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## “As if Reviewing His Life”: Bull Lodge’s Narrative and the Mediation of Self-Representation

JOSEPH P. GONE

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*One night my Father had a vision in his sleep, he saw an old man standing at a distance on the horizon of a low hill. . . . Then the old man spoke, saying, “I came to tell you of my life, I give it to you, you will live until you die of old age, but before that time you will pass away in order that you may demonstrate the power which I am giving you. The power to arise after you have passed away.”*

—Garter Snake, in Fred P. Gone’s “Bull Lodge’s Life”

In 1980, on behalf of the Gros Ventre people, George P. Horse Capture published *The Seven Visions of Bull Lodge, as Told by His Daughter, Garter Snake*.<sup>1</sup> *The Seven Visions* describes a lifetime of personal encounters with Powerful other-than-human Persons by the noted Gros Ventre warrior and ritual leader, Bull Lodge (ca. 1802–86). The life history recorded in *Seven Visions* is also distinguished by its provenance, for it has been almost exclusively mediated at various stages of its production by Gros Ventre people themselves: Bull Lodge recounted his life experiences to his daughter during the latter half of the nineteenth century, who then “gave” (that is, narrated so as to authorize reproduction of) her father’s “life story” to tribal member Fred Gone during her own old age. Gone then carefully translated and inscribed the narrative in written English just as the United States was entering World War II, and the text was later edited and published by tribal member Horse Capture during the Red Power movement. All told then, Bull Lodge’s words concerning

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his own life have been purposefully recontextualized and redeployed by his own people on multiple occasions since he gave voice to them more than a century ago.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of “Bull Lodge’s Life” for the study of pre-reservation northern plains Indian history and culture would seem self-evident on several grounds, not the least of which is the unusual ceremonial detail recounted through the life and times of one of the most accomplished and renowned religious leaders on the northern plains in the past two centuries.<sup>3</sup> Scholarship encompassing a range of disciplines—including religious studies, cultural anthropology, history, literature, and folklore—should have much to gain from careful appraisal of this text. Yet a recent query typed into the Web of Science citation index (encompassing scholarly journals in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences) yielded a total of just three short book reviews concerned with Bull Lodge’s life history. This article may well be the first to devote exclusive scholarly attention to the Bull Lodge narrative, despite its availability in the published record for more than two decades.

As a research psychologist interested in the cultural construction of self, identity, and personhood, I have accorded privileged status to reflexive narrative in my study of these phenomena.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, my colleagues and I have suggested that within past personal (that is, autobiographical) narrative, the discursive fusion of constructed self and intentional world is evident: “the convergence of the individual actor engaged in meaningful activity and the constituent practices embraced by a cultural community is explicit in the narrative events themselves.”<sup>5</sup> In essence, reflexive narrative constructs both self and world such that attention to their mutual constitution can appreciate simultaneously both agency and structure. Thus, my scholarly interest in “Bull Lodge’s Life”—originally an expressive self-representation fashioned in the context of an authoritative oral tradition—emerges from my inclination to appreciate Bull Lodge’s recounted experience as exemplary of nineteenth-century Gros Ventre (male) personhood, the reverberations of which persist (in ways both nuanced and profound) in contemporary Gros Ventre lives.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to any future explication of nineteenth-century Gros Ventre personhood in the life narrative of Bull Lodge, however, a more thorough appreciation of the genealogy of this dormant text first seems warranted. That is, proper appraisal of this textual account of Bull Lodge’s life story by scholars of nineteenth-century Plains Indian life depends a great deal on the historical circumstances surrounding its production. Given that many of the events recounted in the life history occurred over a century prior to its inscription (or “entextualization”) in the early 1940s, this article will attempt to recontextualize the mediated *events of narration* that ultimately gave rise to the text in an effort to more fully appreciate the written account of “Bull Lodge’s Life” as a mediated form of *self*-representation.<sup>7</sup> More specifically, I will first provide an overview of “Bull Lodge’s Life” before turning to a cursory analysis of the mediated historical production of the text. Such analysis will attend to the contexts of (re)production relative to Gone’s entextualization, Garter Snake’s narration, and Bull Lodge’s oration respectively.<sup>8</sup>

## A PRECIS OF "BULL LODGE'S LIFE": THE NARRATIVE EVENTS

Bull Lodge's life narrative was recorded in written form by my great grandfather, Frederick Peter Gone, in early 1942. Gone's text recounts "Bull Lodge's Life" in four parts (with the third part consisting of two distinct sections of manuscript), detailing Bull Lodge's experiences as an ambitious youth, accomplished warrior, powerful healer, and elderly holy man.<sup>9</sup> The immediacy of these documented experiences is conveyed stylistically by Gone's extensive use of quoted speech attributed to Bull Lodge and his various interlocutors throughout the narrative.

### **Part One: Ambitious Youth**

The first part of "Bull Lodge's Life" explains that at twelve years of age, Bull Lodge "noticed him self, he had a vocational feeling, inclination to become a great man of his tribe." Poverty apparently motivated this inclination: "Being of the poor class, he was experiencing rather hard times in his childhood, so at this age of twelve years he began to figure out some way by which he could accomplish his ambition to become a great man among his people, the Gros Ventre." In pursuit of this ambition Bull Lodge cultivated an unusual relationship with the sacred Gros Ventre Feathered Pipe, which he elected "to call upon for his guide and teacher."<sup>10</sup> In response to many pleas and prayers ("I wish there was some one up above who would have pity on me and help me to be a man so that I could live like a man"), the Person of the Feathered Pipe eventually appeared to him and, after explaining that Bull Lodge's travails had moved Him with compassion, announced, "I pity you my child, you will be powerful on this earth, and all you have asked for is granted you." On a subsequent occasion the young Bull Lodge experienced a vision in which a decorated buffalo-hide shield descended from the sky and a voice informed Bull Lodge that the shield design was a gift of Power "for your living."<sup>11</sup>

The ultimate realization of these promises, however, was contingent on Bull Lodge's demonstrating his utter sincerity and commitment to his other-than-human Patrons. The remainder of this first installment of "Bull Lodge's Life" thus chronicles his sequential fasts (and accompanying visions) atop seven buttes in north-central Montana.<sup>12</sup> Following the usual Gros Ventre customs of crying, fasting, praying, and sacrificing strips of flesh and a finger joint during solitary vision quests, Bull Lodge undertook this arduous endeavor, beginning at the age of seventeen. Throughout these fasting experiences he obtained Powerful gifts from the other-than-human Persons associated with these buttes for prowess in war, doctoring, and the pursuit of prosperity. In his final experience at age twenty-three, the seventh Butte Being declared, "You have made your self clear to us that you are sincere in your ambition to become a great man, and all the most important things which goes to help one become famous has been given to you." Bull Lodge was then instructed to prepare himself for "the life you are to live," awaiting any use of the Powers he had received until further notification.

