Chapter 2 - Indigenous/Oral/Primal Religions

All things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man, the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports. — Chief Seattle

Unit Learning Objectives - After reading this chapter, you should be able to:
• Discuss the basics of indigenous tradition.
• Discuss the concept of shared stories.
• Discuss the primal world.
• Describe the three patterns shared by indigenous religions.
• Explain the importance of time and space in indigenous traditions.
• Discuss the symbolic mind.
• Explain the view of reality held by indigenous religions.
• Describe the importance of ritual in the practice of indigenous religion.
• Discuss rite of passage ceremonies.
• Define the function of taboos.
• Describe the role of the shaman.
• Discuss the mission of Black Elk.
• Discuss the religious elements in Black Elk Speaks.
• Explain the Ghost Dance.

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Indigenous Tradition Basics

- Indigenous Traditions are variously labeled as:
  - Oral, Traditional, Aboriginal, Indigenous, Tribal, Nonliterate, Primal, & Basic
- Text will use: Indigenous - meaning native to a particular environment
  - Molloy explains why he selected this term — in the name of neutrality
    - Native works in North America, but has baggage in Africa
    - Oral works for most indigenous religions, but the Aztec and Mayan had sacred texts
    - And even most historical religions have a heavy dose of orality to them
  - Traditional might work, except that historical religions are rich with traditions, too
- In class, we’ll also use: Oral, Native, and Primal (meaning “first”)
  - Oral = no written texts
  - Oral cultures tend to be tribal
    - small groups in relationship
  - Banishment from tribe is the same as death
  - Religion before writing?
    - Hard for moderns to imagine
      - No explicit doctrines to be learned from books or catechisms
      - No books, no catechisms, no bulletins, no printed hymnals, no liturgies…
      - How you did things – prayers, chants, dances, offerings – mattered sacramentally
    - Ancient world news & learning came to you through your ears
    - Eyes mattered, but only to watch, not to read
- Characteristics of Orality
  - The vitality of speech
  - Powers of memory
  - Huston Smith writes of the Three "Endowments" of Orality:
    1. Experiencing the sacred through non-verbal channels
      - Think of dance, movement, and gesture
    2. Writing and information overload
      - Google “orality” and you’ll get 469,000 pages (12/15/10)
      - Google “Islam” and you’ll get 130,000,000 pages (12/15/10)
    3. Need for community
      - Someone else to talk with
- The Native Experience
  - Historical religions existed over the past 4000 out of 3 million years of humanity
  - Oral religions handed down w/o texts
    - Found all over the world & very diverse
    - North America - 100s of Native American nations & over 50 language groups
    - Tremendous variety in religions
    - Text will focus on shared elements
    - We’ll focus on shared elements

Past Obstacles to Appreciation of Oral Religions

- Until early 20th century scholars focused only on historical text-based religions
- Why?
  - Partly, the ideology of progress & cultural
• Primitive was often a negative term
• Would you rather have a primitive car or a modern car?
• Primitive religions were seen as undeveloped and unevolved
• Consequently, they were seen as less valuable
  • Primal, however, means first
  • Primitive religions are the first religions
  • Not unevolved, just different from historical religions
• Obstacle 1 - Ideology of progress & cultural evolution
  • Perception that historical religions
    • More developed
    • More complex
    • More deserving of study
• Obstacle 2 - Historical text-based religions are easier to study
  • Require no travel, they’re everywhere
  • Texts to study, just go to the library
  • Widespread & influential
• Obstacle 3 - Transience, Historical religions are more permanent
  • Oral religions tend to express themselves less permanently
    • Dance
    • Masks
    • Wood sculpture
    • Paintings using mineral & plant dyes
    • Body painting
    • Chants
    • Stories
    • All of which occur in the moment or fade with time
• No longer accepted perspective
  • Consider Navajo sand paintings
    • Over 800 forms
    • Each with a specific chant & ceremony
    • That’s certainly developed & complex
• A Navajo Haatali would construct a likááh (ceremonial sand painting) that creates “the place where the gods come and go,” a doorway to the spirit realm & its power
• Objective: Attain or preserve hózhó, harmony with the universe
  • Sand painting filled with stylized symbols of sacramental significance
    • Ingredients – sand & dies

Navajo Haatali (singer) named Nesjaja, a medicine man or shaman

19th Century Navajo sand painting
Modern Recovery of Oral Religions

- Franz Boas (1858-1942) - curator of American Museum of Natural History in NYC
- Margaret Mead (1901-1978) - Coming of Age in Samoa & Growing up in New Guinea
- David Suzuki - *Wisdom of the Elders* argues we have much to learn from native peoples

- Examples of Recovery:
  - Native music
    - Folk music influenced Ralph Vaughan Williams & Bela Bartok
    - South African music influenced Paul Simon
  - Native art
    - Holistic cultures - everything is related
    - Art, music, religion, and social behavior are inseparable
    - Many native traditions have no word for art - everything you do is art

- Influence on our modern world?
  - Pablo Picasso influenced by African religious masks
  - So taken with Dogon ceremonial masks that he came to haunt the *Musée d’Ethnographie du Trocadéro* in Paris
  - Preceded and influenced his *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* (next page)
  - As were Andre Derain & Henri Matisse
  - Paul Gauguin moved to Tahiti after encountering native art

- Bias and prejudice against indigenous beliefs is disappearing
  - They have, after all, been around a lot longer than the historical religions

Studying Oral Religions: Learning from Patterns

Human Relationships with the Natural World

- Survival requires harmonious & respectful relation w/nature
  - Humans are *a part of* nature, not *apart from* nature
  - Animistic belief - Everything is alive & has a spirit
  - Everything is capable of response
    - Traditionally “alive” things - Trees, plants, animals, birds
    - Dynamic entities - Water, sun, moon, clouds, wind
    - Static entities - Mountains, rocks, soil
  - Everything is a part of same reality

- Absence of sharp divisions of life
  - Between natural & supernatural
  - Between human & nonhuman
  - Animals sometimes referred to as
brothers & sisters

• Absence of divisions between daily life & worship
  • Oglala Sioux said when asked what was Wakan (holy, mysterious)
  • “Every object in the world has a spirit and that spirit is wakan. Thus the spirit[s] of the tree or things of that kind, while not like the spirit of a man, are also wakan.”

