Soaps
Hair-grease
Cosmetic-aidsHAIRHead-dresses
Pad-fillers
Pillows
Ropes
Hair-pieces
Halters
Bracelets
Medicine-balls
Moccasin-lining
Doll-stuffingHIND LEG SKIN

Preshaped moccasin

HOOFs, FEET, & DEWCLAWSGlue
Rattles
SpoonsHORNSarrow points, cups, fire-
carrier, spoons, ladles,
toys, powderhorn,
head-dress, signals,
medicationLIVER

Tanning-agents

GALL

Yellow paints

MEATImmediate use
Sausages
Cached
Jerky (dehydrated)
Pemmican (processed)MUSCLESGlue preparation
Bows
Thread
Arrow ties
CinchesPAUNCH LINERMeat-wrappings
Buckets
Collapsible cups
Basins
CanteensRAWHIDEContainers, shields,
Buckets, moccasin soles,
drums, splints, mortars,
ropes, sheaths, saddles
& blankets, stirrups,
bull-boats, masks, lariats,
straps, caps, snowshoesSCROTUM

Rattles & containers

SKULL

Sun-dance, medicine prayers

STOMACH LINER & CONTENTSmedicines, paints, water
containers, cooking vesselsTAIL, TEETH, TONGUEwhips, switches, brushes,
ornaments, comb, choice meatTENDONS

sinew/sewing, bowstrings

BLADDERPouches
Medicine bags

statuses were associated with fixed positions within the circumference. For example, warriors of renown were closest to the entrance, while the camp-leader was positioned directly opposite. Tipis pitched outside the camp-circle indicated people in disgrace or those who were resistant to the prevailing leadership. Within the perimeter, tipis pitched at the rear of another were subordinate, status-wise, to those in front.

A typical warm-weather encampment would include domed sweat-lodges (ini-tipi) constructed outside the circle. Ownership, number, and use of these purificatory chambers were regulated, it seems, by nothing other than expedience. They were easily built, and frequently used.

Close to the leader's tipi was the council-lodge (tiyotipi) wherein communal business was transacted, and the council fire (peta omniciye) preserved. High-status individuals were allowed within this forum, and their decisions cast them as either perennial incumbents or deposed failures. After all, survival was often at stake--be it related to defence or subsistence. Lack of success in these and other pursuits could not be justified for any length of time. Hence, families outside the camp-circle might well find themselves eventually within it--their resistance to previous decisions perhaps showing some wisdom. And too, families could break off from a camp entirely, and re-organize their following under new auspices--within a circle of their own.

E. CAMP SIZES AND LEADERSHIP

Regardless of frequency, factional disputes and camp fragmentation did not alter what might be termed the normative Lakota political structure within each camp. At first glance, a pyramidal configuration of power seems to have been operative. However, as will be shown, power was relative--both figuratively and literally. Everyone, in some form, was beholden to everybody else. With this in mind, structural "offices" can be appreciated as functional roles which helped facilitate cooperation and survival for the group as a whole.

The popular notion that Indian leaders were "chiefs" and their followers "braves," apart from its sexist connotation, represents colloquial convenience at the expense of a more sophisticated grasp of Lakota social organization. It is true that, in recent times, the English word "chief" has often been used by Tetons themselves when referring to leadership roles, but this contemporary usage is not entirely consonant with what the tradition actually bore. Black Elk himself was accorded this title, posthumously, by those who saw fit to provide his grave with a special headstone (see Photograph). Yet, the pre-reservation period was not so gratuitous in the bestowal of such honors--save for acknowledging that one was indeed "chief" within their own tipi. The public forum, however, required more formal structuring.

The social organization of camp life was contingent upon the fluid conditions of a nomadic way. Flora, foes, and fauna, weal, weather, and woe--all conspired to be the

fluctuating variables which tailored Lakota existence. Because of this, the description of a "typical" camp needs several qualifiers--the end result being a "more-or-less kind of "thick description."

For example, are we speaking about a large camp? A small one? A renegade grouping? Which kind? Early observers of Lakota life were understandably befuddled as different constraints regularly altered configurations of authority and camp-size itself. Custer's demise was the result of his attack upon the inhabitants of a camp who outnumbered his men fifty to one. Were the Seventh Cavalry to have conducted this exploit a month earlier, or later, Little Big Horn would not denote today what it does.

Even though the plasticity of Lakota camp-life offers complicating variables, certain features seem constant enough to merit the designation of "political structure." Under this rubric, we can include the formal offices, or roles, which people recognized within both small and large groupings. Just as one might expect to find a mayor, judge, council, and police force within most towns and cities of America today, so might one have found an analogous (not homologous) arrangement among the Lakota, as the following paragraphs will illustrate.

Presiding within the council lodge, spokesman for a given camp, and persona whose influence was recognized by other neighboring groups, wicasa itancan was the leadership role that was communally affirmed. Literally, the phrase means "man-leader," but has been rendered in the vernacular a

"chief." Public opinion determined if succession followed from father to eldest son--a hereditary feature that seems to have been the general rule. However, this person was not alone in bearing the burden of camp-leadership.

The wakiconza, translated a "magistrate" or "counsellor," was a position occupied by several men whose credentials the people acknowledged by granting them special responsibility. For example, a camp-in-transit was under their direction, as was the arbitration of disputes, and selection of camp police. This latter group, drawn from the seven or so warrior societies which existed, kept order on the hunt and during war excursions. Known as akicita, one chosen for this task carried a wooden stick made of ash and was, with black stripe on the cheek, a readily identifiable judicial presence. The akicita thwarted mischief-makers, punished the irresponsible, and on rare occasion, meted out the death penalty (Walker 1982, 31).

A camp's most influential people sat in council with the itancan, wakiconza, and akicita--producing, as it were, a fairly broad-based kind of democratic deliberation. Although not everyone was included within the council lodge (tiyotipi), representation of issues and ideas was no doubt circumspect. Among the prestigious social positions which carried status within a camp, and which therefore often had access to council were: shamans, headmen, warriors, hunters, storytellers, medicine men, and old people suspected of having peculiar power (Walker 1982, 62).

Because the size of a camp dictated its social arrangement, sample variations are listed below. Accounts rendered by different informants do not always coincide with one another--a puzzlement to one seeking accurate ethnographic detail. It seems, however, that such a meticulous reconstruction of camp-life is, ultimately, a proposition admitting several possibilities.

In essence, we know different persons, in the course of a lifetime, belonged to many camps--in good weather and bad, during rendezvous periods and dispersal times. The "memory culture" being recalled depended upon a lifetime of many memories, at many places, within many camp-circles. Commentators do not seem to have fully appreciated this as they aimed to reconstruct a camp-portrait "frozen-in-time." If each description were then placed next to one another, a nuanced series of pictures would no doubt be seen, and the above observation explains why this would be so.

F. FROM WOODLAND TO PLAINS

By the time Lewis Henry Morgan produced his anthropological epic, The League of the Iroquois, this confederation of people had long been at peace (1962). However, their image from an earlier period was that of a marauding, and merciless, nation intent on subduing the continent. Arguments have been made which associate this belligerent spirit with a felt religious imperative, viz., to bring all people into one fold, their own, as prescribed by the prophet Deganawidah (Hunt 1967; Wallace 1969). a

less-nationalistic interpretation of Iroquois militancy is one that imputes more to mercantilism than it does to a mercenary, spiritual fervor. That is, the League found itself a victim of the French/English confrontation in North America--a European showdown which forced Native peoples to cast their lot with whomever offered the most profitable incentives. At stake for France and England were fertile lands, and a lucrative fur trade. At stake for Native peoples was survival, and Last of the Mohicans, albeit the title of a literary classic, sums up fairly well how much of the Indian population fared ("last," of course, being the operative word in this context).

This seventeenth century struggle affected Black Elk's ancestors--a people who lived in the woodlands east of the Missouri River (Lehmer 1977, 154). Whether the aggression be due to religion, revelry, disposition, dispossession, economics, self-preservation, or a combination of all these, Iroquois sorties against the Chippewa and other groups of the Great Lakes region prompted population movements westward. Hence, what eventually became known as High Plains tribes were the descendants of folk socialized in an entirely different terrain.

Aided in their migration by the growing ubiquity of horses and guns, these people fanned onto the Plains like the buffalo upon which they subsisted. In fact, their adaptation was so complete that Clark Wissler concluded Plains culture to be "timeless"--extending back into the primordial past.

However, ethnohistorical research, along with other studies, has pretty much fixed its now well-known emergence and configuration at the mid-eighteenth century (Anderson 1984).

Adaptation from the Woodland life to High Plains existence was not simply a matter of "packing up and moving." It was, rather, a transition that involved systemic re-organization. The chart below indicates some of the major features of what such change included.

PRAIRIE	PLAINS
1) Sedentary	1) Nomadic
2) Village	2) Band
3) Agriculturalists with seasonal surpluses	3) Foragers with an at times precarious subsistence
4) Clan/Moiety villages with more-or-less static populace	4) Amorphous bands with fluid composition contingent upon success in war and hunt
5) Leadership hereditary with ascribed status: war mostly a defensive tactic	5) Leadership hereditary if merited; status usually achieved; chief and chief's council the norm
6) Kinship reckoning unilateral and extended vertically through clan relationships	6) Bilateral reckoning extended horizontally on basis of generation

The heart of Lakota social life which beat within the more outwardly observable cultural traits was everyone's sense of relatedness to others and, ultimately, the world as a whole. Ethnographies have often addressed this organic facet of social intercourse by discussing such things as descent, marriage, kinship terminology, genealogies, and so forth. And yet, two of the more prominent and contemporary observers of

Lakota culture have suggested that much remains to be explored within this area. DeMallie, for example, has said that:

"A study of Lakota kin terms that strictly used the genealogical method . . . /or/ that strictly used Morgan's method of interviewing . . . would simply miss the complexity of Lakota life (1979, 235)."

He further implies that what is at stake is the Lakota world-view itself. Similarly, Powers has confessed that "adequate explanations of kinship, marriage, and descent" are, regrettably, lacking (1975, 36). Consequently, in order to appreciate social sentiments cherished by people like Black Elk, it is essential to understand how his people reckoned, controlled, and constructed their relatedness to one another and their environment as a whole.

G. LAKOTA MARRIAGE

Just as Lakota trickster stories often served as vehicles of moral pedagogy, so too have recent jokes accomplished the same. With the function of oral narrative seen in this light, and in lieu of what was perhaps formerly an Iktomi story, the following tale can be instructive, and preface the broader discussion at hand.

Long ago, Dreaming Bear looked across the lake and saw the woman of his dreams. Her name was White Rabbit. She was beautiful, he could tell--even from across the waters. She, in turn, could see the brave and handsome Dreaming Bear, and she knew that he was the man who would make her happy.

Daily, they stood on opposite shores--gazing at one another across the waters. Their hearts quickened as they squinted to see one another's features. Weeks went by, and Dreaming Bear finally decided he could no longer restrain himself. He dove into the waters and started swimming to be with

his beautiful White Rabbit. She, too, began swimming toward him.

They swam and swam across the waters--their hearts burning with desire to be with one another. But the waters were cold and deep, and both Dreaming Bear and White Rabbit began to weaken. Their strength was gone by the time they reached the center of the lake. And, having only enough energy to touch hands, the waters swallowed them up, and both Dreaming Bear and White Rabbit drowned.

To this day, Lakota elders instruct their young about the story of Dreaming Bear and White Rabbit. They tell of what they did, and how they drowned in trying to meet one another, and consummate their love. And ever since that time, Lakota elders have called this great body of water, "Lake Stupid."

Among the Lakota, one was advised to go to the top of a hill and look for a wife on the other side." This wisdom was bolstered by the aphorism "do not choose a wife from the corner of your household" (Powers 1975, 35). Members of the camp (wico ti) and band (tiyospaye) regarded one another as kin (otakuye). Hence, dutiful youth sought eligible mates outside their own band so as to avoid incest (wogluze). Stories like that of Dreaming Bear and White Rabbit reinforced this social pattern by illustrating how marriage regulated by hormones led to one's demise. In the words of Levi-Strauss, this kind of oral narrative confirmed "the pre-eminence of the social over the natural, the collective over the individual, /and/organization over the arbitrary"(1969, 45).

Lakota life did witness elopements from time to time, and individual preferences in choosing a mate were acknowledged. However, a young man ordinarily courted both the girl and her family. Ultimately, then, Lakota marriage was an exogamous union that cemented an alliance between two tiyospaye-s.

Sororal polygny reinforced this bond, while the levirate and sororate fostered even further ties. These latter institutions were not particularly coveted goals that one sought but were, rather, a kind of social safety-valve. Supporting many dependents was simply not an easy task, no matter what their domestic contribution.

When Black Elk was growing up, the conventional courtship consisted of males vying for the privilege of standing under a blanket with the desired, closely-chaperoned, maiden (virtuous women were prized, and so, attracted more suitors). Charms would be worn, flute-music would be played, and gifts would be exchanged in a scenario that allowed the girl and her family to decide who the best choice would be. Eventually, the maiden's brothers negotiated a "price" for their sister which, once agreed upon, was ratified by a feast. The price involved goods like horses and robes, and perhaps included taking up initial residence with the bride's family. The feast was called "winyan he cinacakupi" or, "he wanted that girl so they gave her to him"--an understatement if there ever was one, given the social and economic dimensions of this very ritualized courting process (Hassrick, 114-18).

H. DEFERENTIAL BEHAVIOR AND KIN NOMENCLATURE

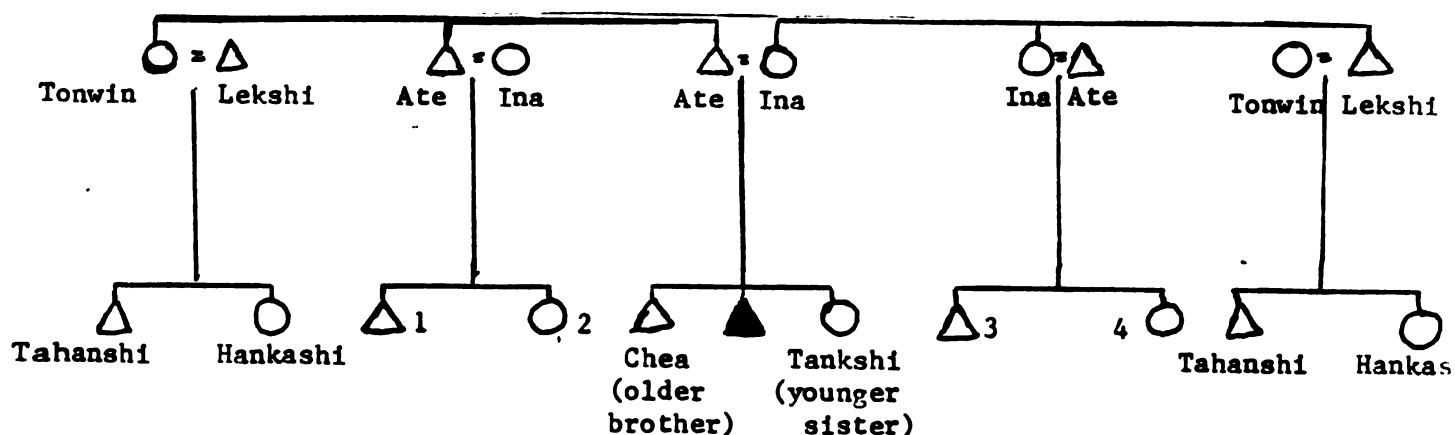
It was not uncommon for residence to be matrilocal at the beginning, and then shift sometime afterward. Flexibility seems to have been the rule here, but clearly not the case as to how individuals comported themselves in face-to-face

relationships. A motif of respect and avoidance governed encounters wherever the hearth was to be found.

Toward their parents and grandparents, children manifested both deference and devotion. Another form of respect, and concomitant guard against incest, was the complete avoidance in everyday activities between brothers and sisters. And yet, their high regard for one another manifested itself through the exchange of such items as wartrophies and mocassins. Brothers- and sisters-in-law maintained a joking or teasing posture toward one another--roles which not only eased tension or permitted working as a unit, but they were also roles which facilitated an easier transition to marriage (with husband's brother or wife's sister, should the levirate/sororate custom ever be invoked). Parents-in-law were accorded extreme respect, complete avoidance by the male toward his mother-in-law and by the female toward her father-in-law. Pre-literate people are frequently described as "kin-based," and the Lakota were no exception. Social relations entailed the customary ways of behaving within or among a group of related individuals, and genealogical charts, like that of the Lakota below, are analytical devices which illustrate how one (ego) referred to lineal and collateral relatives. In the example here, we see that Black Elk's people merged lineal and collateral relatives--treating cross-cousins as siblings, and forging marriages outside the range of blood-relations. The horizontal cast of this social structure is, however, the

foundation of an even more expansive system which incorporated far more than what "Iroquoian cousin" and "bifurcate merging" terminology implies. DeMallie's earlier reference to the "complexity of Lakota life" was directed at this issue of kinship--not at some kind of socio-economic blight (although there, too, it could apply).

The illustration here is straightforward in its depiction of mother's sisters (with their husbands), and father's brothers (with their wives) as all being addressed by mother and father terms ("ina" and "ate" respectively). Similarly, mother's brothers (with their wives, and father's sisters (with their husbands) are all designated as uncle and aunt ("lekshi" and "tonwin" respectively). Cross-cousins were accorded the terms "tahanshi" (male) and "hankashi" (female), but their behavior toward ego was that of a sibling (Hassrick, 312-13). Nos. 1-4 indicate additional sibling terms to those charted.



Why one be called a cousin, yet act like a brother or sister, has prompted speculation that earlier terminology had not kept pace with social change. That is, a separate terminology for cross-cousins perhaps functioned in pre-contact, woodland times as a means of denoting preferred marriage-partners. However, moving west expanded the Lakota marriage-universe. This shift in practice was perhaps still unfolding in the historic period such that a nomenclature reflecting this change had not become fixed.

I. FICTIVE-BUT FELT-KINSHIP

As helpful as genealogical charting can be, the fictive component of Lakota social relations is just as important. When DeMallie observes that "Lakota kinship cannot be understood /solely/ . . . in terms of the traditional categories of descent and marriage," he is, in fact, calling attention to the variegated ways this people "familialized" their universe (1979, 222). For instance, one could be "made a relative" through the hunkapi ceremony. This religious rite conferred family-status upon the initiate who was subsequently treated "as if" a father, brother, sister, etc. (Brown 1953, 101-15; Walker 1982, 5-6). Similarly, relationship terminology was applied to offices within social groups and to those for whom one had "feeling," or whose behavior merited it. Terms were also bestowed on nature (earth, sun, moon, etc.) and the Great Spirit (Wakan Tanka) was itself addressed as "grandfather" (Tunkashila).

Like other peoples, the Lakota considered it dreadful to

be without relatives. However, the possibility of such a nightmare was quite remote. In some form or another, familial connectedness was an operative feature wherever one looked. And be it a visionary ideal, perceived reality, or calming assurance, the phrase "all are relatives" (mitak oyassin) was repeatedly uttered and heard throughout one's life at the conclusion of all religious rituals. These year-round, life-long activities were a kind of perpetual goading of everyone to actualize relatedness (Sandoz, 1961).

Dovetailing with the above were the associations one made enroute to gaining status and prestige within local and larger communities. These associations were what might loosely be termed friendships, memberships, or organizational belongings--rendered in the literature as "sodalities," "warrior societies," or (less sexist) "societies." The Lakota term for these groupings was "okolakiciyapi," and the major ones of the historic period were: Tokala, Kangiyuha, Cante Tinza, Miwatani, Ihoka, Sotka Yuha, and Wici ka (Wissler, 1912). A variety of shaman groups (i.e., different rituals with practitioners for each) also existed, along with women's guilds or groups (the focus of these being religious or handicraft specialization).

Membership in groups was not strictly age-graded, and a person could belong to several of them at the same time. At about the age of seven, one was invited to join a group--full membership coming later on. Officers were elected for the different groups, and served for specific periods of time.

Meanwhile, camaraderie was the earmark of these organizations, and sentiments were fostered which blossomed into terminological designations like "brother," "cousin," "uncle," and so forth. Similarly, to be one's "kola" (friend) in such groupings facilitated sexual access to a companion's spouse. In short, persons of both sexes belonged to a variety of organizations within which an individual could gain the respect and admiration of old and young alike. Such persons were role models who, as war and pestilence whittled away the population, became few in number as time passed.

Despite Wissler's argument that Plains culture was "timeless," other observers contrarily noted that adaptation might well have been the earmark of peoples who forged a new life out of earlier, prairie patterns (Mooney 1907, 361; Kardiner 1945, 47). As mentioned before, part of this overall strategy was an egalitarianism which, among the Lakota, certainly prevailed. Authority-roles could be, in fact, more titular than real, as Parkman observed long ago (1950, 115-16):

" . . . does the /chief/ fail in gaining their favor, they will desert him at any moment; for the usages of his people have provided no sanctions by which he may enforce his authority."

Be it non-coercive leadership, rugged individualism, or social-groupings which nurtured a militant esprit-de-corps, plains-living for the Lakota fostered social mechanisms and elicited behavior that seemed best suited for survival in an ever-hostile environment.

Be their adversaries human or animal, their opponents alive or inanimate, the Lakota struggle for a safe niche was sustained by a resilience that made them spirited foes. This resilience provided a flexibility whose limits were unbounded, as all Lakota being was assured access to the power of Wakan-Tanka. This reservoir of power permeated the changing internal and external environments that befell the people, and so they were assured of a continued survival which was more contingent upon their right-relationship to the sacred than on the forces that confronted them, on the "natural" plane. At least, such is what appears to have been the underlying, empirically elusive attribute of a migrating Lakota people.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL PERSONALITY OF THE LAKOTA

Few Indian groups have gained as much attention over time as the Lakota. Claiming for their tradition such luminaries as Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, Lane Deer, Fools Crow, and many more, the Lakota have dominated the American mind and media (both in fanciful and factual terms) for over a century.

Most recently, for example, television's "mini-series" entitled "The Mystic Warrior" was based on the best-selling novel Hanta Yo (Hill 1979). The book's title was publicized as meaning "clear the way!"--a reference to the story's theme of migrating west. Actually, however, "hanta yo" is a Lakota phrase rendered more precisely as "get out of the way" (as when a grandparent tells an underfoot child to play elsewhere). The book's authenticity was supposedly bolstered through Hill's twenty-five year collaboration with a Teton "dakotah" /sic/. See Powers (1979) and Taylor (1980) for critiques of Hill--her novel referred to by Kroeber (1983) as "trash" (even though its adaptation to television was supervised by contemporary Lakota who approved of its production)!

Earlier, the 1950's film entitled "Crazy Horse" was a reprise to those movies which had the Sioux always losing battles. But before these modern portrayals, Buffalo Bill Cody's travelling "wild west" show catapulted the Lakota to celebrity status and stimulated the popularity of Zane

Grey-like novels in Europe that featured Sioux heroes. The interest in Amer-Indian lifeways that these books generated is still noticeable today as a number of Indian Clubs exist (particularly in Germany) whose raison d'etre is based on a long-cultivated curiosity. It was the last century, however, that served as a springboard for a still-prevailing notoriety.

Defeating the United States in war under Red Cloud during the 1860's, Black Elk's people came into the international limelight with their victory over Custer at Little Big Horn in 1876. Curiously, these many years after the famous "battle of the Greasy Grass" (i.e., Little Big Horn) attention still focuses on this sun-baked Montana hill. Perhaps due to the event occurring on the nation's centennial, perhaps due to the fame of Custer (a Civil War hero and possible presidential candidate), or perhaps due to the reputation of its Indian participants, this massacre of "the Great Sioux War" has generated a steady stream of books and articles which somehow re-address the personnel and actions taken this day by both sides.

In 1982 a Navy pathologist sought to exhume the bodies of 264 Seventh Cavalry troopers in order to see if they had all committed suicide! His theory was that the Indian resistance would have been so depressing to confront that ordinary soldiers would have taken their own lives! Why this tack was even allowed to be pursued is surprising. In 1958 an exhumation of another group of cavalrymen was performed and it showed that they did, indeed, die of battle wounds (Anderson

1982). At the time of this writing an excavation of the battlefield is continuing and shedding new light on a battle which, it would seem, had long been clearly understood.*

Confined to reservation living by 1878, the Lakota once again captured world attention by embracing the Ghost Dance. This "revitalization movement" was sapped of its momentum when over two-hundred of Big Foot's followers (mostly women and children) were killed by the U.S. Army in 1890 near what is now Wounded Knee, South Dakota (Utley 1963)--a place which, prior to the 1930's, was named "Brennan, South Dakota."

More recently, joining the armed forces of the United States has appealed to countless young Lakota while others have distinguished themselves as minuteman-like firefighters. Flown to regions turned-inferno, these people have numerous times been credited with saving life and property. Olympic gold-medalist Billy Mills, artist Oscar Howe, writer Vine Deloria, congressman Ben Reifel, social activist Russell Means, and a score of other Sioux have assumed leadership roles within highly visible and varied sectors of American society.

The nineteenth-century Lakota world sketched by Neihardt was foreign to Lucy's experience of family life, and thus only alluded to fragmentarily. This pattern surfaces

*The newly reprinted Custer's Fall "The Indian Side of the Story" (Miller 1957) is a little-known work whose "ring of authenticity" arises from its content based upon the recollections of old Lakota men who were at the battle (Black Elk is a contributor to the book). See also Evan S. Connell's Son of the Morning Star, New York Harper & Row, 1985 for yet another, more recent, analysis of this conflict.

throughout her account, and its first appearance is in the text which follows. In it, we are lifted into the last century, and matter-of-factly introduced to Black Elk's family as it existed when Plains culture was at its zenith. Ironically, those were years of warfare. And yet, this was probably (as suggested in the preceding chapter) a leitmotif of Plains existence from the beginning.

"Give me eighty men and I would ride through the whole Sioux nation" was the boast of Captain William J. Fetterman prior to his command's annihilation December 21, 1866 near Fort Phil Kearny in Montana. This "Fetterman Massacre" is what Lucy refers to as the "battle of the one-hundred slain"--the old Lakota way of describing this incident of Red Cloud's War (1866-68). The now-controversial Fort Laramie Treaty ended this conflict which forced the United States to accede to Lakota demands and withdraw from the Powder River country (Hyde 1937; Olson 1965; Hebard and Brininstool 1922; Vestal 1932; Howard 1968).*

LUCY'S BLOOD-LINE

As her father had done, so does Lucy mention Black Elk's father. Dying in 1889, he was placed on a scaffold--a customary burial procedure for Plains people. In some instances (winter, retreat during war), the body would be placed in tree limbs, buried, or left in a tipi (Hassrick

*For the past hundred years, a claim to the Black Hills was pressed by different Lakota groups and, only recently, was a judgment rendered on their behalf. Instead of the monetary settlement offered, some of the people are insisting upon a return of the land itself--thus prompting further litigation.

1964, 295-97)).

Included within her family's genealogy, mentioned by Black Elk to Neihardt and by Lucy to me, was Crazy Horse (Tasunke Witko). Among Indian people today, he is regarded as an heroic figure whose name represents resistance to White oppression (although his representation on a thirteen-cents stamp was probably for purposes of acknowledging Native leadership). When he was killed at Fort Robinson, Nebraska in 1877 (by a cavalry policeman named Little Big Man, a Lakota), Oglala military leadership suffered a great loss. His body was taken away and secretly disposed of by family members. Unknown to most people is that many persons have searched for his remains since that time--hopeful of recovering some tangible presence of the free spirit which so defied captivity (Sandoz 1961).

Other members of the Black Elk family-hearth are likewise given attention, even though these members have no fame, and even though Neihardt may have judged them extraneous to the movement of his story. Although Neihardt's judgment-call on this matter might have been appropriate for the sake of brevity, such persons would not be so excluded by Lakota narrators. One's personal identity, for good or for bad, was largely fashioned by the individuals who comprised the familial community (tiyospaye). Its distinct members fostered one another's values, attitudes, and existential perspective. Such is why Lucy acknowledged the network of kith and kin who were part of life's daily routine within her father's world,

and the world of her own home-life (Medicine 1969). Here Lucy recounts her family background:

"My father had five sisters and one brother, but I just knew two of my aunts. My grandfather was wounded in the leg at the battle of the one-hundred slain soldiers and was crippled, so my father was the man of the house.* He was the one who had to get out and hunt.

"My father's brother died a long time ago, and I never knew him. When I was old enough to understand, I'd see my father praying and crying on a hill. He used to do that. My grandma told me 'he's crying for his brother.' His name was Wiceгна Inyanka, Runs-in-the-Center. Somebody named him that when he went on the warpath.

"My one aunt, Jenny Shot Close, died when I was maybe three or four years old. She was sickly and had tuberculosis, but she was really nice. She used to comb my hair. My other aunt was Grace Pretty Bird, and she is buried beside my grandma. She was a nice, quiet woman who had two children--a boy and a girl. I remember playing with my cousin and she used to treat me mean. She'd hold me by the arm and swing me til I got dizzy. Then my grandma would really get mad. My cousins both died of tuberculosis while they were young.

"I don't know where my grandfather is buried because they always used to travel a lot in the old days, and he died back then. So they made a scaffold for him somewhere.

"My father always said that Crazy Horse was his second cousin, and he's dead too. My father's mother was named Mary Leggins Down, and she died in 1915. I don't know why Neihardt called her 'White Cow Sees.' I never heard that name before. It wasn't my grandma, I know that.

"During his life, my father married two times. The first marriage was a common-law marriage to a woman named Katie War Bonnet, who died in 1901. She had three boys: William, who died in infancy around the year 1895; John, who died of tuberculosis at the age of 12 in 1909; and Ben, who passed away in February of 1973.

"My father's second marriage was to my mother--whose name at birth was Between Lodge but was later changed to Anna Brings White. She was a widow who was left with two children from her first

*This same information is given in Black Elk Speaks, p. 53; but p. 199 mentions only one brother and one sister.

marriage (to a man named Waterman). These children were Agatha and Mary, and my father adopted Mary when he married my mother in 1905. Agatha was too old to be adopted. But my sisters both died of tuberculosis in 1910.

"From the marriage of my father and mother, three children were born. I was the oldest, and only girl--born in Manderson, South Dakota, June 6, 1907. My brother Henry died in 1910 while still an infant. But my brother Nicholas grew up and married but he had the accident--that tragic accident. He burned to death in 1959 while sleeping in a small shack over in Nebraska.

"I guess that since my brother Ben is now gone, it's up to me to relate a little history because I'm the only one now surviving of Black Elk's children--the same Black Elk people have read about in the books Black Elk Speaks and The Sacred Pipe."

Both in Black Elk Speaks and The Sixth Grandfather, the name "White Cow Sees" is given as mother's name and nothing more is said. However, DeMallie is very careful to show alternative renderings of people's names (e.g., Black Elk's father, p. 102, Lucy's half-brothers, p. 13, and Black Elk's second wife, p. 23). Lucy's mention of the name "Leggins Down" was said as offhandedly as one might say "Jones" or "Smith." Neihardt perhaps changed the transcripts so as to have a name for Black Elk's mother which did not have the connotation it does to non-Lakota readers. Or perhaps Ben Black Elk, who replaced Emil Afraid of Hawk as translator, substituted this name instead of his grandmother's real one. Whatever the case, Lucy was not pleased that her brother had served in the capacity of translator as she felt he took liberties with what her father intended to say. Baptismal records support Lucy's statement, and further note that "Mary" Leggins Down was born in 1844.

William and John were given the birth names of Never Showed Off and Good Voice Star, respectively. Cf., Pine Ridge census rolls, 1893, 1896, and 1901 (National Archives and Records Service, Record Group 75, Microcopy M595, rolls 365, 367, and 368). The baptismal records of Holy Rosary Mission, Pine Ridge, South Dakota also contain such information along with comments, occasionally, inscribed by the priests.

BLACK ELK'S LATER LIFE--DISREGARDED BY OTHERS EXCEPT THE FAMILY

According to DeMallie (1984, 47):

"Black Elk told Neihardt very little about his later life, his experiences in the Catholic Church, his travels to other Indian reservations as a missionary, and his work as a catechist at Pine Ridge. Neihardt was curious about why Black Elk had put aside his old religion. According to Hilda, Black Elk merely replied, 'My children had to live in this world,' and Neihardt did not probe any further. For Neihardt, the beauty of Black Elk's vision made the formalism of Christian religion seem all the more stultifying, and he seems to have accepted Black Elk's pragmatic explanation at face value."

Contrary to the above is Brown's opinion that Christian participation was somehow seen as compromising the holy-man's "Indian-ness." Implied here is that Neihardt avoided the issue and simply put together a book which emphasized "the end of the trail" or "vanishing American" theme. Lucy's comments support what Brown said, but the purported "addition" mentioned below does not exist in the Neihardt collection. The pragmatic resignation implied by "my children had to live in this world" was not, according to Lucy, the kind of sentiment owned by her father. She said:

"My father related to John Neihardt an addition to his book, but they never put it out. Afterwards, he realized this and wanted the last part of his life also told--his life as a Christian man praying. My father wanted it known that after he quit his medicine practice, he became a catechist. But, this man /Lucy pointed to a picture of John Neihardt/ really believed in the Indian religion . . . so . . .

"I shall try with all my ability to relate this untold history of my father, and I have felt guilty at times not doing this as a memorial for him. When my brother Ben was alive we always wondered if we should do something like this. We got this idea after my father's death, and I have waited for an opportunity to relate the entire story of his life as a holy-man.

"My name is Lucy Looks Twice now, but I was Lucy Black Elk before I was married. And I am the only living child of Nick Black Elk. Many people have already read about my father's life as a medicine man in Black Elk Speaks and The Sacred Pipe. So, I'd like to tell about the rest of his life--the many years not talked about in either book. The greater part of his life was spent as a Catholic catechist whom I knew as a meek and loving father. This is the story I know about, want to relate, and am happy to speak of. This needs to be done while I am alive. My father would have wanted me to do this."

Such things as "Black Elk's pragmatic explanation," "the beauty of Black Elk's vision," "the formalism of Christian religion" (is traditional Lakota religious practice here implied by DeMallie to be informal?) and other aspects of the man's later life will all be addressed in the pages to come. This will unfold through Lucy's account and through the words of those who knew her father. How Black Elk became the matrix of cultural continuities and discontinuities will be my task to explain--a challenge, indeed, but one made easier because I know that Lucy would have wanted me to do it.

CHAPTER IV

LAKOTA PSYCHO-SACRAL-SOMATIC MEDICAL PRACTICE

As elsewhere, Lucy offhandedly raises several points in this next account which need clarification. And so, prefacing these further recollections will be an explanation of some key terms which figure prominently within discussions about Lakota religion. As will be seen, contemporary medicine's emphasis on "holistic health" might well have taken its cue from this Plains people (Vogel 1970).

Just as the word "doctor" is collectively applied to such divergent roles as dentist and heart surgeon, so too is the term "medicine man" when moderns colloquially refer to specialists found within Lakota society (n.b., linguistic convention and lived reality permit retention of what might otherwise be regarded as a sexist phrase, even though a word like "practitioner" could be employed--as woman-healers did exist). In reality, a particular person's gifted power would be sought for addressing specific ailments or needs.

Among the Oglala today, the "medicine man" (pejuta wicasa) is also commonly regarded as a "holy-man" (wicasa wakan), although the two roles have traditionally been separate (Brown 1953, 45n).^{*} That is, the former referred to healers who used herbs or applied certain skills for curing. The latter term implied one's acquisition of mystical power which was either put to work on behalf of a patient, or was

^{*}leMedicin, the French word for "doctor," is the origin of the phrase "medicine man."

the reason why such a person could preside at certain ceremonial occasions. Time and practice have obscured precise usage of the terms by Lakota speakers and others. Yet, in spite of this change, Lucy's narrative rightly characterizes her father as a pejuta wicasa prior to his work as a catechist (the same phrase applied to osteopathic and allopathic physicians of the non-Lakota world).^{*} Current parlance would accord her father the title of wicasa wakan once he became a catechist--a phrase likewise designating the priests with whom he worked.

Having dreamed of lightning, men were obliged to undertake the heyoka (clown) practice--lest they be struck down by lightning. According to Buechel (1970, 174), the term "heyoka" is the name of a "Dakota god . . . represented as a little old man with a cocked hat on his head, a bow and arrows in his hands and a quiver on his back. In winter he goes naked, and in the summer he wraps his buffalo robe around himself." As the definition suggests, behavior of the heyoka was profoundly non-conformist and humor depended upon one's ability to act contrary to all norms (Lewis 1970, 7-17; 1981, 100-04; Starkloff 1974, 74).

At first glance, heyoka participation within the Lakota religious system might seem to be a peculiar admixture of humorous and sacred conceptions. However, such a commingling has been (and still is) present within the larger, so-called "world religions." Its obvious manifestation is, of course,

^{*}Neihardt's terminology is at variance with this.

the ubiquitous Trickster figure (Radin 1956), and according to Hyers (1969, 7), the rationale for so curious a phenomenon is that:

"The comic spirit is fundamentally a certain attitude toward and perspective upon life. The essential element in relation to the sacred is the periodic suspension of seriousness and sacrality . . . and the realization of the playful, gamelike quality inherent in all human enterprises, however holy.

"Comedy in fact plays with both the categories of reason and irrationality, of order and chaos, of meaning and meaninglessness, and in so doing . . . opens up the playfulness at the heart of reality itself . . ."

In specifically addressing the heyoka cult within Lakota religious tradition, Black Elk lends support to the Hyers contention (BES, 159-60).

"You have noticed that the truth comes into this world with two faces. One is sad with suffering, and the other laughs; but it is the same face, laughing and weeping. When people are already in despair, maybe the laughing face is better for them; and when they feel too good and are too sure of being safe, maybe the weeping face is better for them to see."

The heyoka, it seems, provides the harmonizing element to a human existence charged with emotional and psychological

extremes. The heyoka, therefore, keeps in check one's tendency to distort reality. A kind of native "therapist," the heyoka seems to have helped people keep things in perspective (Brown 1979, 58).

Whether coincidental or the result of instruction, Black Elk's reflections on laughing and weeping curiously parallel those of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order (to which Black Elk's priest-friends belonged.) Referred to as states of "consolation" or "desolation," periods of weal and woe were addressed at length by the 16th-century mystic, i.e., as such "movements of spirit" affected a given individual (Puhl 1963, 141-150). Jesuits since the time of Ignatius have been schooled on this matter and they, in turn, frequently pass his teaching on to others. Hence, traditional Jesuit perceptions of this duality either fashioned Black Elk's thinking on the subject, or simply devetail compatibly with an older, Lakota approach (perhaps both).

