

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IRVINE

Settler Dreams and Affective Warfare: The Communications Campaign that Formatted the
United States of America.

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Drama and Theatre

by

Desmond Hassing

Committee in charge:

University of California San Diego

Professor Julie Burrelle, Chair
Professor Ross Frank
Professor David Kamper
Professor Jade Power-Sotomayor
Professor Wayne Yang

University of California Irvine

Professor Anthony Kubiak

2024

Copyright

Desmond Hasing, 2024

All rights reserved.

The Dissertation of Desmond Hassing is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

University of California San Diego

University of California Irvine

2024

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the generations of Chahtah Okla that struggled to deliver the People to the present, and to preserve our culture in a political system dedicated to destroying our way of life and our understandings of the world. Yakoke Chukka Afka!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGEiii

DEDICATIONiv

TABLE OF CONTENTS v

LIST OF ABBRIEVATIONS vi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTSvii

VITA..... xi

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION.....xii

INTRODUCTION: PINBALL SHAMAN...THERE’S GOTTA BE A TWIST 1

Chapter 1: AFFECT WAR: HORROR FOR CULTURAL CHANGE IN FILE UNDER MISCELLANEOUS 48

Chapter 2: CANCELING THE TOMAHAWK CHOP (MAYBE???): SO YOU BOUGHT A BASEBALL TEAM, NOW WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR RACIST MASCOT?..... 99

Chapter 3: AFTER ACTION REPORT, CAPAIGN LOG, DAY 88,889: HOW THE HOLLYWOOD INDIAN CREATES THE WESTERN SUBJECT IN THE GOLDEN AGE COMIC BOOK..... 151

CONCLUSION: HAND ME THE PURPLE FEATHER BROTHER 197

Appendex A: CONTENTS TOMAHAWK #4..... 208

REFERENCES 216

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
SEO	Search Engine Optimization

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While we often walk the path of our academic journey alone, we neither begin this journey alone, nor do we end it alone. Any list of those that aided, guided, or supported me on the journey to this end point would, by definition, fail to be comprehensive. I am well aware of my shortcomings, one of which is a lack of propensity for taking notes “in the moment.” For anyone, anywhere that provided a kind word, a gentle shove, or even a harsh criticism as I walked this path, yakoke. It hasn’t always been a kind path, but it has brought me here, and far too many that had a hand in it will be absent in this brief notation.

That being said, no acknowledgement in this text would be complete without expressing my personal thanks to the following specific individuals. First and foremost, nothing I have done, or can do, is possible without the love and support of my family both present and absent, so to my mother and father and my grandparents, my loving thanks. A special thank you to my mother Nancy and my grandfather Sherman for instilling in me the desire to serve others through their long history of civil service and my grandmother Sally for her ever-present and unflinching faith and support which remains with me to this day, despite her long absence. Additionally, I would like to thank both the People and the entity of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, who have provided me both emotional and physical support, but also daily present me a reason to continue the fight. I am Chahta Okala, I am of you, from you, and for you....in all things....ever and always.

The path of the scholar, academic, and researcher is long and full of difficult challenges that can be soul crushing without the inspiration to press onward, so a special thanks to all of the students I have taught since beginning my graduate studies, but most especially to those I began this journey with so many years ago including Lauren Bautista,

Tom Block, Kat Nakamura, and Matt Tornero who I began working with in their first year and continue to follow in awe to this day. Similarly, while I was blessed to be assigned to instruct Joe Maldonado, Simon Martin, and Cynthia Ochoa later in their academic career, they have proven no less important to my journey to becoming a public academic. These students continue to inspire me with their drive, talent, empathy, and humanity and as I develop my thinking and advocate for a better world it is with their future and their judgement in mind. I will leave it to them to ultimately decide if I have been successful or not.

To survive a graduate program, however, you need more than just inspiration and so I need to take a moment to thank and verbalistically hug the shipmates that went with me on my journey. First to my Indigenous brothers, Ozzie Monge and Sam Aros Mitchell, who have laughed, cried, and complained with me as we have lived and worked uncomfortably within a Western system that wasn't intended for us. Yakoke Nakfi, I am more for your presence in my life. A special thanks to those that started this journey with me at San Diego State University's Master in Theatre program including Nicole Cantalupo, Joel Castellaw, Yi-Lin "Eli" Chung, Melissa Hawkins, Kimberly King, Andrea Kovich, Rachel Mink, and Rachel Shambaugh, each of you helped keep me on track in those first early steps from student to academic, thank you. Similarly I would not have made it through six years of additional graduate study without the stout companionship of those that shared the life-raft with me at the University of California including (among many), my academic ancestors in the part of Will Jones, Kara Raphaeli, Jim Short, Kristen Tregar, Alison Urban, and Bryan Curtiss White as well as the generation I see approaching behind me including D. Haejin Bang, Haïa R'nana Bchiri, Emma Clarke, Jazmine Logan, Nic Rodriguez Villafañe, and G Yi. I also feel it required to focus for a brief individual moment on those that I spent so much time around in

the many uncomfortable seats at the University of California. The cohort-mates that shared my foxhole as it were. To Michelle Huynh, Kristin Leadbetter, Jesse Marchese, Maddie Williams, and Yi-Jen “Elaine” Yu...yakoke (ever my thanks), there is no version of this story which reaches an ending without your inclusion. You are my colleagues, friends, and the standard to which I hold myself.

Additionally, no thank you surrounding support would be finished without noting and thanking the support staff that makes academic work possible, so my many thanks and gratitude to everyone that makes the University of California, San Diego Theatre department possible, from everyone in the administrative offices to everyone on the facilities and custodial and facilities staff that keeps the gears running, but most especially to the department’s Graduate Coordinators, Marybeth Ward, who always had my back covered and was ever ready to listen to my problems, Brittany Norris, who helped keep the lights on during the dark times of Covid, and Cory Caswell, whose quiet efficiency has brought order to a chaotic situation.

Finally, no student becomes a teacher without the impact of the educators they have taken along the way, thank you all. After 20+ years spent learning in higher education a complete list is not possible, but a few notable names (and faces) spring up for specific notation. From the fine faculty at Grossmont College (including Craig Everett, Jerry Hager, Henry J Jordan, and Jim Papageorge) I received much of my early understanding of what makes a college instructor “good.” I learned much from your example, thank you for your dedication and the empathy you showed your students. Special thanks need to go out to CJ Keith, David Kamper, Peter Larlham, and Joseph Thomas, all of whom in some way set the idea of advanced study in my mind during undergrad at San Diego State University. Likewise,

I thank the instructors that supported and challenged me in my Masters' program at San Diego State University including specifically Charles Murdock Lucas, DJ Hopkins, and Shelley Orr. Finally at the University of California I have engaged with and been formed by some of the best educators in the nation, including my Dissertation committee, Julie Burelle, Ross Frank, Tony Kubiak, Jade Power-Sotomayor, and K. Wayne Yang, as well as a multitude of faculty in the Master of Fine Arts Program in the Department of Theatre and Dance, including Allan Havis and Vanessa Stalling, both of whom have helped me develop a praxis as a scholar artist that focuses on how my research "performs" for others.

At the risk of making this long-winded acknowledgement even more dense, I wish to extend my deepest and most personal thanks to my Dissertation Chair Dr. Julie Burelle, PhD, or as she will hence forth be known "Queen Academic Overseer of the Universe." I would be neither the scholar/researcher, nor the human being I am today without your influence. You are my model, my teacher, my colleague, and my friend. Thank you for all that you have given me and all you have shared with me.

Thank you, one. Thank you, all. Yakoke, yakoke, yakoke.

VITA

2015 Bachelor of Arts in Youth Theatre, San Diego State University

2017 Master of Arts in Theatre, San Diego State University

2019-2024 Lecturer, San Diego State University

2024 Doctor of Philosophy in Drama and Theatre, University of California San Diego,
University of California Irvine

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Settler Dreams and Affective Warfare: The Communications Campaign that Formatted the
United States of America.

by

Desmond Hassing

Doctor of Philosophy in Drama and Theatre

University of California San Diego, 2024

University of California Irvine, 2024

Professor Julie Burelle, Chair

“Settler Dreams and Affective Warfare: The Communications Campaign that Formatted the United States of America” proposes a methodology of analysis which (re)considers cultural products as intentional war messaging, or what is commonly referred to in military circles, as psychological operations (PSYOPS). By conducting a close reading of Indigenous representation, and the rhetoric that surrounded its production in the films, mascots, and comic books of the 20th and 21st century, this dissertation argues that the purpose of what we think of as Indian tropes was to further a wartime message of national identity

creation, and further that cultural products are the best strategic weapon available to
minoritarian subjects in the present for altering national identity formation.

INTRODUCTION: PINBALL SHAMAN...THERE'S GOTTA BE A TWIST¹

The cool, crisp air pumping throughout the large warehouse-like space must be generated by a HVAC system a great deal of distance away, because I hear nary a whisper of it. As the frigid air raises the hair on my skin and banishes the small amount of sweat that the hot desert conditions outside the door formed on my skin, I am transported back in time. Around me the space is a weird contradiction of light and shadow. Everywhere I look I see the familiar deep shadows that would naturally form between the gaming cabinets in the video arcades of my youth, fighting with the glaring neon lights that come from the arcade and pinball cabinets scattered around the space that challenged them. But here, strangely, every fourth or fifth cabinet sits dark, disempowered, and unused. A sight that one hardly ever saw in a prosperous video arcade in the 80s and 90s. This is the strange setting where we begin our journey together, amid the cacophony of sound made by the dings, bells and whistles of pinball machines and the prerecorded audio dialogue of video game cabinets shouting, "let's fight!" at the Pinball Hall of Fame just south of the Las Vegas Strip.² Before me sits a familiar friend. I've never met him

¹ It was during the whimsical and nostalgic spirit of the final few days of this dissertation that I added this title to my introduction. My journey to this completed work was long and difficult and stretches back nearly thirty years to my final days in high school. Thus, it is fitting that I should begin this benchmark work with a reference to *The Who's Tommy*, a musical that was all the rage in those beginning days of 1995. Just like much of the pop culture that will make an appearance in this study "Pinball Wizard," which I performed across Southern California for Helix High School's Show Choir during the 1995 competition season was integral in making me the self that I am in the present. Like everything else, it deserves a place here.

"Pinball Wizard." *The Who's Tommy*. 1993. Masterworks Broadway

² Not to immediately turn into the Travel Channel, but the Pinball Hall of Fame is a must stop location for any true nerd visiting the Las Vegas Metro area. The 25,000 square foot museum is located at 4925 Las Vegas Blvd South and is routinely open Sunday-Thursday from 10am to 9pm and remains open for an additional hour to 10 pm local time on Friday and Saturday night. Inside a weary traveler sick of the glaring sun and oppressive heat of the desert or the exhausted gambler tired of all smoke from the casino, will find a large repository of diligently repaired and carefully maintained video game and pinball cabinets, most of which are covered in small handwritten notecards that spell out what the proprietors of this fine museum have discovered of the history of the pieces in their care. Best of all, as of my last visit, they don't even charge admission, relying on the sale of merchandising and the quarters earned by the functioning cabinets to maintain their budget and provide for the repair for the units that remain damaged and inoperable.

before, and yet he has been a part of my life, uninterrupted, ever since I decided that I was going to commit to experiencing this world as a Choctaw, rather than as the Western subject that the United States worked so desperately to have me believe I should be.³ That friend, and I use that term “friend” with all of the “awkward” connotation that term sometimes carries, is what we call the “Hollywood Indian.” A fictitious story that Western Settlers have told themselves and repeated amongst each other so often that it is now just generally accepted as fact by many in these communities. The name of this friend is “Big Brave,” and what will transpire in the unfolding of his story and circumstance, will launch us along a path of exploration and discovery of the myth that the United States tells itself, of a lost people, and the birth of a new nation. A holy myth that became a settler dream, and one that would need to be constructed and reinforced by the longest psychological warfare campaign in the history of the United States, a messaging campaign that began before even the founding fathers had dreamed through their first sleep.

<http://www.pinballmuseum.org/> (Last accessed 8/17/2023)

³ Although for the sake of brevity I will not belabor this point throughout this study, it is important that I foreground here, within the opening moments, that I take as an objective truth that the relationship between the United States of America and the Indigenous Nations of North America to historically be one predicated on a multi-century long intentional effort at genocide and cultural genocide by the Settlers of America. While there have been many good faith efforts by members of the United States government in the years since President Richard Nixon initiated the era of Tribal Sovereignty, and hence renewed efforts at cultural restoration and preservation within my own lifetime, I am none-the-less a product of the eras that led to my birth. Under the long-standing efforts of the United States government, Desmond Hassing, the white coded Choctaw, named after a relative back in Ireland, with a German surname inherited from a 19th century Settler, was meant to think of himself primarily as “White,” and to only remember his Indigeneity as an interesting factoid of his family’s checked past. As this study, and its arguments, unfold, I position myself, and my work in society, as active efforts of Indigenous resistance and what Anishinaabe writer Gerald Vizenor terms survivance, even if those efforts are not viewed as legitimate by all. In point of fact, perhaps I make this attempt explicitly because those efforts will not be accepted by everyone. I will never be the Choctaw I might have been had European Settlers never come to this land or if they genuinely sought to learn from the peoples that resided here and finding a way to live and cohabitate in some form of peaceful relationality. But neither will I be the American Choctaw that the United States experiment would have me be. Instead, I am something different, something unwanted and messy. That is fine with me.

Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. 1999. Bison Books. University of Nebraska Press. Lincoln, Nebraska.

Based on its construction “Big Brave,” or more accurately “Gottlieb’s BIG BRAVE,” was most likely built by D. Gottlieb & Co. sometime in the mid-1970s and features exclusively Indigenous themes. Like most pinball machines, the centerpiece of “Big Brave,” is the painted backing glass that sits in a rectangular wooden box directly above the pinball playing area and is illuminated from behind by a lighting fixture. Due to various layers of paint on the backing glass, some elements displayed in the image are illuminated and others are not. In this case, the eye of the would-be consumer is drawn most prominently to the image of a single Indian at the center of the painting, as only this figure, the scoreboard, and the name of the game are illuminated. The thus designated “Big Brave,” serves as an image of what film and American Indian Studies Scholars label the “Hollywood Indian,” an all-encompassing image of Indigeneity that sees “Big Brave” scantily clad in only moccasins and buckskin pants and covered in war paint.⁴ Much like the near endless number of Indian braves presented by the American film industry in the nadir of the Western between 1940-1960, upon his head sits an elaborate full Indian Headdress in the style of the Lakota, Kiowa, and Osage tribes of the plains.⁵ However, as the viewer’s eye moves

⁴ The “Hollywood Indian” has been described and discussed by a wide variety of people from scholars such as Angela Aleiss, Philip Deloria, Michelle Raheja, and countless others, to filmmakers and commentators like Jeff Barnaby, Neil Diamond, and Chris Eyre. In its simplest articulation, the “Hollywood Indian” serves as a catchall term for the manner and production of the Indigenous subject as generated by the Hollywood film industry in the 1940s-1960s, in other words during the birth and heyday of the conservative John Birch society. Drawing on more than 200 years of European/American narrative production that configures the American subject as a rugged individualistic frontiersman that is the natural heir of the Indigenous Peoples of North America, the “Hollywood Indian” flattens the Indigenous subject and presents all Indigenous Nations as belong to a single monolithic group called “Indians.” This fictitious Western constructed image of “Indianness” is presented as less civilized than its European/American counterparts and is inherently trapped between the tensions of the Barbaric Savage and the Noble Savage. Prone to avoiding appropriate attire, the usually bare chested “Hollywood Indian” bears the weapons and war paint of his past as the frightening foe that once threatened American expansion throughout the continent, but is simultaneously presented with elaborate headdresses and decoration, that suggest a savage nobility safely left in the past. While there is some variance, as a visual symbol, the “Hollywood Indian” is most often a pastiche of the plains Indian tribes, such as the Lakota, and the tribes of the greater American Southwest, best exemplified by the Apache, Commanche, the Diné (Navajo Nation) and the Hopi.

⁵ I desire to make a small distinction here that I have not found present in other studies in this area. While I do not come from a plain’s tribe, and indeed cannot fully speak to the appropriation of Indigenous headdresses the way that a Kiowa, Osage, or Lakota might, as a long-term student of culture there is an inevitable loss of cultural distinction and knowledge that comes with appropriation of such symbols. Thus, the Headdresses worn by representations of

to the elements of color in the image, they no doubt become focused upon the elaborate banding, that wraps the headdress in a series of “Indian” symbols and the breech cloth that hangs between the brave’s legs, both of which are done in the style of southwestern tribes such as the Diné (Navajo Nation) and the Hopi. Ever the entertainer, “Big Brave” is ready for his brief cameo on the movie screen, fully decked out in all the tools of his trade, wearing a breastplate made of yellowed bones and an intimidating looking bowie knife on his belt, with a bow in his left hand and an arrow held horizontally above his head with his right. Spread out in the image behind “Big Brave,” the imagery of the “Hollywood Indian” persists and is amplified by the village that surrounds “Big Brave,” as the perspective, which moves from right to left in the painting, shows us a long row of six teepees trailing off in the distance, implying a village rather than a war camp, and yet each of the seven additional “Indians” in the frame are clad similarly to “Big Brave,” minus the headdress of course. In the fictitious narrative created by the imagery of “Big Brave,” the “Indian” is a historic figure, not one that lives in the present, and importantly one that is shown to the consumer as a figure that lacks the ability to replicate itself into the future, via the absence of femininity.⁶

the “Hollywood Indian” bear little in common with the actual War Bonnets worn by these tribes, the thing we call a headdress is robbed of meaning. As such, when discussing this image, I will, much like I do with the term “Indian,” use the term “headdress” to refer exclusively to artificial image created by American cultural producers and reserving the term ‘war bonnet’ to refer to the actual real world cultural practices performed by these tribal nations.

⁶ Notably, at least within the examples presented by the Pinball Hall of Fame as of the same visit where I discovered “Big Brave,” this absence of women does not seem to extend to Western themed cowboy games of the period and in fact it appears that many of the Indigenous women that are absent from “Big Brave” appear there. A notable example is 1975’s “Quick Draw,” also produced by D. Goittlieb & Co., which shows an image of a White American cowboy shooting a Morgan silver dollar that has been flipped by a sexy Indian maiden on its backing glass. Additionally “Big Brave” is not an aberration, at the time of my last visit the Pin Hall of Fame contained four Indigenous Themed pin ball machines out of its archive of 70 or so active units, and of the four only one, Goittlieb’s “Totem” from the late 1980s/1990s contained an image of an Indigenous woman, and then it only showed her head and shoulders in the bottom left corner of the frame as she looks backward at towards her own scantily clad “Hollywood Indian” warrior.” Conversely Bally’s “Bow and Arrow” and Goittlieb’s “Golden Arrow,” both from the 1970s focus exclusively on the male “Indian” as he hunts for food.

I begin with this image of “Big Brave” because I envision the following project to be something more than a simple cultural history, seeing it instead as a military history, in essence as what we might think of as an “after action report.”⁷ An undertaking that is therefore intended not to lament the past, but instead to inform the future. To explore successful strategies and tactics of the past in an effort to apply those methods to the future.⁸ To, as the U.S. Marines are fond of saying, “[improvise], adapt, and overcome.”⁹ The story of “Big Brave,” our pinball “Hollywood Indian” as it were, represents the culmination of perhaps the most successful psychological warfare campaign in the history of the modern world. A campaign designed to generate a dream of the Settler. A deeply embedded strategic endeavor that continues throughout the mechanisms of American culture in the present, from the films we see to the laws that constrict us and from the histories we teach in the classroom to the stories we tell our children. A strategic narrative that seeks to destroy the identities of the combined peoples of the world, regardless of their origin story, and replace those peoples with a new type of subject, the American Settler. “Big Brave” is but one of thousands, perhaps even hundreds of thousands, of images and icons throughout U.S. cultural history, that present a particular way of being, images that create not just the United States of America, but the American subject itself. In many ways

⁷ An “After Action Report” is best thought of as a strategic document intended to explicate the entirety of a campaign or battle and is used primarily by military services to highlight and identify tactics and strategies for future use in combat or as the DoD puts it “The Department of Defense is a learning organization that routinely conducts After Action Reviews to make our brave troops safer in the future.”

Press Release. Department of Defense. April 6, 2023.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3354951/statement-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-on-the-defense-departments/> (last accessed 8/22/2023)

⁸ Importantly when I use the word “success” in this sentence it should be noted that in no way does that terminology imply an agreement with the ideological intent of the Western artists/culturalists whose tactics I will be analyzing, it is not their worldview I designate as successful, merely their messaging campaign.

⁹ Uncredited. 2nd Marine Division News.

<https://www.2ndmardiv.marines.mil/News/Article/Article/3493051/improvise-adapt-overcome-then-adapt-again/> (last accessed 8/22/2023)

he is not unique, he is indicative of a trend, and in “Big Brave” and his brethren, I see an opportunity. An opportunity to not only imagine a new way of being, but also to envision how, much like the cultural warriors who created the war messaging behind this pinball warrior, we might create our own icons and images to target the identity of the American Settler and replace it with something else.

Hofantit Ishtia!¹⁰

¹⁰ In Choctaw, “Ishtia” means in essence “to begin,” while adding the qualifier “Hofantit” means “to begin to grow.” So, in other words, in my understanding of Choctaw, which admittedly is limited, I would proffer the following English translation: “let us begin.” But please understand that far from a simple directive to begin an exercise, by adding “to grow,” I hope to offer this statement as a form of blessing, as hope that my continued writing, and your continued reading will hopefully “grow” a way of thinking, a way approaching both the world and problems we see around us.

https://dictionary.choctawnation.com/word?_sf_s=begin (last accessed 8/23/2023)

Telling Tales Around a Mighty Big Campfire (hopefully)

Halito weary traveler.¹¹ Aiokpanchi.¹² Take your place beside the fire and become a part of a small circle. One that, I hope, will grow larger with every passing day and every spoken word. Today, you find yourself in a different type of educational space.¹³ For the majority of the history of the Ivory Tower, “Whiteness” has determined the rules of how educational spaces such as articles, books, dissertations, lectures, and public speaking events “exist.”¹⁴ Well—I say to you—that I have had enough! Instead, please sit at the campfire. Get comfortable. Rest. Make yourself feel at home. But understand that one thing above all else is true, this space, is one of conflict. A space where I steadfastly hope, both writer and reader, feel safe and are willing to

¹¹ While pretty much any member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma would be able to tell you that “halito” means “hello” in Choctaw, because we use this translation on nearly all official government communications, I am hardly fluent in my native Choctaw. As I continue to deploy Choctaw throughout this study, I have been greatly aided by an ongoing project by the tribe to digitize the nation’s first “official” Choctaw to English dictionary.

<https://dictionary.choctawnation.com/> (last accessed 8/23/23)

¹² Aiokpanchi = Welcome.

¹³ My use of the word “space” in this sentence is intentional. While the “me” that is writing these words and the “you” that is reading them may well be separated by time, geographic location, gender, class, nationally, and a thousand other small meaningless irrelevancies that society insists are important, in engaging with and activating these words, it is my belief that “the me” that is writing these words and “the you” that reads them, have entered into a shared imaginary in which “we” (You and I) might envision different ways of being that defy the age old rules of Western colonial power.

¹⁴ My understanding of the term Whiteness is informed by the work of Isabel Wilkerson, in which Wilkerson goes beyond considering the grouping we term “Whiteness” as a racial demographic and instead views this category of people as a racially aligned “caste” that fills and controls the “highest” or most empowered power position in Western social circles. Far from being limited to subjects that might choose to identify as Caucasian or Western European descending, Wilkerson argues that what we think of as “White” is a “caste” and therefore a social group that has its own rules, taboos, privileges, entrance requirements, and most importantly, its own performance protocols and rituals. Far from being permanently barred from Whiteness, many minoritarian individuals, and indeed whole racial groupings (such as Americans of Irish and Italian descent), have engaged in performances intended to make a movement toward Whiteness, and many have achieved some success, to one degree or another, in moving toward or into the caste of “White” in American society. In the present I take it to be a given that even in today’s more progressive academy, which at least outwardly claims to want to signal boost minoritarian voices, the associated weight of the Western canon, and the “White” caste that controls it, continues to push all scholars, including those from underrepresented groups, toward engagement with pre-established sources and methods and thus a move toward the caste of Whiteness as well.

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. Random House. New York, NY. 2020.

make mistakes, but a space that is nonetheless ruled by a benign dictator. For every space, even an imagined campfire, one that lives only on the page and in our collective imaginary, must have some sort of rules to follow if we are to have a clear discourse. Rules which I endeavor to lay down here.¹⁵

So, sit down. Rock back and forth. Feel the ground beneath you and come into relation with the land. Feel the soil beneath you either bend to your weight, hugging the edges of your body, or instead, remain firm and reject your own presence thus forcing your body to adapt itself to the land.¹⁶ Once you have found a comfortable position, let's start breaking down the rules as I see them, and more importantly, the rules as they must be accepted, if our conversation is to be a discussion between equals.

¹⁵ The benign dictator in this articulation is obviously me. Don't like it? Go start your own campfire.

¹⁶ Importantly, this portion of the dissertation is neither poetic nor aesthetic flair. I do truly advocate that you attempt to come into relation with the land around you. While it is true that our interactions in this dissertation are strictly speaking, limited to the realm of mind, the concept of the mind as envisioned Western philosophy is overly limited. The thing we call the mind, or the self, or identity is not an independent organism, but instead is a creation and projection of the brain, an aspect of the living body. The mind and body divide does not exist, all human activity is embodied, so even though I am speaking to your intellect across a vast digital and physical distance, you, wherever you are, exist in a time and space. Please take the time to relate to that world beyond the office or house door, for it is that very real world, not simply the world of the mind for which we struggle.

An Invitation to a Relationship

As we settle in around the campfire and I begin to unfurl the long and complicated story of my fictitious ancestor, the “Hollywood Indian,” I wish to set an intentionality for how this dissertation might come to exceed the boundaries of what we consider “traditional.” As a Choctaw academic, no paper, monograph, or dissertation that I might produce has value unless that document itself strives to heal the wounds between us and encourage each of us (both author and reader) to relate more fully to the other. Throughout the course of this dissertation my goal will be to encourage you the reader (and more broadly society at large) to view yourselves not as a separate discrete individual that has interactions with other beings and objects that “you” might “define,” but instead as a “self” who is generated in relation to the peoples and things that surround you. In other words, that the self we generate in our everyday lives is dependent on what we know and believe about the “persons” that surround us. In setting this intentionality towards embracing a relational framework, I seek to broaden the way both reader and author understand meaning making, and in this I take my cue from Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in *As We Have Always Done* when she asserts of Nishnaabewin epistemologies that:

Meaning then is derived not through content or data or even theory in a Western context, which by nature is decontextualized knowledge, *but through a compassionate web of interdependent relationships that are different and valuable because of difference. Individuals carry the responsibility for generating meaning within their own lives; they carry the responsibility for engaging their minds, bodies, and spirits in a practice of generating meaning.* Within Nishnaabewin, I am responsible for my thoughts and ideas. I am responsible for my own interpretation, and thus you’ll always hear from our elders what appears to be qualifying their teachings with statements that position them as learners, position their ideas as their own understandings, and place their teachings within a context of their own lived experience. This is deliberate, ethical and profoundly careful within Nishnaabewin because to do otherwise is considered arrogant and intrusive with potential to interfere with other beings’ life pathways. Although individuals have the responsibility to self-actualize within this system, intelligence in this context is not an individual’s property to own. So once an

individual has carried a particular teaching to a point where they can easily embody that teaching, *they also become responsible for sharing it according to the ethics and protocols of the system. This is primarily done by modeling.*(emphasis added)¹⁷

During the years I spent researching and writing this dissertation, I have deeply considered this guidance from Simpson and how I might accurately and effectively transmit the things I have come to understand about our world, while maintaining my responsibility not just to pass on that research but also to model the results of that learning.

The messaging campaigns that I focus upon in this study, much like traditional dissertations, seek to build narratives which “define” peoples and subjects, rather than interact and relate to them. In an effort to push against similar tendencies here in my own work, I decided early in the process to invite you, the reader, into my experience of the world, to include more of my own acceptance of, and interaction with, the objects of the culture in which I am embedded. To explain to you the context, as it were, of what these objects mean to me, and where I see myself in relation to the communities that created them. Within these pages resides two authors, neither completely divorced from the other, but both nonetheless distinctive in their tone. One is a diligent academic and will spend most of his time within the body of the dissertation seeking to calmly present you his findings, while the other is something of a Choctaw philosopher who will live in the footnotes and will often broaden the deeper historical context that informs my understandings of these objects. I invite you to engage with both of these personas, as I view each as necessary to deriving a complete picture of my methods in meaning making. This is a way, I as an author and a scholar, am asking you the reader, to relate to me as a person.

¹⁷ Simpson, Leanne Beattsamosake. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 2017. (pp. 156)

However, just like relating to others in the larger world beyond these pages, the choice is ultimately up to you which of these two you will engage with. I do hope that you take up the invitation that I present here to engage with both, for these two aspects of myself are not deployed by happenstance or chance and are completely intentional. This mirroring of my being is caused by a need to approach this work, this particular labor, from a position that allows for the meeting of many sometimes-conflicting obligations, to my field, my institution, my students, my people, my friends, my family, and finally myself. The selection of this tactic and the performance of this duality is how I have coped with my process of survival within academia. In other words, this is how I brought the Choctaw philosopher and the American academic within me into balance. I hope you will approach both the body of this text, and the footnotes that accompany it, within the spirit with which they are offered.

A Statement of Purpose on Sources

I have noted in my opening, that what you will find on these pages will not be what you might normally think of as “traditional” Western academic discourse. Don’t get me wrong, many Western sources will appear in our discussion and provide us methods of analysis, there will be French philosophers and Marxist theorists aplenty. But traditional Western academic sources will not be the limits of my framework. In selecting sources, I take as my guiding principle two important assertions from what you might think of as my spiritual Aunties, Audre Lorde and Leanne Beatsamosake Simpson, in which both scholars caution that the rules of the Western Academy were never intended to alter the world created by Western colonialism and will therefore never fully serve our needs in altering it. When Lorde suggested that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” she wasn’t just creating a catchy title for a book, but instead was pointing to the multiple ways in which partaking of the mechanisms of Western colonialism, both implicate us in that system and also format our thinking, thus limiting our imagination.¹⁸ I take from Lorde the belief that if we were to accept the rules of Western academic discourse uncritically, we would, by default, limit the range of our imaginings. The world of possibilities that I, as a theorist, can envision in this study would necessarily be diminished and limited if I were to overtly consider how the Western academy evaluated my sources.¹⁹ Additionally, I agree with Simpson when she warns in *As We Have Always Done* that

¹⁸ Lorde, Audre. *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* (Penguin Modern 23). 2018. Penguin UK. London, England.

¹⁹ This is not to say that individual opinions of my sources are invalid or unimportant. I want you to feel my sources are weighty and significant, however if I were to limit my selections based on my preconceived notions of the audience’s perceived academic value of my sources, I would be self-limiting the discourse in a manner that serves neither myself, nor you best. Many academic sources, both historically and in the modern era, carry with them the same White Supremacist structures that I struggle against as a scholar. Such sources will have still have value, at least some of the time, but to limit myself to them, would be to reify the same system I combat. I would fail before I begin. So please evaluate my sources, judge them even. I look forward to seeing your commentary. But know that I

“[she] cannot see how Indigenous Peoples can continue to exist as *Indigenous* if we are willing to replicate the logics of colonialism, because to do so is to actively engage in self-dispossession from the relationships that make us Indigenous in the first place” (emphasis in original).²⁰ In the plainest terms, Western colonization has dispossessed Indigenous Peoples of more than our land and Sovereignty, it has claimed possession of our imaginations, and our ability to envision new possibilities.

While there is some irony in my performance, as I sternly pound the keys of my keyboard to create the following printed words, it is nonetheless my belief that the academy’s favoritism for the printed word, and in particular, that of peer-reviewed academic writing, limits potential discourse along the lines of sex, religion, race, class and identity.²¹ A study which focuses primarily on written academic sources would be one that would be predominantly a story envisioned by upper class Cis White men, many of whom were raised with a Judeo-Christian cosmology. Understand that in my refusal to accept this framework for citations, I do not mean to imply that the work conducted by these scholars, or the oppositional work conducted by the limited number of queer, female, and minoritarian subjects that have fought their way into academia, is without merit. Indeed, as a Meta Modernist, I take many of my first principles from

will not limit myself to academic articles and texts out of a sense that these sources have greater value than a TedTalk or slate article.

²⁰ Simpson, Leanne Beasamosake *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. (pp. 35) 2017.

²¹ In many ways my assertion here pushes against the same type of forces within the academy which Dian Million struggles against in articulating her “Felt Theory” in which she argues that “Our [Indigenous scholars, particularly feminine scholars] felt scholarship continues to be segregated as a ‘feminine’ experience, as problematic, or at worst as not knowledge at all.” Although, due to my positionality, I am likely to face far fewer detractors for my insistence on an intellectual framework that provides room for sources that are not “traditionally favored” by the academic elite, in both cases this institutional bias and supposed “safe-guards” most often serves to silence work from anything and anyone that is not strictly speaking White, western, and Male, or at least not unless that minoritarian source is willing to properly perform the above qualities to the academy’s satisfaction.

Million, Dian. *Wicazo Sa Review* , FALL 2009, Vol. 24, No. 2, Native Feminism (FALL 2009), pp. 53-76

time honored and traditional Western philosophy, however, the purpose of this study is not to write a story intended for the limits of the academic audience.²² Instead, the work contained herein is intended for all. It is a story about all of us. And it is meant for all of us. As a result, I place no weight on the location or modality of my sources, only upon my perception of their utility. In the pages that follow you will find books from academic presses positioned next to long form journalism, TedTalks living next to Tweets, and podcasts coexisting with occasional dry academic treatise and sprinkled throughout will be elements of the true discourse of the masses, that thing we call popular culture. For as the wise philosopher, Obi Wan Kenobi, told us four decades ago, “many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view.” Were I to deny the obvious truthfulness of this statement, simply because the person who uttered it was fictional, I would likewise be denying the experience of the vast majority of people in the world, who gain their understanding of society, not from the old fossilized philosophers that are favored by the academic elite, but instead by the films, books, and social groups that surround us.²³

²² A discipline whose definition is still contested and in dispute, I gain my understanding of the emerging disciplinary approach of Meta-Modernism from pop culture historian John Higgs who defined Meta-Modernism on the Ezra Klein Podcast as “all models are flawed, and some are useful.” Higgs elaborates that Meta-Modernism is about “extremes rather than the center-point, it’s not about finding the best of both worlds [...] it’s about going to both extremes to find what’s useful in those things.”

Higgs, John. The Ezra Klein Podcast. Vox Media. 2019. (38:00-40:00) <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/a-mind-bending-reality-warping-conversation-with/id1081584611?i=1000448075759> (last accessed 10/10/22).

²³ Be sure to take a moment, breathe in a deep breath, and securely fasten your seat belt, it is likely to be a bumpy ride, but anyone who has ever journeyed through the Indiana Jones Adventure at *Disneyland* park can tell you, sometimes bumpy rides are the best.

Settler Dreams

Terms referring to the designation of the Indigenous Peoples of North America have always been contentious, after all, as Thomas King notes in *An Inconvenient Indian*, there has “never been a good collective noun [for Indigenous Peoples] because there was never a collective to begin with.”²⁴ As King notes, both the Indigenous Peoples of North America and the citizens of the nation states of the United States and Canada are multiracial and diverse. While Indigenous artists, activists, and academics from all over Indian Country (myself included) have advocated for the cultural specificity that comes from identifying Indigenous Peoples by their tribal affiliation, such specificity when discussing a nation state of the size and population of the United States and Canada, is not always practical. Therefore, throughout the body of this work I will be commonly deploying terms for which there is no common consensus of meaning, especially surrounding the various constituency groups that make up these nation states. Further the current debate in Canada and the U.S. has suffered from a limiting of discussion driven, in my estimation, by a fear in embracing a frank discourse of race and ethnicity. To alleviate the need to discuss the group power dynamics of this study in terms of “White” and “Black” groups, I have instead endeavored to discuss these group power dynamics based on their relation to, and placement within, the colonial system.

First and foremost, I will commonly use the term “Settler Subjects” to refer to all participants dedicated in some way to the continuance of the colonial system, be they citizens of an Indigenous nation, citizens of the U.S. or Canada, forced arrivals (such as the descendants of African slaves and European forced transportees, debtors and convicts), or immigrants, in so far

²⁴ King, Thomas. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, MN. 2012. (pp. xiii)

that all participate in Settler colonialism.²⁵ In other words, a Settler Subject is an individual that participates in the colonial system of Western nation states, regardless of whether or not that subject is engaging in a fully voluntary fashion, as each of us within the Settler State, reinforces the historical and continuing displacement of Indigenous Peoples in both knowing and unknown ways. Often, my analysis of the messaging of the objects of this study will focus on the message that this perceived Settler might receive. To a degree the Settler Subject I describe exists primarily in the minds of the creators of the objects of this study, rather than as a real-world citizen. Instead, I view the Settler Subject as a distorted mirror into which these artists pour their beliefs of what an ideal citizen of the United States and or Canada should look like and perform as. While both the descendants of European settlers and the Indigenous Peoples of North America are definitionally Settler Subjects, in that both were born and reared within the same colonial system and neither can completely remove themselves from it, my interests in the Settler Subject rests on the degree with which the individual accepts the script of Western Colonialism. In other words, how much they support the status quo. When discussing the Settler, I will be referencing individuals who appear to perform in keeping with the status quo, rather than those that are engaged in a struggle against it. In other words, as I move forward, Settler will reference the portions of the population that broadly speaking accept the colonial messages forwarded by the mainstream as a script to be adhered to and performed in real life.

Key to my understanding of the term Settler is the shared historical narrative of the covenant state of the United States of America that I articulate through a concept I call “settler dreams.” Much like a term articulated by Eddie Glaude Jr as “disremembering” in which Glaude suggests that American history is built upon what W.E.B Du Bois called “the Big Lie,” namely

²⁵ At times I will use the term “Settler” interchangeably for “Settler Subject” for the sake of brevity.

that one race of people can be “better than” another race of people, and thus U.S. history, as traditionally articulated, requires the Settler to engage in an act of “willful ignorance,” in which they perform a forgetting (a disremembering) of the actual history of race in America. “Settler dreams” advances this concept by Glaude, which he identifies as an “active forgetting,” to focus on the mechanisms deployed by the culture of the Settler State to generate specifically a disremembering of the Indigenous Peoples of North America by focusing not on the dreams we have at night, but instead the aspirational dreams we hold of the future.²⁶ Thus, Settler Dreams differ from disremembering, in so much that they are a lie that Settlers tell themselves in an effort to create the world they want, rather than the world they find they actually live in. At its heart, disremembering is an exclusionary process in which the willful ignorance demonstrated by the subject is intended not only to disavow or erase North America’s history of race conflict, but also to erase people of color as legitimate actors in the political process of the United States and Canada. Disremembering becomes a convenient excuse for Settler Subjects to explain why Indigenous Peoples, African Americans, and other minority groups are disempowered in the American system, by denying the history of institutional racism that has generated that power dynamic. Settler Dreams, however, are appropriative and seek to allow for the carefully curated subsuming of a sanitized portion of the experiences of what these countries commonly refer to as Native American/First Nations Peoples into a unique Western identity. However, because Settler Dreams can only find form in a world that denies an unvarnished reading of the history of contact between the U.S./Canada and Indigenous nations, the continued existence of Indigenous Peoples in the present is an impediment to that narrative and must be erased from it via

²⁶ Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*. B/D/W/Y Broadway Books. New York. 2016.(pp. 46-47)

disremembering.²⁷ Ultimately the Hollywood Indian becomes the mechanism of that effort and my intention within this project is to demonstrate that the Hollywood Indian causes disremembering by generating Settler Dreams.

