Radical Hope

*Ethics In The Face Of Cultural Devastation*

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**Chapter 3: Critique of Abysmal Reasoning**

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The following is an excerpt from:

Chapter 3: Critique of Abysmal Reasoning

_Courage and Hope_

Thus far I have argued that Plenty Coups's dream tracked reality at two levels. First, it picked up the anxiety of the tribe and responded to it. Second, insofar as the tribe's anxiety was justified--that it was a response to a menacing yet uncertain future--the dream addressed this real-life challenge at one remove. But the case for imaginative excellence can be made stronger than that.

At a time of radical historical change, the concept of courage will itself require new forms. This is the reality that needs to be faced--the call for concepts--and it would seem that if one were to face up to such a challenge well it would have to be done imaginatively. Courage, as a state of character, is constituted in part by certain ideals--ideals of what it is to live well, to live courageously. These ideals are alive in the community, but they also take hold in a courageous person's soul. As we saw in the preceding chapter, these ideals come to constitute a courageous person's ego-idea\(^22\). In traditional times, it was in terms of such an ideal that a courageous warrior would "face up to reality"--that is, decide what to do in the face of changing circumstances. But now, "facing up to reality" seemed to include facing up to a situation in which those traditional ideals were no longer applicable. And yet, these ideals helped to constitute the courageous person's psychological structure. So if there were to be such a thing as a courageous response to these radically altered circumstances, it would seem to require a transformation of the psychological structure with which we "face up to reality." At a time of cultural devastation, the reality a courageous person has to face up to is that one has to face up to reality in new ways.
Courage thus seems to have its own vicissitudes. We are all familiar with the image of the "old-timer": a person whose ideals and outlook would have been appropriate in a previous time or culture, but who cannot or will not change with the changing times. However unfairly, such people are stuck in the past. As we have seen, it would seem that courageous people in any robust culture are especially vulnerable to this problem, for they are the ones who have deeply internalized the traditional courageous ideals. One might think that they would therefore be the least able to make the psychological changes that courage now requires. Someone might wish to argue that, on occasion, such stubborn insistence on older ideals is itself a form of courage: a courageous insistence on the importance of these ideals. In certain historical circumstances that is no doubt the case. But, following Plenty Coups, I want to inquire into the circumstances in which courage does require this internal transformation: How might it occur, and why would it count as courage? Let us grant that such a transformation would count as an adaptation to a new reality; but why think of that adaptation as courageous?

To answer this question, we need to take a step back and ask more generally: What is it about courage that makes it a virtue that is, a human excellence? Courage is a virtue, I think, because it is an excellent way of coping with, responding to, and manifesting a basic fact about us: that we are finite erotic creatures. By finite I mean to point to a family of limitations that characterize the human condition: we are not all-powerful or all-knowing; our ability to create is limited; so is our ability to get what we want; our beliefs may be false; and even the concepts with which we understand the world are vulnerable. With the Crow, the concepts in terms of which they understood the good life became impossible ways of understanding their lives. Even when we try to think about the world we inhabit, think about ourselves and our lives, we take a risk that the very concepts with which we think may become unintelligible. By erotic I follow a basically Platonic conception that, in our finite condition of lack, we reach out to the world in yearning, longing, admiration, and desire for that which (however mistakenly) we take to be valuable, beautiful, and good.23
Thus, as finite erotic creatures it is an essential part of our nature that we take risks just by being in the world. As finite creatures we are vulnerable: we may suffer physical and emotional injury, we may make significant mistakes, even the concepts with which we understand ourselves and the world may collapse—and yet as erotic creatures we reach out to the world and try to embrace it. For all the risks involved, we make an effort to live with others; on occasion we aspire to intimacy; we try to understand the world; on occasion we try to express ourselves and create something; we aim toward living (what we take to be) a happy life. As finite, erotic creatures it is a necessary aspect of our existence that our lives are marked by risk. We are familiar with the idea that we are creatures who necessarily inhabit a world. But *a world* is not merely the environment in which we move about; it is *that over which we lack omnipotent control, that about which we may be mistaken in significant ways, that which may intrude upon us, that which may outstrip the concepts with which we seek to understand it*. Thus living within a world has inherent and unavoidable risk. If we abstract from the thick conceptions of courage that a culture may put forward in a particular historical period whether martial valor or counting coups or maintaining a stiff upper lip or being true to one's conscience—and ask in the most general terms what it is about courage that makes it a human excellence, the answer, I think, is that courage is the capacity for living well with the risks that inevitably attend human existence. At times when a culture was organized around battle—as with the nomadic Crow, as with the Homeric Greeks—courage was understood in terms of the risks of battle; at a time of, say, the Protestant Reformation in Europe, courage was conceived in terms of standing alone with one's conscience before God. In different times, in different cultures, there may be different risks; but as long as we are alive and human we will have to tolerate and take risks. The courageous person is someone who is excellent at taking those risks. That is why courage counts as a virtue: it is an excellent way of inhabiting and embracing our finite erotic nature.

Plato saw that it was a condition of our finite erotic natures that we intuit that goodness outstrips our ability to grasp it. In the *Republic*, Socrates says, "Every soul pursues the good and does whatever it does for its sake. It divines that the good is something, but it is perplexed and cannot adequately grasp what it is or acquire the sort
of stable beliefs it has about other things." For the purposes of the present discussion, we do not have to go along with Plato's metaphysics to see him as making an important point—one with which almost all readers will agree. We do not have to agree with Plato that there is a transcendent source of goodness—that is, a source of goodness that transcends the world—to think that the goodness of the world transcends our finite powers to grasp it. The emphasis here is not on some mysterious source of goodness, but on the limited nature of our finite conceptual resources. This, I think most readers will agree, is an appropriate response for finite creatures like ourselves. Indeed, it seems oddly inappropriate—lacking in understanding of oneself as a finite creature—to think that what is good about the world is exhausted by our current understanding of it. Even the most strenuously secular readers ought to be willing to accept this form of transcendence. And this is the core of Plenty Coups's commitment. His specifically religious beliefs were crucially important to him, but in my opinion, they gave him the sustenance with which he could hold onto this core commitment through the storm. The core commitment itself can be held by the secular and the religious; it is an appropriate response to our being finite natures.