Yuwipi literally refers to "transparent stones" used in ceremonies conducted by modern day Lakota shamans. The word has also been rendered "to wrap around" (Buechel, 656). Bound firmly within a star quilt, the specialist performs this ritual in total darkness--calling upon diverse spirits which often appear as glimmering flashes. Throughout the meeting area, animal sounds and human voices are heard--having been summoned by the practitioner. Future happenings might be foretold, missing persons located, or diagnosis and cure of a given person's illness might be offered. On occasion,

however, non-benevolent purposes, or hmunga ("to cause sickness"), might also be the thrust of particular yuwipi gatherings (although these occasions are rare). At the conclusion of the ceremony, the adept is seen freed of fetters--release attributed to the action of spirit helpers.*

Many Oglalas today regard the yuwipi man as representative of the "old time" religion, vestiges of which are present in the ceremony. However, oral history and research point to non-Lakota origins of this shamanic cult institution (Bogoras 1904, 164; Densmore 1970, 44; Powers 1982; Wallace 1964). Nonetheless, "Yuwipi and Yuwipi-like rituals continue a tradition whose roots lie in the nebulous past" (Powers 1982, 8). Practitioners today might be called by the umbrella term "medicine man," or by the more precise "Yuwipi."

Lucy's understanding of her father's early involvement with these older traditions is as follows:

"Before being converted into the Church, and before he became a catechist, my father was a medicine man. I wasn't born at that time and he didn't talk about it very much. I remember he told us that he and his partner, Kills Enemy, were heyokas, or clowns. This clowning was actually done by him and his friend as a trial stage for them. To live the life of a heyoka for one year was a promise they had to fulfill. If they succeed in one year, then I believe they could become medicine men.

"John Neihardt called Kills Enemy 'One Side' in that book, but he really wasn't called that until he

*The great magician, Harry Houdini, is said to have observed a ceremony similar to yuwipi. He regarded the shaman's skill as considerable and evaluated the scenario as an interplay of ventriliquism, sleight of hand, and the people's predisposition to believe.

was an old man. He got that name because he used to wear a hat all the time, and it always sat crooked on his head. Before that, he was always Kills Enemy to us.

"As I said, he didn't talk about his medicine practice very much. However, he did say 'I was kind of good at it.' I almost believed him sometimes. Once I asked him 'Father, do you believe in this yuwipi?' And he said 'No! That's all nonsense--just like the magicians you have in the White people. It's just like that. Praying with the pipe is more of a main thing. If a man prays with the pipe, why people would kind of pray along with him. But this other one, yuwipi, it's just like a magician trying to fool. I know because I've done it myself.'

"One of my father's medicines could be found by standing out on a hill in the darkest night. He used it for curing tuberculosis. When there's no moon you can see it. That medicine just glows. The yuwipi man uses this same medicine in his ceremony.

"Once he was fooling around with his friend I mentioned earlier, Kills Enemy, and they were going to shoot an owl that was above their camp. That owl was just bothering them during the night, so they got a fire going and started loading up. They filled cartridges themselves at that time.

"Just then, they were so close that a man said 'You guys! Don't get close to that fire. It's going to explode for sure!' Just then, when he said that, one of the sparks hit the powder and everything shot up in his face. So that's where he almost lost his sight, and he's been partially blind ever since.

"I got that information from Joe Kills Enemy. He was old enough to hear when his father and my father visited and talked about what they did in their early lives. He's way older than I.

"I always thought he got his blindness while he was a heyoka with Kills Enemy. What I thought was that my father suggested they put a loaded shell in the ground, smash it, and see how far it goes down in the ground. Instead, it exploded up in his face. He did a lot of things like that.

"In his early years, my father had been a warrior. He was in the Custer fight and he was in this massacre /Lucy pointed down the road toward Wounded Knee/. My father said that when all those soldiers got killed at Little Big Horn, he and a bunch of boys his age would go around and pick

****The Sixth Grandfather, p. 235, has Black Elk saying "Kills the Enemy" was named One Side because of "his hair-being cut on one side," a name that came to him during the former's vision. Avoiding "Kills the Enemy" as a name fit for his book, Neihardt might have judged its avoidance for reasons similar to that of "Leggins Down." And too, DeMallie notes that Neihardt minimized "the imagery of warfare and killing" in his text (1984, 53).**

pockets of the dead. He said some of them found money but they didn't know what it was.

"About Wounded Knee he always said 'I was there to witness after it was over. I saw all those women and children and old people. The soldiers shot at them with their guns, and they all just laid there in the big draw. Something awful! They had no weapons--and those children massacred like that.' My father carried wounded persons--women and children--over the hill to safety. They claim he said 'Today is a good day to die!' But he never actually said that. It was Crazy Horse who hollered those words. My father was young then, so he wasn't the one."

Black Elk's comment on the yuwipi practice is not shared by all Lakota people. As in any profession, some charlatanry probably did (and does) exist. However, contemporary practitioners do have a sincere following, and their regard for the tradition is high. Although individuals such as Lucy might locate the yuwipi practitioner's special medicine and use it for other purposes, it is still regarded as the substance out of which "spirits" take their form.

Black Elk's actual blinding is another biographical point that might never be fully ascertained. Aside from the two above accounts, another exists which tells of Black Elk's divining for water. Having placed gunpowder beneath a hole filled with water, Black Elk announced he would make water issue forth from the ground. Touching a spark to the fuse, he remained too close to the eruption and his face was peppered with water, dirt, and gunpowder. I was told this story by a Manderson resident who raised the topic himself. When I informed him of the stories I had been told regarding the incident, he doubted their reliability. Joseph Epes Brown

used to relate yet a different account.

Regarding the war-cry "today is a good day to die," most presume the now-popular statement refers to patriotic sentiment. That is, warriors should always be willing to die while proudly defending their families and home territory. Indeed, such was probably at the heart of the phrase when skirmishing the cavalry. An interpretation offered by an Ottawa woman, however, carried a different meaning:*

"We Indians have an expression 'today is a good day to die.' It means that we should be ready to die on any given day. We should always be prepared to die, and have no regrets. That's why it's important to begin each day fresh, and not let past problems or present distractions cloud how God wants us to live."

Her comment is illuminating in that it shows how Black Elk material has been expropriated by other "tribal people"--to the extent that even a war-cry be a source of reflection.** Whereas social activists have raised the cry as an ultimatum, the Ottawa woman gave a more religious interpretation. Who knows how the cult-film Billy Jack intended the phrase to be understood? At one point in the film, the lead solemnly announced that "today is as good as any to die!"--the Black Elk material once again authoritatively quoted, albeit erroneously, to sanction what Hollywood perceived as authentic Indian ideology.

*This was a personal communication that arose unsolicited.

**See also Del Barton's novel A Good Day to Die, Doubleday & Co., Inc., N.Y., 1980.

With the above kinds of qualifications arising from what Lucy reported, I asked Lucy to recommend someone else who might be able to recall earlier times. It was then that she encouraged me to visit an old friend of Black Elk's. The suggestion was one which, later on, I greatly valued. She said:

"Mr. John Lone Goose was one of the first to join the Church. He later became an organist and worked with my father. He is still living and is in the nursing home at Rushville, Nebraska. If you visit him, he will speak about those times."

I was glad to hear that such a person was still alive. Fearful, though, that I not press my luck any further, I arranged a visit as soon as I could.

John Lone Goose

The journey from Pine Ridge to Rushville is a little over twenty miles, and the drive is a scenic one through rolling Nebraska hills which undulate with dark, green, conifer-splashes. Along the winding highway, mule-deer frequently fall prey to startled automobiles. Billboards, restaurants, and residential areas replace this buffer-zone, and within the new vista lies "Parkview Nursing Home"--a small facility appended to the town hospital.

John Lone Goose had been paralyzed from the waist down--the result of a car accident seven years earlier. Due to his great size, John needed attention which only an institution such as the nursing home could provide. Apart

from the paralysis, his health was excellent. And so, John calmly accepted his handicap with serenity, and said that prayer enabled him to carry on without being bitter.

Visiting Black Elk's co-worker stirred sadness within me, and my "observer bias" amounted to feeling a great deal of sympathy for the old man. With John, I learned the valuable lesson that one can objectively scrutinize what a person says and at the same time develop a felt-friendship. In fact, the investigator's "data" become ever more real and palpable in such a relationship--shared both cognitively and emotionally. With Lucy, for example I actually felt a kind of kinship when, over time, she addressed me as "takoja" ("grandchild"). Similarly, with John, calling him "grandfather" seemed very natural after but a short time of visiting.

John's immediate family was all deceased, and more distant relatives rarely took the opportunity to visit him. So too, residents of the home were predominantly non-Indian, and his beloved reservation was far away. This wise elder spoke softly and with openness. He generated warmth, and it was apparent from what we discussed that John was quite prepared to pass on.

After introducing myself, I offered John a cigarette (a modern gesture of friendship no doubt rooted in the older tradition of extending a pipe). During this leisurely visit, we eventually came around to talking about times past. In the course of our conversation, John painfully recounted the following indignity he suffered when placed first in a Hay

Springs, Nebraska nursing home:

"I had braids that long /pointing to his waist/. They cut them. I don't know why they do it. Want me to cut my hair--that's why they do it. But I never asked what they did with my hair. The long braids! Those long braids. It wasn't quite like mine now. They were all black--coal black. But I don't know what they did with it."

I was aware of John's former appearance because of what people had told me, and since one of the Jesuits referred to him in an unpublished manuscript from the 1930's as "the Giant Indian with long hair!" (Sialm, 86).

Whereas braid-wearing is today common, and generally reflects the cultural-resurgence trend, John was from a time when braids were still part of the living tradition. He was, literally, the last of a kind who could speak from the summit of many years. His was an authoritative perspective because of a longstanding familiarity with persons, places, and events.

John's opening remarks include reference to the Rosebud Reservation--a large territory allocated to the Brulé division of Lakota (Hyde 1961; Grobsmith 1981). Smaller in size than Pine Ridge (its western neighbor), this land was the site of activity which closely paralleled Oglala history (Hyde 1937). In fact, relatives of any given family might be spread throughout the two reservations. Jesuits, government personnel, and Lakota regularly commuted between the two regions (and still do).

Spotted Tail, a famous Brulé leader, requested Jesuit

presence on the Rosebud, and in 1886 they established the St. Francis Mission. Since that time, it has served as a school and religious center much like Pine Ridge's Holy Rosary Mission which was founded in 1888 at the request of Red Cloud (Olson, 1965).

In his account, John reports being baptized by Father Digmann--one of the region's early, well-known personalities. Born in 1846 in Eichsfeld, Germany, Digmann came to the United States as a priest in 1880. At the insightful request of his superiors, Father Digmann organized diary notes into a readable commentary on his life as a missionary among the Lakota from 1886 until 1930 (he died in 1931). Available to researchers through Marquette University's "Archives of Catholic Indian Missions," this unpublished document contains sketches of early reservation life which are almost sensate.* Future commentaries on late-nineteenth/early twentieth century Lakota experience must here-after take into account the priest's unique ethnohistorical contribution.

John provided a page never entered in Digmann's diary. Perhaps it was not worth including from the Jesuit's perspective, as it was just part of an ordinary routine. For John, however, the event meant everything. His parents told him about it, but John spoke of the incident as if he were a credible witness of the proceedings:

*These archives will hereafter be noted as "MACIM." They contain the diaries cited and "Sialm" citations.

"On April 17, 1888, my father and mother went to Sunday Mass in the morning at St. Francis Mission. I was in my mother's womb at the time. While the Father was saying Mass, and while they were sitting there waiting to get their Holy Communion, my mother fell sick and said: 'I'm going to go out for a little while. I'm going to be right back.' So she went outside the church, spread her shawl, and sat down. Right there--outside the Catholic chapel at St. Francis--I was born.

"Since my mother didn't come back into the church, my father came out to see where she was. He found me and my mother laying there, so he went to tell the Mother Superior about it. Pretty soon, all the Sisters came out and took me up in the Sister's room, washed me, cut my cord, and dressed me up. They washed my mother too. At about 11 o'clock I was baptized by Father Digmann. I was the youngest one in the family--and there were fourteen of us. Now, I'm the last one still living. All my aunts and uncles, all my brothers and sisters, they all died. I'm the only Lone Goose left. There are no more by that name."

Here was Lone Goose before me--a one-time infant, christened "John" by Father Digmann.* Here was the long-haired helper of Black Elk whose great size occasioned many laughing-memories--like the time he and Black Elk were burying a fellow Catholic. Ever so involved with the cemetery ritual, big John Lone Goose, moving backwards, lost his footing and preceded the casket into its grave. His body wedged tightly in the ground, John required the assistance of many mourners to gain release. Their tears were temporarily turned to laughter through the slapstick-like misfortune of their kind-hearted brother.

*According to Holy Rosary Mission's baptismal records, the famous Chief Red Cloud was christened "Peter" since he was, like the Apostle Peter, first in rank among his people.

Before me now was the aged John Lone Goose--a gentle man who did not share the fame of his celebrated colleague, and whose earthly existence would soon be over. His manner elicited a reverence, or admiration, I found easy to bestow. Deferring to the prominent Black Elk, however, John continued to report what he considered pertinent to my inquiry:

"I first met Nick around 1900--when I was a young boy and he was not a Catholic. I don't know what they call him in English, but in Indian they call him 'yuwipi' man. Sam Kills Brave, he's a Catholic, lived close to him. And before Nick converted, Kills Brave would say, 'Why don't you give up your yuwipi and join the Catholic Church? You may think it's best, but the way I look at it, it isn't right for you to do that yuwipi.' Kills Brave kept talking to him that way and I guess Nick got those words in his mind. He said that after Kills Brave spoke to him, he wanted to change.

Corroborating John's testimony, Lucy fleshed out for me the actual incident which changed her father's life. A key figure in this episode (and for many years after) was the Jesuit priest, Joseph Lindebner. Born at Mainz, Germany in 1845, he came to Pine Ridge in 1887 and worked there until his death on October 4, 1922. The priest's small stature inspired Black Elk to affectionately call him "Ate Ptecela" or "short Father"--a phrase Lucy used interchangeably with the more formal "Father Lindebner." "Blackrobe" or "Sina Sapa" was the traditional Lakota reference to Catholic priests who in almost all circumstances wore black soutanes, or cassocks. Episcopalian clergy were called "white gowns," and Presbyterians were known as "short coats."

BLACK ELK'S CONVERSION EXPERIENCE

When Lucy narrated the following pivotal experience of her father's life, family members listened intently. It was as if all had heard it before, perhaps many times, and that it was indeed worth hearing again.

"Sam Kills Brave, Louis Shields, and my father organized this Manderson Community. Like we say there is the 'White Horse' community, 'White Bear' community, 'Crazy Horse' community, and others.* These men organized so they could help each other farm and carry on other business. Kills Brave was the main one, the leader or chief. That's the way it was in olden times. Kills Brave was already a Catholic, and he used to tell my father to make up his mind about his religious practice.

"That's when in 1904 my father was called to doctor a little boy in Payabya--seven miles north of Holy Rosary Mission. The boy's family wanted my father to doctor their son because they heard he was good at it. So, my father walked over there carrying his medicine and everything he needed for the ceremony. At that time, they walked those long trails if they didn't have a horse.

"When he got there, he found the sick boy lying in a tent. So right away, he prepared to doctor him. My father took his shirt off, put tobacco offerings in the sacred place, and started pounding on his drum. He called on the spirits to heal the boy in a very strong action. Dogs were there, and they were barking. My father was really singing away, beating his drum, and using his rattle when along came one of the Blackrobes--Father Lindebner, Ate Ptecela. At that time, the priests usually travelled by team and buggy throughout the reservation. That's what Ate Ptecela was driving.

"So he went into the tent and saw what my father was doing. Father Lindebner had already baptized the boy and had come to give him the last rites. Anyway, he took whatever my father had prepared on the ground and threw it all into the stove. He took the drum and rattle and threw them outside the tent. Then he took my father by the neck and said, 'Satan, get out!' My father had been

*Forty-one band-derived communities were located on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1935.

in the hundred-and-one show and knew a little English so he walked out. Ate Ptecela then administered the boy communion and the last rites. He also cleaned up the tent and prayed with the boy.

"After he was through, he came out and saw my father sitting there looking downhearted and lonely--as though he lost all his powers. Next thing Father Lindebner said was 'Come on and get in the buggy with me.' My father was willing to go along, so he got in and the two of them went back to Holy Rosary Mission.

"Ate Ptecela told the Jesuit Brothers to clean him up, give him some clothes--underwear, shirt, suit, tie, shoes--and a hat to wear. After that had been done, they fed him and gave him a bed to sleep in. My father never talked about that incident, but he felt it was Our Lord that appointed or selected him to do the work of the Blackrobes. He wasn't bitter at all.

"He stayed at Holy Rosary two weeks preparing for baptism, and at the end of those two weeks he wanted to be baptized. He gladly accepted the faith on December 6, 1904 which was the feast day of Saint Nicholas. So they called him Nicholas Black Elk. After he became a convert and started working for the missionaries, he put all his medicine practice away. He never took it up again.

"My father said that what he was doing before he met Ate Ptecela was the work of the Great Spirit, but that he suffered alot doing it. As a matter of fact, he had ulcers and had to be treated for them shortly after he started his missionary work. The Jesuits sent him to a hospital in Omaha and he was on a diet for two or three months until the ulcers cleared up. When he converted, knowing about Christ was very important to him, and receiving communion was what he really held sacred.

"People who used to be treated by him when he was a medicine man started coming to him. They asked him about the new religion he belonged to and he explained to them what it meant. Many followed his example and he instructed them in the new faith."

I repeatedly inquired of Lucy why her father did not resist Lindebner's intrusion upon the ceremony. Was he angry?

Did he resent the priest's behavior? Did he experience a kind of religious coup de grace, and simply capitulate to an oppressor?

The scene sketched by Lucy seemed to confirm the abrasive caricature of "missionary versus Indian." Taken at its face value, Black Elk's story would seem to ratify books like The Arrow and The Cross which portray Christianity as a monolithic religious movement that was ruinous for any Indian born after 1492 (Terrel, 1979). Far from being something positive, the holy-man's conversion seemed more of a deathblow to his really-human spirit.

Trying to be Christian myself, I was not inspired when I heard of Black Elk's experience. I was struck by what appeared to be the priest's gross insensitivity. Here was an example of religious imperialism, or Christianity's equivalent of Islam's jihad--a holy war waged against an infidel.

I was perplexed by Lucy's reaction to the content of her narration--as she regarded her father's conversion-story as rather amusing, and wholeheartedly embraced its effect on his life. Lucy, in fact, had difficulty understanding why I did not laugh at the incident. Here was a humorous story, she thought, and I had listened wearing a face filled with discouragement.

I explained to Lucy why I found it difficult to laugh along with everyone, so she hastened to put me at ease. Apparently, the factors most important to Black Elk on this occasion were (1) a holy-man was present, (2) the holy-man's powers were known to be very strong, (3) resistance to such power was unthinkable, (4) Black Elk regarded his power as negligible by comparison, and (5) he was predisposed to

changing his religious practice. That the priest was of another culture, that he was a white man, that he was seemingly so indiscreet, pushy, or insensitive--these and similar considerations Black Elk never entertained. What mattered was Wakan Tanka--whose action was apparent and could not be challenged.

According to Lucy, her father had "suffered a lot" while practicing as a medicine man, and experienced quite a bit of inner turmoil. This, along with Kills Brave's entreaty and a persistent stomach disorder, reinforced Black Elk's desire to seek some kind of relief. He knew that something was not right in his life, and the symptoms were, minimally, social, physical, and psychological. After his visit to the hospital (during which time he received the Catholic sacrament of the sick), Black Elk undertook the work of a catechist and his ulcers were never again bothersome. Lucy said that her father felt "the son of God had called him to lead a new life." The Christian "Lord" who Black Elk heard spoken of during Ghost Dance times as "Wanikiye" had "selected him" to do His work.

I later solicited reactions to Black Elk's conversion story and, according to the prevailing opinion, neither Lindebner's nor Black Elk's disposition seem to have permitted such an encounter. Although no one claimed to speak with certitude, it was felt that medicine men of Black Elk's stature did not allow themselves to be "pushed around" in that fashion, while the priest had a reputation for being very kind and gentle--hardly the ruffian portrayed. However, that

something "out of the ordinary" occurred on this occasion was agreed upon. And yet, the exact details of that "something" were quite difficult to ascertain.

The Digmann diary put as much closure on the facts of Black Elk's conversion as might ever be expected. An incident reported by the priest for July 23, 1887 is markedly similar to what Lucy recounted, and it seemed as if the names had simply been changed. Hence, an appraisal of this curious puzzle was warranted.

Digmann and Lindebner knew one another well, and their work on both reservations was similar in scope. Allowing for idiosyncratic similarities and differences, Digmann's experiences (and reflections on them) probably parallel those of Ate Ptecela. He wrote about his first experience with a Lakota medicine man the following way (8-9):

"A pagan Indian (Katola) called for a priest to baptize his dying child. I went with him on horseback to his camp, about three miles from the Mission. One of our school girls, already baptized had dressed the one-year old boy nicely and put a small crucifix on his breast. He was asleep. After we had said the Our Father, the Apostle's Creed, I baptized the child 'Inigo.' For a couple of days he had taken no nourishment, as the mother had no milk. A boy went with me to the Mission to get milk and medicine. Mother Kostka, who was a good nurse, and had knowledge of medicines wished first to see and examine the sick child. We went on foot under the parching heat of the sun to the Indian camp, the white veil of the Sister was soaked with perspiration. A short distance before the log cottage, Grace Anayela met us saying: 'The medicine man is conjuring the sick child, I do not want to be present.' Arriving at the door we heard their singing, beating the drum, and 'without any compliments I opened!' What a spectacle! In a corner of the room, the father was sitting with the naked child in his arms. Along the wall four

conjurors were crouching, with their faces painted red and yellow. One of them had returned from an Eastern school, understood English fairly well and spoke it tolerably. Him I addressed first: 'George, you here?' He had asked me already before to baptize him. Then I continued in Sioux the best I could at the time, 'Give up your devil's work. The child is baptized and belongs to the Great Spirit.' George said: 'Do you want that one of us shall die?' 'You will not die, get out of here.' They, however, continued their pow-wow, singing and ringing pumpkin shells. On my repeated begging they finally kept quiet. Mother Kostka examined the little patient and wanted to make hot poultices. The conjurors had spread out on the dirt floor of the loghouse their medicine bags. There were also bowls with water, and a pan with burning coals. To gain room, I removed without any compliments the deerskin bags, gave the water to the Sister and put the coals in the stove to start a fire. Horrified they looked at me, thinking perhaps that the Evil One would hurt me. George flung the satchel of the Sister out of the open door. The scared mother took the sick baby outside, the Sister followed. George, angry, grasped my arm to put me out but I stood the ground. In the presence of them I told the father of the child, not to allow them to continue their conjuration, and not to let their leader take the child to his house. They promised. The firmness seemed to make an impression. George became cool. He said he did not believe himself in this pow-wow but there was money in it. They make the parents pay in ponies, blankets or other valuables, while at the Mission and at the Agency they would get medicine gratis (free). My experience in this first encounter with them was a good lesson, teaching '1st, that they themselves do not believe in their charlatanry, 2nd, that they are cowards (owing to their own bad conscience like all wrongdoers) and 3rd, that the 'money' is at the bottom of their superstitious practices'."

A similar situation is reported for April 6, 1907, wherein Father Lindebner himself is mentioned. Digmann wrote:

"Osmund Iron Tail called me out of Catechism class saying: 'Jim Low Cedar would die today.' He was going to the agency to get a coffin. James was a boy of ten years, had been at the Mission over two years but owing to a slow fever was allowed to go home. We told his mother who had been baptized not

long ago: 'Call the physician and give his medicines. If you know of any good Indian medicine, you may also give it but do not allow any conjuration, sacred songs, etc. of the medicine man. Iron Tail told me that she had first done so but seeing that the Whiteman's medicine man. Now, Father Lindebner had visited the sick boy and administered to him Extreme Unction, but could not give him yet the Holy Viaticum. When then the medicine man came making arrangements for his pow-wow, little Jim peremptorily refused it saying: 'The Little Father (Lindebner) has anointed me; I don't want to be conjured, I want to go to heaven.' When Iron Tail reported this, I said within myself: 'Jim, you deserve also Holy Communion.' arriving there I found him fully conscious and glad to receive the Blessed Sacrament. After a short preparation and prayers he received his Lord for the first and last time with visible devotion. Three hours later he took his flight, to see Him in heaven."

That Lindebner encounter Black Elk under the circumstances he did is, then, not surprising. According to Digmann (8):

"... the sickbed is the field, where the physician (medicine man) and priest (missionary) often meet. We had a special eye on the sick, not to let them go without baptism. Several of these died soon after baptism, and the opinion was spread by the medicine men that pouring on of water had killed them."

Such scenarios were commonplace, it seems, as the Lindebner obituary illustrates (I.S., 1923, 84-6):*

"On one occasion, he broke through the ice while crossing Little White River, and one of his horses was drowned. Father Lindebner himself was almost frozen to death, yet the same night he borrowed another horse and made his way to a dying Indian. Only three or four years ago, when over seventy years of age, he made a sick-call trip of four hundred and twenty miles in the face of a keen

*"I.S." is the abbreviation for the Indian Sentinel, "The Official Organ of the Catholic Indian Missions," published out of Washington, D.C., and now out of print. It is in the Marquette Archives.

blizzard that brought the thermometer well below zero . . . three years ago, the writer was returning from a trip with the holy old priest, when on nearing the mission we were informed of a dying man some miles back on the road. We returned forthwith to the Indian's cabin and found the patient lying on blankets and pillows on the ground outside his house. After Father Lindebner had done what he could for the poor fellow, the latter begged us to sing some Indian hymns for his consolation and encouragement . . . for an hour we sang all the hymns we knew and some, I fear, we didn't know. The result was more noisy than harmonious. But it seemed to please the sick man and certainly edified at least one of those present."

Lucy had neither expropriated the Digmann material, nor had she drawn her inspiration from some Hollywood stereotype of Christian missionaries. Rather, she simply imparted to me the tale told by her father. Perhaps Lindebner was indeed too gentle a soul to match the conversion-story's persona, and perhaps Black Elk would indeed never have tolerated anyone's intrusion upon his religious ceremony. Perhaps what Digmann reported in his diary was well-known, through conversation by a number of people like, for example, Black Elk. And maybe his otherwise undramatic conversion-story drew more listeners when embellished with details from somewhere else.

Or could this be a special genre--an oral narrative purveying a biographical truth via incidents that never actually happen quite as reported. Lucy, for example, could relate the story and, with her family, appreciate its import. Unfamiliar with this form of communication, I (a child of the modern era) listen with chagrin, and miss the point intended.

I heard Lucy tell of her father's conversion on several

occasions, and she never failed to mention that "dogs were there, and they were barking"--a statement which appears to be straight-forward in its description of events. More is at work, however, than Black Elk (or Lucy after him) simply recounting a play-by-play account of what occurred. The inclusion of "barking dogs" is a significant embellishment that would lend additional force to the story among Lakota listeners.

My own conversations with people confirm what William and Marla Powers have written (1986, 7):

"Dogs are considered useful for protecting the house from the incursions of strangers, as well as for announcing the presence of friends. Anyone living on the reservation soon becomes accustomed to dogs barking all night long, and the reason for their nocturnal howling is frequently discussed the next morning, because dogs herald not only the presence of humans but that of ghosts as well. In Lakota . . . the expression sunqwapa, 'dog barking,' is a metaphor for any general commotion."

By saying that dogs were barking, Black Elk (or Lucy) established a frame of reference for the conversion-event similar to Western literature's "it was a dark and stormy night." Spirits were part of the story, and their presence signalled that something extraordinary or mysterious was unfolding. The dramatic effect of this narrative element would be lost on a non-Lakota audience, so it is probable that the tale falls within a traditional genre which authenticates the experience itself--a conclusion consistent with the speculation presented here.

Religion might particularly lend itself to this genre--a

precedent coming to mind which I thought seemed comparable to what we had discussed concerning her father. Namely, according to the biblical tradition, Judaism's Saul was enroute to Damascus so as to persecute Christians when, all of a sudden, he was knocked off his horse and blinded (through Divine intervention)--eventually changing his name (to Paul) and religious practice (to Christianity). Christian fundamentalists tend to interpret Paul's experience literally and assume that he had, in fact, been knocked off his horse and then blinded--events which led, ultimately, to his conversion. Other Christians, however, tend to look beyond the extraordinary details of the account and simply conclude that Paul was somehow profoundly changed (converted) on this occasion. Knowing this Bible story, Lucy agreed that her father's experience was like Paul's, i.e., being thrown out of the tent was his equivalent to falling off a horse.

Black Elk's own presentation of the drama of Payabya, whether whole or partial in its statement of concrete fact, unambiguously signalled for him the decisive call from Wakan Tanka through a Wanikiye blackrobe. Such was the basic import of the holy-man's experience, and his life after this event constitutes the most solid testimony to such an understanding. Such an understanding can embellish or delete whatever it was that actually comprised the life-changing occurrence near a dying child in 1904.

Upon request, I supplied Paul Steinmetz a rough draft of my tape-transcripts, and Black Elk's conversion-story

subsequently appeared in his Pipe, Bible and Peyote Among the Oglala Lakota (1980, 158-9). Whereas he proposed that the experience resulted in an "integration of the two religious traditions on a deep emotional and even unconscious level," fellow anthropologist Raymond DeMallie asserts otherwise (1984, 59). Citing Steinmetz as his source for the story, he noted that Black Elk's conversion was "unquestionably genuine" (1984, 14). However, DeMallie falsely concludes that the acceptance of Catholicism placed him "beyond the onerous obligations of his vision" (1984, 15). Hence, a certain opportunism is suggested here. As this study progresses, a more curious and complex series of experiences will be shown to unfold within the holy-man's life that beg a more expansive interpretation which neither Steinmetz nor DeMallie propose.

An initial building block of re-interpretation can be excavated from the classic ethnography of religious experience by William James (1961). His work was one of the first to address conversion as a phenomenon to study instead of an experience to simply take for granted. His observations are apropos of Black Elk's life (James, 160):

"To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities. This at least is what conversion signified in general terms, whether or not we believe that a direct divine operation is needed to bring such a moral change about."

As was the case with Black Elk, "religious aims form the habitual centre" of one's energy after such an experience (James, 165). It is not surprising that questions surface in regard to the facts of Black Elk's conversion-story. According to James, "neither an outside observer nor the Subject who undergoes the process can explain fully how particular experiences are able to change one's centre of energy so decisively" (James, 165). Being ineffable, such experiences beg articulation through symbol or metaphor, through poem or story, or whatever other mode of creative expression lies within the ability of a person involved.

CHAPTER V

LAKOTA CATHOLIC SOCIAL ORGANIZATION: GROUPS AND OFFICES

The wellspring of Lakota Catholic involvement in the early years of the reservation were two religious organizations known as the St. Joseph and St. Mary Societies. Since traditional, Plains cultures sought solidarity through (among other things) non-kinship sodalities (Lowie 1948, 294), these groups represent a rather clever adaptation by the early missionaries. Where formerly men and women organized themselves in warrior, curing, dancing, hunting, handicraft, and other special-interest groups (see Chapter Two), and whereas such groups began to disappear in the post-reservation period, the St. Mary (for women) and St. Joseph (for men) societies were received very favorably by the Lakota.

Louis J. Goll, S.J., one-time director of the Jesuit community at Holy Rosary Mission, related this history of the "okolakiciyapi" (societies) of St. Mary and St. Joseph (1940, 36):

"The Benedictine Fathers working among the Sioux under Bishop Martin Marty had long realized the power which lay in the informal instructions given by the Indian converts. To foster such instructions, the Benedictines organized two societies, one for men, under the patronage of St. Joseph, the other for women, under the protection of the Mother of God, and called them the St. Joseph and St. Mary Societies.

"The Jesuit Fathers introduced these societies in their missions. Accordingly, the Catholic Brules and Oglalas would meet every Sunday whether or not a priest had come to them for services. One man, elected and approved for that purpose, led in a kind of lay-service: hymns were sung and specified prayers were recited. This finished, the president

("grandfather") gave a well-thought-out address on an article of the Creed, on the sacraments, or on the Commandments of God. This done, he would appoint two or four men as speakers on the same subject. Such was the meeting of the St. Joseph Society.

"The St. Mary Society also had its program. The president ("grandmother") would address all present. She, too, would appoint two or four speakers, there being excellent speakers among these Indian women, able enough to drive home a lesson for men and women alike. Then the grandmother would give a resume and hand back the presidency to the grandfather.

Martin E. Marty* has proposed that Catholic missionaries achieved successes among Native people because they "held a somewhat more tolerant attitude toward Indian ritual and custom" and that "being celibate, were more mobile" than their Protestant counterparts (1970, 9-10). Having already commented upon the expansiveness of Lakota kinship, I would further add that the religious nomenclature (i.e., "Father," "Sister," "Brother") employed by the Catholics no doubt sounded a positive note for Native listeners. Lucy mentioned that her father not only called Lindebner "little father," but also "little brother," an affective term for the man with whom he worked so closely.

Throughout the year, meetings were held and well attended. Besides gathering for prayer and song, members would discuss religious issues and plan parish activities. After the first fifty-years, membership in the Societies declined and the core participants became the elderly children of Black Elk's generation. However, the ebb and flow of

*No relation to the Bishop mentioned above.

religious involvement in recent times has made the fluctuation unpredictable. So too, other institutional expressions have arisen; most notably, in Catholic circles, the "Tekakwitha Conference"--a national organization named after the Mohawk maiden whose piety was reported in the Jesuit Relations (Kenton 1954, 293-95).

Where Native "deacons" today serve as clergy among the people, the lifeblood for the Societies (and to the Catholic population as a whole) in times past were catechists. One observer described these special men the following way (Duratschek, 206-7):

"These men, selected for their intelligence, good character, and zeal, were the agents who carried out whatever the missionaries proposed. They met periodically with the priest who instructed them in what they were to teach those natives whom the missionary would not reach the next week or two. On the Sundays, when Mass was not offered in their districts, the catechists led the prayers and hymns of the gathering, be it in a tepee, log house, or chapel. After reading the Epistle and Gospel for the day, they instructed the people. When necessity arose, it was the catechists who baptized and who buried the dead. They visited the sick and informed the priest when anyone was in danger of death."

As will be seen, significantly more was involved with this type of religious commitment. Lucy's memories of her father show a man who took this responsibility quite seriously--so much so that for many years it was a way of life the family-as-a-whole accepted as their own. As will be clear in the following recollections, Black Elk was not an exception, or was not alone, in his pursuit of a religious

vocation within the new order of twentieth century Plains life.

Lucy recalled:

"I don't know why they did this, but even the Episcopalians chose the medicine men--like my father's uncle over here. You'll probably hear about him later on. Black Fox they call him.* He was a medicine man--a great one. And here he got converted to the Episcopal Church, became a preacher, and even became a deacon before he died.

"A good number of the early catechists were medicine men--like Paul and Joe Thin Elk. But they quit and turned back to the old ways. One of them told my father: 'Brother, I am turning back to the old medicine.' And my father answered: 'That's up to you.' As I said earlier, after my father was baptized he promised to do away with his early practices. Since he was a catechist, he lived up to it. He never gave up his prayer or what he was taught.

"At the time, we had a three room loghouse with one room for my grandma--who died in 1915. My father raised horses and pigs while my mother had chickens and a milk cow.** They plowed up the ground and grew potatoes, corn, beans, and other vegetables. My mother helped him with this and we seemed to have enough food because my father built a cellar in which they kept most of it. Although he drew only ten dollars a month for his missionary work, it seems we never went hungry.

"Right after his conversion, he went back and was supposed to take care of the Manderson district. He gathered all his friends, called a meeting, and then asked his friends and relatives to help him build a place--a little house in which to have Mass when the Father comes. Somebody donated a horse to them (a work horse) which they traded for logs. They then built the first St. Agnes Church and meeting house. It wasn't too big, but at least they

*I did hear about Black Fox later on from one elderly Manderson resident who claimed Black Fox was gifted in (among other things) telling the exact age of any stranger who asked him for such information.

**A distant, aged relative of Black Elk's recalled that at one time "Nick had fifty head of cattle." In fact, prior to the first World War, Lakota cattle-raising was quite successful--making the allotment of rations almost unnecessary.

had something ready for the priest. And so that's where my father started--right from that little log house. He was the first catechist of St. Agnes Chapel.

"Soon, before Christmas, my father and those who had joined the Church organized the St. Joseph and St. Mary Societies. They appointed leaders and had a big Christmas party--giving presents to all the older people, the real old ladies and real old men. They called them by their names and gave them presents individually.

"After the Jesuits baptized several in each district, they pretty soon began to get men like my father to be catechists. In every station they appointed two or three catechists to work with them. These laymen were trained to conduct services, read scripture on Sundays, baptize if necessary, visit the sick, and bury the dead. But most of all, they were trained to teach the Catholic faith.

"There were catechists in all those little communities like Grass Creek, Rocky Ford, White River, and Pine Creek. I know Alec Two Two was the catechist in Wounded Knee--which at that time was called Brennan, South Dakota. William Cedar Face and Kills Enemy were the catechists in Grass Creek while Frank Gallego was down in Rocky Ford. Silas Fills the Pipe took charge of the community out there at Red Shirt Table while Joe Horn Cloud took over at Potato Creek. John Fool Head was at Slim Buttes. Many others were also catechists at the time of my father, like Red Willow, Jim Grass, Louis Mousseaux, Daniel Broken Leg, Willie Red Hair--and Ivan Star Comes Out was at Our Lady of Good Counsel on the other side of Oglala on that White River. Men were catechists from all the different districts. And when it came along that my father was called away to other reservations for missionary work, Paul Catches took his place.

"Since my father was one of the first catechists, the Blackrobes might come for him at any time to go on a trip. So right away he had to work--and he worked. They used to come for him very often, and he was really willing to accept any kind of trip they were supposed to make--even in the coldest weather. He would go with Fr. Lindebner, or Westropp, or Fr. Henry Alder and people would come to them, attend mass, and even have their young ones baptized. There would be converts and he would teach them."

The Catholic church in Manderson is today still named

"St. Agnes" and is now, unlike its cabin predecessor, a larger, white, wooden structure looking like a typical "country church" (see photo). The meeting-hall behind was dedicated to Black Elk's memory (see photo). However, the sign which commemorated this (and which reported his tenure there as a catechist) was torn off the building not long after 1973's occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota by members of the American Indian Movement (A.I.M.). As of this writing, the sign has not been replaced (Furlong, 1980).