While my use of the term Settler is a broad category that encompasses a majority of U.S. and Canadian citizens, by contrast, for the subversive voices that seek to modify or discard the aforementioned mainstream script that I approach in this study, I propose a much less inclusive object of comparison, that of the “Indigenous Subject.”²⁸ Far from being limited to the strict category of tribal citizens, in the term Indigenous Subjects, I envision an individual of ethnic or cultural Indigenous descent that is dedicated to a process of decolonization and a move toward a restoration and resurgence of Indigenous epistemologies and cosmologies.²⁹ For my purposes,

²⁷ In this respect “Settler Dreams” as I conceive them also draws from and continues the work of Mark Rifkin in the concept of “settler common sense,” which Rifkin argues are “the ways the legal and political structures that enable non-native access to Indigenous territories come to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history, and personhood.” If “settler common sense” can be thought of as the set of everyday colonial assumptions that generate settler colonialism, then “Settler Dreams” serve as the exposition (or in some case the fantastical legend) that justify those attitudes.

Rifkin, Mark. *Settler Common Sense*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. MN. 2014. (pp. xv-xxii)

²⁸ While I absolutely believe that the conclusion I draw in this work will pertain equally to other subjects of empire to one degree or another, the focus of this study is necessarily focused upon the representation, and lived experience of, the Indigenous Peoples of North America because of cultural affinity. While I steadfastly believe that any individual can successfully study and learn from a culture other than their own, my conclusions herein draw upon my individual placement as both the object being represented and as the principal citizen of the intended message. It is my belief that both my Indigenous cultural affinity and my societal encoding as “White,” place me in a position that views nuisance in this struggle that others might miss, and which may prove helpful in constructing new meaning.

²⁹ In articulating this broad definition of the Indigenous Subject, I specifically seek to create and maintain space for three specific underrepresented groups within the discourse of the Pan-Indian community: those that have been forcibly disenrolled, the Afro-Indigenous descendants of groups like the Cherokee Freedmen, and the large group of tribal descendants who may have lost their tribal affinity through the efforts of the U.S. and Canadian governments and now seek to reconnect or otherwise recover their tribal affinity. While Sovereignty is a mostly beneficial process and I support the right of tribal governments to create their own criteria for membership, even if in many cases I disagree with the choices that tribal councils often make, there is not currently, nor should there ever be, a final arbiter of who has a valid claim to Indigenous Identity. Across the Indigenous nations of the continent before contact with the people of Europe, the most popular of political thought centered on relationality and consensus. As such, I argue that as we move forward away from our colonial past, debates about Indigenous identity should remain fluid and messy, rather than concentrated and strict, specifically because any identity construction that excludes individuals based on a perceived lack of Indigenous purity continues the work of colonial power.

the Indigenous Subject, much like the Settler, is less about what the subject can be “defined as,” than it is about how the individual “performs decolonization.” Indigenous Subjects in my understanding seek to remove, both from themselves and within their relations with broader society, the influence of the colonial system and instead in its place introduce a new Indigenous cosmology. As such, the Indigenous Subject is a performance category that not all tribally enrolled citizens or individuals of Indigenous heritage will fall within. My use of these categories is not intended to split these two groups into a strict binary that individuals must conform to. Instead, I use these categorizations only insofar as they are useful, namely I use them when considering group dynamics. I want to foreground my understanding that these terms can prove both messy and slippery when applied to the individual, after all, there is no individual in a colonial system that is completely free of that system. All members of American and Canadian society demonstrate Settler tendencies at times, even though we might wish it otherwise, because we have all been hailed into a culture that has been heavily influenced and dominated by a Western colonial framework. Whether we spent time in Residential/Boarding Schools or in public education, were raised on the reservation or in the city. Whether we belong to the North American mainstream or instead to one of the multitude of groups that are excluded from the full exercise of rights in North American governance, each of us has been raised, or seeks belonging, within that colonial framework. We each of us bear the scars of that worldview. Like a pathogen it infects us and limits the way we can imagine the world.³⁰ I want to stress that Indigenous

³⁰ I am indebted to the aforementioned Thomas King for my understanding of colonialism as a disease that is carried by all citizens of Western Colonialism, who in his *The Inconvenient Indian*, compares Colonialism to malaria, a malady that human beings are never really cured of and will continue to suffer from off and on throughout the rest of their lives. Just like malaria, King argues that Western colonialism resides in the blood of the nations of the United States and Canada, being kept at bay by the immune system of our politics in the form of Tribal sovereignty. However, should that immune system waver, should these nations retreat from protecting tribal sovereignty, then colonial structures of dominance may well rear up and infect our body politic once again.

Subjects and Settler Subjects, as refer to herein, are an artificial category that I view as existing primarily in the artist mind. These groups are best thought of as artificial constructions that the artist is attempting to speak to, rather than the collection of individuals that make up these groups.

On the Neutrality of Ideas

Despite the fact that comic book writer Alan Moore felt betrayed by DC Comics and Warner Media's adaptation of his 1982 comic series *V for Vendetta*, his original commentary rings true in the comic's 2005 film adaptation, when his titular character addresses the people of London and proclaims that "[words] will always retain their power. Words offer the means to meaning, and for those that will listen, the enunciation of truth."³¹ However, it is not strictly speaking "words" that V is referring to in this scene, but rather words as they articulate meaning, namely what we might call "ideas." As V continues to sway his trapped audience via London's emergency broadcast system, he calls upon the memory of Guy Fawkes and suggests that when the famous 17th century activist/rebel attempted to blow up Parliament in 1605, he sought to "implant the idea" of freedom from oppression, forever within the imaginary of the people of England. It is in this envisioned popular imaginary that V articulates, what Moore himself has referred to as the "Imagine-Space," that this project will live and breathe, with a primary focus on how ideas are introduced into this space and how advocates of Indigenous Sovereignty might seek to create a more balanced discourse with the colonial West.

In 1976s *The Social Gene*, biologist Richard Dawkins formulated the idea of "memes" by applying the Darwinian "survival of the fittest" evolutionary thought process to the world of the Imagine-Space. Theorizing that ideas might well operate like biological organisms Dawkins suggests that some ideas are stronger than others, and are therefore more adapted to survival and would beat out other (weaker ideas) via natural selection.³² Now fortunately, Meme Theory,

³¹ *V for Vendetta*. James McTeigue (director) Warner Media. Warner Bros. Releasing. United States of America. 2005.

³² Although many theorists have envisioned a place or thought palace of shared ideas, my use of the term Imagine-Space is linked to the theoretical work of British author and comic book writer Alan Moore who envisions the

which sounds to this researcher dangerously similar to the Social Darwinism of the 19th and early 20th century, never became a significant area of inquiry in Psychology despite the efforts of proponents such as Susan Blackmore, however that has not stopped the terminology of Dawkins from becoming incorporated into the shared language of the 21st century, via the labeling of simple propaganda posters as “memes.”³³ The normalization of this style of propaganda as memes, much like the racist pseudo-science of Social Darwinism, suggests to the participants of the internet that all ideas are inherently neutral and that the memes we see infecting our Twitter and Facebook feed are in fact the strongest ideas, and that we should follow them because they are the “natural order.”³⁴ This style of thinking under Social Darwinism was used to justify and maintain a social order that proclaimed Western European Whites as the masters of the human universe with all other races beneath them. Darwin’s theory of evolution was used to create a new social understanding of the world that privileged Western European Whites and oppressed everyone else, not because this idea was “natural,” but instead because the military and economic strength of Europe allowed the European powers to dictate the terms of our social ecosystem and those powers used the idea of Social Darwinism to construct the social environment that was best

Imagine-Space as a shared imaginary that we, all of us, as citizens of culture, draw from. A shared imaginary that Moore suggests is filled not only with the specific thoughts that we ourselves place within this space, but also all of the other detritus that society and culture fill us with. For Moore the Imagine-Space is filled not only with our happiest dreams, but also our darkest nightmares, and that includes all the misogyny and White Supremacy of our collected past.

³³ Blackmore, Susan. *The Meme Machine*. Oxford University Press. England. 2000.

³⁴ As an important notation, the final version of this study was published after the purchase of Twitter by eccentric billionaire and would-be destroyer of worlds Elon Musk who officially changed the platform's name and branding to “X” in April of 2023. My refusal to use the term “X” to define this site should not be viewed as an act of resistance, but instead as the average everyday quotidian use of language practiced in pop culture by the masses. Musk may call Twitter whatever he would like, even if it is a silly un-trademarkable name like X, but he cannot obligate actual people in the real world from referring to the platform by the name it has earned over its many years of service, especially when the domain name for X is twitter.com.

Davis, Wes. “Twitter is being rebranded as X: After Elon Musk tweeted about it all night, the bird site is shedding its feathers.” *The Verge*. July 23, 2023. <https://www.theverge.com/2023/7/23/23804629/twitters-rebrand-to-x-may-actually-be-happening-soon> (last accessed 8/29/23)

suiting to their own needs and wants. Both Social Darwinism and Meme Theory seek to move the ideas that construct our social ecosystem from the realm of the Imagine-Space (thought) to the realm of Science (Biology), and why do they do that? By shifting from the realm of thought to the realm of biology, human beings are deprived of agency, the rules that form the world around us become something which exists in our bones, rather than in our heads. After all, we do not often argue with biology.³⁵ If the world around us comes from biology, from our “nature,” then we perceive that we are powerless to change it, the world becomes “beyond our control.” My chief contention is that ideas and thus the Imagine-Space are within our control, that narrative is a weapon that we deploy to change the social world around us. I therefore read the narrative that we are powerless to make changes to our social constructs, that the status quo is “natural,” as one of the chief weapons of White Supremacy.

Ideas are generative, they construct, constitute, and perpetuate our social world. They teach us how to be in the world and how we are meant to behave. After all, it is not happenstance that we call the concept of a “worldview,” a “Cosmology.” The study of Cosmology is literally a discussion (logos), of the Universe (cosmos). Cosmologies teach us the limits of our social rules, the way that our collective society believes people are meant to behave, and perhaps most importantly, how we are supposed to view and treat other people. When Augusto Boal remarked that “theatre is a weapon” in *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, he was not literally suggesting that the theatre was a sword or a mace, but rather that theatre was used by governments to socially condition the masses by identifying what they viewed as dangerous and aberrant behavior. Boal

³⁵ I myself am six feet tall and while Americans everywhere may claim that they wish to be six feet tall and above, the truth is that America was not in general built to accommodate people six feet and taller. I stopped counting the number of times that I have slammed my head into things at 500. My response to these events is not to argue that I am not six feet tall. I am forced by my physical reaction to the world to accept the reality of biology.

believed that beginning with the Greek Drama of the 6th century BCE, Western Theatre most often presented an exemplar hero character, a civic leader, who is ultimately destroyed by a single fatal flaw, and that in the viewing of this character's destruction, the audience was meant to identify that now abhorrent behavior as "bad," and thus seek to purge it from themselves.³⁶ This same style of social conditioning seems to have existed throughout the history of all human cultures and in the world founded by Social Darwinist this meant that the basic default was that White was superior to Black. That the "White" master was meant to be the owner of the "Black" slave. The "White" landowner was meant to take the land from the "Red" Indian. The "White" Protestant boss was supposed to lord it over the "Non-White" Irish Catholic help, and so forth.³⁷ Further, these ideas although weakened over time, remain with us to this day in calls for migrants to discard their culture and become "good Americans," for Indigenous Peoples to surrender their "traditionalist" ways and assimilate to mainstream culture, and for African Americans to humbly accept their permanent placement at the bottom of America's socio-economic ladder. We do not retain these ideas by chance. These ideas remain with us because the dominant culture has been engaged in a long-standing campaign to see to it that their ideas and worldview are constantly reintroduced and strengthened within the Imagine-Space. A campaign that continues to be and always has been a tactic of war.

³⁶ Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Theatre Communications Group; Tcg ed. Edition. New York, NY. 1993.

³⁷ In pointing to the denial of "White" status to the Irish during the latter half of the 19th century, I acknowledge that while we sometimes speak of these social categories as if they have stable and firm boundaries, all social constructs live and breathe in the Imagine-Space and their meaning can alter and fluctuate, sometimes quite rapidly, as they did in the 20th century, when the Irish were adopted into the White majority in a bid to maintain White Cultural Dominance.

On the Boundaries of What We Call Racism

I take it as a given that each of us, myself included, holds within us, racial biases. Based on stereotypes, these racialized attitudes are often subsumed in our identity at such a deep level, that they are invisible to us as individuals and once exposed to them, we may wish to expunge them from ourselves. I also take as a given that these racial biases are broadly speaking different from “racism,” which I view as an individual embracing an ideological worldview that seeks to create public policies or social norms that disadvantage others based on perceived racial traits. Within this understanding of racism and racial bias the long-standing moderate statement that we should be overly cautious of judging and evaluating the racialized attitudes of our fellow citizens because we do not truly know “what is in their hearts” is rendered unnecessary. Instead of guessing at the inner attitudes of the content creators featured in this study, many of whom are dead, and few of whom would be honest with either themselves or us, the audience, if they weren’t, I instead insist we focus on what they did, the actions they took, and what they created. As I work in this project to evaluate the racialized attitudes of the Individuals that created the art, objects, and paraphernalia of both our present and our past, I will in general avoid making belief statements about their inner thoughts and feelings, in favor of analyzing the detritus left behind by those attitudes, the physical art object that we can hold and touch in our hand. So, you will rarely find me labeling anyone in this study as “being racist” or “suffering from racial bias.” What is in another person’s heart is not of interest to me, what they do to support/defend or oppose/dismantle White Supremacy is.³⁸

³⁸ Obviously, there is a bit of hyperbole inherent in this statement, any person dedicated to a more just and relational world, such as myself, desires that as few people as possible in our society suffer from racists or racially biased thoughts. However, as a matter of utility my work in this study is about rendering those attitudes taboo and inappropriate for use within the common ground. First and foremost, I seek to regulate behavior in an effort to alter those thoughts and feelings I argue should be taboo.

Identity is Inherently Unstable

My focus on the importance of the Imagine-Space to political and social discourse is driven by an understanding of identity of self in keeping with neuroscientist Anil Seth. Seth suggests that “for most of us, most of the time it seems as though, the self [...] is an enduring and unified entity, in essence a unique identity,” what we might think of as the “Decider in Chief,” but Seth insists that this is only how things seem and instead “the self is not the thing that does the perceiving, the self is a perception too, or rather a collection of related perceptions [...] a controlled hallucination.”³⁹ In other words, Seth asserts that the thing we call the self is not a stable and unchanging personality, but instead that it is a story, an understanding of the world, that we tell and retell ourselves every morning upon waking and all throughout the day as the stimuli around us move and change.⁴⁰ This process of perception has become so commonplace to us that it operates at a nearly invisible subconscious level, we have literally told ourselves a story

³⁹ Anil Seth’s vision of the self here also bears much in common with a call by Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci to “conceive of man as a series of active relationships (a process) in which individuality, while of the greatest importance, is not the sole element to be considered. The humanity reflected in every individual consists of various elements: (1) the individual, (2) other men, (3) nature.” Much like Seth Gramsci would go on to argue that “one can say that man changes himself, modifies himself, to the same extent that he changes and modifies the whole complex of relationships of which he is of the nexus.”

Gramsci, Antonio. “Gramsci in Prison: 1926-1937.” *In The Modern Prince & Other Writings*. International Publishers. New York. (pp. 77) 1957. 2016.

Seth, Anil. “Anil Seth: How your brain invents your "self" | TED” Nov 24, 2021.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7_LwuuPsAE (last accessed 9/10/22)

⁴⁰ Anil Seth’s concept of the self is very much in keeping with the work of American psychologist James Hillman, who in 2005s *A Terrible Love of War* focused on the dilemma presented by soldiers returning from the battlefield with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as narrative problem. In his analysis Hillman suggests that the most effective treatment would include helping the patient to recontextualize the traumatic event by inserting into their own personal sense of narrative that far from being strange or aberrant, “war” itself is the natural state of man, and that therefore what has happened to them is horrible, and perhaps even unusual, but ultimately normal. In essence Hillman suggest like Seth, that the self is malleable and changeable, that much like a record skipping for the Veteran, their trauma becomes a narrative blockage in which they have become stuck and trapped in a cycle and what is needed is a storytelling fix picks up the needle and moves the record past the skip point.

Hillman, James. *A Terrible Love of War*. Penguin Books. New York and London. 2004.

of self so many times, that we are unaware that we are doing it, the process has become repetition to the point of absence, an absence that has itself become invisible.⁴¹ Because we do not consciously remember the formation of the self, the Imagine-Space takes on increased political importance. In a world where the subject's sense of self reforms every time they come into contact with a new person, the discursive boundaries of the Imagine-Space become the limits of the ways in which they relate to that other person. I am, who I am, and they are, who they are, because of information drawn from the Imagine-Space.

The shared cultural sphere of the Imagine-Space informs us what is good, what is bad, and what is taboo. In this way I argue, that the Imagine-Space operates much like the “common ground” envisioned by philosopher Robert Stalnaker, which he envisions as the shared space of acceptable speech, only instead of limiting the range of appropriate options that can occur in common conversation, the Imagine-Space serves a similar function for the imagination, and thus limits change.⁴² It has often been jokingly said in American parlance that there are “no new ideas,” a sentiment that I broadly agree with and one that encourages me to propose a metaphor for the Imagine-Space as a lake filled with all the ideas of the masses. Within this lake, every idea that any human has ever conceptualized resides. But just because these ideas exist in the lake, that does not mean that they are socially accepted, and if there is any sort of common ground within the lake, it rests near the life-giving surface, while below resides the taboo, the

⁴¹ There is a comparison to be made here between Seth's concept of the self and Richard Schechner's “restored behavior” in comparing “twice-performed behaviors” and the idea of behavior and ritual as a series of pre-rehearsed film strips as the script of the self.

Schechner, Richard. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1985.

⁴² Stalnaker, Robert. “Common Ground” *Linguistics and Philosophy*. Vol. 25, No. 5/6 (Dec., 2002), pp. 701-721 (21 pages)

unacceptable.⁴³ Thus, the ideas that are socially accepted and change the world need to constantly be given buoyancy so that they can rise from the depths of taboo to the light of the common ground and I argue that narrative and culture are how we give ideas that buoyancy. In order to create real felt change in the world, we must first increase the prevalence of the ideas we wish to see enacted within the Imagine-Space. Americans often colloquially remark that “people don’t change” and “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks,” but according to Seth’s conception of identity, the self is regenerated all the time, so it would seem that it is not the people who fail to change, it is the Imagine-Space. With this understanding of the self, I take as a given that the Imagine-Space is the most important battlefield in the war for social change, if we would change the hearts of our fellow citizens, we must first alter the boundaries of the American imaginary.⁴⁴

⁴³ This articulation of the Imagine-Space would not have been possible without the work of Leanne Beatsamosake Simpson, who in *A Short History of the Blockade* uses the work of Beaver Peoples in creating the generative life-giving spaces of lakes, as metaphor to reconsider protest blockades such as the 1990 blockade at Kanehsatà:ke (Oka).

Simpson, Leanne Beatsamosake. *A Short History of the Blockade: Giant Beavers, Diplomacy, and Regeneration in Nishnaabewin*. CLC Kriesel Lecture Series. University of Alberta Press. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 2021.

⁴⁴ According to the 1980s animated cartoon show *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero*, the appropriate Joe to send on an amphibious mission, such as fighting in a lake (even one made out of ideas) is Torpedo, which led me to wanting to make a brief comical pun about ‘calling for a Torpedo.’ Ultimately, I chose not to do that, most predominantly because as I was considering it, it occurred to me that *G.I. Joe* is a wonderful example of the very mechanisms that I am describing in the Imagine-Space. G.I. Joe did, and probably still continues to do, much more for U.S. military recruiting than government propaganda generating a general positive feeling towards America and the country’s G.I.’s in American Children. Through its embrace of Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) *G.I. Joe* and its associated toy line from Hasbro, help embed in children a basic understanding of American military power, even going so far as encourage children to begin considering one of those “specializations” as a potential job one day. So prevalent was such identification for myself that to this day I can tell you that my favorite Joe was the sailor Shipwreck whose primary MOS was Gunner’s Mate.

G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero. Sunbow Productions. Marvel Productions. 1983-1986.

White Supremacy: The Thousand Year Empire

When Adolf Hitler spoke of his “thousand-year Reich,” he was not only envisioning that his reign would somehow miraculously lead to an empire that would last a millennium, but also that his ascension as leader of Germany was the culmination of a thousand-year German empire that tracked all the way back to Charlemagne.⁴⁵ He might just as easily have been speaking of the White Supremacy of Western Colonialism. Despite our long-standing national myths, “race” as a defining characteristic of difference, is a relatively new development historically speaking. In his study of the development of racial attitudes in the American colonies, Ibram X. Kendi, argues that the development of anti-black tropes increased in the 15th century when Slavic townships and villages began building walls to fend off European slave raiders, thus forcing Europe to begin depending to a greater extent on Africa for its slave labor.⁴⁶ Up until that time, Kendi found that nearly 50% of all slaves in Europe had been seized from Slavic countries, hence the term “slave.” Thus, up until the 15th century, the chief difference that drove European understandings of slavery were cultural and religious, not racial. In other words, the chief reason a person was viewed as acceptable for slavery in 15th century Europe was because the individual was not Catholic.⁴⁷ Similarly, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, suggests that Western Colonialism was

⁴⁵ This is not to say that Hitler would not have desired a Fascist Germany that persevered for an additional thousand years, merely that linguistically his primary purpose was to position himself and the Nazi movement as the natural inheritor of the ruling class of Germany.

⁴⁶ Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. Bold Type Books. New York, NY. 2016.

⁴⁷ Orlando Patterson suggests in *Slavery and Social Death*, that the move away from a religious or cultural distinction and towards race as the determining factor for enslavement also served European interests in the spread of chattel slavery because it allows for what he terms “natal alienation,” a form of social death that severs a victim’s connection to their ancestors and their descendants. Patterson goes on to assert that “[having] no natal claims and powers of his own, [the slave] had none to pass on to his children. And because no one else had any claim or interest in such children, the master could claim them as his own essentially on the grounds that whatever the parents of such children expended in their upbringing incurred a debt to him.” Thus, the legal status of a non-Catholic slave in Europe was highly dependent on the context of where that individual came from and what religion they practiced, narrative elements that might well change from their offspring, potentially freeing them from a state of bondage,

born in the 11th century, when the Catholic church gave permission to its followers to steal land from anyone that was non-Christian.⁴⁸ Because these non-Christian subjects were simultaneously people of color, we should perhaps not be surprised that White Supremacy became linked to Western Colonization, after all some of these dark skinned individuals might conceivably become Christian through conversion, gain rights, and therefore challenge the dominance of the invaders, however in the 11th century an individual could not easily alter the color of their skin.

Throughout the previous millennia, White Supremacy became both justification for White colonial dominance and a major tool for maintaining and creating that dominance. White Supremacy would also be the driving force for the creation of the nation states that I will be focusing my investigation upon, namely the nations of North America, primarily Canada, and the United States. However, as I relate to, and analyze, the cultures and art production of these particular nation states, I view all of us in North America as living in the shadow of a thousand-year empire. An empire that first reared its head wearing a British and French face during the crusades, became the British, French, Dutch, and Spanish visage of the invaders of North America in the 15th century, and finally morphed into the American, Canadian, and Mexican

while the African slave became served entirely from the narrative of humanity in a reduction of race as their status. In other words, by discarding the personal narratives and genealogical history of Africans in linking slave status to race, European slaveholders found both a justification for any violent acts they made upon African slaves but also for the passing of slave status on to subsequent generations. Further, here in the present we can still see the afterlife of this belief structure in the discomfort that many mainstream Americans express when confronted by Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion efforts to center the “personal narratives” of underrepresented peoples in public discourse. Although it is beyond the scope of this current project, I hope to return in the future to a deep consideration of what it means to be “unsettled” by listening to another individual’s life story and how I might incorporate the lessons learned as a result of this research to the task of tackling the issue of social death faced by many minoritarian peoples in our Settler controlled spaces.

Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study*. E-book, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb03237.0001.001>. (9)

⁴⁸ Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*. Beacon Press. Boston, MASS. 2014.

nations of the present. The empire is White Supremacy, not the nation states that deploy it and serve as a mask to hide its ugly features.

As an artist, academic, and culturalist, the primary act of opposition that I forward in this study is against White Supremacy, which I will oppose in all its many forms. Both the avowed White Supremacy of the White Ethnonationalist and the silent civil White Supremacy of the peaceful soccer mom who just doesn't want to "see her world change." Therefore, in what follows, while as mentioned earlier I will avoid labeling individuals as racist and racially biased, I will not censor myself over whether or not it is my belief that an action taken by an individual, or a piece of art created by that individual, forwards White Supremacy. As a society we have grown uncomfortable with openly discussing White Supremacy, and in doing so, we have blinded many of our citizens to the concept that White Supremacy is not simply a thought, feeling, or opinion, it is a governing principle. White Supremacy is not simply the belief that White people are superior to people of color, but that White people should be allowed what is in effect an apartheid state, where the White cultural majority makes most, if not all, of the decisions for the state. White Supremacy is a play for power, and in avoiding seeing that, many citizens are therefore blind to the fact that there has been, and will continue to be, a war fought for the domination of this thousand-year empire.

It's Only a Comic Book Story

Inevitably as I discuss comic books, films, tobacco cards, sports paraphernalia, and other pop culture artifacts, there will be some in the academy, and the general public, that will insist that these objects themselves, being primarily directed at children, are meant “all in good fun,” and are thus in of themselves of little use in discussing major political discourse.⁴⁹ Indulge me a moment to place these thoughts from your mind.⁵⁰ I argue that culture is politics once removed. That how we think about the world cannot be separated from how we behave in the world. Allow me to demonstrate. For the most part, none of the foundational thinkers in Indigenous political thought are likely to be placed in the Political Science section of the library. Indigenous theorist from the “Father of American Indian Studies,” Vine Deloria Jr (who you would likely find in the religious or cultural studies section) to Robert Warrior and Craig Womack (who would likely be over near literary studies), are nonetheless philosophical thinkers who were, and are, deeply political in their thinking, primarily because the way that we think about religion and culture becomes how we think about everything else. Culture, our shared interaction, forms our outlook and worldview. Culture builds what psychologist William M. Reddy asserts are “emotional regimes,” social and state political structures that generate an affect of conformity in citizens

⁴⁹ In advocating that academic and public discourse should place greater weight upon the affective abilities of objects like comic books and films to carry political rhetoric, I seek to put my methods and praxis into dialogue with efforts by Anna Watkins Fisher, whose analysis of the abstraction capabilities of the public use of the color we think of as “Safety Orange” aptly demonstrates the myriad of ways that the objects around us, that are often dismissed as simple in their messaging, instead speak volumes. In much the same way I will suggest in this study that cultural products not only condition us to accept certain sentiments and conditions, that they also demand us to “take actions,” Fisher asserts of the warnings provided by the orange traffic cones that forward the politics of their creation, that “[the] trappings of safety make citizens responsible for avoiding the now-visible risk, further normalizing a neoliberal order of state nonintervention in public crises, with care instead automated, privatized, and outsourced to citizens.” (Fisher, xix)

Fisher, Anna Watkins. *Safety Orange*. Forerunners: Ideas First. 2021. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London.

⁵⁰ Or conversely to call out your B.S. for what is.

“which require individuals to express normative emotions and to avoid deviant emotions.”

Reddy suggests that emotional regimes operate much like a combination of Louis Althusser’s ideological and repressive state apparatuses, that:

In these regimes, a limited number of emotives are modeled through ceremony or official art forms. Individuals are required to utter these emotives in appropriate circumstances, in the expectation that normative emotions will be enhanced and habituated. Those who refuse to make the normative utterances (whether of respect for a father, love for a god or a king, or loyalty to an army) are faced with the prospect of severe penalties.⁵¹

Culture therefore becomes one of the chief mechanisms of enforcing a feeling or affect of conformity and unlike adults, most of whom have been trained in at least some level of critical thinking and media literacy, children are especially susceptible to messages being sent by our cultural environment. Just like Althusser, I take as a given that there is literally no cultural interaction between children and the state, which is not intended as interpellation and that ideological State apparatuses come in all shapes and sizes, including the church, the school, the family, and indeed the comic publisher or motion picture company.⁵²

While at first it may seem strange to equate a comic book company or film house with these other institutions, I argue that such companies have come to replace “the artist” in the lexicon of the 20th century, as so much of the culture produced in this era was created under “work for hire” agreements that minimize both the importance and recognition of the individual artist.⁵³ Thus, just like the artists of old (Beethoven, Shakespeare, Longfellow, etc.) who became

⁵¹ Reddy, William M.. *The Navigation of Feeling : A Framework for the History of Emotions*, Cambridge University Press, 2001. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sdsu/detail.action?docID=202058>. (last accessed 3/12/2024)

⁵² Althusser, Louis. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)” From *The Anthropology of the State : A Reader*. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. 2006. (pp.86-111)

⁵³ “Work for Hire” agreements in the United States of America stipulate that as an employee paid by an independent firm, all the “work product” of said employee, including any Intellectual Property created in the course of their

major stakeholders that the masses looked to for judgement and guidance, the companies that produced the cultural objects of the 20th century served as a trusted source for most children.⁵⁴ Therefore, as these objects are intended to model good behavior and designate undesirable behavior, thus creating a “formatted” adult citizen of the state, we should be more interested in the objects that effect children, not less. The characters, classes, and castes that are marked as desirable in products for children will become the privileged citizens of tomorrow, while those that are marked for ridicule, as “the other,” will become the marginalized. These objects ultimately affect not just the child readers world, but the adult world of the future as well by creating two important categories, an “us” and a “them.”

This type of social control is often the goal of the Reactionary Right-Wing forces that I will be exploring at times throughout this study. To mark cultural storytelling that they deem to be harmful for ridicule and condemnation, and to signal boost that which they feel should be held up for idealization. As an example, take the 21st century concept of “cancel culture.” Despite a long and dedicated history of advocating for censorship of ideas that it has found objectionable, the American conservative movement in the 21st century has taken to portraying themselves as victims that the cultural mainstream seeks to silence. Insisting that efforts to financially

duties, belongs exclusively to their employer. In other words, the IP is owned by the person who paid to have the product created, not the artist or writer that physically did the work. Notably the majority of comic books created in the United States, including most monthly issue currently produced by DC and Marvel comics were, and are, created under “work for hire” agreements. Thus, despite creating the Marvel Universe, an IP that has generated more than 22 billion dollars of revenue from films alone in the last decade, the descendants of the fathers of that property, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, receive little or no compensation from Disney, and what they are given is provided voluntarily by the company.

⁵⁴ Indeed, we can see this new sense of identification play out in our current culture war stories. When a vitriolic backlash campaign targeted Rian Johnson’s *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*, the majority of the negative commentary to the messaging of the film, was not directed at the artist who wrote the screenplay and directed it, Johnson himself, but instead it was directed at Kathleen Kennedy the President of Lucasfilm Ltd. And Disney. This negative sentiment suggests that those complaining viewed Johnson merely as a dupe, as a work horse whose reins were securely in the hands of Lucasfilm and Disney.

disincentivize media companies from forwarding White Supremacist and misogynous content, are in fact, attempts to personally censor individual citizens “freedom of speech,” rather than that they are calls for institutional change.⁵⁵ The “cancel culture” messaging suggests that the political right-wing in America acknowledges the importance of these products in not only formatting American discourse, but also in creating the United States of Tomorrow. When Reactionary Right commentators deride the “twitter mobs” that criticized mixed martial arts fighter Gina Carano for her transphobic and antisemitic tweets as “fascist,” or devote entire television segments to a toy company like Hasbro changing a brand name, from “Mr. Potato Head” to just plain old “Potato Head,” they are attempting to speak to a deeply seated fear of a change in American discourse that is felt by their audience. The very vitriol with which these conservative voices oppose such obvious expressions of market Capitalism indicate they are very much aware that film, television, toys, comic books, and other products for children tell powerful stories to the youth of America and in the end, they simply oppose the story being told. And while these conservative cultural icons are often unwilling to discuss the sentiments that inform this discourse in detailed and specific terms, I am not.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ While it is objectively true that no private citizen, either as an individual or a member of a corporation can infringe upon someone’s “freedom of speech,” because they are by definition a non-governmental actor, I choose to engage with the Reactionary Right’s messaging here by interpreting their complaints to be something akin to “you are making me afraid to speak,” rather than “you are passing laws infringing on my speech.”

⁵⁶ This acknowledgement of the importance of cultural products and cultural capital by the political right in the U.S. was made evident once again in the waning days of this dissertation as I was putting the finishing touches for publication with the great “Taylor Swift PSYOPS” of 2024. When pop sensation and internationally famous performing artist Taylor Swift began dating Kansas City Chiefs Tight End Travis Kelce late in 2023, the conjoining of a pair of celebrities of their stature was bound to have some impact on the cultural ecosystem. Indeed, it didn’t take long for Swift’s legions of fans, known as “Swifties,” who spent so much money on tickets to Swift’s concerts in 2023 that the U.S. Federal Reserve announced that Swift’s “eras” tour single-handedly boosted the U.S. national economy, to shift the demographics of the crowd that watches Chiefs games and buys chiefs merchandising. Swift and Kelce’s romance is at the moment I write this in early 2024, the stuff of Hollywood/Celebrity legend and is guaranteed to make some who watch it believe in love all over again, and others to make fake gagging noises as they make fun of the saccharin flavored coverage that the American media puts out about the couple. However, in the world of Right-Wing political discourse Swift and Kelce’s relationship has taken on a more sinister connotation, with “mainstream” commentators like Fox News’ Jesse Watters implying that there was an active effort by the

The Passivity of Ideas Hides a Social Cold War

We all in general accept the premise that when a historian writes a history, he or she is telling us a story that they believe is important and that we can learn some sort of important lesson from. We, as readers, take for granted that there is something to be learned from what material the historian is privileging. After all, there are hundreds of histories written about President Theodore Roosevelt while most people only remember his handpicked successor William Howard Taft for an urban legend which suggests that due to his great girth, Taft once became stuck in a White House bathtub. Surely this must mean that Roosevelt was more important than Taft. However, with the move towards Post-Modernist thought we began to look at the things that these historians were choosing to omit as fertile ground for discovery. Once again, the comparison between Roosevelt and Taft is apt, as much of the 20th century saw the political philosophers of the U.S. argue over the purported “Imperial Presidency.” Perhaps no

Biden Administration to court Swift’s endorsement, and more extreme Right leaning voices such as One American News’ Allison Steinberg labeling Swift and Kelce’s romance as a “PSYOPS,” a manufactured romance intend for the sole purpose of re-electing President Joe Biden. The Taylor Swift PSYOPS conspiracy has grown so strong in right leaning discourse that even the great conservative apologist Tim Pool felt it necessary to debunk the “conspiracy” on his Timcast podcast/YouTube channel by suggesting the affair was nothing more than a standard celebrity public relations campaign. Regardless of the true origin of Swift and Kelce’s affections, at its heart the entire line of reasoning surrounding Right leaning discourse of Swift shows the deeply embedded belief that culture has value in of itself, Swift has become a target for Right leaning demagogos because at some fundamental level they are fearful that she can sway public opinion.

O’Kane, Caitlin. “The Federal Reserve says Taylor Swift's Eras Tour boosted the economy. One market research firm estimates she could add \$5 billion” CBS News. July 18,2023. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/taylor-swift-eras-tour-boosted-economy-tourism-federal-reserve-how-much-money-made/> (last accessed 2/3/2024)

Pool, Tim. “Taylor Swift PSYOP Theory GOES WILD After KC Chiefs Head To SUPER BOWL. Media Says OBAMA SWIFT 2024” YouTube Video. Timcast. January 29, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phOcUp3ujil> (last accessed 2/3/2024)

Steinberg, Alison. “Alison’s Angle: Massive Super Bowl Psy-Op” One America News via Twitter (X). @AlisonOAN “Is Taylor Swift an asset and is she being used to influence the 2024 election? Let me know your thoughts below” 4:18 PM Jan 29, 2024. <https://twitter.com/AlisonOAN/status/1752124163236761739> (last accessed 2/3/2024)

Watters, Jesse. “Jesse Watters: Biden wants a Taylor Swift endorsement” YouTube Video. Fox News. January 31, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuMhIDgz6JM> (last accessed 2/3/2024)

President in the first half of the 20th century more greatly exemplifies the Imperial Presidency than Theodore Roosevelt, Taft however envisioned the Presidency as a disempowered office, issuing little or no legislation and executive orders, preferring instead to act as a check on Congress through the use of the veto power.⁵⁷ It was however the rough and tumble, “speak softly and carry a big stick” policies of the aggressive Roosevelt Administration that would win the war of ideas and would see U.S. presidents deploying military force without Congressional authorization by the beginning of the 21st century. Sadly, for Taft, just like the losers of most wars, he has become less significant in U.S. history than he likely deserves.

It is not happenstance that I have deployed the language of war thus far, nor is it accidental that conservatives have for so long labeled political discourse “the war of ideas.” One thing I wish to push on in this study is the desire by the mainstream, that American citizens should consider ideas, particularly the assumptions that ground our political and cultural systems, as neutral. Thus, an average unchallenged Kansas City Chiefs fan can comfortably attend a game in Kansas City’s Arrowhead stadium unchallenged as they whoop like an Indian and perform the “Tomahawk Chop,” all while silently judging the war-painted, headdress wearing “perceived racist” in the seat beside them. The neutrality of ideas makes racism, in the minds of most Americans, into an action that is expressed as a behavior rather than a belief system. This argument suggests that what we do in the real world is perceived to be racist while what we believe in our heads is somehow, not racist. In other words, that only the action is harmful and that the belief is not. That the fan in the headdress and red-face should be perceived as racist, while the fans that engage in traditional sports activities such as fight songs and war chants,

⁵⁷ Given this political disposition it perhaps should not be surprising that Taft ended his life not with the title “President,” but Instead “Chief Justice,” serving on the Supreme Court some 8 years after the end of his presidency from 1921 until the time of his death in 1930.

should safely think of themselves as free of racial bias. However, ideas inform how we determine our governing philosophies, the policies we desire, and the people we view as mattering. Thus, it is in the realm of ideas that White Supremacy must be opposed if we ever hope to envision, let alone, to create a society free from it.

The Reactionary Right in America has always known this fact. That is why they call it the “war of ideas.” That is why they label Disney’s decision to break ties with Gina Carano as “Cancel Culture.” That is why pundits on the Right argue that the toy company Hasbro has fundamentally shaken the moral order of the universe with a branding change to “Potato Head™.” These people see themselves as soldiers in a war to maintain America and that means that to win, they and their followers cannot be viewed as racist because perceived racism is unpopular.⁵⁸ In order to succeed, these individuals must maintain that the ideas that underline American culture continue to be viewed as neutral and natural, or else their power base will shrink, ideas of governance will change, and the White Supremacist state will finally be allowed to mutate into something else.

⁵⁸ Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I will argue that the Reactionary Right is in essence correct in viewing themselves as soldiers in a war, and that it is because of this proactive and combative thinking that they have seen so many gains in the last three decades since the capitulation of the Progressive Left during the Clinton administration. Further I will suggest that the best path forward for the Progressive Left is not to dissuade the Reactionary Right from this War like understanding of the world, but instead would be to get down in the trench and fight with them. Over the last half century, the Progressive Left has succeeded in significantly moving public opinion on the issue of Gay rights, primarily because cultural producers in Hollywood and New York treated it as a “battle for equality.” That same fervor for conflict must be embraced in public discourse over a broad range of issues if the Progressive Left hopes to match the strength of the Reactionary Right within the Imagine-Space. One final word of caution. Please remember that we fight with words and ideas, so that we don’t have to fight with sticks and rocks.