And if that is an appropriate response, one can see how our erotic natures might lead us toward it. According to Plato and to Freud—who self-consciously followed this Platonic line of thought—we are born into the world longingly. We instinctively reach out to parental figures for emotional and nutritional sustenance that, in the moment, we lack the resources to understand. This is the archaic prototype of radical hope: in infancy we are reaching out for sustenance from a source of goodness even though we as yet lack the concepts with which to understand what we are reaching out for. Let us leave to one side the misfires and tragedies of human upbringing and consider the case in which the parenting is "good enough." And by "parenting" I do not mean merely the acts of the biological parents but all the nurturing acts of all the nurturing figures in a nurturing environment. Part of the sustenance our parenting figures will give us is the concepts with which we can at least begin to understand what we are longing for. This is a crucial aspect of acquiring a natural language: inheriting a culture's set of concepts through which we can understand ourselves as desiring, wishing, and hoping for
We are now in a position to see how Plenty Coups's response to the challenging circumstances of his time might count as courage. First, let us abstract from all the familiar thick images of courage and consider it as the ability to live well with the risks that inevitably attend human existence. To be human is necessarily to be a vulnerable risk-taker; to be a courageous human is to be good at it. That is, a courageous person has the psychological resources to face the risks with dignity and to make good judgments in the light of them. Second, at a time of cultural devastation such as Plenty Coups faced, the risks include not only malnutrition, starvation, disease, defeat, and confinement; they include loss of concepts. In such circumstances, courage would have to include the ability to live well with the risk of conceptual loss. Let us, for the sake of argument, assume that in Plenty Coups's time hope for a future that could not yet be grasped was a good response to the devastation they faced. In such a way, radical hope might be not only compatible with courage: in times of radical change, it might function as a necessary constituent. Again, there might be false simulacra of courage: cases in which an insistent and unresponsive "optimism" is at work, rather than an appropriate manifestation of hope. To be a manifestation of courage, radical hope must be well deployed. Still, we begin to see how Plenty Coups's radical hope might be legitimated as a remarkably courageous response to his times.

\textit{Virtue and Imagination}

I have argued that in times of radical historical change--in particular, at times when one's culture is collapsing--there may be demands made on a courageous person that outstrip traditional training and traditional patterns of character-formation. At such times, to \textit{remain} courageous one might have to endure or bring about significant psychological changes. One might need a kind of psychological flexibility that goes beyond anything the culture
was trying to instill when it taught the flexibilities of courage. If we look to the details of Plenty Coups's dream-life, we can gain insight into how these psychological transformations might come about.

There are two significant dreams to examine. The first occurred almost a year before the prophetic dream that we considered in the preceding chapter. Young Plenty Coups's beloved older brother had gone out on a warparty against the Sioux, and he was killed. In mourning, Plenty Coups, just nine years old, climbed a nearby mountain and had a dream-vision. In the dream, young Plenty Coups was taken up by the Dwarf-chief, the head of the Little People, and told that they would be a source of lifelong protection. The Little People were legendary creatures who lived in the hills and valley near Pryor, Montana, where Plenty Coups made his home in later years. The Crows believed that they had made the stone arrowheads to be found on the ground there, since all the Indians they knew made arrowheads out of bone. In effect, the Dwarf-chief blessed young Plenty Coups's own capacity for excellence:

"He will be a Chief," said the Dwarf-chief. "I can give him nothing. He already possesses the power to become great if he will use it. Let him cultivate his senses, let him use the powers which Ah-badt-dadt-deah [God] has given him, and he will go far. The difference between men grows out of the use, or non-use, of what was given them by Ah-badt-dadt-deah in the first place... In you as in all men are natural powers. You have a will. Learn to use it. Make it work for you. Sharpen your senses as you would sharpen your knife. Remember the wolf smells better than you do because he has learned to depend on his nose. It tells him every secret the winds carry because he uses it all the time, makes it work for him. We can give you nothing. You already possess everything necessary to become great. Use your powers. Make them work for you, and you will become a Chief."
Let us leave to one side the question whether there are Little People and whether they visited Plenty Coups.\textsuperscript{29} Psychologically speaking, the Little People function as transitional figures for young Plenty Coups: because they are taken to exist as some aspect of the spirit world, the question whether their voices come from inside or outside is left vague.\textsuperscript{30} We can think of these voices as the voices of an emerging ego-ideal. Note that they emerge in response to a real-life loss: the loss of a beloved older brother who, if he had lived, could have guided young Plenty Coups, provided a role model, and taught him how to grow up to be a courageous Crow warrior. But what they tell him, in effect, is that he can survive that loss and flourish. One might think of the older brother as standing for--and embodying--the traditional Crow virtues. Note that the Dwarf-chief does not give Plenty Coups specific advice, nor does he encourage the traditional virtues per se. He does not say, "Be sure to practice with bow and arrow" or "Take the first opportunity to plant a coup-stick." Rather, he more generally encourages Plenty Coups to develop his senses and his will. He already has all it takes to become great, if only he will develop his skills. In this way, the Dwarf-chief encourages Plenty Coups to courage. And it is a form of courage that is left vague and open-ended. (In this sense the Dwarf-chief does seem a precursor of the worthy chickadee.) In effect, the Dwarf-chief tells him that if he develops his own capacities, he will develop the ability to meet the world's challenges with skill and wisdom. This is a voice of hope that can play a significant role in developing the reasoned confidence that is constitutive of courage.

When I wakened I was perspiring. Looking into the early morning sky that was growing light in the north, I went over it all in my mind. I saw and understood that whatever I accomplished must be by my own efforts, that I must myself do the things I wished to do. And I knew that I would accomplish them if I used the powers that Ah-badt-dadt-deah had given me. I had a will and I would use it, make it work for me, as the Dwarf-chief had advised. I became very happy, lying there looking up into the sky. My heart began to sing like a bird, and I went back to the village needing no man to tell me the meaning of my dream. I took a sweat-bath and rested in my father's lodge. I knew myself now.\textsuperscript{31}
Of course, Plenty Coups is recounting his childhood dream in old age—and he is telling it to a white man in order that be written down and preserved. Thus one should expect that there have been secondary revisions along the route from the original dream-memory when he woke up to this recounting approximately sixty-five years later. All the better! Because the Crow attributed so much importance to these dreams, there is reason to believe that the dream was recounted over and over from its childhood occurrence—and thus that the large-scale narrative structure of the dream is correct. But our project is not to uncover the original dream in all its pristine clarity; it is rather to see what role the dream might have had in the construction of Plenty Coups's character. Thus the tellings and retellings, the formations and transformations—these are what take hold in Plenty Coups's psyche. Even in old age he recounts this dream as though its meaning had been confirmed. But this persistent sense that the dream was confirmed suggests that the voice of the Dwarf-chief—one of Plenty Coups's ego-ideals—was sufficiently flexible that even in times of radical change, Plenty Coups remained confident that a courageous response was within his repertoire. Arguably this confidence contributed to his flexible—yet courageous response to cultural collapse.