**Part Two: Accomplished Warrior**

The second part of “Bull Lodge’s Life” commences when Bull Lodge is instructed in a dream at age thirty to lead his first war party. This section of the text recounts three war parties that Bull Lodge initiated against the Crow Indians in response to other-than-human directives. After each successful excursion Bull Lodge offered an enemy scalp and stolen horse to the other-than-human Persons associated with one butte in each of the three mountain ranges (the Judith Mountains, Bears Paw Mountains, and the Sweet Grass Hills respectively) where he had previously fasted. With each offering, he announced, “My Father, Mountain Man, . . . I give these to you in return for what you have done for, and gave to me,—Good life, Chieftainship, and wealth.” Following these accomplishments, when Bull Lodge was thirty-three years old, the other-than-human Person associated with the last of these buttes appeared to him in a dream, presenting him with two additional gifts of Power before explaining: “Now that you have done what was planned for you regarding the war parties you just performed, there will be no more orders for you of that nature. . . . From now on you are to use your own judgment to guide you as a warrior, once again you have proven your self satisfactory to those who watch over you.” The text concludes by observing that Bull Lodge distinguished himself in war on numerous occasions subsequent to these events, though he never actively led a war party again. None of these later achievements was directed after the manner of the first three, and by his fortieth year “he had acquired the man hood he desired in the line of chief as a warrior. He had his fill as a warrior and was now considering the angle of medicine man.”

**Part Three: Powerful Healer**

The third part of “Bull Lodge’s Life” is divided into two separate parts that relate his experiences as a doctor and medicine man. The first half describes in precise ritual detail the doctoring experience that initiated Bull Lodge’s career as a powerful healer.<sup>13</sup> Moved to compassion at the age of forty by the suffering of his uncle Yellow Man, Bull Lodge “declared himself” to his mother by announcing, “I will consult my Father Above Man and tell him that my relative needs my help. I will doctor my Uncle.” For three days Bull Lodge attended to his dying uncle at a gathering of seven men and six women commissioned as singers, where he ritually employed his cloth, drum, bowl, and whistle to treat Yellow Man. At key junctures in the ceremony he would pray, “My Father, Above Man, This life you gave me, and the power to heal and cure, I appreciate, look down on me, I raise a body up again.” At the conclusion of these efforts Yellow Man, obviously on the mend, embraced Bull Lodge, saying, “My Nephew you have given me back life, and I’ll live it in appreciation to you.” Bull Lodge then visited Yellow Man over four additional consecutive days (seven days of consultation in total), offering him medicine to drink before the patient was completely restored to health. According to the narrative, Bull Lodge went on to doctor six more individuals in this fashion,

then twelve more following that—all nineteen cases were successfully restored to health. Bull Lodge explained the significance of these accomplishments by noting that “the first seven I doctored signified the seven buttes that I fasted on during my first experience seeking the manhood I so desired.—And the next twelve I doctored signifies my age when I was first contacted by the supernatural.” At some point following these experiences the sacred Feathered Pipe was transferred to Bull Lodge, and he was made ceremonial Keeper, one of the highest honors to be bestowed on a Gros Ventre man.

The second half of the third part of “Bull Lodge’s Life” recounts five instances in which he harnessed Power to accomplish astonishing feats: the healing of a Crow Indian (after the Gros Ventres and Crows became allies) who had sustained an abdominal bullet wound; the healing of a Crow Indian girl who was hemorrhaging through her mouth; the summoning of a thunder storm to disrupt the Crow Sundance after some Crows inadvertently slighted his daughter Garter Snake; the miraculous painting of Bull Lodge’s tipi during an overnight electrical storm; and the surgical removal of a tumor from Windy Woman using a woodpecker feather (one of the gifts received during his fasts). A few years after this last feat Bull Lodge transferred the Feathered Pipe to a new Keeper, setting the stage for the fourth and final part of the text.

#### **Part Four: Elderly Holy Man**

The fourth part of “Bull Lodge’s Life” describes the events preceding his death. Once again, an other-than-human Person appeared to Bull Lodge in a springtime dream. As narrated in the opening quotation of this article, this Person gifted Bull Lodge with the Power of resurrection through a ceremony involving four sweat-lodge tents. At the conclusion of this encounter the Person offered Bull Lodge His cane and rose above the earth before changing into a bird and flying away. Shortly thereafter, Bull Lodge convened seven men alongside his family to describe and discuss this vision. A year later, again in the springtime, Bull Lodge was notified in a dream that “seven great men” were sitting in council above, debating whether to summon him “up above” or leave him among his own people on earth. Throughout the summer and autumn Bull Lodge was notified through his dreams about this council’s deliberations until its seventh and final meeting in the late fall, when the council decided that Bull Lodge’s “work here on earth was finished.” That winter Bull Lodge was forewarned in a vision that he had just eight days of life remaining. He kept track of this time by marking each passing day in charcoal on a white cloth, and when the evening of the seventh day arrived, he gathered his family in his lodge and explained the vision heralding his imminent departure: “I can’t help it, my Father wants me but I don’t know what for, I am told that my time here on this earth is done and I can’t help my self I must obey the commands of, Those who watches over me.”

The eighth and final day was tinged with grief as family and friends again gathered in Bull Lodge’s tipi that evening. After a meal Bull Lodge recounted a war story in which an owl had warned him that their party was in danger.

