Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation

By Jonathan Lear

Shortly before he died, Plenty Coups, the last great Chief of the Crow Nation, told his story?up to a certain point. “When the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground,” he said, “and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened.” It is precisely this point?that of a people faced with the end of their way of life?that prompts the philosophical and ethical inquiry pursued in Radical Hope. In Jonathan Lear’s view, Plenty Coups’s story raises a profound ethical question that transcends his time and challenges us all: how should one face the possibility that one’s culture might collapse? This is a vulnerability that affects us all?insofar as we are all inhabitants of a civilization, and civilizations are themselves vulnerable to historical forces. How should we live with this vulnerability? Can we make any sense of facing up to such a challenge courageously? Using the available anthropology and history of the Indian tribes during their confinement to reservations, and drawing on philosophy and psychoanalytic theory, Lear explores the story of the Crow Nation at an impasse as it bears upon these questions?and these questions as they bear upon our own place in the world. His book is a deeply revealing, and deeply moving, philosophical inquiry into a peculiar vulnerability that goes to the heart of the human condition.

Download Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation.pdf

Read Online Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation.pdf
Shortly before he died, Plenty Coups, the last great Chief of the Crow Nation, told his story—up to a certain point. “When the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground,” he said, “and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened.” It is precisely this point—that of a people faced with the end of their way of life—that prompts the philosophical and ethical inquiry pursued in *Radical Hope*. In Jonathan Lear’s view, Plenty Coups’s story raises a profound ethical question that transcends his time and challenges us all: how should one face the possibility that one’s culture might collapse? This is a vulnerability that affects us all—insofar as we are all inhabitants of a civilization, and civilizations are themselves vulnerable to historical forces. How should we live with this vulnerability? Can we make any sense of facing up to such a challenge courageously? Using the available anthropology and history of the Indian tribes during their confinement to reservations, and drawing on philosophy and psychoanalytic theory, Lear explores the story of the Crow Nation at an impasse as it bears upon these questions—and these questions as they bear upon our own place in the world. His book is a deeply revealing, and deeply moving, philosophical inquiry into a peculiar vulnerability that goes to the heart of the human condition.
Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Scholar and author Lear (Therapeutic Action: An Earnest Plea for Irony) decodes the courage and wisdom of the last great chief of the Crow peoples, Plenty Coups (1848-1932), in this "philosophical anthropology" which seeks to pin down the way societies-and the individuals who lead them-carry on in the face of "cultural catastrophe." As a jumping-off point, Lear uses a quote from Plenty Coups's oral history, given to Frank B. Linderman shortly before the chief's death: "But when the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground... After this nothing happened." The first part of the book explores the meaning of "nothing happened," explicating the idea that history itself comes to an end when the concepts a culture uses to define its world-in this case, concepts tied to hunting, battle, and honor-become obsolete. The second part tackles "Ethics at the Horizon," the possibilities for "radical hope" in the face of inconceivable cultural change through courage, wisdom and flexibility, on both a personal and cultural level. The third part discusses the ramifications of "radical hope," both practically and philosophically. Lear's study is probably too rigorous rhetorically to appeal to a wide audience, and his insistence that "we live at a time of a heightened sense that civilizations are themselves vulnerable" could have been supported with some explicit contemporary parallels, but for those interested in the final years of the Crow nation or the ethical challenges faced by victims of cultural destruction, this book will prove enlightening.

From Booklist

Lear, a psychoanalyst and professor of philosophy, delves into what he calls the "blind spot" of any culture: the inability to conceive of its own devastation. He molds his thoughts around a poignant historical model, the decimated nation of Crow Indians in the early decades of the twentieth century. The last Crow chief, Plenty Coups, told his white friend and biographer, Frank B. Linderman, about what happened to his people "when the buffalo went away." They were despondent, and in Plenty Coups' words, "After this nothing happened." Lear dissects this phenomenon, and the Crows' struggle for continued survival, in a highly esoteric discussion drawing on the writings of Aristotle, Plato, and other philosophers. What makes this discussion relevant to mainstream readers is his application of the blind-spot hypothesis to the present, in which the twenty-first century was ushered in by terrorist attacks, social upheavals, and natural catastrophes, leaving us with "an uncanny sense of menace" and a heightened perception of how vulnerable our civilizations are to destruction, as was the Crow's. Deborah Donovan

