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# New Light on Black Elk and *The Sacred Pipe*

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Black Elk (1863–1950), the Lakota holy man, is beloved by millions of readers around the world. The first book the Indian visionary narrated, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, has substantially contributed to our understanding of traditional Plains Indian culture.[1] However, a landmark 1984 book, Raymond J. DeMallie's *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*, compared the text of *Black Elk Speaks* to the stenographic field notes and transcripts of Black Elk's original interviews and concluded that the book's author, John Neihardt, materially changed Black Elk's words in multiple places to suit his own personal agenda.[2] DeMallie's work spawned scores of studies that debate the authenticity of Neihardt's editing from different and conflicting points of view.[3] Joseph Epes Brown's collaboration with Black Elk, *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux*, significantly contributes to our understanding of traditional Sioux religion and helps to inform the ongoing academic debate about the Lakota visionary.[4] Yet there is surprisingly little information available about Brown's personal philosophy and his editing process, in stark contrast to the mountain of material on Neihardt's collaboration with Black Elk. Twenty-four unpublished letters written in the 1940s were recently discovered. Twenty-two letters were written by Joseph Brown and two letters by one of his closest friends.[5] Those letters provide important new information that will help readers determine the extent to which Joseph Brown may have left a subjective imprint on Black Elk's testimony. Of perhaps greater importance, Joseph Brown's letters shed new light on the question, "Who was the real Black Elk and what is his legacy?"

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## Joseph Epes Brown: The Spiritual Seeker

A recently published book, *Black Elk: The Life of an American Visionary* by Joe Jackson, promises to be a highly influential work in the discussion on Black Elk's life. This 624-page book claims to be "the definitive biographical account" of Black Elk's life and legacy.[6] Jackson correctly credits Frithjof Schuon's interest in American Indian spirituality as the origin of Brown's quest to find Black Elk. The author provides this short introduction to Schuon, who lived from 1907 to 1998 and was a cofounder of the Perennialist School of thought:

> One stream then flourishing in European thought sounded very Native American: a transcendent reality underlay all earthly existence, an idea not that different from Black Elk's "truer reality" of the spirit world. One branch of religious philosophy, called the "perennialist" perspective, believed that an "eternal religion" linked all earthly beliefs, be they Christian, Islam [*sic*], or Hindu: beyond the apparent reality of our earth lay something firmer, purer, more real. . . . The chief figure in the Perennialist School was the Swiss metaphysician Frithjof Schuon.[7]

Joseph Brown's own words help to clarify his perspective, including his relationship with Schuon and the goals of his trip. The story begins during World War II when four men destined to become lifelong friends met while working as conscientious objectors at a US Forest Service camp in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Joseph Brown, Whitall Perry, John Murray, and Lester Kanefsky formed what Murray would later call an "informal reading group" to share their respective insights and discoveries as the four spiritual seekers studied the traditional doctrines of the world's religions.[8] Their study led them to the works of Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, the Boston-based Hindu scholar who is widely considered a cofounder of the Perennialist School of thought. Coomaraswamy then pointed the young men to the works of René Guénon, the third cofounder of the Perennialist School, and the French language journal Études Traditionnelles, which focused on writings by leading Perennialist thinkers.

In May 1946, all four friends were living in New York City. Shortly thereafter, their paths diverged, with Whitall Perry and Kanefsky moving to Cairo to meet Guénon, who, in turn, referred the four friends to Frithjof Schuon in the autumn of 1946.

## Joseph Brown's Quest to Find Black Elk

In one of Schuon's first letters to John Murray, in late 1946, he asked Murray to send him books on authentic American Indians.[9] One of the books Murray sent was a then out-of-print copy of *Black Elk Speaks*. Catherine Schuon remembers that "John Murray gave *Black Elk Speaks* to my husband, who was very impressed by the book. He thought that Black Elk surely knows more about his religion than is revealed in that book, so my husband asked Murray whether he or someone he knew could try to find Black Elk out west."[10] Murray discussed Schuon's request with Joseph Brown, who immediately agreed to postpone his plans to visit Europe and take up the quest to find

Black Elk.[11] Brown was first obliged to finish his academic courses at Haverford in the spring 1947 semester. In the spring and summer of 1947 he had ongoing correspondence with Schuon and the members of his informal reading group. In the summer of 1947 Brown outfitted his Ford truck to act as his traveling home and corresponded with John Neihardt to learn more about where to find Black Elk.

Brown's September 4, 1947 letter from Southwest Harbor, Maine, documents when he actually left in search of the Lakota holy man and how he met Father Gall, a Trappist monk at the Abbaye Notre Dame de Scourmont, who was Frithjof Schuon's brother: "I leave in two days for North & South Dakota." Brown introduced himself to Father Gall: "I do not know whether your brother, M. [Frithjof] Schuon, has informed you of my proposed visit to the North American Indians? In any case, I have learned through your brother of your very real interest in the Dakota, and therefore wish to be of assistance in any possible way." [12] Father Gall had such a keen interest in the Sioux that he had already learned to speak Lakota. Of greater importance, Black Elk later adopted Father Gall as his son. Their correspondence via Brown's letters provides unique insights into Black Elk's relationship with the Catholic Church.

The dates on Brown's newly discovered letters provide us with a more precise time line of his trips to the American West. The first sojourn was approximately seven months in duration, from September 1947 to March 1948. He visited his mother in Aiken, South Carolina, from late March to early May 1948 and then stayed in his family's home in Southwest Harbor until late June.[13]

Brown's intention to visit both John Murray and Frithjof Schuon in Lausanne was finally realized in July 1948, after his first sojourn in the American West. Brown then lived "in Lausanne for almost a year" from July 1948 until just before he returned for his second visit to Black Elk, which began in May or June 1949 and lasted until at least September 1949.[14] Brown's July 8, 1948 letter to Father Gall, shortly after he arrived in Switzerland, explains his relationship to Schuon: "The long anticipated meeting with your brother is for me a very great event, for he is, and I have long considered him to be, my spiritual master—on a plane even above that of our father Black Elk."[15] Each of the four members of the informal reading group found the intellectual framework he sought in the Perennialist School of thought.

As one of Brown's close friends, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, has noted, "In fact Brown was the link between Black Elk and Schuon who was himself so deeply attracted to the Native American traditions. For years it was Brown who through letters and journeys to Lausanne [where Schuon lived] would speak of the Native Americans to Schuon and would create possibilities of exchange between Schuon and that world."[16] Brown also twice visited Schuon in Indiana after his emigration there in 1980, first in 1981 and then in 1984.[17] John Murray and Whitall Perry were Schuon's neighbors in America, so these visits were the last opportunities for the three old friends to meet in person. Communication with Joseph Brown was increasingly difficult beginning in the late 1980s as he began to show symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

## Goals for Brown's Trip to the American West

Excerpts from Brown's letters help us understand his goals and the extent of his travels to different tribes, starting with an October 19, 1947 letter to Whitall Perry written on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, home of the Arapaho and Shoshone:

> Up to this time I have been among the Sioux, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Crees, & Blackfeet. Among each of these peoples much is still retained of their ancient tradition. . . . [T]hose over 70 still follow in their ancient path, know no English, & many are making efforts to insure the transmission of their wisdom. . . . In each nation I have tried to contact the *one who is regarded as the most steadfast in his ancient way* [emphasis added] and with those whom I have thought qualified I have left *The Crisis of the* [*Modern World* by René Guénon] and AKC's [Coomaraswamy's] *Am I* [*My Brother's Keeper?*], both of which should do much in comforting these peoples and in *strengthening them in their determination to follow their Ancient Way* [emphasis added]. Most of the Old Men with whom I have talked understand perfectly the true character of the "Modern World," realize the crisis of the present time, & know that a catastrophe of some sort is imminent . . .