Later, after kissing his infant granddaughters, speaking their names, and laying them on his bed beside him, Bull Lodge narrated another war story concerning the exploits of a famous warrior called Bob Tail Horse. The text, in the voice of his daughter Garter Snake, summarizes the evening's activities as follows: "On this night that my Father was to die, he told many stories of his escapades and the many thrilling experiences he encountered during his past life as if reviewing his life." Later, concerning the Feathered Pipe specifically, Bull Lodge declared that he was the last of four historical Keepers gifted with the Pipe's extraordinary Powers: "Its purpose among the tribe has run its course and it's now all gone. I was the last to receive those powers, and there will be no more supernatural powers attached to it. I pity it,—My son the Feathered Pipe, its days are finished." Finally, Bull Lodge designated certain of his medicines to be reserved for Garter Snake's future use, performed a ceremony over her in which she swallowed a Thunder stone, sent his family away to their own lodges around midnight, and died. Bull Lodge was summoned "up above" during his eighty-fifth year. In the end the resurrection ceremony involving the four sweat-lodge tents could not be performed: "The buffalo robes that were to be used to cover those four Sweat tents could not be gotten because the buffalo were all gone then."<sup>14</sup>

### **Formal Aspects of the Text**

In addition to the detailed account of Bull Lodge's life narrative, the roughly 170 pages of longhand script constituting "Bull Lodge's Life" include four brief commentaries external to the actual life narrative, as well as intermittent asides within the narrative proper. Occasional reference is made in these asides to the "story teller" (Bull Lodge's daughter, Garter Snake [ca. 1868–1953]), who is alluded to in the third person throughout the narrative. Interestingly, midway through the second section of the third part of "Bull Lodge's Life" (commencing with events contemporaneous to Garter Snake's birth), Gone shifted the narrative voice from the detached third person to incorporate extensive quotation from Garter Snake that plainly demonstrates her first-person perspective (even for events that she apparently did not directly witness). As should be evident from the above summary, by the fourth and final part of the text Garter Snake's own voice is consistently represented through quoted speech.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly, "Bull Lodge's Life" qualifies as a singularly distinctive contribution to the oral literature of the Gros Ventre specifically and the Plains Indian more generally. The text's simultaneous consolidation of an epic account of a Gros Ventre life, a sometimes exhausting description of ritual in the context of questing and healing, and a poignant commemoration of the sacred Feathered Pipe before it too succumbed to Euro-American colonization is a literary accomplishment of significant magnitude. Nevertheless, "Bull Lodge's Life" was not written by Bull Lodge, nor did he personally narrate his life story to Gone for the purposes of subsequent entextualization. Thus, in order to appreciate more fully the genealogy of this underanalyzed text, I turn now to a concise consideration of the historical production of "Bull Lodge's Life."

MEDITATIONS ON MEDIATIONS:  
RECONTEXTUALIZING THE EVENTS OF NARRATION

Although comprehensive inquiry into the historical production of “Bull Lodge’s Life” is both warranted and welcome, the constraints of the present venue preclude anything but an exploratory excursion into the complex issues at hand. I will first describe the principal collaborative efforts that resulted in the production of this seminal text and then speculate further regarding the relevant prior events of narration from which the text emerged, as guided principally by references to originating context contained within the manuscript itself.

**Salvaging Knowledge: Gone’s Entextualization**

In March of 1941 Fred Gone was appointed by the superintendent of the Fort Belknap Indian reservation to serve as the “reservation field worker” for the Works Progress Administration (WPA)–initiated Montana Writers’ Project. The project employed field-workers on five of Montana’s seven reservations, including two workers—one from each tribal community—on Fort Belknap. The goal of the project was to support knowledgeable and literate tribal members to document the traditional lifeways of their own communities toward the publication of a distinctive and authentic “Indian series” within the broader corpus of WPA-sponsored regional guidebooks. As a lifelong reservation resident and bilingual tribal member, Gone was hired for an eight-month period to preserve the extant history and myth of the Gros Ventre people for eventual distribution to a wider American readership. By 1942, however, as public focus and funding shifted away from government-sponsored social welfare programs to the war effort, the project was suspended indefinitely, preempting publication of the Indian series; instead, manuscripts originally submitted by the Montana reservation field-workers were deposited in the Merrill G. Burlingame Special Collections at the Montana State University Libraries.<sup>16</sup>

During his months as a field-worker among his own people at Fort Belknap, Gone submitted hundreds of pages of handwritten accounts detailing history, legend, custom, and biography obtained from elderly tribal members. A particularly noteworthy submission concerns one of the community’s two most sacred ritual objects, the aforementioned Feathered Pipe. The Feathered Pipe was originally gifted to the Gros Ventre people by the Thunder Being, Bha’a—typically represented as a giant black bird—who is associated with the sky, rainstorms, the color black, and the western cardinal direction. The Feathered Pipe proper was stored in a large, blimp-shaped bundle with a feathered wand, a carved image or face, a whistle, and a wide variety of bird pelts and other ceremonial objects. A ritual Keeper was responsible for conducting routine Pipe rites on behalf of the community and observing associated restrictions on his behavior and interactions.<sup>17</sup> As “Bull Lodge’s Life” foreshadowed, however, ritual practice involving the Feathered Pipe largely disappeared within a generation of Bull Lodge’s renowned keepership, such that Gone and his contemporaries had little (if any) firsthand experiences with the ancient Pipe rituals.



Within this historical context, in August of 1941 Gone submitted a forty-three-page manuscript to the project state office entitled, "Chief Medicine Pipe or Feathered Pipe."<sup>18</sup> Gone crafted this text following an early interview with Garter Snake, the then seventy-three-year-old daughter of Bull Lodge, who had learned the origin and early history of the Feathered Pipe firsthand from her father during his tenure as the Pipe's official Keeper. In regard to Garter Snake's account Gone wrote, "This story as it is recorded is every bit that could be had, there is no other person living to day that could give the information concerning the Feathered Pipe any better than it is recorded in this story. The man who was keeping it is now dead and the Medicine Pipe is left in his house—An orphan."<sup>19</sup> Gone's forward to the account indicates that he envisioned this entry as the first of five chapters in the Pipe's story, the following four to recount the life and times of every sixteenth Keeper over four cycles of sixteen transfers who was gifted with the Pipe's full extraordinary Powers.