• How to treat all things
  • So the sacred & holy is not limited to Supreme Being
  • Humans must treat all things with care
    • An insulted or injured spirit may retaliate
    • A pleased spirit may bless
  • Respect makes sense then
    • Especially to animals & plants one intends to eat
    • Take only what one needs, use all one takes

• Relation between humans & animals expressed in rituals
  • Imitating motions of buffaloes or wolves or eagles
  • Totemism: binding of tribe to animal species

Sacred Time & Space

• Sacred Time
  • Ordinary time - everyday linear time
    • Measured by normal experience & chronometers
    • Once a moment passes, it’s gone...
  • Sacred time (“Dream time” or “Eternal time” or “Eternal now”)
    • Cyclical, returning to origins for renewal
    • Recalling & ritually reliving the deeds of gods & ancestors
    • So we enter sacred time
      • Think Easter or Christmas or Eid al-Adha or Yom Kippur
      • First cousin to the mythic time we spoke of earlier
  • Daily, as well as annual, life is structured to conform to mythic events & sacred time
    • Example 1. Hawaiian observance of Makahiki
      • Dedicated to agricultural god
      • All war & heavy work are forbidden
    • Example 2. Australian Arunta hunters
      • Ritual preparation for hunt
      • Chanting & body paint
      • Arunta hunter becomes the archetypal hunter, the First Hunter

• Sacred Space
  • Ordinary space - exists in the everyday
  • Sacred space
    • Doorway to “other world”

Picasso’s Les Demoiselles d’Avignon, painted from 1907-1909, reflects his fascination with the planes, angles, and colors of African ceremonial masks. Several of the women (in Avignon, France?) are even wearing ceremonial masks themselves.
• World where gods & ancestors can contact us & vice versa
• May be entered by ritual
  • Think of communal worship - Communion for Christians, Shabbat Eve services for Jews, Friday prayer for Muslims
  • Sioux Sun Dance - Dance for Life & World Renewal
    • Associated with center of universe
    • More on this in the section on Black Elk Speaks
• Often associated with a mountain, volcano, lake, forest, or other striking natural site
  • For Australian Aborigines, Uluru (Ayers Rock)
  • For Oglala Sioux, Harney Peak in South Dakota
• May be constructed in symbolic shapes (often by circles or cones) & defined by a Symbolist mentality sees world as transparent to divine light, rather than analyzing its physical components

Respect for Origins, Gods, & Ancestors

• Respect for Origins
  • Cosmic tales recited & enacted through ritual & dance
  • Beginnings of world, humanity, the tribe
  • The closer one is to the beginnings...
    • The more powerful
    • The more respected

• Respect for Gods
  • Indigenous religions often speak of High God - wise, ancient, & benevolent
  • Tend to focus on lesser gods w/whom one interacts daily
  • Usually localized & associated w/nature

• Respect for Ancestors
  • Little distinction between gods & ancestors
  • Living people have to deal with both
  • Ancestors have moved on to the spirit world and are presumed to have powers over this physical world that we inhabit
  • Note: Like ancestors, elders are also highly respected
    • A lifetime of experience and wisdom
    • Closer to the beginnings of things
    • Therefore more powerful

Sacred Practices

1. Sacred Practices – Life Cycle Ceremonies
  • Journey through life aided & marked by rites of passage
  • Important to individual - defines who one is within the community
  • Important to community - renew bonds & admit new members
• Life Cycle Ceremonies - Birth
  • Powerful time for mother & child
  • Blood associated w/birth very powerful
  • Ceremony/Naming may occur immediately or after a period of time
• Life Cycle Ceremonies - Adulthood

Historically, elders have been treated with dignity and respect in most indigenous cultures.
• Girls
  • Menarche (first menstrual period) may trigger public celebration
  • Apache celebration lasts 4 days - dance, massage, prayer
  • BaMbuti celebration (the elima) - seclusion, lessons, & play
  • Jewish celebration (bat mitzvah) - confirms responsibility for moral and religious duties

• Boys
  • Initiation may include seclusion or tasks
  • Rites may include symbolic death or circumcision

• Life Cycle Ceremonies – Adulthood, Vision Quest
  • Vision quest / dream quest
  • Preparatory instruction, fasting, or sweat cleansing
  • Sacred space created
  • Herbs & totems collected
  • Altar constructed
  • Prayers @ appropriate times
  • Shown in visions his life path

• Lakota Vision Quest (Hanblecheyapi)
  • After fasting and ritual preparation in a sweat ceremony
  • Travel to a high mountain or isolated butte
  • Continue to fast (for as long as four days) and seek spirit guidance about one’s place in the world
  • Identify with the six powers
  • Not limited to a coming-of-age ceremony – may be undertaken multiple times during one’s life, especially before one performs the Sun Dance

• Ojibwa Vision Quest
  • Wove platform high in a red pine
  • Fasting, lie quietly day & night
  • Allowed to opt out, but expected to return annually
  • Discover his life path

• Life Cycle Ceremonies – Marriage
  • Public affirmation & stabilization of union
  • Secures economic arrangements
  • Ensures fertility
  • Many traditions - social rather than overtly religious ceremony

• Life Cycle Ceremonies – Death
  • Comfort the living
  • Assist spirit in moving on
  • Clothing, food, money, favorite objects
  • Sacrifice of relatives & attendants
  • Protect living from unhappy spirit

2. Sacred Practices - Taboos
  • Taboo - “rule that forbids specific behavior with regard to certain objects, people, animals, days, or phases of life.”
    • Social & religious codes
  • Sex & birth - power of blood
    • Menstruating women are often isolated
• Women giving birth may also be isolated

• Death
  • Afterlife is unknown & scary
  • Proper rituals afford protection against spirits

• Foods - Things determined to be acceptable or not acceptable

• Social behavior - rank
  • Avoid mixing those of high & low rank
  • To avoid insult
  • To avoid contamination (& compromise of fertility)

• Antisocial behavior
  • Maintain tribal harmony
  • Adultery & stealing w/in tribe
  • Shaming, warning, shunning, expulsion

• Shawnee rules
  • “Do not kill or injure your neighbor...”
  • “Do not wrong or hate your neighbor...”