Black Elk's friend, Paul Catches, had a son named "Pete" who also became a catechist. Now a practicing medicine man (Zimmerly 1969, 46), Pete is no longer formally involved with Church work--even though his ties with Jesuits are still strong (see photo). The ceremony he conducts is not yuwipi (as some local people charge), but rather that of the "eagle"(wanbli) (performed largely for healing purposes).

Invited to one of Pete's meetings (or sings, lowanpi, as such an occasion is also called), I understood why people had confused it with yuwipi (Feraca, 1962). In the darkness of a small cabin, with participants cross-legged on the floor, Pete orchestrated an entrancing, prayerful, sensory experience comprised of singing-sounds, and faces touched with light brushes of eagle-feathers and water-droplets. He did not, however, get tied-up (as reported for the yuwipi ceremony earlier). Persons present uttered prayers of thanksgiving (or need) in a room so pitch-black that the atmosphere was one of disembodied voices. Pete has often been the guest of priests

and other interested parties at meetings which address differences and similarities of Lakota and Christian religious tradition (Stolzman, 1974).

A CATECHIST REMEMBERS

One of the present-day reservation elders is Ben Marrowbone--a ninety-year old whose ties with the past are far more intimate than those of most Pine Ridge residents. During his active years, Ben worked as a catechist--a labor he undertook when Black Elk was also still practicing missionary work. Ben is from the generation of Lakota patriarchs whose parents were nomadic Plains people, the children of whom became twentieth century reservation dwellers. His perspective is therefore a unique one.

Lucy thought he might be able to make an addition to her own narrative, and so I visited Ben on several occasions. He was very devout in his religious practice, and was one of the leaders pressing Lakota claims for the Black Hills (to be returned to his people). Ben frequently mixed Lakota with English, his hand-gestures lending power to what his words communicated. Although his deafness and the hundred-degree weather worked against us, Ben was most willing and open to discuss those days long past. Just as in speaking of the Black Hills to government officials, so he spoke of those days--maybe hoping both would be returned, somehow, before his death.

Ben Marrowbone:

I drove the team and we used to start from here

/Holy Rosary Mission is across the road from Ben's cabin/. We'd go to Slim Buttes, Wanblee, Sand Hills, Eagle Nest, and every district. It took three or four weeks sometimes. I was tired when we came home.

There'd be no meeting house or no church, so we'd bring bedrolls. Brother used to bake a big loaf of bread for us, and we'd take a box of chicken, some potatoes, and sauerkraut too.* We went to every house in a district and we stopped before sundown. We would talk to each other. "You want to stay there overnight?" "Sure!" You see, different people would want us to come in. Some people had a bedstead, but sometimes the Father and I would sleep on the floor. We'd spread our bedrolls and sleep together.

One time we went to bed about 8 o'clock. It was a cool night and we had a bedstead to sleep in. Fr. Lindebner nudged me as we fell asleep and said: 'We aren't alone. Little animals are sleeping with us.' That bed was filled with little bugs.

In the morning, strong coffee would already be cooked--and we'd have to drink it. And grease bread, we'd eat it too. Father then offered mass at that house and people nearby would come. They'd explain their confession--their sins before God. Remember, everybody makes mistakes--so we tell Almighty, and He forgives them. The people understood this and they truly believed it.

John Lone Goose:

That book, Black Elk Speaks, just talks about the olden way. But I remember every detail of what he did because I was with him--not every day--but everytime the Father would come over, or when he would teach somebody who wanted to be a Catholic. I was there to help him.

The priests gave him instructions in the faith and Nick said he wanted to teach God's word to the people. So he kept on learning, learning, learning. Pretty soon, he learned what the Bible meant, and that it was good. He said: "I want to be a catechist the rest of my life. I want it that way from here on!"

So he went around as far as Norris, Kyle, Potato Creek, Porcupine, and all those districts. He'd go around preaching with Fr. Buechel, Fr.

*The early Jesuits of both Missions were predominantly German born--as reflected in this regular offering at table. Too, Black Elk's receptivity of the German Jesuits may very well have been aided by his familiarity with Germany itself, a country he visited while in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

Lindebner, Fr. Perrig, Fr. Louis, Fr. Henry, and all those old priests. Lots of people turned to the Catholic Church through Nick's work.

He never talked about the old ways. All he talked about was the Bible and Christ. I was with him most of the time and I remember what he taught. He taught the name of Christ to Indians who didn't know it. The old people, the young people, the mixed blood, even the white man--everybody that comes to him, he teaches--from the Bible, from the catechist book, from his heart.

He was a pretty good speaker, and I think Our Lord gave him wisdom when he became a Christian. For even though he was kind of blind, his mind was not blind. And when he retired and was sick, he still taught God's word to the people. He turned Christian and took up catechist work. And he was still on it until he died.

Lucy:

Sometimes he'd be in bed and somebody would come saying there was a person dying who wanted to receive the sacraments. And so, even at night he'd go and pray for them. If they were already baptized and had been receiving the sacraments, he would call for the priest in the morning. Lots of times he would have to ride to Holy Rosary Mission (thirteen miles from our place) on horseback in order to get a priest to come and administer the last rites to a sick person.

During the times he was home, he'd go on sick calls or have prayer services for other families. When someone needed to be baptized, he would call the priest. Or if there was a Mass, he would serve it. On Sundays, when the priest couldn't make it for Mass at a particular chapel, the catechists were trained to read scriptures, put on a prayer service, and make a sermon. My father did these things and learned all the prayers by heart. And in lots of cases, when the priest was not there, he administered baptism.

The people really liked to sing with my father, and Mr. John Lone Goose would play the organ--by ear. Whenever they had Mass there, he was playing for them. They right away caught on to the singing, and they really liked to do Indian hymns.

Of course, my father never had any experience in this kind of work before he was baptized, but still--right away he understood what it meant. He had poor eyesight but he learned to read scripture and prayer-books written in the Indian language.

Pretty soon, I was so interested.

As a small girl I was trained in praying those Lakota prayers and Lakota Indian hymns by my mother. She taught me how to read in Indian too. She really taught me a lot in praying and singing. I wanted to receive Holy Communion so I really tried my best. Well, my father and mother thought I was old enough at the age of seven years.

Ever since I was six years old he trained me in prayers--Indian prayers--and Indian Catholic hymns. There's one song--the first song he ever taught me was this song here. I'll sing it right now.

Wakantanka lila waste	O God most good
Slolyeic'iya cin ce;	Who wants to make himself known,
Oyas tanyan iyuskin po,	All rejoice rightly,
Nicantepi nicila.	He asks of you your hearts.

Lakota oniyatepi,	You Lakota are a nation,
Koyan ekta up ye;	Quickly may they come together;
Jesus niyuhapi kta ce	Jesus would have it so,
Heon oyas nicopi.	Because he has called you all.

My father liked it. I guess that's why I like it.

They told me that I was baptized the same day I was born. I was born a Catholic the same day I was born a Christian. And my father raised me a Christian-Catholic. That's the only thing I was taught by him.

I made my Confirmation in Rapid City at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral. Of all my father's children, there was Ben, my younger brother Nick Jr., and myself--he had us really trained in the Catholic Church. We had to do what he asked and we had to attend Mass every Sunday.

Today I have a great devotion to the Sacred Heart, I myself. One time my younger brother Nick had a hemorrhage. He was bleeding from the nose. He was dying. I didn't know what to do so I knelt down. My father and mother were broken up--saddened--so I knelt down with them. We prayed the rosary and the Sacred Heart prayer.

While he was laying there, my brother said: 'I want some prayers said to St. Theresa.' I don't know why he said that, so I said a prayer to the Little Flower of Jesus. Afterwards, when he got well, he told me he saw that Little Flower--that Theresa. He said: 'I know it was her.'

Bible passages and hymns were translated into Lakota by early missionaries and Lucy's reference is to such a collection. Stephen R. Riggs of the Congregational Church was a missionary of forty-two years among the Lakota who compiled a text of the Bible, hymns, and other literature in the Lakota

dialect prior to his death in 1882. Further linguistic work was done by Franz Boas and Ella Deloria, but before these labors were undertaken Lakota had been an unwritten language.

The Papal letter of May 15, 1956, "Haurietis Aquas" encouraged Catholics to maintain the traditional devotion to the "Sacred Heart of Jesus," and Lucy had been trained from early childhood to recite certain prayers associated with this symbol of Christian love. Therese Martin (1873-97), known to Catholics as "the Little Flower of Jesus," was a Carmelite nun recognized by the Church as a Saint in 1925. Devotion to her was particularly strong in Catholic circles during the time Nick Jr. was ill.

CHAPTER 6

THE ACTIVITIES AND FAMILY-LIFE OF BLACK ELK, THE CATECHIST

The major event each year planned by the Societies was the "Catholic Sioux Congress." This three-day gathering of "Catholic Sioux" from all the reservations first started in 1891 at the Standing Rock Reservation (on the border of North and South Dakota), and has occurred every year since then (at different locations selected by the membership).

Usually held around the fourth of July, this religious convention was instituted by the missionaries for several reasons. In earlier times, the tribe as a whole gathered yearly to celebrate its unity against the backdrop of the Sun Dance. With this religious ceremony being outlawed by the government in 1881, an important fixture of Lakota society had been wrenched from its place. A kind of community beacon was extinguished.

Building on this older religious tradition, missionaries organized the summer Congress as an opportunity for new Church members to see and support one another in their faith (Goll, 39-43). Moreover, it was felt that an event so specifically tailored to Native interests would be a more suitable celebration for a people to whom Independence Day had little or no meaning. Generally, the agent would distribute thirty head of cattle to the tribe for purposes of celebrating the national holiday. And when Congresses first started, the Catholic population requested that these cattle be given to the Societies.

Before the use of cars became widespread, caravans of wagons could be seen taking Society members and their families to the assigned rendezvous, and each family making the trip carried its own camping equipment. Shortly after arriving, as many tents as wagons dotted the hills of the Congress site--Oglalas from Pine Ridge in one section, Brules from Rosebud in another, and so on.

Three days of praying, singing, receiving sacraments, exhorting, and friendly visiting would ensue. Although well over three-thousand Lakota participated in this event fifty years ago, attendance has steadily decreased. As recently as twenty years ago, a thousand representatives were present, but this number dropped to a few hundred just a decade later. Even so, those who still attend the event carry an eager anticipation long months before it occurs. A good time is going to be had!*

For sometime, Society members have lamented the dwindling score of Congress participants. In fact, such concern has been evident since the 1940's, and some attempt has been made to update the event's proceedings. In that Lucy's generation represents the mainstay of the Societies, younger members stress the need to focus more religious activities around

*DeMallie states that Black Elk missed the annual Congress in 1931 because it coincided with the last two days of Neihardt's visit--the senior catechist's absence from the event "no doubt conspicuous" (1984, 46). With the rest of his family at the Congress, Black Elk probably attended the final day once Ben bid farewell to the Neihardts (1984, 48). Whether this occurred or not, one's absence on such occasions was not out of the ordinary.

Lakota youths. But such reforms as the speaking of English rather than the traditional Lakota, or initiating a youth Congress, have been voted down over and over again.

Black Elk's involvement with this unique institution was considerable. Being a catechist, his duties included organizational details, preaching, and instructing new converts. Due to Black Elk's ever active participation in Society work and Congresses, Lucy's religious education as a Catholic maintained a powerful grip on her life--the traditionalism of which reflects tenets her father apparently cherished and made his own, as her following memories suggest:

"We'd go along with him to the Congress and the Catholic general meetings, and all the catechists would show up. On all kinds of Catholic holidays--Easter, Decoration Day, Christmas, New Year's--the catechists would get together at their parish chapels and have services. And on these occasions I often heard my father instruct the people about scripture.

"He related scripture passages to things around him and he used examples from nature--making comparison of things in the Bible with flowers, animals, and even trees. And when he talked to us about things in creation, he brought up stories in the Bible. That's why he was a pretty strong Catholic--by reading the Bible.

"On one occasion, my father and the old faithful catechist Fills The Pipe were attending a meeting and were camped side by side. Fills The Pipe had a crippled wife who could hardly do anything. So one night, my father was coming back to his camp when he heard someone hollering.

"A lady was hollering so my father went down to see what happened. Anyway, this Fills The Pipe had been hauling water from the creek and he fell just as he came up with the buckets. So, he had gone back and got another two buckets full of water. Again, he slipped and fell.

"The third time, his lady just couldn't take it so she sat down and started hollering. That's when my father went down to help this poor old man carry his water. That's the way these catechists ran into

hardships with their families.

"The Jesuits also took my father to other different tribes--even though he couldn't understand their languages. He instructed Arapahoes, Winnebagoes, Omahas, and others--teaching them the Catholic faith with the help of an interpreter. At that time, these tribes were going for Peyote and had been influenced by their neighboring tribes. But he converted a lot of these people.

"Sometimes I would have to sing in front of the Catholic gatherings. I had always been with him--I, and my mother, and also my younger brother--and he would say to me 'Never be ashamed to pray or sing, because if it's for God--praising Him and praying to Him--you'll be rewarded by His blessings in the future.'

"So I learned a lot through him--and understanding. If it wasn't for him, I don't know what I would have done. Through his teaching and training me, I stood strong in my faith. There's something about this Christian life never failing. If anything went wrong with my children, if he prayed, I knew everything would be alright. He had a way, since he said he loved little children.

"Even though he ended up with a lot of sufferings and trials he still went strong--even when two of his children died and he had two caskets in the church.* He stood by, still preaching because he was loved by everybody.

"One thing he always hoped and prayed for in those days was that a Sioux boy would become a priest and a Sioux girl would become a nun. And I think he was rewarded because I've known a girl from our district who became a Sister. And from the reservation, there are several of them.

"He sure was interested in that kind of life. Everything in the scriptures he understood. He knew. Members of the St. Mary's Society always came to him for advice and asked him what Church work they should do in the future."

Born in Germany in 1874, Eugene Buechel, S.J. first arrived among the Lakota in 1902 at St. Francis Mission. From that time until his death in 1954, he worked among the people of Rosebud and Pine Ridge as a missionary-priest-linguist. In 1923, he had published a "Bible History," and in 1939 a

*Black Elk's children, John and Agatha, died at the same time.

"Grammar of Lakota." Having taken extensive field notes during his long years on both reservations, Buechel's collection of the Lakota vocabulary remains unmatched. Jesuit priests compiled his notes into a dictionary in 1970 and it stands today as the authoritative reference on the Lakota language.

His name is legend among older Lakota speakers, one of whom told me: "We can't teach the young people how to talk Indian--the only man who ever spoke it perfect was Father Buechel, and he's dead!" Another aged acquaintance of mine recalled speaking to Father Buechel and did not know the old words used by the priest. Buechel kept a diary during his many years which contains, aside from pastoral concerns of the area, a daily statement about the weather (Buechel, 81-2).*

*DeMallie (1984, 38) cites Father Buechel as denouncing the rabbit dance at the 1929 Congress, the priest reported as saying it was one of the "chief evils threatening the family."

Surprisingly, DeMallie did not mention that Buechel's comments were part of a larger address entitled "What must be done to preserve the Indian race?" The break-up of family life was the theme of his presentation, and among the "chief evils" contributing to this were the dance, "hasty marriages and the spirit of idleness among the young people." The Indian Sentinel was the source of this information (9 (4) (1929): 151-52), and it further noted that Father Buechel left "the solution of the problem . . . entirely to the Indians." DeMallie somewhat tempers the bald-statement above by noting the Oglalas seemed to have agreed with Buechel, and pledged to abstain from the dance (Black Elk being one of the delegates). Verging on caricature, Buechel's depiction in The Sixth Grandfather is misleading.

On November 14, 1906 Father Buechel made the following entry in his diary--the incident revealing Black Elk's attempt to understand his newer religious practice against the backdrop of his older one. Interestingly, "fasting" was common to both traditions--a correspondence which perhaps aided his assent. I say "perhaps" because it seems possible that when one changes something of import within their lifestyle, a total dissociation with the past might be sought. Such a radical break, however, does not seem to have been operative within Black Elk's action.

"Nick Black Elk had come to collect money at an issue in Rosebud. As it came off later, he made three days retreat. I gave (it) to him. He asked 'How is it about eating during the retreat? The Indians do not eat during their recesses.'

Lucy could not assign a date to an experience which her father spoke about in later years, but it occurred at St. Francis Mission and might have taken place at the time of the retreat mentioned above, or during other visits there (which continued for years):

"My father was at St. Francis when they were going to have a burial of a little baby in a casket. They brought the one that died into church so he went in and sat down to pray. That casket was there in the church overnight and they were going to have it buried the next day.*

"My father was in the church that night when a certain Sister kept coming to the casket. Three times she came. Finally, she asked my father to tell the rest of the mourners that she wanted the

*The customary procedure at funerals is to wake the deceased at a meeting hall or a church for at least a night--mourners present throughout the time until after burial (whereupon a "feed" is held for all present).

casket open so she could see the little baby that was in there. I guess they let her.

"They opened the casket and they found the baby was alive! And this Sister, my father told us, must have had a special sense for that child. Anyway it was a girl in that casket and she grew up to be an older woman."

Prior to his departure as a missionary for India in 1916, Fr. Henry Westropp, S.J. produced a little known publication entitled "In the Land of the Wigwam: Missionary Notes from the Pine Ridge Mission." In this very brief account of his experiences among the Lakota (15 pages), he refers to Black Elk's work as a catechist in a manner which seems to endorse the account given by Lucy some sixty years later. He writes:

Many of the younger men who are capable are given duties as catechists and many of them are and have been faithful companions for years, gladly abandoning wife and family for weeks at a time to help the missionary in his work. One of the most fervent of these is a quondam ghost dancer and chief of the medicine men. His name is Black Elk. Ever since his conversion he has been a fervent apostle and he has gone around like a second St. Paul, trying to convert his tribesmen to Catholicity. He has made many converts. At any time of day or night he has proved himself ready to get up and go with the missionary. On any occasion he can arise and deliver a flood of oratory. Though half blind he has by some hook or crook learned how to read and he knows his religion thoroughly. On one occasion a preacher asked him if he thought it right to honor the Blessed Virgin. The following dialogue took place. Black Elk asked him:

'Are the angels good people?'

'Yes.'

'And St. Elizabeth, is she good?'

'Yes.'

'And the Holy Ghost?'

'Yes.'

'Well then if all these honored her why should not I?'

When she was a small child, Lucy accompanied her father to other reservations where he was assigned. One was the Wind River Agency of Wyoming--home of the Shoshone and Arapaho. Here they worked out of the St. Stephens Mission which, like the other Jesuit institutions, served as an educational facility and religious center. Another sojourn was at the Marty Mission (Duratschek, 273-311), a similar operation directed by Benedictine priests some 200 miles east of Pine Ridge. In thinking about early contact with children from different Sioux bands, Lucy clearly savored retelling memories of her distant youth. Not particularly apparent in this part of the account, but poignant in its telling, was Lucy's profound admiration for her father and his work.

Staying at Marty was less menacing than at other places because the Yankton people with whom they lived were quite friendly. Black Elk spread his vision there and returned many times to encourage its growth.

Lucy continues:

"When I was three years old, my sister Mary died. She and Agatha used to go to Holy Rosary, so when we went to St. Stephens in Wyoming I used to go around and cry trying to find her. I thought she was among those Arapaho girls.

"Finally, they thought I was going to be sick

so my father spoke to the superior and said he was going to bring his family back home. Just before that my younger brother Henry died.

"Later on, my father and James Grass went back to the Arapahoes but that tribe had been quarantined against what they called 'sores'--which was the German measles. They stayed around until the quarantine was lifted and wanted to get in contact with the main leaders. But most of them were on peyote (especially the Shoshones) so my father and Grass gave up on them and got ready to leave.

"Then a chief of the Arapahoes came into where my father was staying, grabbed him by the chest, and made the sound of a bear. Then it looked as if he wrapped something up and threw it out. The chief then said 'You're not strong or brave enough to go through with us. We were thinking about your Christianity. We were having a meeting thinking about you.' That man said he would bring his people for instruction.

"So my father went to get a permit from the agent. During the quarantine, they couldn't have any gatherings and the agent still didn't want to give them permission for dances. My father got the permit for the Church gathering, but he had also told the people to bring their Indian costumes to mass--so that afterwards they could have a feast and dance. He knew they liked the dancing. So some of them even wore their Indian costumes to church. That was the only way they could have their dances for awhile. A lot of them joined the Church and got baptized--even peyote people.

"That's when they first started Christmas night dancing. Everyone would go to midnight Mass, then have a feast, and the dance. They'd break up real late. After my father retired, he and Jim Grass visited them. They found out that they continued that dance--only now it was for an entire week up until New Year's. I don't know if they still do that.

"When I was small, maybe five or six years old, the missionaries appointed my father and three others to go east. The places I know he went were New York, Boston, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Lincoln, and Omaha. They were trying to lecture for the Oglala Sioux who were becoming Catholics and who were in need of chapels and other things. Somebody served as interpreter for them.

"After this trip, he told us about his experiences. He said 'In some towns, we'd go down the street or to some special occasion and some white people would throw rotten eggs or tomatoes at us. That happened in some places, but in others a lot of people were real good to us.' I think he

meant the kids were bad to them.

"At one place he said he was up there talking and saying to the audience: 'You white people, you came to our country. You came to this country which was ours in the first place. We were the only inhabitants. After we listened to you, we got settled down. But you're not doing what you're supposed to do--what our religion and our bible tells us. I know this. Christ himself preached that we love our neighbors as ourselves. Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. At that early time, he said those words. He told us that when he was finished speaking, everybody clapped.

"He told me about the white people he had met when he was in the east. He said they were coming like a big river through the land and that I must try and learn at least how to speak English so I could get along with them and compete with them. He didn't hold anything against them, but he always cautioned us to keep our land and work on it--like we're doing now. We have a garden and have had one every year.

"When I was six years old we went to Marty, South Dakota--where the Marty school is now located. There was a house for the catechist to stay in, and my father was the first one to use it. He went around with Father Westropp instructing and baptizing the people. On Sundays, they have Mass and my father would serve for it. He knew how to serve.

"We stayed there over a year and I used to play with the Yankton Sioux children. When I came back home, my friends all laughed at me because I talked like a Yankton. Also during this time, the little Yankton children and myself, we all learned the Latin responses for Mass. After he retired, my father used to put my kids to sleep by singing one of the Latin high Masses. It would work too. You just had to say something to him once and he caught on."

STARTING AND SUPPORTING MISSIONARY EFFORTS

How Black Elk's missionary journeys sometimes got started is revealed in the following correspondence (MCIMA). Interestingly, too, we see another style of self-expression attributed the man--quite unlike that fashioned by Neihardt some twenty-odd years later (or by someone else just a year

later). Tempering Lucy's enthusiasm for her father's work among the Shoshone is a letter within the Archives from a missionary who mentions Black Elk was good, but not as effective as one of the men who accompanied him (viz., Grass).

Writing in English through an interpreter (and someone able to write) to the Director of the Catholic Indian Missions (who was stationed in Washington, D.C.), Black Elk sent the following letter in 1908:

Dear sir. Wm H. Thatchman /sic/

if you wants have a church in your country why I wish you let me know.
We was in saint Stephen Wyoiming. and we make have a church. so.
if you wants same is that. why you let me know.
and shonshone /sic/ indians they wants to me to do it same

you remember me in prayers your friend

Nick Black Elk, Manderson S.D.

A year later (September 7, 1909), a better interpreter seems to have been found, as Black Elk again expressed an eagerness to be on the road doing Church-work.

Rev. Father Wm H. Ketcham
Washington D.C.

My Friend

It is long since I have not written to you. About two things I want to speak to you. The Assiniboins in Canada want the prayer. They want to see me very much.

The other thing is this: I want to take care that many children in North and South Dakota join the Society for the Preservation of the Faith. Therefore I want to go round for 2 or 3 months. I want to hear what you think about that. My sister

died.

With a good heart I shake hands with you

Nic. Black Elk

Address: Manderson P.O. S. Dak.

In a 1915 letter to the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions (MCIMA), Father Westropp again made reference to Black Elk--a catechist he described as "doing great work." In this exchange of letters (one by Black Elk), the matter of "catechist's salary" is raised. Correcting what Lucy said earlier about her father receiving ten-dollars a month, Westropp and Black Elk understood it to be \$25.00, whereas the Bureau "thought it was \$15.00."* Perhaps Lucy's recollection was, after all, one related to the disparity between negotiating parties (i.e., a difference of ten-dollars). We found the sum of money paid to be humorous by today's standards. Yet, Lucy made it clear that her family was never in real need.

Marquette University's Catholic Mission Archives contain other letters exchanged between Fathers Ketcham, Westropp, and Buechel related to Black Elk's missionary trips and compensation for them. As director of the Bureau, Ketcham was besieged with correspondence from missionaries and catechists nationwide. As a result, he was flooded with reports and requisitions. In Black

*DeMallie reported that catechists were given five dollars a month (1984, 16).

Elk's case, the catechist would write of journeys to different reservations and his efforts to promote the faith. Generally, he would ask for Ketcham's continued support of the trips and mention the need for some kind of travel expense.

Ketcham would then try and corroborate Black Elk's comments with the priests out in the field. Both Westropp and Buechel affirmed the catechist's labors, but cautioned the Director in regard to subsidizing him beyond what they had already provided. Westropp's 1909 letter, referring to Black Elk as "Uncle" Nick, assured Ketcham of the catechist's "prosperity" and, as in Buechel's letter of 1912, noted the tendency of such men to readily beg. An evaluation of these exchanges given by DeMallie is that " . . . holding to Christian doctrine, he practiced the virtue of charity to the fullest. On the other hand, he was able . . . to fulfill the traditional role of a Lakota leader, poor himself but ever generous to his people" (1984, 23). This understanding, and not a more critical one, seems apropos as Black Elk's reports from Manderson, published in Sinasapa Wocekiye Taeyanpaha (a Catholic Sioux newspaper), reveal him zealously committed to the work of catechist (See Appendix "Letters"). That is, his toils were not mercenary. The content of these articles reflects what Lucy described as the gist of her father's

preaching.

The ineradicable memories of Lucy's childhood leave telling impressions about the spirituality Black Elk imparted to her. As Lucy related incidents about life with her father, a unique perspective on Black Elk gradually unfolded. The grandmother I interviewed was, at one time, a little girl--the dearly loved and only-born daughter of Black Elk's two marriages. Whatever religious practices or impulses Lucy possessed, whatever spiritual sentiments fashioned her attitudes, all were expressed relative to the counsel of her father. Black Elk's little girl, now a woman with grandchildren of her own, had clearly been the special, beloved recipient of her father's spiritual legacy--warmly entrusted to her from birth and daily manifested within the rubrics of household and reservation life.

When Lucy started school, she was living away from home the better part of a year--thus limiting her grade-school recollections to the late Spring and Summer periods only. Nonetheless, as already shown, she insisted that her father's life was always preoccupied with matters involving his role as a catechist. Upon completion of her eight years of formal education, Lucy remained at home until her marriage. My efforts to secure a more detailed and systematized pattern of life for her father always met with Lucy's calm and smiling restatement of data I already possessed. Namely, when

not actively engaged in teaching, preaching, or other time-consuming Church activities, Black Elk maintained his home--attending to the oftentimes difficult challenge of reservation life.

THE GHOST DANCE AND ITS AFTERMATH

The first anecdote of this section again alludes to historical events already mentioned in passing but not significantly explained. Students of Indian history (or Neihardt's work) are familiar with the references, but the uninitiated need a "spelling out" of material not universally owned. To Lucy, my inquiries may have seemed to be excursions into the obvious. She perhaps little realized the need to explain a cultural vocabulary unique to her Lakota upbringing. In fact, I think Lucy wondered why I could not draw up her account after one session. But as done elsewhere, so here will be given a context for better understanding the import of Lucy's words. Specifically, the Ghost Dance movement needs some explication.

At times referred to as the "Messiah Craze," the Ghost Dance of the 1880's was a Native religious movement whose most vocal adherents were from among the many Sioux bands. Rooted in the teachings of a Nevada Paiute named Wovoka (also known as Jack Wilson), the Ghost Dance was received as the answer to a prayer. Suffering from confinement to reservation life, dying from disease and starvation because of inadequate food allotments, the

Lakota fervently embraced a doctrine they heard would end such unbearable oppression.

Word was received that a second coming of the Christ was close at hand. Whites had killed him years earlier, so this time he would deliver the Indian people, restore their buffaloes, raise the dead, and vanquish their foes. Wovoka is reported to have preached a doctrine of non-violence and resignation, but accretions to this teaching surfaced among the Lakota which eventually produced tragic consequences.

Besides gathering to dance for a return of the dead, people like Short Bull and Kicking Bear advised that a speedier end to oppression would occur if "Ghost shirts" were worn and resistance asserted against whites.* The shirts were thought to have the power of deflecting bullets, and any form of submission to reservation law would only delay liberation. Consequently, a militant atmosphere prevailed throughout Lakota country as Spring of 1891 was signalled to be the time of deliverance. Meanwhile, government injunctions against these ideas and practices only seemed to underscore their validity. The oppressors knew they were doomed, or so went the thinking, and the exhaustive, trance-producing dance became the order of the day.

Sent to intercept Big Foot's band of Minneconjou dancers, cavalry troops mismanaged surrender-negotiations and

*In the Neihardt transcripts Black Elk claims to have started the wearing of ghost shirts--something not confirmed in other documents.

precipitated the now infamous massacre/battle of Wounded Knee on December 29, 1890. With the mass burial of over two-hundred men, women, and children, and with the Spring of 1891 giving birth to only the summer, protective shirts and a second coming became dreams-turned-nightmare. The Ghost Dance hope was dead, even though the conditions which produced it were not.*

Lucy Speaks

"At one time, Father Lindebner said to my father: 'Nick, go over there and I'll have Mr. Fills The Pipe go along with you to instruct a very old lady so she can be baptized pretty soon. I'll come along later.'

"My mother said I wanted to go so my father hooked up the team and we went down the creek below Manderson toward Rocky Ford. When we arrived there, this old lady was in a little log house shack all by herself--next to a bigger house where the people who took care of her lived.

"We went in and she greeted us, and my father instructed her. Afterwards, Father Lindebner came.

"My father asked the old lady 'Unci,' that means Grandma, 'do you want to be baptized and join the Church?' Right away she said 'yes, everybody is getting baptized so don't leave me out.' She said she was willing to answer every question they asked.

So my father said 'Do you believe in the Catholic Church?' She said "yes." And then he said 'Do you believe in Jesus Christ who came down from heaven?' And she said "Yes, I know that long time ago." Right away she looked at Father Lindebner and said 'But I heard the wasicus (white men) were bad so they killed him.' We'd take that as a joke today, but they didn't. They just went on instructing her, and pretty soon she was baptized and willing to receive communion.

"After that, although she was pretty old, she

*When I was still teaching in Pine Ridge, a film-producer from California was directed to sit in on my Native American Studies class. Afterwards, he asked if I might introduce him to ghost dancers (the purpose of his visit being to film them performing). Realizing he had been misled into thinking it was still practiced, the man seemed greatly disappointed.

walked to St. Peter's Church.* I guess she really believed in the faith because she used to walk slowly, but she always did get there to receive her communion. Then she'd walk back to her shack again.

"She was really rewarded with a happy death. The priest was there and she received her last rites and communion. And that's one I witnessed myself.

"Another time Father Lindebner came over to baptize my grandma and her cousins. They were all living together and were ready to be baptized because they had already been instructed. And again there was my father and his friend (he says it's his cousin) old man Fills The Pipe--who was trying to make them say the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Act of Contrition.

"He was trying his best to make them say the prayers along with him but they were kind of blundering. Fills The Pipe would tell them: 'Say after me.' And one old lady would repeat 'Say after me' each time he'd begin a new sentence.

"They were going so slow that I took my fancy little cup. I had it ever since I was a small girl. I took my cup, filled it with water, and went around baptizing my three grandmas. That Father Lindebner--I really like him. He just stood there looking at me pouring water on each one and said 'Hurry up with the prayers, Lucy has already baptized all the old ladies!'

"I guess I really took to everything and I'll always thank my father for training me and giving me a good Catholic life. But that's the way they were. He and my mother were really interested in Church work.

"In those days it was fun to get a lot of the older people baptized. Sometimes they'd understand and sometimes they wouldn't. They might ask a woman what name she had chosen and she might say "Jacob, or some other man's name. Or, one man said "I want to be called Julia." So, things like that happened in the old days.

"Since my father and mother trained me as a helper, I had to teach the younger people. I had to go along with my father to teach them prayers in Lakota--like the Our Father and Hail Mary. And I had to tell them stories in the Bible like when the Lord was born in Bethlehem.

"Anyway that's the way I followed them around. And my father told me to do my duty as a

*St. Peter's church is thirteen miles north of present day Manderson.

Catholic--go to Mass, receive the sacraments, and never forget to thank Wakan-Tanka for the blessings and benefits he has bestowed upon me. He always said "To live close to God is more enjoyable than to live easy--with all the pleasures and riches--because such things never will reach to heaven. One thing is never lie, too, because you will lose all your honesty towards God and your neighbors."

"When I took communion, I knew that Christ came into my heart. He was present on the altar and he came to my parents and my heart. I used to play with my dolls and make believe they received communion. I'd dress them in white and put that little veil on them and make believe they made their first communion.

"I also used to go out in the garden when I was a little girl and shake hands with the corn stalks. 'Good morning,' I would say to these creatures. And I would pray with them.

"Another time there was going to be a Christmas Midnight Mass so my father told me to go to bed early. He said that 'Tonight Jesus comes into the Church'--and we all believed exactly that since Christianity had just been taught to the Indians. Anyway, I got up, dressed, and went into church.

"After I went out of the house, my mother must have put a doll above my bed as a present. I also had a stocking hanging there so they filled it up with candy and nuts and on top of it they put a big apple. When I returned from Mass, I didn't notice anything. I just went to bed. I didn't look around.

"Next morning, my father sang an old song with the words: 'Get up and see what you've got above you. Get up and see what you've got above you. Get up and see what you've got above you.'

"He was singing that, and I knew he meant me. So I looked up and here that doll was hanging there. And my stocking was filled with candy and things I really enjoyed. That was the first time I ever had a doll. Later I went to school at Holy Rosary and Father Buechel gave me a doll too--a nice little doll which I had for a long time.

"Well, it came to pass that my father said I must attend school at the Holy Rosary Mission and that I couldn't go along with them on the missionary trips. He said 'Now since you're a girl and not a boy, I want you to take music lessons and learn all you can. So after you get out of school, you're going to be playing for the Mass and for all Catholic gatherings. That way you can serve God. If you were a boy, I would have you trained as a

catechist.'

"So I did. That way I thought I would please my father. Yet, I learned afterwards that the Sisters who taught me music actually worked for the service of God, and it was actually a heaven-sent talent that I learned from the Holy Rosary Mission.

"I was an organist for the last thirty-four years, and sometimes I still play when I'm in a good mood--but sometimes I have a little rheumatism so I hardly ever play anymore.

"When we went to the Holy Rosary Mission, my father and mother didn't even notice that I wore my beaded mocassins. I also wore a velvet dress which had ruffles on it, and my hair was long. So my father brought me to school and my mother stayed home because she hated to see me go.

"Father Buechel went and got a box with a big red apple on it and said 'I got something that you'll really like.' So I looked in the box and there was a doll--the kind that slept. My dad was there to see if I was going to cry--because my mom told him to take me back home if I did. But I passed him and went to the school clothing room with Sister Genevieve.

"She took away my mocassins and gave me some real thick shoes, black stockings, and a big heavy dress with ruffles.

"I was at Holy Rosary when my grandma died, and I didn't know anything about it until my father, mother, and baby brother came to visit me. My mother had her hair all down, like in the morning when you get up, and it wasn't braided. She wore black and when she saw me she hugged me and was crying as she said 'Your grandma died'."

When Lucy related the above incident, her words were slowly and solemnly uttered--the heartfelt loss of her grandmother seeming far more immediate than some sixty years passed. A reflective silence followed this account as Lucy affectionately beheld her own grandchildren playing on the nearby hills.

Lucy continues:

"Once, after he retired, my father told me about the years when he first became a catechist. He said the people would scourge him with vicious

words and make fun of him since he had been a yuwipi medicine man. The people made a lot of vicious talk concerning him but he held on and did not go back to his old ways.

"There's a couple or three times, he said, that people would chase them out of the house--not wanting to have them in there. They belonged to this peyote clan (at that time they were really going strong).^{*} So they chased him out and even threw their books out. That's the kind of life he led, and those were some of the hardships he faced during his first years as a catechist.

"My father told me: 'At first, they called me names. They called me yuwipi man and said that I was the devil. But I was a catechist so I never paid any attention to them. Pretty soon, they quieted down and started coming to me, working with me, and associating with me. I found out that the ones who did say those bad things about me were the ones not easily converted into the church. They'd come and talk to me and tell me this problem and that problem and by just looking at their faces I could understand what kind of people they are in their hearts.'

"He said that 'At first the little ones listened to me more than the older people. I was always willing to talk to them about God and about our Lord, who was born and died for all of us men. The little ones, the children, were really glad every time I had a service. They enjoyed it. It was the little children who were interested, who came, and listened to me. One of the greatest things God rewarded me with was the little ones. I was always loved by little ones. It seemed like God said 'Let the children come to me' for that's the way it was.** I still think that since I have become a grandfather, why I still am loved by little ones.'

"So that was always his main teaching. When he taught, he said 'Unless we become as children, become like those little children'--he would point to some--'we cannot enter the Kingdom.' That was his main topic.^{*}

One time he told me: 'I know I have a lot of little angels up there in heaven watching over me, and one day I'll see them.' He said that during his

^{*}The "Native American Church" is referred to here, a religious practice based on the consumption of peyote and its blend of traditional and Christian elements. Cf. Steltenkamp 1982; 53-76.

^{**}Black Elk alludes here to Luke 18:15-17.

life as a catechist he baptized a lot of little babies who were dying and since the priest wasn't there he had to baptize them. Those were the ones he meant. He said that they were his 'little helpers' and 'guides.'

Whenever they'd have a meeting--they always liked to have meetings at that time, in the early life of the Sioux Catholics--they liked to hear about God and about Christianity. So they liked to have meetings. At that time, the regulations were very strict so they didn't associate with the other denominations or have anything to do with divorced persons. They didn't allow them in the meetings.

"At all Catholic gatherings--celebrations or meetings--they were bound to have my father lecture on something about the Church. One of his favorite subjects was on the words 'What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul.'** That's one of the things I'll always remember about him teaching during those years.