Psychoanalysts are trained to pay attention to breaks in a narrative. Linderman reports a striking moment when the chief finished his account of this dream: "Here the old Chief, as though struck with remorse, turned his head aside and whispered, 'Oh Little-people, you who have been my good Helpers through a long life, forgive me if I have done wrong in telling this to Sign-talker. I believed I was doing right. Be kind. I shall see you very soon and explain all." 32

Obviously, we are not in a position to make an unimpeachable interpretation of this interlude. It was uttered in front of Linderman, so in some extended sense it might have been for his benefit. But if we just take this interlude at face value, it seems as though Plenty Coups is being interrupted in his conversation in order to respond to another call that suddenly needs tending to. The fact that he feels drawn to address the Little People
suggests that they are still a live presence for him--just as he says they've been. And the fact that he appears "struck with remorse" and explicitly asks for their forgiveness suggests that the relationship has been importantly private. One way to understand this is in terms of one's relationship to the spiritual world being a private matter. This is how Plenty Coups seems to have understood it. However that may be, it is also true that a certain reticence typically characterizes one's relationship to the "spiritual world" of one's own soul. This plea for forgiveness is an indication that Plenty Coups has disclosed the wellsprings of his psyche. If the Little People--and in particular the voice of the Dwarf-chief--did function as an ego-ideal for Plenty Coups, we begin to see how he might have had the psychological ability to break through the traditional thick forms of courage and find a new, thinner form that could help the Crow through their trying times.

We began looking at Plenty Coups's prophetic dream in the previous chapter, when we were considering how one might cope with the future at a time when the standard forms of practical reason had become attenuated. The question before us now is why one might think of Plenty Coups's dream activity--and his steadfast commitment to it--not just as a means of coping, but as a human excellence. What is it about Plenty Coups's response that makes it not just a psychologically efficacious way of maintaining hope through difficult times, but a genuine manifestation of courage?

Plenty Coups had his second, prophetic dream almost a year after his dream of the Little People. The first dream occurred when his brother had been killed and he was just nine years old; the second dream occurred when he was not yet ten. The first dream was a response to a traditional form of loss: the death of a loved one in battle against a traditional enemy. And yet, the legacy of the dream was to embed in him an authoritative voice that said he had the skills to face up to the future and flourish. We might wonder whether this first dream gave him the courage to have the second one. For in the second dream he imagines a future that is radically malign, and still he will have the ability to face it well and survive. It seems to me arguable that in this second dream Plenty Coups was beginning to face up to a reality that at this point--in history, in his development--he could not face
in any other way. And although the dream is, of course, dreamlike, it has a disturbingly realistic tone. It is far from being purely wishful: it predicts the destruction of a way of life. It sees some powerful and malevolent forces that cannot be contained. Indeed, the dream is about facing up to destructive forces that none of the Indian tribes will be able to control. Recall that in the dream young Plenty Coups is there as the person who is experiencing the prophecy, and there is a Man-person who is a narrator and guide. In the dream, young Plenty Coups sees an old man sitting under a tree and feels pity for him. The Man-person explains to Plenty Coups that that old man is in fact Plenty Coups himself. At that very moment both the Man-person and the old man disappear.

Instead I saw only a dark forest. A fierce storm was coming fast. The sky was black with streaks of mad color through it. I saw the Four Winds gathering to strike the forest, and held my breath. Pity was hot in my heart for the beautiful trees. I felt pity for all things that lived in the forest, but was powerless to stand with them against the Four Winds that together were making war. I shielded my own face with my arm when they charged! I heard the Thunders calling out in the storm, saw beautiful trees twist like blades of grass and fall in tangled piles where the forest had been. Bending low I heard the Four Winds rush past me as though they were not yet satisfied, and then I looked at the destruction they had left behind them.

Only one tree, tall and straight, was left standing where the great forest had stood. The Four Winds that always make war alone had this time struck together, riding down every tree in the forest but one. Standing there alone among its dead tribesmen, I thought it looked sad. "What does this mean?" I whispered in my dream.

Plenty Coups is explicitly dreaming of a historical catastrophe of unique proportion. In the past, each of the winds had made war one at a time. Now it was to be a perfect storm. For this dream to be a manifestation of courage—or, part of the process by which a courageous person develops—we do not need to believe that the
young dreamer is clairvoyant; only that he is imaginatively tracking, responding to, and representing reality somehow. The claim would be that this dream was not just an imaginative fiction--a nightmare coming from his private demons--but that Plenty Coups was imaginatively responding to an impending disaster that an extraordinary young man could sense and represent in a dream. One may question the evidentiary value, but Plenty Coups does say to Linderman, "I was nine years old and undeveloped, but I realized the constant danger my people were in from enemies on every side."\(^35\)

In the light of this second dream, it is useful to go back to the first dream and see that even there the winds are represented as malign, external forces over which he lacks control. In that first dream, he is taken by a person he doesn't see to a lodge filled with "Persons I did not know...each Person was an old warrior." When he enters there are strong voices of complaint:

"Why have you brought this young man into our lodge? We do not want him. He is not our kind and therefore has no place among us." The words came from the south side, and my heart began to fall down. I looked to see what Persons sat on the south side, and my eyes made me afraid. They were the Winds, the Bad Storms, the Thunders, the Moon, and many Stars, all powerful, and each of them braver and much stronger than men...I knew that to live on the world I must concede that those Persons across the lodge who had not wished me to sit with them had work to do, and that I could not prevent them from doing it. I felt a little afraid but was glad I was there.\(^36\)

It is in the context of these menacing, unwelcoming forces that Plenty Coups recognizes he cannot control that the Dwarf-chief welcomes him and offers him encouragement. That is, young Plenty Coups is encouraged to courage in the face of these overwhelming forces, not in ignorance of them. In Plenty Coups's imaginative life--whatever its ultimate source--these menacing external forces develop over the course of the year--from age nine to nearly ten--into an overwhelming storm; and yet Plenty Coups is told that he has the ability to succeed--even
in the face of this destructive reality. The world in which he has the capacity to succeed is a world of real-life dangers and genuine risk. It is a world in which he will succeed only if he develops and uses his innate skills well: this is the world of the courageous person.

