The Cheyenne at the Centre of the World: Revisiting 1960s and Thomas Berger's Little Big Man

Literature

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Abstract

1960s are typified with "counter-culture revolution" when preconceived, cultural and artistic values were contested and uprooted to be replaced by more liberal and experimental paradigms pertaining to almost all aspects of life and society. Furthermore, the general mistrust towards preconceived and media generated images led to the rise of a new kind of Western labeled the New Western or Post-Western, which undertook to re-present the western experience anew and provide more truthful depictions of how the west was won or lost. In fact, the whole era is best remembered for its aftermath rather than for what was accomplished during those tumultous years. Likewise, Thomas Berger's Little Big Man (1964), as a predecessor of the era, remains an exemplary novel worth revisiting. To begin with, it depicts for the first time the Plains Indians, The Cheyenne in particular, not simply as "nobel savages" but as human beeings with a well-structured and resourceful cosmology. As such, the novel sets the pace for other literary cross-cultural representations and establishes an anthopological approach of evaluating both cultures, that is, the Indian and the white. In addition, the novel highlights the power of "the circle"3 as compared to the power of "the square", which makes the Indian culture more tolerant and compatible with present day social and cultural tensions at both individual and community level.

1.1 Introducing 1960s

1960s are best noted as turbulent years when an amount of accumulated and repressed energy broke loose to "flood" all the preconceived absolutes and media-based mentalities. By far and large, the cultural turmoil of the era in Arthur Marwick's words (1998) included:

> … black civil rights; youth culture and trend-setting by young people; idealism, protest, and rebellion; the triumph of popular music based on Afro-American models and the emergence of this music as a universal language, with the Beatles as the heroes of the age; the search for inspiration in the religions of the Orient; massive changes in personal relationships and sexual behavior; a general audacity and frankness in books and in the media, and in ordinary behavior, relaxation in censorship; the new feminism; gay liberation; the emergence of 'the underground' and 'the counter-culture'; optimism and genuine faith in the dawning of a better world (p. 89).

In fact, the era marked the beginning of the crisis of representation reflected in such assumptions as "the death of the author" and "everything is constructed within language" (Hassan 1995; Barth 1997). Furthermore, such assumptions were prompted by the rise of new cultural and literary theories ranging from existentialism and neo-Marxism to structuralism and post-structuralism. As Marwick (1998) argues, "The philosophers of the sixties opened up new areas for study (semiotics, the study of signs, for instance), and focused attention on issues which had

not always been treated seriously enough (such as language), though they were not necessarily alone in either of these things" (p. 3). Therefore, one of the questions requiring an answer regards the circumstances which triggered such an unprecedented upheaval and turmoil. To Marwick (1998), the answer lies in the so-called "rigid fifties":

> … rigid social hierarchy; subordination of women to men and children to parents; repressed attitudes toward sex; racism; unquestioning respect for the authority in the family, education, government, the law, and religion, and for the nation-state, the national flag, the national anthem; Cold War hysteria; a strict formalism in language, etiquette, and dress codes; a dull and cliché-ridden popular culture, most obviously in popular music, with its boring big bands and banal ballads (p. 3).

In the United States, the rupture was mainly caused by the mounting distrust towards the official media and media-generated cultural images. Therefore, Raymond Federman (1993), labels the 1960s the "era of suspicion" and argues that it "took certain blunders of the Johnson administration, and subsequently the manipulations and lies of the Nixon administration, and of course the Vietnam War, and the Watergate debacle, to awaken America from its mass media state of illusion and optimism" (p. 25). Likewise, Ihab Hassan in the introduction of *Rumors of Change: Essays of Five Decades* (1995) argues on similar lines about the post-Kennedy era:

> Part of America sank forever there; part of it lives on, torn, tortured, to this day. But another part released itself in extravagant energies: the ecological revolution; the Berkley free-speech movement; SDS and the Weathermen; the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, the Congress on Racial Equality, and the Black Panthers; the Grey Panthers; women's and gay liberation; Chicano and red power; hippies and yippies, freaks and crazies; rock, psychedelics, occultism, the Woodstock nation; dropouts and communes spreading from Height Ashbury to Staten Island … It is a miracle that anyone survived the shocks, exaltations, cataclysms, apocalypses of 1968 alone (p. xviii).