Racist Propaganda as Psychological Operations

As stated earlier it is not by mistake that I mark this cultural conflict as a “war of ideas.” If cultural conflict is thus a war for control of society, it naturally follows that cultural objects such as films, plays, TV shows, comic books, sports iconography and all other collected creations of the Western world are more than simple and amusing consumer products, they must by default, be considered propaganda.⁵⁹ In modern nomenclature the term propaganda is often only deployed about products with explicit political messaging and rarely with any acknowledgment that propaganda is a military tactic that falls within the category of conflict labeled Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) by the Department of Defense. Best summed up in the words of President Lyndon Johnson during the Vietnam Conflict, when he would often say that the objective of the conflict was to “win the hearts and minds” of the Vietnamese people, PSYOPS are asymmetrical messaging campaigns intended to influence the emotions, attitudes, and motivations of civilian populations in order to reinforce state objectives.⁶⁰ If, as I have done, we accept Ibram X. Kendi’s assertion that the United States became more racist overtime under the institution of chattel slavery, not less, then I would argue that culture (as PSYOPS) was the driver of those changes in attitudes. The Colonies, and then later the United States, began by instituting a racist policy (chattel slavery) and only then did the cultural environment of the colonies (through sermons, broadsheets, and books) set about “winning the hearts and minds” of

⁵⁹ Far from being a bad thing, I consider Propaganda to be the battlefields on which we fight a discourse war that helps us avoid actual physical conflict. For those concerned that Propaganda is by default “bad,” I would suggest to you that propaganda is most harmful when directed at a population with low media literacy skills. So, while I do advocate for an increased use of Propaganda by the Progressive Left, I also advocate for an increased push for media literacy programs in public education so that every American, regardless of their political leanings knows when a political message is being intentionally advocated and can evaluate it as such.

⁶⁰ *AJP-3.10.1(A) ALLIED JOINT DOCTRINE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS*. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). October 2007. <https://info.publicintelligence.net/NATO-PSYOPS.pdf> (last accessed 10/1/2022)

the public over to the idea that it was natural and right for Africans to be relegated to the status of chattel slaves. Once they became “slaves,” Africans became evil in the eyes of the church, cursed by God, and inherently less intelligent than white people.

Similarly, the colonies were built upon the easy availability of “unclaimed” land in the Western hemisphere under a concept we term in the present as “terra nullius” or what the Romans thought of as “res nullius,” or property that no one was using.⁶¹ In other words, the early Settlers justified their ownership of the land because no one was using it and popular belief continues to commonly suggest that a large epidemic decimated the Indigenous population of the “New World.” Just like all history however, the true story is far more complex. While many Indigenous Peoples would indeed die due to European disease, it would be no single event that caused this death toll, but instead a series of recurring epidemics would strike Indigenous Peoples, many of them caused or exacerbated by the famine and death associated with European

⁶¹ “Res Nullius” in the strictest sense was used in Roman Law to transfer wild animals and plunder from conquered peoples to Roman citizens, and serves as an early version of what we tend to think of in the modern Western world as “possession is 9/10ths of the law.” Finding an unclaimed animal or standing upon the property of a vanquished, and likely deceased enemy, a Roman citizen was able to exert legal ownership of the property in question because it was not in use by anyone else. In a similar manner the catholic church in a series of Papal Bulls issued in the 15th century (most notably the “Inter Caetera,” issued by Pope Alexander VI on May 4, 1493) laid forth the Doctrine of Discovery as a legal justification for the claiming of the Western Hemisphere on the grounds that because there were no Christians in these new territories they constituted “terra nullius” or empty land.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*. Beacon Press. Boston, Massachusetts. 2014. (pp.197-205)

Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. “History Resources: The Doctrine of Discovery, 1493: A Spotlight on a Primary Source by Pope Alexander VI”
https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/doctrine-discovery-1493?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwwYSwBhDcARIsAOyL0fgWfKSZVRdVIq28UKrHcAPZMy9_PbqWflypeK5PtyJVbmr0o-syNdQaAi76EALw_wcB (Last accessed 3/25/2024)

Lesaffer, Randall. “Argument from Roman Law in Current International Law: Occupation and Acquisitive Prescription” *The European Journal of International Law* Vol. 16 no.1 © EJIL 2005. chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnibpcapjpcglclefindmkaj/http://www.ejil.org/pdfs/16/1/289.pdf (last accessed 3/25/2024)

ethnic cleansing campaigns.⁶² Many of the genocidal actions taken by the early colonists were exceptionally violent and were likely only rendered palatable to the individuals who committed them because they were driven by an extreme paranoid fear of the alienness and otherness of Indigenous Peoples that was intentionally magnified by the culture of the time period. In the early colonies this affect was easy to generate, Indigenous Peoples were not Christian, and had an extremely different culture. Indians did not speak English, dressed and behaved differently, and were on average taller, better nourished, and healthier than their European Settler counterparts.⁶³ However, as time passed and these cultures (Indigenous and Western) began to intermingle, some Indigenous subjects, especially in the form of what European colonist would come to call “the Five Civilized Tribes,” began to assimilate to the English language, Western farming traditions, and Capitalism, and European Settlers gained the high calorie foods of the Western Hemisphere, such as corn and potato, and the health benefits that came with them such as greater height. Thus, the perceived distance between the Settler subject and the Indigenous one, grew less clear over time and a new narrative was needed to once again properly “other” Indigenous Peoples and drive Settlers to genocidal violence. And PSYOPS once again became that mechanism, that PSYOPS campaign and its artifacts is where this project will live and breathe.

⁶² Grenier, John. *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*. Cambridge University Press. 2008.

⁶³ In an interesting presentation on the discourse surrounding the “sale of Manhattan” as a foundational myth, T.M. Rives, shares a statement by the first pastor on Manhattan Island who claimed of the Indigenous Lenape Peoples that they were “as treacherous as they are tall.”

Rives, T.M. “What the sale of Manhattan doesn't tell us about Native Americans | T.M. Rives | TEDxGowanus” (YouTube Video). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQcqKsIf11A> (last accessed 10/17/22)

The Battlefield is Affect (Combat Within the Imagine-Space)

As I suggested earlier, in discussing his understanding of creativity, British artist/author Alan Moore envisions a deep shared repository of thoughts and ideas that he calls the Imagine-Space. Moore suggests that human beings descend into this shared Imagine-space filled with all the accepted knowledge of their culture (both mainstream and subversive) in order to generate creative ideas, which in his estimation explains those circumstances when artists in different areas and places generate very similar ideas.⁶⁴ Ideas in the Imagine-Space have strength and form; however, it necessarily follows that the strength and form of ideas in the Imagine-Space is based in no small part on the placement of that idea in public discourse. The strongest ideas come from physical objects, for any individual, regardless of training and educational background can reach out and experience the object somatically through touch. Next in my estimation come the ideas that take form in our public discourse (performance, media, memes, books etc.) that are broadly discussed in the public commons, the weight of this discourse calcifies the narrative these ideas produce into a specific and generally accepted idea. By far the weakest of ideas in the Imagine-Space are written texts that call upon the message receiver to interpret the message themselves, not because the ideas presented are weak, but because these written texts are not as heavily reinforced by the weight of public discourse. In other words, academic texts, especially those explicitly written primarily for academic audiences result in placing, at best, ghost-like ideas in the Imagine-Space that lack substance in the minds of the general public. Thus, academic texts, while potentially radical and minoritarian, do little to push

⁶⁴ Such as when rival film production companies release very similar themed films in the same moment history, as an example think of the influx of asteroid themed disaster movies that occurred in 1998 with Paramount's release of *Deep Impact* and Touchstone Picture's release of *Armageddon*. In this circumstance Moore suggests that it is not that one studio is stealing from another, but rather that two separate writers descended into the Imagine-Space at that same time and generated very similar ideas.

the boundaries of the Imagine-Space. Purely academic texts can neither fully dredge up lost ideas from the depths, nor push harmful ideas away from the surface of the Imagine-Space the way a popular film, television show, or comic book can. Moving beyond Moore I want us to consider that the Imagine-Space places restrictions upon how far any of us can go to envision change, and thus by necessity if we wish to change the world, we must first push forward the boundaries of the Imagine-Space itself. The limits of our creativity must be pushed to allow for the generation of truly novel ideas. Conversely, conforming to current boundaries of academic and social discourse and making oneself legible reconfirms the boundaries of the Imagine-Space, while true Indigenous Futurisms instead push those boundaries to new limits.

As I continue, I will argue that current movements by Indigenous artists that embrace a refusal of legibility, in which the artist seeks to generate an affect of discomfort in the Settler Subject, push forward the boundaries of the Imagine-Space.⁶⁵ Much as Leanne Betasamosake

⁶⁵ In this I draw on the work of Sara Ahmed in “Happy Objects” when she asserts that “Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values, and objects.” It is this element of affect that Ahmed describes as “sticky” that I am most concerned with in this study, namely the ability of affect to help build and reinforce points of intensity in the people. I operate under the assumption that the points of intensity that affect theory attempts to describe, correlate to the same inner emotions, sentiments, and humors that psychological warfare specialists and political theorist have been attempting to sway for as long as human people have sought to form and build social structures. At a fundamental level when this study discusses Ibram X. Kendi’s work on efforts by theologians in the early colonies to increase anti-black racism, the proclivity for the promoters of early baseball to link their sport to the growing force of Western American Identity through the use of an “Indian Mascot,” or even my own attempts at advocacy for political change, it does so with a conceit that a vast constellation of relational forces come together within a subject to generate intensity (emotions) in the body which is then interpreted by the body through the biological computer of the brain to provide meaning to the constructed narrative that is the self, and that in that process, as Ahmed suggests, those emotions become linked in the mind of subject to the content that is associated and connected with that memory/experience. Thus, I argue that when political operatives and psychological warfare specialists craft messaging to alter public opinion they are engaged in a similar process as many artists who seek to generate affect to “change people’s minds.” In essence the vast majority of political messaging and psychological operations are carried out with the same intention as the average piece of art, they are simply describing these processes using different language.

Ahmed, Sara. “Happy Objects” *The Affect Theory Reader*. Melissa Gregg and Gregory G. Seigworth (editors) 2010. Duke University Press. Durham and London. (pp 29-51)

Seigworth, Gregory. Let’s Talk About Art and Culture YouTube Channel. “What is Affect Theory?” July 8, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuKIqF72Bwo&t=907s> (last accessed February 15th, 2024)

Simpson asserts in her allusion to beaver stories in *A Short History of the Blockade*, that pipeline protest blockades create generative space, I suggest that the feeling of discomfort felt by the Settler Subject in these circumstances is generative. Although most North Americans are familiar with the beaver, and the species' proclivity for building dams, what is not so widely understood among the general public is the importance of these dams to the ecology of what we term the "Frozen North." Simpson highlights the importance of the work of the beaver in creating large pools of water that do not freeze in the winter, allowing species to survive the cold months within contained blockages, in order to suggest that when Indigenous Peoples block government progress, they create more than an impediment, they simultaneously generate a space where Settlers are briefly forced to contend with the ongoing colonial processes that support their lived experience. Simpson believes that the frustration of delay can lead to the generation of new ideas that focus upon the nature of that delay.⁶⁶ Likewise I will argue that while many of the Indigenous performers and artists I study seek to make the audience feel uncomfortable, that they do so in the hopes that their audience will begin to consider why they feel uncomfortable and thus increase the scope of the Imagine-Space. That by forcing the Settler to feel discomfort with the world around them the Indigenous artist seeks to move discussion of colonization from the realm of ideas into one of discourse. That discomfort leads to discussion. Finally, I argue that the Indigenous artists intention in doing so, is no different than the Western Settlers that helped build, create, and maintain the Hollywood Indian, namely that they seek to reformat the world.

⁶⁶ Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *A Short History of the Blockade: Giant Beavers, Diplomacy, and Regeneration in Nishnaabewin*. CLC Kriesel Lecture Series. University of Alberta Press. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 2021.

Chapters

In Chapter One I will seek to demonstrate the methodology that I believe is deployed by messaging tactics such as the Hollywood Indian trope, namely the generation of affect in the receiver, by conducting a deep reading of a 2010 short film from Mi'kmaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby, entitled *File Under Miscellaneous*. If there is indeed a war being fought over the Imagine-Space, and thus the future, then just as President Johnson insisted that the War in Vietnam would be won or lost in the “hearts of the Vietnamese people,” I will argue that Barnaby’s short homage to the 2000s classic horror film *Saw*, embraces the Torture Horror aesthetic in an attempt to focus the hearts of the Colonial Subject on the price of colonization by forcing them to sit with the sense of disquiet and dissonance that comes from watching the film’s disturbing and graphic imagery. In doing so, it will be my goal to show that “the end all be all” status that Literary Studies awards to discussions of plot, focus our attention away from the most fruitful pathways for affecting political change, placing our critical gaze upon the world of the mind and away from the body. Rather than accepting the time honored Western philosophic concept of the Mind/Body binary, I will suggest that Barnaby’s film speaks to the mind as an embodied experience, as a biologic apparatus, rather than as a disconnected spiritual force by generating an affective response of the body to solidify the placement of thoughts and ideas in the mind via the narrative of the controlled hallucination of the self.

When we arrive at Chapter Two, I will turn my gaze to the world of sports mascots and performance of Sports Identity, where I will focus upon two tactics of change that appear aware that the Imagine-Space exists and self-referentially intentionally target the changes they want to make within the Imaginary. Thanks in part to the efforts of national advocates for retiring Indigenous themed mascots, in the last two decades, the world of Minor League Baseball has

seen a sea change in representation with many long-standing Indian mascots falling into retirement like Indian extras falling dead in an old John Wayne movie. Within this chapter, I will set out to catalog and define the messaging tactics of two Minor League teams with Indian themed mascots, the Chiefs of Peoria, Illinois, and the Indians of Spokane, Washington, as they struggle to rebrand in the 20th century. My primary goal in this endeavor will be to consider how the messaging campaigns of both these two teams link affect to a performance of Sports Identity from which we might draw lessons and chart a path more broadly for creating change within the Imagine-Space, and thus the lived world. In other words, I will be considering the tactics deployed by these teams as a series of methods, hacks, and tricks, that we might apply beyond market branding and advertising, for use in the creation of cultural objects in a whole of society effort for social change.

I will finish in Chapter Three by shifting focus to what I think of as an artillery barrage of the Imagine-Space, one that was created by the saturation effects of mass messaging, when I conduct a deep reading of the Hollywood Indian trope within the peritexts of Golden Age comic books.⁶⁷ Early Golden Age comic books bear only a passing resemblance to the sleek and expensive comic books that can be purchased for six dollars apiece at present day specialized comic book stores. Instead, early comic books were low-cost disposable entertainments printed on the cheapest paper available. In 1938 the average comic book was between 106 to 112 pages in length and contained between 5 to 6 full length comic stories. Readers would also find a plethora of peritexts in these books ranging from activity sheets to history comics, and from short stories to comic strips. The Hollywood Indian would find fertile ground between the pages of

⁶⁷ You will no doubt be “shocked” to learn that the Golden Age of comics books is considered by fans, critics, and comic book scholars alike to be the earliest era of comic book production, roughly from 1938 to 1956.

these original funny books, and the message of Indian erasure and Western legitimacy would be strengthened in the imaginary of the youthful reader by the sheer volume of sources in these peritexts. My ultimate effort in conducting a deep reading of Golden Age peritexts will be to consider how these forgettable and disposable sources invite the reader to perform a much more lasting Western identity, one changed because of the readers contact with, and learning from, the fictitious Hollywood Indian.

AFFECT WAR: HORROR FOR CULTURAL CHANGE IN *FILE UNDER MISCELLANEOUS*

Trigger Warning! *The following chapter contains analysis and descriptions of film scenes of a graphically violent nature, Reader discretion is advised.*

Second Trigger Warning! *The following chapter contains theories that advocate an Indigenous criticism aesthetic that opposes traditional modes of Western-centered criticism, “Settler Reader discretion” is advised.*

Every fall, when beginning my course on Indigenous Representation in American film, I expose my students to a series of surprising revelations, which from my point of view, makes the class feel not unlike surfing on an ocean in which every wave is made of shock and awe.⁶⁸ With a robust Indian gaming environment, and a diverse Indigenous population in Southern California, at least some of my students have had an interaction with a member of a tribal nation prior to my class, but many have not. The level of education about the Indigenous Peoples of North America among my students is diverse and varied, however it is rarely comprehensive. Most find the limited amount that they have been taught about the original inhabitants of this land up to this point, to have been shockingly lacking by the end of the semester. Often they are jolted once again when we devote time to the silent film era, less because of how the Indigenous are portrayed, but instead because of the format itself, as they can find it difficult to intuitively

⁶⁸ While this analogy may at first feel strange to my fellow residents of Southern California, who know as well as I that the waves around these parts are rarely intimidating, as I stopped surfing at the age of 10, the act of surfing continues in my recollections to be one of the most terrifying acts known to man, as I recall the juvenile fear of trying to maneuver a long board two feet longer and 20 pounds heavier than my 10-year-old self across waves that appear, perhaps only in my memories, as monsters.

“grok” a world where both sound and image are not integrated to tell a complete story.⁶⁹ Another moment of distress awaits them in the weeks we spend with the films of their grandparents, the era of the famous director of Westerns John Ford, where we study tropes like the “Barbaric” and “Noble Savage,” and the “Indian Princess.”⁷⁰ The exceedingly small space on the screen that these 20th century films provide for Indigenous Peoples, as well as the racial attitudes generally taken for granted by Ford and the other makers of these films, challenge the wholesome family narratives of grandma and grandpa’s early years that many of my students take for granted. I often become the one that is surprised a few weeks later when we look at Indigenous film and I find the students so open and receptive to their messaging. But of all of these waves of surprise, the one I enjoy riding the most, comes in the week when I confidently walk into the space and proudly proclaim “Halito, everyone, today I hope you are ready to be afraid” and I slip a modern made horror film into the government issued DVD player.

The film I show them in this moment, Jeff Barnaby’s *File Under Miscellaneous*, is short, and definitely NOT sweet. Instead, the film fills the average viewer with disgust and revulsion as it depicts the slow torturous transformation of an Indigenous Subject into a mainstream Settler Subject. As I suggest to my students after watching the film, and as I will assert in this chapter, this visual assault that the audience is asked to subject themselves to, the graphic depictions of

⁶⁹ The term “grok” has its origin in Robert Heinlein’s *Stranger in a Strange Land*. With a literal meaning of “to drink” within the narrative of Valentine Michael Space, grokking as “water-sharing” takes on the figurative meaning of “to drink in,” in essence “to understand.” Within the game and heuristic design space of the last 50 years, designers have used the term “grok” to discuss how easily users learn the rules of a game or system, in other words, good game design is easy for the player to grok.

⁷⁰ The Barbaric Savage, Noble Savage, and Indian Princess, which collectively form what we might think of as the Hollywood Indian Trope, all have their origin in the earliest days of contact between the early European Settlers and the Indigenous Peoples of North America and have been reinforced and strengthened in popular American and Canadian media ever since. For an explication of the Noble Savage and through it the Hollywood Indian Trope, interested readers might best begin exploration with *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* by Daniel Francis (Second edition. 2011. Arsenal Pulp Press) or *Playing Indian* by Philip J. Deloria (1998. Yale Historical Publications).

torture, the slow removal of culture in the metaphor of a removed tongue and flayed skin, the trauma of watching a person destroyed and rebuilt is entirely the point of the film. I argue that disquiet, revulsion, and horror are not simply a side-effect generated by the film as it aims to please or amuse the audience, but instead, that when we view the film as part of a broader messaging campaign designed to contest White Supremacists attitudes of Indigenous Peoples within the culture war, these affective responses become the chief goal. That rather than generating emotions as a tactic to increase the sales of the film, these emotions are instead generated as a mechanism for inscribing changes to the audience's understanding of the world, to alter their viewpoint and imaginary. I contend that to fully understand *File Under Miscellaneous* we must view it as an attempt to "win the hearts and minds" of the public in an ever-ongoing culture war, as a new front in a long history of communications warfare between Western Settlers and Indigenous Peoples.⁷¹ In service of that goal, I will be contrasting Barnaby's Indigenous made film *File Under Miscellaneous* to the film I take to be its colonial reflection, James Wan's 2004 American produced *Saw* and its subsequent sequels. In *Saw*, I argue the audience is delivered a narrative that perpetuates the same style of individualistic narrative that was used throughout American pop culture (most notably in Westerns, but also in the prosperity gospel forwarded by the Calvinist/Evangelical faith) to build and maintain American identity.

While Indigenous Peoples might be notably absent from the *Saw* series, the storytelling

⁷¹ Much like the popular media refrains "Beam me up Scotty," and "Frankly Scarlett, I don't give a damn," which were never used in the products that gave them birth and were instead born from the American imaginary, "win the hearts and minds" as an adage appears to be a popular sentiment that has entered colloquially speech without ever being spoken directly in the source material. Most commonly associated with the Vietnam war conduct by the U.S. in the 1960s and 70s, the origins of the phrase "winning the hearts and minds," seems to begin in a speech by Lyndon Johnson in which he asserted about the war in Vietnam that "ultimate victory will depend upon the hearts and the minds of the people who actually live out there."

Johnson, Lyndon B. "Remarks at a Dinner Meeting of the Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.: May 04, 1965. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-dinner-meeting-the-texas-electric-cooperatives-inc> (last accessed 10/1/22)

principles are essentially colonial because Wan's chief goal in the series rests on a critique of the false freedom presented by the turn to individualism within the Western Capitalist system. In essence, if Wan is presenting the story of the outcomes of a false narrative placed upon the average citizen under Western Colonialism, then we should read Barnaby's *File Under Miscellaneous* as an effort to show us the lived costs to the Indigenous of North America in living in and adapting/assimilating to the same system.

Issues of Legibility

In the latter half of the twentieth century as Indigenous Peoples found their way behind the camera, the forces of production, mainly state endowments in Canada and a mixture of private/public endowments and Independent commercial cinema in the United States, created a system that incentivized Indigenous filmmakers first and foremost to render their work legible to a mainstream settler audience. Artistic projects which focused on explaining Indigenous lifestyles to the presumed mainstream audience, films which featured stories that were understandable to that audience, were rewarded with new funding opportunities and transmission bandwidth, while artists who desired to embrace experimental modes of storytelling, found less opportunity for funding.⁷² This disparity in funding opportunities has led to an imbalance in the storytelling approaches selected broadly by Indigenous filmmakers and has effectively produced an overabundance of Indigenous made dramas which focus on trauma and the struggles of Indigenous Peoples to survive and thrive under Western colonization. In other words, Indigenous filmmakers face what we might think of as censorship of success. A specific format has found success in the market and thus that format became the preferred method of the funders of many

⁷² Starting with documentary filmmaking produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Canadian Film Board, and Center for Public Broadcasting affiliates, located primarily in the American Midwest, in the 1960s-1970s, but continuing in the world of independent scripted cinema of the 1990s-2000s, Indigenous filmmakers were rewarded by how well they explained themselves, and by extension Indigeneity (their culture), to a presumed Settler audience. Beverly Singer suggests in *Wiping the War Paint of the Lens* that this process was greatly increased by the creation, in 1977, of the Native American Public Broadcast Consortium (NAPBC) which was influenced by earlier Black, Asian, and Latinx organizations that “were concerned with producing programs for public television reflecting the populations they represented.” Singer, a film and television artist herself, argues that within that system “[the] primary criteria for the funding of projects is based on their viability for being shown on public television.” In other words, Indigenous productions in this early period were selected both for their perceived acceptability to the mainstream public and for their ability to make their subject visible to that audience.

Singer, Beverly. *Wiping the War Paint of the Lens: Native American Film and Video*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, MN. 2001. (pp. 39-40)

projects.⁷³ Over time this selection of a format effected not only Indigenous made cinema, but also the filmmaking community more broadly as stories which revolved around “poor Indians” and downtrodden reservation communities came to dominate what little Indigenous representation the Hollywood literati produced.⁷⁴ There are however a couple of notable exceptions, one of which would be the genre of horror, which would continue to serve as a site of diverse Indigenous portrayals up into the present.⁷⁵

The genre of horror, on average is considered low-brow or common by most critical film elites and horror films are unlikely to be treated in the press as equal to the “classics” of

⁷³ This associated performance of Indigeneity that makes itself “knowable” to the Settler audience remains a popular road to success for Indigenous artists to this day, but with the critical and commercial success of Indigenous created television comedies such as *Reservation Dogs* and *Rutherford Falls*, and the mainstreaming of Indigenous voices such as Taika Waititi via pop culture properties like Star Wars and the Marvel Comics Universe, it appears as if Hollywood and other funding partners may finally be ready to embrace Indigenous stories that fit into several diverse genres, rather than this mostly monolithic titan that has come to dominate the Indigenous film archive.

⁷⁴ In seeking examples, we might consider, that the Hollywood mainstream spent much of the latter half of the 20th century producing Indigenous representations centered around crime dramas like Val Kilmer’s *Thunderheart* (1992) and Lou Diamond Phillips *Renegades* (1989). The former of which treats modern Indigenous Peoples as *poor abused people* that have been pushed to criminality and violence, while the latter treats them as *poor abused people* who are the victims of theft.⁷⁴ In contrast to this trend, horror presented a cornucopia of different modern Indigenous Peoples to the audience. In Roger Corman’s ridiculous *Humanoids from the Deep* (1980), sea monsters attack a small fishing village after an ecological disaster, however much of the rising tension of the film comes from a violent confrontation between the residents of the “American” village and the local tribal nation over treaties and fishing rights.⁷⁴ While in 1979’s *Nightwing*, vampire bats attack the state of New Mexico, but the film spends a significant amount of screen time dedicated to a Pan-Indian argument over land use and the extraction of resources, ultimately using the very oil deposits from this subplot as the Deus ex machina at the climax of the film.⁷⁴ Far from being outliers, the list goes on and on: In 1995’s *Last Gasp*, Robert Patrick commits genocide in Mexico while building a resort and is cursed and possessed by a vengeful Indigenous spirit; in *Shadow of the Hawk* (1976) a white-coded Indian must return and save his tribe from a witch in a story that centers assimilation; *Eye of the Beast* (2007), fishing rights; *Scalps* (1983) Grave desecration.⁷⁴ Unlike the rest of Hollywood cinema, horror it seems has always been a space of discussion and transformation for the Indigenous Subject.

Eye of the Beast (2007) Paramount Home Entertainment. Gary Yates (director).

Humanoids of the Deep. (1980) New World Pictures. Barbara Peeters (director) Jimmy T. Murakami (uncredited)

Last Gasp (1995). WarnerVision. Scott McGinnis (director).

Nightwing (1979). Columbia Pictures. Arthur Hiller (director).

Renegades (1989) Universal Pictures. Jack Shoulder (director).

Scalps (1983) 21st Century Film Corporation. Fred Olen Ray (director).

Shadow of the Hawk (1976) Columbia Pictures. George McCowan (director).

Thunderheart (1992) Tri Star Pictures. Michael Apted (director).

⁷⁵ Another genre notable for making room for diverse Indigenous portrayals is the spoof comedy movement of the 1970s-1990s where the satirical humor often centers around the desire by White Western subjects to “play Indian.”

American cinema.⁷⁶ Far from being a hindrance or negative, I have found, anecdotally, that because horror is thought of as less valuable to the gatekeepers of artworld than other genres of film, discussing horror helps to free the tongues of my learners, in part because they do not treat horror as precious.⁷⁷ It is not my intention in this chapter to convince you that the genre of horror is “Capital A” Art, or that horror is “award” worthy, instead my intention in highlighting Indigenous made horror rests on two principal goals: (1) because horror presents the audience easily understandable tropes and conventions, rules that are broadly discussed in popular culture and are generally accepted, that means we can therefore identify when Indigenous filmmakers choose to perpetuate these tropes and when they defy them; and (2) because horror as a genre is not particularly well thought of, I argue that room is created for the Indigenous filmmaker to

⁷⁶ While there is no objective way to definitively prove a culturally held attitude, I would suggest for evidence of this trend, that we need look no further than the American Film Institute’s “Top 100.” Hardly a conservative body, the AFI’s Top 100, tends to skew toward box-office favorite films, rather the pure Art list favored by most film critics. On the Top 100 you will find the profane violence of Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction* (1994. #94) rubbing elbows with the 1950s Hollywood big budget epic *Ben Hur* (1959. #100). Yet on this list of the 100 greatest films of all time, you will find only one clear horror film, 1975’s *Jaws* (#56). Noticeable horror film absences to the list include George A. Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) which features both an early African American male protagonist and a killer political commentary, and 1978’s *Halloween*, which granted I might be biased, but which is commonly held to be one of the greatest suspense films as yet produced.

https://www.afi.com/afis-100-years-100-movies-10th-anniversary-edition/?gclid=Cj0KCCQjwyt-ZBhCNARIsAKH1174_3Cok06QSTSVIUetO13Lx4ltn7jKRrMDiNqlYVUA8dFNV7cC5RHUaAjvQEALw_wcB
(last accessed 9/30/22)

⁷⁷ In general terms I view all culture as being a single social group, not unlike a Facebook group. While these groupings are obviously not monoliths, I take special note in the formation of my practices therein of what we might consider special sub-groupings within the cultural imaginary, one of the important ones being what Arthur Danto coined “artworld.” Taking an almost Forrest Gump like approach to describing artworld in his 1964 essay, Danto basically describes artworld as being something akin to the statement “Art is as Art does,” when he insists that “without the theory, one is not likely to see it as art, and in order to see it as part of artworld, one must have mastered a good deal of artistic theory as a good deal of recent history” of the art form in question. In other words, artworld is made up of everyone connected to the artistic community, artists, gallery owners, critics, academics, and the public. Using Danto, the phrase “what is art?” becomes a question answered by the consensus opinion of this group of people. So, when I speak to the feeling carried in society that horror cinema is not the equal of the American drama, it is to the consensus opinion of the shared film community to which I gaze and refer.

Danto, Arthur. *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 61, No. 19, American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Sixty-First Annual Meeting (Oct. 15, 1964), pp. 571-584 (14 pages) pp. 581.

defy the overall affective frame of “Indigenous Made Film.” It is my contention that the history of Indigenous made film places Indigenous filmmakers into a default position of commenting on Indigeneity when creating mainstream accepted films. Whether they desire to transmit a message about Indigeneity/Indian Affairs or not, I argue that when Indigenous filmmakers create a film that is viewed as “Indigenous drama,” the mainstream Settler audience has been conditioned by the marketplace to expect such commentary from them. In other words, when watching an Indigenous drama, the Settler audience expects to be told what they are meant to learn from the film by providing a performative legibility of the Indigenous condition, while Indigenous horror, has the freedom to “just be a horror movie,” the low opinion in which Western art literati hold horror cinema ironically frees up room for filmmakers like Barnaby to comment on Indigenous affairs free of the attitudes and biases that most audience members bring to more dramatic fair.⁷⁸

In this chapter, I will be exploring a horror work by Mi’kmaq storyteller, Jeff Barnaby, *File Under Miscellaneous*, a short dystopian story of a land that has become a city and how the Indigenous subject must adapt to find a place within it.⁷⁹ Unlike Indigenous-made Drama, which focuses primarily on pleasing the mainstream audience, I contend that Barnaby belongs to a trend in Indigenous storytelling and art making that is disinterested in legibility as a tactic, and instead pushes the viewer towards greater relationality. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson points us towards this trend in refusal, asserting that “refusal is an appropriate response to oppression [...]

⁷⁸ This is the perfunctory footnote where I am supposed to confess my lifelong love of horror movies, as one often does when choosing a pop culture theme to write about, but the truth is I didn’t grow up liking horror. Although I have always appreciated the work of John Carpenter, horror is a genre which I gave a wide berth as a youth, in fact it is only in my graduate studies that I have seriously approached the genre. Although, graduate studies being graduate studies that now means I have seen far more horror films than even my friends who consider themselves “fans” of the genre.

⁷⁹ *File Under Miscellaneous*. Dir. Jeff Barnaby. Prospector Films. V Spot.org. Bravo. YouTube Video. 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SEyAs-FSHQ&t=126s> (last accessed 1/7/2022)

it is always generative; that is, it is always the living alternative.”⁸⁰ In Simpson’s view, which positions the relationality between subjects as a bedrock principle of Indigenous governance systems, the quest for “legibility” is the continuation of the settler genocidal project which seeks to erase and destroy Indigenous worldviews through a variety of tactics and thus “refusal” becomes a potential counter force to the colonial project.⁸¹ To Simpson the act of refusing the role provided by the colonial empires of Canada and the U.S. becomes an act of survivance, a demand by the Indigenous subject to be seen (and related to) by the citizens of North America as they exist in the present, rather than by the roles these colonial empires have assigned them.⁸² As I will seek to show in what follows, I believe that Barnaby in selecting horror as a mechanism for

⁸⁰ Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. 2017. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, London. (pp. 33)

⁸¹ Although there are some inherent differences between Indigenous concepts of relationality and Western ones, notions of the relational world as highlighted by Simpson are nonetheless present in the Western canon at least as far back as poet John Donne’s famous, “no man is an island” quote. In the modern era, relationality has been addressed in the Western canon by sources ranging from Antonio Gramsci who called for a viewing of humans as “a series of active relationships (a process),” to the series of overlapping social interactions that Kimberlé Crenshaw proposed as ‘intersectionality.’

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8. http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8?utm_source=chicagounbound.uchicago.edu%2Fuclf%2Fvol1989%2Fiss1%2F8&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages (last accessed 8/30/23)

Donne, John. “No Man is an Island.” *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. Sermon/Poem. 1624. <https://allpoetry.com/No-man-is-an-island> (last accessed 8/30/23)

Gramsci, Antonio. “Gramsci in Prison: 1926-1937.” *In The Modern Prince & Other Writings*. International Publishers. New York. 1957. 2016. (pp. 77)

⁸² This same trend is spoken to by Glen Coulthard in *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* when he asserts that “under certain conditions Indigenous peoples’ individual and collective expressions of anger and resentment can help prompt the very forms of self-affirmative praxis that generate rehabilitated Indigenous subjectivities and decolonized forms of life in ways that the combined politics of recognition and reconciliation has so far proven itself incapable of doing.”

Coulthard, Glen. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2014. (pp. 109)

the refusal of legibility is weaponizing subtext in an effort to foster a dialectic of true equality rather than a dialogue fixed in the language between conqueror and subject.⁸³

⁸³ I freely acknowledge that even in this refusal, Barnaby, as a subject of colonial power will inevitably carry elements of colonial thought into his film, just as Audra Simpson notes of *Ethnographic Refusal*, that “[the] work of Indigenous scholars rests upon Empire as well, and through the vocabularies and analytics it put into play.” However just as she notes that “[they] might, however, work from different historical vantage points and locations within the space that Empire has claimed,” Barnaby’s vantage point as a Mi’kmaq filmmaker opens space for us, the audience, to view his refusal of convention as a political intervention.

Simpson, Audra. “On *Ethnographic Refusal*: Indigeneity, ‘Voice’ and Colonial Citizenship.” *Junctures*, 9, Dec. 2007. (pp. 67-80)

A Matter of Subtext

Cultural theorist predominantly focus upon two types of political messaging as we analyze cultural products: the “intended” ideological content of the piece for which we use the term “explicit;” and the “implicit,” the often unmarked political attitudes that the individual artist might have brought into the process with them, what we might think of as their default worldview. What I will suggest in my reading of *File Under Miscellaneous*, is the broadening of the spectrum between implicit and explicit messaging, to include a third category that speaks to the artist’s repressed desires, the things that the artist desperately wants to say, but which they attempt to remove from their art in order to placate what they believe are the wants of their perceived audience. In other words what we might think of as subtext. I suggest that in serving the needs of a capitalist monetization model, artists are somewhat successful in removing from their art, political sentiment that they feel might be harmful to their sales reception, however that removal is by default always incomplete, because it is impossible for an artist to divorce themselves entirely from the intentionality that inspired their work. Thus, these political sentiments linger in the book/film, leaving what I term an “after-affect” or a ghostly haunting that can be “felt” by the audience, and generating an impression that they are being spoken to, but that the message is hidden. In other words, I argue that much like the subconscious, that cultural artifacts (books/films/tv) speak to us, as the audience, in ways that we can sometimes sense or feel, but are difficult to identify rationally.⁸⁴ It is in the realm of these after-images of

⁸⁴ What I suggest here has much in common with new developments in rhetoric and analysis among Millennial and Zoomer YouTube political analysis, who in the 2020s have begun to develop language for political advocacy that speaks predominantly to underlying emotional attitudes, when they say that a political advocate is all about “vibes,” rather than policy. In other words, that the political advocate wants the voter at home to think they support an issue, or speak for it, when their actual policy positions may be contrary to the “vibes” they are sending through the camera. In both cases it is clear that there is something happening that needs to be described, but that we are still in the messy initial stages of developing a vocabulary for that description.

political intention that I argue Jeff Barnaby's film *File Under Miscellaneous* is most effective at challenging colonial storytelling.

Film as a Weapon

As millions of people flocked to the cinema houses worldwide in December of 2021 to see Marvel Studios and Sony's new film *Spiderman: No Way Home*, leading to a billion dollars in revenue in only 12 days during a pandemic that had already claimed 5.5 million people globally, it is hard to overestimate the strength and reach of the influence of American film.⁸⁵ In fact, the power of American cinema has never been in doubt to the institutions of Western society, as efforts such as the Hayes code and the Motion Picture Association of America would both seek to severely limit the range of messaging that American film could potentially transmit to international audiences.⁸⁶ This whitewashed version of America transmitted by Hollywood cinema in the latter half of the 20th century would come to greatly influence international attitudes toward both the society and the government of the United States and would be a significant weapon in the U.S. foreign policy arsenal, as the nation achieved hegemony over much of the globe's peoples. While there is a general acceptance by humanities academics that broadcast media, such as television and film, "can be" propaganda material, the average Facebook or Twitter user often fails to make this connection, failing to see the deeply embedded messaging contained within film's 24 frames per second. Neither of these two previous conclusions fully cover the strength of the power of the affect generated by film significantly enough for my own liking, indeed much like American psychologist James Hillman I believe

⁸⁵ Rubin, Rebecca. "'Spider-Man: No Way Home' Becomes First Pandemic-Era Movie to Smash \$1 Billion Milestone Globally." *Variety*. Dec 26, 2021. <https://variety.com/2021/film/box-office/spiderman-billion-dollars-box-office-pandemic-1235143308/> (last accessed 1/6/22).

⁸⁶ In effect between 1934 and 1968, the Hayes Code (named after Will H. Hays) was a voluntary set of self-censoring restrictions that the Hollywood film industry placed on itself through the Motion Picture Film Association of America (MPAA). Unlike the later day MPAA rating system that qualifies and identifies the content contained in films, the Hayes Code prohibited films with certain content, such as nudity, violence, and the glorification of criminal lifestyles for being shown in cinemas.

that our relationship to consumer products, such as cinema and other commercial art, form a significant touchstone in our identity and approach to the world. In effect that our relationship to the business world of capitalism and its resultant products “[form] the fundamental myth of our civilization, the story that explains the underlying bottom line of the ceremonies of our behavior.”⁸⁷ We are conditioned by the entirety of Western Capitalist culture to accept the rules of that society and therefore no element of culture, no matter how seemingly innocuous, is absent from that project. And that holds true for film, the world we see on the screen is part of the project that constructs the world around us.

This acknowledgement should not be mistaken as an endorsement, quite the contrary, in noting this power of culture I am reminded of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s clarion call in *As We Have Always Done*, when Simpson declares that:

“*how* we live, *how* we organize, *how* we engage the world—the process—not only frames the outcome, it is the transformation. *How* molds and then gives birth to the present. The *how* changes us.” (Emphasis in original).⁸⁸

That Simpson is referencing resisting the forces of colonization by reclaiming Indigenous epistemologies here is irrelevant to my thinking. In the parlance of the American West I would insist that “what is good for the goose, is good for the gander.” What Simpson calls for, the understanding that Indigenous Peoples must focus on “how” we do things to revitalize Indigenous intelligence and world systems, is simultaneously the method deployed by the

⁸⁷ Hillman, James. *Kinds of Power: A Guide to Its Intelligent Uses*. Currency Doubleday. New York, NY. 1995. (pp. 1)

⁸⁸ Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 2017. (pp. 19)

dominant culture to control reactionary forces within the body politic.⁸⁹ “How” society does things, leads to “what” the world is perceived to be, and cultural artifacts become the examples from which people learn how to build the society of the future.

