

ment in advocating revolutionary social change—for themselves alone. Also included is “I am Joaquin” by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, the Whitmanesque poem that heralded the La Raza Movement. The theater section contains two historically significant plays by Luis Valdez, founder and leader of the traveling troupe created to forward the cause of the grape workers’ strike, thereby perpetuating the Spanish traveling theater tradition, while adding a politically subversive message to the traditional repertoire.

All in all, the editors are to be commended for their judicious selections of material, while still providing the depth and breadth requisite for a representative anthology of contemporary Chicana/o literature.

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**Clyde Holler. *Black Elk’s Religion: The Sun Dance and Lakota Catholicism.* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995). xxxi, 246 pp., \$39.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper.**

Few, if any, American Indian individuals are more widely known in the United States than the Lakota holy man, Black Elk (1863-1950). His story, particularly as presented by John Neihardt in *Black Elk Speaks*, has been required reading for legions of students taking classes in literature, religion, anthropology, and American Indian Studies. Scholars in those fields have generated a body of critical literature which has taken on a life of its own as Neihardt’s book, originally published in 1931, has been reprinted in paperback editions many times since 1960. During the 1970s, Neihardt appeared on the Dick Cavett show and, along with Black Elk, became something of a cult hero. Meanwhile, heated debates have arisen as to whether Neihardt’s book is ethnographically or historically accurate and whether it is a faithful as-told-to autobiography or a novel.

Clyde Holler’s book is the most recent major work in this controversy. It deals with the question of Catholicism in Black Elk’s life and the role of Christianity in contemporary Lakota culture, specifically regarding the Sun Dance. Holler came to this particular arena as a professor of religion teaching a class that employed Neihardt’s book as a text. In 1983 he attended most of the final two days of a Sun Dance near Kyle, South Dakota. In order to understand the subject better, Holler perused numerous sources in anthropology, history, philosophy, and literary criticism. In the candid, almost defensive, introduction to his book, Holler admits that he may be trespassing into those areas from his base in classical philosophy and religious studies.

Holler first summarizes the classic Sun Dance as observed between 1866 and 1882 by S.R. Curtis, Alice Fletcher and others. He then outlines the Sun Dance as remembered by informants for the period 1887-1911 and reported to James Dorsey, J.R. Walker, and Frances Densmore. The Sun Dance was officially banned by the U.S. government between 1883 and 1934, but Holler reviews evidence that the ritual continued as an underground observance in outlying areas. Black Elk affiliated with Catholicism in 1904 but played a significant role in the revival of the Sun Dance in 1930s. Raymond DeMallie, working with Neihardt's original field transcriptions, considers Catholicism as a phase in the life of Black Elk whom he views essentially as a traditionalist. Other writers, such as Michael Steltenkamp, perceive Black Elk as a fervent and progressive Catholic who essentially left traditional religion behind. In many ways, Holler attempts to document an intermediate position: "Black Elk's vision embraced the best of what he found in his own tradition, the Ghost Dance, and Catholic Christianity" (186).

Holler's thesis will not be accepted universally, but he sets out a number of points that scholars in ethnic studies will find worthwhile. Efforts to ban the Sun Dance and forcefully assimilate traditional Lakota religion were not successful. This fact speaks strongly for the persistence of basic world views and the continuity of cultural practices. Holler maintains that the essential ceremonial forms of the Sun Dance are still intact: "For traditionalists, the dance continues to be the central expression of their religion" (199). In the past there were many tribal, band, and family groups of deeply religious traditionalists to larger productions sponsored by tribal councils as tourist attractions. Holler asserts that "Lakotas maintain allegiances in two worlds, the Christian and the traditional" (202). But for many Lakota, participating in the Sun Dance is a principal means of maintaining their ethnic identity which, in former times, was more or less taken for granted as a matter of birth into the tribe, fluency in their language, and instruction by their practicing holy men. Thus, despite many changes in the Sun Dance and upheavals in Lakota culture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one can see the elements of survival and revitalization.

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