Joseph Brown's October 28, 1947 letter to John Murray summarizes his visit to the Blackfeet Nation.

> Most of my time [with the Blackfeet] was spent with an old man, a chief, of the name of Ch. Crow Chief Reevis. . . . He is a splendid man, was Lodge Maker for the Sun Dance last summer. . . He was most interested in my reason for being there, was fully conscious of the crisis of the present time, and said he was trying to impress this on the young people. He said that he had told as yet no [non-Indian], but was telling me because he believed it was connected with my being there and with *the Holy Man who had sent me* [emphasis added], and that was that he had been having a dream, in which he saw an Ancient Man Above, very old with gray hair, whose eyes were always open, and who was constantly looking, looking everywhere.

Brown's February 4, 1948 letter from Oraibi, Arizona to John Murray describes his visit among the Hopi people and, in particular, his lengthy conversations with Thomas Banyacya, observing, "[Banyacya] has an absolutely clear understanding of the present crisis, and all that it signifies." Brown concludes, "He has read very intelligently the two books of [Guénon] which you sent, and is now taking great delight in Coomaraswamy's *Am I My Brother's Keeper?*, which I gave him. He is sharing these books with those of Hotevilla who read English and therefore need them. We can have absolute confidence in him, and I know that he shall be a valuable link with the Chiefs."[18] As a *New York Times* article later reported, in 1948 "Hopi religious leaders . . . appointed Mr. Banyacya and three others as messengers to reveal and interpret the [Hopi] prophecies to the outside world."[19]

I conclude that Frithjof Schuon asked Joseph Brown to "contact the one who is regarded as the most steadfast in his ancient way" and to "strengthen them in their

determination to follow their Ancient Way."[20] Brown spoke with these leaders about the "crisis of the present time" facing each tribe,[21] heightened by more than fifty years of forced cultural repression by the US government.[22] He also talked about "the Holy Man who had sent me" and Schuon's mission, as evidenced by an Assiniboine's gift to Schuon: "I am sending several strands of braided sweet grass, which the Assiniboine Holy Man, Medicine Robe, told me to give to [Frithjof Schuon] that he might know that he, Medicine Robe, understands his *mission* [emphasis added]."[23]

What did Brown mean when he spoke to tribal leaders about Frithjof Schuon's "mission"? According to Catherine Schuon, his wife, "[Schuon's] function in the world is really to bring people back to practice their own religion . . . to bring them back to a path that leads to God. . . . [M]any people have gone back and practiced their religion very seriously after having read his books. He wants to help us to go back to where we belong."[24]

The support from Schuon and his European circle of friends to preserve and perpetuate Native traditions included bringing both of Black Elk's books to the attention of the francophone world so that non-Native people could learn about the authentic traditions of the Sioux. Schuon wrote the introduction to the French edition of *The Sacred Pipe*, which was published the same year the book was published in English, 1953, a rare simultaneous foreign language publication for a book on American Indian spirituality. Catherine Schuon and Jacques Chevilliat, one of the Schuons' close friends, translated *Black Elk Speaks* into French and assisted in translating *The Sacred Pipe* into French. Chevilliat was also the liaison with the French publishers, so he was largely responsible for the attention Black Elk first received in France.[25] Black Elk was well aware of these efforts. Catherine Schuon explains, "Black Elk was pleased when Joseph Brown informed him that I was translating *Black Elk Speaks* into French with the assistance of a friend."[26]

## Black Elk's Goal to Restore the Religion of the Pipe

Of course, the first priority of Joseph Brown's trip to the West was to find and assist Black Elk. Shortly after his arrival, Brown explains one of the key goals of the Sioux holy man: "Old Black Elk is anxious to re-establish an Order of the Pipe and I believe this to be of great importance, for in this ritual instrument is contained almost the totality of their ancient doctrine."[27] However, there are two different interpretations about Black Elk's goals for the Order of the Pipe. Jackson summarizes his assessment as follows: "Black Elk hoped to reinstate the 'Order of the Pipe,' a society devoted to [the original Sacred Pipe's] safekeeping. . . . Black Elk hoped that each reservation would create its own Order, and these together would oversee the pipe's maintenance and succession."[28] Jackson is correct that Black Elk had a concern about the physical safety of the original Sacred Calf Bundle; nonetheless, I believe that the Lakota holy man had a very different goal in mind: to restore the "religion of the Pipe" for his people and, in so doing, to make the sacred tree of his great vision to bloom again.

This is one of several instances in Brown's letters where he refers to the "religion of the Pipe" as intertwined with the "order of the Pipe."

> Our first work is in restoring the religion of the Pipe—a rite and ritual instrument of the very greatest importance, as you may know, containing as it does all the essential of their ancient "religion." Every week we have taken a trip to visit one of the old Holy Men—to these Black Elk has explained his plans, and it is encouraging to note their eagerness to assist. It is good to know these venerable men, whom I could probably have found in no other way, and these (about 8) shall constitute our center.[29]

A letter to Father Gall goes into more detail about Black Elk's goals, also using both the terms "religion of the Pipe"[30] and "Order of the Pipe." It too documents that the "recording of the History of the Sacred Pipe" is to be "done as a part of restoring the Order of the Pipe":

> Black Elk is carrying out something which he has felt he must do for some time, but has lacked the necessary encouragement and assistance. This work is to restore the religion of the Pipe—to reconstitute a new order—and thus ensure that the Spiritual Transmission shall not be broken. We are contacting the elderly men of prayer not only in this area, but in the other Sioux reservations, and it is most encouraging to note the manner in which they have responded—and how anxious they are to assist. Just today we have spoken with Spotted Cow, Dull Knife, and Red Cloud—son of the great chief. . . . Also we are recording the History of the Sacred Pipe. Black Elk wishes this done as a part of restoring the Order of the Pipe—for he is the only Sioux who knows this completely.[31]

Brown elaborates further that "In addition to these key men, who shall lead the way, there are 45 others—old men too—who are anxious to help and shall form the bulk—or 2nd rank so to speak. In time the younger people shall be instructed and taken in."[32] Ben Black Elk translated the name of this society as "Order of the Pipe."[33] In practical terms, the Lakota visionary's goal of restoring the religion of the pipe began by stimulating the frequent and widespread use of sacred pipes still owned by most families. Brown explained, "Also in talking with several of the old men here I have found that almost all still keep their pipes, and have never lost their respect for this sacred object. Much of their understanding of it has however, been lost, but it would not be difficult to reestablish this for they possess all the requirements."[34]

A few weeks later Brown provides this update:

> We are now back in Manderson and have started on our real work; it is progressing slowly, for there are many interruptions; but I am tremendously encouraged, as you shall understand from the following. . . . Every few days we take a trip to one of the small settlements about here, and contact the leading holy men, to whom Black Elk explains his plans, why I am here and has me talk to them a bit. Everywhere there has been great enthusiasm and all have promised him their support, for, as you know, Black Elk is regarded as their spiritual leader here on the Pine Ridge Reservation; he is also perhaps the oldest of all. It has been a great thing for me to

meet these men, precisely the ones we are looking for; probably I could find them no other way. . . .