"My father would really stand out there preaching with all his might. He'd tell me 'It's pretty hard to be teaching the people. But still, I feel good when I get through. It seems I feel so good that I can just feel at ease when I finish instructing them--even though at first it's like doing heavy labor. Maybe Our Lord helps me to put on inspiring preaching.'

"I remember a relative of mine used to come over and used to gossip about her aunts and uncles. She used to talk about them and complain about them. So before she left one day, my father said to her, 'Takoja,' that meant 'daughter-in-law'--'the strong person doesn't speak sharp words about their neighbor, or other persons. People hear such words and they like to hear them--then they somehow feel satisfied. Seems like all they want to do is hear bad things.'

"My father gave her an example. He said: 'It's like a dog who gets so hungry at times it goes out and gets all sorts of bones. Even if they're dry and rotted, he carries them back to the house and just piles them up stinking. The dog thinks there's real meat on the bones, he picks them up to eat--they're messy and not good for him at all. That's the way it is with people. They like to hear

*This biblical reference is to Matthew 18:2.

**Matthew 16:26.

and speak harsh words all the time in all places.'*

"'You yourself, if you believe in God, should just forgive others. Don't mention anything about them. The people you complain about might just be ignorant. They themselves want to do good for you because they see you talk nice about them. They see you don't even care what they said to you. That way they'll be back in the religion and do things you respect. And when they're dead, you can say nice words about them.'

"That's what he told that lady. That's the way he talked--in a nice way so she wasn't offended. After my father said this to her, she was really getting along good with her relatives right up until they died."

*"Bones" figure prominently within Lakota mythology, particularly within the story that relates the coming of the Sacred Pipe (Brown 1953, 3-4). Melody suggests the tale be understood to mean that "the life of /egocentric/ gratification is itself that of bones" (1980, 12). It is not surprising that Black Elk draw upon this conventional metaphor to illustrate a morality that was thematic in his life prior to and after his conversion.

CHAPTER VII

CATECHIST- AND HEYOKA-FATHER

While assigned to the Oglala district of the Pine Ridge reservation, Black Elk had some humorous experiences which Lucy found most memorable. When she related to me the episodes that follow, the family members present took great delight in hearing them. By contrast, the day-to-day routine of her father's life at Oglala is more soberly stated in Father Buechel's diary. The December 23, 1928 entry reads: "Mass, sermon & 12 Holy Communions at Oglala. Drove home. On the way, Black Elk & I prayed for Mrs. Charles Eagle Louse who is sick." Other dates, containing scant information, show Black Elk sponsoring for baptisms and present at various religious gatherings.

Lucy continues:

My father was appointed catechist at Oglala, so we moved there. My father would often have services and come home by himself real late at night. My mother would leave a lamp burning near the window so my father could find our house--as it was out in the country. Anyway, one night my father came walking home but all he saw were tall trees and bushes. My mother had forgot to light the lamp and my father was lost.

He started shouting 'hey, hey' but my mother was sound asleep and didn't hear him. I woke up right away and poked my mother saying 'Mother, there's my father shouting outside.' So she got up, opened the door, and saw my father about ten feet away from the house looking the other way. You see his sight wasn't too good at the time and he didn't know he was so close to home. That's why he was shouting for help.*

On another dark night my father came home

*Might this have been Black Elk's way of encouraging his wife to remember leaving a light burning, i.e., awaken her in the middle of the night by pretending to blindly look in another direction?

riding our big white horse Baloney. Baloney was so well broken that you could just let the reins drop and he wouldn't move--he'd just stand there. When my father came home, he got off the horse and went to open the corral we had nearby. After he opened the gate he turned around and was really scared. A white ghost with big black eyes was right behind him--looking at him. My father real quickly punched that ghost in the nose and was he surprised to see Baloney run off. You see he didn't realize that Baloney had followed him to the gate and had turned to face him. That horse didn't come back until the next day.

Father Henry Grotegeers used to ride a motorcycle when he went around to say Mass. My father was at Holy Rosary Mission one day and Father Henry asked if he would help assist at the services in Oglala. So my father got on the back of the motorcycle and the two of them started off. When they got to the church, Father Henry couldn't stop the motorcycle so he headed for the racetrack that used to be there. They went around and around that track until Father Henry decided to head back to the Mission. My father held on all the time wondering why they couldn't stop.

On the way back to the Mission, Father Henry changed his mind and figured he would stop that motorcycle by driving it into a bank. So he crashed into a bank on the side of the road and he and my father were thrown off. My father shouted at Father Henry 'You nearly killed me!' But when he told us the story afterwards we all laughed and laughed.

Another time, one of the missionaries came along to get my father for a trip. So my father said: 'I'm going to get my clean clothes on.' He was in such a hurry that he rushed to the suitcase and started dressing. They must have both used the same one for when he put on his underwear, he was wearing those things (Lucy points to the chest area). It was my mother's underwear he put on!

He was mad. He went to my mother and said, 'Woman, put your things in a separate place from here on!'

And another time, during Christmas, he was resting. For any big feast or holiday that came along we used to stay overnight in the addition to the meeting house. So everybody was getting ready for the Christmas party--putting up the tree, and preparing for services. When they were ready for prayer to begin, they called my father.

Right away he went and got his coat and threw it over his shoulders. All the coats were hanging on nails. So there he was leading prayer in front

of all the people on that cold night--wearing my mother's coat, which had real high shoulders.

When he finally sat down, one of the men near him said 'Cousin, you've got a nice coat on. Where'd you get it?' My father then went over to my mother and said 'You hang your coat someplace else!'

One time my father went with Father Westropp way over to the Cheyenne agency and they had to cross the Cheyenne River. When they got there it was flooded so my father said 'Father, I don't think we'll be able to cross it.' But Father Westropp said, 'No, Nick, God is going to help us. He'll take care of us.' So they went into the water.

Well, it was so high that the horses were swimming, and they were just barely hanging on to the buggy. All their belongings just floated away--their Bibles, prayerbooks, bedding, and even their food. On the other side were some people who came to rescue them.

These people took Father Westropp and my father to their camp and everybody's clothes were just all soaking wet. They clothed them, fed them, and gave them a place to sleep. They even gave them hats--cowboy hats. So that's the kind of life they had in those days.

When he was older and retired from his Church work, my father did that inipi, that sweatlodge, with some other men. Georgie was outside and in charge of opening the flap when they needed air. Well, we had a windmill nearby and Georgie went and climbed it just when they wanted that flap opened. I heard them shouting for Georgie but he couldn't get down. Since that sweatlodge was for men only, I didn't want to open the door and I told them Georgie couldn't get down. I wasn't going to open that door. After I said that, my father shouted right away 'Daughter! Open that flap now or we'll burn up in here!' By that time, Georgie had climbed down and could open the door--so, they were really glad to finally get some relief. It was really hot inside.

At one time he went and took his buggy and team to the store. As you know, he was a pretty talkative man--so while he was there, he forgot about his buggy and team. After he came out to go home with his groceries, his team and buggy were gone! They had left him and went home. After he got a ride, he found them back at our place.

Another time, he rode to the store and left his horse in the front. He then came home, but forgot that this horse was tied up on the rail.

Although Lucy seemed to assess the above incidents as

simply humorous happenings from many years ago, those related to wife and horses suggest another level of meaning at play. Each episode dealing with wife or horses demonstrates, in some form, a circuitous reproof (heyoka-like?) administered by Black Elk to two types of creature with whom he had to contend. However, layers of interpretation aside, everyone with whom I spoke always recalled Lucy's father to be a man with a good sense of humor.

Even in the account of suffering he encountered at the massacre of Wounded Knee, Black Elk made a statement which reflects his heyoka upbringing. Finding soup in a deserted tipi north of Pine Ridge, he and his friend stopped and helped themselves to it. Soldiers were in hot pursuit of the two men, and bullets whistled in and about the tipi. One bullet having struck too close, Black Elk casually states "If that bullet had only killed me, then I could have died with papa (dried meat) in my mouth." His statement is intentionally humorous. It is comic relief during a narrative of woe. However, readers unattuned to this facet of the man's personality can easily miss this constitutive biographical theme (BES, 224-25).

NEIHARDT'S VISIT AND THE REACTIONS IT PROVOKED

Lucy could recall very little about Neihardt's visit with her father, but Father Sialm's diary reflects a viewpoint held by some of the Catholic priests at the time Black Elk Speaks was first published. The basic objection to the book rested not so much on what was related, but rather on what was left

out. Neihardt's so-called "life story" covered only a part of the man's life (twenty-four years) and this, they felt, was an injustice to Black Elk--who had labored long years as a Christian missionary among his people. Excerpts from the diary should illustrate this.

Placidus Sialm, born in Disentis, Switzerland in 1872, first came to Pine Ridge in 1901. He died there in 1940. His use of the word "pagan"--a term which today carries pejorative connotation at times--should be understood in the following context to mean "a person who has not been baptized into the Christian faith."

Concerning Black Elk's relationship with Fathers Sialm, Zimmerman, and others, Lucy said: "Oh, he liked all of them, even though they said Father Sialm really got after him sometimes. But he didn't mind that. Father Sialm was my confessor, but I don't know much about him." Lucy's original sentiments regarding the publication of Black Elk Speaks paralleled those expressed by Father Sialm. With the passage of time, however, both Lucy and Father Sialm's colleagues have come to appreciate the biography Neihardt put together about her father's early life. The diary reported:

"He was very zealous . . . and went much around with Fr. Westropp. He became catechist and traveled to other reservations under direction of Fr. Westropp. He was well educated in the faith.

Nic Black Elk /sic/ could have finished the book with a fine chapter of his conversion. But Neihardt did not want that . . . Nic as Catholic did more for his people than as medicine man before. Nic was in his best years when he was converted and he knew that the Gospel was clearer than his dream.

Nic had many fine speeches about the Catholic faith in big assemblies, at congresses in several places. But all that did not suit Mr. Neihardt.

For quite a few years Nic Black Elk made the Catholic retreat under Fr. Sialm and what he learned then was more than all the dreams of the Indian medicine men. After one of these retreats Nic Black Elk came to Fr. Sialm with the solemn declaration: 'We Indian catechists have resolved never to commit a mortal sin.' It was Nic in the name of all who made up the resolution. In our great procession of Corpus Christi, Nic Black Elk was prominent in leading the real Indians in their costumes in the procession. It was perhaps the greatest exultation of his heart when he saw so many Indians following up to Corpus Christi Hill in Oglala and in Manderson in perfect order and knowing & firmly believing that the living Christ was among and with them all to bless them & their country. He saw then more horses lined up than in his dream. With 9 years Nic Black Elk could for a truth not count the horses which he pretended to have seen in the dream. But perhaps it was rather Mr. Neihardt who by all force put things together to suit his own purpose. Black Elk cannot read the book as it stands and cannot object against the forceful contorsion /sic/ of the poet.

The greatest injustice, however, is that Black Elk is left under the impression that now as an old man he is in despair about fulfilling his destiny for his people. He has done wonderful good work for the truth & the way & the light which is Christ, and His one holy catholic apostolic Church. We, as missionaries whom Black Elk calls Fathers, are obliged to protest against the injustices done to Black Elk--one of the worst exploitations ever done to an honest Indian. This book: Black Elk Speaks has no 'placet' and no 'imprimatur' from Black Elk. It could fairly be put into the class of not only exploitation, but what is worse, of stealing--plagiarism--material for a book, cleverly done, a kind of kidnapping the very words of a man . . . and translated them into a new language to disguise the fraud.

We missionaries have learned the language of the Indians. We lived with them not only a few months. We know their good and bad qualities. But we feel that the Indians have sacred rights to be respected. If a book cuts out the very best from a man's life under his very roof: this is not to be left unchallenged. We know that Black Elk would not

conclude his narrative as did Mr. Neihardt. His son Ben Black Elk said that the last chapter was not in the intention of his father.*

Black Elk did not divest himself from Christianity to fit a poet in such a manner as to stand before the world as a real old time pagan. It badly befits an old man to dissimulate. In the old Book we read of a man in his old days who would not dissimulate but would rather die to keep his good reputation and to be an encouragement to young people than a stumbling block.** Black Elk knows that story. He is man enough and Christian in addition as not to fall back from the holy command which was delivered to him by his missionaries. He knows better than Neihardt the words of Peter II, 2: 22. Black Elk knows all those truths and stands for them. If it were in his power he would solemnly protest against this book, especially against the last chapter added without one consultation by the writer.*

Let him speak as a pagan up to 1900--but after baptism Black Elk solemnly /sic/ protests to stamp him again a pagan. In the last 30 years since we knew Black Elk this Indian stands up as a Christian, knowing & professing Christ the true Messiah and his only church with Peter, the Rock, as guide & light.

It is wonderful to have a solemn Declaration of Black Elk with regard to his firm & solid Catholic faith signed by himself & declared before the whole world. This Declaration should stand in every new edition of Black Elk Speaks. The members of his parish St. Agnes Manderson & all the Catholic Indians on Pine Ridge Reservation will gladly testify that Black Elk is one of their true & sincere members & should not stand before the world now in his old age as an old time pagan and medicine man. Black Elk is a true Christian.

Such a "declaration" was finally made, but never reached

*Forty years after Sialm stated this objection, Mc Cluskey noted the same when she quoted Neihardt as saying the final three paragraphs of the book were what Black Elk "would have said if he had been able" (1979, 232). Holler also disagrees with Neihardt's opinion that these most quoted passages of the work reflected the holy-man's thought (1984, 36-7).

**2Mac. 6:18-31 is the priest's scriptural reference.

the presses as a post-script. In short, feelings were hurt, as the following document reveals.

Holy Rosary Mission
Pine Ridge, S. Dak.
January 26, 1934

Black Elk Speaks Again--A Last Word

I shake hands with my white friends. Listen, I speak some true words. A white man made a book and told what I had spoken of olden times, but the new times he left out. So I speak again, a last word.

I am now an old man. I called my priest to pray for me and to give me holy oil and the Holy Food, the "Yutapi Wakan." Now I will tell you the truth. Listen my friends.

In the last thirty years I am different from what the white man wrote about me. I am a Christian. I was baptized thirty years ago by the Black-gown priest called Little Father (Ate-ptecela). After that time all call me Nick Black Elk. Most of the Sioux Indians know me. I am now converted to the true Faith in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I say in my own Sioux Lakota language; Ateunyanpi--Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name--as Christ taught us to say. I say the Apostle's Creed and I believe every word of it.

I believe in seven Holy Sacraments of the Catholic Church. I myself received now six of them; Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Communion, Holy Marriage, and Extreme Unction.

I was for many years a regular companion of several missionaries going out campaigning for Christ among my people. I was nearly twenty years the helper of the priests and acted as Catechist in several camps. So I knew my Catholic Religion better than many white people.

For eight years I made the regular Retreat given by the priest for Catechists and I learned much of the faith in those days. I can give reasons for my faith. I know Whom I have believed and my faith is not vain.

My family is all baptized. All my children and grand-children belong to the Black-gown church and I am glad of that and I wish that all should stay in that holy way.

I know what St. Peter said about those who fall away from the Holy Commandments. You white friends should read 2 Peter 2-20, 22. I tell my people to stay in the right way which Christ and His church

have taught us. I will never fall back from the true faith in Christ.

Thirty years ago I was a real Indian and knew a little about the Great Spirit--the Wakantanka. I was a good dancer and I danced before Queen Victoria in England. I made medicine for sick people. I was proud, perhaps I was brave, perhaps I was a good Indian; but now I am better.

St. Paul also turned better when he was converted. I now know that the prayer of the Catholic Church is better than the Sun-dance or the Ghost-dance. Old Indians danced that kind for their own glory. They cut themselves so that the blood flowed. But Christ was nailed to the Cross for sin and he took away our sins. The old Indian prayers did not make people better. The medicine men looked for their own glory and for presents. Christ taught us to be humble and to stop sin. Indian medicine men did not stop sin. I want to be straight as the black-gown church teaches us to be straight to save my soul for heaven. This I want to do. I cheerfully shake hands with you all.

signed: Nick Black Elk
Lucy C. Looks Twice
Joseph A. Zimmerman, S.J.

Concerning the above statement, DeMallie notes that the translation "tends to slant the document slightly more in Christian idioms (1984, 61)," and so re-translated the declaration for The Sixth Grandfather. A second document, written eight months later (appearing below), demonstrates that a certain "fallout," difficult to assess, continued to linger after the book's publication. A word is in order such that there be clarity on the roles and sentiments of the persons involved.

A signatory to the first letter, Joseph A. Zimmerman, was a Jesuit priest who figured prominently in the life of Black Elk and other Lakota over many years. He was born in Westphalia, Wisconsin in 1884, and spent thirteen years at St.

Francis Mission on the Rosebud before coming to Holy Rosary in 1930. Brown informed me that Father Zimmerman opposed his work with Black Elk--the priest objecting to a resurrection of "old time religion." Ironically, a present day medicine man of the reservation told me that he regarded Father Zimmerman as a "saint" who, in the medicine man's words: "I pray to." When Brown visited, Zimmerman no doubt vividly recalled the aftermath of Neihardt's stay, and wanted to avoid such matters happening again.

As to the purpose for writing not just one, but two, declarations, DeMallie rightly suggests that some of the missionaries (like Zimmerman) were disturbed by the Neihardt portrayal. He is mistaken, though, to speculate that Lucy was perhaps "the actual author of the letter" (62n). Before explaining why this caution be made, the letter itself is worth noting at this point. Written from Oglala on September 20, 1934, it reads:

Dear Friends:

Three years ago in 1932 a white man named John G. Neihardt came up to my place whom I have never met before and asked me to make a story book with him. I don't know whether he took out a permit from the agent or not. He promised me that if he completed and publish /sic/ this book he was go pay half of the price of each book. I trusted him and finished the story of my life for him. After he published the book I wrote to him and ask /sic/ him about the price which he promise me on the books he sold. He answered my letter and told me that there was another white man who has asked him to make this book so he himself hasn't seen a cent from the book which we made. By this I know he was deceiving me about the whole business. I also asked to put at the end of this story that I was not a pagan but have been converted into the Catholic Church in

which I work as a catechist for more than 25 years. I've quit all these pagan works. But he didn't mention this. Cash talks. So if they can't put this religion life in the last part of that book, also if he can't pay what he promised, I ask you my dear friends that this book of my life will be null and void because I value my soul more than my body. I'm awful sorry for the mistake I made. I also have this witnesses to stand by me.

I'm yours truly

Nick Black Elk

my name is not Amerdian /sic/ but he is lying about my name

Basing his surmise on correspondence between Ben Black Elk and Neihardt, DeMallie noted the family's expressed respect for the author--Ben even naming a son after the poet. Within this correspondence, and surmise, mention is made of other catechists being "opposed to--or perhaps jealous of--the book" (62), particularly one Emil Afraid of Hawk. Ben is said to have written that Emil "has been loading the old man about lots of things. The old man felt uneasy for a while. But he is perfectly satisfied, very glad to hear you are coming again." DeMallie's conclusion is a logical one, given this material and is, indeed, characteristically well-researched and well-written. However, other factors were at play.

As mentioned earlier, there was some disagreement at the time of Neihardt's visit as to who should be interpreter. According to Lucy, and corroborated by others with whom I spoke, Emil's role as interpreter was short-lived, as Ben wished to have involvement with the project. From that time on, Lucy's brother was a moving force behind Neihardt's accumulation of data, and Lucy was at odds with her brother as

to how the whole matter was being handled. Persons like Emil and Lucy dissociated themselves from the enterprise on grounds similar to those of the missionaries, i.e., the highlighting of Black Elk's earlier years at the expense of his later ones. Ben's interests were at odds with his sister's.

Knowing of Ben's eagerness for further visits, and knowing about the above correspondence of Ben to Neihardt, Lucy would certainly advocate yet another "declaration" from her father. DeMallie recognized that the document was "difficult . . . to assess" and that "the motive for writing it is not clear." But given the date of the first declaration (January) and the date of Ben's invitation to Neihardt (June), and taking into consideration Lucy's resistance to her brother's involvement, it is not at all surprising that September disclose additional reasons why Black Elk redress the course of events. Unfortunate as this father-daughter-son interplay might be, it was, nonetheless, a reality Black Elk had to contend with during the book's writing and post-production.

In essence, the second letter is that of Black Elk as he found himself in the middle of his children's disagreement. Appeasing both sides, the holy-man seems to have ultimately steered a course that was as accomodating to as many parties as possible.

"Who" said "what" appears to have been a matter not easily laid to rest since it also bore upon Black Elk Speaks itself. Joseph Epes Brown mentioned to me that while working

on The Sacred Pipe he had reason to correspond with John Neihardt. The poet insisted that his depiction of Black Elk was greatly embellished and only "based" on the holy-man's recollections (supplementary material was gleaned, apparently, from other sources). Instead of keeping the original title of his work, Neihardt requested in 1972 that it be changed to Black Elk Speaks . . . "as told through" /italics added/ the author. As stated earlier, the 1932 edition said "as told to" /italics added/--an important change which has been often overlooked by readers. Nonetheless, in Brown's opinion, the book seemed greatly indebted to Black Elk--even though some Lakota attribute much of the information to Ben.

Assessing all of these qualifications is, at times, difficult, but some essential elements are clear. Obviously, Lucy's father was not a mythical, epic hero whose every waking moment could be construed into a swashbuckling adventure-yarn. Nor was he an otherworldly mystic unconcerned with the pressing issues of everyday life. Instead, Lucy's account (combined with recollections of those who knew Black Elk) reveals the compelling personality captured in the Neihardt work, and does so, simply, in a fashion that reads a little more "down to earth."

The "forceful contorsions" spoken of by Father Sialm are not, it seems, a writer's creative imagination, but are rather Neihardt's choice of emphases. Whatever the poet may have embellished, whatever data he fictionalized into misleading or ambiguous conclusions regarding Black Elk's world-view, he

still managed to discover and reveal much of the substance that made the holy-man who he was.

Prior to meeting Neihardt, Black Elk's destiny as an internationally known mystic could only be the imaginative dream of an old grandfather (considering his remote reservation existence). However, after learning about the holy-man's entire life from a more intimate perspective, I must admit to wondering if the disclosure of his story from start-to-finish just might be a phenomenon not solely guided by human design. It is, simply, intriguing that an old man's vision still unfolds these long years after his death--revealed, as he hoped it would be, to countless persons far-removed from his place and time.

Consonant with Father Sialm's earlier remarks, Father Zimmerman sent out missionary "appeal letters" which emphasized Black Elk's role as catechist, stating that:

The Jesuit Fathers . . . trained him for his many years as a catechist to his race--twenty-seven years on the Pine Ridge Reservation--two years at Yankton Agency--one year at Sisseton Agency--and one year at St. Stephens, Wyoming among the Arapahos. His rare gift of making clear the Catholic teachings won many inquirers. One of the old missionaries believes him responsible for at least four hundred conversions. Old age, blindness and the seven miles between him and the nearest Catholic Church prevent him from often hearing mass, so at times I promise to say mass at his home. Then he sends out word and gathers in the entire neighborhood, and as in his old time catechist days leads them in hymns and prayers.

Reminiscent of the Neihardt/Black Elk meeting, Zimmerman recalled the holy-man's greeting upon the priest's return to

Manderson after a three year absence: "Every day I saw you in my prayers. I knew you would come back. When I looked and saw you I could not believe my eyes, and tears rolled down."

In this same vein, Neihardt reported his introduction to Black Elk the following way (BES, x):*

"'That was kind of funny, the way the old man seemed to know you were coming.' My son remarked that he had the same impression; and when I had known the great old man for some years I was quite prepared to believe that he did know, for he certainly had supernormal powers."

*Geronimo's grandson reported that "Things come to me two or three days ahead of time. I can look into the flames and see what happens. Grandfather was that way. He'd look into the fire and suddenly he would make a loud noise. Everyone would run for cover. And sure enough, 20 minutes later the soldiers would come (1986, 11)." Pre-cognition among pre-literate peoples was of interest to Carl Jung as examples of it were numerous.

CHAPTER VIII

BLACK ELK'S VISION AND THE "TWO ROADS MAP"

In Lakota tradition, "visions of real significance could come to a child of ten and twelve years and might affect the course of his life" (Hassrick, 281). Never taken lightly by their recipients, such visions still retained a forceful hold on people quite advanced in age. A vision often prescribed particular obligations and brought special power to the person receiving it (Lowie 1963, 170-75).

John Neihardt related that at the age of nine a great vision came to Black Elk. With vivid detail this vision is narrated throughout the course of an early chapter in Black Elk Speaks (17-39). Waters said that it was "the living heart" of the book and Black Elk's life and that an "attempt to describe it would do it injustice" (1984, 187).

Neihardt shows that this childhood experience was pivotal in determining Black Elk's every pursuit, as the holy-man repeatedly asks of Wakan Tanka if he has properly implemented the great vision. At the book's conclusion, Neihardt touchingly suggests that Wakan Tanka answers Black Elk's question affirmatively (BES, 231-34). In recent years, Seeing with a Native Eye, a popular anthology of "Essays on Native American Religion," has even been "Dedicated to Black Elk's vision" (Capps, 1976).

Cast in imagery reflecting Lakota cognitive patterns, Black Elk's vision is difficult to comprehend. Indeed, Black Elk himself spent a lifetime trying to actualize its promise. When DeMallie compared the stenographic record of Neihardt's

vision-interviews (1984, 94-99) with what was presented in Black Elk Speaks, he found that a certain amount of condensation was effected, few creative liberties taken, and clarity of interpretation elusive for both texts. And yet, a key to interpretation of the vision--unknown to Neihardt and overlooked by other commentators--mysteriously surfaced in Black Elk's life at the time of his conversion.

In an attempt to communicate Catholic theology on a level other than the abstract, early missionaries made use of a picture catechism. On a strip of paper one foot wide and five feet long were contained illustrations depicting what Christians have traditionally called "salvation history". Goll described this rather captivating device the following way (30):

Beginning with the Blessed Trinity and Creation at the bottom of the strip, the student follows the connected pictures of God in heaven at the top. The Apostles Creed, the life and death of Christ, the Church, the sacraments, the theological virtues, the capital sins--all are there between two roads, a golden road leading to heaven and a black one ending in hell.

Native catechists were instructed as to the chart's meanings by way of individual and group lessons conducted by priests, and by written explanations in both English and Lakota (see Appendix).

Upon first seeing the Two-Roads map and learning of its history, I was struck by its colorful, peculiar, characterization of human beings and non-human creatures. The pantheon of Judaeo-Christian figures is arresting as

winged-angels and bat-like demons are pictured fluttering about the course of world history. Crowds of people are variously portrayed--at the mercy of natural disaster, in the clutches of the leviathan monster, under the embrace of a grandfather-creator, and all in seemingly constant motion (see Appendix). In short, the Two-Roads map imaginatively captures in picture-form the basic worldview of traditional Christian theology.

When I learned that Black Elk used the Two-Roads map during his life as a catechist (see photo), it occurred to me that many of the holy-man's references corresponded directly to the old picture catechism. There were, in short, surprising parallels. For example, thunder beings, a daybreak star, flying men, tree imagery, circled villages, a black road, a red road, friendly wings, an evil blue man living in flames, a place where people moaned and mourned, emphasis on the people's history, self-indulgent individuals, and other more detailed segments of Black Elk's vision were either explicitly or implicitly present on the two-roads map.

Perhaps the reason for this correspondence can be explained through psychologist Carl Jung who so highly regarded Black Elk Speaks, and was particularly interested in the vision that Neihardt described. It represented, he thought, an example of the "collective unconscious," viz., that humanity "shares a common, inborn, unconscious life inherited from the distant past, expressed in archetypal (universal) images and symbols" (Stauffer 1981, 56). Such a

speculation has some merit, but seems secondary to the more positivistic explanation that follows.

Black Elk's closing utterances on Harney Peak allude to the picture catechism as he prays about his vision. The holy-man says to Wakan Tanka: "The good road and the road of difficulties you have made to cross; and where they cross, the place is holy" (BES, 232). These "road" references are made not just here, but also in the earlier vision and later with Brown (1953, 7n). However, all one can conclude from any of these passages is that traditional Lakota simply symbolized the virtuous life as being on a kind of "good red road" and evil behavior as walking on a black one. Walker's turn-of-the-century interviews (1980, 187, 189-90, 215, 232, 235) certainly verify the color associations, but in Black Elk's case much more obtains.

That the good-evil dualism be found on the Two-Roads map is not particularly note-worthy. What is important, on the other hand, is the color symbolism and the notion of good and evil "roads." Running the length of the map, for example, is a "way of good" and a "way of evil"--both of which intermittently touch the map's center whereupon is marked a black and red road. With the former representing centuries before Christ, and the latter representing centuries after him, Black Elk's choice of symbols is very suggestive.

According to both the vision and the map, the forces of evil have always contended with those of good. Fervently wanting association with "the good," Black Elk implies the

Christ-event to be history's dividing mark. Hence, the red road, which on the map is identified with the Christian era, seems to be the path Black Elk prays his people might find and follow.

In Neihardt's unedited transcript, Black Elk is reported as describing his vocation in terms that are clearly compatible with both the map and his long years of labor as a catechist. He says:

"I had been appointed by my vision to be an intercessor of my people . . . I'd bring my people out of the black road into the red road. From my experience and from what I know, and in recalling the past from where I was at that time I could see that it was next to impossible, but there was nothing like trying. Of course probably the Spirit world will help me . . . (DeMallie 1984, 293)."

It seems that Black Elk's self-understanding was that of a leader of his people into the Christian era (given the imagery at work here).

The holy-man's experience with Father Lindebner (and subsequent work as a catechist) was accepted as a more sober, or acceptable life-trajectory than the feverish activity of his Ghost Dance involvement. That is, the "Messiah Craze" might be seen as a theological transition-period. It served as a prelude to Black Elk's later acceptance of a belief system that bore concepts with which he was already familiar. Moreover, presented pictorially, the earlier vision was coherently ratified by being placed in a more global context. Whatever its shortcomings, Neihardt's emphasis on such universal concepts as right-conduct, human harmony, peace, and

friendship was in fact, an accurate reflection of the holy-man's vision. The vision was, however, enhanced by the substance of a "salvation history" that was so succinctly delineated in the Two-roads map.*

A patent difference between the two occurs when the north-south red road and west-east black road of Black Elk's vision do not bisect one another on the catechetical chart. They appear as distinct routes separated by illustrations of Christ's life (interestingly, though, the vision's imagery depicts these roads in the form of a cross). So too, the map's black road is not strictly designated as "one of troubles" any more than the red road is designated as "good" (although its Christian dimension is highlighted). And finally, the catechism's specifically marked paths of good and evil (colored yellow and green) only converge upon the red and black roads.

Nonetheless, reflecting on his vision in later life, Black Elk's comments to Neihardt sound as if he might just as well have been talking about that Two-Roads map and the instructions he received concerning it. He said that:

"It was the pictures I remembered and the words that went with them . . . It was as I grew older that the meanings came clearer and clearer out of the pictures and the words; and even now I know that more was shown to me than I can tell" (BES, 41).

Why the holy-man's friend, Standing Bear, was asked to sketch

*In an interview shortly before his death, Neihardt was asked if Black Elk's Catholicism "colored his thinking." His response: "It might have, here and there in spots, but fundamentally no."

pictures of the vision is difficult to understand, as they are not Black Elk's and are, in fact, distracting. Instead, were the Two-Roads map included, this present discussion would have been started years ago.

So intriguing are the parallels that a comparison of the two could become a lengthy study in itself. In lieu of that, however, suffice it to say here that the temptation exists to find a complete one-to-one correspondence between the map and Black Elk's vision. Yet, as much as the "vision" of the picture catechism and Black Elk's vision bear similarity, they are nuanced enough to cause some hesitation in seeing things which might not actually be present. Ultimately, though, this overall speculation is confirmed by Lucy and acquaintances of Black Elk.

Maybe Neihardt unknowingly transcribed Black Elk's description of the map as the holy-man blended into it an earlier vision. Perhaps Black Elk condensed a number of visions, and used as an inspirational force the Two-Roads map from which he taught for three decades. Or did time simply obscure the vision he once had, so the holy-man wove into his account some elements from the catechism? Comparison of the two requires the reconstruction of such possibilities (and others).

When Joseph Epes Brown visited Black Elk some years after the Neihardt interviews occurred, the holy-man was still "haunted" by his vision--whatever the source of its accretions (Brown 1953, xv). Neihardt did not, at least, fabricate its

impact. As was common in Lakota society, the holy-man had received a vision, and it provided him an abiding sense of mission.

Black Elk's poignant religious experience during boyhood set him in quest of its fulfillment. Thirty years later, after much heartbreak and disappointment, he found himself doctoring a dying child near Payabya. The encounter with Father Lindebner, and subsequent exposure to the strangely-familiar picture catechism, confirmed in what direction the rest of his life would lead. Black Elk's vision seems to have been a foreshadowing of what was later amplified via Ghost Dance themes and the Two-Roads map. Whether this be mysticism, clairvoyance, or coincidence is, ultimately, an engaging speculation that will never be closed.

Although charting the cognitive patterns at work in Black Elk's life is not an exact science, the suggestions here seem likely. The vision's similarity to the picture catechism underscored its prophetic and mystical impact throughout the early-adult years. Whether the Neihardt account is Black Elk's superimposition of the map on his vision (or vice-versa) will probably never be known for sure; but if some overlay was effected, it was done so because the holy-man regarded the two as part of a continuum. The accounts which follow refer to Black Elk's recasting of the original vision--a vision whose entire meaning could only be understood in light of the Two-Roads map.

Lucy Speaks

I remember Ate Pteptecala used to bring a kind of map--with a red road and a yellow road on it. And my father taught me what it was--the good road and the bad road. He would pray "canku wan luta akan napata--on the red road we want to walk--I, my relatives, my children, and grandchildren." he learned the idea of the black road when he was a catechist.

One time Father Lindebner came and said "Lucy, let me see what you learned about this map." Right away I rolled it out and said "Father, sit down. I'm going to teach you something." My father had taught me about it and I was really good at telling about it.

Ben Marrowbone Speaks

Black Elk used the two roads map to teach the old people. He would show that in the beginning, God created everything. And then all these pictures would help them understand easier. He would teach the old people about the seven sacraments, and that cross. Crucified, hanged between heaven and earth, was the Son of God.

So on every church you see a cross--great worship. This is why Christ came: to build His Church on a rock of strength, to stand in place of Him. Nick Black Elk explained this Church to the people--this great Church. He explained and they understood. .

John Lone Goose Speaks

He'd teach them that map many times. He carried one. So everytime we go to teach, he'd go down the Two Roads. He taught them how to go to heaven and how to be a Christian man. On another road. they would go to Hell.

Father gave him a Two Roads map, and he taught from it the rest of his life. One road was black and is the devil. The other is yellow--the very good road to heaven. He'd show the people that some go this way, and some go the black road. Some people believed it and turned around and became a catechist. He turned lots of souls to our Lord away from hell.

If he took it in his grave, I don't know. I didn't see that road-map anymore after he died.

Lucy Speaks

He and Father Buechel would talk. They talked about my father's visions . . . and the Sun Dance, and all the Indian ceremonies which my father said were connected to Christianity. My father said we were like the Israelites, the Jews, waiting for Christ. And some Jews didn't want to accept Jesus as God.

He said all these ceremonies connected. Somehow he knew that in the future our Lord Jesus Christ would come one day to his people. Well, actually they didn't see him but he did come. And the missionaries brought the teachings of Our Lord. They knew, somehow, in the future they would learn this. And they somehow already practiced it in the Sun Dance. That's the way he took it.

Like they say "Pagan way, adoring the sun"--but it's not that. He told me. They pray and say to the Great Spirit "Without any sinful thoughts or actions, we're going to do this for you." That's the way they feel when they do these Sun Dance ceremonies. They purify themselves--that's why they wear the sage crown which resembles the crown our Lord wore--and they start dancing. So the Indian, early before sunrise, had to stand there and had to go with the sun--watching it until it went down. That's the suffering, you see. And some of them even shed their blood. Christ did that too, before he died on the cross. That was the way he suffered.*

No woman was allowed to go near because Eve was the first one to come with sin. That's why women were behind the men and weren't allowed to take part in the Sun Dance. But I don't know if my father totally understood it that way. Only one place could a woman be a part of it, and she had to be a virgin.

This Sun Dance made them suffer from sunup til sundown. They prayed to the Great Spirit and suffered from fasting for three days and not drinking water. Our Lord fasted forty days. They want the Great Spirit to accept their sacrifice because what they want to do is for the sake of their people, for their sick ones, for a richer life, enough to eat, and enough health. That's the way they pray, so the Great Spirit will watch and take care of them.

So Christianity, they already did practice it--in a way that wasn't really too much against the rules of the Church. Of course, there were a lot of ceremonies along with it--like the Fathers have

*Brown, Joseph Epes, 1953, pp. 67-100 gives Black Elk's description of the Sun Dance, while Leslie Spier, 1921, gives a cross-cultural analysis of this ceremony.

rules of the Church. Of course, there were a lot of ceremonies along with it--like the Fathers have masses and all these special days and celebrations. But still, my father was pretty much the new religion.

Black Elk and Traditional Lakota Religious Practice

Central to the spirituality of Plains Indians, in general, and the Lakota, in particular, is the Sacred Pipe (Cannunpa Wakan). Use of this ritual instrument was a crucial feature of every religious ceremony--well reported by Brown in his work with Black Elk. Reference to so sacred an object as simply a "peace pipe" (and such a description is frequent) is quite inadequate.

The well-known legend says that Buffalo Cow Woman (a heavenly, mysterious, and beautiful lady) came many generations ago, bearing what appeared to be a child. In the course of events, however, the bundle she brought was unwrapped and found to hold the Sacred Calf Pipe. As time passed, the holy lady revealed how the Pipe was to be used and what rites (seven in all) were to be observed by the tribe. Furthermore, all subsequent pipe usage was to recall this special revelation. Regarded as a particularly sacred and unique gift to the Lakota, a ritual pipe became synonymous with Plains religious practice (small pipes were used for leisurely occasions). Pipe smoking was regarded, then, as insuring the Lakota of communication with Wakan Tanka.

Among the early missionaries, attitudes concerning the Pipe varied--paralleling the thought of modern Lakota people

themselves. Some regarded the Pipe as part of their religious legacy, while others saw it as disfunctional in a twentieth-century world. Arguments regularly arise today in Native contexts pitting Christian tradition (or even Peyote tradition) against the Pipe tradition--each side frequently claiming the two are irreconcilable (Steltenkamp 1982, 21-49). The accounts which follow will doubtlessly generate further discussion in such circles.

Ben Marrowbone Speaks

A heavenly woman once came and gave us a pipe. Every family had to keep a pipe of its own--use it every day, at night too. That woman gave it to us and told us to talk to the Almighty--pray for whatever we need--for rain or good crops. You didn't have to see any great vision. The Almighty hears you. "Take this pipe. Pray that He hears you." That's what the holy woman said. That kind of order was given our grandfathers. So they followed it.