3. Sacred Practices - Sacrifice: Placating gods, spirits, or people
  • Attempt to make right what was done wrong
  • Libation - “act of pouring a bit of drink on the ground as an offering”
  • Animal sacrifice or blood offering
    • Often the animal consumed by community
    • Pleasing spirit & building community
  • Human sacrifice - rare but known

4. Sacred Practices - Shamanism
  • Shamanism, Trance, & Magic
    • Shaman - Acts as intermediary between the ordinary physical world and the spirit world
    • Responsible for bringing harmony and healing, both physical and spiritual
    • Black Elk was a Shaman, a Holy Man (Wicháša Wakhán), or a Medicine Man
  • Awakened to other orders of reality
    • Encounters with the spirit realm in form of a psychological death and rebirth
      • Severe Illness
      • Near-death experience
      • Accident
      • Extreme loss (vision, a loved one...)
      • Mental breakdown
  • Recovery brings
    • New insight
    • Powers of healing
    • Contact with the spirit world
    • Divination - foretelling of the future (clairvoyance)
    • Sympathetic magic - Influence of the world through powers of similarity (such as throwing water into the air to cause rain)

5. Sacred Practices - Artifacts & Artistic Expression
  • Art - functional objects used in special ways
    • Navajo sand paintings - used for healing & temporary
    • Making artifacts is not a separate endeavor from religious expression, but a part of it
  • Dance - masks, headdresses, costumes, & ornaments
  • Chants - capture stories
• Masks - help dancer embody spirit on earth
• Totems - animals revered as symbolic of tribe or person
• Feathers & featherwork - often symbols of rebirth (Ghost Dance)
• Symbols - mountains, sun & moon, fire, rain, lightning, birds or wings, cross, circle

• Oral Religions Today
• Endangered ...
• As world changes & contracts
• As native habitat is destroyed
• As proselytizing religions spread
• Continues through adaptation

• Traditional Folk Roots - Hallowe’en (Molloy sidebar)
  • Hallowe’en - Evening before All Hallows’ Day (November 1)
  • Samhain (pronounces sow’-en) - Celtic New Year’s festival
  • Doorway between living & dead is open
  • Time of deprivation expected - children go from door to door for food

• Traditional Folk Roots - Christmas (sidebar on page 63)
  • Gospel narratives indicate birth likely in spring
  • Winter solstice festival - concern that days would get longer again
  • Trees & lights were fertility symbols of hope & life

• Traditional Folk Roots - Easter (sidebar on page 63)
  • Eastre/Oestre - Goddess of the dawn
  • Christian allusion to resurrection
  • Jewish Passover festival
  • Fertility festival - eggs, flowers, rabbits
Black Elk (Heháka Sápa) Background Material

Grown men can learn from very little children for the hearts of the little children are pure. Therefore, the Great Spirit may show to them many things which older people miss. — Black Elk

A Short Biography of Black Elk

Black Elk (Heháka Sápa) was born in December, 1863, in the Powder River region of Wyoming. His family was a member of the Lakota Teton Sioux, a confederation of seven bands. Black Elk was a member of Big Road’s band of Oglala Lakota, and his father and grandfather were well-known medicine men and healers within the tribe. In addition he was cousin to Crazy Horse, would come to know Sitting Bull and Red Cloud, and he would be instructed in the sacred rites of the Sioux by the sages Whirlwind Chaser, Black Road, and Elk Head. In The Sixth Grandfather Raymond DeMallie notes that the world of Black Elk’s birth was a symbolically sacred world where members of his tribe “lived in daily interaction with the seen and the unseen spirit sources that comprised their universe” (3). It was in this world that Black Elk would be approached by the Thunder-beings (Wakiyan) who would provide him with the Great Vision that would guide and inform his life.

The Bozeman Trail would punch through their territory in 1864, and their world began a gradual change from the symbolist world of an indigenous people to a modernist world with little room for the ancient traditions of the old ways. The coming of the white settlers to the West would result in intermittent warfare with the United States and a dramatic shift in the reality of the Sioux. Black Elk did not fight in the great battles of the West, although he was present as a young boy at the Battle of The Little Bighorn where Custer was killed, but his world was shaped by those battles, and his Great Vision was of being able to heal his people from the damage and destruction wrought by those battles.

Normally, one who has been visited by the Thunder-beings will sponsor a Heyoka ceremony and become a sacred clown for a day. But when Black was seventeen and sought the advice of a number of elders, they suggested that he should do more than a mere Heyoka ceremony. They proposed that he should re-enact his vision, making the symbolic literal, which they thought might give him the powers promised in his vision. Black Elk did so. He also would later sponsor a Heyoka ceremony, a buffalo ceremony, and an elk ceremony, as well as repeating the horse dance ceremony. He believed he had the power to restore his people, but his dream of renewing the Lakota people never came to be.

In an effort to learn more about white people, their values,

1 Historically, scholars have called the western Sioux the Lakota, the central Sioux the Nakota, and eastern Sioux the Dakota (the tribe’s name when they lived near the Great Lakes in the 17th century before moving west and taking up horses in the early 18th century.)
and their way of life, Black Elk joined Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show in 1886 and toured Europe for several years, even performing for Queen Victoria at her Golden Jubilee (fifty-year anniversary as Queen of England). When he returned from Europe in 1889, he became a store clerk and married Katie War Bonnet in 1892. He continued his work as a healer, even after a Jesuit priest destroyed his sacred objects during one particular healing ceremony. He developed an interest in the Ghost Dance and became a dancer himself, believing that the Ghost Dance had been sent as a reminder of his vision and his mission to heal his people. Instead, the dancing brought on the slaughter of over 300 Lakotas at Wounded Knee.

After the Massacre at Wounded Knee, Black Elk seems to have lost interest in the traditional ways and became an observant Roman Catholic catechist, even going to far as to undertake Catholic mission journeys to other tribes seeking to convert other Indians to Catholicism in the early twentieth century. Mallier argues that Black Elk’s conversion, while genuine, was also a part of his effort to “at last put himself beyond the onerous obligations of his vision” (14). He contracted tuberculosis during an epidemic on the reservation in 1912 and suffered with it the rest of his life. He was also losing his eyesight by this time, in part the result of gunpowder going off in a fire display when he was younger.

In 1930 he first met John G. Neihardt and invited him to return the next year to receive Black Elk’s teachings. Neihardt was honored to do so, and those interviews and discussions became Black Elk Speaks. Neihardt would conduct a second set of interviews with Black Elk in 1944, and these later interviews would form the basis for When the Tree Flowered.

