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Review of *Black Elk and Flaming Rainbow; Personal Memories of the Lakota Holy Man and John Neihardt*

Julian Rice  
*Florida Atlantic University*

In 1931 fourteen year-old Hilda Neihardt accompanied her father and her sister Enid to the Pine Ridge Reservation for the interviews
that became *Black Elk Speaks*. Now, sixty-four years later, she provides a “human-interest narrative” of previously unpublished anecdotes from that historically significant visit, as well as pointed revelations intended to correct “serious misunderstandings” of several unnamed but identifiable interpreters.

Some of the descriptions accurately reflect racial attitudes and stereotypes of 1931. One of the elderly witnesses to Black Elk’s narrative, Chase-in-the-Morning, “was slim, hardened, and strongly built. . . . His aquiline face, twinkling eyes, and long hair completed for us the picture of the perfect Indian” (37). In context and in retrospect this description reflects outdated cultural perceptions that are more historically informative than detrimentally romantic. Similarly, Hilda Neihardt’s candor illuminates cultural differences without self-serving apologies: “Black Elk often said that people should live together, or people and animals should live together, as Ben [Black Elk’s son and the interpreter for *Black Elk Speaks*] pronounced it, ‘like relateeves.’ This tickled us because in our society relatives do not always demonstrate loving congeniality. Of course we did not let our Lakota friends see our amusement; our chuckling was done when we were alone in our tepee” (66).

Bridging the decades from a time of little or no cross-cultural understanding to the present plethora of translative writings, Neihardt’s daughter addresses two issues: Black Elk’s Catholicism and the significance of his final prayer at Harney Peak. In 1973 Michael F. Steltenkamp interviewed Black Elk’s daughter, Lucy Looks Twice, to fulfill her wish that her father be remembered as a dedicated catechist who never went back to traditional belief or practice. In that interview Looks Twice tells Steltenkamp that Neihardt had exploited Black Elk by not revealing his fervent Chris-

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**JULIAN RICE**

Department of English
Florida Atlantic University