Before he converted, Nick Black Elk talked to Almighty God with that pipe. He learned that the same God talked to white people. That's why those catechists believed in the Catholic Church. Nobody said: "oh, you fool you!" No. That's the great Almighty you are respecting and honoring--in a new way. And just as we were brought the sacred pipe, we now had the sacred bread from heaven.*

Nick Black Elk used to use that pipe in his wapiya**--and he believed in it. At that time there weren't any doctors, so different ceremonies were used for healing. So I think Black Elk worked according to the Almighty. These old people used this pipe and prayed to one Spirit. That was their foundation. That's what they said.

The catechists would get together, have meetings, encourage each other--show interest in one another. At one such gathering, Nick Black Elk stood up and said: "Yuwipi come from Santee. We have a pipe here. We use that. God gave us that pipe from heaven through a woman. Two young men

*Ben's reference here is to the Catholic sacrament of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion.

**i.e., "curing ceremony".

met her while out hunting. One of them had bad thoughts about her and was punished. But the other one was a good man. She told him 'I want to explain to the Lakota people how to pray.' She brought that pipe and gave it to an old man--a good man with a good conscience.

"That pipe--it's a road to take--a road of honesty--a road to heaven. It teaches how to lead a good life, like the ten commandments. They understood what that woman was saying; and that worship was my formation--my foundation. But my foundation is deepening.

"God made me to know Him, love Him, serve Him. To make sure I do this, God sent us His son. The old way is good. God prepared us before the missionary came. Our ancestors used the pipe to know God. That's a foundation! But from the old country came Christ from heaven--a wonderful thing--the Son of God. And the Indian cares about this.

"This is not our home. Our home is the new world coming. We come here, lead a good life, and follow the good road. That's the only way to save ourselves and see our relatives again. This body goes but the spirit keeps on. And if we take the right road, try and lead a good life, be honest, and live as brothers in one relationship, we will see our relatives. We will see God our relative. The evil spirit is against what I say. The evil spirit is like Iktomi who fools people."*

This Nick Black Elk, he was kind of a young fellow. He had catechist instruction. And one brother--his name was Brother Graf--taught him Indian songs like Jesus Cante.** So Nick picked up some young fellows and taught them some songs--Church songs. And these young fellows learn quickly. They can think without Bible. Word spread that "Black Elk is going to teach the boys Church songs, Catholic songs." So while these boys went into the tipi and sang, the people laid on their backs out side just listening. That was the first time they introduced religious songs."

Lucy Speaks

He didn't have a pipe until after he was

*"Iktomi" is the spider, the trickster character of the Lakota.

**Sung to the tune of the more traditional Christian hymn "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow," Jesus Cante (heart of Jesus) is still popular among older Lakota Catholics.

retired from his missionary work. They used to have a little pipe--which he and my mother used to smoke, and he was never keeper of the Sacred Calf Pipe. He used his own when he prayed to the Great Spirit--nothing else. He never did tell me about the meaning of the pipe. He'd just say it was something that was given to them, so it was supposed to be sacred. You pray with it.

I think it was at the first Sun Dance in 1928 that my father met Elk Head. He came over to our camp and my mother told me "Don't go in front of this man. He's the one that had the pipe, that sacred pipe." And here my father said: "Shake hands with him." So I shook hands with him. And today they keep that pipe up in Green Grass.

I think we accepted that pipe from the Great Spirit through a sacred lady who brought it to all the human beings. We say that we Christian women should be like her. She told the people that a man who has the pipe should pray with it.

Just like commandments, she told them that men should be peaceful men, nice men. There should be no quarrels or arguments, no committing any kind of adultery, and no feelings to criticize. The Great Spirit created all things through his power so man has to love all the creatures--even the trees. This is what the Pipe Lady instructed. Father Beuchel accepted the Blessed Virgin Mary as the same one who brought the pipe, and that was what we always thought.

If it is not evident in the text, the tone of Lucy's narrative suggested that contrary to his wife's sentiment, Black Elk insisted on relating to the keeper of the pipe in a less formal fashion--free of the strictures felt by Lucy's mother.

Prior to her death in 1936, Martha Bad Warrior--the 99 year-old keeper of the pipe at that time--entrusted to Wilbur A. Riegert what might be regarded as privileged information concerning the pipe. Quest for the Pipe of the Sioux, published posthumously in Rapid City, South Dakota, is Wilbur's account of his meeting with Martha Bad Warrior. A

limited number of books was printed of this account in 1975.

Green Grass, South Dakota is a secluded community located on the Cheyenne River Reservation, home of the Miniconju branch of western Lakota. The original sacred pipe is under the care of Stanley Looking Horse and his son Arvol--its nineteenth keeper. Kept in a small, rectangular, locked, red shed, the pipe bundle can only be approached after undergoing the ritual purification of the sweatlodge--a ceremony Stanley prayerfully conducted for myself and one other person (1982, 38-49).

THE VISION'S TREE IMAGERY

At the end of Black Elk Speaks, the holy-man is pictured looking back on his life and tearfully saying to Wakan Tanka that "the tree has never bloomed" (233). He goes on to plead:

"It may be that some little root of the sacred tree still lives. Nourish it then, that it may leaf and bloom and fill with singing birds" (233). Apart from this famous passage, the unedited manuscript contains repeated references to the "tree".

The account is emotionally powerful with Black Elk depicted as a man whose vision would die with him. Readers presume the holy-man's references are to the rebirth of a tribal past that is no more, and readers are moved to feel the sadness Black Elk speaks. As DeMallie observes (1984, 56): "With its unrelenting sense of defeat," the book (and especially its conclusion) "became an eloquent literary restatement of the theme of the vanishing American." In

contrast to Sialm's discouragement (reported earlier), I (like so many others) was gripped by the concluding remarks, and was eager to hear their fuller explication by Lucy.

Inquiring about the tree imagery, I must have revealed a sense of melancholy because Lucy had a ready response. She dispelled the tone that characterized my inquisitiveness because she wanted me to understand the reality of her father's thought and not the golden-age dream I had previously entertained. Her verbatim account here (and elsewhere) may sound dogmatic, but its tone was casually matter-of-fact. Lucy often mentioned that her words would probably be ignored like her father's. Nonetheless, she wanted posterity to know her father's true sentiments which she here tried to faithfully relate.

Noteworthy in the following section are Lucy's tradition-based understandings of Lakota prescriptions for marriage (discussed earlier). In this regard, her comments are normative for the older generation while seldom, if ever, heard among younger people. Curiously enough, recent evidence suggests that cousins-marrying-cousins is on the rise, and is no longer associated with a disaster-bearing taboo (DeMallie, 1974).

Lakota acceptance of Christianity initially fell within Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian traditions. The former remain the dominant groupings in spite of subsequent exposure to other denominations. As elsewhere, ecumenism has grown over the years and a spirit of

inter-denominational cooperation for the common good has been fostered.*

Lucy Speaks

The Great Spirit has promised one day that the tree of my father's vision was to root, grow, and blossom--to give out its flourishing sweet scent for everyone, and become a symbol of life. I know this. He meant it's like the Catholic faith. Our Lord told St. Peter to establish the religion just like that. The Great Spirit gave the Sioux people a knowledge of Christianity through the sacred pipe. But this tree would grow and spread out strong, flowing, branches. He had that vision and learned the tree was to be the Christian life of all people.

At the time before he died, he had a sad tale. He said he didn't do his part in accomplishing this and that the tree was dying. People were not walking the right path. But he still hoped the tree would be able to give forth its branches before it was entirely dead. I know this is what he meant.

The time I got married to Leo was on August 18, 1929 at St. Agnes Chapel--since my father wanted me to be married in the Church. I had to marry this man because he did a lot of favors for my folks since they were old. He used to go over there, cut wood, and haul water for them. We had to get water from the creek. My husband had been an Episcopal, so I thought "If you like him enough, okay, but he has to become a Catholic," so he went and joined the Catholic Faith before our wedding. Our celebrating priest was Father Sialm, S.J., and my father was real happy afterwards. He honored us by giving a big dinner, or reception.

From this marriage we had ten children, but during the depression we lost six boys. So there are just four surviving now. Leo's grandfather was related to my mother--a cousin--so I'm a first or second cousin to Leo's father. I think that's why we've had tragedy in our family--because we're blood related. A tough life both of us had, but he's now resting in peace.** The only disappointing thing is

*Becoming a reservation in 1878, Pine Ridge was given to the Episcopalian Church through the Grant Administration's "Peace Policy." Lakota requests for "Blackrobes" was approved, and so the Jesuits arrived during the 80's (their predecessor being the famous Pierre DeSmet, S.J.).

**Leo died November 21, 1974.

that my father and mother didn't see my grandchildren. My father and mother died before my children grew up. But my father did see my brother Ben's grandchildren. He saw three of them, so I know he was happy to see four generations of Black Elks.

CHAPTER IX

RETIREMENT YEARS

Following his retirement from Church work, Black Elk restricted his activity to more leisurely pursuits during warm weather months. He took particular pleasure in the opportunity of mixing with tourists who flocked to the Rapid City area. His son, Ben, later assumed such a role and was very popular with visitors who toured the Mt. Rushmore region.

This summer involvement was, for Black Elk, a welcome and enjoyable reprieve from the sweltering sameness of summer life on the reservation. Sociable by nature, the old Medicine Man/preacher was delighted to appear in public with his grandson and simulate scenes of traditional Lakota life at one of the area's popular tourist attractions. DeMallie speculated that Black Elk's motivation for doing "these sacred rituals appears to have been to teach white audiences that the old-time Lakota religion was a true religion, not devil worship as the missionaries claimed (1984, 66)". If such an underlying reason prompted her father's participation, Lucy was not aware of it. The pageant was, rather, an opportunity for her "dad" to "get out" in his old-age.

Meanwhile, younger catechists were now undertaking responsibilities formerly handled by Black Elk. They passed on, as best they could, the religious tenets he preached for so many years. Since it was customary for older persons to speak at various assemblies (a time-honored practice still in effect), Black Elk was now granted this privilege and always accepted such invitations with much enthusiasm.

Neihardt had wistfully characterized the older Lakota as having little to do "but wait for yesterday"--a poetic view of the senior generation who gathered on occasion to nostalgically reminisce about their younger days. Black Elk was not spared this--as seen in his grand-daughter's account. In his declining years, the holy-man was not burdened with the more physically taxing household chores, and was thus free to visit families whose ancestors he had known from another age.

The presence of the old warrior and revered catechist was welcome, and his visits uplifting. People knew him as one who had lived through the "good old days," yet still managed to kindle hope for a happier future. Nick Black Elk was a special guest at homes, and seemed to be regarded as a blessing the people knew would not be theirs much longer.

Lucy Speaks

"After he quit being a catechist and had time of his own, he wanted to join in recreational activities. For instance, one time there was a dance being held at the house of one of his older friends. They didn't use to have meeting halls like they do now, so dances were held at homes. Anyway, he wanted to go to that dance real badly. My mother didn't want to go and I didn't either because I was pregnant at the time. I wouldn't go in that wagon for anything.

"Finally, my husband talked about going and my father said: 'We can saddle a horse and we'll ride together. I'll ride on the back.' So they both did. It was quite a sight to see because my father wore his Indian costume to that dance. There he was--behind my husband on that horse. As soon as he got on, my father kicked the horse and it got spooked and started running with my husband and him on it. He let out a whoop like in the old times--hollering out like a cowboy. His little bells were jingling and ringing all the way. My father yelled out: 'We're going to fall,' but Leo shouted 'Hang on, father-in-law, I don't want you to

fall off!!' Later on, my mother got after my father and said 'You could have got hurt!'

In about 1936*, he started working for Alex Duhammel at the Sitting Bull Cave on Highway 16. There was a showplace where they put on a pageant for tourists and my father had a main part in it--as medicine man. The pageant would show him doctoring a little boy (which was my son Georgie), preparing a death scaffold, and leading the Sun Dance. He would also pray with the pipe and smoke it. But it was just a show and he never meant it. The women got a dollar and a quarter and the men got a dollar and a half. It was during depression but they made quite a bit of money on his performance.

My father was a good friend of Gutzon Borglum, too, and he and Georgie would perform for crowds at Mt. Rushmore while it was still not finished.** After they finished carving Lincoln, they had a big dedication because Lincoln was the last one. My father went up there in a cable car with my sister-in-law's sister and my boy. They were all dressed in Indian and my father sang up there on top of Lincoln's head. But by 1947, he was too old to continue doing this work.

My mother died February 19, 1941 and my father took it hard for awhile afterwards. They lived northwest of Oglala at the time, so he moved back to Manderson to stay with Ben, or my brother Nick's family, or myself. On the Decoration Day after she died, my father was asked to preach at the cemetery. Of course, he was now getting old so he wasn't really strong. Anyway, he spoke out under the sun for too long a time because when we brought him back home he collapsed. But that's the way he was. Even though he retired, he would still occasionally give a speech--a good one too.

Families still assemble in great numbers on Decoration Day to care for the graves of deceased relatives. Generally, such a gathering will have a priest present who conducts a prayer service or celebrates a Mass for all in attendance. A "feed" follows this annual ceremony and so, the day is quite a

*DeMallie says Black Elk started work for the pageant (begun in 1927) in 1935 or earlier (1984, 63).

**John Gutzon de la Mothe Borglum was the chief sculptor at Mt. Roshmore. He died in 1941.

social occasion. When younger, Black Elk was a regular participant in these activities.

THE DEATH OF LUCY'S MOTHER

The Indian Sentinel, reported the death of Black Elk's wife in a two-page obituary of November, 1941--excerpts of which follow.

Brings White was a strong and active member of the St. Mary's Society and set an attractive example of what a Catholic woman should be . . . Even during these last few years, when both Black Elk and Brings White have been enfeebled by age and illness, their home has been a kind of mission center where the Sioux in the neighborhood gather to pray and sing hymns. Whether it was a tent or a cabin, it has always been a welcome home for the missionary.

On one occasion, Father Henry Westropp drove up to the church at St. Agnes Mission rather late. In those days the missionaries made their rounds by means of horses and buggies, often travelling many miles and sometimes reaching their destination after every one had gone to bed. Father Westropp stopped his team a few feet from Brings White's tent and as usual shouted out: 'Tunwin,' meaning, 'Aunt.' . . . This awakened Brings White who, recognizing the voice, called back 'Han, mitoska,' meaning, 'Yes, my nephew.'

Again, Father cheerfully spoke out: 'Tunwin, wanagi ki palek cek ama u pelo,' meaning, 'Aunt, the ghosts have pushed me here' . . . Father Westropp knew that this expression would amuse his hostess. He always had something clever to say. This is why the Indians called him Little Owl.

Brings White, of course, was always delighted to receive her 'nephew' and, regardless of the hour, would prepare a real Sioux meal for her visitor. All the interesting and amusing stories which had been collected by both since the last visit were told and sometimes all would laugh themselves to sleep.

I am reminded of all this, because just lately good old Brings White passed away peacefully to her

reward. Though her death caused great sorrow to Black Elk and her children and many friends, they were consoled by her faith and piety as she received the Holy Food for the last time and the Sacrament of the dying.

The Sentinel carried a photograph of Black Elk's wife and family--the reporter being Stephen McNamara, S.J., a priest whose work began in Pine Ridge in 1928.

Neihardt's "Postscript" concluding Black Elk Speaks presents a striking example of Black Elk's peculiar relationship to nature. He is portrayed as asking for a sign of encouragement and, in the end, he receives it. This type of incident is, however, not uncommon. In discussing the use of the pipe with different individuals, I repeatedly heard stories of its power to control the weather. Hence, this additional account did not come as a surprise.

Lucy Speaks

My daughter Regina always remembers how often my father would go outside and look up at the sky. He would rub his hair backwards saying "Hey, hey, hey, hey," and would know if a storm was coming--even if the sky was all blue. It would come if he said it would.

And that reminds me of the time we were going to have a bad storm--a big thunderstorm. It looked like it was going to have a tornado in it. We didn't have a cellar, only a small grain house to hide in. My father was a pretty old man at the time.

He took his pipe upon a hill and stood facing the west. He then sang this song.

A Thunderbird, that is the nation!
 A Thunderbird, that is the nation!
 A Thunderbird, that is the nation!
 The people, you are alive!
 A nation that will live well!

After he was finished, you should have seen those

clouds. One went off this way, one off that way, and the storm was gone. They must have heard him.

My father must have sung that around my kids because one time we went to town and left my oldest daughter with my in-laws. They put her in the big house and called another uncle of Leo's to go and sit with her. When he arrived he heard her singing that song. And here the thunder and the wind stopped. We laughed when we heard about that.

My father was a patient man, and sometimes I compare him with my father-in-law who was just the opposite. He would crab at everything as he got older. But my father never complained. My father was happy all the time. You can see how my father-in-law's son is taking after his father.*

My father still liked to visit other people. Even though he retired from his catechist work, he liked to go to sick people and pray for them. If anybody died in a family, he'd visit that family and speak with them and console them. He did a lot of that even though he was retired.

When our family would get together on Thanksgiving Day, my father used to say this prayer. I remember it:**

I am talking to you, Grandfathr Great Spirit,
on this day.

Pitifully, I sit here.

I am speaking for my relatives, my children,
my grandchildren, and all my
relatives--wherever they might be.

Hear me, Grandfather, Great Spirit.

With your help, our needs are taken care of.
You have helped us in the time of want during
the past,

And on this day we wish to thank you.

Hear me, O Great Spirit.

This day is a day of thanksgiving.

The nations of living things the world
over--and we the two-leggeds, along with the
children and the smaller ones with them--come
to you today to express thanks.

In the future, make us see again a red day

*Leo was still alive at the time this interview was taken, and Lucy's reference is to him. His mood was not pleasant this particular day.

**This is a translation of the prayer Lucy uttered in Lakota, the content of which she had committed to memory.

of good.

In the past, you have preserved us from evil on this red road. Keep us on this road, and do not let us see anything wrong.

I, my children, and my grandchildren shall walk--led like children by your hand. You have helped us in all things. And Grandfather, Great Spirit, through your power alone we have survived.

Grandfather, Great Spirit, you have come and put us down--gathered together on mother earth. And while we continue in this world you provide food for all living creatures. So we give you thanks on this day, Grandfather, Take pity on me.

One day, we shall go and arrive at the end of the road.

In that future, we shall be without any sin at all.

And so it will be in the same manner for my grandchildren and relatives who will follow as well. We give you thanks, Grandfather Great Spirit. I am sending this prayer to you.

Lucy's daughter, Norma, recalled these childhood memories of her grandfather. "Georgie" is her now-grown brother.

Norma Speaks

After I grew up and went to school I found out my grandfather was pretty famous. He was an important person but I remember when I was a small girl he had a lot of time for me. We used to have a real small place and my parents made him sleep on a bed while my brother and I slept on the floor. He'd say to me: "If you want to sleep on this bed, crawl in." So I always crawled in with him. He always felt sorry for me.

My grandfather always used to babysit for us when my parents went out so I'd say to him lots of times: "I want to ride a horse." So he'd catch our horse named Brownie, put a halter on it, and set me on top. He'd take me all over these hills. And while he led the horse, he was either always reciting his prayerbook or saying the rosary.

Real old men would come to the house and sit on

the floor in a circle telling stories and smoking. They used old Indian words which I couldn't understand, but I would sit with them all the time next to my grandfather. He might have been a famous person because of those books he wrote, but I always remember him being around me and concerned about me until he died.

Georgie remembers when my parents bought him a tricycle, my grandfather would watch over him as he rode it. My grandfather had a cane and he'd watch Georgie to see that he stayed on the road. If he went off the road, my grandfather would hook the wheel with his cane and make him go straight. He'd pray as he did that too.*

The Grandparents of today were young adults toward the end of Black Elk's life, yet old enough to understand why his presence commanded respect. Their religious instruction was administered by younger catechists and priests a generation removed from the holy-man whose boyhood friends were gradually disappearing.

Black Elk is remembered as walking from his house (a distance of two miles) to Church every Sunday, walking-stick in hand. A Manderson resident, now aged himself, recalled helping the old catechist rise from the communion rail, as infirmity took its toll. Pat Red Elk recalled growing up during this period, and his account is representative of others from his peer group.

Pat Red Elk Speaks

Even though they didn't have any formal education, those old converts were really trained to preach. They'd say that Saint John says this here and there, and when I'd get the Bible and read

*Norma Regina Looks Twice, grand-daughter of Black Elk, died in the fall of 1978.

it--they were right! That's what was written. I read Scripture but I can't remember the right words like they used to be able to do. Yes, those old converts could really talk--especially about religion. And they'd just really give you "the works!" They really knew what to say.

Nick was a catechist and when he got up he really preached. People sat there and just listened to him. They could picture what he was talking about. I remember one time when he was pretty old, he really bore down on them. He said:

The older people who constructed and kept up the Church are all fading away . . . and the new generation isn't continuing the work that the people did. When I come to Church in wintertime, there's no firewood in that little box there (he'd point to the wood box) and tears come to my eyes.

Nowadays we have education, but we're not that good.

On Sunday morning you'd see Nick walking down the road from where Ben lived--two, three miles outside of Manderson. In wintertime he didn't hardly come--too cold. But summertime, spring, and Fall, he'd be walking. He was old, so he got an early start and wouldn't catch a ride. And every Sunday, he'd join up with John Lone Goose right around where the store is now and they'd say the rosary together. One would begin and say "Hail Mary." The other would finish the prayer. By the time they got to Church, they had said the whole thing.

CHAPTER X

LAST DAYS OF THE AGED HOLY-MAN

Despite ill health, Black Elk appears to have lived out his remaining days in the same contemplative spirit that characterized his earlier life. Having confronted death in other, more dramatic contexts, the holy-man was now resigned to patiently await its final visit. What restlessness he experienced came in the form of physical discomfort, viz., a stroke that his aged cousin, Little Warrior, was instrumental in relieving.

The Lakota word for stroke is wanagiktepi--from the root word wanagi. A literal translation of the word for stroke would be "killing of the soul"--an etymology which, if little else, describes the perceived seriousness of the condition. Little Warrior's skill in effecting relief for Black Elk reflects the rich tradition of healing ceremonies developed by the Lakota. Little Warrior's cure, it seems, brought rehabilitation to Black Elk and so, one should not find it surprising that a considerable number of traditional, Native "home remedies" are still used in modern reservation households (Vogel, 1970).

Lucy goes on to say that her father regarded his impending death with calm anticipation. He knew that life's circle was nearly complete. Not immediately apparent in the following narrative is that Black Elk received a phantom visitor who was seen only by him. That such an occurrence

take place did not meet with disbelief on the part of his family, as such phenomena seem to have been understood as simply another dimension, or awareness, of life that was possessed by persons with heightened religious consciousness.

Lucy Speaks

One day, in the spring of 1948, it was really slippery. My father went outside, lost his footing, fell, and broke his hip. He was around eighty then, and from that time until his death he was bedridden. We put him in a wheelchair when he wanted to sit up or go outside. And after that happened, he said he was ready to accept his Creator's call anytime. But for me, he said I should try and carry on the works of the Church and go to Mass very often.

When he had that accident, he tried to argue with me saying he was alright. But we took him to the hospital anyway. While he was there his tuberculosis caused him some trouble but not serious. He caught that when he was young. He also had a stroke while there and was given the last rites for the third time in his life. The second time was when he was sick and I've already told you about the first time.

Anyway, he recovered and came to stay here at our house. Even though he couldn't walk, he still prayed and sang. There was never a day he complained about his suffering. He'd sit praying and he'd tell us "never fail to miss a day without your prayers. God will take care of you and reward you for this. Say the rosary too, because that is one of the powerful prayers of Our Lord's mother." That's how he was.

He was uncomfortable at our house because it was so small and hot during the summer. So he asked if he could go back to the hospital where it was cooler. That's when he moved to my brother Ben's house--where he stayed until he died.

At times, I'd just go over to him and try to make him feel good. He got to be so blind that he couldn't read his Indian prayer books, but he had learned them by heart. He seemed to always have a rosary in his hands, and even though he was sick you'd never hear him complain. When he came to stay at our place, we had to pray. He never forgot.

Joseph Epes Brown related to his classes at Indiana University that he once had occasion to go to Denver with

Black Elk. Stopping in a diner frequented by social outcasts, Black Elk left a memorable impression on observers who saw him pray before eating. The Indian prayer book Lucy recalls her father as memorizing was the Sursum Corda: Lakota Wocekiye na Olowan Wowapi (Sioux Indian Prayer and Hymn Book), a compact little book of 386 pages published by the "Central Bureau of the Catholic Central Verein of America" in St. Louis, Missouri.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE COMES TO BLACK ELK'S AID

When my father was released from the sanatorium and was well enough to stay at our home, he was also partially paralyzed.* His mouth was crooked due to the stroke and he had trouble eating. So, as I said, I used to sit down and talk to him to make him feel better (because he was all by himself).

One day I asked him: "Dad, I wonder if this man you call your cousin would be able to bring you out of this stroke?" You see, before my father got crippled he used to often talk with a man named Little Warrior--and this is who I meant. Little Warrior was a Catholic and did wanagi wapiya (spirit ceremony of healing). And he was good at that they told me.

My father didn't really want this, but he had respect for his cousin and myself so he agreed to go through with it. I called my brother Ben who was really after this kind of thing--curious about it too--and we arranged to have it at my house. We prepared the sweat lodge, but my father didn't go in--just three older men. He didn't want that doctoring done on him.

When we were ready to have that ceremony, Little Warrior said: "You know these other types of medicine men and yuwipi men--they always tell you to close the windows so there will be dark. They tell you to take down from the wall the holy pictures and rosary. I say 'No.' Those are the ones we are going to pray to. Just watch that rosary while this is going on. If you have a rosary, you'd better say it while I'm doctoring your father." That's what Little Warrior said about our picture of the Sacred

*He was treated for tuberculosis.

Heart and this big rosary we had on the wall.*

Well, I must have really believed him because I took my rosary and sat there saying it. Pretty soon, the main time comes for those little spirits to doctor my father. All at once, I'm in the middle of my rosary and I remember what Little Warrior had told me. So I looked up at our rosary on the wall and you ought to have seen those little things on each bead. Those little lights--there must be a bunch of them--were all glowing on the beads. And that cross, it just glowed. And the holy picture--the sacred picture--those little things just sat around it. I think they were worshipping the picture.

I noticed after everything was over that my father's mouth had straightened out so he could eat. Before that, I had a hard time feeding him. My father, after it was all over, said to Little Warrior: "Yes, I'll admit you're good at it. But next time you come to doctor me, don't let those little spirits treat me so roughly. They were really treating me harsh. I'm really tired." Mind you, his mouth was straight and he could eat after that ceremony.

And that's when I got confused. I asked my father: "Why in the world--how is it that you became a Catholic catechist?" Then he told me about his conversion. I had heard the story when I was in the teen age, but I never paid any attention to it. So I was a little older when he explained these things to me. It was after I got married, then I realized and understood these things about my father.

Little Warrior told me: "In my life, there are good spirits and bad spirits. When you pray, the good spirit is always going to help you. In the morning, when you get up, stand in the doorway and pray that the day is a nice quiet day. Give thanks for the day--for coming through the night." I guess he was glad that he slept through the night and woke up again.

He also said: "Don't go out at night too much--that's when the bad spirits are about. If there's anything to eat, like nice fruit or any kind of meat, just put it out there and say 'That's for you good spirits' and say 'I want this--a nice day' or make some other request. Break off a chunk of

*Powers suggested in his study of yupiw that "no one wearing a (Catholic) medal would be permitted to stay in the meeting. One man had a rosary in his pocket but was afraid to say so. Soon something in the darkness picked him up and threw him out the window" (1982, 54). Obviously, different approaches to the rite exist, given Little Warrior's use of such objects.

bread and place it out for them. And in the morning take a cup of water. Drink that water--because God has given you that cleansing water for you to drink. Just take a cup and thank the Great Spirit for the day--then pray for the day. And then when you lay down, thank the Great Spirit for the day He has given you." My father did this, so I try to do that too.

One time my husband had to stay home while I took Georgie and Regina up to the Custer celebration of "Gold Discovery Days."* Leo was working then for Albert Yankton putting up hay. So my husband would stay here at home all by himself--sleeping here at night and going to help Albert in the morning. They always helped each other.

Anyway, he came home one evening and it was still light outside. It wasn't quite dark. Leo was coming down the hill toward the house and he could hear my father singing icilowan /death song/ in the house. He tied up his horse, walked in, and knew he was present in there. Leo said out loud: "I hear your voice, but I hope nothing bad happens in our family." So then he said some prayers and went to bed.

Now my father was alive at this time, but he was at the Sioux San Hospital in Rapid City. Also in that hospital was my nephew, Benjamin Junior. It was just a short time after Leo heard my father singing that Benjamin Junior died of meningitis--so we knew my father was preparing us for it.

One day, my father called my husband and I in and talked to us. He said that his days were coming to an end and he told my husband "Take care of my daughter as a father and mother would take care of her." And my husband has done that I guess. My father said "I am old, so don't take my death too hard. Do not mourn a long time, you know I will be happy. My sufferings will be over and I will have no hurt. Pray for me as I taught you to pray in your early days. And pray for me. Do not let any single day pass without praying for me." So the last prayer I always say before I go to bed is "May the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace." I say that for my father and for all who have died.

THE VISITOR FROM BEYOND

As he waited for death, he told me "Do not worry, there is a man who comes to see me everyday

*An annual tourist event held in the Black Hills town of Custer, South Dakota.

at three o'clock. He is from overseas and he comes in to pray with me--so I pray with him. He is a sacred man." When he was living, my father always used the phrase "wicasa wakan" when speaking about a Blackrobe priest. And that's the phrase he used in talking about that visitor--wicasa wakan. So he might have been a Blackrobe who visited him. During this time he received his last rites for the fourth and last time.

He also said, "It seems like I will go anytime now, so if your car is alright, go after your younger brother. I want to see him." My brother Nick Junior was working way out about fifteen miles from Hay Springs, Nebraska so we went to get him. He got his pay and came back, but my father died just before he returned. He passed away at my Brother Ben's house on the seventeenth of August, 1950. And he was patient with his suffering right up until the end.

When he was a catechist, he had been given a black shirt but we couldn't lay him out in that because it was all eaten by mice. So we laid him out in a suit and tie and put his big cross around his neck. The catechists had been given those large crucifixes. He also had his big rosary--one which had big beads and a saint's relic on it. When he was out east, a Bishop in New York had given him that rosary and the relic of St. Peter.

CHAPTER XI

BLACK ELK'S WAKE: THE FINAL FAREWELL

According to traditional Lakota belief, one's spirit parted the body at death and, if judged worthy, embarked upon the Milky Way or "spirit trail" toward the "land of many lodges" (Powers 1975, 191). If found wanting for some reason, it became a "wandering spirit" and was sentenced to roaming the earth until deemed fit for entrance to the better life (Hassrick, 297). The uncanny luminescence of the Milky Way during Black Elk's wake seems an appropriately mysterious and supernatural sanction of the man whose spiritual vision was now entrusted to those he left behind. Relegating nature's relationship with Black Elk to coincidence is easy to say, but more difficult to explain--given Neihardt's comments, Brown's observations and my own.

The holy-man's apparent kinship with the forces of the universe is nowhere more obvious than during his wake. The figures Lucy (and others) claim to have seen, i.e., the number eight and a circle, might be construed in various ways. For example, the circle held special meaning for Lakota people--its meaning elaborated by Tyon in his interview by Walker (1917, 160):

"The Oglala believe the circle to be sacred because the Great Spirit caused everything in nature to be round except stone . . . Everything that breathes is round like the body of a man. Everything that grows from the ground is round like the stem of a tree . . . It is also the symbol of the circle that marks the edge of the world and therefore of the four winds that travel there.

Consequently, it is also the symbol of these divisions of time and hence the symbol of all time.

"For these reasons the Oglala make their tipis circular, their camp circle circular, and sit in a circle in all ceremonies. The circle is also the symbol of the tipi and of shelter. If one makes a circle for an ornament and it is not divided in any way, it should be understood as the symbol of the world and of time . . . "

Apropos to the occasion, Westerners might identify the figure "8" as a symbol for infinity. However, such an association is not a traditional one among the Lakota. Nonetheless, apart from being the conjunction of two circles, the figure might also be a kind of celestial marker of the month, August, in which the holy-man died--an association perhaps construed at the time but now forgotten. Lucy herself was unable to attach a particular meaning to the sight--the details of which are variously reported in the following narratives.*

Also contained in these recollections are some clarifications regarding Black Elk's birth. That is, Neihardt reported the holy-man to have been born "in the Moon of the Popping Trees (December)" in 1863 (BES, 6), while Brown had said Black Elk was born in 1862. Father Lindebner, on the other hand, listed 1866 in the Holy Rosary Mission archives, and this was the same year Lucy understood to be the year of her father's physical birth. She disputed the December period by saying that July was the real month of his birth, and that

*This celestial occurrence might have been the Perseid Meteor shower, the most active and most visible of such phenomena in recent history.

her father had actually reported to Neihardt the date of his spiritual birth (i.e., his December baptism.)

Throughout life, natural phenomena were repeatedly perceived as affirming the holy-man's prayerful entreaties--an approbation that all religious leaders would no doubt wish to have. Death did not, it seems, curtail this pattern since, proclamation-like, a sort of galactic testimony was seen by people at Black Elk's wake. This heavenly display was understood as the sky gleaming bright his way to the peaceful land of many lodges.

Having watched the gradual disintegration of his people's traditional lifestyle, the old catechist had enjoined his nation not to lose its religious integrity. Black Elk manifested what their responsibility entailed, and he did so in the face of discouraging trends. Those present at his funeral powerfully felt an affirmation of the man and his life. There was a clear consensus that at least one of their number would own the experience of being happy with Wakan Tanka forever.

Lucy Speaks

The night of his wake was one I'll never forget. Others saw it that night but they don't seem to talk about it. My father said toward the end that "I have a feeling that when I die, some sign will be seen. Maybe God will show something. He will be merciful to me and have something shown which will tell of His mercy."

What we saw that night was the sky in a way we

never saw before. The northern lights were brighter than ever and we saw those figures--the number eight and a ring, or circle. They were separated by a short distance but they were there--an eight and a circle. I always wondered what that meant."

Seventy-seven year old William Siehr, S.J., a Jesuit Brother at Holy Rosary Mission since 1938, knew Black Elk and had attended the holy-man's wake. His recollection of the night was vivid, and the reason for which is apparent. He related his experience of the night:

Brother Siehr Speaks

Well yes, I remember old Nick, he was the medicine man Neihardt talks about in Black Elk Speaks. He was also a zealous catechist from Manderson. He had quite a bit of influence with the people, old Nick did. He was the old medicine man who, in the old days, was considered something like our priesthood. That is, they respected him for the authority he had, especially in religious matters. He was considered to be quite a noted man among the tribe.

Anyway, I was with Fr. Zimmerman that night and we went over to the wake. It was in the old house that's still standing there as you approach Manderson. There were many people sitting nearby the coffin, like they do at all the wakes, but this was a large assembly. There wasn't so much auto traffic in those days, but there were quite a few cars around and it was impressive to see so many people there. We stayed there and spoke to many of the mourners and it must have been around 10:30 when we started back up the old Manderson road.

When we left the place, we noticed that light. The sky was just one bright illumination. I never saw anything so magnificent. I've seen a number of flashes of the Northern Lights here in the early days but I never saw anything quite so intense as it was that night.

When we came back from the wake, the sky was lit up and you could see those flames going into mid-air. It was something like a light being played

*Miller suggested that Black Elk's birth was even earlier than 1862 (1957, 185).

on a fountain which sprays up. It seemed like it was rising and moving. There would be some flames going at a great distance way up into the sky above us. And others would be rising and coming into various groups and then, all of a sudden, spurt off on this side and then another side and then off to the center again. It was almost like day when we returned.

Everything was constantly moving. As I said, it was something like a display on a fountain of water where you see light reflecting on the water as it's being sprayed up. That's the way the sky was illumined--something like that--but it was all in every direction. That is, it was all coming up from the east and the south, the north and the west. And they'd all converge up to the top where they'd meet--rising up into the sky and it was a tremendous sight.

They weren't stars or meteors, but rather, well, they were beams or flashes. And there was a variation of color effect in there--the whole horizon seemed to be ablaze. That's the first time and the only time I ever saw anything like it.

There were different formations in the sky that night which, to me, looked like spires, like tremendous points going up--then flashes. And it seemed like they were almost like fireworks in between. It was something like when a flare goes off in the sky--some sparkle here and there, but spread over such a vast area. And it was not just momentary. We all seemed to wonder at the immensity of it.

I don't recall just what anybody else said, but I know it was something I'll never forget. It was something I rather associated with the old man as he was buried at his funeral. Some sort of heavenly display, a celestial presentation--that's the way I looked at it. It was sort of a celebration. Old Nick had gone to his reward and left some sort of sign to the rest of us. I think it was symbolic. There was something there.

During a 1979 interview, Joseph Epes Brown was asked if he had been present at Black Elk's death (1979, 63). Responding that he had been in Europe at the time, Brown did recall what the holy-man had foretold, viz., "You will know

when I am dying, because there will be a great display of some sort in the sky." Brown said this prophecy was "true" because "in talking with people on the Pine Ridge Reservation," he was told that "the sky was filled with falling stars" when Black Elk died--"a very unusual display."

John Lone Goose Speaks

Yes, I remember that night very well, and those bright stars. Everything looked miracle-like. I'm not the only one who saw it. Lots of people did. They were kind of afraid, and I was scared a little bit--but I knew it was God's will. I know God sent those beautiful objects to shine on that old missionary. Maybe the Holy Spirit shined upon him because he was such a holy man.

The night was still and warm with nothing fearsome about it--just quiet and nice. God was with us that time. Other people said, "God is sending those lights to shine on that beautiful man." And that's what I believe.*

Lucy Speaks

He used to say that he was born when the cherries were ripe (July) and the summer before he died he told me he would be eighty-four that year. So, he wasn't over ninety. They never used to celebrate birthdays as we do now so he used his baptismal date as his birthday--December 6th. He did that because he would say "I was reborn in baptism".

*John died November 23, 1975 and was buried at Manderson.

CHAPTER XII

THE LEGACY

With Black Elk's passing, the reservation knew that a very special member of its community was no longer present. The holy-man who had lived so well through so much had been a beacon for others struggling to make their way down the at-times gloomy corridor of twentieth-century life. But now he was gone, and with his departure, it would seem that part of the reservation conscience had been laid to rest.