Shortly after submitting this text, Gone wrote his project supervisor in Butte to explain that "Garter Snake Woman had offered to give me her Father's history if I wanted it," and he urged approval to proceed with documenting Bull Lodge's life history because "it so happens that Garter Snake woman's Father, Bull Lodge was the last man . . . who received the supernatural powers . . . attached to the Chief Medicine Pipe called the Feathered Pipe." From the outset, then, Gone recognized the unique value of Bull Lodge's life history because it was so intimately associated with the sacred Feathered Pipe. He elaborated further in his letter: "the question may arise, what is the supernatural powers? It is the only way to demonstrate the working powers of The Feathered Pipe and just what the man becomes in his tribe when those powers become noticeable."<sup>20</sup> Later that year, having encountered no bureaucratic objections, Gone interviewed Garter Snake on an unknown number of occasions, noting the details of her account in longhand translation even as she narrated her father's life story in Gros Ventre.<sup>21</sup> Based on these written notes, which preserve the structure of the narrative for later reference, Gone drafted "Bull Lodge's Life," submitted in four parts to the project state office during January and February of 1942, explaining in his introductory comments that "in order to explain what those supernatural powers were and how they worked, it was necessary that the life story of Bull Lodge be obtained.—His life story brings fourth the medicine man in every sense of the word."<sup>22</sup>

From the brief commentaries and occasional asides Gone submitted with the manuscript, it is evident that "Bull Lodge's Life" was Gone's judicious entextualization of Garter Snake's stylized narrative. The importance of these commentaries and asides for the purposes of ascertaining the contexts of production cannot be overestimated. For example, in his opening "footnote" Gone explained that additional details provided by such orienting commentary regarding ritual performance throughout the narrative were essential to its proper comprehension: "There fore it will be noticed that in the story, that these four items mentioned [song, smudge, pipe, and prayer] are missing, because the story was written just as the story teller told it, but upon questioning into these items when she got done telling it, she said that these items

were included in each and every thing that was given to Bull Lodge. So I am obliged to take this means of inserting them into the story.” Here within his prefatory orientation to the text, Gone asserted that “the story was written just as the story teller told it,” such that any relevant information gleaned from subsequent questioning of Garter Snake was included peripherally in commentaries and asides. Evidence that Gone observed this practice consistently can be found in an aside at the conclusion of the second part of “Bull Lodge’s Life,” in which he observed that Bull Lodge participated in numerous other war experiences following the three his daughter recounted but that Garter Snake “did not intend to tell all of his war experiences she was telling only the part that her father Bull Lodge told her.”

Not only was the text proclaimed to correctly represent Garter Snake’s testimony concerning her father’s life, but in a separate commentary accompanying the first part of “Bull Lodge’s Life” Gone also attested to the veracity of this testimony: “The following story of Bull Lodge’s life history as told by his daughter, Garter Snake Woman is as accurate as can be, as she is gifted with good memory and can be seen in her account of her Father’s life history where she was present and witnessed many cases that her Father Bull Lodge disposed of, very successfully.” Thus, Gone characterized Garter Snake’s account of her father’s life as both reliable (“as accurate as can be”) and authoritative, owing to her personal involvement in some of the recounted events and her excellent recall more generally.

So with regard to the textual production of “Bull Lodge’s Life,” several tentative conclusions may be drawn. First, Gone was well aware that one goal of the Montana Writers’ Project was to publish a guide to the state’s Indian communities comprising histories and legends characterizing pre-reservation ways of life. As the Gros Ventre field-worker, he apparently used the opportunity to salvage a range of declining knowledge and fading experience related to the ancestral traditions and practices of the community, knowing from the outset that to do so under the auspices of the project would necessarily entail wide distribution—and perhaps skeptical evaluation—of this knowledge outside the bounds of the local community. Second, there is no evidence in the text of incorporation or synthesis by Gone of material from any source extraneous to his interviews with Garter Snake; instead, Gone explicitly claimed that his text bears direct correspondence to her narrative, “as the story teller told it.”<sup>23</sup> Third, Gone explicitly avowed faith and confidence in Garter Snake’s ability to recount her father’s life story with great accuracy (in contrast to other instances during his employment with the project in which he expressed grave doubts about the reliability of an “informant” in his correspondence with the state office and vowed to cross-check the information obtained by consulting other more knowledgeable persons). Finally, Gone’s interest in entextualizing “Bull Lodge’s Life” emanated primarily from a desire to explicate the “supernatural powers” associated with the sacred Feathered Pipe during the reservation era in which the significance and consequence of such pipes had been virtually erased from community memory: “Therefore, since there are no more Gros Ventre living to day that can give an account of the so-called supernatural powers of the Medicine

Pipes, . . . this story of Bull Lodge's life history gives it out in full, all to gether, and through out a life time."

Taken together, these points suggest a powerful motivation for Gone to construct as careful and authoritative an account of Bull Lodge's life as was feasible (that is, "the only way that I know how") in that time and place, limited only by the potential constraints of lost knowledge, limited experience, or faded memory. Certainly for Gone, textual authority in the context of a stylized oral tradition was characterized by first-person testimony from reliable parties providing perhaps incomplete—but in no case imaginatively embellished—narrative accounts of past events. Clearly, Gone believed that Garter Snake's testimony met these expectations, thereby providing him with an unprecedented opportunity to recontextualize the life story of Bull Lodge for the purpose of explicating the role of Power in pre-reservation Gros Ventre life before this knowledge too vanished like the buffalo.

Having reviewed the circumstances surrounding the entextualization of "Bull Lodge's Life," I will proceed now to consider in more detail the narrative contexts from which the text emerged. Appreciation of these contexts, although impossible to reconstruct in their totality, should enable a more thorough assessment of the mediated recontextualizations of Bull Lodge's narrative.

### **Commemorating Voice: Garter Snake's Narration**

Although Gone was explicit that his account of "Bull Lodge's Life" was "the only way" to preserve future understanding of the "supernatural powers" so essential to pre-reservation Gros Ventre existence, what might Garter Snake's motivation have been for offering to "give" her father's story to Gone in the first place? Evidently her offer arose in the context of their earlier collaboration on the origins of the Feathered Pipe, but additional details of this negotiation are impossible to reconstruct. Nevertheless, tantalizing references to Garter Snake's interest and intent are evident in "Bull Lodge's Life," especially within the accompanying asides and commentaries. One important point to keep in mind was that Garter Snake was designated "Pipe Child" by her father when ownership of the Feathered Pipe was transferred to him. This custom required a Pipe Keeper to expel all but one of his children from his lodge for the duration of the keepership owing to the jealousy of the Pipe, who was regarded as a Child of the Keeper and his wife.<sup>24</sup> The one remaining youngster who occupied the office of Pipe Child was typically a favorite of his or her parents; indeed, in regard to Garter Snake's status, "Bull Lodge's Life" cites her father as informing some Crow visitors, "This child is my favorite child, I got attached to her because my concern was most for her on account that she has been sickly and I had a hard time with her health." As a result of her favored status Garter Snake undoubtedly benefited from privileged access to events and information of importance to her father throughout her lifetime.

The textual evidence regarding Garter Snake's interest and intent is recorded in Gone's introduction to the fourth part of "Bull Lodge's Life."