In the winter of 1947, Joseph Epes Brown searched out Black Elk who told Brown that he had been waiting for him and whose teachings become Brown’s The Sacred Pipe. Brown writes of Black Elk, “Partly crippled, almost completely blind, he seemed a pitiful old man as he sat there hunched over... But the beauty of his face and the reverent quality of his movements... revealed that Neihardt had given to us the essence of the man” (xiv). Brown posits that when Black Elk first spoke to Neihardt, Black Elk, as well as most anthropologists in the country, felt that the ways of the Native Americans “with their seemingly archaic and anachronistic cultures would be completely assimilated into a larger American society which was convinced of its superiority and the validity of its goals” (xv). But perhaps in the late 1940’s Black Elk noticed the beginning of a resurgence of Sioux belief and practice. Brown, like Mallier, believes that while Black Elk believed that his mission had failed, he was perhaps aware on some level that the branches of the sacred red stick of the Sioux people were swelling with buds and, if not yet flowering, might one day do so, making the planting of that stick by Black Elk and the renewal of his people “may be succeeding in ways he could not have anticipated” (xvi).

Black Elk died in August at The Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.
Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux

What is good in this book is given back to the six grandfathers and to the great men of my people. — Black Elk

Vine Deloria, Jr., said of Black Elk Speaks
• "Perhaps the only religious classic of this century."
• The book’s effect "upon the contemporary generation of young Indians who have been aggressively searching for roots of their own in the universal structure of reality. To them the book has become a North American bible of all tribes."

About John Gneisenau Neihardt
• Neihardt was born in Illinois, and his family moved west to Nebraska when he was a small boy.
• Neihardt was a poet who taught poetry as a professor at the University of Nebraska and wrote, among other things, a five-book epic about the American West called The Cycle of the West. It consists of books that individually he called “songs.”
  • The Song of Three Friends (1919)
  • The Song of Hugh Glass (1915)
  • The Song of Jed Smith (1941)
  • The Song of the Indian Wars (1925)
  • The Song of the Messiah (1935)

Neihardt's Editorial Process:
• "The beginning and the ending are mine; they are what he would have said if he had been able. At times I changed a word, a sentence, sometimes created a paragraph. And the translation – or rather the transformation – of what was given me was expressed so that it could be understood by the white world."
• First edition (1932): "as told to John G. Neihardt"
• Second edition (1961): "as told through John G. Neihardt"
• Do note the images the begin on page 227.

Apocalypticism is a term that is usually discussed in relation to Christianity. It is, after all, the near-title of the last book in the Christian Testament. But some form of apocalypticism appears in all of the historical religions (even in Hinduism and Buddhism), and these characteristics, or some subset of them, are common to apocalyptic visions of the world. In addition, it is worth remembering that Nicholas Black Elk was baptized an Episcopalian and was a practicing Roman Catholic during the second half of his life.

Apocalyptic Characteristics (Apocalyptic = Greek, “revealing of hidden things”)
1. DESPAIR
• Forces of evil are in control of the world
• Prophet’s people are subjugated, powerless, and enslaved
• Black Elk sees the Wasichus as beyond reason, destructive, and deceitful

2. ESCHATOLOGICAL PREOCCUPATIONS (ἐσχάτος, Eschaton = “edge/end of time”)
• Looking toward the end of time
• Looking toward a new world for reward, the next stage of creation (the “real” world, as
opposed to this “shadow” world)
• Black Elk sees himself as having a definite role in the future of his people and in the
ultimate renewal of the world and the old ways.
• He seems to believe it is his job to usher in this new age — in part because he was
given the power of the Soldier’s Herb, a destructive power that he refuses to
utilize for fear of the death and suffering that would result ()

3. SYMBOLS & CODE WORDS
• Apocalyptic visions are highly symbolic and sometimes in codes that only the in-group
or properly initiated can understand. — In the case of first century Jews and
Christians, this symbolism served also to add a layer of security in the face of the
occupying Roman Empire.
• Think symbols and metaphors in the Sacred Pipe and Great Vision ceremonies
• Consider the colors, directions, and spirit powers

4. UNIVERSALITY
• Not just for the prophet’s people
• All people will be caught up in this event
• While Black Elk’s visions focus on his own people, they are a part of his duty to return
the world to a harmonious relationship one part to another.

5. COSMIC DUALISM
• The cosmos is divided into:
  • The earth below (this shadow world, our home)
  • The heavens above (the real world, land of the spirit people) — Actually called
    Heaven by Christian apocalypticists.
• Black Elk’s vision of the other world during his Great Vision and Horse Dance is a clear
example of this split between worlds, and of an exchange of energy and power
between the other world of spirit and this world of matter and flesh. Black Elk
believed that enacting his Great Vision would manifest that vision int this world.

6. CHRONOLOGICAL DUALISM
• Now time - which we inhabit day in and day out
• After time - when the spirit world has broken into and altered the flow of human history

Sacred Pipe Ritual Elements — As Black tells us in chapter one, the Sacred Pipe was given to
the Sioux by White Buffalo Calf Woman (which some white scholars have equated with Gaia, the
earth spirit - and while that’s not quite accurate, if it helps
you understand her, then it’s close enough).
She gave the pipe to two men of the relatively small
Itázipcho (Sans Arc) Sioux tribe, walking slowly toward them
and singing:

  Behold me.
  Behold me,
  For in a sacred manner
  I am walking.

She walking amongst them sunwise (clockwise) and sang:

  This is a sacred gift
  And must always be treated in a holy way.
  In this bundle is a sacred pipe
  Which no impure man or woman should ever see.
  With this sacred pipe

A Lakota pipe on display at
The Library of Congress
You will send your voices to *Wakan Tanka*.
The Great Spirit, Creator of All.

One of the two men held evil thoughts toward in his heart, and the spirits, in the form of a cloud, stripped him of his flesh and left him to the worms. She sent back the good-hearted man back to his village and told him to prepare for her coming. And when she arrived at their village, she asked that they send word to all of the Sioux people that she had a teaching for them. And when representatives of all the various tribes and bands had come together, she taught them of the Sacred Pipe, as well as the other sacred rites (see below) that would become central to Sioux life.

A Sacred Pipe is constructed of a stem made of wood (ash, sumac - both with a soft core that is easy to remove - cedar, or cottonwood), and the bowl was carved from pipestone. The length was about 2½ feet (although pipes specially made for important ceremonies might be as long as five feet). From the stem hangs an eagle feather, which is symbolic of unity with the Great Spirit, and four colors of ribbons (see chart below).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Ribbon Color</th>
<th>Power</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
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<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Thunder Beings</td>
<td>Rain</td>
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<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Great White Wind</td>
<td>Cleansing</td>
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<td>Wisdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Growth</td>
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</table>

**Seven Original Sioux Sacred Ceremonies**

*C'anupa*: The Sacred Pipe Ceremony - This ceremony has been incorporated, if not subsumed, into other ceremonies such as sweat ceremonies, naming ceremonies, meetings, and marriages. It begins with loading tobacco, red willow bark, or a combination of the two into the pipe and saluting the four cardinal directions, beginning with the stem pointing east and ending with the stem pointing upwards, toward *Wakan Tanka*. Head and heart are focused on unity and harmony with the powers that be in this and the other world.