These men, and several more, shall constitute, I believe, the intellectual and spiritual center that we had hoped for. In about three weeks or a month they are all coming to Manderson, and with many ceremonies, the Order of the Pipe shall be established.[35]

Another letter explains the desire of one of Black Elk's friends to resurrect the Ghost Dance before adding more information about the "Religion of the Pipe" and the "history of the Sacred Pipe":[36]

> In any case should this fail [resurrection of the Ghost Dance], these people shall still participate in the Religion of the Pipe, and this is a great deal. . . . Black Elk wishes to have recorded the history of the Sioux and especially the history of the Sacred Pipe—for he is the only one left who knows all this completely—and he wishes it to be known by his people and especially by those who follow the religion of the Pipe. . . . Soon the old men mentioned above shall gather here and the order of the Pipe shall be "officially established."[37]

Brown's subsequent letters detail the December 1947 ceremonials hosted by Black Elk when about a hundred old Lakota traveled by horse and wagons from all over Pine Ridge and some other reservations:

> The ceremonials, all different, but all centering around the pipe, went on every night for about five days. Then on the 18th we had the large pipe ceremonial at Manderson. . . . This was of course the great day for Black Elk, for his vision was now being realized, and he was as happy and excited as a child. He and Little Warrior [his best friend] painted their faces red, and put on their best clothes, and what traditional clothing they had. Never have I seen a priest officiate at a rite with more dignity, confidence, and majesty.

Brown then adds more descriptions before commenting, "Many of the old men, still strong and handsome, now arose and one by one gave a short speech, most of them expressing that they had neglected the pipe given to them by *Wakan-Tanka*, and that it is now a necessity that they use it once again."[38] Shortly after this ceremony Brown wrote, "It was agreed that the Pipe of every old man be handed down to the most worthy of his descendants. This shall be good, for somehow these pipes have a way of getting into the museums, or into the hands of the profane whites."[39]

If Black Elk had intended to establish a completely new society dedicated to the safe keeping of the original Sacred Pipe bundle, as Jackson opines, Brown would have mentioned the original Sacred Pipe, the Keeper of the original Sacred Pipe, or the Buffalo Calf Pipe Bundle, when speaking about the Order of the Pipe. But nowhere in five letters above is there a mention of these terms. Many of Brown's other letters while living with the Lakota visionary refer to the goal of restoring and reestablishing the "religion of the Pipe" and the "Order of the Pipe" without any reference to the original Sacred Pipe, the Sacred Buffalo Calf Bundle, or the keeper of the original Sacred Pipe.

Joseph Brown repeatedly uses the terms "reestablishing" and "restoring" when referring to the "religion of the Pipe" and the "Order of the Pipe." However, the original Sacred Buffalo Calf Bundle was always kept by one Keeper of the Pipe—there never was an order or society dedicated specifically to that purpose. If Black Elk had intended to establish a completely new paradigm for the safekeeping of the original Sacred Pipe, as Jackson opines, he would not have repeatedly used the terms "reestablish" and "restore."

I believe Brown's letters document that Black Elk's goal was to bring together a "center" of more than one hundred "elderly men of prayer not only in this area, but in the other Sioux reservations" so that "in time the younger people shall be instructed and taken in" to this pipe society.[40] It would be almost impossible, practically speaking, for a group that large and diverse to make effective decisions about the safekeeping of the original Sacred Buffalo Calf Bundle. In direct contrast, a group of that magnitude and diversity is ideal to begin the process of revitalizing the essential ancestral traditions that all revolve around the use of the sacred pipes owned by most traditional Sioux. Black Elk succeeded in encouraging more than one hundred of the most prominent old men of prayer to once again practice the ancestral rites associated with the sacred pipe and to pass their sacred pipes to their most worthy descendants. I believe that in teaching and encouraging other Lakota to follow their ancestral traditions, this week-long ceremonial may have played an even greater role than the subsequent publication of *The Sacred Pipe*.

## The Fate of the Sacred Pipe Bundle

Brown's letters also help to clarify the transmission and fate of the original Sacred Pipe. Jackson is correct in saying, "At the time [1947] there was a concern among holy men about the future of the original Sacred Calf Pipe Bundle." Jackson concludes, "Concerns about the pipe would prove well founded. In 1968, when the anthropologist J. L. Smith tracked down the Sacred Calf Pipe Bundle, he found it kept by a 'not-so-knowledgeable fifteen year old boy and housed in a not-so-elaborate tool shed. . . . 'What the future of the Pipe bundle will be one can only guess,' Smith wrote."[41]

Jackson's readers are left to ponder what appears to be the problematic and uncertain destiny of this all-important sacred object for the Sioux people.[42] A key part of the answer can be found in Brown's letters in *Spiritual Legacy*, which include this partial history of the transmission of the original Sacred Pipe through generations of "keepers of the Sacred Pipe" (the editors' notes appear below in italics):

> You once asked about Elk Head, former keeper of the Sacred Pipe. It seems that he certainly was a qualified person—indeed it was from him that Black Elk received the sacred history, which we are now recording. . . .
>
> Elk Head had two sons, but both were unqualified to be keepers of the Pipe. The Pipe was thus handed down to Elk Head's daughter [Martha], who married a certain Bad Warrior. [*Editors' Note 9: Elk Head's daughter's married name was Martha Bad Warrior.*]

> The Pipe then went to Eli Bad Warrior, who had little or no traditional instruction. He does, however, fear the power of the Pipe, and this is good, for it shall keep it from being profaned. I have also recently been told that Bad Warrior is willing to give up the Pipe should the people wish it, and so it seems quite certain that this shall happen in the spring, and Black Elk shall choose a qualified person. [*Editors' Note 10: Martha Bad Warrior passed the original Sacred Pipe to her son, Eli Bad Warrior. Some years after the date of this letter, Eli Bad Warrior passed the Pipe on to his sister, Lucy Bad Warrior. In 1966 Lucy was told in a dream to pass the Pipe to her grandson, Arvol Looking Horse, who was only 12 years old at the time he became the keeper of the Pipe bundle. Arvol Looking Horse is still the keeper of the Pipe bundle and lives near Green Grass on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.*][43]