As far as the fictional output is concerned, it consisted of novels that "propose nothing, they only illustrate the fact that reality is but a fraudulent verbal network … Therefore, all periods of American history are now being remade, replayed self-reflexively, as well as ironically in these parody-novels that often use the mass media as a backdrop … " (Federman, 1993). As a matter of fact, it was the time when the long-held literary and rational conventions broke loose and language utterances failed to convey any meaning. John Barth, for instance, coined the self-suggestive term: "Literature of Exhaustion" and Roland Sukenick declared the novel dead by arguing that, "The contemporary writer-the writer who is actually in touch with the life of which he is part-is forced to start from scratch: Reality doesn't exist, time doesn't exist, personality doesn't exist. God was the omniscient author, but he died; now no one knows the plot, and since our reality lacks the sanction of a creator, there is no guarantee as to the authenticity of the received version" (cited in Federman, 1993). Therefore, led by such principles or lack of principles, literary endeavors purposely blurred the distinction between reality and fiction through an intensive use of self-

reflexive elements, fragmentation, parody, irony, discontinuity, *black humor*, farce, explicit sexuality and media-related images, to name a few. As Federman (1993) puts it:

> In the novel of 1960s, where official history is mixed with the picaresque and burlesque adventures of the individual, where the characters have no other substance than their fictitious personalities since they exist only as verbal beings, the author denounces the symbolic strata that shape history and the individual. Most of these novels propose nothing, they only illustrate the fact that reality is but a fraudulent verbal network, for to replace one reality with another is a senseless undertaking, because one merely substitutes one symbolic system for another, one sets of illusions for another (p. 113).

1.2 The Cheyenne at the Centre of the World

Despite its incredulity towards recorded history and narrative itself, *Little Big Man* marks the return of the "vanishing American" as Leslie Fiedler labeled it in *The Return of the Vanishing American* (1968). However, unlike the classic Western, where the Indian is portrayed mainly as the villain and the main threat against the peaceful settlement and the heroine, Berger embarks on an anthropological study of the Plains Indian, the Cheyenne and, contrary to the classic reader's expectations, portrays them as human beings thus dispersing the one-dimensional view of the Indian. In addition, Berger, through the first-hand experience of Jack Crabb, presents at best a profound and balanced view of both cultures mythology, that is, the Indian and the white. As the anthropologist and folklorist Frederick W. Turner argues (1989a), thanks to Berger's transcultural work, "for the first time really in American letters, *both* cultures are seen from the inside out" (cited in Landon, p. 134).

Viewed historically, the Plains with their vast flatness and dry climate have many times proven disastrous to both the conquered and the conqueror. In fact, it was the Spanish conquistadores led by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado during 1540-42 who explored the Southern Plains in search of Gran Quivira or the Seven Cities of Cibola. Their disappointment at what they encountered: "no wealth, no cities, a tiny handful of humans lost in the immensity of grass," revealed a topography which changed little until 1700 (Worster, 1979). Then, it was the post-1700 era of intertribal hostilities that forced the displacement of the Indian tribes further west towards the vast grasslands and fostered the emergence of unique cultures known for their heroism and their close bondage with the land. In Worster's words (1979): "By the 1775 this culture was in full maturity, with tepees spotted over the landscape, horses tethered and hobbled, haunches of buffalo meat roasting on sticks, and a rich, imaginative mythos sung around the campfires. For the first time in its history the grassland began to experience the presence of man" (p. 76).

In fact, such a sudden rise of mobility and cultural values at the heart of the Great Plains had its own reasons. The introduction of the horse, originally from the Spanish through the Southern tribes, irrevocably changed the lifestyle of the Plains Indians, reinforced the intertribal conflicts

over territory claims, increased the mobility of the Plains Indian and improved his life-sustenance which was based on an abundance of bison herds, in fact, acclaimed as a cultural icon and beyond. As Elliot West (1998) argues, "No animal was more useful and widely revered. It walked prominently through Native American cosmologies. Various parts of the bison were eaten, worn, fought with, slept on, traded, played with, and worshiped" (p. 69).