Here Gone explained in evocative detail that Garter Snake had extreme difficulty maintaining her composure during her effort to complete the account of her father's death:

Her words were mingled with tears as she spoke the words which is recorded in this story, and at times she'd stop talking and in glancing up from the paper I could see her lips moving in silent prayer, evidence of asking for strength and courage to go on with [the] story, and when the pressure was too great for her to bear, she'd kneel and blessing her self with the sign of the Cross, would pray aloud asking for divine help that she may not err in the performance of her work.—But never the less Garter Snake woman stood the supreme test in her old age, and when she had finished, she breathed a sigh of relief, and sat with eyes closed with out a word for a space of about ten minutes. Then she raised her head and said, you have put me under a severe test, the end of this story I have just told you was the severest time of my life I have experienced.<sup>25</sup>

In this description Garter Snake's grief was palpable, nearly overwhelming her resolve to complete the narrative. In the face of such emotional turmoil her response was to petition the Divine so that "she may not err in the performance of her work." After concluding the story, she explicitly conveyed how severe the ordeal had been for her.

These brief observations raise intriguing questions about the purpose of Garter Snake's narration of her father's life story. Obviously, at least in regard to this final chapter, her efforts involved significant hardship, (perhaps) even sacrifice. Of evident concern to her during this "supreme test" was her susceptibility toward errors in performance.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the performance she sought to complete competently was characterized as "her work." What then was the "work" that Garter Snake intended to perform by narrating the life story of her father? The most revealing clues may be found in her final words recorded at the close of "Bull Lodge's Life":

Thats all there is to tell of my Father. . . . Now that I have went through with my work successfully and with stood the experience I went through by living over once again the awful experience of telling you of my Father's death, I feel greatly relieved that I have accomplished what must have been expected of me by my Father Bull Lodge.—I have been very careful not to tell you what I didn't know by filling in any gaps with imaginations. What is missing in my story about my Father Bull Lodge means that I don't know of it, you must consider the fact that I am a woman, there must be some parts of his life he kept from telling me for that reason. But now that though I suffered my self by telling his life story, I am glad that the voice of my Father, Bull Lodge will be heard—always—.

So Garter Snake affirmed that her performance unfolded in the context of *expectation*—that is, duty, obligation, or responsibility owed to her father for reasons that are not explicitly stated: “I have accomplished what must have been expected of me by my Father.” She then proceeded to reassure Gone that her “performance” of this “work” was accomplished without error: “I have been very careful not to tell you what I didn’t know.” Finally, she concluded with evident satisfaction that, “the voice of my Father, Bull Lodge will be heard—always—.”

It would seem, then, that Garter Snake’s interest in “giving” her father’s life story to Gone was in fulfillment of the perceived expectations of her father, who plainly saw fit to recount these experiences to his favorite daughter for *some* reason many decades prior. She explicitly characterized this obligation as “my work,” perhaps echoing her father’s final, fateful resignation to death because his own “work here on this earth was finished.” The result is a commemoration of Bull Lodge’s life, a resounding of voice originally heard before the buffalo were gone, before the Feathered Pipe was orphaned, and before the Gros Ventre spoke (and wrote) in English. In contrast to Gone’s efforts to salvage sacred knowledge before all memory of it had been vanquished, Garter Snake may have been simply fulfilling an outstanding kinship obligation: the honoring, in her own advanced years, of her father’s words (and attention and affection) by ensuring that his voice would endure forever.

### **Redistributing Life: Bull Lodge’s Oration**

Whereas recontextualization of Garter Snake’s mediation of the life story of her father depends on a slender segment of text in the final part of “Bull Lodge’s Life,” characterization of the context for Bull Lodge’s original event(s) of narration is even more speculative. Nevertheless, such speculations would seem to be in order, if only to complete the consideration of the shifting contexts of mediated representation of Bull Lodge’s life narrative.

If Gone sought to salvage sacred knowledge in writing “Bull Lodge’s Life,” and if Garter Snake sought to commemorate her father’s experience in narrating his life story, what might have motivated Bull Lodge himself to narrate his life experiences to his favorite daughter? The text itself provides very little insight into this question, referencing Bull Lodge’s interest or intent infrequently and usually without elucidation. Even Garter Snake’s description of her father’s final event of narration is relatively unrevealing of motivation or purpose: “On this night that my Father was to die, he told many stories of his escapades and the many thrilling experiences he encountered during his past life as if reviewing his life.” The only substantive exception is found in commentary by Gone following the second part of “Bull Lodge’s Life” (in which only the first three of Bull Lodge’s war experiences were recorded): “Bull Lodge only told this part of his life where it was connected to the supernatural. He did not tell of the part of his life, after the three years of which he was controlled by the supernatural, because it was common knowledge and he performed publicly as he exercised the powers and the inspirations to him as a

warrior." This assertion was, of course, offered by Gone, and it remains unclear from the text whether this was his interpretation of the narrative or whether this was Garter Snake's explanation to Gone of her narrative.

In any case it does in fact seem characteristic of "Bull Lodge's Life," as mediated first by Garter Snake and then by Gone, that "supernatural" events and occurrences experienced by Bull Lodge (those that concern the workings of Power) are the chief subject of the narrative—for example, we learn almost nothing regarding Bull Lodge's family life, friendships, hunting adventures, political commitments, leadership experiences, and so forth. Instead, what the text records is a series of vignettes throughout Bull Lodge's lifespan in which Power was made manifest—in this regard, Horse Capture's decision to title his published version of the text *The Seven Visions of Bull Lodge* seems perfectly appropriate. What, then, might have motivated Bull Lodge to recount those experiences in particular, as opposed to a more "comprehensive" life narrative in general?

In addressing this question, I must observe at the outset that I think it extremely improbable that Bull Lodge shared in what we might label the autobiographical impulse, namely to craft a self-life narration encompassing an individual legacy for posterity. This particular rhetorical formation is the product of Western selves in the context of modernity that would have remained utterly foreign to the Gros Ventre until the reservation era.<sup>27</sup> Allow me to suggest instead an admittedly speculative interpretation: Bull Lodge narrated these kinds of experiences specifically because he understood such narrations to actively harness, circulate, and redistribute Power for the benefit of others. I will devote the remainder of this brief section to clarifying this interpretation.