It is also worth considering the role of pity in the prophetic dream. Plenty Coups says that he felt pity for all the trees knocked down in the forest, and pity for the creatures that lived there—though he was "powerless to stand with them against the Four Winds." And when he looked at the old man sitting in the shade of that lone standing tree, "I felt pity for him because he was so old and feeble." For the Crow, pity is an emotion appropriate to the gods. As we have seen, when young men went out into nature to seek their dream-vision, they would call out to God, "Pity me!" When they cut off a joint of a finger, made themselves bleed, starved, and became weak, they did so to invite the pity of the spiritual world. It is from pity that the gods are moved to help men. Thus when young Plenty Coups in the dream feels pity, one might guess that it represents a fascinating compromise formation. On the one hand, Plenty Coups represents himself as helpless in the face of inexorable sad events—hardly the kind of wishful omnipotence one often sees in dreams. This is not a nine year-old boy dreaming he is superman. On the other hand, he responds with a godlike emotion. He portrays himself as able to see these events accurately. In the dream he is viewing events as they shall be, and he responds with an emotion that is appropriate to gods and men alike. Imaginatively, we might think of extraordinary men as inhabiting a space between gods and ordinary men. The true heroes are intermediate figures—mortals who can communicate with the divine. But if we think of the psychological process by which courage develops in an individual soul, young Plenty Coups is imaginatively giving himself the resources to experience reality as the gods would. Part of what it is to be courageous is to see reality accurately and to respond well in the face of it. Plenty Coups is envisaging a scene that is genuinely pitiable—the gods would see it that way—and yet, even in these circumstances, he is able to respond and act well. The point is not that he is dreaming that he can do this; it is that his dreaming equips him with the psychological resources actually to be able to do it.
Courage, Aristotle tells us, requires the ability to face up to reality, to exercise good judgment, and to tolerate danger in doing so. One way to explore the depth of a person's courage is to inquire into the range of experience in which a person can do just that. What kind of constancy can a person maintain across life's experiences? A traditional courageous warrior would be able to face anything that might arise in battle. Thus we apprehend the truly courageous warrior in terms of the extremes of battle experience. A person demonstrates his ability to act courageously over a range of experience when he can continue to act well at its limits. As would be expected, Crow tales of courage are of extraordinary deeds--for this is the realm in which true courage comes to light. But, as we have seen, the truly courageous warrior who could face anything in battle might be utterly unequipped to face a reality in which battle becomes irrelevant. His training in youth may have equipped him to face all foreseeable possibilities; but what has emerged in his time are new types of possibility. There are now new limits opening up to the possibilities of experience. How is one to face the reality that a way of facing reality is coming to an end? It looks as though Plenty Coups's dream life is giving him just the kind of psychological resources he needs to face this new reality well.

One of the salutary effects of his dream is to inoculate him against the problem of evil. The Crow believe that they are a chosen people: chosen by God to flourish on this particular land. The problem of evil arises when a religious people are faced with horrific historical circumstances. They ask, "How could a good and powerful God allow this to happen to us?" The problem is especially pressing when God seems to remain silent. When Plenty Coups had his dream, the Crow were about to face the worst century in their history. There were to be punishing battles with the Sioux, confinement to the reservation, terrible disease and mortality at Crow Agency. But Plenty Coups's dream anticipates that a terrible storm is coming; so when these bad events occur, they are seen as confirming the dream. The dream is taken as coming from a spiritual source, and it gives an explanation of the disaster. The Four Winds are natural-spiritual forces that have overwhelming power, but their menacing existence does not disturb the very fabric of the universe. The world is a place in which such a storm can occur. It is possible for humans to be overwhelmed in this way, but the fundamental goodness of the world is secure.
Also, the dream, as interpreted, gives divine sanction for the thought that if the Crow can use their wisdom--the wisdom of the chickadee--they can survive. Plenty Coups adopts this interpretation and remains steadfast in his commitment to it. Thus the message of the dream, while pessimistic, also holds out hope. And it leaves intact the idea that the Crow have a special place. Plenty Coups's dream is interpreted by the elders as saying that the original divine promise will be sustained: if they follow the wisdom of the chickadee, they will survive and hold onto their land. Even today, if one visits the museum in Plenty Coups State Park in Pryor, Montana, one will see this plaque:

Our elders interpreted his vision to mean that the white people would take over Indian country, and that the Chickadee's lodge represented the Crow tribe, which placed its lodge in the right place. Today we retain the heart of Crow country as our reservation.

In this way, the dream provides the psychological resources by which one might avoid despair. But for this hope to count as a constituent of courage, rather than as a mere wishful optimism, we must see it as facilitating the capacity to respond well to reality. For Plenty Coups and the Crow, the dream had a divine sanction; and this belief played a significant role in their ability to hold onto its significance. We can remain agnostic about that claim and nevertheless argue that the dream manifested courage--and contributed to its development. All we need to maintain is that the dream was itself a creative response to reality and that as a response it was not entirely wishful but actually provided good advice. The prediction in the interpreted dream is not that things will work out for the Crow no matter what, but that after an inevitable devastation, the Crow will survive and hold onto their land if they make the best use of their own skills to learn from others. The historical record gives credence to the idea that this was good advice. It is, I think, arguable that the Crow ended up better off by following this advice than they would have by any other strategy. And, in particular, despair would have made them worse off in terms of dealing with life's challenges. In this way it is arguable that the hope embedded in Plenty Coups's dream was an important constituent of courage. The aim is not to make an a priori argument that
such a strategy will always be courageous. We must rely on our own best judgment--and our best judgment of what counts as the best judgment of others--to make up our minds about what counts as genuine courage. But if we examine the details of these decisions and acts, a plausible case can be made that they were a manifestation of courage.

_Historical Vindication_

The Crow were not able magically to turn the tide of history. The onslaught of the white man was a force that no Indian tribe could resist. That outcome is just as the dream predicted. The question is whether the hopefulness manifest in the dream facilitated a courageous response to the new challenges the Crow would face. To the extent that the dream was confirmed—that the Crow did survive and did hold onto their land—what role did that hope play in securing this outcome? I think it can be shown that the role was considerable.