Culture as a force of colonization is used as a tool and is deployed by the Settler State in order to help format what British artist and philosopher Alan Moore refers to as the “Imagine-Space.”⁹⁰ As envisioned by Moore, the Imagine-Space is a form of shared imaginary, a vast repository of cultural ideas and stories that the storyteller or creative change agent (read this as all humankind), delves into in order to create a story.⁹¹ My purpose in this study is to consider film as not just simple propaganda, but as an ongoing tactic of psychological operations carried out by the Settler State to control the boundaries of that Imagine-Space. In the plainest terms I view all mainstream culture as an attempt to limit the ability of colonized peoples to rebel against the Settler State by removing the idea of active resistance from the popular imaginary, thus there is no “unimportant” aspect of culture. I am reminded in this moment of Mark Rifkin’s “Settler common sense,” that “the legal and political structures that enable non-Native access to Indigenous territories come to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy,” in other words, many of the structural elements of Settler

⁸⁹ In her understanding of “how” Simpson suggests a methodology that might allow Indigenous Peoples and other minoritarian groups to build what Antonio Gramsci called for in Counter Hegemonic power, the creation of a new hegemony with new intentions, agendas, and perhaps most importantly, given this study, stories/narratives.

⁹⁰ Although I do not wish to engage in a direct intervention on this subject within the scope of this study, one of the places where my own thinking may well diverge from that of the mainstream revolves around the acknowledgement of “artists” as “philosophers.” Alan Moore is a noted comic book writer and that labeling of him, may well cause some individuals to undervalue the importance of his thoughts and worldview. Within my own method and worldview there is no such distinction between artist/philosopher, just as Von Clausewitz viewed the military officer as a politician that continues politics by alternative means, so to do I believe that artist are philosophers that engage in philosophy using alternative language and communication delivery systems.

⁹¹ “Alan Moore talks to John Higgs about the 20th Century” YouTube video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpajFOECzAk> (last accessed 1/8/2022)

Colonialism that make land dispossession invisible, have become accepted to such a degree, that they have become “common sense.”⁹² Similarly, many of the elements of control that are enforced within Settler State culture, the boundaries of the acceptable and the taboo to be avoided, have become unnoticeable to the average citizen.⁹³ These limits have been baked into the Imagine-Space and I argue that it is there that they must be combated through the use of the cultural products (films, books, art, etc.) that engender in us, emotions about the world that surrounds us, altering our world view, just as I argue Barnaby’s *File Under Miscellaneous* does for the Western audience.⁹⁴

While all art seeks to engender a connection with the perceived audience, broadcast media, such as film and television are uniquely suited to generating affect. It was in fact noted culturalist and often accused luddite, Marshall McLuhan’s, chief warning that broadcast media

⁹² Rifkin, Mark. “Settler common sense” *Settler Colonial Studies*. Vol. 3, Nos. 3–4, 2013. 322–340.

⁹³ Another helpful articulation of what I attempt to speak to here is an apocryphal quote from the founder of the Alt Right media website Breitbart, Andrew Breitbart, who argued that “culture is downstream of politics.” By this Breitbart articulated a communications doctrine that sought to first alter the cultural landscape in order to condition the consumers of that culture to a different governing agenda.

Weatherby, Leif. “Politics is Downstream from Culture, Part 1: Right Turn to Narrative.” *The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture*. Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. FEBRUARY 22, 2017. <https://hedgehogreview.com/web-features/infernal-machine/posts/politics-is-downstream-from-culture-part-1-right-turn-to-narrative> (last accessed 10/1/22)

⁹⁴ The work of two scholars/philosophers greatly informs the logical leap I make connecting Moore’s Imagine-Space to systems of social control in this articulation, namely: the Panoptic control systems proposed by Michel Foucault; and the subsuming of radical protest/messaging asserted by Guy Debord as part of his Society of the Spectacle. In my articulation here I suggest that cultural artifacts (film, books, comic books, etc.) become objects through which we both surveil the actions of others and come to understand the ways in which we are surveilled by others. Cultural artifacts set the boundaries of acceptable performance and when challenges to those boundaries occur, they are ultimately accepted, mimicked, and eventually delegitimized as they are incorporated within the Imagine-Space. It is within this understanding of the mental contours of the Imagine-Space that I encourage a greater push towards Affect and the body.

Bakhtin, Mikhail, (H. Iswolsky, translator). “Rabelais and his world.” *The Applied Theatre Reader*. Routledge. London. 2020.

Foucault, Michel, (A. Shepard, Translator). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, New York, NY. 1995.

created a communications structure of passive engagement, that unlike reading which requires the brain to continuously make guesses to infer meaning, the audiences of broadcast media were uncritically absorbing such media and its messages including the attitudes and emotional linkages presented by the artist.⁹⁵ In pointing out the difference between reading and broadcast media (and yes given our current understanding of online infrastructures I am including film as a broadcast medium), McLuhan would note that "...literacy is objective, TV is subjective, totally involving," suggesting that it is not the rational thoughts the we have watching broadcast media that are the point, but rather what those products are making us feel.⁹⁶ To briefly fall into the parlance of the present day, let us suggest that what drives our "engagement" with the film is what McLuhan is referring to here and that in film, that engagement, or as he might say "involvement," is driven by an affective response to the film. Thus, we might view film genres as a series of conventions and story elements that are intended to elicit a series of specific emotional responses in the viewer, hence a film like *Star Wars* might be referred to as a "science fiction" movie, but many film critics place it within the literary genre of "adventure/romance,"

⁹⁵ McLuhan, Marshall. "Marshall McLuhan - The Medium Is The Message [1977] (Media Savant)" YouTube video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoCrX0scCkM&t=2450s> (last accesses 1/6/22).

⁹⁶ An important distinction to be made in this quote from McLuhan, is that he is not referring to the moral or ethical value of the cultural messaging of Literature and Television when he uses objective and subjective, but rather he is describing what he perceives to be the interactions between the audience and medium. Although the term only came into general use after his death, McLuhan's work focuses primarily on what he perceived as the dangers of passive "engagement." Identifying the adaptation of society from a mostly literary culture to a predominantly broadcast one, McLuhan asserted that the books were a better safeguard for liberal democracy than broadcast media because books are an "object" that reader can only understand by first interpreting the meaning of sentences, prior to digesting the content of the plot, and broadcast media in his view treats the viewer as a "subject" being spoken to. It is still in question whether McLuhan was correct in his appraisal of the dangers of broadcast media, for although his work, along with the work of fellow "luddite" Neil Postman, did accurately foreshadow the present-day dangers of misinformation and polarization on the internet, however, much of the traffic that drives those dangers is literary in the form of memes and fake news stories.

Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. 1993. Vintage. New York, NY.

because the journey is meant to activate our desire for objects and individuals after which we lust.

Within filmmaking, few genres are more explicit in their intentions than horror, which is to activate the viewer's sense of dread, disgust, and fear.⁹⁷ This sense of obviousness in horror can become an ideal site for us to consider both the messaging of mainstream Settler Cinema and also those of Indigenous resistance and insurgency, because in the genre of horror each of these filmmakers is attempting to generate the most basic and universal of emotional responses in the audience.⁹⁸ I now turn my attention to an analysis of a short film written and directed by Mi'kmaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby, entitled *File Under Miscellaneous*, as an active act of Indigenous insurgency and resistance by comparing his finished product to the benchmark of the genre from which I believe he draws his inspiration, James Wan's 2004 film *Saw*.

⁹⁷ I fully acknowledge that the award for most explicit genre goes to, of course, "Hallmark" movies.

⁹⁸ Obviously, we will never be able to know for certain what others in the audience feel completely. Even were we to conduct audience surveys, I am frankly unconvinced by recent political polling that we would receive "objectively" true answers. On polls and surveys, just like IRL, people wear a presenting mask and behave performatively. For the purposes of this chapter, I will be using my own emotional response as a mechanism for analyzing what emotions I believe the filmmaker is "seeking" to generate.

Foregrounding Sovereignty

Among Indigenous artists, like Jeff Barnaby, the very act of engaging in filmmaking, in seizing control of an artistic medium that has predominantly only been open to the most privileged in our society the act of creation is, in of itself, an act of Indigenous resistance and Sovereignty. However, as I continue with my analysis of Jeff Barnaby's *File Under Miscellaneous*, I will specifically invoke the work of Michelle H. Raheja and consider how Barnaby deploys what she refers to as "Visual Sovereignty." Raheja suggests that we should "[think] about the space between resistance and compliance wherein Indigenous filmmakers and actors revisit, contribute to, borrow from, critique, and reconfigure ethnographic film conventions, while at the same time operating within and stretching the boundaries created by these conventions."⁹⁹ In other words, I will be analyzing Barnaby's work with a specific focus on how and when he chooses to speak to the conventions of filmmaking, Indigenous representation, and the genre of Horror. I presume these moments when Barnaby seizes narrative production to be intentional Sovereign acts, intended to create opportunities for conversation between the Mi'kmaq filmmaker and the mainstream Settler audience to which his film is directed. I treat these moments as points at which Barnaby seizes control of the conversation.

In addition, as a theatre and performance studies scholar I am most interested in the ability of Barnaby's work to generate affect in the perceived Settler audience, in what I believe they come to feel in the course of watching the film. I assert in this chapter that unlike many other film artists who seek to make their political project known through the text or story, that it is instead in the feelings generated and engendered in the audience in which Barnaby's political

⁹⁹ Raheja, Michelle J. *Reservation Reelism*. University of Nebraska Press. 2013. pp 193.

project rests. In keeping with this assertion, I place my own work within the framework theorized by Algonquin Anishinabe scholar Lindsay Lachance in her dissertation “The embodied politics of relational Indigenous dramaturgies” which suggests that Indigenous representations within media fall into four waves of development of which the “fourth wave” seeks to deny legibility to the Settler State.¹⁰⁰ According to Lachance, fourth wave “practitioners have been reclaiming creative and spiritual practices in order to articulate culturally specific worldviews and discourses.”¹⁰¹ In plain terms, fourth wave practitioners engage in what Audra Simpson has dubbed “ethnographic refusal,” they are less interested in explaining Indigenous Peoples to the mainstream, than they are in engaging with those mainstream audiences directly and articulating a new way of being, both for Indigenous Peoples, but also for the citizens of the Settler State that surround them.¹⁰² It is in the fourth wave theorized by Lachance that I firmly place Jeff Barnaby’s work.

While a lack of legibility and a refusal to fully explain oneself to the audience might normally be viewed as an impediment to proper communication, I additionally assert that the

¹⁰⁰ LeChance argues that the first wave, beginning with the arrival of European settlers and continuing through roughly the 1970s, was created primarily by the Settlers of the United States and Canada and presented Indigenous Peoples as either a dangerous adversary to be destroyed or as a noble race doomed to extinction. The second wave would once again be led predominantly by Settler artists and would reach its nadir in the late 1970s, these films would seek to complicate the North American narrative, removing the “good guy/bad guy” dichotomy of earlier eras, but still however, relegating Indigenous Peoples to the role of always “being stuck in the past.” It would only be with the third wave starting sometime in the 1980s that a large collection of Indigenous filmmakers would begin seizing control of how Indigenous Peoples were represented in film. Notably, this first wave of Indigenous filmmakers were most interested in making Indigenous Peoples knowable to the mainstream North American audience, in combating the invisibility that Indigenous Peoples traditionally experience in the public imaginary of the Settlers of North America. To accomplish this task the films made by the members of this third wave are highly legible to mainstream audiences and do little to make the audience sit with the feeling that they themselves might be culpable for the actions of the present Settler State. It is in the fourth wave theorized by Lachance that I firmly place Jeff Barnaby’s work.

¹⁰¹ Lachance, Lindsay. “The embodied politics of relational Indigenous dramaturgies” Dissertation. University of British Columbia. 2018. pp. 29.

¹⁰² Simpson, Audra. “On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, ‘Voice’ and Colonial Citizenship” *Junctures*, 9, Dec 2007. (pp. 67-80)

communications blockade created by Barnaby should be viewed as an attempt to create a generative space. In *A Short History of the Blockade*, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson focuses our attention on the activities of the beaver and the importance of beaver made dams on the ecology of Canada in the winter noting that, “Amikwag build dam. Dams that create deep pools and channels that don’t freeze, creating winter worlds for their fish relatives.”¹⁰³ Simpson goes on to envision the worlds created by these pools positioning them as spaces which generate life:

Amik is a world builder.
Amik is the one that brings water.
Amik is the one that works continuously with water and land and animal and plant nations and consent and diplomacy to create worlds, to create *shared* worlds.
(Emphasis in original)¹⁰⁴

In embracing the Nishnaabeg stories of the beaver, Simpson proposes a worldview that envisions blockages not for the ways in which they, like the beavers dams, impede movement, in her case the impediment the free travel of Settler citizens across the roadways of Canada, or as I am proposing in my case, the communication normally associated between filmmaker and audience, but instead for what the location of these blockages might generate. Thus, I will be considering how the site of affective blockage that Barnaby creates in *File Under Miscellaneous* might potentially generate new ideas and notions in the imaginary of mainstream members of the audience.

¹⁰³ Simpson, Leanne Beatsamosake. *A Short History of the Blockade: Giant Beavers, Diplomacy, and regeneration in Nishnaabewin*. CLC Kreisel Lecture Series. University of Alberta Press. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 2021. (pp. 14)

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* (pp. 15)

The Colonial Framework of Torture

In attempting any analysis of Jeff Barnaby's *File Under Miscellaneous*, a competent cultural critic needs to note the obvious influence of the genre of Torture Horror on the short film's production due to its similarities to James Wan's 2004 seminal classic *Saw*.¹⁰⁵ Both films take place primarily as single location films, and specifically in locations that serve as heterotopic passages. In Wan's *Saw* the principal action takes place in a large bathroom/locker room, while Barnaby focuses his action on a Bureau of Indian Affairs medical clinic.¹⁰⁶ The visual similarities persist as in both of these normally antiseptically clean locales, the camera takes great pains to focus and linger on signs of obvious degradation and decay, notably fixing the audience's gaze on grime and soot within the mortar work that holds the space together. But it is in the choice and selection of lighting style that Barnaby's call back to *Saw* becomes most evident. As he unfolds his story Wan takes special care to differentiate his lighting selections between scenes that occur in the "real world," versus the scenes of the killer Jigsaw's activities, in order to help establish in the mind of the viewer that these locations are in fact sites of transformation. The real world of *Saw* has a naturalistic color palette and serves as a site for the artificial choices that people make in everyday life in order to "go along, to get along." The sites

¹⁰⁵ At one level this influence is evident to even the least animated viewer as both films deploy an aesthetic of restraints and suffering that has become synonymous with the Horror subgenre of Torture Horror, of which *Saw* along with Eli Roth's *Hostel* is colloquially credited with launching by Horror critics and fans alike. However, the apparent aesthetic connections between the two films do not stop at the selection of genre and additionally include visual indicators that suggest that Barnaby would have his film be viewed as in conversation with, or as a response to, Wan's earlier film.

¹⁰⁶ My conclusion here draws on Michel Foucault's work in "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" describing Heterotopias as counter-sites that can serve as passages between one world and another that are disturbing and transforming. With this framing in mind, both Jigsaw's traps and Barnaby's BIA clinic are viewed as sites from which their victims/converts exit as changed, as different versions of themselves.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* October, 1984; ("Des Espace Autres," March 1967 Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec)

of Jigsaw's transformations, however, are instead presented in overwhelming and singular color and become heterotopic spaces where the characters are made to acknowledge their failings, at least in the eyes of Jigsaw, and can only survive and grow, by engaging in self-inflicted suffering. Similarly, Barnaby presents a naturalistic lighting palette for the outside world surrounding his overwhelmingly yellow lit interior. Due to these visual similarities, among other things, I propose that the messages presented by *Saw* can become a valuable tool for our interpreting Barnaby's intentions in *File Under Miscellaneous*, that what we are looking at in these films is MESSAGE and COUNTER-MESSAGE.

There is no clear evidence that the Malaysian/Australian Wan intended to make a direct comment on the nature of Western colonialism in his American made film. He has never stated in the press that such commentary is part of his larger project, none-the-less Wan is an artist working from within that structure, and as such, many of the implicit rules that form the world of *Saw* are reflections of that colonial landscape. In fact, Wan's film likely struggles under multiple layers of colonial structures, as the film bears an interesting origin story. The first incarnation of *Saw* was released as a short film in Australia in 2003 and was used as a proof of concept to garner the backing of major studio funding, which it found in partnership with Lionsgate Home Entertainment. With a shift to an American production company came the traditional requirement that the product be retooled for the U.S. market. So, while some elements of Australian colonial thinking no doubt remain in Wan's finished story, we might aptly think of *Saw* as an attempt by a non-American filmmaker to find common ground with the American audience. Additionally, I argue that this Americanization of the original story of *Saw* grew more pronounced in subsequent films as American directors took the helm. Thus, I argue that we

should take the story of the *Saw* series, as a representation of the default in which Mi'kmaq filmmaker Jeff Barnaby lives, and in which he positions his own film.

In *Saw*, the killer Jigsaw, seeks to literalize each of his victims bearing the weight of their sins, as he passes moral judgment on his own perceptions of their lack of individuality and excessive conformity to society. Wan, through his use of grotesque horror, likewise forces the audience to suffer through the trauma of his characters ordeal, thus implicating each of us for our own sins of conformity and leading the audience to concentrate on the perceived moral of the story, which we might read as “to live for today and cast loose the bondage of our fear, even if doing so requires suffering.” *Saw* points to the great fear at the heart of Settler Dreams, that despite all the claims that American society makes to being a meritocracy, the vast majority of American citizens are trapped in a life that is not of their own making and that it is our fear, our passive acceptance of an unacknowledged caste system that keeps everyone in the same place and limits upward social and economic mobility.¹⁰⁷

While it forwards a message of individualism, the *Saw* series ultimately instead re-creates the conditions that perpetuate colonialism for its characters. If we view *Saw* for how it makes an assault on the Imagine-Space, we might easily conclude that the message is that modern 21st

¹⁰⁷ I have suggested that similar to Eddie Glaude Jr.'s use of “disremembering,” “Settler Dreams” eradicate an unvarnished reading of the racial history of the United States, much to the detriment of Indigenous Peoples and other minoritarian groups, however there are also negative outcomes generated for some members of the White majority as well, as the disremembering of our racial history also obscures the creation and causes of class and caste in the United States. As an example, “Bacon’s Rebellion,” a nearly successful multiracial and multiethnic attempt to seize power from the leaders of the Jamestown colony in 1676-77 is mostly forgotten, via disremembering, because of the movement’s successful collaboration between Freedmen and low-class whites which threaten the narrative created by Settler Dreams, that these two groups, or castes, are separate and distinct and should not have common cause. settler dreams require more than a disremembering of the “Indian,” they also require a willful forgetting that caste exists in America, that America’s “meritocracy” is just another myth we tell ourselves.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States*. Beacon Press. Boston, MASS. 2014. (pp. 61-62)

century society has robbed the Western (read American) subject of their individual agency and turned them into mindless automatons to Capitalism. After all, as the series progresses we come to learn that the series' chief villain, John Kramer, became the killer Jigsaw because of his interaction with, and poor treatment by, the American healthcare system, after a terminal cancer diagnosis. For the duration of the series Jigsaw then proceeds to stand in judgment of his victims as a sort of vengeful god, who admonishes them for failing to live their "full life" because of a fear of consequences. Those that find the inner fortitude to survive one of Jigsaw's trials, transition from the world of "the victim" to one of "the killer" as they go on to plan and carry out their own killings, carrying forth both Jigsaw's message and method. While many in modern pop culture would qualify this transition by calling these individuals converts, it is important, I think, to note that converts to a faith may not be a wise analogy, as converts usually find themselves within a strict hierarchy, while these new Jigsaw-inspired killers remain strict individuals, often finding themselves in deadly conflict with the killer Jigsaw himself. Instead, I would suggest colonization as a more apt metaphor especially when considering the internal colonization of European nations in the 15th and 16th century as a potential model.

In her exploration of the arboricide committed by the English government prior to and immediately following first contact between Europe and the Western Hemisphere in *Why We Left*, Joanna Brooks points to the seizure of the commons, the commonly held forests and woods of England, and the creation of private property by the aristocracy as an initial first step in colonization. Brooks research found that "[nearly] three-quarters of us who came to British North America during its first two centuries came in some state of unfreedom: whether as slaves, indentured servants, convicts, or redemptioners" and that it was the loss of citizenship that came with the dispossession of the commons that would forever link the ownership of land with

citizenship in the American Imagine-Space.¹⁰⁸ In other words, the seizure of the commons, an act of governmental elites, encouraged English citizens to embrace an individual solution, the seizure of land by any means in order to achieve full citizenship (read selfhood), that could only be achieved in the “New World,” an action that could only be undertaken at the direction of the very government that dispossessed them of their original selfhood through the public ownership of the commons. Thus, the Settler needed to embrace the persona of a rugged individual, but they were only allowed to do so in a method that conformed with the desire of the rulers of their society. In this respect Wan’s *Saw* appears to put forward an inherently colonial tale, one in which his victims are forever changed and forced to embrace individuality, but one where they are punished when they exceed Jigsaw’s boundaries, and therefore we might well view Jigsaw’s victims, as the colonized, which leads us to an interesting quandary when considering our own response to the films.

Although aficionados of horror cinema do not commonly broadcast it, we all secretly admit to ourselves that occasionally it is not the victims that the audience is rooting for, sometimes it is the killer. The way the audience views the “hero” of a film greatly influences the moral message of the film and thus how the Imagine-Space is influenced moving into the future, which is the primary reason that a film series such as *Saw* is of such interest to my research. Ordinarily despite any tricks the filmmaker attempts, the audience of a horror film will ultimately decide for themselves which character in the film they identify with, whether the moral is contained in the killer’s motives for killing, or in the final girl/boy’s opposition to it. However, *Saw* does not allow for the possibility of miscommunication or confusion, whether the

¹⁰⁸ Brooks, Joanna. *Why We Left. Untold Stories and Song’s of America’s First Immigrants*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 2013. (pp. 36)

individual audience member empathizes with the killer or the survivor of his trap, Jigsaw's methods and ethos are built upon a commonly held American belief system that is in general accepted by the killer, his victims, and the investigators that pursue him. Further, that belief system as presented by the film series sounds a lot like Colonialism: society makes sheep of the individual, it is only through a struggle of pain to embrace individuality that one can be freed, and once freed that empowerment is not meant to be turned against the system that oppressed you, but instead towards the people around you. Perhaps it should not be surprising then to see that motif make itself apparent to a Mi'kmaq filmmaker like Jeff Barnaby.

The Shared History of *Saw* and *File Under Miscellaneous*

There is an obvious aesthetic connection between James Wan's *Saw* and Jeff Barnaby's *File Under Miscellaneous*. Released in 2010 a mere 6 years after the release of *Saw*, right in the middle of a pop culture hype-train that would lead to at least 7 sequels to Wan's film, *File Under Miscellaneous* is a seven-minute short film set in a dystopian North American future. Barnaby opens the film using a realist visual aesthetic, focusing upon a landscape view of a nondescript North American city, before zooming in to a dirty and grimy snow-covered alleyway. A lone man stands before a building that is clearly marked as a medical facility by a large red neon cross. The man is wrapped in multiple layers to protect him from the cold and is as non-descript as the city around him. He might well be anyone. It is only through the use of the Mi'kmaq language in his inner monologue that Barnaby identifies the character as Indigenous at all. However, once our erstwhile hero enters the ominous looking medical clinic Barnaby immediately shifts to a lighting scheme of a single overwhelming color, in this case the oppressive and all-consuming yellow of a sodium gas bulb. Colloquially, lighting designers often assert that the deep yellow of sodium vapor bulbs produce headaches in the viewing public, as a result, while deep vibrant color palettes of red, blue, purple, green have all become popular in both film and theatre, yellow is not a common selection. The selection of a yellow lighting palette sends valuable signals to the audience, indicating this is not a "normal place." Instead, it is an inhospitable site which seems to reject the audience, it is perhaps even a place the viewer will come to instinctively loathe and fear. Already, Barnaby generates affect in the audience as we come to believe that we do not belong here, that we wish to be done with this place as quickly as possible. We begin to be filled with a sense of dread for what will occur here, for indeed who would voluntarily enter this burning yellow hell save those that are desperate, and as

a rule in the genre of graphic horror, the desperate usually suffer. Further, as we will see as we continue in our exploration of the film, the space of the medical clinic is filled with visual homages that call back to the *Saw* franchise. White brick floors with deep black grout and grime in the cracks, strange medical devices that appear homemade, and a victim restrained on a table awaiting a crucible, all speak to the viewer and push them to see the aesthetic connection between the two films. There are however two obvious points of departure between the two films: the first concerns the nature of the trap at the heart of *File Under Miscellaneous*, while the second revolves around our perceptions of the protagonist.

Within the *Saw* franchise, the victims of Jigsaw and his various copycats are always kidnapped and incapacitated prior to their insertion into the trap. These unfortunate souls always awaken to find themselves chained to pipes or, as the series grows more fantastical and hyperbolic, sometimes surgically altered and attached to strange devices from which they must release themselves via self-induced physical trauma. But a necessary component to the *Saw* formula is that Jigsaw's targets wake up already in the trap, their participation in it is nonvoluntary. However, Barnaby in *File Under Miscellaneous* notably defies this convention of the *Saw* films, as his protagonist participation is outwardly voluntary, as he both enters the medical clinic and chooses the procedure that he will receive of what appears to be his own free will.¹⁰⁹

As I mentioned earlier, *Saw*, and its sequels, are predicated on privileging the individual, so much so that as a conceit of the story, each trap victim is inevitably left an audio recording

¹⁰⁹ In suggesting that our hero enters into the care of the BIA health clinic voluntarily, I do not intend to suggest that he is free of social constraint, social pressures, or governmental policies that might limit his free will and force him toward his fate, merely that he is not drugged and physically relocated to the clinic while unconscious. While Colonial powers may well enforce his presence in the clinic, he has not been kidnapped in a legal sense.

from Jigsaw that addresses the character in question by first name. Now on one level this was designed by Wan simply to heighten the fear and tension in the audience, it provides Jigsaw an opportunity to explain to the audience the character's sin. Additionally, the use of the character's first name sends the audience into a fear spiral as they consider how easily Jigsaw has stalked and studied his victim and it inevitably makes us think about how little we do in our everyday lives to protect ourselves from the stalking behaviors that are depicted in the film. In essence this screenwriting choice encourages the audience to transplant themselves into an imagined version of the trap the victim finds themselves placed in. However, the use of the first name also personalizes each story. *Saw* becomes the story of Adam and Dr. Lawrence Gordon. A story of each man's perceived sins, of their conformity to society, and inevitably of the price they must pay to either escape their bathroom tomb or perish within it.

This choice by Wan and the filmmakers that followed him, makes the *Saw* franchise squarely a story about the individual not the collective and it stands out that Barnaby has chosen to defy this convention of the franchise. At no point in the film is Barnaby's main character identified as an individual by either name or description, in fact on the film's IMDB page, actor Glen Gould, is merely identified as "Indian Man."¹¹⁰ In speaking and responding to a film that squarely places the eye of the audience on the individual, Barnaby instead provides a character that might well be an everyman. Further this Brechtian like label of "Indian Man," seems to hold within the boundaries of his Indigenous skin, multiple understandings of the term "everyman,"

¹¹⁰ While some may question the weight I give to the IMDB credits page in this claim, I insist that the credits of a film, one of the few elements of a film controlled almost exclusively by the creative personnel on a film, are one of the best places to garner information about the filmmaker's intent. Try watching the full credits the next time you go to the movies and look at how the bit players are designated in the credits. Sometimes the pizza delivery driver is "Pizza guy," and sometimes he is "Pizza Time Bob." Such crediting decisions are a choice, and it is definitely one I want to make arguments about.

IMDB page: *File Under Miscellaneous*. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1666349/> (last accessed 1/8/2022)

the audience will likely have different readings of what he represents based on their own cultural understanding of Indigenous Peoples. In other words, the “Indian Man” is an allegorical character whose representation varies for each audience member based on their own relationship with Indigenous Peoples. For the uninitiated, the most mainstream of audience members, and therefore the most removed from the concept of Indigenous Peoples, the man is likely viewed as a representation of all of humanity. For Settler Subjects that have watched films starring Indigenous Peoples or have seen state encouraged ceremonies performed by tribal and First Nations communities, the sound of spoken Mi’kmaq may well tickle their memory, thus leading them to conclude that the man is a stand in for all Indigenous Peoples. And finally, for those that are familiar with Jeff Barnaby, such as myself, they likely view the man as an allegory for the Mi’kmaq themselves. But in the end what is likely understood by most audience members, is that this story before us, while it may be occurring to an individual, is really about the collective. A stark contrast - and an epistemological one at that - to its emotional predecessor *Saw*, and one that we should account for in attempting to ascertain the meaning we receive from the film.

Showing Resistance Through the Horror of Acceptance

Just as James Wan uses his “blue bathroom” in *Saw* as a site of transformation, Barnaby’s “yellow clinic” serves as a heterotopic passage through which his protagonist will be transformed, only where Wan focuses this transformation on an acceptance of sin, it is instead the presentation of a choice that will see Barnaby’s character changed forever from one state to another. Having entered the clinic, we see our protagonist unobscured for the first time. Giving up the utility of his cold weather clothes, he is now covered in a simple white medical gown. As he stands in front of a large collection of objects bathed in eerie yellow light, it likely takes the uninitiated audience member a few extra seconds to determine what they are seeing in these display cases, but for the true horror fan, we know instantly that what we see in blurry relief within the glass are human organs and what hangs from the ceiling is human skin.¹¹¹ As the hair begins to rise on our skin, as that sense of anxiety grows in the audience, Barnaby pulls back to a long shot, revealing at the end of the cases a seemingly white man in a black suit standing opposed to our Indigenous protagonist. This white individual, portrayed by actor Arthur Holden, does not code as the rosy pink of the average Western European and instead is artificially white, his skin closer in hue to that of a face painted clown.¹¹² The white painted figure gestures to the organs and skin and request that our intrepid Indigenous hero “choose.”¹¹³ As the Mi’kmaq man

¹¹¹ This horror connection is driven in part by a visual similarity to many of the “meat locker” scenes that have been created in the decades since the initiation of the *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* series. Launched by Tobe Hooper’s 1974 film *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the series centers around the cannibalistic Hardesty family and the masked killer Leatherface and over the various iterations and sequels the series has become more graphic in its depictions of the butcher like storage of human remains, thus generating a visual vocabulary that Barnaby is speaking to in his representation of this large glass display case.

¹¹² This invocation of the clown’s face seems to be generated with purpose, associating the antagonists of this film with horror depictions of the clown that range from *The Batman*’s Joker and *It*’s Pennywise, and may also speak to the sad clown of *Pagliacci*.

reaches his hand out to touch the flayed skin, we cringe as we hear him speak English for the first time, as he informs us “it’s still warm.” Watching the interplay between the Indigenous and the Settler Subject in this moment, I find myself questioning: do we cringe because of the thought of the threat of this removed skin, or instead because of the character’s surrender of the Mi’kmaq language?

With this use of English, the character appears to have made his choice as far as Barnaby is concerned, for there is no moment of acknowledgment or acceptance, No head nod. No verbal consent is given. Instead, there is only a quick cut, the sound of a closing warehouse door. and suddenly both the procedure, and our affect of horror has begun. Although I am not often given to hyperbole, let me just say that the fairest assessment that I can give to the transformation scene in *File Under Miscellaneous*, is that to watch the 90 second transition that the protagonist undergoes, is to experience a trauma. The viewer’s mind reels as it refuses to accept the images laid bare before it, as the bizarre white figure begins by restraining the Indigenous man to the table with leather straps. Turning on a machine, the pale skinned man next pulls down what appears to be an oxygen mask that is suspended from the ceiling and places it on the Mi’kmaq man’s mouth. The visual of the mask hanging in open space motionless, suggests to the ardent viewer that it remains ever at the ready, for a circumstance and a procedure which is not rare, but rather is commonplace. We hear the whirling of what sounds like a recording of multiple saw blades, followed by a scream of pain from the Mi’kmaq man. In the seconds that follow, as the mask is slowly pulled away from the Mi’kmaq man’s face, the white painted man operating this apparatus quietly places his fingers into the awaiting mouth and slowly pulls the Mi’kmaq man’s

¹¹³ Drawing our “ear” to the possibility of a false choice being presented, it is notable that in the delivery of this line the actor does not use an upward inflection at the end of the sentence. He thus does not imply a question, leaving to wonder, does this simple recitation of “choose,” represent a command?

severed tongue from his mouth. The tongue is then casually discarded into a stark white bowl sitting beside the bed and as it quivers and slides down the smooth porcelain surface, my mind returns to the Mi'kmaq man's earlier embrace of English and I wonder, what does it cost to give up one's tongue?

The image of this removal and the bloody mess within the bowl that follows can prove too much even for an ardent horror aficionado like myself. Many of us have become inured to such violence when the violence is directed against stock characters that we understand and accept, such as “the masked killer” and “the helpless victim,” however, there is something in the giving of consent in this scene, in the choice that the protagonist makes to accept this painful and grotesque transformation, that increases not only the menace in the moment, but also our sense of revulsion at the imagery. Just like most people found it far more disturbing to watch Cary Elwes remove his own foot with a hacksaw in James Wan's *Saw*, than they did to watch Kane Hodder's Victor Crowley perform the same feat on multiple victims throughout the *Hatchet* films.¹¹⁴ As an audience, horror fans have grown so accustomed to viewing the violence perpetrated by the masked killer that horror films are often given a positive rating for their imagery and gore. The audience is distanced from the reality of that gore by character tropes that designate some characters within the film as “safe to kill.” While I may feel sympathy for Perry Chen's character in *Hatchet* when Victor Crowley slices his leg away with a shovel, I do not feel empathy, because the horror genre has encoded me to understand that Chen's character is not the “final girl/boy” and is instead “fodder.” In other words, while Chen's character is good for a few laughs along the way, his purpose in the plot is to die a horrific and painful death, and the fact that I have been conditioned to expect it, means that the violence directed at Chen's character

¹¹⁴ *Hatchet*. (2006) Anchor Bay Entertainment. Adam Green (director).

and his pain, appears and feels less real to me. However, when the violence is directed at the hero, the aforementioned “final girl/boy,” I naturally place myself in the circumstance of that character. They become a surrogate for myself, I emphasize and identify with them, and what happens to them, happens to me. So as the camera focuses in on the image of that bloody tongue on crisp white porcelain, that physical representation of the pain felt by the protagonist, it is also an image of my own pain and I cringe, quake, the hairs on my arms raise, as I feel my anxiety level rise.

But no sooner do those hairs on our exposed arms begin to fall then Barnaby makes it perfectly clear that he is not content to let us rest, as the camera quickly cuts to a tray full of sterling silver medical instruments, a bevy of scalpels, clamps, and retractors meant to make us experience the intimate and ever-present fear of the demise of our own bodies. Panning the camera up the table, Barnaby rests the action upon the exposed chest of our Indigenous hero, a chest filled with tattoos, signifiers that even the uninitiated should see as indication of his sense of belonging in the Mi’kmaq nation. We are unflinchingly made to watch over the next 90 seconds as the dark tattooed skin is at first slowly sliced into, and then flayed from his body. No room for CGI here, Barnaby insists on practical effects and as we watch the skin slowly peel off of the red flesh, small strings of a gooey red substance are yanked from the flesh along with the skin, which is then unceremoniously dumped into the white porcelain bucket beside the Indigenous Man’s tongue. The scene continues to increase in cringe factor and intensity until the audience, much like myself, must fear that our taunt muscles will snap like a rubber band breaking. Then as quickly as it began, it is over, a quick cut takes us from our now skinless Indigenous hero to the top of a mobile medical tray bearing a folded dark black suit and pale white heart. When next we see the Mi’kmaq man, we will find him forever changed.

A Visual Feast, With a Side of Indigestion

The principal way in which the audience will come to understand this Mi'kmaq man's journey from one state of being to the other will be visual, as he begins the film with one set of skin and literally finishes it with another. As the camera slowly dissolves from the image of the folded suit into the next frame, we see our Indigenous protagonist walk forward slowly as if approaching from within a mirror or some other reflective surface, almost as if we, the audience, were watching ourselves approach. Having survived the ordeal of the transformation, now sporting newly artificial white skin, with a series of deep red fissures that mark the patchwork suturing of this artificial skin, it is almost as if these scars physically represent the trauma placed upon his soul as his outward affect has become refrained and lacks the keen interest he expressed in both the clinic and the procedure previously. I argue that this trauma is shared by the audience and the proceeding footage causes in the viewer an instinct to disconnect emotionally from what they are viewing on the screen, much as the protagonist has done, pulling back into themselves and minimizing the activation of the normal empathy that a lifetime of traditional minoritarian, and Indigenous cinema has conditioned them to perform. In this new emotionally distanced state of reduced affect, the viewer is in an ideal position to coldly, calmly, and intellectually approach the final images of Barnaby's film.

It is in this way that I return to the work of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson and her assertion that we should attempt to view blockages and blockades as generative sites. Barnaby assaults the audience's sense of decency and causes them to remove their own ego, and the Settler Dream under which they live, from the equation, to approach the final few minutes not as the Bob, Sally, or Dave that they were when they entered, but as that colder disconnected identity that we all maintain within us, for those moments when life is just too terrible to accept

as normal. In that space free of our own expectations and conditioning, the audience witnesses as the Mi'kmaq man now interacts with countless legions of similarly black clad, pale skinned beings. Row upon row of seemingly identical automatons, lacking all of the joy, wonder, sadness, and pain, that our hero demonstrated previously. We know that we have given something up, that like the Mi'kmaq man who has traveled from one world and been initiated into a new one, and perhaps most importantly due to our emotional disconnection from the outcome, this new world, just like the Mi'kmaq man, seems bleak, boring, and colorless. It is almost as if in witnessing his transformation, we the audience, just like the "Indian man" have been hollowed out and are empty. I argue that even if briefly, gone is an aspect of Settler Dreams, removed is the casual belief that Indigenous Peoples should want to assimilate to Western lifestyles, or that the transformation itself is "easy." The newly awakened Settler Subject may still desire that Indigenous Peoples assimilate to Western culture, but they feel "in their bones," even if they don't in their hearts, that assimilation does not come without cost. Thus, emptied of some of those Settler Dreams, perhaps true equitable dialogue can take place between Indigenous and Settler.

Film is More than a Visual Medium

It is not just a change in visual imagery that helps Barnaby transmit the severity of this change in representation, as the protagonist not only codes differently in the visual landscape, but in the aural one as well. From the beginning of the film, the audio landscape is filled with our hero's direct narrative of self, a voiceover that will remain the primary dialogue of the script, as the film has only three total moments of vocalization between characters. As he approaches the Bureau of Indian Affairs medical clinic on this blustery winter day in the Northeast, the man speaks to himself, and through extension the audience, in his native Mi'kmaq, informing us in a single sentence of the stakes that await both himself, and us the viewer, within the building before us when he begins, "[it] just so happens that I am tired of being a man." Thus, separating the outside world and its trials and struggles as being the real world, the place where this man exists, where he suffers, he simultaneously establishes that inside the building awaits deliverance, but what form will that deliverance take? Just like Hamlet's famous soliloquy we do not know if it is salvation that awaits him ahead or the "sleep of death," but we do know that he has not come to this place completely voluntarily as his feelings "[push him] into certain corners."¹¹⁵ As the action continues and the man faces the choice before him, he continues to consider in Mi'kmaq the necessity of his situation, admitting to himself the shame inherent in this illicit transformation, but carrying a tone and finality that imply he has no choice at all.

In contrast to the rest of the film there is no voiceover during the transformation itself, instead we are made to sit in relative silence with only a disturbing background musical track that flows between some form of tribal drumming and the discordant notes of another rhythm. A

¹¹⁵ Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet: Revised Edition* (The Arden Shakespeare Third Series) 2nd Edition. 2016.

rhythm that does not wish to blend and conform with these regular beats, banging upon pipes, buckets and seemingly any other industrial object around. As our human brain attempts to find a pattern in the rhythm of these discordant tones, they slowly take control from the sound of the tribal drumming, as the Mi'kmaq man approaches his decision. In this discordant rhythm I suggest Barnaby is playing upon our very ability to form the self, as Anil Seth suggest our brains are guessing engines, and the scientific consensus is that we guess by seeking patterns.¹¹⁶ Barnaby seeks to confound us with these dissonant tones, denies us a simple pattern that will allow us to make sense of the world and thus destabilizes our surety of the world we know. Meaning and clarity may only return for the majority of the audience in the final images of this disturbing medical procedure, as the voiceover returns with the tossing of the final bit of the man's flayed skin into the bowl. Only as his voice returns to us, it speaks not Mi'kmaq, but English.