Black Elk understood his role as a Catholic catechist to be the desire of Wakan Tanka "who had chosen him for this work." And as has been shown, he adopted this new form of religious expression with great zeal. The old medicine man-turned-catechist appreciated his earlier tradition but adapted to an historical ethos that made his religious quest a response to Wakan Tanka in the changing circumstances of the here-and-now. Such was the spiritual impression he tried to etch upon the hearts of his listeners, and Lucy was saddened to think her father's life-message had been lost.

Lucy Speaks

After my father passed away, memories of him stayed with us a long time. Sometimes in church or sometimes at a gathering, somebody would get up and mention his name and speak about him. People would feel he was present in our chapel or meeting house. Younger people would even say that we should follow his example, support the church, and pray more often. And some people would say that when they came to church, they thought they saw my father.

Before my brother Nick died, I believe he was trying to follow in my father's footsteps. Sometimes he would pray in times of need, at social gatherings, or at funerals. He also preached, and

liked to sing in the choir. But his life was cut short, as I have said, when he died in 1959.

Although I don't speak of this, often we still experience my father's help in our lives. If something is going to go bad in our family, or if something is wrong, I know about it. And I think my father is responsible for this.

Just lately, when they took my boy to the hospital, I cried. We had plans for my brother Ben's memorial feast and here my son was close to death. I asked my husband what we should do and if we should go through with the dinner. He said it was up to me. All of a sudden, something came to me like a flash--like somebody speaking to me clearly. I was told to go through with everything. So I did.

What I thought was this. People would come to the memorial for something good. They would pray for the church, and express their feelings about our religion--which I'm sure my father enjoyed. That's what he did when he was alive. And he would have thought as I did--to go through with the memorial. What came to mind was the time he had two coffins in church and still preached--even though those two coffins held his own children. I know my father was speaking to me then. We experience things like that.

My son really made a mistake when he went through that sweat lodge ceremony--thinking it was his grandfather's wish. He went and did it, got sick and almost died. Just before he was flown to the Denver hospital, Georgie was given the last rites and communion. His mouth was dry so he couldn't swallow the communion and had it on his tongue the entire trip. When he arrived, he got water and could swallow. My son recovered after a long stay there. He said many bad spirits came to fight him, but there was always one good spirit--Jesus. And the bad couldn't do anything to him. That was a miracle.

So when things aren't going right, I remember what my father used to say. "At such times," he would say, "go to church. It is a place of comfort where you will not feel bad. There's a quiet peace in there. There are no quarrels and nothing is wrong in that church."

"We Indians originally had a wanagi tipi. When a family member died, a piece of their hair would be cut off and hung in the back of a tipi. A pipe would be there too.* If it's their child, the father and mother taught the other children not to say anything bad in that tipi--because it was a special place, a sacred place, a place of prayer.

*Cf. Brown, Joseph Epes, op. cit., pp. 10-30.

"They'd want their child to have a good life in the other world. They wanted that one to have an easy afterlife--so they prayed for the dead like we do now. The church is a wanagi tipi in which Our Lord is present.

When you go in there, have no feelings of hardship, no wrong feelings, no hatred--nothing like that. Go in there to the Great Spirit. That's the only place where you will be content. If you go to church, worldly things would not disturb you."

So I do as he said, and believe what he told me. Sometimes I offer Holy Communion for those who don't do us wrong, and I pray for those who have done us wrong. In that way, I get back on the road again. I know my father led a life like that, and I'm sure he prays for me in the other world. He prays, as do all the poor souls, for us who are living all confused.

A while back, somebody came and reported that certain people were saying bad things about me. When this was told to me I thought "they hurt me why don't I hurt them back?" But right away I remembered my father and all that he taught me. When he became a catechist he had the same kind of trouble. But he was a patient and forgiving man.

When I was tempted to strike back, I thought about my father. I chose instead to follow his way. He practiced a Christian life and that's the faith I wanted to practice. This younger generation is trying to live without the Christian life. They don't seem to be interested and practice the faith. They've been suffering, I know that, so I pray for them.

I feel bad about this at times. So I go to my room, like my father, and pray for them. I pray that one day they'll return and do as they're supposed to do--fear God according to the commandments. I pray a prayer for priests too.

A DAUGHTER'S MELANCHOLY

Like her father, Lucy has suffered the discouragement of seeing relatives and friends become lax in their practice of religion. Losing this responsibility, she felt, was a major reason why the social conditions of Pine Ridge remained so pitiable. Within her own family, Lucy sees crystallized the spiritual ferment of the reservation as a whole. Some people

cling to their religious practice while others participate half-heartedly. Some crusade for one tradition while embittered others simply shrug and say they are occupied with more important concerns.

The confusion engendered by these mentalities is not foreign to Lucy's experience, and has been a source of considerable pain for the holy-man's daughter. Lucy's sadness was apparent during many of my visits when, particularly, we were distracted by unexpected intrusions. On one occasion, a distant relative stopped by after a day at the pub. Unsteady on his feet, the man was distressed to the point of tears. Unintentionally stepping on my taperecorder, he held me and repeatedly implored: "help me!" Unmoved herself, but noticing my own uncertainty as to what, exactly, I should do, Lucy calmly said "he wants you to pray for him."

On another occasion, I spent an afternoon with Lucy in the presence of a relative who had, the previous night, been pushed around and bruised by some neighbors. The relative laid in bed just a few feet away from us during the course of my visit. With gun in hand, he expressed a hope that the neighbors would stop by so that he could shoot them. Although greatly distracting me, the scenario stimulated Lucy to state her convictions with even more force.

Because Pine Ridge was rife with violence and dissension during and after the Wounded Knee occupation of 1973, the holy-man's daughter felt an even more acute need to have her father's life-story completely told. A current within the

reservation milieu was the invocation of Black Elk's "spirit" a la Black Elk Speaks, and to ignore the Black Elk of subsequent years--the person Lucy knew as father. She felt that extended-family members were sorely suffering from an ignorance of the holy-man's actual lifestyle and thinking. And so, her effort to produce this biography was, as stated, a longstanding desire that was fanned by the flames of a social unrest she wanted to assuage.

As has been clear throughout her narrative, Lucy's devotion to the Catholic tradition of her father is ardent. Saddened at her people's plight and fearful that her father's efforts would likewise be forgotten she often despaired the following observation.

Lucy Speaks

The past couple of years I've been shocked to hear people say that my father never actually believed in the Catholic religion. I know they're really making a mistake. So please pray that they won't spoil my father's past life and destroy his work for the Church. It's really pitiful for our younger people to believe such things and have such misunderstandings about our people. Our older people came to believe in the faith. But these days I'm asked to talk about my father's older practice, and how he rejected Christianity. If I made up stories to please people, I'd be lying. And I don't want to do that. It's not what he would have wanted.

Of historical note in this last narrative is a reference to Calico, Ben Marrowbone's uncle, who had been a prominent figure in the early reservation community. In Lakota parlance, he had been an itancan or "leader" (chief). On the reservation today, a small community north of Holy Rosary

Mission comprises the village of Calico--named after the chief. Its original name was tapisleca or "spleen."

Ben Marrowbone Speaks

Saving your soul was important to us. That's why the Indian used to keep a relic of someone who died. It would be kept in a tipi maybe two years or four years. This was called a wanagi tipi or "spirit lodge." My uncle Calico had a daughter for four years, a nice girl, but she died. He kept some of her hair as a relic.

People had to show respect for the spirit of the person who died. That relic would be kept in the tipi and no sharp words were to be spoken in its presence. No quarreling or even loud talk was to be done in that house--because there was a spirit in there. So people respected the dead, and prayed for them. If children forgot and were noisy, or if they went into the tipi before a visitor entered, they would be scolded. Visitors might come and show respect for the relic of the dead. And if little children did not show respect for the visitors, they would afterwards be told: 'You are impolite . . . you have no manners.'

After one, two, or three years were over, a feast would be held in honor of that spirit. That spirit would then be joined with relatives in the new life.

Visiting the church was like visiting the wanagi tipi. Care for the soul and praying for the dead were not new things to us. As I said, when men like Black Elk converted, nobody said "You fool!" My father's special friend was a screech owl, and he cured people with the screech owl's help. But when my father started to change his ways to church ways, no more screech owl. He changed his practice.

CONCLUSION

WHAT DID BLACK ELK REALLY SPEAK?

Kiowa scholar N. Scott Momaday has written that in Black Elk Speaks "we have access to a principal world view of one of the major tribes of American Indians . . . without knowing precisely where to place /the book/ in our traditional categories of learning" (1984, 81). Appropriately, he continues, it has fallen under the rubric of such disciplines as Literature, Anthropology, Folklore, Religious Studies, and Native American Studies. Momaday further adds that "we need not concern ourselves with labels here, any more than we need concern ourselves with the question of authorship or the quality of translation or transcription." Rather, we simply need to recognize the book as "an extraordinary human document . . . the record of a profoundly spiritual journey, the pilgrimage of a people towards their historical fulfillment and culmination, towards the accomplishment of a worthy destiny" (31).

The holy-man's life does, indeed, address a spectrum of human concerns in a fashion that has prompted others, from different cultures and countries and creeds, to give him special attention. Implicit here is that we have more than just an intriguing study of individual or cultural adaptation, and Black Elk himself alludes to this "more" when speaking of a sacred ritual to Brown. At stake in what he reports is the very meaning and purpose of life itself as he tearfully

observes that "some are not even trying to catch it" (Brown 1953, 138). Momaday suggests that such a focus was foremost in Black Elk's thought and is, essentially, what constitutes the holy-man's appeal. Regardless, though, of its philosophical implications, his life and thought has long needed the clarifications this biography has provided.

In Black Elk Speaks, the world received a work that gave birth to many reprints and innumerable footnotes of opinion and commentary. Neihardt's biography was intended to symbolize the life-journey of the Sioux and, by extension, Native people as a whole. But as the preceding chapters have shown, such an equation lacked critical information--the availability of which can now generate even further discussion.

The new perspective presented here arises from material that was feelingly communicated and grounded firmly within the lived-experience of persons intimately connected with the holy-man's Lakota identity. It has eclipsed earlier notions and provided, as carefully as possible, a better sense of the issues and individuals who comprised the cultural horizon of the post-reservation period within which Black Elk and his people confronted change. This more holistic sketch does greater justice to the human drama that initially captured audiences with details that were incomplete.

As shown, Black Elk attained luminary status over the past several decades among reading audiences as a whole, and Native people in particular. The general public tended to

reverence him as an eminently praiseworthy nineteenth-century Native figure, and anthropologists pretty much regarded his life and thought as distillations of a Plains Indian culture that is no more (Hoover, 1979).^{*} Moreover, Black Elk material has been variously utilized. Social scientists tapped it for the purpose of cross-cultural comparisons, and regarded it as a fairly good ethnographic index to Siouan ways of a century past. Others, however, were gripped emotionally, as the man's moving narrative powerfully conjured up a vision of better, yet bygone, days. The demise of this period stirred sadness within such readers, as White conquest dealt death to an entire way of life. Black Elk's compelling observations painted a portrait of extinction for the once-nomadic, now-confined and lifeless, Lakota people.

Having appreciated these same perspectives, I (like so many others) thought myself as having a "participant-observer" role prior to even meeting a flesh-and-blood Sioux person. Once among his people, though, I was forced to reassess some rather central assumptions that had been nourished by much of the literature which described them. This re-evaluation was due mostly to garnering greater knowledge about Black Elk himself through his family and those who knew him best. And so, these concluding pages will address the main issues raised by the man's now-completed biography.

^{*}Black Elk Speaks has been published in German, Flemish, Dutch, Italian, Danish, Serbo-Croatian, Swedish, and Spanish.

I. THE INTERPLAY OF RETREATISM, ROMANTICISM, AND REALISM

This new reading of the holy-man's life might confound those who have sought to re-establish traditions of the past as a necessary first-step in the forging of contemporary Lakota identity.* Since religion figures so prominently within this movement, Black Elk's vigorous Catholic practice will no doubt stir controversy. For example, Deloria's God Is Red rode the crest of revivalism largely because of its articulate dispatch of Christianity as a viable option for Indian people. A respected social critic and a Lakota himself, Deloria wrote that in Native religion:

"There is no demand for a personal relationship with a personal savior. Cultural heroes are representative of community experience. They may stand as classic figures, such as Deganiwidah, Sweet Medicine, Black Elk, Smohalla, and even Wovoka . . . /italics added/" (1973, 201).

However, in learning about the whole of Black Elk's life we see that the concept of "returning to the ways of our grandfathers" can be little more than the equivalent of moviedom's penchant for romantic portrayals. A popular sentiment is tapped, but its resemblance is to the ethnographic present rather than the actual conditions of the past. Discovering that "grandfather's ways" were more of a

*Other Native groups also grapple with this issue, and Black Elk's image has contributed to their spirited effort. Recently, for example, Omaha spiritual leader "Joe Kemp" said that "Black Elk was a sacred man to whom Indians turned in time of need /italics added/." He gave this observation to an audience at the groundbreaking ceremony for a Black Elk monument in Blair, Nebraska.

search than a well-established discovery, proponents of a "return" just might find themselves embracing precisely what their forebears chose to relinquish, or significantly modify.

Elsewhere, Deloria states that "more than one Indian political organization has based its approach to modern problems on Black Elk Speaks." Hence, he suggests the work captured what was authentically Indian. Now, however, Black Elk's last sixty years must also be considered, even though some may find this latter period tainted through "guilt by association" with Western ways.

We are left, then, to discern if there is something essentially consistent within the man's life that does not compromise the integrity of his earlier portrayal. Even if contemporary social trends resurrect a nineteenth-century Indian identity (with the Black Elk model reigning as a favorite), it is, nonetheless, judicious to appraise such models in their totality. The derivative sketch of the man and his culture is, thus, far more satisfying if for no other reason than its completeness.

Framing the problem this way, a significant qualification has been added here. The central figure of Black Elk Speaks and The Sacred Pipe does not, in Lucy's narrative, conjure up images of a resplendent warrior astride his majestic stallion with face toward the setting sun. Buffaloes do not gasp last breaths which toll the death knell of America's pristine wilderness, and prairie schooners are not dotting the horizon as prey for the test of Indian marksmanship. Similarly, the

story she has told does not establish her father as a type of Indian "Dick the boot-black"--artificer of some new American dream a la Horatio Alger.

Lucy's account of her father's adult life has special merit in that it begs re-evaluation of long-held notions concerning the adaptation of Indian culture to changing times. Plains warrior society was itself a short-lived phenomenon originating from agricultural, woodland ways. And yet, a static concept of Indian-ness--wedded only to the nineteenth-century world--has entrenched itself as the beginning and end of discourse related to Native identity.

Two Leggings of the Crow, interviewed shortly before his death in 1923, seems to epitomize a conventional wisdom which has been too readily accepted by both scholars and laypeople. Having recounted his life-experiences up to 1888, Two Leggings sadly concluded his narrative by saying:

"Nothing happened after that. We just lived. There were no more war parties, no capturing of horses from the Piegans and the Sioux, no buffalo to hunt. There is nothing more to tell" (Nabokov 1967, 197).

Plenty Coups, another famous Crow leader who died in 1932, echoed the above when, having told of his earlier days, he said:

". . . when the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened" (Linderman 1962, 311).

Writing at the same time as Neihardt, author Robert Gessner tapped a similar sentiment for Lakota life. He quotes an informant as saying: "After Wounded Knee all ambition was

taken out of us. We have never since been able to regain a foothold (1931, 417)." The accent of this literature is obviously a grim one. It errs, however, by being overly retrospective and fatalistic.

Such accounts are forceful reminders of the cataclysmic experience of social upheaval that Indian groups endured. Indeed, their felt losses and griefs need to be acknowledged by we who might otherwise simply name this period a "transitional phase of culture." In all probability, there are some who might still not be sensitized to this part of American history--remaining smug and uninformed about the destructive aspects of our own cultural imperialism. Still, however, those who define Indian resilience as little more than a museum-piece severely (and perhaps unconsciously) jeopardize the ongoing struggle of Native people in the contemporary world.

Lucy's account of her father's full story is, then, not unlike the appeal of Rosa Parks--the woman who refused to give up her seat on a bus. By doing so, she ushered in the civil rights movement among Blacks. Like Rosa Parks, Lucy felt compelled to assert that her people were live, human beings, and not to be taken for granted, or consigned a one-dimensional identity. Her father's life commanded more attention than it had received, and Lucy wanted known the entirety of what Black Elk spoke.

The quintessence of nineteenth-century Lakota identity had been ascribed to a man who lived most of his life in the

twentieth-century. In fact, the greater part of his life was never reported, and Lucy sought to redress this injustice. As a result, an important byproduct of her effort (and that of others) has been to show how pre-and post-reservation Sioux adjusted to changing conditions.

To repeat, the culture into which Black Elk was born was adaptive, or processual, and not static. This work has shown that Black Elk's life-span bridged significantly distinct periods--providing, as it were, a kaleidoscopic (or diachronic) perspective that has heretofore been lacking. Rather than regard the holy-man as a kind of artifactual relic of the bison-hunting era, we have, instead, seen him to be a flexible person who was acutely sensitive to the demands of changing conditions. In that sense, he indeed typified the essence of the old order. He was not, however, a prisoner to its substance, even though diverse analytical perspectives would have us believe so.

DeMallie rightly points out that the earlier portrayal deserves criticism precisely because of its depiction of Black Elk "as more aloof and cut-off from the real world than he actually was" (1984, 124). This understatement has far-reaching implications. Notably, the Black Elk model of Lakota identity has been sustained by both scholarly opinion and native self-perception to the detriment of, among other things, his people's contemporary social adjustment.

II. BLACK ELK'S BIOGRAPHY DISPELS THE WARRIOR STEREOTYPE

Although noted in earlier descriptions of reservation

life (Macgregor, 26-7), the Lakota desire for a return to what is imagined as more carefree and pristine Native ways has emerged with even greater force in recent years. With their socio-cultural horizon limited to the more dramatic events of historical times, writers have expended much effort depicting the Sioux as a "warrior society" during that zenith period. The line of thought here is basically that military exploits somehow greatly epitomized the people's essential identity (Hyde, 1937; Macgregor, 1946; Hassrick, 1964; Anderson, 1984). Studies that describe the anomic conditions of twentieth-century reservation life suggest that the Sioux have been disenfranchised from their most important pursuit (i.e., military adventure). Students of Indian culture thus perceive the modern era as comprised of sad people who mourn their inability to wage meaningful fights. Presumably, the social institutions of the past drew their lifeblood from this central activity, and with it gone the Sioux are reduced to lingering depression, a grueling and tortuous assimilation, or perhaps (many hope) a new cultural synthesis that is dynamic.

Most of the literature (and folk opinion) has used this terminology either directly or indirectly when referring to Black Elk's people. However, a review of Lakota culture shows that "warrior society" (and the associations it evokes) is little more than a misleading abstraction. Now reduced to a commonly-shared vernacular, the designation seems explanatory but is, in fact, not very illuminating.

The Siouan ascent to what has been called their "plains

dominance" was actually a hard-fought and continuous negotiation (Little Thunder, n.d.). That is, the Crow, Pawnee, and other tribes did not passively succumb to aggression. Rather, they sought to retain their own contiguous footholds within a buffalo-bounded ecosystem. During this process, American expansion accentuated militancy, and brought fanfare to such Lakota leaders as Crazy Horse, Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and others. Apart from representing an indomitable and praiseworthy spirit of Native integrity, these figures surface as representatives of a long, ongoing struggle for existence that characterized the historical period. The economic sphere lends support to this perspective as the short period of successful reservation pastoralism is a significant and early testimony of the Lakota willingness to clearly eschew a contingency lifestyle in favor of a more predictable, less-trying mode.

Did Black Elk speak on behalf of a "warrior society?" Neihardt's interview-material contained more militant overtones than appeared in the finished text, but these omissions did not substantially alter a sense of the nineteenth-century milieu which he described. The period was, simply, one of immense struggle marked by the violence of war. Ultimately, then, the explicative value of "warrior society" is minimal and its relevance to contemporary Lakota can only be metaphorical as in the people's "fight" for social justice. Two-thirds of the holy-man's life, like that of many others from his generation, was clearly a decision for alternative

routes to survival.

The historical record presents a picture quite different from the one so often portrayed by modern media, or war buffs. As much as the best-seller, Hanta Yo, has been criticized, it does represent a commendable attempt to show how life ways of the nineteenth-century gradually came to be (Hill, 1979). The Sioux did not just one day decide that social status would be commensurate with coup counts, and sex-roles did not become fixed simply as a result of a new-found equine "technology" that assured greater battle success. If ever there did exist a "golden age" of yesteryear, it seems not to have been a period of blissful repose free of duress. Similarly, it cannot be concluded that maintaining existence via regular war parties was a cultural value.

A re-reading of the historical period does not so much show the Sioux as a "warrior society," but as a defense-minded people (a characteristic noted even in recent years) who also occupied themselves with other activities. Crucial to point out is that this defensiveness was not, initially, by design, but by pressures exerted by other Native groups. It would seem that rather than conduct themselves in some kind of desired military regimen, the Lakota were simply wise enough to protect a long-sought territorial niche.

Far from being a well-oiled military machine, Sioux society maintained a posture sufficient only for boundary maintenance. War exploits never required mobilization of very great numbers and seem, in fact, to have equalled as much or

as little time spent on other activities (Two Bulls, n.d.). The much-celebrated victory of Little Big Horn in 1876 was a grand exception to the years-standing rule of inconsequential militancy. Therefore, instead of considering the warrior element of Sioux society as somehow its essential attribute, we might better understand it as defensive in nature and as but one means of gaining social status--a cultural category subject to fluctuation and variety (One Feather, n.d.). Stated in simpler terms, patriotism which includes the taking up of arms is a good for the protection of kith and kin. Nonetheless, portrayal of the Lakota as a hostile people no doubt lingers because of other reasons only alluded to until now.

Namely, the United States still fought this "enemy" as recently as 1891. Shortly after this final clash, the advent of the film industry captivated the world, and capitalized on the well-known, topic of America's "savage" foes. "Westerns," ever since, have reinforced the tried-and-true, box-office draw of Sioux adversaries stalking innocent, yet brave, settlers. Such celluloid fare, and the plethora of Zane Grey or Louis L'Amour novels, no doubt greatly influence our national perception. Their repetitive "imaging" of Lakota people has created, both inside the classroom and out, a cultural stereotype that the Sioux themselves find difficult to dislodge.

A recent example of this pattern would be the Wounded Knee occupation of 1973. It was a bitter, unglamorous,

deathly experience for the "militants" (and others) it included. The incident was a predictable response by Native people (from many groups) to grievances that always seemed to go unheeded. Nonetheless, the event is frequently referred to as a glorious glimmer of Indian resistance from times past (Akwesasne Notes, n.d.). People present at the occupation are now almost reverentially spoken of as Wounded Knee "warriors." Fertile imaginations (of Whites and Indians) seem, after the fact, to have constructed a reality quite different from the original.

Similarly, popularity of the cult-film "Billy Jack" has led many to conclude that such a figure fit pre-eminently into traditional Siouan concepts of male militancy. The movie portrays Billy Jack, an "Indian," as a former Green Beret (not just a common soldier) with Vietnam experience, known for dispatching unfriendly Whites with lethal karate kicks (updated battle tactics borrowed, no doubt, from Bruce Lee's martial arts movies). Modern Lakota youth have been much entranced by the Billy Jack image, while subscribing to alternative status models almost connotes a kind of genetic sellout.

The deeper truth is, however, that for over two-hundred years the Sioux have, very simply, had to defend themselves. In addition, one-hundred years of reservation life have fostered different forms of antisocial behavior that arise largely from the hammerlock of poverty. Such responses have little to do with any kind of earlier, ingrained, "warrior"

tradition.

Erik Erikson worked among the Sioux during the 1930's and addressed some of the issues raised here. He mused that even if the Lakota could return to the past, their traumatic defeat and dependence would never be erased. The "psychological effects of unemployment and neurosis . . . tuberculosis, syphilis, and alcoholism" were, among other things, exacerbated when he visited the Sioux again in 1950 (1963, 163).

Obviously, his prognosis was not very hopeful, and subsequent research only amplified the ominous forecast. Children see their fathers as ineffective models, suffer from family disruption, turn to delinquency, and carry a "generalized rejection of life" (Seward 1956, 230). Educational achievement has likewise consistently been noted as radically below that of other groups (Bryde, 1966).

The most recent and comprehensive sociocultural analysis of the Lakota was published in 1969 (Maynard and Twiss). Though compact as far as such studies go (184 pages), it condensed previous literature and applied it well to the contemporary reservation scene. On a more positive note, recent initiatives on the reservation give some basis for optimism.*

The complexity of culture does not, however, permit the resolution of difficult problems through simple programmatic

*Proposals for a renaissance are threefold in nature: 1) eliminate poverty's ills through gainful employment, 2) upgrade education through a bicultural curriculum and community involvement, and 3) encourage reservation leadership and autonomy.

directives. Attitudes, institutions, technology, environment, and a score of other phenomena interpenetrate and influence a people's life-experience. The discussion here has addressed an additional factor affecting the amelioration of Lakota culture--the resurgent interest in past tradition. Although this looking back seems logically more enlightening than predicting the future, it should now be obvious that confusion can even occur in this regard.

Langness has argued that the use of biography has not been sufficiently plumbed by anthropologists and that it offers a key to cultural identity which other research fails to articulate (1965). With this in mind, Black Elk's now-completed biography, can contribute to the development of a more authentic cultural understanding. Acculturation, Billy Jack, warrior society, retreatism, anomie, and other descriptive labels of the Siouan milieu deserve the qualification his life-story proposes. Examining Black Elk's passage from medicine man to catechist, from horseback to motorcycle and cars, from forager to successful rancher, jerky to sauerkraut, and from buckskin to three-piece suits, we have a more accurate picture of what it has meant, and does mean, to be a Lakota.

III. TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

The special commemorative edition of Black Elk Speaks featured a Preface which, due to the omission of this new account, reinforced a theoretical misdirection that can now be

amended. Namely, the author (again Deloria) emphasized how Neihardt's work was indispensable for understanding Indian religious tradition (1979, xiii-xiv). He asserted that the book must be considered as an essential "canon" of Native spirituality from which further theological reflection can (and must) arise. He claimed that the book's unanticipated popularity was what Black Elk would have wanted, and that it must serve as an alternative to Western religious thought.

Aware of its authorship problems, Deloria, nonetheless, seems to have given his blessing upon the work because of an already widespread sentiment. That is, Christian churches did not appear to be touching Native communities with a desired spirituality, and so a more congenial, culturally rooted, religion needed to be tapped. Neihardt's Black Elk represented a kind of lost legacy of religious strength, and it was presumed that his grief as an elder symbolized the inevitable outcome of culture-contact wherein Native people were dispossessed of everything they had formerly cherished. Such has been, at least, a popular characterization--one which Deloria perhaps espoused. And yet, the "theology" of the work, according to a recent critic, is Neihardt's and not his informant's (Holler 1984, 20).

The completion of Black Elk's biography constitutes an addendum which clarifies these disparate types of observation. The holy-man's "life prescription," if it can be labelled that, was not a call for the restoration of traditional Native rites; nor was his Christian practice a signal for renewed

evangelistic endeavors among Native peoples at the expense of an older tradition's religious forms. By the same token, Christianity's importance within the holy-man's life cannot be underestimated. His legacy might best be summed up in the words of a ninety-year old relative who appraised her cousin's behavior and thought the following way:*

"He was a really good fellow. He'd preach about the Gospel. He'd say to 'bring up children according to God's laws. Only Almighty God can change the way things are!'"

A witness to what his life had entailed, she distrusted any further reports that time would add to his memory. And so, she angrily indicted her people by saying:

"Younger ones now don't tell the truth. They never believed. People heard him but did not listen."

My aged friend's forthright comments were telling. So much was implied in so little.

The Wounded Knee massacre was an event of her early childhood, while her many years were passed in residence near Manderson itself. Matriarch of both the reservation and its Catholic community, the outspoken grandmother knew her cousin to be a man who had lived through very difficult times, the district's first and foremost catechist, and one whose "family could have taken better care of him than they did." A woman whose religious instruction was clearly received from Black Elk, she shared his lament that the years had devastated the people's behavior. What had been a reflexive religious

posture was now, in her opinion, not much in evidence.

In light of the above, Black Elk's life and thought can be more readily assessed by commenting upon the reservation's history of religious involvement. By doing so, the holy-man's portrait of zealous catechist and discouraged elder will not remain the paradoxical profile that bars understanding. That is, much of the discussion spawned by this figure has focused on an "either/or" proposition. Namely, Black Elk was, at heart, either an old-time medicine man, or one who forsook the tradition in favor of something entirely new.* What follows will show that neither evaluation is an appropriate framing of the issue.

DeMallie has pointed out that "effective leadership for the Lakotas shifted during the early reservation period from political to religious spheres" (1984, 23). It is not surprising that such a phenomenon occur. In his recent study of Plains Indian religion, Schwarz noted that:

"The holy man has a 'vision' of the world--its nature, its history and its destiny--and a sense of humanity's place within that scheme. Through that vision, the holy man can hope to solve problems for which the tradition offers no ready-made solutions . . ." (1981, 53).

Given this observation, it should be clear why such persons were especially prominent during the late-nineteenth century. The fluid nature of Plains culture itself, noted earlier, made

*DeMallie rightly notes that discussions of this topic usually dissolve "into political rhetoric rather than objective assessment" (1984, 80).

it conducive for religious leadership to emerge even more significantly, and as shown, it was Black Elk's abiding sense of religious mission that permitted his own meaningful adaptation to changing circumstances.

A corroborating source for this same theme can be found in the person of George Sword, Walker's multi-dimensional informant--the man "of marked ability with a philosophical trend far beyond the average Oglala" (Walker 1917, 59). In his unfinished autobiography, Sword disclosed that:

"When I believed the Oglala Wakan Tanka was right I served him with all my powers. I became a Wicasa Wakan /holy-man/ . . . a pejuta wicasa /medicine man/ . . . a Blotaunka (leader of war parties) . . . I was Wakiconze (civil magistrate) . . . In war with the white people I found their Wakan Tanka the Superior . . . and have served Wakan Tanka according to the white people's manner and with all my power . . . I joined the church and am a deacon in it and shall be until I die. I have done all I was able to do to persuade my people to live according to the teachings of the Christian ministers . . ." (1917, 159).

An Episcopalian, Sword was not unlike Black Elk and many others who, as MacGregor pointed out, "translated Christianity into the Dakota /sic/ way of life"--interpreting it in terms of their previous religious experience (1946, 102). This experience included (from their most immediate past) the Ghost Dance, which was itself an "import" that they received and accommodated.

Equally notable at this time was Short Bull.* He and

*A leading proponent of the Ghost Dance (with brother-in-law, Kicking Bear).

Sword were two prominent holy-men who confronted both the Ghost Dance and Christianity, and can be considered as representative theoreticians of this process. Their high-visibility as public figures does not make them exceptions to the principle at work here. Instead, they serve as credible examples from the early period, and Black Elk's completed biography validates the normative role they bore as religious leaders confronting change. Theirs was a challenge, as Overholt described, "to put/keep the world together, and as such was fraught with ambiguity" (1978, 190-91).

Steinmetz has categorized this ambiguity under two labels, viz., Lakota Ecumenist I and II (1980). The former refers to those who practice each tradition separately, while the latter are those who somehow work to integrate them. Disputing Black Elk's classification within the second category, Holler argues that the holy-man was clearly a traditionalist for Neihardt and Brown, a dutiful Catholic while employed as a catechist (1984, 41). Steinmetz's reading of Black Elk's experience stressed an integration that was largely "unconscious" (159), while Holler sought to establish the holy-man as a proponent for the practice of traditional rites. Unfortunately, both evaluations (to varying degrees) do not fully take into account the cultural landscape within which Black Elk lived, and lack the panoramic view that this biography contains.*

*Steinmetz's work also includes discussion of other religious movements among Pine Ridge Lakota.

In short, the late nineteenth century Lakota world was characterized, as most history books note, by upheavals that radically altered the people's manner of life. It was during this period that Black Elk was born and raised. Formative in his (and the people's) experience, were such cultural cornerstones as the vision quest, the Sun Dance, nomadism, and the buffalo hunt.

Sitting Bull's surrender in 1881 marked the end of the nomadic way, and sealed once and for all the reservation system still in place today. Similarly, the last great buffalo hunt was held the following year, and this ushered in a new economy which, ever since, has amounted to some form of subsistence based on government rationing.

Where success, power, and the virtuous life could come from Wakan Tanka thru the vision quest, this avenue was gradually sealed off by a variety of measures imposed by the reservation's Superintendent. Certain customs were outlawed (notably, the Sun Dance), children were made to leave home and then board at government schools (some taken to Carlisle, Pennsylvania), and sodalities which formerly flourished gradually lost their significance. In fact, reservation-born youth came into a world quite different than that of their parents. Those who rallied around the Ghost Dance of 1890 were, in all probability, the last to have experienced a vision quest free of duress, or a Sun Dance that truly symbolized and reinforced social solidarity.

Witness to and participant in this unfolding drama, Black

Elk embodied Lakota ideology as he manifested a resilient willingness to let go of what was, and experiment with what might be the disclosures of Wakan Tanka for his life. Hence, like others similarly constituted, he travelled overseas, and endured whatever unknowns such a venture entailed. Disillusioned there, he listened to reports of a Red messiah and, again like others, embraced the new hope offered by Ghost dancing.

Where Linton would call the above religious movement an "irrational" flight from reality (1941), and where Mooney would call it a response to recent and long-standing grievances (1896), persons like Black Elk generated a response to the "craze" by means of a well-conditioned, culturally-based, disposition to seek the power of Wakan Tanka on whatever new horizon it might appear. Linton's proposition for movements such as the Ghost Dance was that they arise during the acculturative process when exploitation and frustration are experienced by a dominated people. Mooney's thesis noted that the Ghost Dance was only a symptom and expression of the real causes of dissatisfaction that had been growing among the Sioux (noted above). And just as their observations are a phenomenological description of the more apparent conditions of the social milieu, so is this work a much-needed illumination of the cognitive "map" that guided people like Black Elk past the Ghost Dance and into still another mode of adaptation, viz., active participation within an organized denomination of Christianity (along with the

"acculturation" such participation included).

Like others of his generation, Black Elk had been a respected religious practitioner, and when such persons affiliated with Christian sects, their following did not turn a deaf ear on this already-established leadership. As Lucy herself stated, the missionaries seemed to look for such persons. By the same token, however, people still needed the assuring presence of their own religious specialists who, it appeared, were successfully discerning a new course that surely had the blessing of Wakan Tanka.

Essentially, when people like Black Elk or Sword, Fills the Pipe or Black Fox strove to lead their people into the twentieth century, their role as new-order holy-men served the people well, and provided a self-direction that was elsewhere very difficult to experience. This self-direction, a kind of vision quest gone communal, explains in large part why denominational affiliations became so widespread and important during the early reservation period. External conditions could drastically change and be controlled or manipulated by non-Lakota agents. The people's internal environment, however, was theirs to determine.* In this way, the holy-men perceived anew the durability of Wakan Tanka.

Discussion of such a process becomes fruitless when attempts are made to quantify Christian accretions or Lakota

*This same theme is apparent in a study among the Modern Tswana of Southern Africa. Cf. Hoyt Alverson's Mind In The Heart Of Darkness, Yale University Press: New Haven, 1978.

residues, and conscious or unconscious reconstructions. "Theological speculation," if it can be called that, has been shown in this text to happen as a matter of course, when Black Elk spoke with priests or other catechists, or anyone who broached the topic. Fools Crow's biography has given additional examples of this same occurrence. And although a case has been made for The Sacred Pipe being Black Elk's Lakota counterpoint to Catholic sacraments, the holy-man's disposition was not so parochial.* He, unlike those who study him, seems not to have felt "the need of coordinating and systematizing . . . beliefs as strongly as we do" (Durkheim 1965, 193). Hence, an attempt to make Black Elk's thought in The Sacred Pipe something that it is not merely confirms the Lewis indictment of some researchers. Namely, they "treat rites rather like a set of clues or a test to be solved by finding answers that all fit together. It is as though the cry 'It fits' would convincingly repay the effort and the ingenuity" (1980, 186).

McGregor's sociological study of Pine Ridge contains a more fertile perspective on the issues which bore upon Black Elk toward the end of his life. Given the nature of this present inquiry, McGregor's work took place at a time which can only be considered fortuitous. That is, the research he presented was undertaken during the years between visitations

*Hultkrantz considers The Sacred Pipe "the most widely read work on Plains Indian religion" (Capps, 91). As such, it especially needs the caution offered here.

by Nelhardt and Brown. And most pertinent is McGregor's comment on religious practice. He writes:

"Christian Churches too appear to be losing some of their former hold as . . . many Indians are now following the trend of the local white population away from control by the Church" (103).

Residents of Pine Ridge, although removed from mainstream America, were not insulated from the secularizing forces of the dominant society. World War II contributed to this trend by drawing large numbers into the armed forces, while relocation programs similarly expanded the nation's "hoop" of experience. Such was the unfolding social scene (stated here in general terms) that Black Elk witnessed. Not only did his people have a loose hold on traditional religious forms, but they were also growingly half-hearted in their practice of the Christian way.

Black Elk's late-life reprimand of the Manderson Catholic community reveals the kind of discouragement he, as an elder, endured. Far from being an acknowledgement of his erroneous Catholic practice, The Sacred Pipe was simply another attempt to rally his people's religious fervor by whatever means were at his disposal. Earlier in life he respected the Thin Elk decision to resume traditional, and discontinue Christian, participation--not because he felt their choice was theologically more sound, or because he was indifferent to their concerns, or because he was vacillating in his own commitment. Black Elk was not given to charade in such important matters. He seems to have truly believed that "to

seek, you will find." Hence, the Thin Elk decision, because it was rooted in sincerity, was a journey upon which he could bestow his blessing. By contrast, the elder Black Elk seems to have been discouraged by his people abandoning a trek in any direction.

Elizabeth Grobsmith's recent ethnography on the Rosebud Lakota succinctly expresses the historical relationship of Christianity to the Lakota, and the biography here is an overdue contribution that gives substance to her remarks.

" . . . the history of the Christian church . . . will reveal the very deep if ambivalent relationship between the Indians and the church and the secure place the church occupies in most people's lives . . . Although missionaries may have capitalized on a situation ideal for introducing a new religion, the Indian people recognized that those missionaries were not themselves to blame for the changes; on the contrary, their sympathetic assistance was deeply appreciated and still is to this day . . . It is common for the non-Indian outsider to regard Christianity as alien to the Indian. But, in fact, nearly all Lakota are Christians, even those who are also active in native ritual. For the Indian people themselves, the church is an integral and important institution in Lakota society" (1981, 82, 86).