On the basis of Plenty Coups's dream, the tribe decided to ally with the United States against its traditional enemies. They participated in common battles against the Sioux and celebrated the defeats that were inflicted upon them. And the U.S. government did treat the Crow as an ally. This fact did not stop the United States from repeatedly revising treaties at will and from encroaching on Crow lands. But, unlike other tribes, the Crow were not displaced from their lands, they were not put on a forced march, they did not have to walk a "trail of tears"—and they could correctly say of themselves that they were never defeated. Their undefeated status remains a source of pride among the Crow. Plenty Coups was received at the highest levels of the U.S. government in Washington—as were other Crow chiefs—and treated with respect. And although they suffered many strategic setbacks, the Crow were able to leverage for themselves a better outcome than they could have done by pursuing any other strategy. In this way the dream helped them to face up to this new reality and to deal with it in imaginative, resourceful, yet steadfast ways.
A paradigm is the sequence of negotiations that led to the Crow Act of 1920. Although the Crow had retained some of their land, the United States put pressure on them to divide it up, allotting individual properties to the members of the tribe. Such a change posed a threat to the survival of the tribal lands, as Plenty Coups well recognized: once the lands were allotted, the individual farms might later be sold--and the Crow reservation could be broken up piece by piece. This threat followed an even greater one in 1915, when the U.S. senators from Montana proposed that all the unallotted land west of the Big Horn and east of Little Big Horn be opened to homesteaders; individual Crows who already had their own allotted farms would be able to keep them. This measure, if passed, would have appropriated all the land that the Crow tribe still held communally. In January 1917, Plenty Coups led a delegation to Washington that lobbied successfully to prevent the bill from coming to the Senate floor. After World War I, in 1919, the issue arose again. The Senate Indian Affairs Committee told the tribe that no bill would pass without their approval provided the Crow ended the practice of communally held land. This proposition sparked a debate within the tribe. Plenty Coups argued for resisting any further changes; some of the younger leaders, like Robert Yellowtail, a lawyer educated in the white man's school, saw allotment as a way to avoid further white encroachment. The younger leaders won the day, and the Crow Act became law in 1920.

This sequence of events is an example of what Aristotle would call a mixed action. The Crow had to act in difficult circumstances. Plenty Coups was not able to avoid the allotment of reservation lands. But the tribe was able to negotiate significant successes. The tribe retained all mineral rights to the land under its control. Although the land was allotted, it was retained by members of the tribe. It defeated the attempt to sell off "unused" land to white settlers. And, perhaps most important, the tribe was able to set the conditions under which the allotment took place. Further, the legislation set a precedent that endured: no further large-scale land offerings would be approved by Congress. Given the previous seventy years of encroachments, of treaty revisions and land-grabs, the outcome represents a significant success.
And though Plenty Coups lost that last debate within the tribe, the nature of that defeat actually confirmed the ideals that were given to him in the dream. The chickadee survives because he is able to learn from others. Thus Plenty Coups had urged the young men and women of the tribe to be educated in the white man's schools. Even today he is remembered for telling his people: "With what the white man knows he can oppress us. If we learn what he knows, he can never oppress us again."43 Robert Yellowtail had followed this advice. And it was precisely from his study of U.S. law and American politics that he came to think that fashioning a distinctively Crow approach to allotment would ultimately be the best way to protect Crow lands. Arguably, this is the wisdom of the chickadee unto the second generation. The tribe survived and protected its interests by following the ideals that Plenty Coups advocated, even when the specific decision went against his own judgment.

Even in old age, Plenty Coups was able to wrest certain individual successes. Just a few months before his death in 1932, he asked tribal attorneys to petition the U.S. government to protect the Pryor and Big Horn Mountains from allotment—and he succeeded. These mountains remain protected. He also succeeded in having the trust period for allotments extended by twenty-six years. The result was that although individual Crow would have allotments, they would not receive title to the land—and thus not be able to sell it—until that extended period was up.44 Today members of the tribe express pride that the Crow were able to keep their mountains; and there is at least discussion of how the tribe might over time be able to buy back lands that members have sold to white farmers. There is also discussion about how the tribe might discourage future such sales.

There is another historical accomplishment that is harder to measure. Plenty Coups laid down an enduring collective ideal for the tribe as it faced new challenges. He drew upon ancient tribal beliefs—the chickadee has long been respected among the Crow—and put them to new use. He insisted that his people learn the white man's ways, but he idealized neither the white man nor his own tribe. The white man, he said, "too often promised to do one thing and then, when [he] acted at all, did another." He is someone "who fools nobody but himself."45 "With all his wonderful powers, the white man is not wise. He is smart, but not wise."46 He was no
easier on his tribe. At feasts, he would lecture them: "You who once were brave have turned into pigs. I am ashamed of you. Self-pity has stolen your courage, robbed you of your spirit and self-respect. Stop mourning the old days, they are gone with the buffalo. Go to your sweatlodges and cleanse your bodies...then clean out your dirty lodges and go to work!" Yet he hoped that a new generation would be able to hold onto traditional Crow values and customs while synthesizing them with a white man's education.

In the historical circumstances, this seems a hopeful-yet-realistic response. For in addition to all the objective degradations the various Indian tribes had to endure, they had to suffer an assault on their subjectivity. At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, it was official U.S. policy to break down traditional tribal values. Accordingly, certain traditional rituals and religious practices were forbidden by law; children were forcibly separated from their parents and put in the white man's schools; and, as we have seen, there was relentless pressure to break up tribal lands and turn the members of the tribe into individual farmers. In any case, the traditional way of life was destroyed. So it is hard to see how, in these circumstances, any ideals could survive. A crucial aspect of psychological health depends on the internalization of vibrant ideals--the formation of a culturally enriched ego-ideal--in relation to which one can strive to live a rewarding life. Without such ideals, it is difficult to see what there is to live for. Many factors contribute to the alcoholism and drug abuse that plague the Indian reservations; no doubt, unemployment and poverty play crucial roles. But there is also the psychological devastation for young teenagers when they cannot find ideals worthy of internalizing and making their own.

For a vibrant culture, it is traditionally the task of the older generation to adapt the culture's ideals to current challenges and to pass those ideals on to the next generation. But in the period 1870-1940, the Crow tribe went through such a collective disruption that there was no way to pass on those ideals in an unproblematic way. It was in this context that Plenty Coups drew on traditional tribal resources--the chickadee--to formulate an ego-ideal of radical hope. That is, he gave the tribe the possibility of drawing on a traditional ideal that would help
them endure a loss of concepts. I am tempted to say that during their nomadic warrior period no Crow could have dreamed of the uses to which the traditional icon of the chickadee would eventually be put. Except that one of them did. Even he could not dream in detail about the chickadee's future. But this ideal gave the Crow a basis of hope at a time when it was systematically unclear what one could hope for. Plenty Coups's dream held out for the Crow the hope that if they followed the wisdom of the chickadee (whatever that would come to mean) they would survive (whatever that would come to mean) and hold onto their lands (whatever that would come to mean). Thus Plenty Coups bequeathed an ideal that would help the tribe tolerate a period of conceptual devastation. And the fact that this ideal has survived--that is, that a traditional ideal has a vibrant life on the other side of this abyss--lends legitimacy to the claim that the Crow have indeed survived. Or, perhaps, that the Crow have revived.