The linking of the character's visual transformation (from the whole, complete, dark-skinned Indigenous man we begin the film with, to the pale skinned patchwork monster with which we end) to the character's sublimation of the English language generates in the audience the knowledge that we are watching someone leaving one society to join a new one. The

¹¹⁶ In simplest terms when we look at human reading skills, the primary way that our biological wetware ascertains meaning is by scanning rather than reading. Most scientific research suggests that on average humans read only 25% of the words in a sentence. Which explains why short sentences, even in dissertations, are easier to retain than long sentences. In the general public discourse, the average sentence length is 14 words, leading to an average retention rate of 90% and therefore is easy to understand. But as sentences grow longer, it becomes more difficult to parse meaning while scanning. In part I use reading as an example because I feel I have unique insight on this effect. I specifically have a learning disability that keeps me from retaining the information I gain from scan reading. Instead of scanning I am forced to carry out a deeply involved performative process in which I must envision the words on the page as a series of lines, and then envision delivering them in my mind. So, much like early Roman and Greek readers who lacked spaces between words, I am limited in reading by how quickly I can read out loud.

Wylie, Ann. "How to Make Your Copy More Readable: Make Sentences Shorter." PR Say. The Public Relations Society of America. <https://prsay.prsa.org/2009/01/14/how-to-make-your-copy-more-readable-make-sentences-shorter/> (last accessed 2/25/2024)

voiceover, as a convention, has been used by Hollywood cinema in primarily two ways, either the narrator is telling someone a story or we are being allowed access to the characters inner monologue, their thinking. In the case of a storytelling narrator, a frame is often added to inform the audience that they are presenting a story. As an example, Shane Black uses this technique in *Iron Man 3*, when after the credits, the final cut scene of the film shows that the hero Tony Stark has been telling the story of the film to a sleeping Bruce Banner.¹¹⁷ However, Barnaby takes great pains to avoid any similar frame in *File Under Miscellaneous*, we are left unsure to whom the Mi'kmaq man is telling this story; Is it himself? The ancestors? His culture and society? His people? Regardless of the intended audience however, we are left firmly believing that this story is being told within the confines of the character's own mind. Leading to a final conclusion that the Mi'kmaq man has become a perverse Frankenstein's Monster, a man that has surrendered his living state while still alive, in order to gain acceptance in a foreign society. But what meaning is the audience meant to garner from this transformation, and its price?

¹¹⁷ *Iron Man 3*. (2013) Marvel Entertainment. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. Shane Black (director).

A Multitude of Meanings, All at Once

While a surface level reading of this transformation might cause us to conclude that the darkly clad and pale skinned antagonists that conduct the transformation represents mainstream Settler society, and the medical procedure the Mi'kmaq man suffers is the ordeal that Settler society forces upon Indigenous Peoples to join the mainstream, Barnaby challenges this simplistic reading and fills his film with visual “easter eggs” that suggest an alternative identity for these villains, even if Western colonialism is ultimately still viewed as culpable.¹¹⁸ While the primary visual focus of the film is placed upon the Mi'kmaq man, by necessity Barnaby must firmly establish a visual image of the pale figures that fill out the rest of the film's cast, if for no other reason than because the protagonist is undergoing the process of becoming one of them. And in all honesty, the film would not be nearly as menacing without the cruel smiling visage of these artificially constructed White men. At the beginning of the film, as the Mi'kmaq man struggles against the locked door of the medical clinic the camera cuts to a dingy old closed-circuit Television (cctv) monitor, establishing firmly in the mind of the viewer that the character who calmly sits behind this panoptic view of our protagonist represents in some fashion the order behind this strange medical repository.¹¹⁹ As the camera reverses, an unclear pale face approaches the camera out of the murky shadows and Barnaby makes the interesting choice of

¹¹⁸ Far from being merely a dyed hardboiled egg associated with the Christian holiday of easter, my reference to “easter eggs” here can be traced back to the first digital easter egg in 1980, a credit claim inserted by game designer Warren Robinett into the classic Atari 2600 game *Adventure*. Since 1980 “easter eggs” have become common in game design and the terminology has been adopted by cultural critics to address “call backs” to initiated groups within cultural artifacts such as film, theatre, literature, etc. “Easter eggs” often represent the filmmaker speaking to specific viewing groups using coded language, the viewer must be part of the in group in order to fully garner the meaning.

¹¹⁹ While emulation of cctv footage is used as a filming technique in multiple genres, it is most prevalent in the genre of mystery and police procedurals, where it is routinely deployed as an investigative technique to solve the case at the heart of the story by law enforcement. Viewers are therefore conditioned to view the individuals who have access to this style of footage as representatives of the ruling order.

placing a magnifying glass between the patchwork man and the camera lens, making it seem as if this panoptic force is in fact not observing simply the Mi'kmaq man, but instead the audience as well. The magnifying glass also serves to distort and obscure the actor's face, thus dehumanizing him and suggesting we are not meant to understand him as an individual, but instead only by his function. This pale figure, who watches the world outside, is merely the gatekeeper through which the Mi'kmaq man must gain entrance, but who is he?

Even partially obscured by the magnifying glass, as the gatekeeper leans forward toward the screen, we see evidence that helps the viewer encode him as being of Western European descent, such as his disturbingly pale blue eyes and his albino like white skin, however I believe that this attempt to code the character as "White" by Barnaby is intentionally misleading. In this initial meeting with the villains of the piece, I believe Barnaby creates a moment of disruption where he speaks directly to the Indigenous Subjects of the audience in a way that is quite likely overlooked or missed by the members of the larger mainstream audience. As the very next shot depicts the Gatekeeper returning to a relaxed seated position, Barnaby chooses to reverse on a shot of the man's neck as he slowly leans back into the chair and thus into the awaiting view of the camera. As the patchwork man does so, the audience is made to discover a deep black tattoo in the shape of a barcode placed on the back of his shaved skull. Just below the barcode is a letter and number sequence that is partially obscured by the low lighting, however just like a half-remembered license plate number in some detective film, the audience can clearly see that the sequence begins BIA 02. For the uninitiated members of the mainstream, this barcode along with the man's pale white visage, his stark thinness, and pale blue eyes, likely evokes vague recollections of the holocaust subsumed from popular culture like scenes of Ian McKellen's Magneto in the X-Men movies revealing the tattooed serial number that the Nazis placed upon

his skin in the concentration camps. However, for the initiated, for those that are tribally enrolled in the U.S. and for status Indians in Canada, the letters B.I.A. have a very specific meaning, namely the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

It is hard to overestimate the power of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the lives of tribally enrolled citizens of Indigenous Nations when describing this offshoot of the federal government to mainstream Settler subjects. Despite the strong inclination in the American identity to believe conspiracy theories concerning the use of state power against private citizens, the powers envisioned of the despotic surveillance state feared by free speech and 2nd amendment advocates pales in comparison to the level of control and surveillance exercised against Indigenous Peoples in the U.S. and Canada for most of the 19th and 20th centuries. Beginning predominantly with the formation of Canada and the Indian Removal Act in the United States in the 1830s, both governments transitioned from practicing foreign policy models with Indigenous Nations to a model that directly exercised colonial authority over them with the use of Indian Agents. Across North America, Indian Agents would be awarded the direct authority to act as the U.S. and Canadian government with the mandate to destroy tribal nations and Indigenous culture. The ultimate end goal of this project was the creation of future generations of U.S. citizens via the destruction of the Choctaw, Lakota, Navajo, Comanche, and other Indigenous nations from which the peoples of North America originally descended, by targeting tribal leadership, cultural and religious practices (including tribal languages), and Indigenous concepts of gender and sexuality, with programs that enforced forced conversion to Christianity and hetero-patriarchy. A key factor to understanding the indelible scars left by this project is to consider United States and Canadian Indigenous education efforts during this time period via the forced removal of children

from Indigenous communities and their forced indoctrination in the boarding school program.¹²⁰ Key to this process was the designation of Indigenous Peoples as “wards of the state” by the United States Supreme Court in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 30 U.S. (5 Pet.) 1 (1831), which would come to be used by the U.S. Government to position Indigenous Peoples as “children” that were in the “care of” the government, thus stripping Indigenous Peoples of full civil liberties. Even to this day the Congress of the United States has not introduced new language into the U.S. legal code overriding this definition of the law, meaning that tribally enrolled citizens, myself included, are technically still “wards of the state,” meaning in essence that the civil liberties of tribally enrolled citizens are not guaranteed by the United States constitution, but instead by the policy positions of the U.S. Executive branch.¹²¹ Nor has the Bureau of Indian Affairs discontinued cataloging Indigenous tribal members, if you will spare me a brief moment for an anecdote: My own family tells an apocryphal legend, that as the local courthouse burned down shortly after my birth, leading to a delay in receiving my birth certificate, my family often jokes that my Certified Degree of Indian Blood (CIDB) card arrived from the BIA prior to our

¹²⁰ It is not my purpose in this chapter to linger upon, or indeed even provide oxygen for a detailed discussion of the boarding school program. Without minimizing the trauma experienced by any of the likely hundreds of thousands of Indigenous Peoples who had contact with this system, as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson has argued in *As We Have Always Done*, the public performances of grief associated with these events have become a powerful tool of the United States and Canada to reaffirm colonial dominance and as advocated by both Simpson and Glen Coulthard, I refuse to participate in that reaffirmation, it is enough for me to say that the boarding school program must by definition be considered an act of cultural genocide under the guidance created by the United Nations in The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. For those seeking more literature on the boarding school program, my own suggestion would be to avoid beginning with the qualified narrative created by the government institutions of the U.S. and Canada and instead start by consulting their opposites in Indian country, The National Congress of American Indians and the Assembly of First Nations.

¹²¹ I know that some readers may suggest that this is a distinction without a difference, that the abuse of this power happened in the distant past and that Tribal members have effectively the same rights as all other enfranchised American citizens. However, to any such readers I would ask one question, what is the distant past? I am only 46 years old as of this writing and there have been confirmed criminal and civil cases against Indian Health Services doctors for forcibly sterilizing Indigenous women without their knowledge or consent from when I was in high school and the United States Congress was obligated to create The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) (Pub.L. 95–608, 92 Stat. 3069, in 1978, due to interventions and abuses by the individual states to continue the process of the removal of Indigenous children from Indigenous house and see them placed in white households as an effort to continue assimilation efforts.

receiving my proof of citizenship to the state of California and the nation state of the U.S. In other words, the United States government had declared me an Indian, before the state of California declared me an American. It is with this important context that I would like to return to a discussion of how Jeff Barnaby portrays the disturbing, black-suited, white-scarred antagonists of his film.

Before we took our little side trip through a cursory sampling of the difficult history of Indigenous Peoples with the governments of the U.S. and Canada, I suggested that a reading of the black-suited villains of Jeff Barnaby's *File Under Miscellaneous* as the Settler mainstream was a surface level of interpretation, against which I wanted to push back. It is easy to suggest that "the mainstream is bad, the mainstream wants assimilation, therefore the creepy men are the mainstream" and indeed I will even concede that one would not be ill advised to view that as the story of *File Under Miscellaneous*, but let us return to what we know of this process for a moment. Throughout this chapter, I have asserted that the medical procedure we witness in *File Under Miscellaneous* is a transformation from one state of being, one identity, to another. That not unlike the gestation of a larva the Mi'kmaq man's metamorphosis literally alters the manner in which he relates to the world, which we can see by observing the nature of the world he leaves at the beginning of the film compared to the one he enters at the end, post-transformation. The absence of additional characters at the beginning of the film is relatively invisible, after all, in *File Under Miscellaneous* we are watching a short low-budget horror film, so the absence of extras seems appropriate, but when compared with the crowd of similarly clad makeup-adorned extras (perhaps 20 in all) that form the teeming masses that our protagonist joins in the final moments, it becomes impossible to view the relative loneliness of this character at the start of the film as non-intentional. Barnaby presents the pre-transformation landscape as a dingy and

deserted city in which our protagonist, as indicated by his winter weather gear, has literally been left out alone in the cold. By contrast, while most of us might not wish to live in the dark and hellish crowd of conformity that this transformed Mi'kmaq man finds himself living within by the end of the film, it is nonetheless a society, a place where the man no doubt finds at least some sense of belonging with the other people surrounding him. If we continue viewing the cost of joining this new society as a metamorphosis, that transformation is not envisioned as an organic one that occurs naturally, such as that of a caterpillar into a butterfly, but instead as a violent one that strips the tongue and skin from our protagonist, in theory depriving him of the cultural encoding that comes from his Indigenous language and the tattoos embedded in his skin. In the place of this Indigenous encoding, it becomes necessary that he should instead be implanted with strips of white skin and the English language in order to join his new brethren.

As the now transformed man finally takes his place among the black suited masses, he does not move forward to celebrate among them, but instead silently takes a seat at the rear of their formation, almost as if he is the latest in a long line of initiates. A feeling confirmed for the audience by Barnaby's use of a clever crowd shot that shows the Mi'kmaq man's face slowly sink into the frame in the distant background as he settles into the fourth row of nearly identical seated figures. Further Barnaby pairs this shot with a reverse angle that demonstrates for the audience, that each of these men, our protagonist included, bears the same BIA barcode tattoo on their neck. I suggest that within Barnaby's use of allegory, this barcode means that these patchwork men are not meant to represent the Settler mainstream, but instead countless generations of "assimilated Indians." As the understanding of this tattoo requires significant cultural encoding to be understood, I think we can presume that the message of this allegory is directed primarily at audience members with significant inroads to the Indigenous community,

either through enrollment, cultural affinity/heritage, or significant knowledge of Indigenous Peoples. The message then that is transmitted to the Indigenous Subject, becomes one that suggests the costs and trials of entrance into Settler society demanded of Indigenous Peoples, is that they actively participate in the destruction of Indigenous culture and therefore the continued dispossession of Indigenous land. As a Choctaw observer of this Mi'kmaq story, I am left envisioning an inevitable future where our protagonist once again finds himself back within the yellow confines of that dirty medical clinic, only this time as the one that peels and strips the skin, rather than as the one who is stripped. Barnaby further establishes this idea in the mind of some viewers with the timely use of a joke, which I will soon describe, about the pop culture icons of the Lone Ranger and Tonto.

Launching as a radio drama on George W. Trendle's *WXYZ* in Detroit in 1933, *The Lone Ranger*, and his Indian sidekick Tonto, would become a cultural phenomenon, who along with other radio heroes such as Red Ryder, Little Beaver, and Straight Arrow, would be featured on syndicated radio, television, books, comic books, newspaper strips, and on the backs of popular home goods such as Nabisco products throughout the 1930s-1960s. *The Lone Ranger* would come to have a major influence on the Imagine-Space, dictating to the American public the appropriate positionality of Indigenous Peoples in American society as being a helper to the Western cowboy character. As Indigenous characters such as Tonto and Little Beaver were so prevalent in American popular media, they often provided the only positive representation of Indigenous Peoples that mainstream Settler Subjects were exposed to, as well as serving as the only truly heroic Indian characters that Indigenous Peoples could look up to. It should thus come as no surprise that the relationship toward these characters, broadly throughout the Pan-Indigenous community, is nuanced and complex. Meaning that these characters are often beloved

for their strengths and joked about for their failings—and joke about them, Barnaby does, but he uses that opportunity for dry biting humor to show the transformation of the thoughts of his main character.

What most stands out about the reference to the Lone Ranger and Tonto in *File Under Miscellaneous*, is that the pop culture icons are introduced at the exact moment of transformation. As the final piece of the Mi'kmaq man's tattooed skin is tossed into the cold medical bowl, he references the radio drama saying that “[he] always knew the Lone Ranger wore a mask because he didn't want anyone to know he was friends with an Indian” and how “it always made [him] wish he was white” (4:40-4:58).¹²² As the line softly comes to a close, our transformed protagonist enters the frame in his black suit with his newly white skin gleaming, ready to perform the role of the Settler Subject which Barnaby demonstrates with the continued reference to the Lone Ranger. Sinking into his place among the mass of men, the formerly Mi'kmaq man now over-performs masculinity, sexism, and racism, saying:

I trade jokes with the Ranger now,
“What does a Squaw say after sex?” I ask.
The Ranger always shrugs in ignorance.
“Get off me dad, you're crushing my cigarettes,”
we would laugh and laugh, laugh until silver bullets flew out of every orifice and
burned the land with our whiteness (5:26-6:00).¹²³

Having entered the Settler mainstream, the transformed man can only find his place amongst them by performing colonialism within the sanctity of his own thoughts by demonstrating the very heteropatriarchal and racist tropes about Indigenous women that were used to destroy the social cohesion of the very Indigenous community that he is leaving to join the mainstream.

¹²² *File Under Miscellaneous*. (2010) Prospector Films. Jeff Barnaby (director) V Spot.org. Bravo. YouTube Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SEyAs-FSHQ&t=126s> (last accessed 9/17/2022)

¹²³ *Ibid.*

While I believe that the affect of disgust and discomfort being generated in the audience is intended to focus the Settler audience on what is being lost, its obvious use of allegory in the remainder of the film—post the transformation—serve to focus the Indigenous viewer upon what is being gained and whether there is any utility in accepting the ideas of the colonial mindset? Ultimately for Barnaby, the answer appears to be “no.”

But is All Hope Lost?

The careful use of graphic horror and allegory in *File Under Miscellaneous* serves to place both Settler and Indigenous audience in a similar state of dejection come the end of the film. While Barnaby does nothing to soften the blow of his commentary on where we find ourselves in the present, he does offer some hope of a brighter future with his continued use of voiceover. Regardless of the viewer's placement in the audience, the transition point in which the character goes from thinking in Mi'kmaq to English will likely stand out to them. Even if the viewer does not consciously notice that the character has begun to think in another language, their brain will still make note of it creating a clear moment of "before" and "after," and they will become primed to receive additional data from the audio that follows this moment of change. In this fertile ground Barnaby plants the seed of an understanding that change is not permanent, and that which has been lost, even if it was intentionally discarded, can be reclaimed. In the final two minutes of the film, as the protagonist over-performs Whiteness and masculinity in order to earn his place in colonial society, the man is unable to completely erase his Indigenous identity as after each line of dialogue, ever so softly in the background, the audience hears the line repeated in Mi'kmaq. Barnaby seems to suggest that the violent horrific ordeal of his assimilation has not succeeded in "[destroying] the Indian within the man" as famed Carlisle superintendent Richard Pratt hoped, instead achieving only to suppress or drive that identity beneath the surface, always in reach and ready to be reclaimed.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ The founder of Carlisle industrial Trade school, Richard Pratt, would spend much of his later years lobbying for the Indian Boarding School Program throughout the United States a was often credited as defining the program as an effort to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man."

Pratt, Richard. Speech "Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections." 19th Annual Conference. Denver Colorado. 1892. https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/sites/all/files/docs-resources/CIS-Resources_1892-PrattSpeech.pdf (last accesses 10/1022)

File Under Miscellaneous lingers in ambiguity, remaining open to a multitude of readings and responses by the audience, and I have suggested that this sense of unknowing and the unknowable is ultimately the primary purpose of the film. Whether he is driving the Settler audience to consider the plight of the oppressed by causing them discomfort, asking the Indigenous members of the audience whether the price of assimilation is too high through allegory, or just looking to entertain the horror fans in the stands, what Barnaby struggles to avoid is providing what so much of Indigenous cinema has presented up until the present: a easily digestible and legible narrative that presents Indigenous Peoples as somehow less complex than their fellows from other cultures. Instead, Barnaby makes the audience struggle with both the content of the film and the Settler Dreams that they bring into the process. He makes them look within the film's dark depths to attempt to find meaning, in hopes of encouraging a renewed need for relationality in them. In other words, that both Settlers and Indigenous Peoples, might put away their assured interior knowledge of one another and instead seek to learn of each other once more.

CANCELING THE TOMAHAWK CHOP (MAYBE???): SO YOU BOUGHT A BASEBALL TEAM, NOW WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR RACIST MASCOT?

October 3rd 2019, should have been a happy day for the Atlanta Braves fanbase. Baseball Post Season had arrived and the Braves found themselves beginning the National League divisional series against the Central Division Champion, St. Louis Cardinals, and even better, game one was set to be played in Atlanta's own SunTrust Park.¹²⁵ However, prior to the game as they distributed thousands of foam tomahawks upon the awaiting seats of the 41,000 capacity stadium, the Atlanta Braves events crew likely did not realize that they were participating in what would become yet another flashpoint in the ongoing controversy over the use of Indian mascots and monikers in professional sports. The climax to this particular story would occur in the eighth inning when Cardinal's rookie pitcher, and Cherokee Nation Member, Ryan Helsley, took the mound. In that outing, as the tall lefty worked diligently to retire the two batters that he faced, the hometown crowd engaged in a performance of sports identity intended to intimidate and distract him, specifically a three decades old stadium performance tradition called "the Tomahawk Chop."¹²⁶ As it is currently practiced, the ritual of the Tomahawk Chop sees the Braves fan extending either a foam tomahawk or their arm and then making a downward chopping motion while chanting "tribal war chants" at the direction of a war drum played by the stadium personnel over the public announcement system. The following day Helsley showed

¹²⁵ In a chapter about the performative nature of the "business" of modern-day Major-League Baseball, there is perhaps no more ironic beginning than the fact that the information contained in this sentence is already out of date, as after a merger with BB&T Corporation in 2020, SunTrust Bank became Truist Bank and as such the exclusive naming rights owned by the corporation would see Atlanta's SunTrust Park renamed as well.

¹²⁶ Boeck, Scott. "Cardinals rookie Ryan Helsley, a member of the Cherokee Nation, says Atlanta's tomahawk chop 'devalues us'" USA Today. Oct. 4, 2019. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/mlb/2019/10/04/ryan-helsley-cardinals-braves-tomahawk-chop/3869933002/> (last accessed 1/20/2022)

disappointment in the actions of Braves fans in the media, commenting to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*:

I think it's a misrepresentation of the Cherokee people or Native Americans [that] depicts them in this kind of caveman-type people way who aren't intellectual. They are a lot more than that. It's not me being offended by the whole mascot thing. It's not. It's about the misconception of us, the Native Americans, and it devalues us and how we're perceived.¹²⁷

Helsey's sentiments soon found their way into stories in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *USA Today* and were picked up by the Associated Press who carried photographs of the long rows of foam tomahawks neatly arranged on the seats of SunTrust Park to small town papers throughout the country and with that, the controversy well and truly began.

As the "scandal" began to unfurl like some kind of giant Napoleonic era battle standard above a naval engagement, the Atlanta Braves at first balked, taking steps towards modifying or retiring the Tomahawk chop, but would later backpedal. Liberty Media, the corporate owners of the Braves, opened negotiations and discussions with the National Congress of American Indians to envision an equitable path forward, but would ultimately reverse course, just two seasons later by proudly, explicitly, and loudly using the Tomahawk Chop during the 2021 World Series.¹²⁸ I

¹²⁷ Goold, Derrick. "Cards' Helsey, a member of Cherokee Nation, calls 'chop' chant 'disappointing, disrespectful'" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Oct.5 2019. https://www.stltoday.com/sports/baseball/professional/birdland/cards-helsley-a-member-of-chokeee-nation-calls-chop-chant-disappointing-disrespectful/article_4150156e-89ae-5e55-8e0d-7936eeef8ded.html (last accessed 1/20/22)

¹²⁸ My twenties saw me suffer from a brief affliction/addiction to the Napoleonic era naval fiction of, among others, Alexander Kent's *Richard Bolitho*, and as result I descended into the research rabbit hole of Age of Sail Naval tactics. One of the indelible facts that has remained with me to this day (other than the fact that the real implement of death in Age of Sail combat was neither cannon ball nor sword, but instead the many flying wooden splinters that were created as a result of cannon fire) are the giant flags that particularly Ships of the Line flew into combat, which some times ranged up to fifty or sixty feet in length and most have made quite a sight to behold as they unfurled behind the mighty two and three "deckers." Ironically for the purposes of this chapter perhaps the only flags of such size still commonly in use in modern society are the occasional commemorative flags that appear as part of pregame or halftime festivities at significant sporting events like the Super Bowl, the World Cup, and the World Series. However, in those cases the flag is most often unfurled parallel to the ground for an overhead shot, so it's likely that the crowd and the audience at home don't view those flags with the same level of awe and grandeur.

choose to begin here, in this moment in 2019, with this seemingly minor skirmish in the war over Indian mascots and heraldry, a skirmish that was, by all indications, a tactical failure for proponents of retiring Indian themed mascots because it demonstrates that the use of a narrative of social progress is often a delaying tactic in corporate messaging. Helsey's goal in bringing attention to the Tomahawk Chop was to discourage Atlanta's fanbase from engaging in the performance, by making their use of the ritual public knowledge. However, the end result of that exposure was not a reduction in its use, but an embrace of the activity. In other words, I read the events surrounding the Tomahawk Chop controversy as indicating that narratives of inevitable social progress do little to engender significant change, and forever leave open the possibility of a futurity in which society undergoes a historical return to form. When we hide the ghosts of our past, they lie in wait unchallenged, and often return to haunt us.

Additionally, I start in this location because Atlanta's response, their apparent openness to calls for change, without any real desire to alter the team's performance, represent the exemplar in Major League sports in America. Corporate responses to the mascot debate at the Major League level have traditionally been evasive, lacking true motivation for change. I assert that this uniformity of tactical response by Major League sports teams makes those franchises poor examples for envisioning a future free of Indian-themed mascots. We know how these teams will respond. If we wish to encourage new communications methods to alter the perception of Indigenous Peoples within the popular imaginary, I suggest we must look farther afield than Major League Baseball™, the National Football League™, the National Basketball Association™, and other premiere sport leagues. I suggest instead that we shift our gaze just off stage to lesser-known leagues, where rarely carried by the national sporting press, a host of sports corporations and small communities have been finding new and innovative ways to

address our shared history of Indian mascots. Away from the spotlight of the media surrounding the “Major Leagues” these smaller venues often have the breathing room to be messy, as they adapt to the fraught world of Indigenous mascots and monikers.

In this chapter, I endeavor to show the utility of focusing our critical gaze, not on the “Major League” franchises that draw so much national attention, but instead upon their smaller, seldom discussed “Minor League” brethren. I will argue that when these teams select a tactic to address their mascot, in doing so their choice affects the American imaginary and that we can judge the relative outcome of their public relations based on how these strategies serve to perpetuate or conversely, struggle against, what W.E.B. Du Bois implied was “the great lie” that formed the foundation of the American republic, the belief that due to an immutable characteristic, some people are inherently better than others.¹²⁹ As I analyze my two case studies in this chapter, I will argue that one of the strategies deployed represents an effort to continue the status quo of America and thus seeks to maintain the institution of White Supremacy by erasing Indigenous Peoples from the national narrative, while the other challenges that narrative, and asks the faithful fan to instead acknowledge the lives of Indigenous Peoples in the present day,

¹²⁹ In my paraphrasing of W.E.B. Du Bois here I draw most heavily on *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* in which Du Bois suggests of his methodology that “I cannot do this writing without believing in the essential humanity of Negroes, in their ability to be educated, to do the work of modern world, to take their place as equal citizens with others. I cannot for a moment subscribe to that bizarre doctrine of race that makes most men inferior to the few.” I proceed in my analysis with the understanding, from Du Bois, that any cultural narrative, including public relations narratives, generated in the American system will be definable by their proximity to the long-standing tradition of maintaining White Supremacy.

Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880*. First Free Press Edition. The Free Press. New York, NY. 1998. pp, 725.

and thus creates future possibilities of an equitable relationship between the Settlers of North America and Indigenous Peoples.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ My understanding of relationality within the context of this statement is that to “seek relationality,” is to seek a relationship that is predicated on equality and mutual respect, rather than one based on control and dominance. In my articulation “to be relational,” is to come together in an effort to jointly deploy power for the betterment of all, while colonial relationships seek to exert dominance in an effort to garner power for the few. While Western ears may hear the phrase “equitable relationship,” and interpret that to mean that I am advocating for what some might consider “weak sauce,” I assure you that I am not. In advocating for proper relationality between Colonial Subjects and Indigenous Peoples I am expressing what I understand to be a radical readjustment to American and Canadian foreign policy which has been articulated by a bevy of Indigenous thinkers that have preceded me and built the scaffolding upon which I stand. A framework that builds upon calls for true Indigenous Sovereignty, free from the legal and cultural constraints placed on Indigenous nationhood by the Settler State. At the heart of Robert Warrior’s calls for Indigenous Nationalism, Craig Womack’s push for the creation of a respected Indigenous literary canon, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson calls for radical resurgence of Indigenous governance systems, and Glen Coulthard’s denial of Canada’s politics of recognition rests on a shared clarion call that the nation states of the United States and Canada finally treaty Indigenous nations as their equal. Far from being insignificant, I view these calls for greater relationality between Colonial Subjects and Indigenous Peoples to be the bedrock of Indigenous resistance for the last five centuries.

Target Selection

As the apocryphal legend in Atlanta goes, the Tomahawk Chop came into popular use by the Braves sometime during the 1990s, when famous two-sport athlete, and Florida State University football team alumni, Deion Sanders played for the team.¹³¹ Like most sports legends it is virtually impossible for us to know for certain if it is grounded in real historical fact or is instead performative justification for the present. What is evident however, is that the “Tomahawk Chop” is a performance of fictitious Indigeneity regardless of what the original intention was.¹³² While it goes without saying that this sports ritual is intended to intimidate the opposing team, the Tomahawk Chop also serves to initiate the Braves fan into an ad-hoc sports nation through their performance of belonging to a fictional Indian Tribe.¹³³ In a basic sense, the

¹³¹ While apocryphal sports legends may at first blush seem of little importance to scholarly work, I take the guidance from Thomas King when he says “[history] is the stories we tell about the past [...] but the stories are not just any stories. They’re not chosen by chance” to mean that the narrative we tell ourselves is a history, even if it is not written down. Further I look to Tomson Highway’s musings on the “additional window” of perspective that is generated when we learn a new language when I suggest, via King, that understanding the colloquial myths and legends of sports nations gives us perspective into understanding their goals and intent. So, while much of my understanding of the motivations of team management will be drawn from the team’s public relations efforts, there is still a place for the stories and understandings of everyday fans in my research methodology. Ultimately, I attempt to balance how the team is discussed in public discourse and among the fan base against the team’s public relations efforts to control the narrative.

Highway, Tomson. *A Tale of Monstrous Extravagance: Imagining Multilingualism*. Henry Kreisel Lecture Series. University of Alberta Press. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 2015. pp.19-20.

King, Thomas. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Indigenous Peoples in North America*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2013. pp. 2-3.

¹³² I use the term “fictitious” here to denote that the performance of Indigeneity is fictitious, not that those who engage in it lack any claim to Indigeneity. Indeed, given a capacity of 41,000 and a diverse fanbase, it is very possible that some portion of the fans that were engaging in this ritual, on that day, have legitimate claims to Indigeneity, either through enrollment or heritage. Instead, I suggest that the particular representational ritual of the Tomahawk Chop is a fictitious “image” of Indigeneity, that reflects neither a historically accurate representation of Indigenous Peoples nor an image of Indigenous Peoples true lived experience in the present. Instead, I view the “Tomahawk Chop” as a western created fantasy of the Indians of the past, one that Western subjects perform and use to make themselves find happiness with a past that fills them with discomfort.

¹³³ Other examples of this type of sports behavior can be seen at nearly any NBA or NCAA basketball game, as hometown fans behind the hoop scream and wave brightly colored objects in an attempt to distract players engaged in “free throw” penalties.

purpose of the Tomahawk Chop is to align the fanbase to a shared sports identity as a member of Braves Nation, by thinking of themselves as an Indian Brave. These performances then go on to serve to erase the actual presence of Indigenous Peoples in the present within the imaginary of the average Braves fan. As a result, all over Atlanta and the greater Georgia area, family myths and legends of distant Indian heritage often go unchallenged by the public. When an Indian becomes nothing more than a fiction, a myth, then it becomes impossible to insult or harm an Indian. The Indigenous subject is dehumanized, and Indigenous peoples suffer as a result. This is the argument against the use of Indian mascots and monikers in its most basic form: Indian mascots erase Indigenous Peoples from the imagination of the fanbase and thus those faithful Brave fans' go out into the world to perpetuate a false narrative in which "Indians" no longer exist, leading, at least in part, to negative outcomes broadly for Indigenous Peoples both in Georgia and nationally, including low self-esteem and disproportionately high suicide rates.¹³⁴

While I am blind to none of the conclusions I have just drawn, as a Choctaw intellectual and as a Performance Studies scholar, neither am I principally interested in them. In keeping with the work of Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Ibram X. Kendi and other prominent voices in both the Indigenous and Black intellectual traditions, I take it as a general principal that the United States

¹³⁴ Since the turn of the 21st century the American Psychological Association has taken several measures to condemn the use of Indian mascots at one point going so far as to officially issue guidance to their membership that Indian mascots have a negative impact on the self-esteem of Indigenous youth. "APA Resolution Recommending the Immediate Retirement of American Indian Mascots, Symbols, Images, and Personalities by Schools, Colleges, Universities, Athletic Teams, and Organizations" <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/mascots.pdf> (last accessed 3/22/22)

For a more general review of the arguments for the retirement of Indian mascots, I recommend the collected repository "Ending the Era of Harmful 'Indian' Mascots" maintained by the National Congress of American Indians on their website. <https://www.ncai.org/proudtobe> (last accessed 3/22/22)

For information on Indigenous suicide rates see the National Indian Council on Aging, <https://www.nicoa.org/national-american-indian-and-alaska-native-hope-for-life-day/> (last accessed 3/22/22) and U.S. Bureau of Health and Human Services, <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=4&lvlid=39> (last accessed 3/22/22).

was founded with deeply embedded White Supremacist attitudes, that those attitudes have increased in intensity over time, and that there has never been a time when Indigenous Peoples have not resisted genocide/assimilation or that African-Americans have not deployed anti-racism to combat White Supremacy.¹³⁵ In other words, I take the struggle between White Supremacy, and the antiracism that opposes it, as the core foundational disagreement embedded in the American dream. The Atlanta Braves fanbase's use of the Tomahawk Chop. and the racialized effects it has on the people who engage in this type of performance, absolutely should be both catalogued and opposed. Expressions of racism, both by the individual and by a sports nation should be labeled and called out, however, my own gaze primarily focuses not on the behavior of the fans, but instead upon the actions and performance of the companies that own these sport teams. Companies that have often purchased these teams in the last 20 to 30 years and who I argue should be viewed as being less committed to a team's history of Indian heraldry, than the familial owners that created those symbols. That the company should be viewed as lacking the emotional connection/loyalty that the previous ownership may have felt toward the organization's long-standing brand.¹³⁶ As the branding deployed by their team has been deemed

¹³⁵ Both Dunbar-Ortiz and Kendi, have done a great deal of the heavy historical lifting that supports my understanding of the default White Supremacy that serves as the governing philosophy of the United States. Dunbar-Ortiz' analysis of United States history as an ever-ongoing genocidal conflict over possession the land, the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples and the racialize violence that enacted the American nation in *An Indigenous Peoples History of the United States* and Kendi's explication of how racial attitudes in the early colonies actually increased after the adoption of the African slave trade in *Stamped From the Beginning*, inform for me a conclusion that the United States of America is a White Supremacist nation. Do note that I do not euphemistically say that the United States was "founded in" White Supremacy, or that the country "has structural racism at its core," instead I acknowledge that since the founding of the republic the United States has been a White Supremacist state. There is no way to separate the government (and thus the people) from the actions taken by that government.

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Beacon Press. Boston, Massachusetts. 2014.

Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. Bold Type Books. New York, NY. 2017.

¹³⁶ For an example of this style of "familial ownership" one need look no further than Dan Snyder of the now Washington Commanders, who engaged in a multi decade long struggle to retain a team name that I will hence forth

toxic and destructive by large swaths of the general public, these new ownership committees face significant financial incentive to retire or otherwise mitigate their branding in order to appeal to new fans. Balanced against that incentive, however, are the sentiments of the existing fanbase of the team which often desires to keep their “traditions,” regardless of whether that branding is seen as racist or not. Thus, each of these teams are placed in a delicate position in which they feel compelled to make changes to their corporate brand in an effort to market to potential new fans, but simultaneously desire to limit the potential blowback from their pre-existing fanbase.

As the consolidation of ownership has occurred over the last three decades in professional sports, especially in minor league baseball, each team with an Indian mascot or moniker has struggled in some way with this branding issue and has created a mostly unique set of tactics to do so. It is only now that these methodologies and tactics are beginning to be codified into a repeatable framework to be deployed for maximum efficiency as the political left and right continue the ever ongoing “culture war.”¹³⁷ I contend in this chapter that advocates for the retirement of Indian mascots, and indeed all human style mascots, need to determine which

represent as the Washington Redskins, due to the team’s selection of a dictionary defined racial slur. In May of 2013 Snyder was quoted in a USA Today article that “We will never change the name of the team. As a lifelong Redskins fan, and I think that the Redskins fans understand the great tradition and what it's all about and what it means, so we feel pretty fortunate to be just working on next season. We'll never change the name. It's that simple. NEVER—you can use caps.”

Brady, Erik. USA Today. May 9, 2013.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/redskins/2013/05/09/washington-redskins-daniel-snyder/2148127/> (Last Accessed 8/22/22)

¹³⁷ An important linguistic distinction I feel it necessary to make for the sake of clarity here is between the terms the “political left” and the “progressive left,” and the “political right,” and the “reactionary right.” When discussing the “political left/right,” I am referring to the broad political coalitions that make up the American polity. I view these two groups as representing the majority of American citizens, who regardless of how they brand themselves (Democrat, Republican, Independent), mostly align, and find themselves regularly voting with one of the two poles of American politics. Conversely, when I refer to the “progressive left” and the “reactionary right” I am homing in on what we might think of as the most motivated members of those coalitions, the political leaders, pundits, grassroots activists, internet warriors, motivated voter, and even your Aunt Vicki, who hasn’t missed her local Democratic party meeting since the 2016 election.

of these tactics are most effective in allowing for change within the American cultural imaginary and therefore which should receive the most advocacy when protesting and petitioning sport franchises for change. Additionally, as I see the goal of such advocacy as the creation of what I term a more relational framework between Indigenous Peoples and members of the Settler State, I will also focus upon how some of these methodologies, which might appear to create positive outcomes and benefit on the surface, result instead in supporting White Supremacist thinking.¹³⁸

In this effort I take inspiration from Philip Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places*, in which the Lakota historian explicates how some Indian representations in Western media appear to serve an anomalous end. Deloria asserts events which are anomalous ultimately reinforce the status quo and that there is a distinction to be made between "the anomalous, which reinforces expectations, and the unexpected, which resists categorization and, thereby, questions expectation itself."¹³⁹ Deloria demonstrates his conclusion most aptly within the text in his case study of a 1941 photograph entitled *Red Cloud Woman in Beauty Shop*, in which an Indigenous woman wearing full buckskin regalia, sits beneath an industrial hair dryer while receiving a manicure. Deloria suggests that, for the average American, the oddity of seeing a historical Indian in the modern beauty shop does not in fact highlight her uniqueness, but instead turns one's eye back toward the things that she is not, i.e., the status quo. That "[naming] Red Cloud Woman an unexpected anomaly, then, helps naturalize categories such as *white, woman, modern, beauty, technology, and labor,*" that the image helps "give them their shape, meaning, and

¹³⁸ In positioning "Relationality" here, I am deploying an Indigenous sense of the world of Relationality, that all life and political thought rests in an interconnected world, in which the "human" or "self" is only determinable as it relates to the peoples and places that surround it and form the world. In suggesting a "more relational framework between Indigenous Peoples and members of the Settler State," I am envisioning a world in which the Settler State views the Indigenous as "peoples to relate to," rather than as "objects to be defined."