In 1940, while facilitating the documentation of the nineteenth-century Gros Ventre way of life, an esteemed community leader (and my great great grandfather) named The Boy explained an interesting gambling practice to anthropologist John Cooper.<sup>28</sup> The Boy recalled that in the game where opponents attempt to shoot arrows through rolling hoops, a competitor might "think of a war deed" before taking his turn. According to The Boy:

He would use that as a sort of prayer for better luck in the game and would then win. . . . He here used the supernatural. He used words in his mind. He did not talk out loud. . . . He was sort of taking an oath indirectly. In an indirect way he would think: "I am not telling a lie [about this war deed]. The powers know that I am not telling a lie." He actually did the deed, otherwise he could not hope to have better luck in the game. It was a sort of indirect prayer. If he were really praying, he would do differently. He was not actually asking anything for anything. He was not appealing to or asking any one particular being, any single being or animal, but was just thinking of everything supernatural.

Here The Boy differentiated between direct supplication of Powerful other-than-human Persons for Power, favor, or "luck," and indirect "use of the

supernatural” by concentration of the mind on a notable (and truthful) war achievement. In this instance, of course, the competitor attempts to “use the supernatural” for the rather self-centered purposes of besting his opponents and winning the stakes, but The Boy’s description of this practice nevertheless illustrates the tantalizing links between the concentration of thought, prior accomplishments in war, and the harnessing of Power toward “better luck.”

Interestingly, the recounting of war achievements played no small role in Gros Ventre society, and the prominent man was someone whose “wrist would be made slim” from being pulled to his feet to tell publicly of his exploits. Such narrations featured significantly in a wide variety of occasions, including, for example, the ritual preparations for “shooting down” (that is, felling) the tree to serve as the center pole for the so-called Sundance lodge, or instances of naming young children or changing the names of older individuals, or piercing a child’s ears, and so on.<sup>29</sup> Naming is of particular note in this regard because the essence of this practice was the appeal for long life. Indeed, Gros Ventres treasured long life as one of the Supreme Being’s most valued gifts, and their prayers routinely incorporated the petition for long life. Moreover, Gros Ventres believed that aged individuals had persuasively demonstrated their favor with the divine (by evoking pity from the Supreme Being) simply by virtue of surviving so many winters, and young people were encouraged to assist old people in the hopes that the latter might offer particularly potent prayers for long life on their behalf.

Similarly, accomplishments in war (as in “Bull Lodge’s Life”) were frequently seen as evidence of divine favor and manifestations of Power. Thus, in aspiring to long lives for their relatives, Gros Ventres frequently referenced notable war deeds in the names selected for their kin (for example, my ancestors include women named First Kill, Two Strikes, and Killed in the Brush). This routine association of war achievements with naming practices, then, parallels the gambling practice described above: the (truthful) narrative commemoration of war deeds was seen to harness Power (that is, to “use the supernatural”) on behalf of those for whom it was directed—the effects of distributing such Power, even through narrative “recirculation” in this fashion, included prosperity, good fortune, and especially long life.<sup>30</sup>

Every ancestral ceremony practiced by the Gros Ventre involved invitations to the Four Old Men to distribute their blessings to those gathered. These other-than-human Persons represented the four buttes or “ridges” (that is, stages) of the human lifespan, evidently explaining why “Bull Lodge’s Life” is recounted in four parts.<sup>31</sup> For the Gros Ventre, then, a long, full life was understood to be dependent on divine favor for its realization, as expressed by the distribution of life-generating Power. Such generative Power might be obtained *directly* through ritual sacrifice, ceremonial performance, or devout prayer, and it might be obtained *indirectly* through redistribution by prayer, narrative, and other communicative performances and practices by those who have already obtained it themselves in some direct manner. Thus, practices such as oration of a war accomplishment or other truthful tellings of “supernatural” exploits and events literally effected the channeling of life to their audiences.<sup>32</sup>

Returning then to the most seminal event of narration recorded in “Bull Lodge’s Life,” that summarized by Garter Snake “on this night that my Father was to die,” it seems apparent that Bull Lodge, in his final hours, had plenty to say. In addition to the “many stories of his escapades and the many thrilling experiences he encountered during his past life,” Bull Lodge went on to recount the exploits of a contemporary as well. That is, after kissing his infant grandchildren and calling them by name (a formality observed only rarely, as Gros Ventres were very respectful of proper names and would usually refer to individuals by the appropriate kinship term or a nickname), he proceeded to recite in their presence the war exploits of Bob Tail Horse (the details of which required four pages in Gone’s longhand) despite the fact that the episode barely involved Bull Lodge himself but instead commemorated the almost unimaginable courage of Bob Tail Horse. So although there seems to be no question that Bull Lodge offered many self-referential narratives that evening “as if reviewing his life,” he clearly included the “thrilling experiences” of others as well. In the context of contemporary autobiographical endeavors, such accounts would not make much sense unless they were directly linked to the reflexive narration of one’s own life. But in the context of the narrative recirculation of generative Power, it makes perfect sense why Bull Lodge would relate the “escapades” of Bob Tail Horse for his young grandchildren on the night he himself was to die.

I suspect that it is now plain why I have tentatively suggested that Bull Lodge’s motivation for recounting his life story—principally those portions having to do with “supernatural” encounters and experiences—may well have been the harnessing of generative Power, the recirculation of divine favor, and the redistribution of life itself for the benefit of his interlocutors. As The Boy made clear in the citation above, such effects were dependent on the oathlike qualities of the narration, especially its veracity (which Powerful other-than-human Persons would evaluate). But we should take care to note that this kind of supremely instrumental event of narration was not exclusively ascribed to Bull Lodge in the textual account of his life, for he himself was the apparent beneficiary of a similar gift in his final series of visions: “Then the old man spoke, saying, ‘I came to tell you of my life, I give it to you, you will live until you die of old age.’”

In sum, if Gone sought to salvage knowledge, and Garter Snake sought to commemorate his life, Bull Lodge himself may have had much more pragmatic interests at heart when engaging in these truthful self-referential events of narration: the “giving” of his life to those he most loved so that they might enjoy the blessing of advanced years in their own prosperous journeys over the four ridges of life. At least in the case of his favorite daughter, Garter Snake, following the completion of “her work” in accomplishing “what must have been expected” of her, a dozen additional years of life sustained her until she departed this earth at the ripe old age of eighty-five.