However, the post-1700 era witnessed the rise of the Cheyenne, the nomadic hunter-warriors of the Great Plains, who excelled among the other tribes in ferocity against their enemies, unique cultural myths and fondness for horses. In fact, the Cheyenne had left their original homeland on the upper Mississippi River around 1680 forced by the intertribal warfare with the Chippewa and Sioux and the outbreak of small pox and measles among the Indian tribes. As a result, their "exodus" took a westward turn chasing the depleting herds of bison. Eventually, their horseback pilgrimage was finalized once they occupied the green area around the Black Hills, South Dakota, where their modern mythology and scriptures were sanctioned. In fact, their prophet, Sweet Medicine was called and instructed by Maheo, the All Being, on tribal law and morality and provided with four protective sacred arrows and a promise of an abundance of bison. Moreover, the Cheyenne have regarded themselves as *Tsistsistas*, that is, "The Called Out People" or the chosen people ever since (West, 1998).

However, the Cheyennes' modern history of survival had, in fact, just started. Eventually, their outstanding heroic character would be forged through countless battles with the surrounding tribes such as Arapahoes, Lakotas, Comanches, Kiowas, Plains Apaches, and Pawnees for dominance over the Plains and acquisition of horses. Gradually, the Cheyenne would move away from their traditional lifestyle toward a total reliance on the shrinking herds of buffalo and the trade with the white man. Small wonder, the second half of the 19-th century would prove disastrous for both the Cheyenne and the Plains Indian alike. E. Adamson Hoebel (1978), an anthropologist, whose studies parallel those of Grinnell's[4], characterizes the Cheyenne "high culture" of 1800-1850 as highly well-organized and adaptive:

> *The Cheyennes stand out among the nomadic Indians of the Plains for their dignity, chastity, steadfast courage, and tightly structured, yet, flexible, social organization*. Never a large tribe, they have held their own with outstanding success. They have come to terms with their environment and with themselves. They are exceedingly rational and skilled in cultural adaptation through felicitous social inventiveness and manipulation. Although deep down they are beset with anxieties, their anxieties are institutionally controlled. Their adaptation to the Plains way of life was sudden and rapid. In this situation of flux they have faced three great threats: famine, enemies, and internal disruption. They ward off famine with carefully police controlled group-hunting, abetted by occasional supernaturally directed group hunts, and they constantly reassure themselves by tribal World Renewal ceremonies. They hold off their enemies by exaltation of the military life combined with a system of firm alliances with selected neighboring tribes. They counter the forces of the internal

> disruption (in part engendered by the training values necessary to successful war making) by repression of sex, by vesting authority in those who are learned, by organized government and removal of tribal chiefs from status competition, by emphasis on altruism, by banishment of murderers, and by reinforcement of tribal unity through the great tribal ceremonies. Reasonably effective mechanisms for intrasocietal release of aggressive tensions are provided in mock battles between man and women, in a variety of competitive games, in self-torture, and in institutionalized role transfers for a few of the men [*my emphasis*] (p. 103).

In fact, that is the time when *Little Big Man* intersects by depicting the most tumultuous period in the history of the Cheyenne, precisely, the period between 1852-1876 when their mythology, cultural heritage and even their survival was at risk due to the settlement of the Plains, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills and eventually the armed engagements with the Federal Cavalry. Nevertheless, Berger's main concern lies in humanizing the Cheyenne, stripping them off any unmerited savagery, highlighting their heroic deeds and scrutinizing their cultural myths through a constant contrast with the myth-making process of their white counterparts. Therefore, Berger's aim matches Grinnell's observations that, "The Indian is a man, just like one of us … Like us he loves his wife and children; like us, he hates his enemies" (cited in Smith, 2000). Furthermore, Berger manages to utilize, for different ends, both intertextual and anthropological viewpoints thus presenting profound and truthful insights into their cosmology. To begin with, a Cheyenne's life consists of an endless list of dos and don'ts. As Crabb argues, "If you are a human being, you can't get away from obligations"[5] (LBM, p. 61) or "You've got to do things right when you are a Cheyenne" (LBM, p. 67).