Editors' Note 11, on the next page in *Spiritual Legacy*, references my personal conversations with the keeper of the original Sacred Pipe and concludes: "Both of these stories [related in Brown's letters] were confirmed in recent conversations with Arvol Looking Horse, the current 19th generation keeper of the original Sacred Pipe." Arvol Looking Horse is the current keeper of the original Sacred Pipe and a well-respected spiritual leader of his Sioux people. His teachings are recorded in *White Buffalo Teachings from Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Pipe of the Lakota, Dakota & Nakota Great Sioux Nation*.[44] A number of accounts are also available about the favorable conditions in which the original Sacred Pipe Bundle is currently housed.[45]

## Black Elk, *The Sacred Pipe*, and Catholicism

There is an ongoing debate about the extent to which Catholicism influenced Black Elk after his 1904 conversion to Catholicism versus the extent to which the Lakota visionary continued to adhere to his ancestral spiritual traditions. Harry Oldmeadow observes, "There are three distinct schools of thought, arguing that his conversion [to Catholicism] was: (a) no more than an expedient stratagem and that he remained true to the ancestral ways; (b) deep and sincere, entailing a repudiation of his old beliefs; or that (c) he somehow blended and reconciled Lakota tradition and Christianity."[46] Joseph Brown's letters provide compelling evidence that Black Elk was a dual participant in both Catholicism and his ancestral traditions at the end of his life. For example, this letter to Father Gall documents that the Lakota holy man did not abandon Catholicism in his last years: "All day this last Sunday, your father prayed for you, and had us do so too when we went to church. . . . On Christmas Eve we all (except for Black Elk for he was tired) went to midnight Mass."[47] However, Black Elk was fully aware that his attempts to resurrect the Lakota traditional ways would anger the Church: "Black Elk says that he is sorry that his present action shall anger the priests, but that their anger is proof of their ignorance; and in any case Wakan Tanka is happy; for he knows that it is His Will that he does this work."[48]

The week-long pipe ceremonial Black Elk hosted in December 1947 resulted in a predictable confrontation. Brown explains:

> Last week, as I had long expected, we received a call from the local parish priest, who is also head of the mission school at Pine Ridge. He was quite irate about the pipe ceremonial, and said he did not mind if we merely wanted to put on a show, but if we were serious, it was a terrible thing, for he could not have his people going back to "savagery." At this Ben launched out with quite an oration, defending and pointing out the truths of his own tradition—during which time the priest became more and more tense and red in the face. When he finished, Old Black Elk started in, and went on for almost half an hour, after which the priest looked at his watch and sped off in his automobile in great haste. Black Elk's speech was later explained to me, and it was indeed a magnificent one. . . . I might mention that many of the priests here are in great disfavor among the people, due to many acts, which were not exactly straight; but I shall not go into that. The Catholic Church among the Indians in the early days gained many followers, by making catechists of the old men, tempting them with money, good clothes, and a house, and the opportunity to travel. These old men—Black Elk among them—made hundreds of converts, but now that they have gone, participation in the Church has fallen off, and a vacuum has been left. Let us hope it shall be filled by the renewal of their own Way.[49]

In the face of hostility from local priests, Black Elk's relationship with Father Gall was a great consolation because he was a Lakota-speaking Catholic monk who completely supported traditional Sioux beliefs and the quest to restore the religion of the pipe. Brown explains, "Black Elk has taken a great interest in his son, Father Gall; he talks of him often. . . . It of course means much to Black Elk to have the support of a Christian Father, for the priests here have been continually after Black Elk to give up his heathen practices and works of the devil, and to participate fully and only in Catholicism."[50] At the time of the adoption, Black Elk gave Father Gall a traditional name to symbolize his physical isolation: Lone Lakota. However, the Sioux visionary subsequently thought of a better name. Brown's letter to Father Gall explains, "[Black Elk] now sees that he perhaps should have given you a better name: Two Men, for in appearance you are a white man, but in reality, you are an Indian."[51] I believe this relationship further demonstrates Black Elk's attachment both to the Church and his ancestral ways.

## Editing of *The Sacred Pipe*

Very little information was previously available about Joseph Brown's recording and editing process. I had conversations with Brown when he stayed in my home in 1981 and 1984 that can fill in many of the missing details about how he recorded and edited Black Elk's wisdom. At the time of Brown's visits I was in the midst of recording and editing Thomas Yellowtail's account of the Crow Sun Dance.[52] I asked Brown about his experience editing *The Sacred Pipe* so that I could understand the best way to proceed on the Yellowtail book. He explained that first Black Elk spoke, and then Ben Black Elk translated while Brown wrote transcriptions that focused on key words and concepts. If the meaning was vague, then Brown asked an immediate question.

In addition, Brown read his notes back to the Black Elks during pauses in the narrative in order to be certain that his notes and understanding were accurate. In effect, he read back a rough draft manuscript for approval as part of the recording process. There were often discussions about the concepts and the right words to use, some of which were long. Brown kept adding marginal comments to his field notes and restating his understanding of what the elder Black Elk had said. This back and forth refined his understanding and continued until Ben confirmed that Brown's restatement was correct. Brown wrote out some of his transcriptions into prose while he was still living in the West. Whenever he had questions he read the draft edits to Ben and the Lakota sage.

Brown stressed to me the importance of word-for-word transcriptions without the editor adding anything to the narrative. I remember specifically asking him about whether an editor should correct grammar. He told me that he did correct some of Ben Black Elk's grammar during the transcription and final editing processes, but that he never made any substantive alterations.

Others who knew Brown also attest to his fidelity to Black Elk's words. Brown lived in Lausanne while he was reading through his notes and editing the book. Frithjof Schuon was one of the early readers of the book and wrote the introduction to the French edition. As a result, Schuon was familiar with Brown's editing process. In 1984 Schuon wrote a letter to a friend of Brown and Schuon that criticized Neihardt for taking liberties with *Black Elk Speaks*. Schuon closes his letter with this statement, "for the doctrine one has to refer to *The Sacred Pipe*, all the more as this book is strictly faithful, word for word, to the account given by the Indian author."[53]