1. *Nagi Gluhapi Na Nagi Gluxkapi* - The Keeping of the Spirit Ceremony was, after the Sacred Pipe, the first ceremony given by White Buffalo Calf Woman. It is a way of helping the soul of a loved one rest easy by purifying it for a year before it returns to *Wakan Tanka*. After one dies, a lock of hair is taken and burned with sweet grass, which will help it rise up to the Great Spirit and make known the soul's

**Sacred Ceremonies Closed to Outsiders**

On March 3, 2003, Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe, convened a meeting of spiritual leaders of the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe tribes to discuss the protection of Native American ceremonies from exploitation. During the meeting the spiritual leaders voted to ban non-Natives from sacred Ho-c'o-ka (altars) and from the Seven Sacred Rites, especially the Sun Dance. Elements of concern included mockery, charging for religious knowledge, mixing in of New Age beliefs, and the use of other medicines (i.e., drugs). The last element, in particular, is patently contrary to White Buffalo Calf Woman’s instructions “that only those with a pure mind and heart should touch the C'anupa,”

essence and smell to the Four Winds. The lock of hair would then be bundled in a
blessed piece of leather and hidden away in the tipi for a year. After a Sacred Pipe
ceremony asking the spirit powers to aid his relatives in walking the red path in a wakan
(holy) manner. The body would then be bundled up and placed on a scaffold where the
physical shell of the person could return to the physical world, while the spirit was kept
with the family for a year. And during that year the family is responsible for remembering
the good of the dead loved one and for not fighting, no matter what, and for not arguing
or allowing argument within the shelter housing the soul. Black Elk says the family must
remember that “Your mouth is wakan and every word you say should reflect this holy
state in which you are living,” that is, living with the kept soul of a loved one (Brown 15).
On pretty days, the keeper is to take the sacred soul bundle outside in the sun and hang
it facing the south (always carrying it in the crook of the left arm, close to the heart).
Family, friends, and neighbors will come by and pray for the soul and bring gifts (which
will later be given to the poorest of the tribe). It is the family’s job to look after the soul
and to keep it in a holy manner.
To release the soul, after a Sacred Pipe Ceremony, a shallow hole is scraped in the
ground of the tipi representing a buffalo wallow (for the buffalo is symbolic of the
universe and of all things, especially the good things given by Wakan Tanka). The
bundle is place in the shallow hole with a Sacred Pipe which was lit from the center fire
(which in every tipi is symbolic of the Great Spirit at the center of the universe) and
which has ceremonially been filled with the essence of the entire universe. Then a
special sun-dried portion of buffalo shoulder (which has been killed in a wakan manner
and which, according to Brown, one might consider similar to the Christian Eucharist for
its importance and spiritual significance) will be consumed by four maidens who in a
series of four incantations symbolically partake of all that is good in this life, and more is
offered in a wooden bowl to the soul. The keeper of the soul picks up the bundle and
walks four times toward the door of the tipi and out of the tipi the fourth time. When the
bundle leaves the family lodge, the soul is released to return to Wakan Tanka, traveling
south along the Spirit Path (the Milky Way) to join with Wakan Tanka.
On the anniversary of one’s death, the gifts brought to the soul, as well as the
possessions of the loved one’s life, are distributed by his family. Giving away all of one’s
goods on the anniversary of one’s death provides closure and an opportunity to celebrate
the beloved’s life.
Historical note: In 1890 the U.S. government made it illegal to “keep souls” in the United
States and issued a decree that all kept souls must be released.
2. Inipi - The Sweat Lodge Purification
Ceremony is a ceremony of purification and spiritual preparation where one
mingles one’s on waters (sweat) with the waters of the earth as water is poured on
the hot rocks and rises upward as steam. These joined waters are carried
into the world by the four winds. The ceremony often begins with a day of
fasting and continues with a Sacred Pipe Ceremony. There is a pit in the center of
the sweat lodge for heat stones, and a pitcher of water for steam. The
ceremony consists of four rounds or endurances, each a half to three
quarters of an hour long. The first round

19th century Crow sweat lodge
focuses on the spirit world of the black West. The second round turns to courage, endurance, and living in a wakan manner of the white North. The third round is a round of knowledge and individual prayer in the direction of wisdom and the daybreak star in the red East. And the final round aims for growth and healing of the yellow South. Participants may exit the lodge between rounds and roll in the snow or dip in a nearby body of water.

3. Hanblecheypi - The Vision Quest, sometimes called Crying for a Vision, is a methodical search for meaning and purpose. And while it is a coming-of-age ceremony for young men, it is also a renewal ceremony for older men. After fasting and ritual preparation in a sweat ceremony, the initiate will travel to a high mountain or isolated butte where he will continue to fast (for as long as four days) and seek spirit guidance about his place in the world. He will be readily accessible to the Six Powers (the Four Winds, as well as Above and Below) and will have ready access to them, as well. Many Lakota shamans require a Vision Quest in the year before one participates in the Sun Dance, especially if one intends to be pierced.

4. Wiwanyag Wachipi - The Sun Dance Ceremony (see below for more detail) is a celebration and renewal of connectedness. It is something of a three-level ceremony in which those who choose to undergo a piercing make a monumental commitment to holiness, while those who do not undergo a piercing make a similar, if less dramatic, commitment, all the while acting as spiritual support for those who will undergo piercing. In addition to ceremonial participants, those who observe the ceremony are also expected to provide support with their chanting and stomping for the ceremonial participants.

5. Hunkapi - The Making Relatives Ceremony is almost a means of choosing one’s family. It is a ceremony designed to acknowledge those bonds that we form with people who are closer even than family. The two will often share a Sweat Ceremony and then will share blood, literally becoming blood brothers or sisters after holding pierced hands together. Traditionally, horse tails were waved over them as a symbolic show of their freely given commitment to each other. (Horses, of course, being a natural symbol of freedom.) It is a powerful ceremony that illustrates the harmony between two people and, in doing so, creates greater harmony in their families, in their tribes, and in the Great Spirit’s world, at large.