Therefore, in order to scrutinize their culturally sustained myths, Berger focuses on many aspects of their social and cultural traits including their exceptional pride, honesty, legends, religion, tribal organization, bondage with nature, superstitions and rituals, their hunting and war techniques, the role of sexes, child rearing practices, courting and marriage, homicide, hospitality, to name a few, and contrasts such traits with the white man's notions before hinting at both cultures' shortcomings and human nature's weaknesses. Nevertheless, the backbone of a Cheyenne's life, in fact, consists of two main principles, that is, honor and warfare. Warfare to a Cheyenne was a unique opportunity to show one's courage and to count coups rather than to annihilate the opponent. In Grinnell's words, the Cheyenne turned to fighting due to "a desire for glory, a wish to add to their possessions, or eagerness for revenge, but the chief motive was the love of fight" (cited in Oliva 1973). Crabb too, argues on similar terms: "If you had to reduce the quality of Cheyenne life to a handy phrase you might describe it as the constant taking of risks" (LBM, p. 100). Furthermore, child rearing among the Cheyenne is based on oral storytelling and self-awareness rather than on physical beating, as might have been the case among the whites: "It ain't bad to be a boy among the Cheyenne. You never get whipped for doing wrong, but rather told: 'That is not the way of the Human Beings'" (LBM, p. 67).

However, Hoebel (1978) argues about the contradictory effects that such educational practices, mainly high expectations on heroic deeds and self-control, which leads to a vulnerable spot in the Cheyenne cultural cosmology, that is, homicide, a crime committed even in the novel by Old Lodge Skins which has eventually brought about his personal and his followers' exile from the Burnt Artery, the main Cheyenne band. As a matter of fact, the Cheyenne community strongly disapproves of homicide and considers the killing of a kin a "deadly sin" for such a horrible deed would bring misfortune upon the whole community at large, pollute the Four Sacred Arrows, shun the game away and undermine the natural harmony. Therefore, banishment is required for the wrongdoer.

In addition, the Cheyenne in the novel are noted for their exceptional hospitality: "In the Indian code, if you see a stranger you either eat with him or fight him, but more often you eat with him, fighting being too important an enterprise to waste on somebody you hardly knew" (LBM, p. 28). As Crabb observes, "… for contrary to white opinion nobody is more sociable than a redskin when among his own" (LBM, p. 59). Thus, the provision of puppy dogs to guests reveals their welcoming attitudes, noted even by Hoebel (1978): "Of their domesticated animals, the dog is a favorite delicacy reserved for feasts. 'With us a nice fat, boiled puppy dog is just like turkey at Thanks-giving with you,' High Forehead used to say to me'"(p. 68-69).

Furthermore, the Cheyenne, often portrayed as sexually repressed, take courting seriously. As such, marriage represents a serious and formal matter as chastity is both socially and culturally revered whereas adultery is regarded as a deadly sin analogous to homicide: "You seldom saw a cut-nosed woman among the Human Beings" (LBM, p. 232). George Bird Grinnell, the most resourceful anthropologist and folklorist of the Cheyenne, argues along similar lines: "The women of the Cheyennes are famous among all western tribes for their chastity. In old times it was most unusual for a girl to be seduced, and she who had yielded was disgraced forever. The matter at once became known, and she was taunted with it wherever she went. It was never forgotten. No young man would marry her" (cited in Hoebel 1978).

Moreover, the Cheyenne, unlike their white counterparts, show a great sense of understanding and altruism towards the less fortunate members of their community who have become socially and culturally outcasts at their own consent, that is, the homosexuals or *heemaneh* and the Contraries. *Heemanehs*, such as Little Horse, are often valued and praised for their entertaining skills. Likewise, the *Contraries*, such as Younger Bear, whose behavior and practices run against those of the whole community, are allowed to lead their own life differently far from the communal premises. As Hoebel (1978) argues, "The Cheyenne male who finds the stress of life too much may find an institutionalized way open to glory and public esteem by becoming a Contrary, or more simply by getting himself hurt in a battle, dying the glorious death" (p. 33).

However, despite the insightful and apparently positive observations of the Cheyenne cultural traits, Berger's main concern remains the parodic and critical observation of the cultural operating systems of the two apparently opposing world views. As such, both cultures' ethnocentric views are eventually ridiculed as equally self-centered and self-righteous as in the following paragraph

where Old Lodge Skins' comic view about the role of the Indian and the white man on earth is highlighted:

> Whatever else you can say about white man, it must be admitted that you cannot get rid of him. He is never-ending supply. There has always been only a limited number of Human Beings, because we are intended to be special and superior. Obviously not everyone can be a Human Being. To make this so, there must be a great many inferior people. To my mind, this is the function of white men in the world. Therefore, we must survive, because without us the world would not make sense (LBM, p. 181-182).