¹³⁹ Deloria, Philip. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. The University of Kansas Press. 2004. pp.11.

power” (emphasis in original).¹⁴⁰ In applying Deloria’s concept of the Unexpected to the brands in this chapter, I have moved toward considering not only the ways in which images like *Red Cloud Woman* are anomalous, but also how they are ambiguous. While it is true that her traditional regalia clad appearance beneath the modern hair dryer might cause many viewers to view her as out of place, it is equally possible that her appearance will be read as an Indigenous invasion of a traditionally colonial space, and thus could be viewed as subversive. However, I suggest that this subversive reading would ultimately be ambiguous, as in accepting the colonial frame of “beauty treatment,” Red Cloud Woman, legitimizes it as a methodology. Even in her traditional regalia, she accepts that she needs to conform to a Western ideal of beauty. Despite this subversive reading of the image, the image itself inevitably reinforces White Cultural Dominance. Therefore, as I analyze the retirement methods of my case studies, I will likewise consider how the potential for ambiguity in messaging leaves room for an outwardly progressive message to mask a colonial reactionary effect.

I will also argue that branding changes can be used either to increase relationality between the Indigenous and Settlers, or it can instead, be used to create a condition that Princeton Professor of Africana Studies, Eddie Glaude Jr., has termed “disremembering.” Glaude suggests that “what we put in and leave out of our stories tells us something about who we are” and that disremembering is an act of “active forgetting” in which the memories of our past are intentionally obscured in order to format the future.¹⁴¹ Glaude explains:

When we *disremember* an event, an egregious moment in the past, we shape how we live in the present. I borrow the word from Toni Morrison. In her magisterial

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 5.

¹⁴¹ Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*. B/D/W/Y Broadway Books. New York. 2016. pp. 47.

novel *Beloved*, she grapples with the difficulties of memories, haunting memories that come back to consume. Disremembering enables the characters in the novel to ward off, temporarily, the pain of past events. Disremembering blots our horrible loss, but it also distorts who the characters take themselves to be. Something is lost. (Emphasis in original)¹⁴²

Through his theorization of disremembering Glaude invites us to consider how intentional forgetting is often destructive, that hiding from the ghosts of our past will ultimately consume us because in denying the history that brought us to the present, by acting as if it never happened, we may be saving ourselves from pain today, but the underlying forces that manifested that history remain unchallenged in the Imagine-Space and continue into tomorrow.

In placing Deloria's concept of the unexpected beside Glaude's disremembering I seek to focus our attention on the question of how celebratory narratives of forgetting can be detrimental to actual social change in society by creating what I call "Settler Dreams." I view Settler Dreams as an extension of disremembering, in which the U.S. national narrative serves to obscure the real-world history of foreign relations between the Settler State and Indigenous nations, in favor of a convenient myth that positions the American Settler as a descendent and the natural inheritor of the Indigenous Peoples of North America. Just as Glaude argues that America uses "the legends and myths we tell about our inherent, you know, goodness, to hide and cover and conceal, so we can maintain a kind of willful ignorance that protects our innocence," I argue that the teams that deploy a tactical strategy of disremembering/Settler Dreams, do so not to change the attitudes and beliefs of their fanbase, but instead to create willful ignorance of the reality of their past history, and thus maintain a false sense of innocence.¹⁴³ While I am, in general, against creating binaries, I do argue that there is utility in this instance, in assessing the tactics of these

¹⁴² *Ibid.* pp. 46.

¹⁴³ MSNBC YouTube. "Blaming President Donald Trump Is Too Easy: This Is Us. | Deadline | MSNBC" Aug 5, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKiB0APdxTo> (last accessed 10/1/22)

corporate enterprises along a spectrum that stretches between the relational and disremembering. That one of these intentions, the relational, is to be desired and creates greater opportunity for change, while the other, disremembering, should be discouraged as it necessarily limits adaptability.

While obviously a tactical analysis of the entirety of the methods deployed by all Indian themed minor league baseball teams is beyond the scope of this chapter, my research has indicated a significant divide revolving around a question of approach. Whether or not the team in question responds to calls for change in good faith has significant impact on the outcome. While all these teams are willing to make alterations to how they present their branding, some also seek to challenge the attitudes and feelings that underlie the institutionally racist system of professional baseball, while others do not. As a Choctaw, as an American, and as a baseball fan, my desire is that advocates for change focus on strategies and tactics that assault not just the surface level effects of institutional racism, but also the beliefs which support those effects. What follows is a tale of two teams: the *Chiefs* of Peoria, Illinois, and the *Indians* of Spokane, Washington. The choices they have made, the steps that they have taken, and the tactics they have used, and continue to use, mark a road map for our shared future.

An Indian in Name Only, the Indian Mascot

At the heart of the investigation of my two case studies resides a fictitious historical personage, what I will refer to as the “Hollywood Indian.”¹⁴⁴ In the Hollywood Indian, I refer to something more than the filmmaking tropes surrounding Indigenous Peoples, that most academics are familiar with (the Barbaric and Noble Savage, the Indian Princess, and the Vanishing Race) to consider the whole of society messaging campaign surrounding Indigenous Peoples in North America. Born in the days immediately preceding the American Revolution, Philip Deloria suggests this messaging campaign became an important mechanism by which proto-Americans defined their differences with their British counterparts, that in essence Americans came to view themselves as changed by contact with Indigenous Peoples. The Indian was the mechanism by which the American subject came to understand the New World, and thus stopped being British. Deloria however cautions that this fascination with Indigenous Peoples also came with a guarantee of violence, that “Americans wanted to feel a natural affinity with the continent, and it was Indians who could teach them such aboriginal closeness. Yet, in order to control the landscape, they had to destroy the original inhabitants.”¹⁴⁵ Deloria goes on to suggest that Indians came to represent both “instinct and freedom,” but in order to embrace that sense of

¹⁴⁴ Used colloquially throughout Indian Country by artists, poets, writers, academics, and everyday citizens, it is difficult to pinpoint with absolutely certainty where I was first learned of the Hollywood Indian, does this knowledge descend from a half-remembered story from Ojibwe playwright Drew Hayden Taylor, from Philip Deloria’s discussion the DeMille Indians in *Indians in Unexpected Places*, or in everyday conversation with the elders that have brought me into the academic world today. Suffice to say that broadly speaking throughout Indian Country there is a discourse surrounding the media tropes that have informed the American public’s imagining of Indigenous Peoples. Whether you refer to these tropes as the Barbaric and Noble Savage, the Indigenous Princess and the Squaw, or the Hollywood Indian, each of these designations point to a series of signifiers wrapped up in a history of discourse that positions the Indigenous Subject as simultaneously an object of fascination and fear. Both the violent aggressor that needed to be conquered and the honor ancestor from whom the Colonial Subject has inherited their claim to the land.

¹⁴⁵ Deloria, Philip. *Playing Indian*. Yale University Press. New Haven, London. 1998. pp. 5.

freedom they, by both necessity and purpose, would need to possess a land of their own, therefore requiring the dispossession of the continent's original inhabitants.

Deloria points us toward an understanding that it was through two rivaling emotions that early Western settlers constructed American identity, namely fascination and fear, and thus the modern Hollywood Indian plays on the American fetishization of the Indigenous Subject and simultaneously seeks to alleviate the fear of everyday citizens. To accomplish this task the Hollywood Indian presents a false persona, a character forever trapped in a historicized past. A cursory inspection of nearly any American media venue from the first half of the 20th century will show you the broad appeal of the Hollywood Indian in the cultural landscape.¹⁴⁶ The conquered Indian became a noble caricature around which American artists, writers, advertisers, and influencers could reinforce America's sense of national identity in the days following the end of Westward Expansion, by justifying the dispossession of Indian land and erasing the debris left behind in the image of modern day Indigenous Peoples. As the Hollywood Indian became an object to be celebrated, the Indian became relegated to the world of fiction.

The history of Indian mascots and monikers in American baseball would begin at the turn of the 20th century, in the same period of transitional national identity as the birth of the cultural

¹⁴⁶ My own survey of golden age DC/National comic books from 1938-1952 located thousands of images and stories that were informed by the narrative of the Hollywood Indian. Indian Law-Man Pow Wow Smith traveled the same early pages of *Detective Comics* as Batman™, even if only one of the two is currently protected by DC parent company Warner Media by use of a trademark. Indians abounded in these early comics finding purchase in history comics, activity sheets, comic stripes, and factoids. And while this representation was not uniform, it was principally a depiction of the Hollywood Indian, an artificial and glorified quasi-ancestor trapped in a historicized past. As further example, in *Making the White Man's Indian*, her study of Indigenous representation in the American film industry, Angela Aleiss found that on average between 12-15 Native American themed films were released on average in America's movie house between 1910 and 1912. Although the Indigenous subject has become rare today in American media today, the image and performance of the Hollywood Indian appeared quite prolific in the half century following the closing of the frontier.

Aleiss, Angela. *Making the White Man's Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood Movies*. Greenwood Publishing Group. 2005.

formation I call the Hollywood Indian. Both should be seen as an implementation of the changing cultural values of the period. As Fredrick Jackson Turner asserted at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 with his Western Frontier Thesis, the government of the United States structured itself during its first century of life on a model of constant growth built on the violent seizure of Indigenous land.¹⁴⁷ However, in the waning years of the 19th century, the United States found itself without new lands to conquer, and although that would not stop the federal government from seeking new areas for expansion, the time-honored narrative of the rugged frontiersman whose citizenship was made and codified in the crucible of land theft would be displaced. As Philip Deloria asserts "American history took shape, not as a frontiersman's struggle with wild lands, but as one long Indian war, a violent contest in which Americans were shaped by constant struggle with a dangerous adversary."¹⁴⁸ American history, as a narrative, would become about the conquering of the frontier, and the Indian would become the vanquished foes who needed to be overcome to ensure that victory. With this understanding I read the Hollywood Indian, especially in its mascot visage, much like a 17th century Indian scalp, as a trophy of a victorious war. Indian mascots become the totem by which the modern Colonial Subject both celebrates those past victories and also delegitimizes claims of wrongdoing, by rendering those past actions as common place.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Turner, Fredrick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Essay delivered to the American Historical Association. World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago, Illinois. 1893.

¹⁴⁸ Deloria, Philip. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. University of Kansas Press. 2004. pp.62.

¹⁴⁹ In suggesting Indian mascots and monikers normalize structures of power and the dispossession of Indigenous land I use the framework asserted by Mark Rifkin as what he calls "settler common sense." In settler common sense Rifkin refers to "the ways the legal and political structures that enable non-native access to Indigenous territories come to be lived as given, as simply the unmarked, generic conditions of possibility for occupancy, association, history, and personhood." Rifkin suggests that attitudes and legal systems surrounding settler common sense makes Indigenous land dispossession invisible and generates an affect within the colonial subject that allows them to exert claims upon the land. I suggest in this chapter that the Indian mascot has likewise become a common place performance of identity which allows the Settler Subject to lay claim, not only to Indigenous land, but to the story,

The Great Culture War

Embedded in my analysis of the tactics of Peoria and Spokane is a challenge to two commonly heard refrains from political advocates in American society, one from the Progressive Left and the other from the Reactionary Right, namely that “the culture war” is simultaneously “not real” and that cultural objects such as film, TV, books, and in this case sports performance, are “not political.”¹⁵⁰ At a basic level this chapter is an effort to analyze the public relation tactics of sports corporations within the framework of a culture war which the Progressive Left often seems intent on denying. As an example, when the Reactionary Right picked a fight in 2020 over the rebranding of Mr. Potato Head™¹⁵¹ to simply Potato Head™, most political operators on the Progressive Left chose not to engage with their counterpart’s actual argument, namely that Hasbro (the toy’s manufacturer), should be supporting the traditional gender binary that has thus far been enforced in American society, and instead insisted that the rebranding was the result of a non-political everyday business practice.¹⁵² Although the gender encoding of a seven-decade old,

and therefore selfhood of Indigenous Peoples. Thus, the fight to retire Indian mascots should be viewed as a struggle to reclaim that selfhood.

Rifkin, Mark. *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2014. pp. xvi.

¹⁵⁰ My use of “sports performance” here is 100% intentional. The game of Baseball’s coding by American as a sport often blinds people to the fact that the creation of a baseball game, the manner in which it is staged, is every bit as performative as a World Wrestling Entertainment Pay Per View, even if the actual outcome of the game is unknown to the individuals that stage the performance prior to the completion of the game.

¹⁵¹ Let it never be said that I don’t teach people things, for by reading this footnote you now know that Mr. Potatohead was the first toy advertised on television in 1952.

“What Was The First Toy Ever Advertised On Television.” S.B.M. Small Business Mentor. <https://www.smallbmentor.com/blog/what-was-the-first-toy-ever-advertised-on-television> December 16, 2021. (last accessed 7/2/2022).

¹⁵² This dismissive reaction to the reactionary right’s framing of the Mr. Potato Head debate is well exemplified by a July 4, 2022 tweet from the account of average Twitter user @LeslieGaming in which they suggest the following summation of the scandal “do you remember when people started freaking out that Mr. Potato Head changed its company name to just Potato Head thinking it was ‘woke’ when it was just because they didn’t sell exclusively Mr.

plastic demon toy, shaped like a potato, may seem to be unusual terrain on which to fight a battle, I take the Reactionary Right at their word that they are engaged in a battle.¹⁵³ Members of the Reactionary Right are making an argument about how society is structured and the most effective response against that advocacy should target the changes to our society that the Right wants to make, instead of suggesting the battle itself isn't happening.¹⁵⁴ Conversely the Reactionary Right finds it expedient, and also politically effective, to delegitimize cultural arguments that they do not like, by insisting that in those instances, that cultural objects are without political value. We can see this ideology play out within the Indian mascot debate in the

Potato Heads.” While I agree with @LeslieGaming’s estimation of the paranoia level of the average online conservative keyboard warrior during this scandal, nonetheless what is completely dropped in their analysis is any engagement with the argument forwarded by conservatives that “Mr. Potato Head” should enforce the traditional gender binary and instead focus is placed on what @LeslieGaming sees as the perceived misunderstanding of the intent of the parent company. Further, @LeslieGaming’s tweet conveniently obscures the fact that Hasbro, both before and after the scandal, manufactured a variety of Potato Heads in a variety of genders. Realistically the change from Mr. Potato Head to Potato Head will not directly affect Hasbro’s manufacturing or distribution of toys, the effort at rebrand instead was undertaken to bring Hasbro’s corporate values in line with changing cultural attitudes, exactly as the reactionary right claimed. Thus, the battlefield of debate is, and should remain, contained in the question: “are these the cultural attitudes we want our media products to perpetuate?”

@LeslieGaming. Tweet. <https://twitter.com/LesliGaming/status/1544124896556580870> (last accessed 9/6/2022)

¹⁵³ While the statement “demon toy” here may seem somewhat hyperbolic, when I envisioned this moment within the Imagine-Space, my mind’s eye was filled with imagery of hundreds upon hundreds of discarded Potato Head’s staring at me from within a grimy landfill. Their faces were only half completed, some had lips, other eyes, some only noses, but one and all of them displayed the stark dark peg holes of their missing facial features to me and sat in silent judgment as the pile of Potato Head’s and other refuse grew higher, and higher, and higher. While Potato Head’s alone cannot bear the brunt of the blame for our climate crisis they do provide a stark metaphor for our destructive consumer culture, as the plastic that form their potato shaped bodies is likely recoverable, but the majority of these toys will not be recovered for generations to come until we have first bled the earth dry of every last drop of oil for our energy and plastic needs.

¹⁵⁴ The casual dismissal of the importance of the “culture war” by the broad Progressive Left is perhaps best exemplified for me by a recently released video from the YouTuber *Some More News* entitled “A Brief Look at Jordan Peterson” (Aug. 3 2022) when after a three hour long breakdown and deconstruction of the position and methodology of the Canadian Pop Psychologist, host Cody Johnson proclaims in his closing that Peterson’s positions have become “less academic and serious and simply morphed into culture war nonsense.” The dichotomy in this statement suggests that the former, the academic, is of value, while the latter, the culture war, is nonsense, and while I do not disagree that the positions forwarded by the likes of Peterson are indeed foolish, it does not mean that Peterson is not forwarding proscriptions for formatting society and the ways in which we live with and relate to one another. I suggest that the ideas themselves must be opposed with the vigor of a full-scale military conflict, even if the ideas themselves may seem “nonsense,” which is an approach that has not, in my estimation, been broadly adopted by the left. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSNWkRw53Jo> (last accessed 8/12/2022)

part of the Washington Commanders, the former Washington Redskins, whose then use of a derogatory racial slur as a team name became easy fodder for calls for change in the 21st century. Within the last decade it has become almost impossible for defenders of the team to insist that the team's name is not offensive, so instead their arguments often rested on the lack of importance they felt football had on American society. That it was in effect "just a game," which is a strange argument to make for an American-centric sport whose championship game reportedly netted a total viewership of 208 million people earlier this year.¹⁵⁵ As I move on to my analysis of Peoria and Spokane, I assert that both of these ideological attitudes that so greatly influence the landscape of mainstream debate are incorrect, that in fact that human beings are always engaged in a great culture war, one that is constant and ever-ongoing. And that, as part of that war, there is no art object that is thus created by those same human beings that is not filled with meaning meant to alter culture and society. In other words, the battlefield of this great culture war, is the question of how we see the world and how we will choose to build it going forward, and thus cultural objects become the tactics we use to fight that battle.

¹⁵⁵ NFL.com. "Super Bowl LVI total viewing audience estimated at over 208 million." Mar 01, 2022. <https://www.nfl.com/news/super-bowl-lvi-total-viewing-audience-estimated-at-over-208-million#:~:text=Nielsen%20found%20that%20nearly%2090,a%20truly%20unique%20watching%20experience>. (last accessed 9/4/2022)

Tactics of Analysis

For a tactical analysis to be of value, the author of that analysis needs to understand the contours, limits, and discursive boundaries of the conflict and war which they are engaged in: where does that war begin? On what fields is it fought? And what does victory look like? My own understanding for the cultural war in which we forever find ourselves trapped descends from the work of American Psychologist James Hillman who argues in *A Terrible Love of War* that we "[human beings] think in warlike terms, feel ourselves at war with ourselves, and unknowingly believe predation, territorial defense, conquest, and the interminable battle of opposing forces are the ground rules of existence."¹⁵⁶ Hillman goes on to point to English linguistic patterns of war-based language in American colloquial speech as businessmen, actors, teachers, nurses and citizens all across American society declare that they must "take a stand," "advance," "retreat," and "seize the high ground" in their interpersonal dealings with others within the workplace. Hillman suggests that far from being aberrant, "war" is in fact the normal condition for human beings, that "war fathers the very structure of existence and our thinking about it: our ideas of the universe, of religion, of ethics."¹⁵⁷ Ultimately based on Hillman, I operate as if all of human social interaction is in fact a conflict or war fought over how we will structure larger society, in essence that we are engaged in a great cultural war fought over the future our descendants will come to live in and I argue that the primary battlefield of that war is the human imaginary or what I think of as the Imagine-Space.

¹⁵⁶ Hillman James. *A Terrible Love of War*. Penguin Books. New York and London. 2004. pp. 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 2.

Perhaps most embraced by Western audiences as Carl Jung's collective unconscious, the concept of a shared cultural landscape that controls and maintains the social values and norms that structure society, has been prevalent in human thought for centuries.¹⁵⁸ After all, it is toward the idea of a shared and malleable imaginary that Augusto Boal points us in *Theatre of the Oppressed* when he argues that "theatre [was] a weapon" used by 6th century BCE Athens to condition the behavior of the masses.¹⁵⁹ I borrow my own use of the Imagine-Space from philosopher/comic book artist Alan Moore, who often speaks of a writer or artist's ability to call upon a vast repository of cultural data when creating artistic storytelling.¹⁶⁰ Ephemeral in nature, the archive that Moore refers to contains the collective understanding of any given culture at any given time, and is generated not by some mystery of the human mind but instead by the collective knowledge of the individual subject's interaction with the cultural artifacts of their surrounding society. In other words, the Imagine Space of my own mind is generated by all the books, movies, television shows, plays, magazine articles, newspaper articles, paintings, etc. All

¹⁵⁸ Jung, C.G. *Psychology of the Unconscious*. Dover Edition. 2003.

¹⁵⁹ Boal's insistence that the drama of 6th century Athens creates social control by presenting a hero (an exemplar) that demonstrates an overabundance of a good quality as a fatal flaw, and thus must be punished and or reviled by society, is predicated on the acknowledge of a shared concept of what it meant to be a citizen of Athens. For Boal's theory to be correct, indeed for this sort of social control to be effective, the citizens of a nation or group needs to share an imaginary sense of citizenship. Punishing Oedipus only works as a deterrent if we view ourselves as similar to Oedipus.

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Theatre Communications Group; Tcg ed. Edition. New York, NY. 1993.

¹⁶⁰ Alan Moore does not, broadly speaking, view himself as a philosopher, and as such, he has not chosen to codify his articulate of the "Idea" or "Imagine-Space," in a treatise, leaving academics, like myself, in the position of piecing together his ideas from various interviews, conference panels, and discussions. My own understanding of Moore's thought process is deeply indebted to work of technology reporter and historian of the 20th century John Higgs. For those interested in gaining some idea of the complexity of this process, a good starting point is an interview Higgs conducted with Moore and posted to YouTube in 2015, beginning at minute 23:00 in which Moore discusses the boundary between what occurs in the Imaginary and what becomes reality.

Higgs, John. "Alan Moore talks to John Higgs about the 20th Century" Nov 1, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpajFOECzAk> (last accessed 9/1/2022)

of the ephemera of the world around me mixed with the sum total of all of the interpersonal human interaction I have had to date.¹⁶¹ This bubbling pool of interacting ideas might be best thought of as a soup containing the entirety of my interaction with culture. According to Alan Moore, anytime a human storyteller sits down to generate a creative work, they draw upon this soup pulling their ideas from the vast repository of knowledge it contains.¹⁶² My own concern regarding the Imagine-Space is the way in which it limits or forecloses debate about how the future world might be structured. By its very nature such a collective landscape of cultural information necessarily sets the range of debate along the lines of Robert Stalnaker's "Common Ground."¹⁶³ No person will be able to successfully create new cultural mechanisms for change if those cultural mechanisms for change are not generally accepted first and foremost within the collective imaginary that is the Imagine-Space. Therefore, one of my principal goals in considering the tactics of both the Spokane *Indians* and the Peoria *Chiefs* will be to consider how those teams moved to increase or limit the range of debate regarding Indigenous representation within the Imagine-Space itself.

¹⁶¹ An important distinction I feel I need to make here is that the Imagine-Space exceeds the boundaries of the films, books, plays, comic books, etc. that I have personally consumed. Within the popular media I have consumed resides a web of popular cultural signifiers for the associated canon of my society. As an example, any citizen that is significantly plugged into American pop culture will understand the cultural signifier of "may the force be with you," but not every American has seen a Star Wars film. In this way our Imagine-Space expands past the limits of our own personal mental library to connect with a broad shared reading of the all of the art and cultural artifacts built by our society.

¹⁶² Moore uses this idea of the Imagine-Space to explain why it is that authors will oftentimes come up with similar ideas in the same time period. Rather than theft of intellectual property what Moore sees in these commonalities of storytelling are two authors happening upon similar "happy accidents" based on a shared access to the Imagine-Space. In other words, because those writers are drawing on a similar pool of cultural information and have similar circumstances in the present, oftentimes they will draw similar ideas out of the Imagine-Space.

¹⁶³ In the common ground Stalnaker prozes that there is a discursive boundary that is generally accepted withing society and designates what is of "acceptable" in normal conversation and what is "taboo."

Stalnaker, Robert. "Common Ground" *Linguistics and Philosophy*. Vol. 25, No. 5/6 (Dec., 2002), pp. 701-721 (21 pages)

Although my focus in this chapter is on the public relations messaging of the Peoria and Spokane baseball teams, basically the linguistic texts distributed by the team through the press and other forward facing marketing channels, I read those texts as generators of acts of public performance. I am most interested in how these texts invite the fanbase to perform a sports identity and interact with the broader society beyond the fanbase. The analysis that follows will be predicated on an understanding of the brand performance of these two teams as what Robin Bernstein calls “scriptive things.”¹⁶⁴ I will argue that the physical objects that surround the ballpark and the teams game procedures are “[items] of material culture that [prompt] meaningful bodily behaviors.”¹⁶⁵ Scriptive things, such as the foam Tomahawks presented by the Atlanta Braves during the Helsey incident, do not so much control our behavior, as they invite a particular type of performance. They in essence provide a script which we, as the performer, then either choose to follow or disregard.¹⁶⁶ Bernstein suggests that these objects “hail” us to behave in a particular fashion and that “[by] answering a hail, by entering the scripted scenario the individual is interpolated into an ideology and thus into subjecthood.”¹⁶⁷ In other words, to accept and perform the script provided by these objects is to accept one’s place within the cultural framework they represent. Far from an unimportant game, to be a Peoria *Chiefs* or a Spokane *Indians* fan, is to perform as a *Chief* or *Indians* fan, and that performance is scripted

¹⁶⁴ Bernstein, Robin. *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*. New York University Press. New York and London. 2011.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 71.

¹⁶⁶ In demonstrating the invitation to performance that Bernstein identifies as “scriptive things” she suggests that the rubber composition of 19th century dolls which depicted black children, were so rugged in comparison to their white porcelain counterparts that the dolls invited children of all races to treat them with violence, thus conditioning children in America of all races to link violence with Blackness even for children. This performance became so common in practice that Bernstein suggests it became a selling point, that “White makers of black ‘Topsy’ or ‘Dinah’ dolls encouraged—and often explicitly instructed—children of all races to beat, throw, soil, burn, and hang black dolls.” pp. 21.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 77.

with a deeply embedded understanding of what it means to be a citizen of a present-day Settler State. Because that understanding of identity is derived as an opposition to an Indigenous subject, my goal will be to identify which of these strategies would prove most beneficial in the long term in allowing for a more equitable future between Settler Subjects and the Indigenous Peoples of North America.

Affectively Speaking

A significant part of the process of my evaluations of the tactics deployed by these two teams requires a deep consideration of the projected affective response of their fanbases.¹⁶⁸ Ultimately, I read the creation of these brands, and the reinforcement or modification of them in the present, as an attempt to generate loyalty, an emotional response, in the fanbase. Because the process of brand management is both instinctively understood by most humans and is simultaneously also rarely discussed in our everyday life, I want to take a moment to make clear how my own understanding of how brand management operates. As I understand the concept, following general marketing principles, brand managers seek to generate customer loyalty between the consumer and the company (or product) by linking a positive affective response in the mind of the customer for the firm or the product to a visual symbol. In other words, the company seeks to create an intentional act of metonymy, the company becomes the brand. The brand manager creates or maintains a symbol (an icon or logo) and seeks to link that symbol in the imaginary of the consumer with either the positive previous experiences they have had with

¹⁶⁸ In my use of the word “projected” within this sentence, I want to make clear that I am acknowledging that there is no objective method to determine the fanbases’ affective response. If we use response surveys, we know the individuals polled will often lie to the pollster. If we use ticket sales, no one single factor moves consumer spending. It is primarily for this reason that surveying firms like Nielsen report on how much time the subject is exposed to advertising, and not on how effective that advertising was in spreading your message. Advertising and marketing (including brand management) are based in the world of perception and are built on the projected thinking and emotional response of a constructed everyman in much the same way that U.S. jurisprudence is based on the reasonable person standard. Used as a mechanism for determining culpability, the Reasonable person Standard “is a legal fiction meant to suggest a person of average caution, care and consideration.” As we often say that in this country we face a trial of our peers, I argue that the “reasonable person” the RPS are in fact the jury themselves, they place themselves in the circumstances of the defendant and ask themselves, “would I behave this way?” I assert that this is also essentially how advertising for brand management works. The advertiser attempts to envision the life of the public, imagines themselves living that life, and then designs advertising that would work on themselves. This is likewise the process and the method that I will deploy as I project and analyze the affective response of the fanbase and the lens through which I will interpret the tactics of Team Management. It should go without saying that my analysis will not be an accurate response of an average Peoria Chiefs or Spokane Indians fan, but instead they will be my projection of how they ought to respond, all things being equal.

Johnson, Jeff. “Reasonable Person Standard: Legal Definition & Examples.” Forbes.com. Sep 19, 2022, 9:19am. <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/legal/personal-injury/reasonable-person-standard/> (last accessed 10/7/22)

the company or to positive positions that company has taken. In turn it is then hoped that the positive sentiment “felt” by the consumer for the symbol/company will blunt the potential impacts of a future negative interaction between the consumer and the company.¹⁶⁹ Branding is far from passive, and my default when conducting my analysis is that it represents one of the most effective strategies a company can deploy to prepare itself for potential customer complaints, primarily because it places both the company and its customer base in a preselected narrative.¹⁷⁰ I treat brand management as being akin to a battleplan, the generals in charge of these brands, just like officers on real battlefields may sometimes make poor decisions based on bad assumptions. Mistakes will be made. Unintended biases will sometimes cause brand managers to misread the fanbase. And ultimately no fan community is a monolith, and messaging that works with one constituency in that community may sometimes alienate others. However, I take for granted the fact, that every choice that a company makes in regard to their brand has been considered at multiple levels, by multiple people, and that there are no accidents.

¹⁶⁹ A good example of this process can be seen in the 1993 Ivan Reitman film *Dave*. Starring Kevin Kline, the comedy film follows the activities of the titular Dave as he is used by an evil deep state conspiracy as a replacement for a President that has suffered a massive stroke and is effectively brain dead. Within the plot of film, director Reitman and writer Gary Ross at one point place their critical gaze on wasteful government spending in a scene where Dave seeks to save the funding for a homeless program by cutting what the audience is meant to view as “unnecessary spending.” Among the programs on the chopping block is a Department of Commerce consumer confidence advertising campaign aimed “at increasing consumer confidence by reminding them of a previous positive domestic automotive purchase.” While Reitman and Ross insist in their commentary that this should be viewed as wasteful spending, Dave nonetheless aptly sees the power and purpose of brand management in his response when he rationalizes that the purpose of the ad campaign is to make the consumer “feel good about a car they have already purchased.” This is the essence of brand management distilled into 20 seconds of film, over time the consumer feels a series of positive feelings toward a symbol, the brand, and when things go wrong in the future, when a negative response occurs, those positive feelings are carried into the interaction as well, and it is hoped, temper the negative response of the consumer. The advertising campaign’s true goal in *Dave* is to increase the likelihood of a new domestic automotive purchase by reminding the consumer of a good experience owning American in their past. In other words, it is a three-part message 1) Hey remember this brand? 2) You like this brand 3) Buy this brand.

Dave. (1993) Warner Bros. Pictures. Ivan Reitman (Director) Gary Ross (Screenwriter).

¹⁷⁰ We might also consider branding to be a form of limited insurance against future messaging disasters. By spending money in the present building loyalty to the brand, the company minimizes its expenditures in the future when they face negative press.

I read intention in their choices, rather than chance. That those decisions deploy tactics as part of a strategic doctrine.

Just as I wish to stress the importance and weight that we should place on brand management, I likewise wish to position sports identity as a significant influence in the formation of identity more broadly. Often sports identity can see wholesome childhood memories entangled with problematic performance rituals in a way that proves difficult for sports fans to separate. A brief example from my own life. I was not very coordinated as a child, being near sighted and with my first pair of glasses not being slated for arrival until my 16th birthday, it would be safe to say that me and the ground were on very intimate terms. That being said, I loved baseball and so did all my friends. Back then the San Diego Padres had a reduced-price youth ticketing program called “Young Friars” which provided tickets to nearly every Sunday game of the season for something like two dollars a game.¹⁷¹ Over the course of a long season my friend group would soon begin to lose interest in the games themselves and usually by the middle of the 4th inning, just long enough to see our idol, and the undisputed greatest hitter of all time, Tony Gwynn’s second at bat, we would find ourselves out in the stadium’s walkways playing baseball ourselves.¹⁷² You see, one of the more unique features of then Jack Murphy

¹⁷¹ Of course, I thought this was a phenomenal deal and my young brain didn’t even consider the costs of our parent’s tickets, or the food from the concession stands, that many of the more well-to-do kids had the money for. I thought we were getting a steal.

¹⁷² It can sometimes be difficult to truly demonstrate for fans of more successful teams, what it is like to be a die-hard fan of a long-term losing franchise, but one way that I have often found works well is to point out that members of the fanbase will often create rituals that in their own mind that “snatch victory from the jaws of defeat,” whether or not those rituals are necessarily true. As an example, I distinctly remember some of my fellow Padres fans beginning a rumor during the 1993 season (a season when the Padres finished an amazing 46 games out of first place) that the 1993 Padres led all of baseball with the largest number of innings played, simply because we had been to multiple Padres games that lasted until the 18th inning that season. Now was this fact true? Maybe. Due to the design of the field at Jack Murphy, and later at the newly constructed Petco Park, the Padres have been in more than their share of extra inning affairs, but, did they have any proof that they were correct? No. But being correct or right was ultimately less important than constructing a narrative in which the 1993 Padres were noble warriors who

Stadium was that its accessibility ramps were not constructed using straight lines, but were instead circular. Built somewhat like a castle tower, the ramps at the Murph were like large multi level concrete towers that one had to walk around to ascend between levels. At their center rested a flat open space perfect for play. As this design feature meant it literally took about a half mile of walking to change floors, they were rarely used during the game.¹⁷³ In general people found their level and stayed there, so me and my friends would take over one of these center areas and play baseball with a tennis or racquetball.¹⁷⁴ As such, when I think about my time as a Padres fan, my memory is always informed by the five years' worth of baseball I played with some of the best friends I ever had. Separating that memory from the team in the present is exceedingly difficult.¹⁷⁵

went down swinging, rather than one of the lowest paid rosters in baseball that got routinely rolled over by the opposition and finished the season in last place.

¹⁷³ The measurement of a half mile between floors here is completely hyperbolic, but what do you expect? I was eleven years old, my legs were short, everywhere felt like a half mile away.

¹⁷⁴ The security guards wouldn't let us bring in a stick of course, but as is usually the case during play time, kids will find a way and sometimes we would use our hands, or if one of us happened to have a little extra money that month, we would buy one of those team branded mini-bats from the gift shop.

¹⁷⁵ As an Indigenous intellectual concerned with the ways we use culture to conduct what I argue is in essence a form of narrative warfare, I am not blind to the legacy of the Padres mascot and moniker. Although "The Friar," in the form and performance of the foamy stuffed mascot, has only been used by the team sporadically over the team's MLB history, its iconography, much like Chief Wahoo of the Indians, has always been present in some way or form either on the teams primary uniforms or in throwback merchandising for the fanbase, and the iconography continues to operate in the present, in the same way that Atlanta's use of the Tomahawk Chop does, in essence rendering invisible the true history of Indigenous Peoples. Presenting visually as a an outgoing, overweight, and nonthreatening Franciscan monk, "the Friendly Friar" was far from a neutral selection by the then Pacific Coast League Padres organization in 1936. While many United States citizens are familiar with the concept of Manifest Destiny as a justification for White Supremacist violence against Indigenous Peoples in the past, less are aware that the narrative of western expansion that sits at the heart of Manifest Destiny was less pronounced here along the Western edge of the United States, instead here in California the American origin stories play out a bit differently than in other locales within North America. Philip Deloria has aptly demonstrated in *Playing Indian* that the origins of American identity in the early colonies revolved around a narrative that Indigenous Peoples were going extinct and the newly forming American subject was their natural inheritor. The California American origin story by contrast, casts the newly arrived American settler of the 1850s as the natural inheritor, not of California's Indigenous Peoples, but of the Spaniards, and their Mexican descendants, from whom Fremont had stolen the state from during the Mexican American War. Key to this effort was an organized tide of state education policies that situated the beginnings of the history of the state of California with the arrival of the first Spanish explores and the creation of the Spanish Mission system. For at least the next 140 years California's children were taught in the state's public

Borrowing a term from the HBO drama *Westworld*, this memory of childhood play has become a cornerstone of my identity construction, it cannot be removed without altering in entirety the identity I create for myself.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, while not every human has a sports identity, indeed many people in societies around the world express a quiet disdain for the world of sports by labeling such endeavors “Sports Ball,” for those that do build and maintain a sports identity, I presume that sports, and their association with their team, also form a cornerstone to those individuals broader identity. Thus, the brand of each team activates emotions in the average fan and those brands can be used to alter how they feel more broadly about society. Far from being unimportant, the struggle over Indigenous themed branding is deeply felt on all sides, and ultimately whichever side prevails in the debate, that side’s messaging should see returns in greater society.

education system a sanitized, uncritical version of California’s history that began with the Spanish Mission System bringing civilization to the continent. What is lost in this telling of history is the genocide of California’s Indigenous Peoples, who would see a reduction of population of almost 50% (from approximately 300,000 to 150,000) between Spanish first contact and the U.S. takeover of the southwest, and the additional 80% loss of life, reducing the California Population from 150,000 souls to only 30,000, which was committed by the newly arrived Americans in just their first ten years of rule from 1850-1860 (Carrico).

Carrico, Richard. *Strangers in a Stolen Land: Indians of San Diego County from Prehistory to the New Deal*. 2008. Sunbelt Publications.

¹⁷⁶ Set in our immediate future, the showrunners of HBO’s *Westworld*, repeatedly reminds the audience through the first four seasons of the show that each of the “Hosts” (potentially sentient Artificial Intelligence based robots) has a personality built around a single strong and defined affective memory which the Host’s designers call a “cornerstone” after the constructive method of securing a structure. Of course, within the show the designers say that they think “trauma” makes for the best cornerstones, so I’m not sure what it means that I picked a happy memory instead. But leaving that aside, my own understanding of identity is that we have not a single cornerstone, but instead many of them, a series of affective memories (good times and bad) that we draw on every time we reform our identity. Unlike other memories, that we need to actively recall, these cornerstone affective memories stick with us, almost as if we feel them in our bones, almost as if we cannot keep from recalling them, and we have done so countless millions, if not billions of times, so much so that recalling them has become habitus and we no longer even remember that we are remembering them. In part this idea that our conscious mind is unaware of our unconscious recall of these cornerstones may explain the overall stability of our sense of self, as well as explain why people sometime undergo personality changes after brain surgery, their unconscious mind may have lost access to some of these cornerstones.

We—Um—No Been Indians.....Never!

Located in Central Illinois, south of Chicago, it is perhaps unsurprising that Peoria chose for its baseball team an Indigenous themed name in the *Chiefs*. Unsurprising in that James W. Loewen found in his research for *Sundown Towns* that the majority of counties surrounding the minor metropolis of 100,000, were Sundown Towns and routinely barred African Americans from county limits after dark on threat of violence and death.¹⁷⁷ Pointing to longstanding political leanings between the Democratic held rural counties and the Republican strongholds of the city centers throughout Illinois, prior to the Civil War, Loewen explains the clear dichotomy on racial attitudes that was demonstrated by Peoria and its surrounding counties for the century and a half prior to the formation of the Peoria *Chiefs* in 1983. A dichotomy in which first slavery, and later African-Americans, were “rarely mentioned” in local histories in the White majority suburbs, and by contrast, statues that glorified Illinois’ involvement in the U.S. Civil War and the abolition of slavery were erected in the multicultural cities.¹⁷⁸ In the 1980s when the *Chiefs* were formed, the team, which would need to be able to draw fans from both the multiracial urban center of Peoria, and the intentionally all White suburbs that surrounded it, would need a symbol that could unite these two disparate groups.¹⁷⁹ As both groups would have grown to adulthood

¹⁷⁷ Best exemplified by the example of a sign that remained standing in Anna-Jonesboro, Illinois, until the 1970s that read “[N word omitted], Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on You in...,” Sundown Towns were, and culturally continue to be, a commonly enacted segregation tactic throughout the United States of America. Loewen identifies Sundown Towns as “any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus ‘all-white’ on purpose.” In other words, using first the de jour power of the state, and later the de facto power of cultural practice, Sundown Towns operate as what we might think of as “green zones” of non-white exclusion that were generated using racial violence.