Joseph Brown's newly discovered letters confirm his 1984 account of the editing process and provide a time line. In March 1948 he wrote from Aiken, South Carolina, "I have a quiet place, and am starting to work immediately on the book. I hope in two months to have it in decent enough shape to show to a publisher, and get all that arranged—and then the finishing touches, additions, illustrations, etc. can be finished up in Switzerland."[54] A June 1948 letter indicates the progress to that point and corroborates Brown's 1984 comment that the text closely follows his field notes: "Several weeks ago I sent you a rough draft of two of the most important chapters of the book—on the rites of the *Inipi* and the lamenting. This is still rough, and is really just as I copied it from my notes, but I thought you would like to have them even in this shape."[55] Five months later Brown sent his draft of the entire book to Father Gall with a request to assist with translations and transliterations: "The first draft of the book is now completed, and there remains only a few notes, corrections, precisions to make. I am preparing a list of Lakota words which I will send to you soon & trust you will have time to correct them according to ethnological standards, about which I know nothing. Also you may be able to give me more precise translations."[56] Joseph Brown's December 1948 letter verifies that he spent time reviewing his field notes with the venerable holy man's son while he was living with Black Elk: "*Hokshichankia* is a difficult word—Ben and I spent several days struggling over it so do not worry if you cannot locate it!"[57] The same letter demonstrates the care Joseph Brown took to verify various Lakota terms: "I am indeed grateful to you for your fine work on the Lakota

words. . . . I think *Inikage* satisfactory—have written Ben to check on it, along with several other odds and ends."[58] This letter also verifies that Brown asked Ben Black Elk to review parts of the book for accuracy. The editing process was completed sometime in the spring of 1949 and the manuscript for *The Sacred Pipe* was sent to the University of Oklahoma Press prior to Brown's return to visit Black Elk that summer.[59]

## Did Brown's Personal Beliefs Motivate Him to Color Black Elk's Words?

Critics allege that Brown had a bias in favor of Christianity that motivated him to color Black Elk's words.[60] I believe a somewhat related, but better, question is: Did Brown's Perennialist perspective motivate him to color Black Elk's words?

There are passages in Brown's letters that point out similarities of Lakota rituals with rites of Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity. Some of these ideas were later incorporated into the notes for *The Sacred Pipe*.[61] I do not believe these references indicate a bias toward Catholicism because many of the parallels would occur to most religiously literate observers. Nothing in the more than seventy pages of Brown's surviving letters from this period sheds light on whether he favored Christianity. In due course, the Brown family's publication of all of Joseph Brown's early letters will verify my opinion. Until then, readers can review the twenty-six pages of letters already published in an appendix to *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*.

Given Brown's relationship to Frithjof Schuon, it is helpful to review passages in Schuon's second letter to Black Elk, dated October 7, 1947 and hand-delivered by Brown, which provide an overview of both men's views about the relationship of Christianity and American Indian spirituality.[62] Schuon began, "I could never believe that one religion alone in the whole world was the true one, and that all other religions were false. . . . [T]he holy Truth must have many forms, just as a light may have many colors; God—the Great Spirit—gave that indispensable Truth to every race in a form which is suited to its respective mind." Schuon then introduces his thoughts about Native religion, "the Indians are not heathens, and their religion, though not fully understood by every individual Indian, is a true one, and God is working in it, and gives His Grace in it. This you know best, of course." Schuon explained:

> The Great Spirit gave the indispensable Truth to every race: He gave the Indians their manner of praying, as He gave the Christians and the Moslems and the Hindus and the Yellow peoples their manner of praying. Every old and true religion is a necessary form of the eternal Truth, and a gift from God, the most-high *Wakan-Tanka*. Therefore nothing in the Indian creed is a mere human invention or a sense-less thing; every symbol or rite known and practiced by the Indians finds its analogous form and explanation in the traditions of other peoples—in the most direct way, perhaps, in the Hindu tradition, for it is as old as the Indian one, whereas younger traditions are, in a certain sense, more simplified expressions of the same eternal Truth.[63]

A careful review of Brown's and Schuon's published writings will confirm that both men were without prejudice for or against any particular religious form.

I believe that Joseph Brown attempted to be as faithful as possible to the literal meaning of Black Elk's words and that he used his best efforts not to add any editorial coloration to *The Sacred Pipe*. This assertion is reinforced by Brown's letters from 1947 through 1949, but it is primarily based on my personal relationship with both Brown and Schuon. This includes their respective advice to me during the time that I was recording and editing the words of a Crow holy man, Thomas Yellowtail, which resulted in the publication of *Yellowtail: Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance Chief*.[64] My earlier comment, "Brown stressed to me the importance of word-for-word transcriptions without the editor adding anything to the narrative," bears repeating. I also discussed my project with Schuon, who was one of Thomas Yellowtail's closest friends. Schuon advised me to be completely faithful to Yellowtail's word-for-word narrative and confirmed that it was the same advice he gave to Brown for the recording and editing of *The Sacred Pipe*.[65]

Ben Black Elk's lifelong friendship with Joseph Brown provides further evidence of the accuracy of *The Sacred Pipe*. In 1971, two years before his death, Ben Black Elk visited Indiana University to give a series of lectures for Joseph Brown's classes. I helped escort Black Elk during his visit because I was Brown's graduate teaching assistant and next-door neighbor. At a family dinner at the Brown home there were long reminiscences of the olden days. The deep and abiding affection between these two old friends was tangible and would not have been possible if Ben Black Elk thought that Brown had not been faithful to his father's words and intentions.

## Why Did Brown Not Mention Black Elk's Catholicism in *The Sacred Pipe*?

When Joseph Brown stayed in my home in 1984 he told me that his most important remaining project was to write a lengthy article on Black Elk's dual participation in both Christianity and traditional Sioux practices. Brown was aware that many readers concluded that he avoided mentioning Black Elk's relationship to Catholicism in *The Sacred Pipe* because he did not want to compromise the "Indianness" of the Sioux visionary. He said that conclusion was incorrect and it was past time to set the record straight.

Brown explained that Black Elk wanted to be clear that he believed in Christianity. This was accomplished in Black Elk's foreword on the opening page of *The Sacred Pipe*. "We have been told by the white men, 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 Judgment, the end of this world or cycle. *This I understand and know that it is true . . .*" (emphasis added).[66] At the same time, Black Elk did not want anything to detract from his overriding purpose to help his own people understand the profound nature of their ancestral beliefs as part of the effort to restore the religion of the pipe.

Brown also explained that the disclosure of Black Elk's dual participation in Christianity would have required lengthy discussion because at that point in his life his

relationship with the Catholic Church was complex and multidimensional. It would have been misleading to give the appearance that Black Elk was in good standing with the local priests, and it might have created even greater ill will with the local church if Brown had detailed the criticisms that are recorded in his letters. In addition, the Lakota sage did not blend the rites of the two religions; rather, he fervently participated in his ancestral rites in a completely traditional manner, while later going to church and praying in a Christian manner. His understanding of Wakan Tanka—the Great Spirit—was enriched by both religions, but he never mixed the two forms.

It is not clear to me if Brown and Black Elk discussed all of these considerations. It was clear to me, however, that it was Black Elk, not Brown, who made the decision not to include a discussion of his Catholicism in *The Sacred Pipe*. It is unfortunate that Brown was not able to explore this subject in depth prior to the time he fell victim to Alzheimer's disease.