## CONCLUSION

The textual account of “Bull Lodge’s Life” is distinctive in many significant ways, but its interest for scholars of nineteenth-century Plains Indian life



depends a great deal on the contexts of its production. Given that many of the events recounted in the life history occurred over a century prior to its entextualization in the early 1940s, this article has attempted to recontextualize the mediated events of narration that ultimately gave rise to the text in an effort to trace the genealogy of Frederick Peter Gone's unusual literary contribution. From Gone's own account it seems evident that he sought to render an authoritative and reliable text that forever preserved a narrative explication of the meaning of "supernatural powers" in pre-reservation Gros Ventre life. In contrast, Garter Snake's event of narration may well have been motivated by a perception that her father's life story was told to her with the expectation that she would one day commemorate his experiences in an appropriate forum for circumspect recontextualization. Finally, I have speculated that Bull Lodge's events of narration may have been less concerned with reflexive portrayals of self-representation than with channeling generative Power for the instrumental purposes of investing in long lives for his loved ones. Each of these willful expressions and mediated redeployments was characterized by overt concern for truth, accuracy, and faithfulness to a previous event or event of narration. Thus, despite the contrasting interests and intents that have framed the narrative throughout its historical production, each of the successive mediations of "Bull Lodge's Life"—undertaken in the context of an enduring oral tradition—ensures that the community of scholars might more fully appreciate Garter Snake's conviction that "the voice of my Father, Bull Lodge will be heard—always—."

### NOTES

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1. Fred P. Gone, *The Seven Visions of Bull Lodge, as Told by His Daughter, Garter Snake*, ed. George P. Horse Capture (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).

2. This article is expressly concerned with the life story of Bull Lodge as recorded in Gone's text. Intermittent references to Bull Lodge's life and activities may be found in a variety of other historical and ethnographic sources as well (including many of the citations listed below), but no attempt to survey or evaluate such sources is attempted here.

3. Gone's manuscript is variously labeled "History of Bull Lodge's Life," "Bull Lodge's Life," and "Bull Lodge's Life History." I will refer to it consistently as "Bull Lodge's Life."

4. See Joseph P. Gone, Peggy J. Miller, and Julian Rappaport, "Conceptual Self as Normatively Oriented: The Suitability of Past Personal Narrative for the Study of Cultural Identity," *Culture and Psychology* 5, no. 4 (1999): 371-98; and Joseph P. Gone,

"We Were Through as Keepers of It': The 'Missing Pipe Narrative' and Gros Ventre Cultural Identity," *Ethos* 27, no. 4 (1999): 415–40.

5. Gone, Miller, and Rappaport, "Conceptual Self," 384. For an overview of the significance of autobiographical narrative within psychology see Dan P. McAdams, "Personal Narratives and the Life Story," in *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research*, ed. Lawrence A. Pervin and Oliver P. John, 2nd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 478–500.

6. For a brief consideration of Bull Lodge's relevance for contemporary Gros Ventre personhood see Joseph P. Gone, "Keeping Culture in Mind: Transforming Academic Training in Professional Psychology for Indian Country," in *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*, ed. Devon Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 124–42.

7. Of course, as with all social interaction the discursive essence of any given "event of narration" is immediately lost to passing time—our attempts to "fix discourse" through incomplete (and inherently evaluative) representations of such interactions ensure that textual authenticity remains ultimately elusive. For further discussion of the relationship of text to action see Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991); for further consideration of authenticity in Native American texts see Susan Hegeman, "Native American 'Texts' and the Problem of Authenticity," *American Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1989): 265–83. On the question of mediated autobiography, Arnold Krupat notes that Indian autobiography is largely a contradiction in terms, since "the autobiographical project, as we usually understand it, is marked by egocentric individualism, historicism, and writing. These are all present in European and Euramerican culture after the revolutionary last quarter of the eighteenth century. But none has ever characterized the native cultures of the present-day United States" (Arnold Krupat, *For Those Who Come After: A Study of Native American Autobiography* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985], 29). Krupat's definition of Indian autobiography as characterized by "original bicultural composite composition" appears to assume that such works are written by cultural outsiders. The Gros Ventre mediation of "Bull Lodge's Life" complicates his definition of genre by challenging this assumption, though "Bull Lodge's Life" may still be viewed as a bicultural production because Gone's text clearly bridges indigenous oral and Western literary traditions in any number of ways. Gone's text also raises the question of whether Indian autobiography can be compositely composed by a writer who is once removed from the subject who "speaks for himself" (e.g., through Garter Snake's account of her father's "life story").

8. Owing to limited space, I will forgo analysis and discussion here of Horse Capture's more recent recontextualization of "Bull Lodge's Life" as published in *The Seven Visions*.

9. Gone's handwritten manuscript of "Bull Lodge's Life" (hereafter designated as "Life") is available in box 19 of the Burlingame series, no. 6, Collection 2336 (WPA Records), at Montana State University in Bozeman (hereafter designated as MSU). All quotes from the narrative in this article are taken from this handwritten manuscript. In my own effort to avoid further unnecessary alteration of this text through additional mediation, I have cited Gone's text without attempting to standardize his written English in accordance with modern, mainstream publishing conventions. Finally, to avoid reader distraction in material quoted from the text, I have eliminated the use of

the [*sic*] convention. In his “footnote” to part 1 of “Life,” Gone wrote: “There are three parts of the story of Bull Lodge’s life yet to come. The next part will bring forth mostly his war experiences, which will be controled mostly supernaturally, and to extend for ten years, then the next part will bring forth the part of his life as a medicine man and doctor, then the fourth and last part of his life will tell of his last days of his life on earth and his death.”

10. For relevant background information on the history and culture of the Gros Ventre, including the evolving significance of the sacred Pipes, see Alfred L. Kroeber, “Ethnology of the Gros Ventre,” *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 1, no. 4 (1908): 141–281; Regina Flannery, *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Social Life* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953); John M. Cooper, *The Gros Ventres of Montana: Religion and Ritual* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1957); and Loretta Fowler, *Shared Symbols, Contested Meanings: Gros Ventre Culture and History, 1778–1984* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987). For a contemporary analysis of the role of the sacred Pipes among the Gros Ventre see Gone, Miller, and Rappaport, “Conceptual Self”; and Gone, “Missing Pipe.”

11. A shield obtained by collector Richard Pohrt from community member Philip Powderface in the 1930s is routinely identified as this Powerful object, but its appearance diverges so markedly from the design described in the narrative that this identification seems unlikely. Horse Capture noted in *Seven Visions*, in which a photograph of the Pohrt shield is prominently displayed, that the narrative was actually describing the shield’s covering, now lost. Comparisons with the sketch of the shield made by Gone in 1941 render this explanation equally unlikely. Nevertheless, the Pohrt shield enjoys widespread acknowledgment as that revealed to Bull Lodge in his vision and has even been displayed in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, as authentic in this regard.