That Plenty Coups could formulate such an ideal and pass it along--at a time when traditional ideals were losing their vibrancy--is, I think, his greatest achievement. Plenty Coups's ideal remains a powerful legacy. His exhortation to education is the credo of Little Big Horn College, which educates students on the reservation in Crow history and tradition, but also in algebra, accounting, economics, computing, psychology, and the humanities. It is a living monument to his ideal. I have had the privilege of talking to young members of the Crow Nation-students on the reservation and at Little Big Horn National Monument, as well as students and interns in Washington, D.C., and Chicago--and I have repeatedly been told that in childhood Plenty Coups's words were drilled into them. In their articulateness, vibrancy, knowledge of events, and plans for the future--and in their ability to interact comfortably with whites and Indians-one will, I think, see the living legacy of Plenty Coups's hope. This was not merely wishful optimism but a sustained thoughtful engagement with the world that, in terrible circumstances, yielded tangible positive results.
Plenty Coups felt vindicated by his life choices. As he told Linderman:

The Crow were wiser [than the Sioux and Cheyenne]. We knew the white men were strong, without number in their own country, and that there was no good in fighting them...Our leading chiefs saw that to help the white men fight their enemies and ours would make them our friends. We had always fought the three tribes, Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapahoe, anyway, and might as well do so now. The complete destruction of our old enemies would please us. Our decision was reached, not because we loved the white man who was already crowding other tribes into our country, or because we hated the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapahoe, but because we plainly saw that this course was the only one which might save our beautiful country for us. When I think back my heart sings because we acted as we did. It was the only way open to us.⁴８

Look at our country! It was chosen by my people out of the heart of the most beautiful land on all the world, because we were wise. And it was my dream that taught us the way.⁴⁹

In old age Plenty Coups could see that the Crow had been able to hold onto their lands. As history unfolded, the very idea of what it was to hold onto one's land changed radically, but the elderly Plenty Coups could nevertheless see his boyhood dream as having been confirmed by experience. Indeed, as he was recounting his tale to Linderman--as he was telling him that prophetic dream--he was sitting on the very spot where the dream had placed him. "And here I am, an old man, sitting under this tree just where that old man sat seventy years ago when this was a different world."⁵⁰ He had brought himself to the spot where the dream told him he would be. And the recitation of the dream to Linderman was in its own way the triumphal counting of coup: he was
telling the story of how he successfully went to "battle" to protect his land. He was now sitting under the tree that the dream told him he would if he adopted the virtue of the chickadee.

At Plenty Coups's home, that tree is still standing. And his house is now a state park. Plenty Coups got the idea of donating his house when he visited Mt. Vernon, George Washington's house. Here is an instance of taking up a white man's idea in order to establish an institution that would preserve and transmit traditional Crow values. Plenty Coups and his wife Strikes the Iron wanted to will his house and property to the u.s. government to be "set apart as a park and recreation ground for the members of the Crow Tribe of Indians and white people jointly...in trust and perpetuity." In one of history's ironies, the U.S. government took itself to be unable to accept the land as a gift! It seems that the government could only take land, not accept it. And, adding insult to injury, government agents decided to mislead and patronize Plenty Coups: "It was the intention of Plenty Coups to will his property to the United States Government. It was found that this could not be done, but the government went through the motions of accepting the farm so as not to offend the kindly old chief. An elaborate ceremony took place at his home on August 8, 1928."

When he died the county commissioners took charge of the property; and finally the Billings Kiwanis Club trustees were able to take charge of the land and restore the property. Eventually influential members arranged to donate it to the State of Montana--and it now functions as a park, as Plenty Coups wanted. And so, Plenty Coups not only saw his dream as confirmed; he had reason to think that his steadfast commitment to his dream played a crucial role in his successfully negotiating a future for his tribe. Though they faced a terrible onslaught upon their civilization, they did hold onto their precious land, and they did hold onto the possibility of transmitting their values and memories of their traditions to another generation. Indeed, telling Linderman his story was arguably the last act of Plenty Coups the chickadee. For part of the white man's wisdom was literacy: the value of writing memories down is that it can preserve them through times when an oral culture may be under too much stress to hold onto them. The chickadee understands that in a period of cultural onslaught one not only needs an ideal like the chickadee; one
also needs to learn new ways to preserve and transmit it. That is what Plenty Coups was doing—and his ideals and memories are there today for a new generation of Crow to pick up and transform for themselves.

Thus I think the case is made not just that it was psychologically advantageous not to give in to despair but also that it would have been a mistake to do so. It would also have been a mistake to "go down fighting." The radical hope that was embedded in the ideal of the chickadee helped Plenty Coups throughout his life to make creative decisions in radically new historical circumstances. And his fidelity to hope fits all of Aristotle's hallmarks of courage. With the virtue of the chickadee he was able to reorient himself to what was genuinely shameful (criterion 1)—and to teach others. What would be shameful now would be to turn one's back on the genuine wisdom of others; to give in to despair; to nostalgically insist that one can go back to the old ways without any change. At a certain historical point, feeling ashamed that you can no longer live as a traditional warrior may be psychologically understandable, but it is a mistake. By providing an ideal for the times, Plenty Coups did not merely give himself and his people the psychological resources to adapt to a new situation; he also gave them an ideal in relation to which they could aim for something fine (criterion 2). The aim was not merely the biological survival of the individual members of the tribe—however important that was—but the future flourishing of traditional tribal values, customs, and memories in a new context. This is an admirable goal.

Moreover, the virtue of the chickadee explicitly advocates developing good judgment, and making decisions on how to act that are based on knowledge (criterion 3). This has been evident in the tribe's defense of its land. And Plenty Coups's strategy has involved serious risk (criterion 4). This was not the paradigm risk of death on the battlefield, to be sure. It was a greater risk: that one had reoriented oneself toward shame in the wrong sort of way, and was unwittingly doing something shameful, not fine; that one's strategy would not ultimately work and that the Crow would lose their land, their values—indeed, that they would be destroyed as a people. The stakes could not have been higher for Plenty Coups and his people. Finally, it has been the aim of this entire chapter to argue that Plenty Coups's radical hope was not mere wish-fulfilling optimism (criterion 5), but was rather a radical form of hope that constituted courage and made it possible. After all, through a series of canny
decisions and acts, the Crow were able to hold onto their land, and Plenty Coups helped to create a space in which traditional Crow values can be preserved in memory, transmitted to a new generation, and, one hopes, renewed in a new historical era.