6. Ishnata Awicalowan - The Preparing a Girl for Womanhood Ceremony is similar to ceremonies of a kind among other indigenous peoples. A small tipi, built away from the others in the village and with a sheltered entrance, is used as a shelter for a young girl or woman spent the time during her menstrual period. A young girl would be accompanied by an older woman who would teach her the ways of being a woman among the Sioux. After her period is over, she would undergo a Sweat Lodge Purification Ceremony before returning to the everyday life of the tribe.

7. Tapa Wanka Yap - Throwing the Sacred Ball - No longer widely practiced, this ceremony included women throwing a ball of buffalo hair back and forth in a circle representing the four corners of the world, as well as the above and below when the ball moves up and down in its arc of travel.

Other important ceremonies, some of which have risen to the level of Sacred Rites, are the Yuwipi - Healing Ceremony or Spirit Calling Ceremony - and the Marriage Ceremony.
Elements of Black Elk’s Great Vision —
By now you’ve read of Black Elk’s vision when he was nine and of how he was approached by two Thunder-beings shooting out of the sky with flaming spears. The Thunder-beings took Black Elk, on a cloud, to a great plain where a bay horse (a red horse with black points - mane, tail, ears, and stockings on the legs) greets him. [Which direction and powers are associated with red in the Peace Pipe chart and in the chart below? Think symbolically.]

- While the Sioux recognized six directions (west, north, east, south, above, and below), the four cardinal directions, the four winds, of the earth we inhabit are dramatically important
- Multiples of 4 used for the power of four
  - 12 horses
  - Riding 4 abreast in 3 rows (4x3=12)
  - Representing past, present, & future
- Bay horse speaks and leads Black Elk’s vision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Animal Symbol</th>
<th>Implement</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st West</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black Horses</td>
<td>Wooden cup of water &amp; sky</td>
<td>To make live &amp; sustain life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Grandfather</td>
<td>Name - Eagle Wing Stretches</td>
<td>&amp; a small blue man spirit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd North</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White Horses</td>
<td>White Wind</td>
<td>Cleansing Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Grandfather</td>
<td>Animal symbol - Horses</td>
<td>Herb of power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd East</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Sorrel Horses</td>
<td>Morning Light</td>
<td>To awaken others &amp; to heal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Grandfather</td>
<td>Animal symbol - Bison</td>
<td>Sacred Pipe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th South</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Buckskin Horses</td>
<td>Manes Alive with Trees</td>
<td>To make sacred tree bloom in unity of all (hoop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Grandfather</td>
<td>Animal symbol - Elk</td>
<td>Bright red holy stick &amp; yellow hoop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Above (The Eldest)</td>
<td>Spirit of Sky (eagle)</td>
<td>Wings of the earth (the winged, the winds, &amp; the stars)</td>
<td>Friendship &amp; Unity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Below (Himself)</td>
<td>Reviews the messages of the other grandfathers &amp; brings unity to the vision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Power of Four
Native peoples, having a symbolic mindset, look for symbols and meaning in the world around them. One thing that the Sioux noticed was a prominence of fours in the world around them.

- Four faces of humans - faces of a child, an adolescent, an adult, an elder
- Fours in the cosmos - four winds (directions), four seasons, four races (red, yellow, black, white)
- Four things that breathe - those that crawl, fly, run on two legs, and run of four legs
- Four divisions of time - day, night, moon, year
- Four celestial entities - earth, sun, moon, stars
- Four elements - fire, water, air, earth

1 The birds appear in the shorthand interview manuscripts but were removed in the typed versions.
2 DeMallie notes in the Afterward of BES (310) that an indwelling spirit is common among Native Am. shamans.
• The Blue Man — After talking with the Sixth Grandfather, Black Elk walks the black road foreseen by the Fourth Grandfather, a “fearful road,” and sees a vision of sick plants and fearful animals and “flames... rising from the water” and a blue man who seems to be the source of the withered plants and animals. The horses charge him by troops - black/west, white/north/ red/ead, yellow/south - and are all beaten back. Black Elk charges and kills the Blue Man. Most commentators equate the Blue Man with drought, but Black Elk seems to have believed simply that he would destroy an enemy of his people in battle.

Remember DeMallie’s comments in the Afterward of Black Elk Speaks (310) that Black Elk had consumed a blue man spirit in his drink from the First Grandfather and that this blue man spirit (symbolic of water in this vision series, while blue is sometimes also linked to the immaterial Great Spirit) aids him with his first healing.

• The Bright Red Stick — Black Elk rides to the center of the village (the center of the vision and perhaps the center of all things) and plants the red stick, which flowers and grows. Black Elk was to plant and raise a nation, all within the yellow hoop. He understood the sacred tree to be a kind of cottonwood tree, and he understood the hoop to stand for the elders of the tribe, the connectedness of his people, and the unity of all things.

Symbolist thinkers will see this as a Tree of Life symbol, and they will be right on target. Think of the Tree of Life imagery and mythologies in Egyptian, Chinese, Norse (Yggdrasil, the world tree), Hebrew (Etz Chaim, עץ חיים, not to mention the trees in the Garden of Eden), Indian (think chapter 15 of the Bhagavad-gita, not the Black Hills), Aztec, Mayan, and even Christian (Revelation 22.1-2).

• After the tree flourishes, the people move on, but sickness and disharmony come again during the third ascent of Black Elk’s vision. Black Elk weeps for his people and sees a sacred man painted red standing on the north side of the camp (think symbolically - this is the direction of the cleansing wind). The man lay down, rolled about, and became a healthy buffalo. And where the man/buffalo had wallowed, a sacred herb grew up, and the herb had four blossoms on it - blue (which sometimes substitutes for the black of the west), white, red, and yellow. Black Elk interprets this to mean that the buffalo were a gift “of a good spirit,” but that the people would lose the buffalo and must go on.

All the people are still crying out, and the winds sound like the weapons in a battle, when the bay horse tells Black Elk to take the herb to a worn out brownish black horse. When Black Elk does so, the horse is renewed and is clearly the “chief of all horses” who snorted lightning and cried out with a voice that could be heard the world over. Then four virgins appear holding he elements of power from the Grandfathers - the wooden cup, the white wing, the pipe, and the nation’s hoop.

• Black Elk’s vision ends with his recognition of the importance of his people’s hoop (life, unity, purpose - it seems similar to the way we will discuss one’s Torah when we study Judaism) and its connection to the hoops of other people and of the universe. Two men then give him the herb of understanding, and the Grandfathers give him his final commission.