12. The order of Bull Lodge’s fasts proceeds roughly from south to north, with a tight east-to-west line running perpendicular to this axis across three buttes in the Bears Paw Mountains. It is curious to wonder at the significance, if any, of this order or arrangement in space. Connecting the fasting sites linearly on a topographical map of the state suggests a cross design, with the long arm running from southeast to northwest. Perhaps this signified the morning star? Or the star constellation referred to by the Gros Ventre as the Bulls (now known as Orion)? Or perhaps, as my colleague Lincoln Faller has suggested in informal conversations, this axis simply maps out the four cardinal directions.

13. For reasons not entirely apparent Horse Capture incorporates this first half of the third part of “Life” into the second part, entitling his second chapter, “From Warrior to Healer” (*Seven Visions*, 59). The effect of this creative reconstruction may be to accentuate in his third chapter the period of Bull Lodge’s high office as Keeper of the Feathered Pipe.

14. The buffalo herds on the northern plains were completely decimated by 1883, just a few years prior to the death of Bull Lodge; see Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750–1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

15. The precise meaning of this shift in voice is unclear, because the second section of the third part of “Life” diverges stylistically from earlier parts of the text in other ways as well, raising the possibility that this portion of the narrative was originally

obtained separately from the life history project proper. As a final aside I might add that formal nuances such as this key shift in voice have been lost in the publication of *Seven Visions* owing presumably to editorial pressures on Horse Capture to "tidy up" the narrative and render these disparities more consistently.

16. For much more detail concerning the Federal Writers' Project, the Montana Writers' Project, and related local efforts on the Fort Belknap reservation see Mindy J. Morgan, "Constructions and Contestations of the Authoritative Voice: Native American Communities and the Federal Writers' Project, 1935–41," *American Indian Quarterly* 29 (winter/spring 2005): 56–83; and Mindy J. Morgan, "Tradition and the Critique of 'Novices': Mark Flying and the Montana Writers' Program," working paper, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 2004. Manuscripts submitted from Fort Belknap to the Montana Writers' Project may be found in series 6, box 16, folder 1 (Assiniboine) and box 19, folders 1–11 (Gros Ventre), MSU.

17. See Cooper, *Religion and Ritual*, for much more detail.

18. Gone, box 19, MSU.

19. The Feathered Pipe bundle was not retrieved from this abandoned house until the summer of 1991. In addition reports dating back several decades indicate that the Feathered Pipe itself is missing from the bundle; see Gone, "Missing Pipe."

20. Fred P. Gone to Michael Kennedy, 14 August 1941, box 19, MSU.

21. Gone's oldest daughter, my grandmother, Mrs. Bertha Snow, confirmed that Garter Snake "didn't speak a word of English."

22. These notes are retained privately by the Gone family at Fort Belknap.

23. Of course, Gone's claim of textual correspondence is challenged by the simple fact that in writing "Life" he necessarily engaged in an act of translation from spoken Gros Ventre to written English. Interestingly, this profoundly creative activity receives no mention by Gone in the entire manuscript. Evidently, Gone conceived of his acts of translation as relatively transparent operations unworthy of comment or concern. A second challenge to Gone's claim of textual correspondence is the evidence that Gone's text is no mere dictation (even in translation) of Garter Snake's words. In fact, it seems clear from Gone's interview notes with Garter Snake that he occasionally modified the ordering of her accounts while remaining otherwise faithful to their content in order to produce a more seamless narrative structure. Because little evidence remains by which we might reconstruct these acts of translation and reconstruction, we are left simply to evaluate Gone's assertions of referential adequacy or equivalence in terms of the genre requirements invoked by him through the text itself. In this regard see also the illuminating (and provocative) discussion about the cross-cultural role of facticity in truth and history in chapter 3 of Arnold Krupat's *Red Matters: Native American Studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

24. For much more information see Cooper, *Religion and Ritual*.

25. I am indebted to my colleague Lincoln Faller for pressing me to consider further the importance of Catholicism in the production of "Life." Both Garter Snake and Gone were devout Catholics, and they undoubtedly interpreted their collaboration within this Christian frame of reference. In this regard it is intriguing to consider "Life" as a counterbalance to the conventional Christian narrative in which instead an Aboriginal holy man, gifted with the Power of resurrection, fails to return to life owing to the colonial extermination of the buffalo. Insofar as Bull Lodge's demise represented the end of pre-reservation Gros Ventre "supernatural powers," the narrative

paves the way for the ascendance of reservation-era Catholicism. It is also interesting to consider that life narrative as a genre of representation may have originated among the Gros Ventre with explication of the Gospels by Catholic missionaries beginning as early as the 1840s. Bull Lodge himself, who evidently met and even captured the occasional missionary, may have been inspired to represent certain facets of his own life after this manner (see Lawrence B. Palladino, *Indian and White in the Northwest; or, A History of Catholicity in Montana* [Baltimore: J. Murphy, 1894]). Unfortunately, space constraints here preclude the development of these ideas, and further speculations of the kind are currently being consolidated for future publication.

26. It is tempting here to engage scholarship in sociolinguistics and folklore on the many performative aspects of narrative; however, because the meaning of Garter Snake's use of the term is ambiguous (that is, one can "perform" one's duty or one's work in the sense of merely completing it), I have forgone such analysis.

27. For more on the emergence of the individualized self in the West see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). See also Krupat, *For Those Who Come After*.

28. See Cooper, *Religion and Ritual*, 369.

29. The so-called Sundance among the Gros Ventre had nothing whatever to do with the sun and is better translated as Sacrifice or Torture Lodge; see Cooper, *Religion and Ritual*.

30. *Ibid.* For additional details also see Flannery, *Social Life*.

31. In addition, movement though these life stages was accomplished (for men) by age-graded cohorts who successively completed seven ceremonial lodges or dances (see Cooper, *Religion and Ritual*). In discussion of an early draft of this article Raymond Fogelson raised the intriguing possibility that the seven buttes on which Bull Lodge quested might correspond to these lodges that mark movement through the male Gros Ventre lifespan.

32. For much of this analysis I am indebted to Jeff Anderson for his illuminating treatment of "life movement" among our kinsmen, the Northern Arapaho. See Jeffrey D. Anderson, *The Four Hills of Life: Northern Arapaho Knowledge and Life Movement* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).