Review

How does a nation come to life-and-death decisions at a time of crisis when it can no longer live according to its founding values? The strategic brilliance of Jonathan Lear's response to this deeply important question lies in focusing our attention on the exemplary history of the Crow people, and deploying the insights of psychoanalysis to interpret their struggle for survival. With admirable lucidity, in the most clear-cut language, he shows us that besides the glamorous alternatives of freedom or death there is a third way, less grand yet demanding just as much courage: the way of creative adaptation. (J. M. Coetzee, winner of the 2004 Nobel Prize in Literature and author of Slow Man)

As a story of courage and moral imagination, Radical Hope is very powerful and moving. The book deals with a very important contemporary issue, how cultures may seek rescue from near-death; one that cannot help but be more and more relevant to our times. It treats this subject with clarity and depth, drawing on
philosophy, psychoanalysis, and anthropology. As a book which straddles these disciplinary gaps it is rather exceptional; but it aptly demonstrates how superior a discussion of this question is, which comes to grips with the details of a paradigm case. It is a valuable addition to important debates today. (Charles Taylor, Professor of Philosophy, McGill University)

This is a philosopher making use of anthropology and history in a way that is quite uncharacteristic of philosophers. It is an attempt to throw light on the concepts of courage, of practical reasoning, of identity, and of hope through a study of the autobiographical testimony of the last great chief of the Crow nation, Plenty Coups, concerning the events which deprived the Crow of their traditional way of life. Plenty Coups said of the extinction of the buffalo, that ‘After this nothing happened.’ Lear asks and answers the question of what Plenty Coups could have meant by this. This is a remarkable little book. (Alasdair MacIntyre, Senior Research Professor of Philosophy, Notre Dame University)

In this very engaging book, Lear examines the cultural collapse of the tribe of Native Americans known as the Crow Nation. He describes his analysis as a form of philosophical anthropology, as he focuses on the tribe's thinking and how its members attempted to live when their values and lifestyle were being threatened. He begins by examining the importance of bravery, courage, and honor within the tribe's culture and how these values were tested when the Crow were forced to abandon their warrior lifestyle and move onto a reservation. Their chief, Plenty Coups, inspired the Crow to use what Lear describes as 'imaginative excellence' by trying to imagine what ethical values would be needed in their new lifestyle. Plenty Coups did this with a combination of such traditional sources as dream interpretation and past ethical values, which gave the Crow an opportunity to overcome their despair and lead a meaningful life. In his analysis, Lear creatively uses philosophical ideas to explain what it must have been like for the Crow to make this radical change. (Scott Duimstra Library Journal 2006-07-01)

For those interested in the final years of the Crow nation or the ethical challenges faced by victims of cultural destruction, this book will prove enlightening. (Publishers Weekly 2006-09-11)

Lear, a psychoanalyst and professor of philosophy, delves into what he calls the 'blind spot' of any culture: the inability to conceive of its own devastation. He molds his thoughts around a poignant historical model, the decimated nation of Crow Indians in the early decades of the twentieth century... What makes this discussion relevant to mainstream readers is his application of the blind spot hypothesis to the present, in which the twenty-first century was ushered in by terrorist attacks, social upheavals, and natural catastrophes, leaving us with 'an uncanny sense of menace' and a heightened perception of how vulnerable our civilizations are to destruction, as were the Crow. (Deborah Donovan Booklist 2006-08-01)

There is so much to learn here; Lear parses the differences between mere optimism and radical hope, as it is manifest in Plenty Coups' 'fidelity to his prophetic dream.' It's one of those books you want to put in the hands of leaders the world over. (Susan Salter Reynolds Los Angeles Times Book Review 2006-10-01)

A sustained meditation on cultural collapse, a brilliant, moving discussion of what it means to lose sense of one's existence without losing hope that existence makes sense. Lear's meditation centers on Plenty Coups, the last great chief of the Crow Nation, who watched, and in many ways directed, the transition from a nomadic hunting culture to one confined to reservations. Lear argues that he exhibited a special version of courage, an ironic and transcendental courage in the form of radical hope. His account opens up meaning for anyone, anywhere, who lives in and thinks about his or her world. (Mark Kingwell Globe & Mail 2006-11-25)

Jonathan Lear's latest book, Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation, consists in an inquiry,
properly characterized as a form of philosophical anthropology, into 'a peculiar form of vulnerability' that is arguably part of the human condition… The general problem, however, that he deals with has to do with what he calls the 'blind spot' of any culture: the inability to conceive of its own destruction and possible extinction… I can only add my comments of well-deserved praise to an already long list of similar comments by illustrious commentators… Lear's book is not only a masterfully crafted and deeply moving narrative, but it also offers us a timely philosophical reflection that is highly relevant to our current condition at this juncture of history. Needless to say, we live in an age of deep and profound angst that the world itself, as we know it, is vulnerable and could break down… Lear may be right when he says that 'if we could give a name to our shared sense of vulnerability, perhaps we could find better ways to live with it.' But, being naturally more pessimistically inclined, and therefore arguably more realistic, I sincerely doubt if this will suffice. (Nader N. Chokr Metapsychology 2007-01-16)

