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Review of *Standing in the Light: A Lakota Way of Seeing* By Severt Young Bear and R. D. Theisz

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Standing in the Light: A Lakota Way of Seeing. By Severt Young Bear and R. D. Theisz. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. Introduction, pronunciation guide, bibliography, index. xxxi + 191 pp. \$35.00 cloth, \$12.00 paper.

Dance, song, and spiritual renewal are at the heart of traditional Lakota life in contemporary America. Severt Young Bear's life experiences, as told in this collaborative work resulting from Young Bear and R. D. Theisz's close relationship developed over three decades, are a continuation of Lakota autobiographical and biographical literature. Theisz's fluency in Lakota language, his broad knowledge of traditional and contemporary Lakota life, as well as his adoption by a Lakota family, lend to his credibility in co-authoring the text. His friendship with Young Bear centered on their common interests in music and dance, and each's particular talents led to their becoming members of the Porcupine Singers. *Standing in the Light* is the culmination of their

desire to teach and learn about Lakota dance, song, and ceremony.

Young Bear describes "four circles of people" that exist at powwows and ceremonies. The book is divided into four parts to be used as educational tools. In Part I, "Grandfather Rode through Smoke: Names Tell Stories," reminiscent of Momaday's *The Names*, Young Bear's personal history signifies his close ties to his family and his grounding in Lakota culture. As he narrates his family history, from his own to his grandfather Smoke's, through oral tradition, Young Bear tells the story behind the receiving of names, describing well the complex nature of being a Hunka in Lakota traditional life and the responsibility in receiving and giving names. In Part II, "Butterflies from the Mouth of an Elk: The Oral Tradition," he acknowledges that the "spoken word and the memory that catches and keeps it are at the center of our [Lakota] tradition." What is important to Young Bear in learning the oral tradition is listening carefully to remember the orality of that tradition and recognize the importance of recording traditions and making them available to those who seek to learn about the Lakota cultural worldview. As an educator, he is careful to focus on the meaning of words and their individual relevance to the oral tradition.

Part III, "Singing Rooster in the Black Hills: Lakota Singing and Dancing," the heart of the book, elaborates the hypothesis that singing and dancing are central to the Lakota cultural worldview. Young Bear affirms, moreover, that these are essential means of expressing and conveying the oral traditions that maintain, or reestablish, traditional Lakota values. Through song and dance the people will survive. Part IV, "Running on the Edge: The Search for Modern Lakota Identity," further explores his cultural worldview through the telling of stories.

In each section Young Bear ably articulates his experience as a member of a Lakota singing group, the Porcupine Singers, and his personal way of seeing the world. This fruitful collaboration by Young Bear and Theisz, con-

tinuing the exploration of Lakota male roles and identity, stands as a contemporary exemplification of what it means to grow up and understand life as a Lakota male. It can be placed on a shelf with *Black Elk Speaks*, *Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions*, *Fools Crow*, and other books by and about Lakota men.

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