

complexity and sophistication of his thinking: Starkloff's essay will not encourage better work.

The book's production is good, but some editor should have corrected problems with lie/lay, shone/shown and lead/led as well as miscellaneous spelling errors. The frontispiece is a good-gray-poet photo, and the book contains preface and editor's introduction, index, and a chronology of Neihardt's books.

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Raymond J. DeMallie. *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) xxix, 452 pp., \$19.95.

Although *Black Elk Speaks* was first published in 1932, it was not until the 1960s that the book gained widespread popularity and elicited the interest of serious scholars of literature, ethnology, and religion. DeMallie provides in this study a resource for further investigation of European influences on Lakota culture as well as the raw material for analysis of Neihardt's role in the final production of *Black Elk Speaks*.

In his childhood vision, Black Elk saw himself as the "sixth grandfather," the representative of the earth. As DeMallie points out, it was this vision that predestined Black Elk's role as a holy man for the Lakota people. Black Elk was born in December of 1863, and twenty-five years later, after he had traveled to Europe with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and been exposed to influences beyond Lakota culture, he began studying Christianity. After his conversion in 1904, Black Elk no longer performed Lakota religious ceremonies. Yet, as the interviews from both 1931 and 1944 make clear, Black Elk never lost faith in the power of Lakota religious life. Black Elk was sixty-seven when John G. Neihardt came to Pine Ridge seeking an informant to tell him about Lakota ways. Black Elk saw Neihardt's appearance as his opportunity to share his sacred vision and to discuss his despair about the present condition of the Lakota people. Black Elk called Neihardt "talk maker" or "iyapi kage" which Neihardt interpreted as "word sender." Indeed, it was through Neihardt that Black Elk was able to send his words beyond Pine Ridge.

Neihardt originally planned to call the book "The Tree That Never Bloomed" in recognition of the holy man's sense that he had failed his vision and his people. Ultimately, however, Neihardt saw in the story a message for all people, and it was a message of hope rather than despair.

Speculation on Neihardt's role in the final product should be dispelled with this volume. DeMallie says, "The book is Black Elk's story as he

gave it to Neihardt, but the literary quality and the tone of the work are Neihardt's" (51). He supports this statement with the transcriptions of the interviews, demonstrating where certain material appeared in the book and pointing out what was excluded or added by Neihardt.

This book is easy and interesting reading for someone who has read *Black Elk Speaks* and wishes to know more about Black Elk or Lakota culture. As DeMallie points out, Neihardt deliberately omitted much that Black Elk told him about the influence of European culture on his life and definitely avoided getting into Black Elk's Catholicism and work with the priests at Pine ridge and other reservations. In fact, the Jesuit priests were shocked to discover when the book was published that Black Elk still maintained beliefs in the traditional Indian religion because he had been one of their most devout converts. DeMallie speculates that Black Elk had been able to find enough similarity in the two religious points of view to make the conversion workable for him.

DeMallie points out that no one should use *Black Elk Speaks* as the definitive study of Lakota religion, but he acknowledges the veracity of Black Elk's story as one Lakota holy man's reflections on his life and his perceptions of the changing world he had witnessed.

DeMallie's book pays tribute to Black Elk as well as to John G. Neihardt. Together they produced a book which, although a financial failure originally, ultimately became one of the most successful books about American Indians. DeMallie provides scholars and students alike a view of the collaboration that took place "behind the scenes."

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