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The Last Contrary: The Story of Wesley Whiteman (Black Bear). By Warren E. Schwartz. Sioux Falls, SD: The Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, 1989. 146 pages. \$12.95 paper.

In the summer of 1980, I assisted a Northern Cheyenne elder in conducting interviews concerning the Black Hills with other Cheyenne elders at the Northern Cheyenne tribal building. Among the eight or ten elders present was a small, silver-haired man. I later learned that his name was Wesley Whiteman. Throughout the interview sessions, I recall, he always greeted me with a smile or some kind words of encouragement. Although our interaction with each other was brief, he impressed me as a kind, gentle man, with a deep appreciation and knowledge of Cheyenne cultural traditions. In *The Last Contrary*, Warren E. Schwartz has codified some of this cultural knowledge and the personal qualities that Wesley Whiteman possessed.

The Last Contrary presents Northern Cheyenne history and religious life as seen through the eyes of one extraordinary individual. Through eight years of association and friendship with Whiteman, the author recorded Whiteman's recollections of Cheyenne history, oral traditions, religious beliefs, songs, and ceremonies. More importantly, Whiteman tried to show Schwartz how these traditions provided a cultural map that guided and shaped his life. For Whiteman these traditions were not just ancient, bygone beliefs, but a way of life that was practiced on a daily basis.

Chapter 1 briefly describes how the author met Whiteman and how their association grew. For Whiteman, their friendship was a way to summarize his life experiences. For Schwartz, the relationship was a new beginning, altering forever the course of his life.

In the next two chapters Whiteman told Schwartz his genealogy and recounted significant historical events that his father, Vehoo (Little White Man), had participated in. These events were not discrete pieces of history, strung together in random fashion. Nor were these instances isolated familiar remembrances. They wove together kinship, genealogical history, and cultural history, forming Whiteman's social identity as a member of Northern Cheyenne society. These events linked him to the past, while simultaneously shaping his present and guiding his future.

After outlining his history, Whiteman turned to describing his own spiritual development. Through personal suffering and tragedy, participation in Northern Cheyenne ceremonies, encounters with supernaturals, and dreams, Whiteman gained spiritual knowledge and power. This knowledge and power would eventually culminate in his becoming a member of the Contrary Society and actively participating in the Arrow Renewal ceremony.

Whiteman's spiritual knowledge extended far beyond the religious arena. He understood, as Schwartz relates in chapter 5, both the practical and the ceremonial function of a variety of natural things. His knowledge included uses for plants, stones, mammals, reptiles, birds, as well as geographic places, and an understanding of the natural elements and the cosmic forces present in our world. For Whiteman, the world was alive, filled with powerful spirits, good and evil, which had to be cared for through proper religious observances. Chapters 6 and 7 detail some of the mechanisms by which the spiritual and social order of the Cheyenne universe is renewed and maintained.

Whiteman recounted for Schwartz the many ways in which the Northern Cheyenne worship, but primarily focused on the ceremonies associated with traditional Cheyenne religion. Although he had been exposed to Christianity and peyotism, Whiteman preferred to participate in the Cheyenne ceremonies surrounding Arrow Worship and Sun Dance. Aside from these, his elders taught him many ceremonies that were no longer practiced, such as the Antelope Pit and Buffalo Arriving ceremonies.

Despite his preference for practicing the religion of his Cheyenne ancestors, Whiteman held a high degree of respect for other ways to worship. He told Schwartz that

a lot of these people are jealous of each other about religion. . . . That's no good. They should all pull together (p. 70).

Clearly, Whiteman saw the whole and not just the parts of life. This means tolerance and respect for others, especially if they are sincere in their beliefs and actions.

Just as religious action connected the Northern Cheyenne with the supernatural world, so too did the various songs and stories that Whiteman told to the author. The songs and stories transcribed by Schwartz in chapter 7 had religious meaning in Whiteman's life. They are oral traditions that carry with them a deep religious and moral code.

Whiteman's religious beliefs are explored further in chapter 8. The author found that Whiteman carried on a continual communion with spiritual powers and lived his life according to the virtues prescribed by his religious convictions. Respect, generosity, cheerfulness, and the ability to endure hardships were some of the virtues Whiteman possessed as a spiritual person.

On 13 April 1981, cancer swept Whiteman from this earth. The significance of his life lies not in any scholarly analysis of what he told the author, but in his conscientious practice of a way of life—a Cheyenne way of life.

To be a Contrary was to be an ascetic of the highest order—a man of exemplary virtue and grace. As one examined Wesley's life, these things became self-evident. He was a man without prejudice and without guile, a truly noble individual, a rare human being—a "contrary" (p. 108).

The closing chapter contains three discrete supplementary narratives by Grover Wolf Voice, a cousin to Wesley Whiteman; Lee Old Mouse, an Arikara; and a Dakota, William Voice. While these narratives contain interesting ethnographic and historic information, their inclusion, in my opinion, detracts from the book's main subject, the recollections and life of Wesley Whiteman.

For students of Cheyenne culture and history, *The Last Contrary* is a welcome addition to a growing list of Cheyenne biographies. Similar to the previously published biographies, this book is rich in historical and ethnographic detail from a Cheyenne perspective. Most importantly, *The Last Contrary* stands as testimony to the resilience of the human spirit and a way of life.

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Chasers of the Sun: Creek Indian Thoughts. By Louis Littlecoon Oliver. Greenfield Center, NY: Greenfield Review Press, 1990. 105 pages. \$9.95 paper.

Elders have always constituted the primary repositories of knowledge and wisdom in traditional American Indian societies. Not simply accumulators and regurgitators of data, the old people have been relied upon to interpret bodies of information and