Firstly, both cultures demonstrate different attitudes towards each other due to their cosmology and cultural misapprehension. Thus, the Cheyenne, unlike the white man, "hate him [the enemy] for what he is but don't want to change him into anything else" (LBM, p. 99). On the contrary, the white man looks upon war as a means to dominate, not simply win, as it is usually the case with the Cheyenne:

> … a white man gets no pleasure out of war itself; he won't fight at all if without it he can *get his way*. He is after your spirit, not the body. That goes for both the military and the pacifists, neither breed of which is found among the Cheyenne, who fought because of the good it did them. They had no interest in power as we know it (LBM, p. 101).

Therefore, the main difference between the white and Indian culture lies in their incongruous world views: "… The Cheyennes believe in the power of the "circle," whereas the white man believes in the power of the "square." The battle of Little Big Horn, in fact, is just a battle won for the Cheyenne but a psychological scar for the white man which would eventually lead towards the Plains Indians' disperse and gradual extermination. As such, both cultures act in accordance with their preconceived cultural notions. That is the reason why the Cheyenne eventually lose the war, even though they win a significant battle, as it is the weakness of their cosmology that fails them not their lack of courage or bravery. The Indian chief, Old Lodge Skins, seems to be aware of such a weakness as expressed in a talk with Little Big Man at the top of the mountain right after the infamous battle:

> "Yes, my son," he [Old Lodge Skins] says, "it is finished now; because what more can you do to an enemy than beat him? Were we fighting red men against red man . . . it would now be the turn of the other side to try to whip *us*. We would fight as hard as ever, and perhaps win again, but they would definitely start with an advantage, because that is the *right* way. There is no permanent winning or losing when things move, as they should, in a circle. For is not life continuous? And though I shall die, shall I not also continue to live in everything that *is*? (LBM, p. 441)

In addition, it might also seem as if Crabb or Little Big Man, a captive of the white society's mythology and standards, sides with the Indian throughout his narrative, as his favorable portrayal

of the Indians especially the mythic rise of Old Lodge Skins and the critical view of the white man's civilization, might seem to reveal. As a matter of fact, Crabb's narrative rises above such cultural limitations and undertakes to analyze the shortcomings of both cultures and eventually finds faults with both of them. Therefore, Berger's novel stands as a satire on both cultures and cultural mythology:

> … Crabb's movement from Indian society to white society allows us to view each society from a different perspective. We thus see the snobbery, for example, of the whites and Indians. And although there is an emphasis on the subjectivity of the Indian life when Crab finds the feeling that he is at the centre of the earth, the narrative perspective allows both ways of life to be satirized. Thus, the novel is more of a commentary on the foibles of mankind itself rather than a simplified statement about the superiority of Indian ways (Wylder, p. 283).

Frederic W. Turner (1969) argues that Berger's novel laments the loss of the American cultural heritage: "Berger, examining at first hand the American West, discovers a melancholy fact about our culture and character: That America is neither near-savage and vital neither civilized but rather an unhealthy amalgam of both states, an amalgam in which the virtues of each have been cancelled" (p. 115). Furthermore, Turner (1969) argues that the clash presented in the novel involves "an autonomous culture (white) and a group of related theonomous cultures (red)" thus hinting at the spirituality of the Cheyenne as contrasted with the vainness and materialism of the white man's world (p.16). Likewise, Crabb, despite his apparent and often deceiving attachment to the Indian culture, fails to lay roots and succeed in either society thus preserving his divided self throughout his narrative as it is stated at the outset of the novel: "As usual, the trouble lay in deciding whether I was finally white or Indian" (LBM, p. 253). Brookes Landon (1989a) argues on similar terms:

> Jack's *achievements* are Cheyenne, his *aspirations* are white, and therein lies a kind of captivity against which his shiftiness has no power … The moment of his great victory also signals his ultimate submission to the tyranny of self-imposed definitions, just as the Indian victory at the Little Big Horn marked the end of the Plains Indian way of life (p. 141-42).

As a matter of fact, Crabb strives in vain to lay roots. He can not make it in the white society where he goes bankrupt due to the prevalence of hypocrisy and greediness; he can not make it even among the Cheyenne either due to his white skin. In Landon's words (1989b):

> Just as his observations about Indian life are consistently understanding, his inherent bias in favor of white culture-a curious blend of stark pragmatism and unbridled idealism-forces him always to shift his attention from the attractive abstract features of the Cheyenne ethos to the concrete deficiencies of its effects, as when he points out that Indians could not invent the wheel even when familiar with its basic mechanics (p. 37).