• In Neihardt’s transcripts Black Elk is shown the spirit of war and given the “soldier weed of destruction,” which he was afraid to use because of the death and destruction that the herb power would cause. Neihardt’s seems to have decided this part of the vision was disharmonious with the universalistic message of the rest of the vision. Allow me to recommend that you read this part of the 1931 transcripts in The Sixth Grandfather.
The Ghost Dance

By the late 1800s almost all of the Indians are on reservations
• Usually on land so poor that the whites could conceive of no use for it themselves
• Supplies that had been guaranteed by the treaties were of poor quality
• Graft and corruption were rampant in the Indian Bureau
• Conditions were bad on the reservations (starvation was not uncommon)
• Situation was ripe for a major movement to rise among the Indians
• Originated with a Paiute Indian named Wovoka (circa 1870?)
  • During an eclipse
  • While suffering from a high fever
  • He had a vision of how to revitalize the old ways
• Announced that he was the messiah come to earth to prepare the Indians for their salvation
  • Anglos had killed their messiah
  • Now God had chosen another people for his message
• Representatives from tribes all over the nation came to Nevada to meet with Wovoka and learn to dance the Ghost Dance and to sing Ghost Dance songs

The Peaceful Prophecy
• Next spring, when the grass is high, the earth will be covered with new soil, burying all the white men
• The new soil will be covered with sweet grass, running water and trees
• The great herds of buffalo and wild horses will return
• All Indians who dance the Ghost Dance will be taken up into the air and suspended there while the new earth is being laid down (The image of being “caught up in the air strongly resembles 1 Thessalonians 4.17 in the C
• Then they will be replaced there, with the ghosts of their ancestors, on the new earth
• Only Indians will live there then
• To this prophecy, the Sioux added the Ghost Shirt, proof against soldier’s bullets

The Dance
• Unlike the rapid pace and loud drumming of most Indian dances
• Ghost Dance was a slow shuffle accompanied only by chanting
• Danced each night for 5 nights
• Lasted until morning on the 5th night
• Repeated every 6 weeks

Taught on all Sioux reservations
• Big Foot’s band
  • Consisting mostly of women who had lost their husbands and/or other male relatives in battles with Custer, Miles and Crook
  • Danced until they collapsed, hoping to guarantee the return of their dead warriors
• Sitting Bull doubted that the dead would be brought back to life
  • He did not object to people dancing the Ghost Dance
  • However he had heard that the agents were getting nervous about all of the
dancing and were calling in the soldiers on some reservations.
  • He feared the soldiers would return and kill more of his people
  • Kicking Bear assured him that
    • If the dancers wore their Ghost Dance shirts, painted with magic symbols
    • The soldiers’ bullets would not strike them
  • Sitting Bull consented to Kicking Bear remaining at Standing Rock and teaching
    the Ghost Dance

The number of people involved in the Ghost Dance movement increased in 1890
  • Panic and hysteria of the Indian agents increased
    • Agent James McLaughlin had Kicking Bear removed from Standing Rock
    • McLaughlin telegraphed Washington, asking for troops
  • One voice of sanity, the former agent, Valentine McGillycuddy, recommended allowing
    the dances to continue.
    • "The coming of the troops has frightened the Indians. If the Seventh-Day
      Adventists prepare the ascension robes for the Second Coming of the Savior,
      the United States Army is not put in motion to prevent them. Why should not the
      Indians have the same privilege? If the troops remain, trouble is sure to come."

December 12, the order was received to arrest Sitting Bull
  • Even though he had nothing to do with the dancing, McLaughlin feared Sitting Bull
    might join the dancers and thought him too influential not to have under
    government control
  • December 15, 43 Indian police surrounded Sitting Bull’s cabin before dawn in a
    freezing rain
    • Backed up by a squadron of cavalry
    • When they entered the cabin, Sitting Bull was asleep
    • Upon awakening, he seems to have agreed to come with the police
  • Large group of Sioux (some Ghost Dancers?) was waiting outside
    • Larger than the police force
    • Sitting Bull seems to have refused to mount a horse
    • Catch-the-Bear shot the Lieutenant Bullhead who commanded the unit
    • In the ensuing melee Sitting Bull was killed - Bullhead shot him in the chest and
      another policeman shot him in the head
    • Sitting Bull was buried at Fort Yates, North Dakota
      • (Some Sioux claim that his body was exhumed in 1953 and reburied
        near Mobridge, South Dakota - this claim is disputed by others)
  • And the stage was set for the Massacre at Wounded Knee a
    couple of weeks later

Massacre at Wounded Knee,
  December 29, 1890
  • 500 men of the 7th Cavalry surrounded
    Big Foot’s camp (he was also known as
    Spotted Elk), the last of the Sioux who
    were off the reservation, but a group who
    had agreed to give themselves up

  Big Foot lies dead in the snow at Wounded Knee.
• Orders were to disarm and escort the Sioux to the railroad for transport to a reservation
  • The 7th Cavalry set up four Hotchkiss guns (early revolving barrel machine guns) on a hill west of the camp
• The Sioux were ordered to give up their guns
  • Yellow Bird, a medicine man, began dancing and urged the Lakota to join him
  • Black Coyote, a deaf tribesman, either did not hear the order to give up his gun or refused to do so
• Troopers moved in to take his weapon
  • This may have triggered fighting
  • Or it may be that five warriors fired first – no one is quite sure what set off the firing
• 300 Lakota men, women, and children were killed
  • 25 troopers died - some argue they were killed by friendly fire in the fight
  • Over a hundred Lakota ran off, many of whom would die in the cold
• The U.S. Army awarded 20 Medals of Honor to 7th Cavalry troopers, the most ever awarded at any single battle

The dead are buried in a trench at Wounded Knee.

Three of the four Hotchkiss guns from Wounded Knee. The lower right caption reads: “Famous Battery "E" of the 1st Artillery. These brave men and the Hotchkiss guns that Big Foot's Indians thought were toys, Together with the fighting 7th what's left of Gen. Custer's boys, Sent 200 Indians to that Heaven which the ghost dancer enjoys. This checked the Indian noise, and Gen. Miles with staff Returned to Illinois.”
The Sun Dance — *Wiwanyag wachipi* — “Sun gazing they dance”

Pay attention to the spiritually significant symbolism of this ceremony.