## Was Black Elk's Quest Successful? A Personal Reflection

Disagreement exists about the extent to which Black Elk was successful in preserving and perpetuating traditional Lakota culture. For example, Joe Jackson's Lakota informant observes, "they want you to be Indian, but it's too late, the language is dying, no one speaks Lakota anymore."[67] But this conclusion ignores the work of the Lakota Language Consortium since 2004:

> Lakota is experiencing one of the most robust language revitalization movements among all Native American languages in the US. Today, there are over 20,000 students in 80 schools learning Lakota. There are currently three Lakota immersion schools that utilize nothing but the language for instruction and several more are in the planning stages. Increasing numbers of young people are getting involved with learning the language—many using new smart-phone dictionaries, apps, and other programs. There has been more material published in Lakota in the last decade than in all the previous time combined. People are texting in Lakota, creating webpages exclusively in the language, and creating cartoons and other media in the language. Today there are an estimated 1,500 first-language speakers and approximately 250 second-language speakers of Lakota, with more than 30 new speakers being added each year.[68]

The former captain of police for the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Milton Bianas, also believes the Lakota language is experiencing a resurgence. He notes, "The Lakota Language Bowl is now an annual competition to see which schools are the most fluent in Lakota. The Lakota Language Bowl is part of the annual Lakota Nation Invitational held each December in Rapid City that attracts thousands of visitors over four days."[69]

Jackson cites only one informant about the current status of the Sun Dance on Pine Ridge, who speaks of one "Sun Dance taking shape." Jackson concludes that a traditional revival "seems to be happening, yet assessing the extent is nearly impossible." His research identified these statistics about cultural participation among all Native Americans: "Some non-native scholars have estimated twenty-first-century

membership in traditional native religions as hovering around nine thousand people, but spiritual leaders say the numbers are substantially higher."[70] Based on my personal experiences, I believe these "non-native scholars" need to rethink their methodologies and listen more to Native spiritual leaders. Since 1971, I have spent time each year on many different reservations in the Plains, Northwest, and Southwest, except 1977—the year our son was born. I have attended approximately two hundred traditional Indian rites on geographically diverse reservations with members of many different tribes, including Sun Dances, sweat lodge purifications, bundle openings, harvest dances, kachina dances, and young women's puberty rites. I have witnessed many times more than nine thousand participants at only these ceremonies.

I believe the December 1947 week-long ceremonial hosted by Black Elk stimulated a cultural revival. Beginning in 1952, the Sun Dance was once again openly performed on Pine Ridge when Black Elk's nephew, Fools Crow, was granted permission to pierce sun dancers in the traditional manner.[71] The cultural revival was energized during the "Native rights" and "Red Power" movements in the 1960s and 1970s. As Joseph Brown observed in 1972, "Purification rites, vision quests, Sun Dances, rituals of the pipe, and other ceremonies of a traditional nature are being increasingly practiced by Plains peoples today, with positions of leadership being assumed by younger tribal members."[72]

I believe the traditional cultural renewal is now vibrant on every Sioux reservation. I can personally attest to the general use by traditionalist Sioux of four of the seven sacred rites of the Religion of the Pipe: prayer with the pipe, the Sun Dance, the sweat lodge, and the vision quest. Over the past forty-six years I have attended approximately thirty Sioux Sun Dances and sweat lodge purification ceremonies on five different reservations. This includes two Sun Dances in the mid-1980s led by Black Elk's nephew, Fools Crow, both of which had approximately one thousand campers and many more attendees. A few years ago, my family and I attended three different Sun Dances on Pine Ridge during the course of one long July weekend. There were from 300 to 500 campers at each Sun Dance, and scores of additional spectators came during the course of each day to share prayers. Three other Sun Dances were simultaneously taking place on Pine Ridge that same week, two of which were closed to non-Indian visitors. In July, 2017, Fools Crow's primary successor, Steve Dubray, held a Sun Dance at Kyle, South Dakota, that had approximately 100 dancers and well over 500 campers. Several other Sun Dances were taking place at the same time on Pine Ridge. All of the Sioux rites I observed follow the basic formats that Black Elk recorded in *The Sacred Pipe*, with minor variations that are allowed for each intercessor.[73]

As I was unaware if the three lesser-known sacred rites documented in *The Sacred Pipe* are still being practiced by the Sioux, I asked Arvol Looking Horse, "To what extent are the Sioux people still practicing the rites of: 'throwing the ball,' 'keeping of the soul,' and 'preparing a girl for womanhood'?" He responded, "There are a few around the [Sacred Pipe] bundle that do all seven sacred rites. . . . We hold strong."[74]

Milton Bianas also confirmed the vibrancy of the ongoing cultural renewal among traditional Lakota:

> Lakota traditionalists are practicing all seven rites of the Sacred Pipe, in addition to other rites such as the Yuwipi ceremony. It seems like every other home has a sweat lodge—there are thousands of them all over the reservation. You can go into a sweat lodge ceremony on every night of the year. The reservation is in full blown "Sun Dance mode" all of July and August. There were fifty-one or fifty-two Sun Dances on Pine Ridge last summer [2016] and a similar number on Rosebud. We just had the first thunder that signals the start of the vision quest season. Hundreds of men and women will be vision questing in the coming months. Six of my neighbors are going to fast for four days in the Black Hills next week at different locations around the recently renamed Black Elk Peak.[75]

## Epilogue

Joseph Brown went on to obtain a doctorate at the University of Stockholm under the guidance of the eminent Swedish scholar Åke Hultkrantz. In 1970 Brown created the first university program in Native American Religious Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. He ended his distinguished teaching career in the American West he loved so well at the University of Montana. The last part of Brown's 1954 letter to Frithjof Schuon provides a fitting glimpse into his life's work: "Our travels of this summer have been of tremendous value to us. For almost two months we heard the powerful rhythms of the big drums almost continually, as we went from one dance to another—and even now I can still hear them, for it seems they have become a part—or more than a part—of me. I know that somehow my lot is tied up with that of the Indians."[76]

It seems apparent that Black Elk never gave up on his quest "to bring the sacred hoop [of his people] together and make the flowering tree [of his vision] to bloom again at the center of it."[77] The fame that eventually came to *Black Elk Speaks* and *The Sacred Pipe* spread the ancestral wisdom of the Sioux far beyond the borders of their reservations. The Lakota holy man's actions toward the end of his life, including the week-long pipe ceremonial, created sparks that lit one of the lamps that helped the Lakota see how to once again walk the traditional red road out of the darkness that characterized that low point in tribal history. I therefore believe that Black Elk's efforts to preserve and perpetuate the ancestral traditions of his people were successful beyond what anyone might have imagined in 1947, perhaps even Black Elk himself.

## Notes

1. John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1932). Among its myriad praise, in 1999 a panel of experts lists *Black Elk Speaks* as one of the top ten spiritual books of the twentieth century. See Philip Zaleski, "*Black Elk Speaks* in the Top Ten Spiritual Books of the Century," *Neihardt Journal* 2 (2000): 9.

2. Raymond J. DeMallie, *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1985).

3. These studies deserve special attention for their comparisons of Neihardt's notes and transcripts to his final text: Sally McCluskey, "Black Elk Speaks: And So Does John Neihardt," *Western American Literature* 6, no. 4 (winter 1972): 231–42; and Clyde Holler, "Lakota Religion and Tragedy: The Theology of *Black Elk Speaks*," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* III, no. 1 (1984): 19–45.