As such, Old Lodge Skins' final words: "Take care of my son here … and see that he does not go crazy" ring a bell. In fact, only once did Crabb manage to envision the centre of the world, [6] that is, a sense of belonging among the Cheyenne and it was only physical and short-lived, disrupted by the violent intrusion of Custer at Washita:

> Looking at the great universal circle, my dizziness grew still. I wasn't no more. I was there, in movement, yet at the centre of the world, where all, is self-explanatory merely because it is. Being at the Greasy Brass or not, and on whichever side, and having survived or perished, never made no difference.
>
> We had all been men. Up there, on the mountain, there was no separation (LBM, p. 443).

Thus, Berger's novel succeeds in disregarding any nostalgic depictions of a heroic, long-lost past and vanished race. In fact, it is an anthropological and historical discourse on the culturally sustained mythology and prejudices. For Berger, as for postmodernism at large, both myth and history are human constructs which privilege a particular culture's supremacy over the other. Therefore, they remain ethnocentric and egocentric.

1.3 Conclusion

Little Big Man exemplifies an exceptional Western where romantic and escapist genre expectations have been undermined through a well-researched, realistic and anthropological study of both cultures, that is, the Cheyenne and the white. Thus, through the employment of a picaroon like Jack Crabb, in fact, a jack-of-all-trades and a shifty manipulator of fact and fiction, the novel provides revealing, first-hand insights about the western experience, Western mythology and the often misunderstood cultural mythology of the Plains Indian. However, Berger's primary aim remains the satire of the unsustainable cultural myths of the past, in fact, the egocentrism and self-righteousness of such creations in both cultures. Nevertheless, the Cheyenne culture remains a resourceful tool to even provide solace and solution to present day cultural tensions and frictions of all kinds as it based on the power of "the circle" and the existence of "the centre of the world".

Notes:

1. For an all-encompassing overview of the 1960s see Jameson, Frederic. (1988). "Periodizing the 60s" In: *The Ideologies of Theory: Essays 1971-1986*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Marwick, Arthur. (1998). *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-c.1974*. N. Y & Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2. For more about the New Western and/or Postwestern see, among others, Jaupaj, Artur. (2008). "The Rise of the New western in the 1960s". *European Journal of American Studies*. Special Issue on May 68, [Online], article 6; Available:

http://ejas.revues.org/document3303.html; Jaupaj, Artur. 2012. *Redefining the American West and/or western in the 1960s: Thomas Berger's Little Big Man, Ishmael Reed's Yellow Back Radio Broke Down and E. L. Doctorow's Welcome to Hard Times*. Saarbrucken: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing; Jaupaj, Artur. (2012). "Parodic Deconstruction of the West and Western in Ishmael Reed's *Yellow Back Radio Broke Down*." *BAS/British and American Studies*, vol. XVIII, Timisoara: Editura Universitatii de Vest; Jaupaj, Artur. (2012). "Failure of the Myth: The American West as Fraud." *Mediterranean Journal for Social Sciences* (MJSS), vol. 3, No. 7, Rome: MCSER-Mediterranean Center of Social and Educational Research.

3. Oliva, Leo E., (1973). "Thomas Berger's Little *Big Man As History*." *Western American Literature* 8.1,2. Spring/Summer draws a comparison between Old Lodge Skins' view regarding the power of a circle and Black Elk in Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* whose views Berger used in portraying the Indian chief Old Lodge Skins: "… it is a bad way to live; for there is no power in a square … Everything tries to be round" (p. 45).

4. George B. Grinnell, whose works Berger admits to have consulted, is regarded as an indisputable source and authority in the Plains Indians' cultural anthropology, particularly the Cheyenne, through his most distinguished works: *The Cheyenne Indians: Their History and Ways of Life*, (2 vols; New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1924); *The Fighting Cheyennes*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915) and *By Cheyenne Campfires*, (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1926).

5. Berger, Thomas. (1964). *Little Big Man*. Faucet Crest, N. Y: Faucet Publications. Subsequent quotations are from this edition and will be documented parenthetically within my text as LBM.

6. The centre of the world consists of "a Cheyenne concept which expresses one's awareness of the circular nature of things, the unending unity of things past and present, life and death. To be at the centre of the earth is to be at complete peace with oneself and others" (Clearly 1980).

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