This was possible because Plenty Coups was able to bring about an astonishing imaginative transformation. Through his dream--and his fidelity to it--Plenty Coups was able to transform the destruction of a telos into a teleological suspension of the ethical. A traditional way of life was being destroyed, and along with it came the destruction of its conception of the good life. The nature of human happiness became essentially unclear and problematic. In such conditions, the temptation to despair is all but overwhelming. And it was in just such a moment that Plenty Coups's dream predicted that destruction and offered an image of salvation--and a route to it. The traditional forms of living a good life were going to be destroyed, but there was spiritual backing for the thought that new good forms of living would arise for the Crow, if only they would adhere to the virtues of the chickadee.

It is worth noting the role played by enigma in making this imaginative transformation possible. For starters, Plenty Coups's name is not, strictly speaking, Plenty Coups, but rather "Many Achievements" (Alaxchiiahush). Certainly, his grandfather, who named him, envisaged that he would count many coups. Nevertheless, his name is strictly Many Achievements--and what constitutes an achievement is open for re-interpretation in the light of experience. This name functions as what psychoanalysts call an enigmatic signifier: it is given to him by a parental figure, and thus it has for him a kind of oracular status. It tells him who he is or will be while remaining enigmatic in meaning. This is what can get lost in the shift to "Plenty Coups": Many Achievements--Alaxchiiahush--knows he will achieve great things, but the nature of the achievements is left vague. Ironically, one of his important achievements involved abandoning coup. So, too, the virtue of the chickadee is essentially enigmatic. The chickadee has the ability to learn from the wisdom of others--but it is left systematically unclear what this wisdom is. That is for the chickadee to find out.
The fixed point in this enigmatic story is the interpretation the elders gave to young Plenty Coups's dream: that if the man of many achievements follows the wisdom of the chickadee, the Crow will be able to retain their land. This interpretation adds symbolic poignancy to the image of old Plenty Coups, sitting under the tree of the chickadee, recounting his story to Linderman. The planting of a coup-stick in battle was symbolic of a tree that cannot be felled. Yet there Plenty Coups is, at the end of his life, sitting under an actual tree that history has proved cannot be felled. In giving up the symbol of protecting Crow territory he actually succeeded in protecting it. He used the dream to reach down to the imaginative strategies that might save Crow land; and in so doing he substituted the symbol of the tree that cannot be felled for the tree that cannot be felled. An actual tree became its own symbol. It is still there, marking a real boundary of Crow territory.

Plenty Coups's dream--and his fidelity to it--also enabled him to live what Aristotle would call a complete life. In spite of the devastation to traditional Crow life, Plenty Coups's dream became a thread through which he could lead his people through radical discontinuity. In sticking to his dream, he unified his life across this discontinuity: and at the end of his biological life, he was able to see his life as having a unity and a purpose that was confirmed by the unfolding of events. Indeed, the repetition of his story to Linderman is its completion. In telling his story, he presented himself as having had a complete life; and he was able to pass on to a future generation what he thought was still essential to the Crow way of life.

Response to Sitting Bull

Sitting Bull in his visit to the Crow reservation was harshly critical of the ideals Plenty Coups taught. Only a fool would cooperate with the white man, he argued, and no authentic leader of the Crow would lead them in this direction. Both these leaders command our respect; and our aim is not to sit in judgment of either of them. Rather, we are inquiring into the legitimate roles that hope and imagination might play in the formation and
development of courageous ways of living. Still, Sitting Bull has laid down a challenge; and it behooves us to consider what response might be made on Plenty Coups's behalf. In this section, I am going to be a straightforward advocate for Plenty Coups's vision in opposition to Sitting Bull's.

In 1889 there was much talk throughout the Sioux reservation of the coming of a new messiah who would save the Indians. In the fall, a delegation of tribal leaders rode west, from where the rumors were coming, and in the winter they wrote back confirming the news. When they returned in the spring of 1890 they said there was a person who said he was the son of God, who had once been killed by whites, who bore the scars of crucifixion, and who claimed that he had returned to punish the whites and restore the Indians to their previous life. This seems to have been the famous Wovoka, a holy man who is generally credited with having introduced the peyote religion to the Indian tribes of the South and West. According to this messiah, in the following spring (1891), he would wipe out all whites in a catastrophe, bring back their ancestors from the dead, restore all the buffalo. These emissaries reported that they had even seen a number of dead relatives who were alive, as well as a herd of buffalo.

The messiah was teaching that the current task of the Indian was to perform a Ghost Dance, which would help usher in the apocalypse. The dance spread like wildfire across the reservation, but nowhere did it take greater hold than at Sitting Bull's camp at Standing Rock. The dance was ecstatic: participants would dance into a frenzy and continue until they dropped of exhaustion; they wore ghost shirts that would protect them from bullets; they abandoned all other activities in order to bring about this cataclysm. There is no evidence that Sitting Bull actually participated in the Ghost Dance, but he did support it. The dance began at Standing Rock on October 9, inaugurated at Sitting Bull's invitation. And when officers came to arrest Kicking Bear, who was introducing the dance, Sitting Bull promised that Kicking Bear would go back to his reservation, but the Ghost Dance would continue. They had received a message from the spirit world that they must do so. The dance continued through October and November and into December, when it was forcibly ended. As is well
documented, U.S. authorities were greatly disturbed by the Ghost Dance--they were concerned it might lead to an uprising or, at least, the breakdown of civil order--and they sought to suppress it. On December 15, 1890, as tribal police tried to arrest Sitting Bull on orders of the Indian agent, he was killed by police in the midst of an outbreak of violence.

His death is a national disgrace. And while much deserves to be said about Sitting Bull's right to religious expression as well as the ineptitude and brutality of the response, still, from Plenty Coups's perspective, Sitting Bull deployed religious imagination in the wrong sort of way. The point here is not whether one was for or against working with the white man or learning from him. Rather, it is that Sitting Bull used a dream-vision to short-circuit reality rather than to engage with it. We do not have to adjudicate whether this dream-vision was or was not coming from a spiritual source. From Plenty Coups's perspective, even if the dream did come from the spirit world, it was being misinterpreted and misapplied: Sitting Bull deployed a messianic vision that fueled the Ghost Dance in a wishful way. It is a hallmark of the wishful that the world will be magically transformed--into conformity with how one would like it to be--without having to take any realistic practical steps to bring it about. The only activity in which one is enjoined to partake is a ritual, in this case a dance. But when the ritual comes to take over one's entire life, as it did for the Sioux at Standing Rock in the fall of 1890, this is a case of what Freud called "turning away from reality." Symbolic rituals take over life--whether in an individual's private life or in the group activity of a culture--and they become a way of avoiding the real-life demands that confront one in the everyday. And it led to a disaster for the Sioux.