Although the above citation is an academic one, its content can be translated more concretely into the Black Elk life-story just concluded. This clarification is perhaps of most importance to those Grobsmith refers to as "non-Indian outsiders," or even some Native people themselves who, for whatever reason, have not been familiar with this perspective.

The repetitive emphasis on Black Elk's early Lakota formation deserves the criticism levied here because it does a

disservice to the social system now in place among his people. As admirable a portrait as it might be, Neihardt's Black Elk can no longer be regarded as enlightening cultural discourse in quite the same way as before. Nonetheless, toward the end of my interviews with Lucy, an incident occurred which, despite this biographical addition, would insure its even greater longevity. .

I was invited to attend a special picnic the family had planned. Christopher Sergel, a New York playwright, had composed a work based on Black Elk Speaks, and he thought it important that his "lead" (actor David Carradine) and entourage visit Black Elk's surviving relatives. Included with the group was John Neihardt's daughter, Hilda, who served as the expedition's photographer.

Familiar with Carradine's popular television series "Kung Fu," the younger members of the family were quite excited to be hosting such a celebrity. Their enthusiasm was contagious since the older folk decided to slaughter a cow for this special occasion--no small thing for people who were quite destitute. Ironically, this gesture of Lakota hospitality was not mentioned by anyone and so, their sacrifice went unnoticed by the featured guest who, it turned out, was practicing vegetarianism.

The playwright and his wife comported themselves as grateful guests, and amicably chatted with everyone they met. They seemed to relish the contrast of this occasion with what they probably knew back home in an urban environment. Hilda,

meanwhile, moved about getting photographs of the visitors mixing with Lucy's family. The actor's three-year old son, Free, played with other children who were also present.* Except for a brief demonstration of his skill in the martial arts, Carradine kept a low-profile, and responded to the occasional question directed his way. That is, he did so until deciding to take a swim in the nearby, swollen creek.

Perhaps assuming his hosts customarily disrobed for such purposes with little attention to anyone present, Carradine casually stripped and strode into the water for a swim. Hurriedly, the older children rounded up the young ones and, eyes averted, provided the actor with the privacy ordinarily expected for swimming of this nature. If Carradine realized his behavior was not in keeping with the local custom, I never learned because what followed this quickly absorbed everyone's attention.

One of the visitors suggested that Lucy be pictured presenting a pipe to the actor. Directed to an open space, Lucy was positioned upright as the actor fell to his knees, arms outstretched, in front of her. Repeatedly corrected by younger family members as to how one should hold the pipe for such a pose, Lucy was finally photographed. A kind of

*Introducing myself to the little fellow, I asked his name. Thinking he had perhaps mispronounced his age, i.e., "three," I said "oh, are you "three?" Whereupon Carradine interjected: "he told you his name, it's "Free!!" I then said to the little one, "oh, and how old are you?" His reply: "Free" (i.e., "three"). I recently came upon an article, almost ten years after this event, and read that Carradine's son's name was "Tom."

dramatic passing-on of her father's spiritual legacy was thus staged, the photos of which perhaps used later on for advertizing purposes in cities far away. Immediately following Lucy's debut as pipe-holder, the guests bade farewell and drove to Rapid City in order to connect with their respective flights home.

The fruits of this encounter between Hollywood and Lucy's family ripened shortly after, and the play "Black Elk Speaks" was performed in a number of cities. Tulsa World columnist Danna Sue Walker reported the following on November 18th, 1983:

"Carradine visited the Black Elk wilderness in South Dakota with Chris Sergel, who authored the play, and with Neihardt's daughter, Hilda . . . Carradine said the group met with Black Elk's granddaughter, Lisa Long Hill /sic/, and Lucy Looks Twice. Lisa performed the peace pipe ceremony with the three, and Carradine was made to promise he would play the part of Black Elk. The two women thought Carradine sounded much like Black Elk . . ."

A brochure put out by the American Indian Theatre Company also reported that "Carradine discussed Black Elk Speaks with Lucy Looks Twice, daughter of the holy man. She gladly gave Carradine permission to play her father in the play." Both the columnist and the brochure mentioned that plans were underway to film the production.

As early as the Fall of 1976, the play had been performed, with Lisa Lone Hill, Lucy's teenage grand-daughter, having a small part. Lucy herself had even been flown to Washington, D.C. as an honored guest of the production. When

I inquired as to how she felt about the course of events, Lucy expressed ambivalence. Extended family members were excited about involvement with the play and she, too, was provided with travel opportunities and attention that previously had not been a part of her life. Accepting the script as simply a work based on her father's early life, Lucy saw its importance in terms of calling attention to her people's history. She wrote that there was interest in the play "since /my father/ was a witness to the Wounded Knee Massacre." In her opinion, the twentieth-century part of her father's life was on another level entirely, and was pretty much disconnected from this earlier period which the play addressed.

Resurrection of the nineteenth-century Black Elk in the terms described above relies heavily on its Romantic appeal. Bolstering this appeal is a portrayal of the holy-man as a resolute traditionalist--all of which no doubt has its place both within the worlds of ethnic resurgence, literature, drama, and the like. As shown, the human appetite for such representations never seems to be sated.

This is, however, secondary (if not detrimental) to a proper understanding of how persons like Black Elk actually withstood and overcame the conflicts generated by the clashing of cultures. Most of Black Elk's life was occupied with issues of the post-reservation era, and his efforts were directed at concerns that still prevail today. Because he was so involved with the contemporary world, his late-life grievance should not be construed as Nativistic retreatism.

stated simply, he had confronted as much as anybody, and still retained "the power to live." And as mentioned earlier, he was sad that "some were not even trying to catch it."

On the other hand, words attributed the holy-man have been invoked to rally his people from social torpor, and application of his thought in this regard is legitimate. After all, Black Elk was himself a man disposed to making moral indictments, and his strategy for renewal was framed within the religious perspective. That is, challenging his people was well within the holy-man's sense of mission. His prescription for adjustment was religious--the social or political agendas presumably flowing from what he deemed foremost, a spiritual base.

Recently, a "Sioux social worker" commented upon the high alcoholism rate at Pine Ridge (80-95%). Her discouragement is a kind of updated Black Elk who, during his own life, witnessed the problem arise. According to Fools Crow, the 1930's were "the worst ten years I know of . . . because of problems caused by intoxicated people . . . such shameful behavior . . . We discussed many things, but in the end concluded that the solution was not in our hands, that all we could do for the moment was to fall back on our prayers" (1979, 148-49). The social worker's observation is, thus, cited here for the purpose of conveying a sense of the holy-man in practical terms--minus the generalized symbols and images of his persona in Black Elk Speaks and The Sacred Pipe:

"People still sit around crying about how it's

all the white man's fault for bringing us firewater. Well, five generations later, we better start taking some responsibility ourselves--because we are committing self-genocide, breeding a new generation of idiots. If it keeps up at this rate, 50 years from now there won't be a Sioux on the reservation who can think straight even if he is sober" (Talbert 1986, 9B).

Nothing as direct as the above appears in Black Elk quotations and, as a result, room was left for interpreting him in broad, humanistic or Nativistic terms. Such were, however, the kinds of concerns that confronted him in later life, and to which he applied his religious "solution." Essentially, Black Elk was a social critic who derived his own strength and inspiration from the Lakota-Christian religious sphere and who, in turn, used that framework to challenge his people unto renewal. In this sense, his behavior was, indeed, consistent with the leitmotif of Plains culture and its holy-men.

Religion was a strategy of adaptation which had served his people and himself. With its lapse due to the multifaceted changes accosting Pine Ridge, Black Elk had little else to offer as a lifegiving alternative. And with the gradual abandonment of this reflexive religious disposition, Plains culture was truly undergoing a major modification.

Previously, readers were left to ponder "the complexity of Black Elk." In the end, however, his life and thought are fairly straightforward. Those who have chosen instead to hunt for something more sublime or programmatic will, as before,

never "catch it."

* * * *

Lucy Looks Twice, the last surviving child of Black Elk,
died on April 23, 1978.

* * * *

APPENDIX A.

Appendix A.

A Bibliography of American Indian Autobiographies

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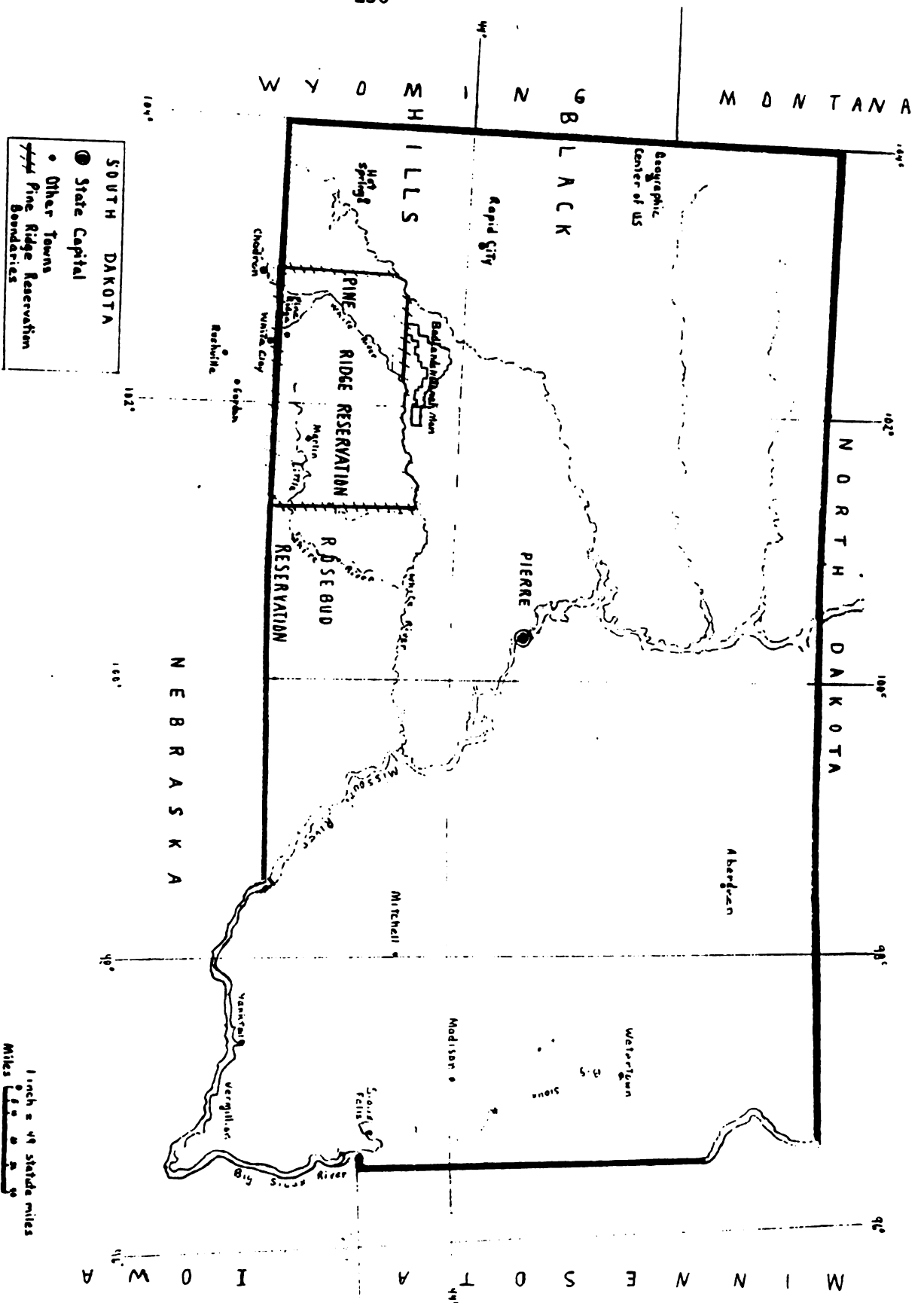
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Map I

DISTRICTS AND COUNTIES



Map II

APPENDIX B.

APPENDIX B

Eulogy given at the funeral of Benjamin Black Elk in Manderson, South Dakota, February 28, 1973 by Paul B. Steinmetz, S.J.

We come here today as a faith community to celebrate the eternal life of Benjamin Black Elk. For we know that his soul lives on and enters into the spirit world.

Benjamin came from a great tradition. He had a father who was very important in the life of the Oglala Sioux. His father, Nicholas Black Elk, was perhaps the greatest Lakota Mystic in the history of this reservation. He was the "St. John of the Cross" of the Oglala Sioux people.* And from his vision he derived from God a gift of prophecy and a gift of healing which was very great.

But amidst these visions, we see in a Lakota holy-man the seeds of Christ were planted. He not only was converted to the Catholic Church, but he became one of the greatest Catholic catechists on the reservation. Probably no man is more responsible for the implanting of the Catholic Church at Manderson than Nicholas Black Elk. This is the part of his life that is not well enough known.

I can remember Ben tell me that this was the chapter in Black Elk Speaks that was not yet written. It is wonderful that in this book, a great gift to both the Indian people and mankind, we have the visions of this holy man revealed to us. Yet Ben said that this book was incomplete . . . that someday he would have to write the last chapter of his father as a Catholic catechist establishing the Church here in Manderson. And he said that this would be the greatest and the most important chapter of his father's life.

And so it is fitting then, that Ben Black Elk had this spiritual training from his father -- training in two religious traditions. It would be a preparation for a very unusual life. Many years ago now, Ben Black Elk rode through the Hills -- the Black Hills -- seeking the spirit of his son Benjamin Junior who had passed into the other world. And it was this search that eventually led to his involvement at Mount Rushmore.

*John of the Cross (1542-91) was a Carmelite monk who established several monasteries in Spain. He is regarded as one of Christianity's great mystics.

I think we have here an example of a proud Indian who greeted literally millions of people for over a quarter of a century. And I remember seeing him being so wonderful and being so open to small children. He had a winning way with the little children at Mount Rushmore. I would reflect on the Gospel story of Christ calling the little children to himself and not having them turned away. Ben Black Elk won the heart of the American people. He certainly was an ambassador of Good Will. He captured the heart of America.

But I think there is a much more important side to Ben Black Elk. There is his religious side. I can remember talking to him in his home about his religious searching, about his seeking to understand his own religious traditions, trying to understand more deeply the life experience of his father that he had interpreted for the world in Black Elk Speaks and The Sacred Pipe.

He was not satisfied with the understanding he had. He was seeking for a deeper and deeper understanding. Ben Black Elk was also a very deep Catholic. Ben, along with all mankind -- all of us -- would sin and fail against almighty God. However, from my own personal experience, I know that he had a deep faith in the sacrament of Confession. He knew that there was a sacred power in the absolution of the priest. He knew that he had a religious ceremony of purification to which he could go whenever it was needed. I have seen him receive this sacrament with great sincerity, faith, and feeling.

One particular night we were talking together about the vision of his father -- the relationship of the Lakota religion and his Catholic faith. We talked about this because both of these meant very much to him. We began to talk about the fact that there was no conflict between the two. We discussed about how the Pipe would lead a person to Christ, how the Sacred Pipe was a foreshadowing of Christ in his great office of mediator, in his great office of bringing man back to the Great Spirit.

We talked then how the two could be fulfilled -- how Christ fulfilled the tradition of the Sacred Pipe, and how Christ is the living and eternal Pipe. And then Ben made a very startling confession to me. He said that through most of his life there was a conflict between these two traditions. He did have doubts of conscience when he lectured on the Sacred Pipe. When he had a belief in the Sacred Pipe was he betraying himself as a Christian? He said that now he sees the two have become one, that the Sacred Pipe and Christ really are one, that they fulfill each other.

Now the doubts of conscience of many years were ended. Now he had real spiritual peace in his soul. And so it was this shared vision of the Sacred Pipe leading the Indian people to Christ as the living and eternal Pipe -- it was this shared vision then which made a deep impression on both of us. And this is what I would like to call the vision of Benjamin Black Elk.

In a way this vision is much more powerful and much more needed today than even the vision of his father, Nicholas Black Elk. I think that this is a vision that would be well for all of us to consider as we look up now to the wisdom of our elders -- the vision that we should take to heart, a vision that we should pray over, and a vision that we should explore. It is Christ, the God-man, who gathers from the four directions the entire universe and carries it back to the Great Spirit in a way that fulfills the Sacred Pipe and does not destroy it.

I think, then, that this vision of Christ was a very important thing in the life of Benjamin Black Elk. I think that it will help others as they bring the living Oglala Sioux culture to the people today. I believe that this vision can become a foundation of the important work then of Sioux culture which is beginning to come alive on this reservation.

And so now we gather together to celebrate the eternal life of this great man, a man who holds out to us the hope of a better and a more spiritual life. In the reading from Prophet Isaiah, what a wonderful picture it is of our life in heaven. On the mountain the Lord of hosts will provide for all people. He will prepare a feast -- in which we are going to have a great deal of joy -- where God will wipe away the tears from all faces. He will take away our shame and our reproach. This is the heavenly feast which all of us someday will share. This is the heavenly feast which the mass is but the sign and the foreshadowing.

We gather at the eucharistic feast because it will lead us someday to the heavenly feast to which Ben Black Elk has been called. Very early in the Church when Christians were called to Christ, they received power. That is what Nicholas Black Elk certainly had -- power as a holy-man and power as a Catholic catechist. I think this is what Benjamin inherited -- an influence and a power over people -- which will enable his name and his memory to go on for a very long time.

Ben was very much impressed with the ceremony of the Sacred Pipe at the graveside as he saw it performed for his friends. In this ceremony Ben made his great act of faith: Christ is the resurrection and the life -- "if anyone believes in me, he will not die forever." He will not die spiritually, but his life will go on.

Our Lord asked Benjamin that very same question he asked Martha: "Do you believe this?" And along with Martha, Benjamin said "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah the one who is to come to save the world." And then in that cabin that night -- when he could see that Christ was the living and eternal Pipe -- this act of faith and this vision brought both of his religious traditions together. And I feel deep in my heart that this is the greatest achievement of Benjamin Black Elk.

This is the crown of his spiritual life, the destination of his spiritual gropings. This is the vision, then, which

we are all welcome to share in. This is his heritage to the Oglala Sioux. And so let us open our hearts.

We turn now to the relatives, to those close to him, dear to him, to those who are going to miss him so much, and to the countless people that have such a deep love and affection for Ben Black Elk. We turn to them and we ask all these people now to open up their hearts to the Holy Spirit -- to let the spirit of Christ come in with peace, with understanding, with acceptance of God's will -- God who is a loving Father . . . with the belief that God directs the lives of each one of us -- including the life of Ben -- according to his best plan to lead us to salvation. We open our hearts up to the hope of resurrection. We open our hearts up to the peace of Christ -- that same peace which Ben had that night in his cabin.

Let the Holy Spirit then come into our lives. And may the blessings of Almighty God descend upon each and every one of us. Amen.

Let us pray. We gather our prayers, this faith community, through the Sacred Pipe in the name of Jesus Christ to pray that the soul of Ben Black Elk may be purified of any stain of sin; that his soul be taken up by the holy angels to his true home in heaven; that there he will share the vision of God as He is and enjoy eternal happiness.

Let us pray for those who are close and dear to him, that the Holy Spirit may give them hope and courage, joy and peace; that they may have faith to believe that God is a loving Father who has called their loved one back to Himself; that God may protect this reservation and all people living here from all harm and all danger; that He may guide each one of us so that we may give ourselves in such a way that this community will be a better community.

Let us pray for all those who are sick, discouraged, lonely; all those who are poor, all those who need God's help the most; that there may be an education in which the Sioux culture will become a vital living part of the life of our people. For all our intentions let us pray, O Almighty God, we offer you our prayers through the Sacred Pipe. Purify the soul of Benjamin, give him eternal happiness and eternal rest. We ask you this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Living and Eternal Pipe. Amen.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTION BY MEANS OF THE TWO ROADS

Itowapi kin le canku nupa eciyapi; canku waste kin, na canku sice kin. Canku waste kin mah'piya ekta iyaye, na canku sice kin wakan sica ti ekta iyaye.

Man'piya ekta unyanpi kta uncinpi ehantans, taku yamni econk'unpi kta iyececa: 1 -- Taku tona Wakantanka ya'otanin kin wicaunlapi kte. 2 -- Wakantanka tawoope kin unkopapi kte. 3 -- Wowakan sakowin kin unkicupi kte. 4 -- Wakantanka wanji la, tka Wakantanka el yamnipi kin he ohounlapi kte, Ateyapi kin na Cinca kin na Woniyan Wakan kin. Hena yamni Wakantanka wanjila. Taku oyasin sakib yuhapi: akilececap. Wookahinige wanjila, tawacin wanjilapi.

Wakantanka woniyan un on welo. Tancan yuha sni, na yuha kta iyececa sni. Wakantanka iyotan tanka: taku oyasin okihi, taku oyasin slolye na man'piya na maka ko el un welo. Wakantanka taku oyasin lte tawacin on kage.

Tokahsya ogligle wicakage na waste wicakage, tka os'paye wanji Wakantanka oholapi sni na heun hena ih'pewicaye na kakis'wicaye. Hena owihanke wanil wakan sica ti el kakijapi kte. Tona Wakantanka anagoptanpi kin hena mah'piya el unpi.

Hehan Wakantanka taku tona wanyang'pica kin kage: maka na m'ni, can na wanah'ca, anpetu wi kin, hanhepi wi kin, na wicah'pi, hogan kin m'ni el na zintkala hehanl wamakaskan kin na wicasa kin ehakela kage. Wicasa tokaheya kin he Adam eciyapi na winyan tokaheya kin he Eva eciyapi. Wakantanka wicasa na winyan tokaheya kin waste wicagage, na maka akanl itancan wickage. Hena ecela Wakantanka slolyapi na oholapi na wastelakapi okihipi, heon. Na nakun Tye cincapi hena wicakage. Waniyetu conala maka akan tanyan nipi kta na Wakantanka wastelakapi kte na hehanl t'api sni mah'piya ekta yapi kta. Makoce waste wan el Adam na Eva ewicagnaka na hel lila tanyan impi. Tka tehan hel unpi sni. Wakantanka tehan anagoptanpi sni, heon. Hehan Wakantanka hena makoce waste etanhan tankal ih'pewicaye na waniyetu ota tehiya unpi, kakijapi, h'tanipi na t'api. Yunkan Wakantanka hena ogligle sica iyecel ih'pewicaye sni, onsiwicala na Wanikiya wan iwahowicaye na nakun wicak'u, waniyetu 4000 iyohakab. Iacunhan Adam na Eva Wakanhejacota wicayuhapi. Yunkan tokaheya yuhapi kin (Cain) na isunkaku wan (Abel) he tikte yelo. Itahena maka akan wicasa ota, tka scaya skanpi. Wowah'tani ota econpi. Heon m'nitan tanka wan el t'api; na

estan 8 heceglala nipi (Noah na tiwahe ataya) wata ogra yankapi na nini; hena ecela wastepi kin heon.

Itahena aka wicasa ota icagapi, tka ake sicaya skanpi. Heon Wakantanka nakun hena ota akigle kakiswicaye. Conala wastepi: Abraham na Isaad na Jacob na samp' icincapi k'un hena. Hena canku waste kin ogra yapi. Na wicasa unmapi kin iyuha ocanku sica kin ogra manipi.

Tona Abraham ateyapi kin, hena Wakantanka lila yanyan awanwicayanke na woope wikcemna kin wicak'u: oyate kin le etanhan Wanikiye kin icagin kte kin, heon. Wakantanka oyate kin le wicabe waste'ste ota wicak'u. Wicass wok'can (Wayaata) ewicakiyapi kin hena epi. Lena oyate kin taku waste ota onspewicakiyapi, na Wanikiya wan u kte k'un akes'sna kiksuyewicayapi.

Juda oyate Wakantanka ohiniyan oholapi na tipi wakan tanka el wesnapi k'upi. Iacunhan oyate unmapi kin oyasin wakantanka tok'tokeca ota oholapi nains wakan sica eikiya woilak'ic'iyapi na wosnapi k'upi.

Waniyetu 4000 Wakantanka wicasa kagin na iyohakab Wanikiye hi na Bethlehem el tonpi. Waniyetu 33 maka akanl ni un; waniyetu 30 Nazareth el o'unye na wowasi ikce ka ecun na lecel tokaheya wicoh'an on onspeunkiyapi.

Hehanl waniyetu 3 Juda oyate na unkiyepi eyasin wicoiye on mah'piya canku kin onspeqicaye na awicakehan Wakantanka un kin he wowapetokeca tanka on wicakipazo.

Hehan unkiyepi on iyecinka kakije na t'e na h'api. Tka anpetu iciyamni el ake kini. Ake anpetu 40 maka akanl ni un, Okolakiciye kin tanyan yustan na hehanl mah'piya ekta iyaye; wana mah'piya el yanke.

Wanikiya Wakantanka Winhintku, Wakantanka Ateye na Mary witansna un wakan kin Inaye. St. Joseph ihan'han ateye. He Jesus cik'ala kin hehan awanyanke, na he Wakantanka hecel ecun si.

Jesus wicasa un na Wakantanka un. i. e. (he kapi) taku tena wicasa tawa hena yuha na taku tona Wakantanka tawa hena yuha, he kapi.

Heon wicasa tancan na nagi, wo'okahnige na tawacin yuha na Wakantanka to'okahnige na tawacin na wowas'ake kin yuha. Heon Iye iyotan tanka; na lila wasteunlakapi. Heon unkiyepi Jesus lila ohounlapi na wasteunlakapi kta iyececa na taku tona econ unspip cantewasteya econkunpi kta iyececa. Hecel tokate Iye kici oihanke wanil mah'piya ekta unkiyuskinpi kte.

Tona Wanikiye wastelakapi sni na taku tona econ wicasi kin econpi sni, hena wicont'e kin iyohakab oihanke wanil kakijapi kte woka sica ti el. Ho, hena tokaheya kisuyapo.

Nakun okolakiciye tawa kin tanyan anaungoptanpi kta iyececa. Jesus caje kin el onspeunkiyapi na mah'piya canku kin unkipazopi, heun; "Tuwa nanih'unpi kin he, namah' un," Jesus hecel eye lo. Wanikiya hi sni itokab oyate oyasin oiyokpaza wan el unpi, heon omaka iyohi hecel unkupi. Tka

Wanikiya maka kin le aojanjan ye, na hetan takenakiya iyojanjanyan unkupi. Wana ojanjan wan el unk'unpi na Wanikiya na Taokolakiciye kin anpetu wi kin he iyecelya mah'piya ocanku kin unkipazopi.

"REFERS TO PICTURE "TWO ROADS" YEARS BEFORE CHRIST IN BLACK;
THOSE AFTER IN RED." 12-10-31

II

Wakantanka woope wikcemna kin unk'upi. Hena tanyan unkopapi kta iyececa, mah'piyata unyanpi uncinpi ehantans. Mount Sinai el Wakantanka tokaheya woope wikcenma Moses i'yohlokya unk'upi. Wakantanka unkagapi. Heon Itancan unkitawapi, na heon woope unk'upi okihi; iye he owaja. He wiceh'an tawa.

1-TOKAHEYA: Wakantanka isnala ohounlapi kta; wowicala on, woape on, woape on, wowastelake on na wocekiye on.

Ogligle wakan na wakan wastepi kin hena unyuonihanpi kte na wastewicaunlakapi kte; Wakantanka hena kolawicaye na cinawicaye kin, heon.

2-INUNPA: Wakantanka caje kin unyuonihanpi kte.

3-ICIYAMNT: Anpetu wakan (Mass) wosnapi unkopapi kte na wowaski ikceka econk' unpi kte sni.

4-ITOPA: Wakanheja atewicayapi na inawicayapi kin na tona ate na ina ostan wicayuhapi kin hena anawicagoptanpi, wicayuonihanpi na wastewicunlakapi kta iyececa.

5-IZAPTAN: Wacasa oyasin tanyan wicunkuwapapi kte, tokel unkuwapapi uncinpi, he iyecel.

6 & 9-ISAKPE na INAPCIYUNKA: Taku sapa econk'unpi na unkeyapi na unkiyuk' canpi kte na awauncinpi kte sni.

7 & 10-ISAKOWIN na IWIKCEMNA: Taku unkitawapi sni kin nah'mala unkicupi kte sni na nakun kiun'niunyanpi kte sni. Owewakanpi unkoklakapi kte sni na tuweni caje unyusicapi kte sni.

OKOLAKICYTE WOOPE

Anpetu wakan (Mass) wosnapi unkopapi kta. Waniyetu otoiyohi wakan woglakapi unkagapi kte. Waniyetu otoiyohi

Yutapi Wakan ecuh'ci wancala unki cupi kta (Easter itokab nain iyohakab.) Wocekiye wicoh'an o'unkiyapi kta tohanyan unkokihipi, hohanyan.

WICOH'AN SICA SAKOWIN IYOTAN UNKIPAJINPI KTE KIN HENA LENA E.

- 1 -- Witantanpi kin he.
 - 2 -- Maka woyuha ecela akitapi kin he.
 - 3 -- Wi'inah'mapi wicoh'an na taku tona he el aikoyako kin hena.
 - 4 -- Winzeizipi kin he.
 - 5 -- Lila wotapi (wisicawacinpi) nains lila mni-wakan yatkanpi kin he.
 - 6 -- Wocanzeke (na teanhan wauntonyanpi) kin he.
 - 7 -- Skankapi-pi (takuni waste econpi cinpi sni) kin he.
- Hena iyuha lila unkipajinpi kta.

III

WOWAKAN SAKOWIN KIN HE.

Wanikiya taku wakan (wicoh'an wakan) sakowin unk'upi, na hena un wakan unkagapi na ounki yapi, hecel Wakantanka woepe tanyan unkopapi kta na hecel mah'piya ekta wiconi kin he unkiglamnapi unkokihipi kte.

1--MNIAWICAKASTANPI KIN HE.

Mniawicakastanpi kin he on Wakantanka cinca unkagapi. Wakantanka towastelake kin he hel unki cupi. He wokoyake waste-ste koyakunyanpi iyecelya wicasa wakan kin he unk'upi.

2--WICAYUSUTAPI WAKAN KIN HE.

Wicayusutapi wakan kin he on Woniyan Wakan unki cupi, na Woniyan Wakan kin he en sampa wakan unkagapi na iyoyamunyanpi na wasagunyanpi, hecel wowicala unkitawapi kin oga Wanikiya taakicita waste iyecel unskanpi unkokihipi kte. Wicasa wakan Itancan Bishop, he unk'upi.

3--YUTAPI WAKAN KIN HE.

- 1 -- He unnagipi kin tawoyute na he el Wanikiya Iye ceh'pi kin unkicupi, tancan na ve na nagitawa, Wanikiye wicasa un na Wakantanka un k'un unkicupi.
- 2 -- Aguyapi na mnisa yutekecapi na aguyapi na mnisa o'wanyanke imahel Jesus unkicupi.
- 3 -- Aguyapi ca unkicipi sni.
- 4 -- Jesus hecel unkokiyakapi, heon slolunyanpi; "Mitancan le e, mawa kin le e." eye.
- 5 -- Yutapi wakan un unnagipi kin nipi kte na sampa wakan na wasakin kte.
- 6 -- Yutapi wakan unkicupi sni itokab, wakan wounglakapi na hecel unnagipi kin skaya unglujajapi.

Na hehanl Jesus unkicupi: Jesus micante ekta u ye, wastecilake, u ye. Na hehanl hanhepi mazaskanskan ake-nupa hetanhan takuni unyutapi nains unyatkanpi kte sni na ya onihanyan Yutapi Wakan unkicupi kta.

MASS--WOSNAPI WAKAN KIN HE.

Mass wosnapi kin el aguyapi na mnisa yutokecapi na on Jesus tancan na we wakan ni un kin kagapi na Jesus waiglusna. Heon lila wakanyan na oholaya unkopapi kte.

Tipi wakan el Jesus ohiniyan yonke. Heon iyuskiyan ekta unyanpi na yuonihanyan Jesus kici wounglakapi kte na taku tona uncinpi kin hena unkilapi kta.

Jesus Yutapi Wakan kin el un kin lila wastelakapi kta na ota akiglo unkicupi kte, he iyotan waste na on lila unyawastepi kte. HE KIKSUYAPO!!!

4--WAKAN WOGLAKAPI KIN HE.

Tona mniawicakastanpi iyohakab wowah'tani tanka econpi, Wakantanka lila siglayapi na he on Wakan woglakapi kta iyececa. He tanyan econpi ehantans, wicasa wakan kin wowah'tank kin hena wicakicipajuju okihi Jesus wowasake kin le wicz'u, heon. Yunkan wicasa hececa kin he taku zaptan econ kte kin he lena e:

- 1 -- Wowah'tani econpi kin hena tanyan kiksuye ic'iyapi kte kin he.
- 2 -- Cante ataya on iyopeic'iyapi kte kin he.
- 3 -- Ake wowah'tani econ kte sni sutaya ic'iconzin kte kin he.

4 -- Owotanla wowah'tani tanka iyuha wicasa wakan itokab oglakin kte kin he.

5 -- Wicoh'an tona wicasa wakan econ si, econ kta iyececa. Lena awicakehan na wicakeya econ ehantans, wowah'tani iyuha pajujupi kta.

5--EHAKE IWICAYUNPI WAKAN KIN HE.

Tona lila kujapi, he icupi kta na heon iwasakapi kte.

6--WICASA WAKAN KAGAPI KIN HE.

Heon wicasa wastepi heca wicasa wakan towasake icupi. He wicoh'an iyotan tanka na wakan kin heca.

7--WAKAN KICIYUZAPI KIN HE.

He nakun wicoh'an wakan heca na on wicasa na winyan woksape na wowasake icupi, hecel tanyan skanpi kta na wakanheja tawapi mah'piya ekta awica'upi ehihipi. Jicasa Wakan kin itokab oconpi kta iyececa.

EHAKELA LENA EPIN KTE LO

1. TAKU YAMNI TANYAN UNYAHAPI KTA IYECECA KIN HENA LENA E.

1--WOWICALA: Taku tena Wakantanka yaotanin kin sutaya wicaunlapi kte. Wakatanka taku oyasin slolye na owewakankan okihi sni, heon.

2--WOAPE: Taku tona Wakantanka iwaheunyanpi kin, hena awauncinpi na ape unk' unpi kte. Iye wowicake na hena Jesus en etanhan unk'upi kta keye lo, heon.

3--WOWASTELAKE: Wakantanka taku oyasin isampa wasteunlakapi kta na Ite on etanhan wicasa oyasin wastewicunlakapi kta.

2--OKOLAKICIYE KIN HE.

Wanikiye taekolakiciye taku tepa on slolunyanpi kte: He, WANJILA, OWANCAYA, WAKAN, Wakosyapi taanpetupi kin he ciystanhan u kin heon.

Okolakiciye unmapi kin hena nahanr'oi waniyetu 400 ihun'nipi sni, owanjila najinpi sni, owancaya hecapi sni, wakan sni; hena mah'piya ekta unkayapi okihipi sni; heon hena unkopapi unkokihipi sni. Sina Sapa Okolakiciye tanyan unkopapi ehontans owotanla Wakantanka ti ekta unyanpi kta. Heon he econk'unpi kte na sutaya unkic' iconzapi kta.

3--PURGATORY TOKEL KAPI KIN HE.

Tona wowah'tani cis'cila el t'api kin, wiconi unma el wokakiye oyanke wan ol skaya glujajapi kta, na hena wocekiye on owicunkiyapi unkokohipi.

4--COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Tona mah'piya el unpi kin, na tona Purgatory el kakijapi kin na tena maka akan okolakiciye opapi kin, hena kolakiciyapi na okiciyapi okihipe lo. Henala epe lo.

AMEN.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

INSTRUCTION BY MEANS OF THE TWO ROADS

This picture is called the two roads; the good road, and the bad road. The good road leads to Heaven, and the bad road to the home of the devil.

If we desire to go to Heaven, three things we must observe: 1--We must believe all what God has revealed. 2--We must observe the commandments of God. 3--We must receive the seven Sacraments. 4--There is one God, but there are three persons in God whom we must adore, the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost. Those three are one God. They possess all things: All alike. One Wisdom, one Mind.

God is the living Spirit. He has no body, and doesn't need to have any. God is very Great: Can do all things, He knows everything, and is in Heaven and on earth. God made everything according to His will:

First He created angels and made them good, but a part of them failed to adore God so He cast them away and made them to suffer. They will suffer for all eternity in the home of the devil. Those who were obedient to God are now in Heaven.

Then God created those things that could be seen: The earth and water, trees and flowers, the sun, the moon, and the stars. The fish in the water and the birds, then the animals and lastly He created man. The first man's name was Adam and the first woman's name was Eve. God created the first man and the first woman very perfectly, and made them to be rulers of the earth. Those are the only ones to know God and could adore and love Him, hence. He also made their descendants. They were to live on earth for a few winters but to love God and they were to enter Heaven without dying a death. So God placed Adam and Eve in a very good land and there they lived happily. But they did not stay there very long. Because they did not obey God.

So then God drove them out of the good land, cast them away and for many years they lived in hardship, suffered, at hard labor then died. But God did not cast them away like He did to the bad angels, he pitied them and promised them a Saviour and did give it to them, 4000 years later. In the meantime Adam and Eve had many children. Their oldest son

was (Cain) and his brother (Abel) who was killed. Since that time the earth populated, but all lead bad lives. They have committed many sins. Therefore they were punished and died in the big flood; but eight in number lived (Noah and his family) were saved in a boat; because they were good.

Again the earth populated, but lived wickedly. Therefore God caused them much trouble and made them suffer. A very few were good; the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were good. They follow on the good road. And the others follow on the bad road.

The descendants of Abraham, God loved and took good care of them and thus gave them the ten commandments; because from this tribe the promised Saviour would be born. God gave this tribe some very good men. Men with talent (Prophets) as they are called. These men taught many good lessons in their tribe, and repeatedly reminded them of the coming of the Saviour.

The Judah Tribe always adored God by offering sacrifice to Him in their big temples. In the meantime the other people worshiped different gods and were very much in service towards the devil.

Four thousand years after the creation of man God sent the promised Saviour who was born in Bethlehem. The Saviour lived for 33 years on earth; for 30 years He lived in Nazareth and rendered common labor thereby teaching us an example.

For three years He taught the people of Judah by counsel including us the road to Heaven and showing to us and proving to us that He is the true God by some wonderful miracles.

On our account He gave Himself to suffer, died and was buried. But after three days he rose from the dead. He lived and remained 40 days on earth. He instituted His Church permanently and then went to Heaven; he dwells in Heaven now.