Loewen, James W. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension in American Racism*. The New Press. New York, London. 2018. pp. 3-5.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 148-149.

¹⁷⁹ While I argue using Loewen’s findings that the majority of suburbs surrounding Peoria can be classified as sundown towns, it is important to know that Peoria was not an outlier. In fact in summarizing his findings Loewen asserts that “[outside] of the traditional South—states historically dominated by slavery, where sundown towns were rare—probably a majority of all incorporated places kept out African Americans”(emphasis in original) as he found

within a Western cultural framework steeped in legends of the Indian Wars and the brave frontiersmen that fought them, the “Indian,” as a symbol, must have seemed capable of serving as an “other,” around which both the diverse community in the urban areas ,and the White citizens of the suburbs that surrounded it, could rally.¹⁸⁰ Nor should it be surprising that, in a sports ecosystem with literally thousands of teams already named the Indians and the Braves, the team would select the name *Chiefs*. Not only did the selection of the name give them a slightly more distinct individuality from many other teams, but it also served to insulate the team from at least some criticisms of appropriation and racism caused by the already softening racial attitudes toward Indigenous Peoples nationally, racial attitudes that the team showed it was already aware of in the 80s due to the selection of their Indigenous iconography.¹⁸¹

in his research “that Illinois, for example had 671 towns and cities with more than 1,000 people in 1970, of which 475—71%—were all-white in census after census.”

Ibid. pp. 4

¹⁸⁰ In envisioning the Peoria fanbase as a nation I have borrowed from the work Benedict Anderson who in *Imagined Communities* posited that what allows the individuals who form a nation to view themselves as linked, despite the fact that it is unlikely they will ever meet one another, is that they form a shared history that is “*parallel and comparable*” In other words, despite physical separation, the citizens of Imagined Communities share a common culture or history, which in turn forms a shared sense of identity. With this understanding, another significant factor in making the Indian an ideal choice as a racial other around which to build a shared sense of identity in these two heavily segregated groups would have been a shared history serving as Indian fighters and shock troops for the colonial expansion of the U.S. For the White residents of the areas surrounding Peoria that trace their origins back to the foundation of the state, their ancestors likely served as the citizens rangers that helped conqueror Illinois and the rest of the Ohio river valley. Similarly, as Loewen shows in *Sundown Towns*, a significant amount of Black immigration to the state of Illinois occurred in the 20 years immediately following the American Civil War, so at the same time these African American families would have been immigrating to the metropolis of Peoria, their sons, brothers, and fathers may well have been fighting to seize territory in the plains and throughout the West as Buffalo Soldiers. Ultimately the “Indian” would have been a legend of a vanquished foe that both groups, at least in general, would have shared in common.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso. London and New York. 2016. (pp. 192)

¹⁸¹ After all, unlike an “Indian,” one is not born a “Chief,” instead it is a title and status that one must ascend to and be assigned. It is not difficult for us as citizens of a Neo-Liberal future to envision how Peoria’s name selection can thus be used to suggest that they are not essentializing Indigenous Peoples due to their name, even as they participate in a series of iconographic performances that draw on a history of essentialization of those very same Indigenous Peoples. There is a potential in the Chiefs name for the old multicultural bait and switch of statements

Unlike many older minor league teams, such as the Syracuse *Chiefs*, that have a complex history of extremely aggressive anti-Indigenous racist imagery (including cartoony racist images of brutish big-nosed and buck-teethed Indian braves) the Peoria *Chiefs* may have begun life with a standard *R*dk+ns* style “Indian Head” logo, but the team soon ditched human representations entirely in their Indian themed iconography, instead moving to mediated images of Indians. Beginning in the early 1990s, the team retired their initial hat logo, a stoic headdress wearing Indian Head, in favor of a more family friendly cartoon themed logo, this time featuring an anthropomorphized smiling baseball wearing a traditional Plains Indian headdress. In many ways the move to a white leather-covered baseball with an innocent smile was not unique and can be viewed as part of a trend in baseball history. The 1980s and 90s would see other minor league baseball teams begin to retire offensive Indian themed imagery in their logos in favor of Indian iconography that was more mediated and abstracted, such as the Syracuse *Chiefs* did in the early 1980s, creating an 8-bit themed logo seemingly inspired by the new home video game craze.¹⁸²

In both cases, the smiling baseball and the 8-bit logo, the teams deployed a strategy which sought to distance themselves from the historical racial histories of their team names, while still proudly dog whistling those same racial attitudes to anyone in the fanbase primed to receive those messages. We might best think of these decisions by team management as strategic withdrawals; the team accepts the problematic nature of their name and iconography but refuses to entirely surrender the history of that name and iconography. In essence the team surrenders the

like “We can’t be racist because we did this antiracist thing,” which is so often deployed by both companies and individuals as a camouflaging tactic for racially motivated messaging.

¹⁸² Early video games, especially home consoles, operated on simple 8-bit images. Lacking significant visual resolution, the characters in these games were often made up of simple blocks and rectangles, that suggested the idea of a person, rather than a firmly defined image of one. The blue and white Indian Head used by Syracuse *Chiefs* until 1997 takes advantage of this 8-bit imagery to build the suggestion of an Indian Head logo from deep and light blue blocks interspaced to create a mosaic of an Indian Head logo.

battle but continues the war. It should perhaps then come as no surprise that by the end of the 1990s, when these initial steps at moderation would prove insufficient for the speed of societal progress, that both franchises would select a new tactic, this time the erasure of the entirety of the team's history of using Indian mascots and monikers.

Now traditionally in the American Indian Studies and Indigenous Studies world, when we hear the word "erasure," we think in terms of the erasure of Indigenous food ways, languages, philosophies, cosmologies, the erasure of Indigenous Peoples from mainstream history, and the erasure of Indigenous bodies from the land, however, while an Indian would be erased in these team re-branding efforts, it was first and foremost the team's own history that owners sought to sanitize. Beginning in 1997 with Syracuse, but continuing with Peoria in 2001, these teams jettisoned their Indian iconography and eventually settled on a strategy which not only provided their fan bases with a new mascot, but also served to recontextualize the meaning of the word "chief," at least insofar as its use by the team, and thus erasing the previous history of the team.¹⁸³ In a nutshell how this process worked is as follows: what these teams did was not alter their mascot and moniker, indeed both teams in fact retained the *Chiefs* name but instead merely shifted their mascot from an Indian Head to an alternative iconography, in the case of the Peoria *Chiefs*, the team moved to a logo featuring a dalmatian named "Homer." After adopting the new mascot, Peoria would then go on to minimize or ignore their previous use of Indian

¹⁸³ While Syracuse would immediately settle on this strategy, the Peoria Chiefs would for 3 seasons briefly use a hat logo influenced by their major league affiliate, the ST. Louis Cardinals, before moving more aggressively to redesigning their logo in 2004 after becoming a part of Chicago Cubs system.

Iconography and fill their stadiums with visual signifiers that suggested they were no longer *Indian Chiefs* but instead *Fire Chiefs*.¹⁸⁴

When modern day fans attend a game at Peoria's Dozer Park, they are treated to the in-between inning antics from a foam suited dalmatian mascot often clothed in a team jersey, tan overalls, and with a proud Peoria branded red fireman's helmet upon his head. The fireman branding of Peoria's mascot "Homer," makes it difficult for us to presume that the selection of a dalmatian as the new mascot for the team is coincidental, instead it reads as implicit intent to transmit a new message, namely that the fans of the team are no longer "*Indian Chiefs*" but are instead now "*Fire Chiefs*." Further the *Chief's* would go on to make great efforts to perpetuate this change in messaging, featuring Homer on their uniforms, in media, in branding throughout the stadium, and by often pairing with the local area fire departments on events and fundraisers.¹⁸⁵ Now nearly two decades later, an entire generation of *Chiefs* fans have been initiated into the Peoria fanbase with little or no knowledge of the team's previous history of Indian mascots and monikers. On one level Peoria represents a successful example of what I advocate in this very project, the owners of the team recognized a change that they wanted to

¹⁸⁴In Syracuse the process would not prove as orderly, as the team would unsuccessfully move through a series of rebranding attempts before the Mets organization finally officially retired the Chiefs moniker in 2019. Throughout the aughts and teens Syracuse would use either a Lockheed Martin B-24 bomber as their logo in an attempt to rebrand themselves as the "*Sky Chiefs*," or at other times a steam locomotive as their logo in a futile attempt to be either the "*Chief Conductors*" or possibly as some allusion to stories of old train engines being nicknamed "*Chiefs*." Obviously neither effort was particularly successful with the Syracuse fanbase.

¹⁸⁵ Homer is featured prominently on Peoria's home and away uniforms, appearing twice, both as the hat logo and usually as a patch on the right upper arm. In addition to exemplify how strongly Peoria has embrace of Homer has been we look no further than the online store page for both of our case studies. a quick review of the Peoria online MiLB (Minor League Baseball Association) website shows that Homer appears on 15 of 48 caps sold by the store, a significant 31%, while in Spokane's online store there are only 2 out of 61 which feature a mascot of any kind.

Peoria Chiefs Online Store. Caps Section. <https://peoriachiefs.milbstore.com/collections/all-caps> (last accessed 10/16/22)

Spokane Indians Online Store. Caps Section. <https://spokaneindians.milbstore.com/collections/all-caps> (last accessed 10/16/22)

make in the Imagine-Space, a way in which they wanted to recontextualize the American Imaginary, and they developed a tactic to drive new thoughts into the minds of the people in the community. In theory the team should be saluted for their success, however one of the elements that I believe made them successful is how limited a change to the Imagine-Space they sought to create. Indeed, with the change to Homer, the team does not seek to challenge the morality of Indian mascots, or the anti-Indigenous racism the team has helped create in the local community, but instead seeks to obscure the collective memory of the team's formally questionable behaviors, thus fomenting disremembering. In other words, what the team is doing with this mascot change is a form of tactical retreat that we might think of as effectively data sinking their previous history of the use of Indian iconography.

With the invention of the internet, the people of the United States were gifted with a new communications tool that has come to serve as a giant interconnected public common, where frankly, most people choose to air their grievances with others more often than they signal boost the people and things that they enjoy. In contrast, data sinking, or Search Engine Optimization, (SEO), is a fancy way of saying that "super smart people" (SEO Specialists) can analyze metrics of words used on websites, versus page views, and how specific keywords affect the selection of webpages for high placement by the algorithms that determine search order on search engines like Yahoo and Google. Using the collected data SEO can be used to determine methods and tactics to boost engagement with websites.¹⁸⁶ While originally intended as a proactive tool meant to boost corporate signals by moving targeted websites up in the search list, Big Tech would soon find an alternative use in data sinking. It is all well and good to use SEO to let people know

¹⁸⁶ Want to see this method in action, just go to any YouTube video from any influencer with more than 30K watches from 2015 and click on the video description, and you will likely find at the bottom a series of words marked with a hashtag, this method of SEO which relied primary of adding popular search terms is probably the most easily recognizable form of SEO.

about how awesome your \$60 an hour dog walking business is, but how does your business survive those 4 online reviews about those times you inadvertently lost your clients' dogs? The answer is data sinking. In a reverse of traditional SEO, a client seeking data sinking pays an SEO firm to create fake webpages (reviews, news stories, press releases) all designed with SEO to receive maximum placement on search engines, and thus driving those bad reviews, whose authors are less versed in the magic bullets of SEO than their professional counterparts, hundreds or sometimes thousands of spots deeper into the dark recess of the search lists and into positions where no one will ever see them again. Homer, and the scriptive performance of civic pride he calls on the fanbase to pursue, doesn't completely remove the previous history of the team, but it does push conversations of that previous history out of the forefront of the fanbase, and contemplating the creation of Homer as an attempt at SEO and data sinking within the Imagine-Space makes us confront a hard truth about the intention of this particular group of owners, namely that their actions seem concerned with protecting the team, not with fostering dialogue between the citizens of Peoria and Indigenous Peoples.

Ultimately, I read these tactics by Peoria through the lens of what Eddie Glaude Jr. terms "racial theatre," a performative response to racial strife that Glaude suggests is tied up in America's "racial habits" and ultimately serves as an evasion tactic:

Racial theatre is somehow the stand in for actually confronting the problem. It lets us move on feeling like we've done something without challenging the order of things. And we tell ourselves after watching the special or listening to the conversation that we are all better people for doing so—that we are, at least, a bit less racist. But our racial habits remain completely intact.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*. B/D/W/Y Broadway Books. New York. 2016. pp. 65-66.

In racial theatre, Glaude is pushing us to acknowledge the ways in which we use public performance surrounding race, to avoid altering the actual underlying habits that generated our previous racist outburst. I likewise suggest that in retiring their Indian themed heraldry, Peoria does not seek to alter the racial attitudes of their community, but instead hopes that their performative gesture, disavowing the previous behavior of the team, will allow them to silently move on from this racist history.¹⁸⁸ Thus, I view Peoria's actions as being less concerned with an effort at reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, but instead seeking to protect the current day team from criticism of their history. Additionally, Peoria weaponizes their performance as *Fire Chiefs* as a metaphor for progress as minority owner, Rocky Vonachen did in a 2020 *Peoria Journal-Star* story saying that:

We re-branded years ago [...] We have nothing in our logo that points to Native Americans anymore. Our chief is a fire chief. Our mascot, Homer, is a firehouse dog. We never really had any protests or concerns from our fans or people in the community about our name and logo. I feel we met any potential concerns when we changed to the fire chief.¹⁸⁹

So convincing was this statement to reporter, Dave Eminian, that Eminian tees up this quote by Vonachen by first informing the reader that the *Peoria Chiefs* “didn't even have to change their name,” implying that the action was taken absent of political pressure and thus serving to erase not only Peoria's decades long use of questionable iconography, but also the many decades of national discourse and advocacy against Indian mascots.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Due to the limitations of time and the necessity of completing this dissertation, the incorporation of this lens is effectively aspirational at current. While I do make steps to view these choices through their ability to generate disremembering, I expect this framework to grow more pronounced in subsequent iterations of this project.

¹⁸⁹ Eminian, Dave. “How the Peoria Chiefs long ago moved away from Native American imagery” *Peoria Journal-Star*. Oct. 11, 2020. <https://www.pjstar.com/story/sports/mlb/2020/10/11/how-peoria-chiefs-long-ago-moved-away-from-native-american-imagery/114380860/> (last accessed 2/8/2022).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

I read this creation of a metaphor of social progress as a tactic that reifies Western Colonization and ultimately does more to reinforce colonial and White Supremacist attitudes, than it does to challenge them. My thinking here is greatly influenced by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's articulation of "settler moves to innocence," in which they assert "[the] metaphorization of decolonization makes possible a set of evasions, or 'settler moves to innocence,' that problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity."¹⁹¹ Tuck and Yang suggest that by casting themselves as the oppressed people of the narrative, rather than the oppressor, settler moves to innocence serve as "strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all."¹⁹² Using this articulation, the average Peoria fan is invited by the team's statement, to perform in a role of heroic retreat. One in which "racist Indian mascots" become a thing that "other teams" have, and even if Peoria had one at some point in time, it doesn't "really" matter because they "voluntarily" gave up that iconography. The Peoria fan becomes the "good guy," while other teams, like the Washington Football team, become the "bad guy," and thus the average Peoria fan remains safe from any challenges to the underlying racial attitudes that made Indian imagery acceptable to them in the first place. All of this, while the team, and by extension the fanbase, get to take a victory lap celebrating how forward thinking and progressive the community is on racial issues.¹⁹³ As such

¹⁹¹ Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization is not a metaphor" *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40.

¹⁹² *Ibid.* pp. 10.

¹⁹³ Although there is not sufficient room to discuss in detail all the thinking that fully forms this portion of my analysis, I do wish to mark the importance of thought-leaders in Canada on my final articulation of this position. Notably the work of Glenn Coulthard in *Red Skin, White Masks Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014) which challenges the act of recognition in the progressive myth of multicultural Canada as a tool for Indigenous Sovereignty. Additionally, Jill Carter's work problematizing the government sponsored sympathy of

anti-mascot activists should be highly suspicious of the long-term effectiveness of encouraging teams to follow this tactic, as it takes as its foundation the belief that Peoria has become “anti-racist,” and therefore need change no further. The team thus suggests that the passage from Indian *Chief* to Fire *Chief* is a complete narrative, a journey which the fan base has completed and should be proud of. That to PERFORM as a Fire *Chief*, is TO BE anti-racist.

Unfortunately while the retirement of Peoria’s smiling Indian baseball does put an end to the ongoing harm that continues to be directly perpetuated by the symbolism presented in Indian mascots, in the denial of the history of Peoria’s use of Indian heraldry and the racial attitudes of the surrounding community that led to its original selection, changes to the Imagine-Space are necessarily limited, thus diminishing the actual reduction of those attitudes in the community or as Glaude would remind us, creating disremembering. The adult fan is not challenged in any preconceived racial bias toward Indigenous Peoples that they may have garnered from their previous interactions with the mascot and the team. The mascot was not something that was “taken from them,” it was instead something “they voluntarily gave up,” and in their own minds, the fan is left to wonder, how can they be questioned for doing the “right thing?” In the mind of the team’s ownership and fanbase, the question becomes, how can these efforts be interpreted as anything less than a moral good? For younger fans by contrast, a potential avenue for compelling them to acknowledge and learn about the modern-day existence of Indigenous Peoples is lost.

Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission in “Discarding Sympathy, Disrupting Catharsis: The Mortification of Indigenous Flesh as Survivance-Intervention” was helpful in demonstrating the subtle touch of institutional power, and how we might theorize and envision resistance to such power.

Carter, Jill. “Discarding Sympathy, Disrupting Catharsis: The Mortification of Indigenous Flesh as Survivance-Intervention” *Theatre Journal*, Volume 67, Number 3. October 2015. pp. 413-432.

Coulthard, Glen. *Red Skin, White Masks Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2014.

The Indian is once again erased from the narrative, leading to less exposure to, and greater ignorance of, Indigenous Peoples, and thus maintaining fertile soil in the American Imagine-Space for anti-Indigenous attitudes that might be present in other aspects of the community. In other words, by erasing the history of Indian mascots, the Peoria *Chiefs* limit their liability, but they simultaneously limit the ability of the community to learn new ways of viewing the world and thus help safeguard, just beneath the surface, the same negative racial attitudes about Indigenous Peoples that they helped stoke in the community for decades. The symbol is gone, but the Settler Dream continues unchallenged.

Rather than being a positive, we might well conclude that the change from the Peoria Indian *Chiefs* to the Peoria Fire *Chiefs*, actually represents the successful close of a hostile messaging campaign, one in which the Settler State feels that they have been victorious, and, in the present day, that the mechanisms of that victory can now be erased and forgotten. The campaign began with a Settler Dream, a narrative of disremembering in which the European/American Settlers of North America believe that they were forever changed by their contact with an ancient and noble progenitor race from whom they inherited the continent. An honored enemy that, now vanquished, has become an object of legend, a symbol, that was deployed as a mascot/moniker, in the Indian Chief, to reinforce the Settler Dream and encourage the Peoria fanbase to engage in playing Indian and thus embed the attitudes expressed in the Settler Dream into their sense of self through sports identity. And now that the Settler Dream has become a capstone of Western identity creation, “Indians” become “Native Americans,” and the belief that present day Americans are the naturally occurring outcome of the Indigenous Peoples of North America has become settler common sense, thus even the image of the Indian Chief can be erased from the narrative without challenging this belief directly. The Settler Subject

continues to “feel” that they are in some way “Native” to America, even if they are not genetically related to Indigenous Peoples.

This erasure of an Indigenous symbol, even a harmful one such as those of the Peoria *Chiefs* should concern anti-mascot activists because it has proven many times throughout history that ignorance leads to anger, anger can become hatred and hatred easily transforms to bigotry, and that bigotry often leads to racialized violence.¹⁹⁴ It is not enough to keep people from saying harmful racial epithets, true change requires that we help these communities learn why these racially focused attitudes are potentially harmful to the community. We must force them to remember the disremembered. To truly alter the Imagine-Space and therefore the future, team re-branding efforts should invite the fanbase to perform an identity that challenges the Settler Dream and increases their likelihood of seeing Indigenous Peoples as living, breathing people in the present, rather than as an object to be forgotten and erased. Therefore, in an ideal world, activists should instead push teams to retire their mascots in a manner that encourages their fanbase to engage with, and hopefully learn from, their previous use of Indigenous iconography, perhaps by following the example of the *Indians* of Spokane, Washington.

¹⁹⁴ I would be derelict in my “nerd” duty here if I did not, for full disclosures sake, point out that I am basically just stealing from the wise teacher Yoda in this assertion, who much more aptly than myself said “Fear [ignorance] leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering.” Yeah I admit it, he’s smarter than me, but hey my ego is okay, he’s got nine centuries worth of experience on me.

Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace. (1999) Twentieth Century Fox. (George Lucas Writer/Director)

The Community Embrace

The baseball team in Spokane, Washington, traces their lineage all the way back to the founding of an old Pacific Northwest League team in 1892, officially adopting the moniker *Indians* in 1903. Spokane has a claim to being one of the oldest teams in minor league baseball, and while each of the Minor League baseball teams I have presented to this point are owned by a corporate enterprise, the Spokane *Indians* stand out on this list for the scope and size of the corporation that owns the team. Purchased by Brett Sports & Entertainment in 1985, the Spokane *Indians*, became the initial holding of a moderately-sized minor league baseball empire which also includes the Tri-City *Dust Devils* (acquired in 2004), and the Rancho Cucamonga *Quakes* (acquired in 2009).¹⁹⁵ Unlike the small regional corporations that own the clubs I have discussed in Syracuse and Peoria, which ultimately privilege the opinions of the local area community when they make decisions surrounding sports identity, Brett Sports & Entertainment's national presence and outreach means instead that the corporation, out of necessity, must always balance the sentiments of the local community against the weight of the national discourse in a complex and nuanced negotiation over sports identity, which may partially explain why the Spokane *Indians* selected an alternative approach to handling their *Indians* moniker when they redesigned their logo in 2006. Further these first steps at rebranding would select an approach that is oppositional to the tactics we have previously discussed in this chapter, which work to obscure the team's history of Indian heraldry. Instead in Spokane, the team has chosen to highlight its century-long use of the *Indians* moniker and attempts to recontextualize the team not as a group

¹⁹⁵ "Spokane Indians" Wikipedia entry. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spokane_Indians (last accessed 4/9/2022)

"WHO OWNS THE TEAMS?" HSW Group. <https://www.hwsgroup.com/who-owns-the-teams/> (last accessed 4/11/2022)

of generic stereotypical “Indians,” but rather as an acknowledgement of the State of Washington’s original inhabitants.

The re-branding process in Spokane began, as these processes often do, with the team’s hat logo. In 2006 the team partnered with the Spokane Tribe of Indians to jointly design a new circular logo featuring a large block “S” design on top of a baseball, surrounded by an outer ring of text in which both the city of Spokane (Sp’q’n’i) and *Indians* (suxwc+sep’cin’m) are represented in the Spokane Tribe’s local dialect of Coast Salish. It is hard to overestimate the importance of hat sales to the perpetuation of a sports team’s branding. While sports teams will create, sell, and distribute a variety of promotional materials from team jerseys to baseball cards throughout the season, baseball hats, due to their versatility and low price of entry, are produced and distributed in higher quantities than other items, such as team pennants. In fact, one of the major factors that would cause Cleveland’s continued use of their Indian mascot, even into the “progressive” 21st century, was Chief Wahoo’s popularity in hat sales, as the mascot’s disturbing smiling visage has often been featured prominently on Cleveland’s logos. But while it is true that hat logos helped make Chief Wahoo the strong persistent brand he remains to this day, that same branding process can be turned toward creating new brands, and therefore new narratives within the Imagine-Space.

While I have no doubt that the Spokane *Indian*’s embrace of this jointly-imagined re-branding is fostered by a corporate desire to maximize profits, rather than a deeply embedded commitment to social justice, the power of this new hat logo has served to move the needle in Spokane toward what we might term progress.¹⁹⁶ After eight years of embracing the new

¹⁹⁶ Indeed, as I have suggested, if the other minor league teams I have highlighted thus far do not deserve our contempt for their use of racial biased iconography, then neither does Spokane deserve our adulation for making efforts to stand against their previous use of it. Rather than assigning moral worth to these economically driven

branding presented in the logo, eight years addressing and advertising the team's traditional and continuing relationship with the Spokane Tribe of Indians, in 2014 the team created a home uniform that featured the Sp'q'n'I (Spoaquin) branding.¹⁹⁷ Despite a small pushback from the Minor League Baseball Association™ (MiLB), these new branded uniform's would become the full time home jersey for the *Indians* in 2015.¹⁹⁸ and today the team has fully embraced the branding and the Coast Salish language is on display, not just in Spokane's Avista Stadium, but also all over the Northwest league as the *Indians* now wear the branded uniforms at each of their 35 away games as well.¹⁹⁹

Although it is true that Spokane's *Indians* moniker may still lead to potentially negative outcomes broadly for Indigenous Peoples in the United States, after all, even in spite of these positive developments noted Cheyenne and Hodulgee Muscogee poet and policy advocate Suzan Shown Harjo has recently commented of Spokane's efforts that there "is no such thing as respectable treatment of any mascot or team name that has a native theme in sports [...] no matter how you package it," however, unlike in the other communities upon which I have fixed

decisions, we should instead focus on what these strategies accomplish in the world. What changes do they make? And which best serve our purpose in rendering our own best version of reality.

¹⁹⁷ Harwood, Rodney. "Spokane Indians Take Historic Step With Logo in Salish Language" *Indian Country Today*. DEC 27, 2013, UPDATED:SEP 13, 2018. <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/spokane-indians-take-historic-step-with-logo-in-salish-language> (last accessed (4/9/22))

"Spokane Indians Change Jerseys to Salish Language" *Indian Country Today*. OCT 12, 2015, Updated SEP 13, 2018. <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/spokane-indians-change-jerseys-to-salish-language> (last accessed 4/9/22)

¹⁹⁸ The MiLB Association's initial response to the new jerseys included a ruling that the new uniforms could only be used as "alternative" home jerseys during the 2014 campaign, and therefore could not be worn at away games. It would not be until one year later that the uniform design became the default uniform for Spokane.

¹⁹⁹ Waldstein, David. "Why One Team Named the Indians Won't Be Changing Its Name" *The New York Times*. Aug. 3, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/sports/baseball/indians-team-names-mascots.html> (last accessed 4/12/22)

my gaze in this chapter, the rebranding campaign in Spokane has led to an increase in community engagement with the local area Indigenous tribe.²⁰⁰ Significant progress has been made in the area of community outreach, as the team has incorporated several museum-like displays covering aspects of Spokane history and culture, such as traditional hunting and fishing practices and efforts at Coast Salish language revitalization.²⁰¹ Additionally a pair of alterations to the *Indians* performance practices, which have frankly been undervalued within the mascot debate, have occurred in the last few years as a result of this continued engagement between the tribe and the team: namely the use of Coast Salish language on signage throughout Avista stadium and the apparent replacement of the team's long-standing lizard mascot, Otto, in favor of a new trout themed mascot.

By far the flashier of these two alterations is the very visual change of the Spokane mascot from lizard to trout. At more than one hundred years of age, the Spokane franchise is no stranger to harmful stereotypical Indian heraldry, although my research has not as of yet revealed evidence that Spokane ever deployed an on-field Indian mascot, a cursory inspection of Spokane scorecards printed and distributed between the 1950s and the 1970s show ample evidence that the team did co-opt the iconography of the Cleveland *Indians* mascot, Chief Wahoo, deploying a drawn mascot featuring the Cleveland logo.²⁰² However, beginning in 1997 the Spokane *Indians* began presenting a perpetual eight-year-old lizard named Otto as their primary on-field

²⁰⁰ (Quoted in) Waldstein, David. "Why One Team Named the Indians Won't Be Changing Its Name" The New York Times. Aug. 3, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/sports/baseball/indians-team-names-mascots.html> (last accessed 4/12/22)

²⁰¹ "Spokane Tribe of Indians" *Spokane Indians Official Team Website*. <https://www.milb.com/spokane/community/spokanetribe> (last accessed 4/8/22)

²⁰² Sources located in author's personal archive: *The Indigenous Peoples Reading Room*.

mascot.²⁰³ As a blue foam lizard, Otto would become the cornerstone of a new race-neutral strategy by Spokane of presenting multiple on-field mascots including; Recycle Man (2009), Doris the Spokanosaurus (2011), and finally culminating with Ribi the Redband Trout in 2017.²⁰⁴ While not intended as a literal replacement for Otto, indeed the team still uses all of these mascots intermittently to this day, there has been a paradigm shift in how the Spokane *Indians* relate to Ribi, namely that unlike these other recently added mascots, Ribi has received a major push in the team's branding campaign.²⁰⁵ Unlike the 25-year-old Otto, who never saw a blue lizard added to the team's branding, after only 5 years of life, the redband trout can be seen jumping forth from the water throughout signage at Avista stadium and the team has designed a new hat logo featuring the trout, that judging from the multiple iterations the team has created appear to be selling well with the fanbase, setting the stage for a potential colloquial name change.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ You are not alone if you find the explicit infantilization of a blue foam lizard mascot in the press by Spokane team management strange, I am right there with you. If there is a critical question that has been made manifest to me throughout the course of this research, it is that, as a society, we have radically under-researched the area of sports mascots. While the Indian mascot debate has focused the academic discussion on the effects of "human" stylized mascots, it also appears to have somewhat foreclosed the discussion of mascots more broadly. Ultimately mascots are intended primarily for the young, not just as simple entertainment, but also as a mechanism for learning about the world around themselves and the rules of the society in which they live. It is my hope that in the years to come cultural theorists and scholars will embrace the study of these strange furry and padded creations in a similar fashion as the academy has approached the world of film and television. It is my belief that these institutions are strengthened, not weakened by being analyzed critically for their explicit and implicit messaging and I believe that the world of sports mascots would likewise benefit.

²⁰⁴ Curley, Johnathan. "Spokane Indians mascot Otto celebrates 8th birthday ... again" *The Spokesman-Review*. Sun., June 24, 2018. <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2018/jun/24/spokane-indians-mascot-otto-celebrates-8th-birthda/> (last accessed 4/11/22)

²⁰⁵ I know what you are thinking, but sadly due to the limited resources in minor league baseball parks, it is unlikely we will ever see regular mascot races in Spokane, as it appears that Spokane is limiting their regular use of mascots primarily to Otto and Ribi.

²⁰⁶ Never fear friends, Otto is making a comeback as the blue lizard is now used on at least some child themed merchandise by the team.

Although most anti-mascot activists choose to focus on activities and messaging campaigns designed to “literally” retire Indian mascots and monikers, the language selections of actual people living in the real world also have significant impacts on the Imagine-Space. It is true that explicit public shaming campaigns from multiple sources, from significant Indigenous activists to the President of United States, Barack Obama, did have a significant impact in moving the needle toward retiring the Washington *R*ds#ins* moniker, another significant factor was the adoption of a colloquial strategy of denial by some sportswriters and broadcasters. Beginning in the twenty-teens an ever-growing number of the sports media intelligentsia of the United States refused to use Washington’s Indian themed moniker on the grounds that it was a dictionary defined racial slur, such that by the time the team “officially” retired the name in 2020, the team had been known colloquially throughout a majority of the sporting press as the *Washington Football Team* for years already. In other words, the process of “retiring” the name began in public discourse prior to the literal retirement of the name, not after. People stopped using the name, and then it was retired. This is not to say that this change in usage represents the most important step required to retire an Indian mascot or moniker, merely that it means we should not be blind to the gains that such changes in language usage can generate. Spokane appears to be “leaning in” to its trout re-branding, and activists in the community should do likewise and encourage members of the fanbase to begin to refer to the team colloquially as the *Trout* rather than the *Indians*. This new brand represents an opportunity to alter the way the fanbase thinks of the team within the Imagine-Space. If a majority of fans begin referring to the

Spokane Indians Online Shop. Kids Apparel.
<https://spokaneindians.milbstore.com/collections/apparel/products/toddler-otto-logo-red-tee-spokane-indians> (last accessed 10/16/22)

team as the *Trout*, then the team's ownership will be incentivized to genuinely consider a more permanent name change.

Perhaps not as exciting as a full-grown adult in a large foam-padded trout suit, the team's incorporation of the Coast Salish language into informational graphics posted throughout the stadium, such as signage for the restrooms and other amenities, reinforces the potential benefits for Indigenous Peoples in the community dialogue model that has been embraced by Spokane. In 2014 when Spokane first added the Spoaqin branding to their uniforms, David Moses, a Spokane tribal member and one of the chief instructors in Spokane's language revitalization efforts commented that "[on] the one hand, Indian mascots in general are problematic and troublesome [...] But it is a positive thing that they reached out to the tribe. It's also a positive thing that it will give the Salish language wider representation in the culture."²⁰⁷ Moses' comments points to the way in which the team's efforts provided an opportunity of greater engagement between the Western community of Spokane and the Spokane Tribe of Indians centered around a legitimization and exploration of the Coast Salish language, a future which the team has worked to make manifest by adding Coast Salish to their signage. Ultimately the Spokane *Indians* appear to have selected a strategy that is more relational with the Indigenous Peoples in their region than the other team's that I have researched. Whether that strategy is motivated by a performative sense of "wokeness," as some might suggest, or instead by a genuine desire to know and gain understanding from Indigenous Peoples, activists should be just as focused on outcomes as they are on intent. In the Imagine-Space surrounding Indian mascots and monikers, Spokane appears to represent the best effort to date by a franchise to treat Indigenous Peoples, not as an object to

²⁰⁷ (quoted in) Kershner, Jim. "Spokane Indians baseball uniforms sport Salish word" *The Spokesman-Review*. Sun., March 16, 2014. <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2014/mar/16/spokane-indians-baseball-players-uniforms-sport/> (last accessed 4/12/2022)

gain revenue from or a vocal minority to placate, but instead as a partner to be worked with. Much of Indigenous history has been driven by the efforts of Indigenous nations to create a real and equal nation to nation relationship between the United States and the Indigenous, and while the extended hand proffered by the Spokane *Indians* may come from a corporation rather than a nation, the offer should not be undervalued for its potential ability to alter the Imagine-Space.

Anti-mascot activists should consider the ways in which this new, and frankly unique, signage invites the fans of Spokane to engage in a new performance of identity. Upon arrival at any sports park the fan is immediately surrounded by statues and signage that invite the fan to subsume the team's histories and traditions. Plaques dedicate the stadium itself, often demonstrating the creation of the team and its historical achievements. Large banners and posters adorn the rafters indicating "retired numbers," so that the hometown fan can know the heroes of the team. Statues litter the concourse highlighting the best of the best, who won magical metal objects, such as "Golden Gloves" and "Silver Slugger" awards.²⁰⁸ Even past mascots can be found lurking in the iconography throughout the stadium. The ballpark becomes an object that invites the hometown fan to perform a very detailed identity centered on the team's long history, and within that history the new Salish language signs and the historical displays deployed by Spokane invite the average *Indians* fan to consider an alteration to that identity, to become an individual who "desires" to learn about modern day Indigenous Peoples. Incumbent in an

²⁰⁸ Often the local team heroes or the most successful players in a team's history will see their numbers "retired," or removed from circulation. When this occurs two things happen: first and foremost, no future player will be allowed to play for the team under that number, the number itself is no longer used in on-field play; and second a media campaign is usually begun to forever embed the history of the selected player into a metonymic frame surrounding the number (the player becomes the number). As an example, in the parlance of my own hometown Padres, a local area fan need only use the number "19" for any other Padres fan to know they are addressing Tony Gwynn, Jr.

Very similar to the Oscars of baseball "Golden Gloves," and "Silver Slugger" awards are awarded by the Major League Baseball Association annually for the highest of technical performance of the sport. The Golden Glove (and now the Platinum Glove as well, apparently) is awarded for defensive fielding, while the Silver Slugger is awarded for excellence in hitting at the plate.

understanding of the function of any style of historical display, are two essential facts: first that the individual, or organization, that has produced the display is of the opinion, that the information therein contained is of value, that people should want to learn about it; and two, that having ascertained the purpose of the display, any fan that then chooses to engage with it, learn from it, also feels it is of value. Because Spokane goes beyond the platitudes of the normal everyday calls for greater understanding and relationality with Indigenous peoples that are parroted by so many present-day institutions, to also include the institutional weight of their history and stadium, they invite the fan to see “learning about Indigenous Peoples,” as a cornerstone of *Indians* identity. While people have free will and a Spokane fan could fight this messaging and conditioning in the same way a Padres fan might disagree with me over the hitting prowess of Tony Gwynn, they are just as likely to be shouted down by the rest of the fanbase as over years of exposure this idea of Indigenous/Western relationality becomes more baked into the *Indians* sense of sports identity.

While calls to completely change Indian monikers envision a future world where the removal of such names can be permanent, I am less convinced that such changes can ever be so fixed in stone. Indian mascots and monikers, along with the genealogy of performance and heraldry that go with them, were created to cause alterations in the American Imagine-Space, changes in the very ways in which the standard North American Western subject viewed Indigenous Peoples. If these monikers are simply retired, those alterations in the imaginary will remain unchallenged. Indigenous Peoples as discrete modern nations have been effectively erased from the Imagine-Space of many citizens of North America, leaving only an inaccurate stereotype. Attempts to discontinue the retransmission of the stereotype do nothing to address the absence of Indigenous Peoples in the American Imaginary and without further steps there will be

nothing to stop any of these teams, from Cleveland to Spokane, to revive any of the past genealogy of performances we have seen in this chapter. Indeed, there is nothing to stop any team in organized sports from doing so, even if they lack any previous history of Indian mascots or heraldry. It is only by contesting this narrative in the Imagine-Space itself that we can have any hope of creating meaningful change, only by inserting counter-narratives of Indigenous continuance and survivance into the modern world can we offset the damage of Indigenous erasure done in the Imagine-Space. Indigenous activists should absolutely discuss, consider, and argue amongst themselves how best to achieve this, but they should also question if the sanitization of Indian mascots and monikers, as these organizations and institutions would have us approach it, provides a meaningful counter-narrative.

As these discussions among anti-mascot activists, both Indigenous and Western, unfold into the future, I would like to suggest that whenever possible those conversations should embrace a Meta-Modernist approach. Although still in the process of coming into being, Meta-Modernist theoretical frameworks might best be thought of as embracing an understanding that all theoretical and disciplinary frameworks were created by humans and are thus flawed, but that there are still ways in which they can provide us utility.²⁰⁹ In other words, all human knowledge and our institutions are used for bad, but they can also be used for good, and a Meta-Modernist seeks to work in an interdisciplinary approach, using bits and pieces of the “good” elements of these human-made systems to create an ethical framework. After conducting my research, I have

²⁰⁹ I borrow this articulation of the emerging disciplinary approach of Meta-Modernism from pop culture historian John Higgs who defined Meta-Modernism on the Ezra Klein Podcast as “all models are flawed, and some are useful.” Higgs elaborates that Meta-Modernism is about “extremes rather than the center-point, it’s not about finding the best of both worlds [...] it’s about going to both extremes to find what’s useful in those things.”

Higgs, John. The Ezra Klein Podcast. Vox Media. 2019. (38:00-40:00) <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/a-mind-bending-reality-warping-conversation-with/id1081584611?i=1000448075759> (last accessed 10/10/22).

come to the conclusion that each of the methods of mascot retirement presented in this chapter provide at least some utility. Each of them also, at some level, either strengthen or maintain the harmful changes that Indian mascots and monikers have rendered on the American Imagine-Space. There is no utopian solution that will create a perfect version of the Imagine-Space. The Imagine-Space is a site that comes from the sum total of a culture, it is by its very nature constantly contested. In addition, the culture of every individual community is unique, and thus the limits of the Imagine-Space in that community will be unique as well, pushing beyond the boundaries of imagination is of course possible, but advocates for change should consider if acceptance of those limits, in some cases, might prove a viable strategy as well. Ultimately the most effective strategy for change will be the one that has the most buy in from the largest number of stakeholders in the community. The war over the Imagine-Space is a history told not in months or years, but in generations. Advocates for change should take the strategies presented herein and run with them, there is no perfect strategy or outcome, take what works and leave the rest. Fight. Adapt. Survive. Flourish. Take the good you can find from these strategies and ditch the rest. There is no perfect solution, take what we have learned, and envision something new. An ideal world is possible and getting there will be messy. Embrace the mess.