In a sense, Plenty Coups and Sitting Bull had the same vision, but they interpreted it in opposite ways. Both saw the ghosts of buffalo, but for Plenty Coups the vision signified they were going away forever; for Sitting Bull and his Sioux followers, it signified that they were coming back. This is a danger for all forms of messianic religions: a wish can easily be mistaken for reality. In the case of the Ghost Dance, the outcome is strong evidence that Sitting Bull's people used it in a wish-fulfilling way.
Plenty Coups was outspoken in his opposition to the messianic peyote religion that was sweeping across the Indian tribes.\textsuperscript{58} And his opposition brings to light a significant philosophical issue: there will always be a question, and thus a possibility for debate, around what counts as traditional. Sitting Bull was trying to preserve the traditional Sioux way of life. But to that end, he adopted a ritual that was entirely new--and that had itself arisen in response to painful defeat. The Native American Church, which evolved out of the messianic peyote religion, sees itself as preserving traditional Indian culture--and no doubt it does in various ways; but it is also true that the idea of a pan-Indian church would have been alien to the tribes before they encountered white culture. I have heard young members of the Crow tribe express skepticism about the pan-Indian movement. They take it as a symptom of the defeat that was inflicted on the other tribes. The Crow, in their opinion, were able to retain their distinctively Crow rituals. And thus, for them, pan-Indian rituals are ways of watering down their uniquely Crow heritage.

As we saw in the first chapter, the Crow actually stopped performing their Sun Dance in 1875; and when it was re-introduced in 1941, they had to learn the steps of the Shoshone version.\textsuperscript{59} The dance is now organized around heartfelt requests--for example, that a young girl survive a heart operation. Is this the maintenance or re-introduction of a tradition--or is the name of "tradition" being invoked to invent new rituals? It is not for me to answer this question: that is and will be the task of Crow poets, of Crow leaders and their followers. But I can say that Plenty Coups has bequeathed them the wherewithal to reinvigorate a genuine tradition. In this context, Plenty Coups's haunting statement, "After this, nothing happened," takes on a new meaning. Plenty Coups had to acknowledge the destruction of a telos--that the old ways of living a good life were gone. And that acknowledgment involved the stark recognition that the traditional ways of structuring significance--of recognizing something as a happening--had been devastated. For Plenty Coups, this recognition was not an expression of despair; it was the only way to avoid it. One needs to recognize the destruction that has occurred if one is to move beyond it. In the abstract, there is no answer to the question: Is the Sun Dance the maintenance
of a sacred tradition or is it a nostalgic evasion--a step or two away from a Disneyland imitation of "the Indian"? What is valuable about Plenty Coups's declaration is that it lays down a crucial fact that needs to be acknowledged if a genuinely vibrant tradition is to be maintained or reintroduced. It is one thing to dance as though nothing has happened; it is another to acknowledge that something singularly awful has happened--the collapse of happenings--and then decide to dance.

Plenty Coups was also able to preserve some of the traditional warrior ideals in this radically new context. As we saw in the first chapter, at the dedication ceremony of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Plenty Coups laid down his coup-stick and his headdress. But he also declared a new role for the Crow warrior:

> For the Indians of America I call upon the Great Spirit of the Red men with gesture and tribal tongue: That the dead should not have died in vain; That war might end; That peace be purchased by the blood of Red Men and White.⁶⁰

If one visits the Veterans' Memorial at the Crow Agency today one will see a list of distinguished Crow veterans who have served with or in the U.S. military from the original Sioux wars, through World Wars I and II, the Korean War, Vietnam, Panama, Afghanistan, and Iraq. On the wall there is a plaque, "Warrior's Homecoming," which begins:

> The Crow Tribe...practices its own style and brand of ceremonies and rituals. These are practices that have been with The Tribe for generations and centuries. One which has regained attention recently is a ceremony to welcome returning combat veterans. This is done today as before by The Tribe since early times when The Crow were largely a Warrior Society. It is called Warrior's Homecoming (literally translated as "bring-back-to-the-camp-home/tribe").⁶¹
There follows a description of how to perform the ceremony as well as advice about how to think about its meaning in these new historical circumstances. Thus a direct link is made between the ancient warrior values and the new and available role of combat veteran. And Plenty Coups's words paved the way.

Finally, as we have seen in detail, Plenty Coups was able to draw upon the traditional icon of the chickadee. Through his dream-vision, Plenty Coup was able to take a valued and honored spiritual force and put it to creative use in facing up to new challenges. Thus, although Plenty Coups was advocating a new way of life for the Crow, he was drawing upon the past in vibrant ways. And thus I think a case can be made that Plenty Coups offered the Crow a traditional way of going forward.

Footnotes


28. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

29. Should this book attract Crow readers who believe that Plenty Coups did receive a vision from the Little People, they should see that my account of this dream will still apply. But I am writing to show the reader who does not share traditional Crow beliefs that, even so, Plenty Coups's dream played a significant role in his development of courage.


31. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

32. Linderman, Plenty-Coups, p. 47.

33. Ibid., pp. 65-66.

34. This is what Freud would call the manifest content of the dream.

35. Linderman, Plenty-Coups, p. 47.


37. Ibid., p. 65.


41. Hoxie, Parading through History, pp. 258 ff.

42. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics p.1110a8-15.

43. Timotlly P. McCleary, "Afterword," in Linderman, Plenty-Coups (2002), p. 175. The better-known version is a bit sanitized and politically correct: "Education is your most powerful weapon. With education you are the white man's equal; without education you are his victim."

44. Ibid., p. 178.

45. Linderman, Plenty-Coups, pp. 227, 228.

46. Ibid., p. 265.


49. Ibid., p. 78.

50. Ibid., p. 75.


52. Ibid., pp. 28-39.


56. Ibid., p. 847.

57. I am speaking figuratively. There is no historical record that Sitting Bull actually had the vision associated with the Ghost Dance; but he did support the dance and thus those who had had that vision. It is part of the historical record that before the battle of Little Big Horn, he had a vision of men in blue coats falling out of the sky. And he interpreted that to mean success in battle with U.S. soldiers. See Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, pp. 288-289; Stanley Vestal, Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), pp. 150-151; Welch and Stekler, Killing Custer, pp. 50-51. For an extended account of a Sioux warrior's cataclysmic vision see John G. Neihardt, Black Elk Speaks (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), especially "The Great Vision," pp. 16-36.


61. The author is Barney Old Coyote, a veteran of World War II, who was honored with a Warrior's Homecoming in December 1943. According to his account, that was the second homecoming since World War I.
In visiting the Crow Fair—the "tepee capital of the world"—which occurs every year in late August near Crow Agency, Montana, I was struck by one tepee that had the insignia of the U.S. Army emblazoned on an entire side.