The Saviour is the son of God. God is His Father and the Holy Virgin Mary His mother. St. Joseph is His foster-father. When Jesus was yet small he watched over Him, and God commanded him to do this.

Jesus lived as Man and lived as God (i.e., for instance, he possessed all what men possess and as God what God possessed, thus is the meaning).

Thus as a man He possessed body and soul, understanding and mind and as God he possessed wisdom, intellect and power. Therefore He is the Greatest; and loves us most dearly. Hence we should honor and love Jesus by observing His will and we must fulfill all He wants us to do in all good will. And thereby in the future we will be happy with Him in Heaven for all eternity.

Those who have no love for the Saviour and who are not obedient to His will, and when death takes them they will suffer forever with the devil in his home. Therefore first, remember these things.

We should be obedient as well as dutiful to His Church. Because His name Jesus is taught to us and His road to Heaven is shown to us: "He who listens to you, listens to me,"

Jesus said. Those people who lived before Jesus came lived in the dark, so we also live year after year. But Jesus came and brought light to earth, and hence we live in His light. We are now living in the light of the Saviour and His Church and His road to Heaven is presented to us which is bright like that of the sun.

REFERS TO PICTURE "TWO ROADS" YEARS BEFORE CHRIST IN BLACK,
THOSE AFTER IN RED

God gave us the ten commandments. We should observe these very carefully, if we want to enter heaven. God gave us these commandments on Mount Sinai the first time through Moses. God created us. Therefore He is our Master, and He could give us commandments; it is His right. It is His authority.

FIRST: We must honor God; by Faith, by Hope, by Loving Him and by Prayer.

We must respect the angels and Saints and we should love them; because they are the friends and children of God.

SECOND: We must honor the name of God.

THIRD: We must attend Holy Mass on Sundays and must not work on that day.

FOURTH: We must honor and love our parents and guardians as well as to obey them.

FIFTH: We must treat all men good, as we expect them to treat us.

SIXTH & NINTH: We must not commit dirty actions or tell about dirty actions or even think about dirty actions.

SEVENTH & TENTH: We must not wrongfully take things that do not belong to us or injure anyone's property. We must not tell lies or ruin the good name of others.

OKOLAKICIYTE WOOPE

We must attend Holy Mass on Sundays. We must go to Confession every year. We must receive Holy Communion at least once a year on Easter Sunday (before or after). We must help support the Church according to our means.

THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS WHICH WE SHOULD FIGHT AGAINST

- 1 -- The sin of Pride.
- 2 -- The sin of Covetousness.
- 3 -- The sin of Lust, stealing women, and other sins in this class.
- 4 -- The sin of Envy or to be jealous of others.
- 5 -- The sin of Gluttony eating too much or drinking whiskey.
- 6 -- The sin of Anger by injuring others through anger.
- 7 -- The sin Sloth or laziness causes one to neglect the good will of a man.

ALL OF THESE SINS WE MUST ALWAYS FIGHT AGAINST.

III

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS AS FOLLOWS

The Saviour's mystery of the gift of the (holy sacraments) were seven in number, and with these it helps us to become holy, thus it will give us the divine strength to observe the commandments of God and thereby gain the heavenly reward and that we must gain by our own merits.

1--The Baptism

The sacrament of baptism makes us the children of God. In this sacrament we receive the love of God. It is just like putting some nice garments on our person but only the holy priests are given this power to give us.

2--The Confirmation

In this sacrament of Confirmation we receive the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost then gives us light, strengthens

and makes us holy, so that we will be more able to march in the line of our faith as the Saviour's Soldiers of good merits. We receive this sacrament through the power of the Holy Bishop.

3--The Holy Eucharist

- 1 -- This is the food for our souls and it is really the Saviour's Body that we receive, His body and His own blood, we receive the Saviour who is man and is God.
- 2 -- We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus when the appearance of bread and wine is changed into His Body and Blood
- 3 -- It is not bread that we partake.
- 4 -- We know it, because Jesus has told us this, "This is my body, this is my blood."
- 5 -- Holy Communion makes our souls stronger and holy and will help to save our souls.
- 6 -- We should wash our souls clean by making a thorough confession, before receiving Holy Communion.

Thus we receive Jesus: Jesus come into my heart, I love you, come hither. On the day previous and from twelve o'clock mid-night we must fast by not eating or drinking anything and thereby we should receive Holy Communion with the deepest reverence.

MASS--WOSNAPI WAKAN KIN HE

During the Holy Mass the bread and wine is changed into the living body and blood of Jesus and there He offers Himself up. Hence we should devoutly respect it.

Jesus is always present in Church. Therefore we should gladly go there to honor Jesus and speak to Him and ask Him for what we want of Him.

We should love Jesus who is present in the Holy food and should often receive Him, these is the utmost good and we receive many graces by Him. REMEMBER THIS!!!

- 1 -- FAITH: We must firmly believe all that God has revealed. Because God knows everything and He cannot deceive.
- 2 -- HOPE: We must hope for all that God hadst promised us, bear it in our minds and hope for it. Because He is the Truth when He promised Jesus to us.

- 3 -- LOVE: We must love God above all things and for His sake we must love all men alike.

2--The Catholic Church

We must know the four reasons of the Saviour's Church; Because it is, ONE, UNIVERSAL, HOLY, It came and passed down from the days of our Apostles.

Some of the so-called churches have not yet reached the age of 400 years, they are not steady, they are not universal, they are not holy; those churches cannot bring us to Heaven; hence we should not follow them. If we follow the Holy Catholic Church rightfully we will reach and enter into the Home of God. Therefore let us strongly pledge ourselves to follow this and do it.

3--The Meaning of Purgatory

Those who die with smaller sins, go to another place where his soul will be washed until it is white, and to those we could help them out by our prayers.

4--Communion Of Saints

Those who are not in Heaven, and those who are now in Purgatory suffering and those who are on earth belonging to the Church, are friends and they could help one another. This is all I wish to say.

AMEN.

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

The following pages of this Appendix contain excerpts of letters which appeared in the now-defunct missionary publication entitled "Sinasapa Wocekiye Taeyanpaha." These excerpts are translations of correspondence submitted by Black Elk in Lakota.

March 15, 1907

Since the last Catholic Sioux Congress, and at the present time, I have visited the Rosebud Reservation. The people there told me that they want churches built on their own districts. I was pleased to hear these people are interested in God. As I was present there, they took up a collection for me, and these people donated to me . . . /names listed along with donations given/

I thank these people for doing a great deed for me. I know all these came from God. I spoke mainly on Jesus -- when he was on earth, the teachings and his sufferings. I, myself, do a lot of these things. I suffer, and I try to teach my people the things that I wanted them to learn, but it's never done.

In my sufferings, my eyes are failing, and also my health is failing. So I will tell you that all of you (and myself, that is, everybody, or we) are like sheep among the wolves ready to be eaten up. And you know when one sheep is surrounded with wolves, it has no place to go. That's how we are. We are ready to be eaten up.

So my friends and relatives, we should stand together and do what is right, and be patient. That way God has something good for us all the time.

These people want to accept God, and they ask me how to get a catechist in these communities. So I told them that the districts of our own reservation have catechists . . . and these people pray on Sundays when the priest is not around

I will encourage you people that you donate at least a penny to these catechists, so that they can continue on their work in the name of God. While we're still living on earth, we

should be thankful to God for putting us here on this earth. And God has promised us a place when we die, and I'm pretty sure he'll never forget us.

Sincerely,

Nick Black Elk

April 27, 1907

My friends and relatives: May the Holy Spirit be with you all and watch over you. Always look towards Heaven and prepare yourselves. God has promised the Kingdom of Heaven for us. When we die, if we have faith in God, the place that we go is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Remember your commandments, and when you receive your sacraments, believe in them. God is our Father. Believe in Him. We will join Him someday. Remember, God has always loved us; not me, because I am old, but all of you younger people. He died for us.

God did not come to the rich, but he came to the poor people. Not only Indians, but all of the poor people. When you feel bad, if you know how to say a Rosary, say your Rosary. And the prayer book that we have given you, use that because all the prayers are in there. And when you pray, always remember your priests, and your catechists -- because we need prayers very much.

Listen to what your folks are telling you. That way, you will gain wisdom from these other people -- not me, because I'm a catechist and I should pray for you. And if you pray for me, I will get stronger.

On April 16th, George Charging has died. He could have been a very useful man: A young man at his age. And he was a very nice looking man -- big and tall -- and if he'd lived, he would have been very useful as our sergeant-at-arms. And I really felt bad because his mother really loved him.

So, I will now close my letter here, and I will pray for all you people. Remember what I have told you because this is the only way that God is going to love you -- if you ask Him, if you pray to Him, He will give you things that you want . . .

Nick Black Elk

October 20, 1907

...Last May, Edward White Crow lost his wife. And at that wake I said these words: My friends and relatives and St. Joseph's and St. Mary's Society present. What I want to tell the mourners is this. Everyone of us has to die some day, and we are not to live for a long time because God has sent us on this earth for a short time. But what I want to tell you is: have faith in God and remember to go to church every Sunday because this is where you can gain wisdom. And when you prey to God, all your sorrows and whatever that comes your way will disappear, because God is there to help you.

This woman was very active in the St. Mary's Society. So now she has gained the gates of heaven because she has worked very hard for God. Now what I'm going to say again is this: that Julia White Crow was a very kind woman. I saw her work many times, and she tried her best to do what she was supposed to be doing--sewing, and helping out in the meetings, cooking--and we are going to miss this woman because God has called her.

God the Father, and Jesus Christ--I pray to them often that St. Joseph's and St. Mary's Society will never fade away. Some day this is going to happen: Because the present generation is beginning to turn. But let us train our younger ones to continue on the work* that we've been doing. I'm very old now, and my days are numbered. So, my friends and relatives, what I'd like to say is, at least, God have pity on you during your mourning.

And last July, I went to Indianapolis, Indiana. There I met with the white people in a meeting, and I was really glad that I have heard and seen with my own eyes the things that they are doing. And we should do the same thing here, but it is very hard for us to do the things that the white people are doing because we have very few things to work with. But again, we must depend on God to help us. My friends and relatives I speak to you from the bottom of my heart. Please try and do the things that we're supposed to do. Let us not forget the main person--that is, Wakan Tanka, God. And the priest or the bishop has told us that we are never to be afraid because God is always with us.

Now last September 20th, I went on a trip again. This time to Montana where they called me and invited me to go there. And it was difficult for me because/of their language/. But they have organized a St. Joseph and a St. Mary Society, and I was really glad that these people, too, were interested in the organization. And I spoke at the meeting and congratulated them because they, too, have interest in the great family, the Holy Family.

So I will now close that you should all pray, and always remember to pray for each other. I am,

Nick Black Elk

*Nick was barely over 40 years of age at this time which suggests, perhaps, that invocation of a theme as "elder spokesman" (as repeated 25 years later with Niehardt) was an oratorical device employed for its power of persuasion (i.e., age associated with wisdom).

October 18, 1909

I will tell you something about what I have been writing in the Eyapaha (Messenger) . . . I've been telling you about God and all His works and how we could all be involved. We should all support each other -- in the St. Joseph Society, or helping others like cutting wood or helping haul water.

The Apostolic Delegate in Washington, D.C., is a very nice and holy man. His name is Fr. Ketcham. They called a big meeting and at this meeting, there was a big occasion that happened. He recognized us as catechists -- helping the priests and helping our own people.

The children that are coming up as adults should be taught what is right and what is wrong. If we don't teach them, then these children will not learn anything about God, and also the commandments. So teach your children. And if you need information, ask me, or ask the Father.

My friends and relatives: You should set aside a date when you could call me or the Father and have a family to come together and pray. Then, if you don't know the prayers, I or the Father, whoever is around, could tell you or give you some books or something that you can pray with.

Children must learn that they must first learn to pray. First they must learn who God is, and who the Holy Spirit is. All these things should be taught.

When I was given this job I did not want it, but you people have encouraged me to take on this job. So that's why I'm doing this -- for your own good -- so I need your help. When I come to your house to pray, please have everyone there so I may be able to teach you something about God.

I will now close here that you remember to donate 25 cents. That will help us to build a new church and a meeting house in the near future. In closing, my friends and relatives, I will remember you in my prayers. Also, pray for me.

Nick Black Elk

January 26, 1908

This year, the midnight Mass was held at Oglala, and I was invited to come there in the holy church where I prayed with members of that community. That evening, Fr. Westropp came and we had a midnight Mass and lots of people received communion.

The next day, they had a big feast, and Fr. Westropp told me to talk to the people, and I got up and told the people what Christmas meant. And when I got through with my talk, they took up a collection, and I received \$1.88 gift. Fr. Westropp also received a donation of \$1.88.

The next day, we were invited to Our Lady of Good Counsel, known as the No Water Camp. Fr. Westropp and I went there and he had Mass in the morning. The members there sang hymns, and after that the members there told me to say a few words. So I told them: Christmas is a big thing. It's not only the presents, but Christ was born on this day.

Fr. Westropp baptized Julie Holybird, age 15, Mary Little Skunk, age 18, and Alice Red Hedge, age four.

The next day, during Mass on December 24th, I went back to St. Agnes Church for midnight Mass. The members here made a crib, and accepted the birth of Christ. A total of 130 people received communion at Manderson. The next day, they had a big meal and spent \$40.04 for it. And they helped me out with 50 cents.

The next stop with Fr. Westropp was St. Peter's, north of Manderson. When we arrived there, the people were waiting for us. And after the Mass, we had another big feast. And I, and Fr. Westropp, went on into Wolf Creek. And there, Fr. Westropp had another Mass and there were a total number of people there of 40 adults. And there again I was invited to talk to the people, so I told them that same thing (that Christmas is a big thing, not only presents, but the birth of Christ). And after we left there, our next stop was St. Paul's Church in Porcupine. There during mass Fr. Westropp married Louis Mousseau and Alice Iron Cloud.

Our next stop was back in Manderson, St. Agnes Church. And they had a big New Year's pow-wow, and we had Mass that next morning. At this time, Fr. Westropp baptized Frank Kicking Bear, age 20 . . . and Fr. Westropp told the young people there that he came to the Indian people to help them in any way he could, especially visiting the sick.

I was really glad that the people of our community really honored Christ's birth. And Fr. Westropp told us that they were going to build a bigger church and enlarge our meeting

house. The people were really glad that Fr. Wetsropp brought this message to us. They are going to build an addition to our meeting house so more people can come into our meeting houses. I pray to St. Emma for help. I pray to her that more money will be donated to us to complete our church and our meeting house . . .

Nick Black Elk

May 31, 1908

I will be going on a journey to Wyoming, the land of the Arapahoes. We are bringing good news to these people -- I and Joe Red-Willow. They have selected us to go to the Arapahoes. We are invited by the majority of people, and we had a really big meeting with the Arapahoes and what they want to know about is the St. Joseph and the St. Mary's Societies. So we did the best we can. We told the Arapaho people that we, too, are very poor, and that there is no difference between them and us because we are both Indians. And they asked me to say a few words to the members there, so I told them about the St. Joseph and the St. Mary's organization. First, how to conduct a meeting. And then I told them about the order of the meeting: That you've got to have a president, a vice president, secretary, treasurer, a critic, and a doorkeeper. And then they were so enthused that they are going to start their own St. Joseph and St. Mary Society there. And then they asked me how they should pray, so this is what I said to them. When you say the Our Father, remember that there is one Father and one Son. This is what you've got to believe. And after my talk, they were so interested so they want us to go back to the land of the Arapahoes again, in the near future.

What they want to know is how to pray. So, I asked Fr. Westropp to send our prayer-books so they can translate in their own language. Then they will have a prayer-book. While I was talking, I was talking in my own native language and Mr. Red Willow was translating my talk because I do not talk English well. I know a few words and that is it.

The next thing that I will be talking about is how to elect officers. And I told them that you select a person that is worthy -- that has knowledge of being a leader, and that's the person that you select. And the Vice President is the same way, in case the President is not there, then the Vice will be there to take over. And the next portion is the Secretary. The Secretary is to keep the minutes. And I told them that whatever they say are the main points, that's what the secretary should write down, and make it a good minutes. And a Treasurer is responsible for all of the money that's been collected so as to keep an account and report this at each meeting. A critic is a person that if a person gets out of line, he should correct them and still accept it. And a doorkeeper is to shake his hand, then he will close the door and charge a fee for opening the door again. This is the organization of the St. Joseph and St. Mary Society. They had a big election of officers while we were there. Andrew Jackson, President; Alfonso Goes In Lodge, Vice President; Mr. Big Head is Treasurer; Black Hole is Secretary, Alfonso Moss, Catechist.

The next Catholic Congress is in Rosebud. These officials are planning to come there, and to get more ideas while the meeting is going on. And there's many people who are suffering. The superior told me to help these people and I went to every lodge, to help them. Fr. Westropp came by and talked to me about going back to the Arapaho. And he said he has received a new donation to build a church and a meeting house and I was really glad that they are beginning to take hold of their own and I hope in the near future that they start organizing and do the things that we are doing over here. So Fr. Westropp has told me that we are going to install some more Catechists in our area, the Pine Ridge Reservation. The place where they are going to install these new Catechists is at St. Paul's in Porcupine District. So now, I will close my talk and wish you the best, and I will shake your hand from the bottom of my heart and I remain as your friend.

Nick Black Elk

July 15, 1909

I have seen a number of different people - the ordinary people living on this earth - the Arapaho, the Shoshone, the Omaha, the tribe living in California and Florida, the Rosebud, the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe, the Standing Rock, and our own, the Oglalas. The White men living in all these places -- I have said prayers for their tribe. I'm really moved that I was able to travel to those places and meet people that are very friendly. What I'm going to tell you now is that at the upcoming Catholic Sioux Congress, the people will be coming and telling you what a great job you have done. In all these, good things come from God because of your faith. The United States -- All the people should have faith in God. We all suffer in this land. But let me tell you, God has a special place for us when our time has come.

All of us belong to the Church that you and I are Baptized into. Let us remember that we only can gain what we ask of God. The priest has the wisdom to stand before you and inform you what God can do for you. The Son of God came to this earth for us and shed his blood for us and we shouldn't waste his blood, because he created us.

We must all sweat and tire for our own good -- by working for ourselves and making a living. If we don't sweat and tire, then we cannot live. When God came on this earth, He sweat and He got tired, and he brought good news also.

Last March 17, Jonnie Black Elk, four years old, died quietly. I have lost a good boy. May 18, Sam Big Road and his wife were baptized and were married in the Church. This is really good.

The last thing I'm going to say is that I have tried my best to do what God tells me to do. All of you are my friends and my relatives. Please pray for me, and I shake your hand from the bottom of my heart.

Nick Black Elk

My friends and relatives and members of the Catholic community at large. When you are to have a meeting remember to pray first. That way you will gain wisdom from God, and God will help you in whatever your needs are. Remember that. Although we are poor, we can count on God's blessing.

They are going to build a new church. The one building we have will become a meeting house, and Fr. Lindebner told me that somebody donated a lot of money, so they are going to start building St. Agnes Church. And what we should do is start discussing about the future.

Throughout the reservation all Catholic members discuss what should be done for their own district societies. I have realized that everyone has a very deep faith in God. This I found out. When I was visiting a neighbor of mine, all the other people didn't bother to talk with me. But this one girl wanted to know about God, so I sat down with her and we prayed the rosary -- one bead at a time. And in a very short while, she was able to say the rosary.

Remember that I am just a common man like you. But I was installed as a Catechist and I have received instructions. And with those instructions that I have received, this is what I am doing. I am a Catechist and that job is to pray with people -- teaching them how to pray -- and this is what I am doing. so if I should come to your house, don't be afraid of me -- because I am one of you.

In the generations to come, we should tell the younger generation about the St. Joseph and St. Mary Society, we have learned that this is the organization of the Holy Family.

In the Bible, Jesus told us that "You should love your neighbor as you love Me." So remember if you get in trouble with your neighbor, remember that God has said, "Love your neighbor." So whatever you have said or if you did some bad thing to them, go over there and please tell them that you are sorry.

I will close here. In closing, I will say to you: May the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you all. And I remain,

Nick Black Elk

APPENDIX F



Photostatic reproduction of the "Two Roads" map, reduced in size for inclusion here. Few originals exist, one of which can be found in the Marquette University Archives, and one in the possession of the author.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Lucy Black Elk, age 6.
2. Lucy and her father, 1912.
3. Lucy with friend, 1922.
4. Lucy in pow-wow apparel, c. 1925.
5. Black Elk, wife and mother in wagon.
6. Black Elk, wife Anna, and Lucy, c. 1925.
7. Lucy wearing pow-wow apparel.
8. Lucy, 1974.
9. Lucy, 1974.
10. Daughter Regina and grandchildren of Lucy.
11. Leo, three months before he died.
12. Nick Black Elk Jr. and family.
13. Black Elk, 1945.
14. Identifiable -- includes persons mentioned in text.
15. Congress, Black Elk in top row, c. 1915.
16. Black Elk, Bishop and catechists at Holy Rosary.
17. Black Elk (sixth from left) is the only catechist wearing moccassins.
18. A photo post-card showing Black Elk giving instructions.
19. Congress 1915. Black Elk in bottom row.
This and other photos are much clearer than the xerox shows.
20. Black Elk preaching in center of gathering at No Water
1925-30
21. Black Elk using the "Two Roads Map" for instruction.
22. Nicholas Black Elk, catechist at Manderson, c. 1925

(PHOTOGRAPHS CONTINUED)

23. Father's cross is the only one shining -- in the photo it shines brightly.
24. Black Elk teaching a little girl how to say the rosary, 1935. Modelled after photo taken years earlier with Lucy.
25. Black Elk with Scabby Face family, 1945.
26. Black Elk, c. 1945.
27. Ben and Black Elk, c. 1948.
28. Black Elk (kneeling) with Scabby Face family he instructed, c. 1940.
29. Photo of Neihardt and Black Elk held by Lucy.
30. Neihardt photo of Black Elk on Harney Peak held by Lucy.
31. Autographed conv of Black Elk Speaks, Jesuit Library, Holy Rosary Mission.
32. Black Elk with Ben's Family, 1955
33. Ben Black Elk publicity photo at St. Agnes Church, Manderson, S.D..
34. Ben Black Elk, Ibid...
35. St. Agnes Chapel, Manderson.
36. Black Elk, family, c. 1913.
37. St. Agnes meeting hall dedicated to founder Black Elk.
38. Commemorative sign on meeting hall (torn off by unknown person summer of '76).
39. St. Agnes as seen from Black Elk's grave.
40. Grave of Black Elk.
41. Pete addressing 1974 Catholic Sioux Congress.
42. Paul Catches, Pete's father, c. 1920.
43. Modern day medicine man, Pete Catches, conducting prayer with pipe ceremony to begin 1974 Catholic Sioux Congress.
44. Catechists at Manderson.

(PHOTOGRAPHS CONTINUED)

45. John Lone Goose and Fr. Sialm, 1930
46. John Lone Goose, c. 1925, with first communicants.
47. John Lone Goose, 1974.
48. Little Warrior, c. 1945.
49. Ben Marrowbone.

Many of the photographs listed here are courtesy of the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum, St. Francis, South Dakota.



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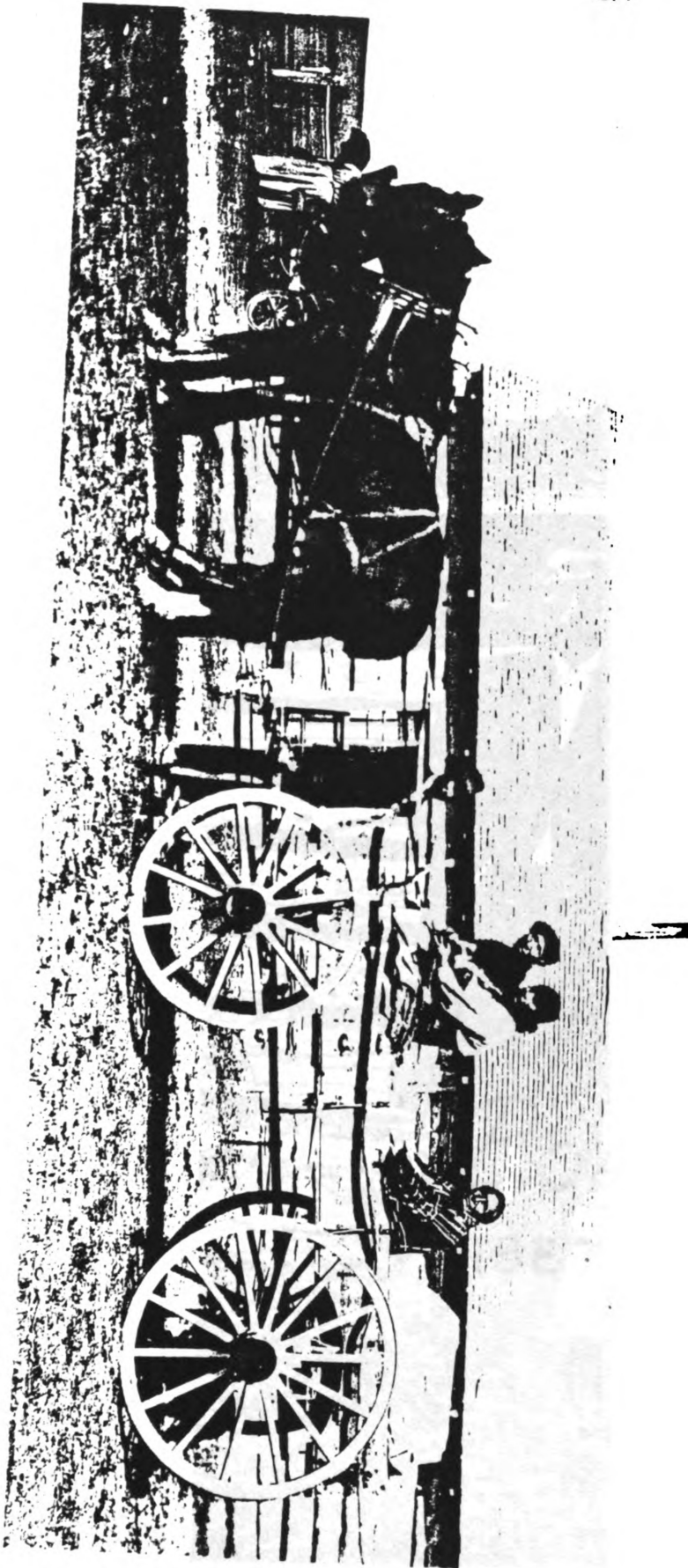
Luz Black Elk
Mantua, N.S.



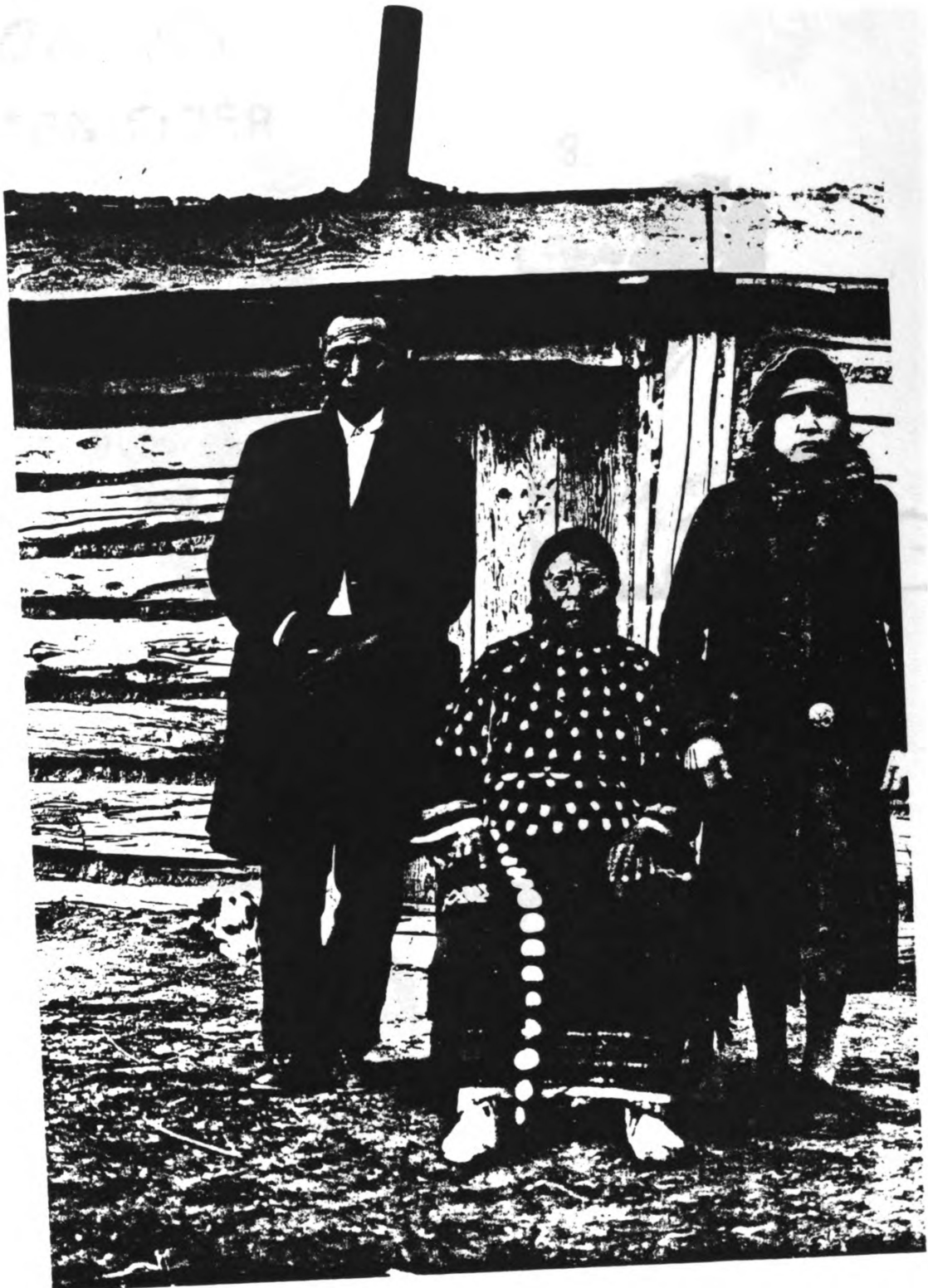




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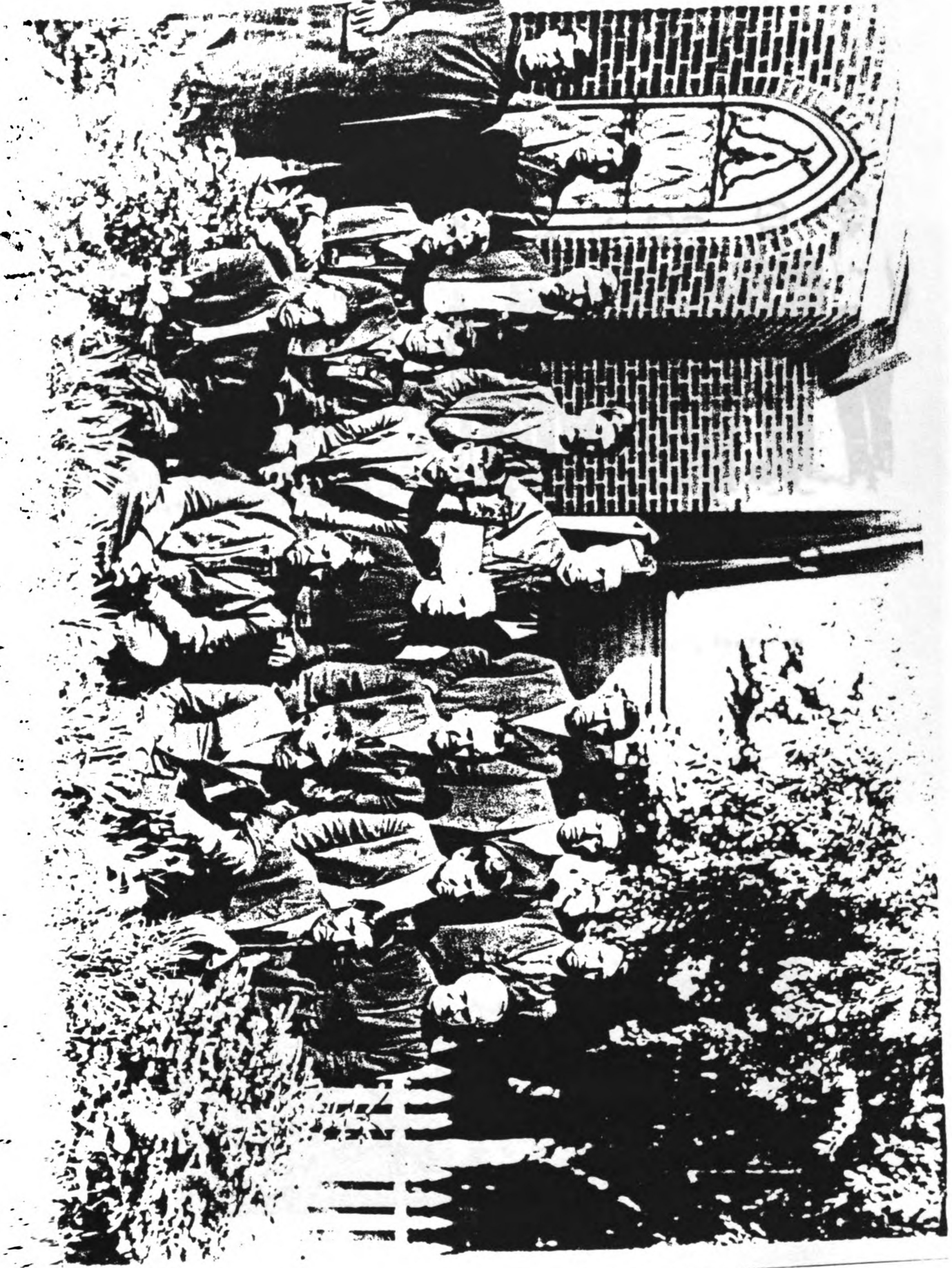


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17.



Catholic Catechists - Congress 1911 - at Holy Rosary Mission

18.



19.







22.

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31.

WHAT IS GOOD IN THIS BOOK

IS GIVEN BACK

TO THE SIX GRANDFATHERS

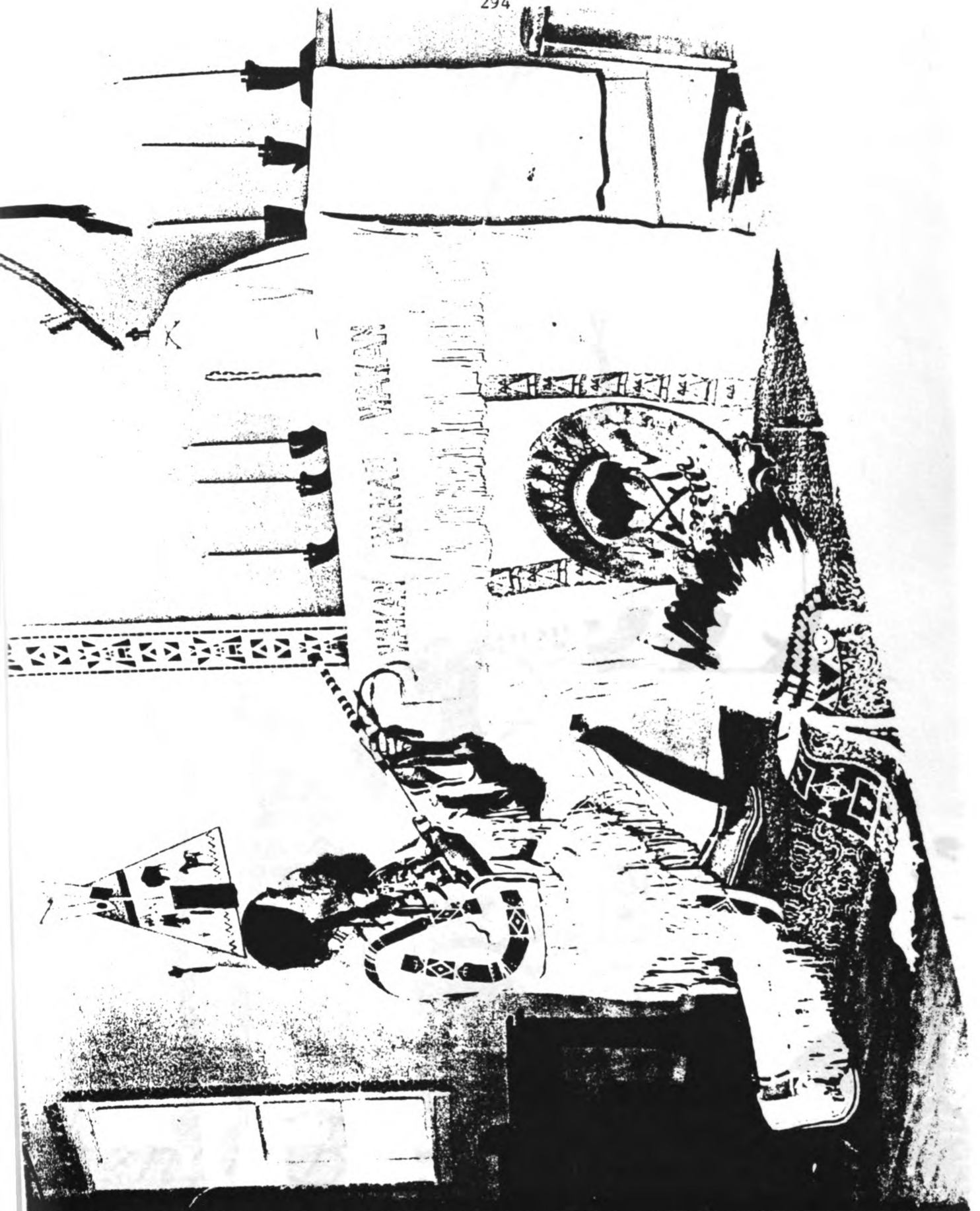
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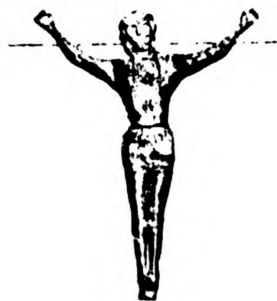
TO THE GREAT MEN OF MY PEOPLE

—BLACK ELK.

Nick B Black Elk







35.

St. Agnes Chapel, [REDACTED]

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36.



The new church at Kamloops

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44.



Photo of P. J. and
Charles at museum



46.



47.



48.



49.



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