4. Joseph Epes Brown, *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953).

5. Fifteen of Brown's letters were contemporaneously collected and archived by Frithjof Schuon. Extensive excerpts from thirteen of those letters were published in an appendix to *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian: Commemorative Edition with Letters while Living with Black Elk*, by Joseph Epes Brown, ed. Marina Brown Weatherly, Elenita Brown, and Michael O. Fitzgerald (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2007). Then in 2016 Paul Verbeeren provided me with sixteen additional letters written by Brown to Father Gall, the brother of Schuon, and Joseph Fitzgerald found six of Brown's letters in Whitall Perry's papers. I provided copies of all of these letters to the Brown family. Marina Brown Weatherly, who represents the Brown family, hopes to publish a revised edition of *The Sacred Pipe* with an appendix of extensive excerpts from all of her father's letters. She also intends to put copies of all of her father's papers, including his letters, "in a safe archive where many people could have access to the information" (personal correspondence dated November 17, 2016). Brown's remaining original letters are at World Wisdom in Bloomington or at the Abbaye Notre Dame de Scourmont in Belgium. The unpublished letters will remain private until such time as the Brown family makes their final decisions.

6. Joe Jackson, *Black Elk: The Life of an American Visionary* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016). This quotation is taken from the dust jacket.

7. Ibid., 457.

8. Whitall N. Perry (1920–2005) became a leading voice in the Perennialist School of thought. John M. Murray (1910–1999) was one of Brown's closest friends. Lester Kanefsky (d. 2007) lived in Cairo until Guénon's death in 1951. Brown lived from 1920 to 2000.

9. Personal conversation with John Murray, 1997.

10. Personal recollection of Catherine Schuon, 2017.

11. Brown's letter from Haverford, PA, to Whitall Perry in Cairo postmarked January 17, 1947 (incorrectly dated 1946 in the letter) verifies that Brown and Murray were still in close proximity, with Brown stating that John "has been a great boon to me here in this desert" and that Murray "has been doing excellent work in translating Guénon's and Schuon's articles."

12. Brown's letter from Southwest Harbor, ME to Father Gall (Eric Schuon), September 4, 1947. The date on Brown's next letter documents that it took approximately one week of actual traveling to find Black Elk. That letter, dated September 30, 1947 in Manderson, SD, states, "I have been among the Oglala Sioux of Pine Ridge Agency, S.D. for almost three weeks now" (ibid., letter to J. A. Cuttat, published in *Spiritual Legacy*, 99). Jacques-Albert Cuttat (1909–1989) was a Swiss diplomat and scholar with a deep interest in comparative religion.

13. Brown's March 12, 1948 to John Murray was written in Aiken, SC and Brown's June 17, 1948 letter to Father Gall was written in Southwest Harbor, ME.

14. Brown's letter from Manderson, SD, to Frithjof Schuon, July 27, 1949. This letter is incorrectly cited in *Spiritual Legacy* as "Late summer 1948 (exact date unknown), Manderson, South Dakota," 119–21.

15. Brown's letter from Lausanne to Father Gall, July 8, 1948.

16. S. H. Nasr, quoted in Renaud Fabbri, *Frithjof Schuon: The Shining Realm of the Pure Intellect*, MA dissertation, Miami University, 2007.

17. Joseph Brown stayed in my home during both of these visits to Bloomington.

18. Brown's letter to John Murray, February 4, 1948 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 117). Thomas Banyacya remembered Joseph Brown and Frithjof Schuon when I visited with him at his home in Kykotsmovi, AZ, in the mid-1980s and again in 1993 in Chicago, where he shared a room with Thomas Yellowtail, the Crow Sun Dance chief, when the two men were delegates of their respective tribes to the Parliament of the World's Religions.

19. Robert M. Thomas Jr., "Thomas Banyacya, 89, Teller of Hopi Prophecy to World," in *The New York Times*, Feb. 15, 1999. https://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/15/us/thomas-banyacya-89-teller-of-hopi-prophecy-to-world.html. *The New York Times* article went on to explain, "The prophecies remained a secret oral tradition until 1948" and "Mr. Banyacya seems to have been an obvious choice [to represent the Hopi]. At a time when many Hopis were beginning to embrace modern ways . . . he had remained steadfast in his devotion to the sacred traditions and cherished sovereignty of the Hopi."

20. Brown's letter to Whitall Perry, October 19, 1947.

21. Ibid. and Brown's letter to John Murray, October 28, 1947.

22. John Neihardt summarized the spiritual crisis facing the Lakota in his late 1945 report to the US Indian Office after his several month trip to Pine Ridge: "[T]he Oglalas simply are not any longer a tribe in the social sense. . . . Their old culture is dead. They recognize no leader. They are mostly just poor people living together in a land that cannot support them all, and laboring under psychological, social, and economic handicaps" (John Neihardt, "Report to the Indian Bureau on a Field Trip to Pine Ridge in 1945," 3, 7).

23. Brown's letter to John Murray, October 28, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 100).

24. Film interview quoted in the two-disc DVD, *Frithjof Schuon: Messenger of the Perennial Philosophy* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2012), directed by Jennifer Casey.

25. *Black Elk Speaks* was first published in French as *Héhaka Sapa. La Grande vision: Histoire d'un prophète sioux telle qu'elle a été contée à John G. Neihardt* (Hehaka Sapa. The Great Vision: History of a Sioux Prophet as It Was Narrated to John G. Neihardt) in 1969 by Éditions traditionnelles. Their translation was subsequently published by Le Mail in 1987 (new edition in 2014 by O.D. editions) as *Elan noir parle: La vie d'un saint-homme des sioux Oglalas* (Black Elk Speaks: The Life of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux).

26. Personal recollection of Catherine Schuon, September 21, 2017.

27. Brown letter from Manderson to Father Gall, October 1, 1947.

28. Jackson, *Black Elk: The Life of an American Visionary*, 459.

29. Brown letter from Manderson to Whitall Perry, November 24, 1947.

30. Black Elk uses this term seven times in Brown's surviving letters from 1947.

31. Brown's letter from Manderson to Father Gall, first part of November, 1947.

32. Brown's letter from Manderson to Whitall Perry, November 24, 1947.

33. We do not know the Lakota term that the Sioux holy man used to refer to this group of old-timers. One wonders if it might have also been translated as "Pipe Society," which is the translation of the name that other tribes used for analogous groups of traditional leaders.

34. Brown's letter from Manderson to J. A. Cuttat, September 30, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 99).

35. Brown's letter from Manderson to John Murray, November 19, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 103).

36. Several of Brown's letters reference Black Elk's very close friend, Little Warrior, and provide an overview of Little Warrior's attempts to resurrect the Ghost Dance. Brown's letters make it clear that Black Elk supported these efforts; however, a discussion of the Ghost Dance is beyond the scope of this essay (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 103, 108, and 119).