Lear's book breaks new ground, in an extremely interesting way… What do I take away from this short, illuminating book? My own version of radical hope, applied to very different circumstances… This is what makes Lear's well-written and philosophically sophisticated book so valuable. As a story of courage and moral imagination, it is very powerful and moving. But it also offers the kind of insights that would-be builders of 'new world order' desperately need. (Charles Taylor New York Review of Books 2007-04-26)

A beautifully crafted and skillfully constructed examination of the dreams and hopes of Chief Plenty Coups, the last principal leader of the Crow people. Lear succeeds admirably in portraying the ethical and social issues Plenty Coups overcame to bring his people into a new, dramatically different reality. (Timothy P. McCleary, Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency, Montana)


[Lear's] book exemplifies the best features of recent breakthrough works in philosophy: it is analytically rigorous, yet grounded in both history and anthropology, and open to world-views other than those safely ensconced in the Western academy… Lear's account of cultural devastation serves as an important rejoinder to those constructions of society based on the beliefs of liberal individualism. (Luke Gibbons Field Day Review 2008-06-01)

Radical Hope is a very rich and complicated repast that a reader can savor over and over again, discovering new insights with each reading. My review, in short, cannot do Lear's book justice. (Ryan LaMothe Psychologist–Psychoanalyst 2007-09-01)

Thought-provoking and highly-recommended… As Lear points out, with the onset of reservation life it became increasingly problematic to define what a warrior was and there was no longer a clear sense of what it was to be outstanding as a chief. In a very real sense, Lear's observation holds true today. The tribal water quality specialist may do excellent work and the recipient of a tribal scholarship may be a top-notch student. They may also be aware of the tribe's history; participate in tribal ceremonies, and understand the importance of place in tribal culture. But neither understands how to constitute themselves as persons who need to internalize the ideals associated with those social roles for the benefit of the tribe… An examination of Lear's book is an excellent starting point for those planning tribal workforce development programs. (Mervyn Tano International Institute for Indigenous Resource Management)

Don't be alarmed by its grimly academic title; [Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation] is one of the most profound and elegantly written books to come out in decades. The book discusses a Crow Indian leader named Plenty Coups, who led his people through their brutal transition from a nomadic hunting culture to confinement on a government reservation. This is not a work of history or anthropology, however,
but an inquiry into how an entire society can radically transform itself in order to survive. Lear’s book is visionary and—if you take its message to heart—transformative. He has done one of those rare things: produced a work that applies to literally every person on the planet. (Sebastian Junger *Time* 2010-07-12)

**Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Andrew Schulz:**

What do you regarding book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you want something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your time? Or are you busy man or woman? If you don’t have spare time to do others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Everybody has many questions above. They have to answer that question because just their can do this. It said that about reserve. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on jardín de infancia until university need this particular Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation to read.

**Donald Cauley:**

People live in this new time of lifestyle always aim to and must have the extra time or they will get lots of stress from both daily life and work. So, if we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not only a robot. Then we inquire again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to anyone of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then ever try this one, reading guides. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is definitely Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation.

**Mary Kasten:**

You can spend your free time you just read this book this publication. This Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation is simple to develop you can read it in the park, in the beach, train and soon. If you did not get much space to bring the printed book, you can buy the particular e-book. It is make you easier to read it. You can save the book in your smart phone. Therefore there are a lot of benefits that you will get when you buy this book.

**Lucia Stevenson:**

Guide is one of source of expertise. We can add our knowledge from it. Not only for students but additionally native or citizen need book to know the up-date information of year for you to year. As we know those guides have many advantages. Beside we all add our knowledge, may also bring us to around the world. With the book Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation we can consider more advantage. Don’t one to be creative people? To become creative person must love to read a book. Simply choose the best book that suited with your aim. Don’t become doubt to change your life with that book Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation. You can more appealing than now.
Read Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation By Jonathan Lear for online ebook

Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation By Jonathan Lear Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation By Jonathan Lear books to read online.

Online Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation By Jonathan Lear ebook PDF download

Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation By Jonathan Lear Doc

Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation By Jonathan Lear Mobipocket

Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation By Jonathan Lear EPub

691BACDRKWV: Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation By Jonathan Lear