- **Given to Kablaya by Wakan Tanka (the Great Spirit)**
  - Renewal Ceremony (June or July at time of the full moon)
  - Renewal of unity with Great Spirit
  - Renewal of the hoop (circle) of life
  - Renewal of the community

- **Sun Dance Symbols & Ritual Elements**
  - Cottonwood tree — for the center of things
  - Cut crosswise reveals a star pattern
  - Had been hunted & captured
  - Sweet grass smoke — for growing things
  - A good pipe — for the four directions (first pipe given by White Buffalo Calf Woman)
  - Eagle bone whistles — for the sky
  - Skin-covered drum — for the earth

- **Days One - Three**
  - Rawhide man & buffalo placed in tree
  - Buffalo skull hung low in tree
  - Ribbons of black, red, yellow, white for the Four Winds
  - Participants are purified by fasting & painted red
  - Dance around the tree wearing personal symbols (necklace of otter skin, rawhide shapes of moon, star, buffalo, red/blue circle)
  - Make pledges of self-sacrifice

- **Day Four**
  - Each person acts out sacrifice
  - Often a matter of piercings
  - Strings & hooks attached to a the central tree (think Tree of Life symbolism)
  - After piercing with a metal awl, wooden skewers placed through skin
  - Pull back on strings until hooks break loose
  - End of ceremony, personal symbols are burned
Possible Chapter 2 Essay Exam Questions — Our exam questions for this chapter will come from this list of questions. I usually select two or three prompts from each chapter for the exam.

11. COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE TECHNICAL MEANINGS FOR THE TERMS MYTH AND LEGEND.
   • How are they alike, and how are they different? Include the definitions of each, as well as the chart detailing how they are alike and different.
   • Discuss the role of symbolic thought in the development of myths.
   • Why is symbolic thought necessary when talking about gods.
   • According to the lecture notes, if myths are true, must they also be literal? Explain.

12. DISCUSS THE CONCEPT OF SHARED STORIES AS IT IS PRESENTED IN BOTH THE COURSE LECTURE NOTES AND IN YOUR TEXTBOOK.
   • Why do humans tell stories?
   • What do we mean by the phrases “the vitality of speech” and “powers of memory”?
   • What are the three endowments of orality?

13. DISCUSS WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE COMPARE "DREAMTIME" AND ORDINARY TIME/LIFE.
   • What is dreamtime?
   • What is an archetype? (If you really want to look good, you’ll want to work Carl Jung into this answer.)
   • What does “becoming the archetype” mean?
   • How could the Arunta hunter become the First Hunter? Why would he want to?

14. DISCUSS THE PRIMAL WORLD.
   • Discuss what the following words mean: primal, tribal, oral.
   • Why is “primal” not a negative word? (You’ll want to discuss those who think it is a negative.)
   • Why would banishment from the tribe be seen as death?
   • What is totemism?
   • We spoke repeatedly about an “absence of sharp divisions of life.” What do we mean by this phrase?
   • Primal peoples often have no word for art. Explain what it means to say that for them “everything is art.”
   • We suggested that for Primal peoples there is no separation of life from divine beyond of salvation or afterlife. What does that mean?

15. PRIMAL PEOPLES OFTEN DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PLACE AND SPACE. HOW DO THEY DO THIS?
   • What is Eternal Time?
   • What is the Eternal Now?
   • Why does the past have a place of respect?
   • Discuss the role of the Sun Dance as a “Dance for World and Life Renewal.”
   • Why would Primal people have so much respect for ancestors and elders?

17. WHAT IS THE SYMBOLIC MIND?
- Do Primal people usually believe in a supreme divine being?
- What do we mean when we say that Primal belief in a Supreme Being and lesser gods is distinct from ‘anthropomorphic polytheism’ of the Greeks? (Don’t forget to tell me what anthropomorphic polytheism is?)
- How can the concept of the sacred not be exclusive to a Supreme Being?
- What do we mean when we use the phrase “symbolist mentality”?
- What is a shaman and why might a shaman be important to a Primal people?

18. Visions play an important role in many religious traditions. Visions may arise spontaneously in the visionary, or may be produced by various techniques, such as fasting, self-mutilation, sleep-deprivation, or the ingestion of hallucinogenic substances. DISCUSS THE PLACE OF VISIONS IN AT LEAST TWO DISTINCT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS, SUCH AS THE ZUNI OR THE LAKOTA OR HINDUS AND SUNIS OR BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.
- Are visions genuine encounters with a spiritual dimension of existence or merely hallucinations?
- Is there a qualitative difference between a vision that comes spontaneously or one that is induced by one of the techniques described above?
- Are visions generated by psychedelic substances less genuine as spiritual experiences than other kinds of visions? (This question also appears in the Conclusions section.)

19. DISCUSS THE MISSION THAT BLACK ELK BELIEVES THAT THE SPIRIT WORLD HAS GIVEN TO HIM, especially in light of what you already know about primal religions.
- Outline the historical situation that makes this mission important.
- Discuss whether or not he succeeded in his mission.

20. DISCUSS THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS OF BLACK ELK’S VISION AND HOW THOSE ELEMENTS ILLUSTRATE PRIMAL RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS.
- Be detailed in your discussion of the elements.
- Include the symbolism of each element, as well as the details. (Hint: I’m looking for at least colors, directions, and symbolism.)

21. DISCUSS THE INSTITUTION OF THE GHOST DANCE.
- What was it?
- What were its Christian elements?
- Discuss the apocalyptic characteristics of the Ghost Dance.

22. In God is Red, Vine Deloria is critical of much of the literature published in recent years on Native Americans. SUMMARIZE DELORIA’S OBJECTIONS TO AT LEAST THREE DIFFERENT BOOKS.
- On the basis of this summary, state in general terms Deloria's problem with this literature.
- Explain why you agree or disagree with Deloria's criticism of this literature.
- Finally, discuss whether you think his criticism is helpful or harmful to the Native American cause.

- He offers an imaginative scenario that highlights these differences. Recount at least four incidents in this scenario.
- Explain why you think this scenario is effective or offensive.
Recommended reading about Black Elk:


Walker, James R. *Lakota Belief and Ritual*. Edited by Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980. Print. Walker was born in the 19th century and served as a medical doctor first to the Chippewa in northern Minnesota and then to the Lakota Sioux at the Pine Ridge Reservation where he worked to reduce the impact of tuberculosis among the Indians. (Note: Black Elk contracted tuberculosis at this time and suffered from it the rest of his life.) While serving as a doctor, he interviewed many Lakota wise men, and those interviews make up most of this book. Highly recommended.

For more recommended reading about Black Elk, see the References listed at the end of *Black Elk Speaks*. 