37. Brown's letter from Manderson to Whitall Perry, November 24, 1947.

38. Brown's letter from Manderson to John Murray, December 26, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 111–12).

39. Brown's letter from Manderson to John Murray, January 27, 1948.

40. Brown's letter from Manderson to Whitall Perry, November 24, 1947.

41. Jackson, *Black Elk: The Life of an American Visionary*, 458–59. Jackson cites J. L. Smith, "The Sacred Calf Pipe Bundle: Its Effect on the Present Teton Dakota," *Plains Anthropologist* 15, no. 48 (May 1970): 89–90.

42. There is no debating the importance of the original Sacred Pipe and the Sacred Pipe Bundle to the Sioux. Jackson's *Black Elk: The Life of an American Visionary* provides this introduction early in the book, "To the Lakota, their true origin lay with the Sacred Pipe, the foundation of all society. . . . In their eyes, the Buffalo Calf Pipe signified their covenant with God," at 29.

43. Brown's letter from Manderson to John Murray, December 14, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 107). Lucy Bad Warrior married Thomas Looking Horse. Lucy and Thomas Looking Horse raised their grandson, Arvol Looking Horse.

44. Arvol Looking Horse, *White Buffalo Teachings from Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Pipe of the Lakota, Dakota & Nakota Great Sioux Nation* (Williamsburg, MA: Dreamkeepers Press, 2001).

45. I have visited the home of Arvol Looking Horse three times over the past seventeen years and can attest to the natural beauty and dignity of the sanctuary that houses the Buffalo Calf Pipe Bundle.

46. Harry Oldmeadow, *Black Elk, Lakota Visionary* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2018), 43–46 and 99–110. Oldmeadow reviews the different points of view of fifteen writers, including himself.

47. Brown's letter from Manderson to Father Gall, December 26, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 113).

48. Brown's letter from Manderson to John Murray, November 19, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 105).

49. Brown's letter from Manderson to John Murray, January 24, 1948 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 116). Brown's letters also include a general observation about dual participation: "[M]ost of the Indians here are Catholic—but of a certain sort—i.e., they recognize the truth wherever they find it, and so know that their ancient way was also the true one" (Letter from Manderson to Father Gall, December 1, 1947).

50. Brown's letter from Manderson to John Murray, November 19, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 103).

51. Brown's letter from Manderson to Father Gall, December 26, 1947 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 113).

52. Thomas Yellowtail's recordings resulted in the publication of Michael O. Fitzgerald, *Yellowtail: Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance Chief* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

53. Schuon's letter from Bloomington to William Stoddart, August 8, 1984.

54. Brown's letter from Aiken, SC to John Murray, March 12, 1948.

55. Brown's letter from Southwest Harbor, ME to Father Gall, June 17, 1948.

56. Brown's letter from Lausanne to Father Gall, November 21, 1948. In a marginal note Brown adds, "(Am enclosing now [the list of Lakota words]—some are not too important, but I check the ones that are especially important. You will of course add all the inflections, etc.)."

57. Brown's letter from Lausanne to Father Gall, December 17, 1948.

58. *Inikage* is the performance of a sweat lodge ceremony. *Hokshichankia* is spiritual influence or seed. This is the definition used by Brown in the chapter entitled "The Releasing of the Soul" in *The Sacred Pipe*.

59. Personal conversation with Catherine Schuon, February 2017.

60. Harry Oldmeadow's book, *Black Elk, Lakota Visionary*, has an extensive discussion of the allegations that Brown colored Black Elk's narrative (see 90–96).

61. Ten notes in *The Sacred Pipe* identify parallels with Christianity, six notes compare similarities with Hinduism, four notes identify similarities with Islam, and one note makes a comparison with Buddhism. Brown's letter from Manderson, SD to Father Gall in mid-November, 1947, illustrates one similarity that was not mentioned in those notes but which Brown did discuss in his later writings (including page 33 in *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*): "Essentially to smoke the pipe is the same as taking Holy Christian communion. The form of the pipe is the same as the Xian Cathedral, & it too represents the Universe, with God at the Center. Wakan Tanka dwells at the Center, in the bottom of the bowl, and he who smokes moves Intellectually from the periphery to the Center where he is consumed in the fire of Being, & is thence liberated in the smoke. But all this you know. I merely mention this to show the importance of the ritual of the Pipe—almost the whole of their doctrine is contained in it."

62. This letter is presented in its entirety in Oldmeadow's *Black Elk, Lakota Visionary*.

63. Ibid. Brown's October 28, 1947 letter from to John Murray describes Black Elk's reaction to Schuon's letter. "You will be pleased to know that the letter from [Frithjof Schuon] has had a tremendous impact on him [Black Elk]. His son translated the whole letter to him; he is excellent at this, and you should also know that he is responding and awakening extremely well."

64. Fitzgerald, *Yellowtail: Crow Medicine Man and Sun Dance Chief*.

65. Personal conversations in the 1980s. I was Schuon's neighbor in Indiana for eighteen years, one of his biographers, and the executor of his estate.

66. Brown, *The Sacred Pipe*, xix.

67. Jackson, *Black Elk: The Life of an American Visionary*, 482.

68. Personal correspondence from Wilhelm Meya, executive director of the Lakota Language Consortium, February 3, 2017. The Lakota Language Consortium is an affiliate of The Language Conservancy, which is involved in the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages across North America—assisting across more than twenty Indian reservations.

69. Personal conversation with Milton Bianas, March 29, 2017. There are three levels of competition in the Lakota Language Bowl: elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.

70. Jackson, *Black Elk: The Life of an American Visionary*, 482, 483. When academics try to statistically define "membership in traditional native religions" they are imposing a postcolonial construct unsuited to Native traditions, for which there are no written rules, no membership lists, and where "membership" is nowhere defined. I believe the better term is "participant," meaning those people who, at a minimum, sincerely believe in the efficacy of traditional rites and repeatedly attend Native rites to share prayers and receive spiritual blessings.

71. Thomas E. Mails, *Fools Crow: Wisdom and Power* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1979), 119.

72. Brown, *Spiritual Legacy*, 14.

73. In Brown's letter from Lausanne to Father Gall, December 17, 1948, he notes, "You are quite right—the prayers for the different rites really follow certain formulas, a certain flexibility or spontaneity being allowed to the one who prays—in keeping with the whole Indian spirit. It was necessary for Grandfather [Black Elk] to repeat certain prayers, and I always noticed that although they were always worded differently, they did follow a certain pattern. In the question of the rites of the Pipe also, there is a certain flexibility according to the occasion."

74. Personal correspondence dated January 11, 2017, and conversations on July 28, 2017 at Green Grass, SD.

75. Personal conversation with Milton Bianas, March 29, 2017. Harney Peak was officially renamed Black Elk Peak on August 11, 2016.

76. Joseph Brown letter from Albuquerque, NM, October 8, 1954 (see *Spiritual Legacy*, 125).

77. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*, 134.