AFTER ACTION REPORT, CAMPAIGN LOG, DAY 88,889: HOW THE HOLLYWOOD INDIAN CREATES THE WESTERN SUBJECT IN THE GOLDEN AGE COMIC BOOK²¹⁰

October 21st 2021 was a Thursday. And as the large yellow disk of the sun rose on the eastern horizon to burn the citizens of Riverside, California, just like it had done nearly every day since time immemorial, the air was ripe for the type of viral stampede that has become all too common in the 21st century. There was no outward sign however, to suggest that Riverside should be the location of today's latest viral scandal in the ongoing messaging war over American identity, nonetheless by end of business, the digital commons were on fire, sprouting nonstop talk, chatter, and banter surrounding cellphone footage shot by an Indigenous student of a math teacher at Riverside California's John H. North High School.²¹¹ In the two-minute video the audience sees a middle-aged female instructor engaged in "teaching" a classroom full of confused students the mnemonic device "SohCahToa."²¹² Wearing a menacing looking black

²¹⁰ I am obviously being slightly poetic and hyperbolic in my use of the date 88,889 here, as much as I would like to spend some time determining exactly how many days have elapsed between July 4th, 1776, and October 21st, 2021, I am just going to have to ask your indulgence on this poetic license. Overall, what I hope you draw from stylistic affect I present here, is that I view the actions that occurred on October 21st as the continuation of an ongoing struggle against Western colonization, rather than as an isolated incident.

²¹¹ The location of this event in a high school named for famous abolitionist and founder of Riverside, California, John H. North, is a perfect example the tension that lies at the heart of American culture, between the aspirational ideals of the founders and the harsh costs of the actual lived experience of the subjects of the American Republic. Born in Sand Lake New York in 1815 John H. North was a prominent voice in the Abolitionist movement, often lecturing in the original 13 colonies for the Connecticut Anti-Slavery League and founding the Wesleyan University Anti-Slavery Society prior to the American Civil War. In many ways John H. North speaks to the highest aspirations of the American Republic, a proud and decent Methodist minister who worked diligently against the institution of chattel slavery for many years because he perceived it to be a moral wrong, however, North also represents some of the worst of the United States of America's excesses, in that as the "founder" of Riverside, California, North was founding a Western city on land recently cleared by the American immigrants to California using genocide. Between the beginning of American occupation in 1850, during the twenty years of American immigration that preceded the founding of Riverside in 1870, the California Indian population was decimated in one of the worst document genocides in human history, with only roughly 30,000 survivors of 150,000 Indigenous souls that began the American occupation of Alta California.

²¹² Of all the various subjects in education in which I am ungifted, mathematics is my worst, however as best I understand it "SohCahToa" is a mnemonic device intended to aid the memory in remembering the trigonometric functions sine, cosine, and tangent, the three proofs that can be used to determine the missing side and angle in right-angled triangles.

mask, thanks to the Covid-19 epidemic, and a bright orange head band that holds six black and five red feathers against her forehead, the middle-aged teacher begins a slow dance. Marching forward and back, while swinging imaginary tomahawks up and down, as she stoically chants “SohCahToa.” As the short video continues her performance steadily becomes more braggadocious and unhinged, as she stomps around the room, appearing to frighten, concern, or amuse her captive audience of high schoolers, screeching “SohCahToa” two octaves higher than when she began and climbing up on the furniture. Unsatisfied with merely presenting her class an image of Indigenous Peoples in keeping with the simple tribal adversaries of some 1950s Western films she probably saw in her youth and one that is likely best left in the past, she gives a brief aside to her students in which she asserts that “obviously this is all ridiculous,” and she soon quiets her performance, sitting cross legged on a desk to lead the assemblage in a ritual in which she communicates with the “rock god” and the “water goddess.”²¹³

Obviously most sane and rational people would agree that this patronizing and racially biased performance isn’t an appropriate or effective pedagogical method in a high school calculus class, and we might find our minds inadvertently drawn to the endeavor of cataloging the various reasons for which this individual should be “canceled.”²¹⁴ However, I begin our

²¹³ “SOH CAH TOA Riverside California School Full Video (Archival Re-Upload)” YouTube Video. The Library of Alexandria. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJPOABO6vvY> (last accessed 4/20/2023)

²¹⁴ I feel it important to note that my brief reference to “cancel culture” here should not be interpreted as an advocacy for a world without consequence. While I will not be identifying the subject of this video by name, she has lost her position with the Riverside Unified School District and that outcome, based on her actions and the learning environment she created, seems in keeping with the best interests of both the students of Riverside and the citizens of surrounding community. Now that she has been removed, I will endeavor to practice restorative justice and hope that she finds peace and fulfillment in some new endeavor, perhaps with a greater understanding that her actions have consequences, especially when deployed from a position of authority.

Shin, Tony. “Riverside Teacher Fired Months After Video Shows Her Dancing in Mock Native American Headdress” NBC Los Angeles. Published February 4, 2022 • Updated on February 4, 2022 at 7:48 pm. <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/riverside-teacher-fired-video-sohcahtoa-headdress-native-american/2817486/> (last accessed 4/20/2023)

journey with the imagery of this literally “faceless” teacher so that we might focus on her actions not as an individual, but as an exemplar. Not for the ways in which she has performed “badly,” but rather for how she demonstrates a performance strategy that was engineered into her by a society desperate to create a sense of shared national identity we call “American.”

In many ways the American myth is not dissimilar to the creation myth of any other nation state. At their heart nation states are not natural, they, just like most of the other concepts we take for granted in everyday life, are social constructs. They are the fruits of the way in which we, as humans, have used our linguistic and rhetorical abilities to try to bring order to the universe by giving everything that surrounds us a “meaning.”²¹⁵ One thing that helps separate the American national narrative from the nation states of Europe, is that the founders of this new place called the United States of America, envisioned themselves not as a continuation of the Europeans that came before them, but as a break from them. To soften political tensions between Pro-Republican and Pro-Monarchist forces in the revolutionary era it was necessary to create a new identity around which both parties could work and build a nation together, and thus America’s first culture war began, a cultural war that would revolve around the “Indian.” Philip Deloria in *Playing Indian* points to the embrace of early carnivalesque harvest festivals carried out in the New England and Pennsylvania colonies surrounding the legend of Lenni-Lenape chief Tamanend (the Delaware Tammany of what would become Tammany Societies) when he suggests that “[increasingly] inclined to see themselves in opposition to England rather than to

²¹⁵ When deeply engaging with the origins of social constructs I often find myself wondering what the other souls that share this small spinning globe with us think of these definitions that we have thought up? A small part of me thinks that they must be secretly laughing at those silly human peoples that arrogantly think they can control the world around them, but then sadly I remember that even though our arrogance is silly, as a dominant species our social constructs affect every living thing around us. In the 17th century beaver hats became popular in Europe which led to further contact between the French and Indigenous Peoples in North America and what we human peoples now know as the nation state of Canada, but that’s not all that happened, for beaver people, many died, all because someone, somewhere in history thought up the social construct of the hat.

Indians, they inverted interior and exterior to imagine a new boundary line of national identity.” Thus, Deloria argues that the prototypical “Indian” became a subject with which early American settlers came to identify and one which they used to differentiate themselves from their former European selves.²¹⁶ The “Indian” became a contested symbol in a centuries long culture war and is still contested to this day.

In embracing the term “culture war” I do not seek to focus on the current articulation of that term as presented by the American political Right as they insist that “American values” are under assault. While my own meaning is similar to modern day uses of this term and likewise acknowledges that culture has a significant impact on how we structure both society and our concept of reality, my own meaning however is literal, rather than the figurative and hyperbolic meaning proposed by the political Right. This analysis seeks to demonstrate what I interpret to be a communications campaign, in other words a psychological operation (PSYOPS), that serves as part of a broad and ongoing war that was initially intended to create political power and authority for one group of people over another, and which remains in effect today in order to reinforce that political power for the descendants of the instigators of that war. My analysis of the cultural artifacts contained in this chapter is greatly influenced by the work of American psychologist James Hillman, who proposes in his many books, that our understanding of reality, and our psychological wellbeing within it, are directly linked to our sense of narrative. Further Hillman argues that for those who live within Western societies, particularly the Peoples of the United States, it is a life lived under a narrative and linguistic framework that suggest an ever-ongoing war, with long periods of what we might think of as cold war. Hillman correctly points that within Western parlance people of all ilk’s “fall back” on the language of warfare as they try

²¹⁶ Deloria, Philip. *Playing Indian*. Yale University Press. New Haven, London. 1998. (pp. 21)

to “take the high ground” in conversation, “retreat” from ideas they find uncomfortable, and roll their collective eyes at their bosses who routinely tell their assistants to “muster the troops.” In other words, America embraces the language of war in everyday speech, while conversely the Oxford English Dictionary literally defines “peace” as “a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence.” In other words, I take it as a given that the world we live in has been, and continues to be, in a state of constant warfare over how we will structure the future. Whether or not the average citizen accepts the existence of that conflict or their participation in it, I argue that culture, which I interpret as the stories we tell each other (regardless of their format or medium) are the most important battlefields of that war, and perhaps the principle battlefield in times of cold war, such as the one we find ourselves living within as of the publishing of this chapter.²¹⁷

This chapter lives in the detritus and remnants of that war, it lives in both its history and its execution. It seeks to understand the methods and tactics of the people fighting that war. How they constructed a narrative. How they used that narrative to give meaning to American identity. And how they used that identity to control power in an apartheid state. Finally, this chapter operates not from a state of intellectual detachment, but instead as a living document of advocacy and takes as its inspiration the military policy of after-action reports, which seek to catalog and define military tactics and stratagems, so that others might learn from them in the future. In other words, in returning to our faceless masked teacher at John H. North High School, I seek to learn what methods were used to build in her the attitudes that led to the ease with which she engaged

²¹⁷ Hillman, James. *Kinds of Power: A Guide to its Intelligent Uses*. Crown Publishing. New York, NY. 1997.

“Peace” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.
https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/peace#:~:text=%2Fpis%2F,peace%20between%20the%20warring%20factions. (Last accessed 8/5/2023)

in a performance of Indigeneity, how those ideas were introduced and replicated in national discourse and which of these tactics can each of us, as potential change agents, use in our efforts to alter the “character of the nation.”²¹⁸ Owing to the fact that a comprehensive study of the tropes and stereotypes that built American identity throughout all of the popular cultural history of the U.S. is beyond the scope of any single study, a limiting of our field of focus must naturally occur. Therefore, for the purposes of this chapter I shall focus my gaze upon a single element, or trope, of popular culture, namely the image and iconography of the Hollywood Indian, and its use in a single medium, the Golden Age American comic book.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ My use of the business term “change agents” in this sentence is intentional and seeks to foreground an acceptance that if the United States Government is organized along the lines of a publicly traded corporation, as most economists argue it is, then a consideration of the tactics of the business world might prove valuable in the struggle to bring political change.

²¹⁹ As we begin our journey, a brief note on terminology. Thomas King noted in *The Inconvenient Indian* that “Indians have become First Nations in Canada and Native Americans in the United States, but the fact of the matter is that there has never been a good collective noun because there was never a collective to begin with.” The Indigenous Peoples of North America come from more than 570 Federally recognized tribes and several hundred tribes which bear only state recognition, additionally many tribal nations did not survive the 400 years of struggle against Western colonial power. While some of these tribes may bear similarities in customs and language, just like the Peoples of Europe, Indigenous Peoples form a multitude of distinct and individual nations that make the quest for a common noun to define them contentious and difficult. Terms like the American Indian, Native Americans, the Indigenous Peoples of North America, Amerindian, and NDN all have both their proponents and detractors, and each has a long history that informs these terms with elements of pride and negative stereotyping. Without intending insult to any stakeholder in this particular debate, I will be using these terms interchangeably throughout this chapter, however I do think there is legitimate utility in explaining my own preference in regard to this terminology. Whenever possible my personal preference is to use the term Indigenous Peoples, with a capital “I,” a capital “P” and closing with an “s” to mark the point that Indigenous Peoples come from a variety of national identities rather than forming a cohesive national whole. I also feel it necessary to note here that this use of Indigenous Peoples on my part may become more confusing and problematic in the years that follow the release of this dissertation as the decision of who is Indigenous to a region can just like Obi-Wan Kenobi said, “vary greatly dependent on our point of view.” In other words, if we are considering North America since time immemorial, we will receive a very different image of who among us represents Indigenous Peoples than if we are considering only the last 50 years of U.S. history. While this word of caution may seem paranoid at this time, I should point out that another term for Indigenous Peoples that was in common use amongst scholars and citizens alike only ten years prior to the release of this dissertation has in general fallen out of use and that is the term “Native.” Although the term Native has traditionally been one of the more popular terms deployed by tribal citizens to define their shared representation in the American consciousness, the term “Native” in the 21st century has shifted in usage, as it has been broadly claimed and deployed by members of a right-wing isolationist and nativist movement in political discourse, such that the term has lost all utility for its previous meaning. The same fate may await the term Indigenous in the years to come as these reactionary forces become more vocal and violent as their messaging continues to fall on the unwilling ears of the American mainstream.

This chapter will argue that the image of the Hollywood Indian came to dominate the American understanding of the Indigenous Peoples of North America not just because the symbol was popular on page and screen in our entertainment stories, but instead because of a whole of society messaging campaign that established the American Indian as both the ever present “other” from whom the average U.S. citizen could differentiate themselves, and as the noble progenitor from whom their ancestors “naturally” and “legally” inherited the North American continent.²²⁰ The messaging campaign described herein follows a four part process of identity creation within popular American culture that: (1) seeks to engender in the youth of the United States a sense of identification with historical images of the Indigenous Peoples of North America; (2) provides those youths historical context for Indigenous Peoples that denote traits and values that are perceived to be morally “good” for incorporation into their own life and worldview; (3) creates a sense of in-group membership through the use of symbolism and codes with the intention of building solidarity and loyalty within that group; (4) finally culminates in providing a social script for the Western American subject to engage in a stylized Indigenous performance, which Lakota scholar Philip Deloria has dubbed “Playing Indian.”²²¹ The analysis

King, Thomas. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, MN. 2013. (pg. xiii)

Star Wars: The Return of the Jedi. (1983) Twentieth Century Fox. (Richard Marquand, Dir.)

²²⁰ In invoking the terminology of “whole of society” governmental approaches in this statement, I seek to point your gaze towards the ways that governmental agencies often exceed their specific portfolio/remit as part of enacting major changes in national policy. As an example, the official position of the Internal Revenue Service is to support Indigenous Sovereignty, despite the fact that tribal governments are specifically excluded from the IRS’s portfolio, however in a “whole of society” messaging campaign by the U.S. government, the messaging of every federal agency is geared toward enacting the social change desired by the Executive branch regardless of whether that agency has standing in the debate. Therefore, I am suggesting that rather than viewing the messaging campaign surrounding the Hollywood Indian as an organic movement that developed as a result of consumer demand, we should instead read it as a unified effort to enact a specific set of social circumstances that the producers of comic books became implicated in by accepting the identity of American and Settler. It should not matter for our circumstances that most of the writers/artists that created these comic stories no longer remember the origins of their messaging campaign, as regardless, they continue it as part of their performance of identity.

²²¹ Deloria, Philip. *Playing Indian*. Yale University Press. New Haven, London. 1998.

of this messaging campaign, what we might think of as a tactic of colonization, will focus on a deep reading of Golden Age comic books which principally rests on an analysis of the DC/National comic series *Tomahawk*, which saw publication in the 1950s.²²²

²²² Much like the rest of history, the story of comic books is broken down into “eras” for ease of conversation. This chapter focuses on the “Golden Age” which, while there are multiple interpretations, in general is considered to have spanned from the creation of the modern comic book in roughly 1938 through the reintroduction of the Flash to DC Comics in *DC Showcase #4* in 1959. The comic book would then travel onward to the silver age (1960-the early 1970s), the bronze age (the mid-1970s through the late 1980s), the early modern age (the late 1980s through the 2000s) and the modern age (everything else to the present). It is necessary to point out here that all of the previously suggested dates are subjective and open to interpretation, and perhaps most important are still sharply contested among the fan community in comic stores and coffee shops all throughout the Western world. As an example, some comic book aficionados and comic studies scholars are currently engaged in an effort to split the comic book bronze age in two, with a traditional bronze age that spans from 1971/1972 through 1981 and a newly created “copper age” that they see as having existed between 1981 and 1991/1992.

Setting the Stage

The Golden Age American comic book has been selected as the exemplar for the methods I see demonstrated by the war messaging of American identity, because unlike other artistic endeavors of the time period, the comic book in this era was not generally perceived by the international and national public as “High Art.”²²³ Thus I take for granted the fact that the writers, artists, editors, and producers of American comic books, between 1938 and 1959, in general suffered from less of the self-awareness that falls on the artist when they are overly concerned with the reception of the “art” that they are producing. Because of this fact, we should interpret the comic books they created as being mostly free of the artifice of personal concern, and therefore that the comics they produced were predominantly influenced by the market factors that surrounded their creation. In other words, I assert that the comic books of this time period should not be primarily viewed as representing the writer/artists personal ideological beliefs, but instead as the perceived beliefs of the nation, or if we were feeling poetic, as the quickest path to wealth and riches, in that the stories that were being told were what the writer/artist thought the paying public wanted to hear. In this, I perceive the comic book to be a significant and unfiltered distillation of the primary American messaging campaign that both created and reinforced American identity in the middle of the 20th century, but also informed the majority of the American people about Indigenous Peoples, both how tribal citizens lived their lives and what their relative place in American society ought to be.

²²³ One need look no further for evidence of this than to the titan of Marvel comics himself, Stan Lee, who has repeatedly pointed out during his iconic career, in which he happily embraced his “accidental” celebrity, that when he began writing for Marvel comics in the 1940s he used the pen-name Stan Lee in order to maintain the sanctity of his given name, Stanley Lieber, for when he wrote the “great American novel.”

Lee, Stan and George Mair. *Excelsior: The Amazing Life of Stan Lee*. Atria Books. New York, NY. 2002.

This chapter also challenges traditional literary methodologies that privilege the primary text of the source, i.e. the comic book story itself, and instead suggests that to understand, analyze, and interpret a whole of society messaging campaign, we must move beyond the comic book story alone, to also consider all of the associated peritexts that came as a part of the package of the Golden Age comic book. Unlike the sleek, expensively printed comic books of the modern age that leave little room for augmented material and focus primarily on the comic book story, Golden Age comic books operated more like the magazines of the time period. Although page counts would reduce throughout the Golden Age as the cost of printing went up due to inflation, in general a Golden Age comic book averaged roughly 52 to 64 pages, in an era when the average comic book story clocked in at 12 pages. This meant that Golden Age comic books were often a collection of 3 to 4 comic book stories, usually ranging in length from 6 to 16 pages.²²⁴ Each book also contained a variety of peritexts, what we might think of as filler material, small one page comic strips, brief history comics, “factoid” sheets, exercise sheets/crossword puzzles, fan club material, and complete prose short stories.²²⁵ My primary goal in this chapter is not to analyze these peritexts or the comic stories that surround them in isolation, but instead to consider the message and potential takeaways that a young reader was likely to receive from the comic issue/series in total. I will also consider that regardless of year,

²²⁴ For anyone seeking to gain a better understanding of the overall composition of an average Golden Age comic book, I have included a copy of my notes concerning the issue I am focusing on in this chapter, *Tomahawk #4*, for your convenience. It can be located by searching for Appendix A.

²²⁵ FUN FACT!!! While a prose based short story may seem like it should be out of place in a comic book, the history of prose writing in comic books goes back to the earliest comics printed in New York, since the beginning of the industry, the comic book companies have taken advantage the U.S. Postal Service’s periodical shipping rate that required that every issue contain a minimum amount of prose writing. The influence of this shipping decision still effects the modern comic book, as in the years since the Golden Age short stories morphed, much like the Power Rangers, into the letters column where comic fans could interact with the editors and sometimes the writers of their comics. If you now have an image of a Power Ranger covered in newsprint stuck in your head, I can only say, “You’re welcome!”

whether we are thinking of my grandfather reading in the Golden Age, or myself reading in all the years that came after, comic fans who only read a single comic book are obviously, a rarity and that the average reader of the adventures of Tomahawk, while they might not have a complete run of the series, almost certainly owned more than one issue. As such my analysis and the conclusion I draw is predicated on an assumption that the average readers engagement with the character of Tomahawk most likely went beyond any single issue or story.

Revolutionary Beginnings

There are few experiences quite like opening the seals on one of the mylar plastic sleeves that most anal-retentive individuals (hmmmm...I mean comic book fans/archivists) keep their Golden Age comic books in. In the geological or even historical sense, the oldest American comic book is relatively young, at less than 100 years of age.²²⁶ However, the Golden Age comic book was never really intended or treated as a cultural object that was meant to last. When removing a 73-year-old comic book from its sleeve, one is immediately struck by the same weight of history that is present with so many older objects. Unlike a statue or even a book from antiquity, unless one is exceptionally wealthy, the average Golden Age comic book shows every day, of every year, of its long life. Think more of Estelle Getty than Betty White.²²⁷ And this particular issue of *Tomahawk* #4 that sits before me, has perhaps lived a little harder than others of its kind. As I pull back the blue painter's tape on the plastic flap that is folded over the top of the mylar, I am not quite ready for what awaits me, as it quickly becomes apparent that the cover of the issue of *Tomahawk* #4 that I purchased through the wonder of the internet, has a detached cover. As I gently pull the book from the sleeve, things get worse as the detached cover I pull

²²⁶ The most expensive of archival sleeves produced for comic books, Mylar sleeves are (if you will forgive the pun) the gold standard for gold age comic books because traditional standard comic book bags are made of polypropylene, a less expensive form of plastic that has a shorter half-life and slowly shrinks and hardens as it decays causing them to cling to the comic book. While this process may prove insignificant for modern comic books as both their covers and interiors are printed on slick high quality art paper, the comic books printed prior to the late 1990s were routinely printed on newsprint pulp paper which can make removing a comic book from a long degraded polypropylene comic sleeve an arduous process that runs the risk of further damaging the comic book. Conversely high quality mylar sleeves have a considerably longer half-life and remain relatively unchanged over the years. As an example, in my own personal collection, I have several mylar sleeves of early silver age comic books I purchased when I was 11 in 1988, although the plastic has begun to yellow, showing the beginning of the decay process, the sleeves themselves have the same shape and consistency as the day I purchased those comic books nearly 40 years ago.

²²⁷ For the uninitiated both Estelle Getty and Betty White were in the quartet of exceptional actresses that made up the pinnacle of late 1980s television situational-comedies, *Golden Girls*, which has an outsize influence in American nerd culture due in no small part to the long term career of Betty White, who along with fellow television star, *Star Trek*'s George Takei, formed what was in the estimation of many within the nerd community the moral conscious of nerd culture in the 20-teens.

gingerly from the book's main body contains only the front cover—the back cover, with its advertisements for Daisy Air rifles and a Radio-Television Technician correspondence course has now been forever lost to history. As I examine the slip of a cover, now better thought of as an art object than a true comic book, I find its colors surprisingly vibrant given its long seven-decade life. On the cover the cerulean skies of the revolutionary era “pop” as the great Western frontiersman Tom Hawk, also known as Tomahawk, flies through the wild blue beyond in a wing contraption that looks exceedingly similar to Leonardo da Vinci's early designs at flight.²²⁸ On the ground beneath him, surrounding our intrepid DC hero, are four Indian braves, each adorned in little more than buckskin pants and pointing their drawn bows at “THE BUCKSKIN HERO [who] HALTS AN INDIAN WAR WHEN HE BECOMES ‘THE FLYING FRONTIERSMAN.’”²²⁹

Setting the cover carefully aside, I begin to flip through the intact pages of the book, trying with all my vaulted intellect to place myself into the mindset of the small children who likely read this very issue of *Tomahawk* in the 1950s. In doing so I have opened myself to a unique experience of being transported into a 1950s fantasy version of the American Revolution, complete with the politics of my grandparent's era and all of the identity building messaging that surrounds the image of the rugged individualistic American frontiersmen. Created in 1947, most likely by writer Joe Samachson and artist Edmond Good, the titular hero Tomahawk, most

²²⁸ As I closely examined the detached cover for this book it was fairly clear that the cover became detached and subsequently ripped due to spine rolling. Spine rolling occurs due to excess pressure being placed on a comic book, most commonly due to vertical stacking of comic books. When stacking comic books, unless the comic books are alternated (placed cover to cover), all of the staples will end up on one side of the stack meaning that the pressure being placed on the books at the lowest point will not be equal on both sides, causing damage to both the cover and the spine of many of the books. Please avoid storing your comic books in large flat stacks and instead invest in some archival boxes.

²²⁹ *Tomahawk* #4. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. March-April 1951.

closely resembles early American frontiersmen myths such as Davy Crockett, who Tom Hawk would ironically meet in issues #35 and #36, and Daniel Boone, who would also make an early appearance in the *Tomahawk* story, “Daniel Boone—King of the Hunters!”²³⁰ Clad in a buckskin outfit, complete with fringe, and a fur racoon hat, with accompanying tail, Tomahawk spent much of his 140 issue run working as a military scout for George Washington. When not directly engaged with the British, he often found himself ensnared in the affairs of local Indigenous Peoples whom the book repeatedly suggests through those 100 plus issues, were his friends and educators, the Peoples from whom he had learned his skills as a woodsman, tracker, and fighter.

²³⁰ “Daniel Boone—King of the Hunters!” *Star Spangled Comics* #88. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. January 1949.

Identification

Tomahawk serves as an example of a trend in American culture since the revolution, identified by Philip Deloria, of American subjects to perform what he refers to as “Playing Indian,” in essence to engage in a performance of Indigeneity meant to provide legitimacy to Western subjects claims of ownership over the lands of the American Republic. Deloria asserts that for early American citizens severed from their Western European identity, the subject of the American Indian became a key component in the creation of a new national identity that:

Increasingly inclined to see themselves in opposition to England rather than to Indians, they [the nascent American subject] inverted interior and exterior to imagine a new boundary line of national identity. They began to transform exterior, noble savage Others into symbolic figures that could be rhetorically interior to the society they sought to inaugurate. In short, the ground for oppositions shifted and, with them, national self-definition. As England became a them for colonists, Indians became an us.²³¹

In other words, the newly formed American subject came to think of themselves as unique and different from their European counterparts due to their contact with Indigenous Peoples, however the “Indian” remained a clear and present danger to U.S. interests in national expansion throughout the Western hemisphere. While colonists were encouraged to identify with the Natives around them, the tribes to the west of them still remained, at least from their point of view, a dangerous enemy Other that blocked their territorial aspirations, and thus the identification forwarded by the national narrative was aesthetic rather than philosophical.

In the years that followed the American Revolution, this movement toward a sense of kinship or “likeness” to the Indigenous Peoples of North America would deepen and expand in the U.S. national narrative and the Indigenous subject would take on a symbolic quality. In other words, as the threat of Indigenous tribes to the ongoing settler agenda was reduced, so too did the

²³¹ Deloria, Philip. *Playing Indian*. (pp. 21-22)

image of the “the Indian” as a living person diminish in the minds of the newly created American frontiersman. Instead, the Indian would come to be seen as a symbol or icon, as a pre-historical idealized male, something that we might think of as an American David. An image of a historically distant male perfection that the newly American male could look back on as a replacement for the perfection of the Western male, as seen in classical Greek and Roman statues. However, as Chad A. Barbour argues, the image of the noble Indian forebearers (the “First Americans,” as it were) would come to serve “as completely symbolic figures with no flesh-and-blood exigencies that might adversely affect white imaginings of Indians.”²³² In other words, the Indian became seen as a merely symbolic object around which Americans constructed a sense of masculinity.²³³ While it would be true to say that Indians were meant to be “seen and not heard,” even in being seen, the object of that gaze was not a true Indigenous subject, but instead a figment of the Western invader’s imagination. Thus, the real living example that Indigenous Peoples in the present provide for U.S. citizens is obscured by a fictitious Indian that springs forth from the American imaginary and serves only as a distorted mirror image which American citizens, particularly men, use to define themselves. And the Indian becomes a reflection of both a model of ancient perfection, to be emulated in some respects, and a

²³² Barbour, Chad A. *From Daniel Boone to Captain America: Playing Indian in American Popular Culture*. University of Mississippi Press. Jackson, MS. 2016. (pp. 28)

²³³ Conversely Rayna Green has articulated in “The Pocahontas Perplex” that Indigenous women came to serve a similar symbolic function for the United States as a nation, in the 18th century iconographic move from the image of the savage and powerful “Indian Queen” to the Europeanized and whitewashed “Indian Princess.” In Green’s analysis she argues that “the [Indian] Princess [entered] the scene when the colonies begin to move toward independence, and she becomes more ‘American’ and less Latin than her mother,” and thus became a precursor for the later symbolic representation we know of as Miss Liberty/Lady Liberty which was featured on Liberty dimes and Morgan silver dollars throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. According to Green, just like Indigenous men, the Indigenous women would come to be defined exclusively due to their relationality to White male Settlers, being defined in literature and culture as an “Indian Princess” when they perform as a helper to the Settler subject and as the promiscuous “squaw” when they do not.

Green, Rayna. “The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture.” *The Massachusetts Review*, Autumn, 1975, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Autumn, 1975), pp.698-714

dangerous symbol of the uncivilized, to be denied in the oppositional image of the American frontiersman.

As an American frontiersman Tom Hawk (Tomahawk) shares a deep and mutual connection with Indigenous Peoples, one in which he learns Indigenous ways and in so doing increases his utility as a Western settler, via his dutiful participation in George Washington's persecution of the American Revolution. In this respect Tomahawk falls into a category of Indigenous stereotype that is perhaps best summarized by Michael Sheyahshe as "The Mohican Syndrome." Drawing on the long history of Western frontiersmen characters such as Natty Bumppo in *Leatherstocking Tales* like *The Last of the Mohicans*, Sheyahshe suggests that the Mohican syndrome "in which a white man becomes Indian, manifests itself through non-Native participation in Indigenous ways of life [...] allows the non-Native character to absorb all things seemingly positive about Native culture by some sort of osmotic metamorphosis."²³⁴ In essence, as we see demonstrated in *Tomahawk* #4, an issue that sees Tomahawk featured in three separate stories, Tomahawk is never shown in scenes depicting the process by which he learned Indigenous skills, instead these stories simply designate him as "Indians brother" as Chief Strong Bow does in "Tomahawk: Wanted Dead or Alive," Tomahawk is explicitly identified as being connected to the Indian tribesmen in these stories and is seen as having Indigenous skills as a result.²³⁵ Tomahawk then goes on to be a symbol of identification for the youthful reader because of his placement as hero, as Sheyahshe goes on to note that characters that suffer from the Mohican Syndrome "[become] Indian in everyway that counts [...] these individuals are not only

²³⁴ Sheyahshe, Michael. *Native Americans in Comic Books: A Critical Study*. Mcfarland & Company, Inc. Jefferson, North Carolina. 2008. (pp. 13)

²³⁵ "Tomahawk: Dan Hunter, the Young Brave" *Tomahawk* #4. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. March-April 1951. (pp. 3)

transformed into the best representation of that Indigenous culture, but they also become heroes.”

²³⁶ Thus Tomahawk “becomes” a hero through his contact with Indigenous Peoples, a contact that is never fully explained to the reader, and is merely aesthetic and presumed, and the young reader is then encouraged to identify with Tomahawk as the hero of the comic book. The end result is that the reader is intended to identify with Indigenous Peoples through Tomahawk’s osmotic and passive engagement with “Indians.” Tomahawk becomes a Western frontiersman that we might think of as a “civilized Indian,” an image of all the “good” qualities that generations of American citizens have drawn from the Hollywood Indian Myth, a symbol that the presumed young male reader in the 1950s was meant to emulate in their performance of American Western identity. This effort at identification and emulation can more explicitly be seen in another of our tales from *Tomahawk* #4, that features Tom Hawk’s young sidekick, Dan, entitled “Dan Hunter, the Young Brave.”

²³⁶ *Ibid.* (pp. 14)

Further Identification: Literally Becoming the Hero

As was the trend for most other DC/National sidekicks of the 1950s, Dan Hunter is better thought of, not so much as a discrete individual character, but rather as a small undersized copy of Tomahawk himself. While Aqualad, Wonder Girl, and Kid Flash all show at least a little bit of visual distinction from their superhero mentors, in the slight color alterations they were allowed to their costume, Dan instead wears an exact replica of Tomahawk's fringed buckskin outfit, complete with a matching racoon hat.²³⁷ This literal mirroring of Tomahawk by Dan Hunter should not be altogether surprising, as comic book historians and scholars from Maurice Horn to Lauren R. O'Connor take as a given that the purpose of early comic book child sidekicks was to literally provide a character for the youthful reader with whom they could identify.²³⁸ A way of placing the reader within the adventures of Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman, the sidekick is a mechanism for the reader viewing themselves as being in the adventure and a part of the story. In essence the insertion of a surrogate for the reader, a teen sidekick, allows the reader to envision themselves within the narrative and thus more easily identify with the hero. However, within the world that is presented to the comic book reader in issue number 4, Dan Hunter, and thus the reader, is literally transformed into the mighty frontiersman Tomahawk, himself, when Hunter enacts the mighty DC hero's unspoken backstory in a tale called "Dan Hunter, The Young Brave!"²³⁹

²³⁷ Of all of the Teen Titans I mention here, only "Kid Flash," wore an exact replica of his mentor's costume at one point in his career, which he wore from his debut in *Flash* #110 through *Flash* #135 which saw the introduction of Wally West's far superior yellow and red costume.

²³⁸ Horn, Maurice. *Comics of the American West*. Winchester Press. 1977.

O'Connor, Lauren R. *Robin and the Making of American Adolescence*. Rutgers University Press. New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark, New Jersey, and London. 2021.

On one level the story of “Dan Hunter, The Young Brave” is indicative of most Tomahawk stories, a greedy and conniving European land speculator (perhaps the most loathed of all revolutionary era symbols, as he stands for all the “evil” aristocratic forces of Europe that sought to replicate those failed systems in the new American colonies) seeks to steal Indigenous lands by beginning a war between two rival Indian tribes and sends Tomahawk and Dan Hunter on a mission to find a way to convince the Indigenous Peoples to maintain the peace. However, as previously mentioned, we rarely see the transformation by which Tom Hawk gains his connection to, and skills from, Indigenous peoples in *Tomahawk* stories, and in that respect “Dan Hunter, The Young Brave,” is something of an outlier, that directly transports the comic reader into the shoes of the hero Tomahawk as he is transformed by his early contact with the “Indian,” when Hunter after being injured finds himself memoryless and in the care of Indigenous Peoples. The initial setup is generally unimportant in this comic book tale, and serves as one that most *Tomahawk*, and indeed most comic readers would be intimately familiar with. A bad man wants to steal Indian land, Indians are simple folk and can be easily fooled, and it falls to our hero Tomahawk to demonstrate the conspiracy to the Natives. As such, in attempting to engage with and considering the comic book in the same manner that a reader in 1951 would have, what stands out as unusual in this comic tale, is when young Dan Hunter is injured and taken to an Indigenous village where for more than 4 pages (roughly half the length of the story) the action revolves not around the titular hero, but instead his boy sidekick.

This aberration in storytelling, focuses the reader’s attention upon the change in Identity experienced by Hunter after his accident and his discovery by the Indigenous Maiden “Princess

²³⁹ “Tomahawk: Dan Hunter, the Young Brave” *Tomahawk* #4. (pp. 18-26)

Morning Star.”²⁴⁰ It is in this portion of the story where the tactic of identification is doing the heavy lifting of the creation of the U.S. national narrative. Upon awakening at the village, Hunter, now suffering from amnesia and being unable to determine where he comes from, suggests that “maybe I’ve always been here! Maybe this is my home!” Despite that this is a preposterous idea from the Indigenous point of view, after all, Princess Morning Star finds young Hunter unconscious in the woods and has him transported to the village, she well knows he is for all intents and purposes an outsider, a newcomer, or (and not to put too fine a point on it) an immigrant. Nevertheless Morning Star suggests that Dan “[knows] not where he comes from—or who [he] is” and that the village “shall be your home from now on, if you wish!”²⁴¹ Thus, the Western Settler is welcomed to the new world by being accepted into the open arms of, in this case, a literal Indian Princess and he immediately sets to learning the art of being an Indian brave. In a transformation that will last a total of four panels, Hunter first discards his frontiersmen buckskin ensemble in favor of the bare chest and fringed buckskin pants of the Indian brave, he is then shown in two consecutive panels learning and besting the other braves of the village in first games (stick combat, wrestling, etc.) and then hunting. Finally, in the fourth panel his transformation to a state of Indigeneity now complete, Hunter has become the perfect Indian (Indigenous by training, European by birth/blood) and is informed by Morning Star that

²⁴⁰ Although it is not the primary purpose of this chapter to document the multitude of individual ways in which “Dan Hunter, The Young Brave” draws extensively on the Western frontiersmen mythology of the United States (sadly that task is simply beyond the scope of any individual chapter), I do feel it is important to note that the general feeling of the story draws most predominantly on the legend of Pocahontas and John Smith and that there seem to be obvious connections to the Hollywood cinema of the time period as even “Princess Morning Star’s” name seems to be an homage to the 1950 Delmer Daves classic *Broken Arrow*, that released only a year before *Tomahawk* #4 and starred Debra Paget as Sonseeahray (Morning Star).

Broken Arrow. 20th Century Fox. 1950. (Dir. Delmer Davis)

²⁴¹ “Tomahawk: Dan Hunter, the Young Brave” *Tomahawk* #4. (pp. 21)

his “skill at the games and the hunt have impressed the others [that they] consider you a leader now!”²⁴² However, as the “White Indian” represents an ongoing threat to Western society, Hunter must inevitably be redeemed in the eyes of the masses by returning to normalcy of frontiersmen identity which occurs at the end of the comic.²⁴³ When he pursues Tomahawk, having mistaken the “friend” of Indian people for the two evil rangers that have been attacking his village and once again hits his head, returning his memory and seemingly taking from him his memories of Princess Morning Star. A fact Morning Star confirms in the final panel when she watches Dan Hunter, now once again wearing his “Tomahawk costume,” preparing to leave and thinks to herself “he doesn’t even remember me!”²⁴⁴

²⁴² “Tomahawk: Dan Hunter, the Young Brave” *Tomahawk* #4. (pp. 21-22)

²⁴³ It is also in this way that Dan Hunter does not serve as a true surrogate for Indigenous Peoples, as the intention of both the fictional character of Tomahawk and the people who created his adventures are not to represent or relate to the Indian, but instead they simply seek to weaponize a brief intercultural contact that they then use to justify the elimination of said Indian.

²⁴⁴ Although I will rarely break into the normal flow of this chapter, or indeed the large project with which it is associated, to discuss my own personal affective response to the ways in which Indigenous Peoples were depicted in 20th century American popular culture, this final frame of “Dan Hunter, The Young Brave,” is an exception, because to say that as an Indigenous reader I find this moment in the comic to be disheartening, is to make one of the largest understatements in the history of rhetoric. While not well developed as a character, Princess Morning Star in “Dan Hunter, The Young Brave” escapes much of the negative stereotyping associated with the Indian Princess trope. She is never presented within the story as a sexually conquerable object for Dan and is instead attired in what we might think of as a respectful ensemble for an Indian maiden of the 1950s, as she wears a full shirt and a skirt that ends just above the knee, both which are made of animal hide and bear fringe. Although Princess Morning Star is presented with a passive form of sexism in which she, just like many white female characters of the era, seems to instantly fall in love with the sleeping male warrior character, for the most part Morning Star is treated no differently than any other female character might be in this type of adventure story. However, at the conclusion the story as she laments being forgotten Morning Star closes the text of the story by thinking “he doesn’t even remember me! Oh well...perhaps we’ll meet again someday!” It is this line more than any other within this parochial story from the 1950s that leaves me so dejected. Let me reiterate, this line is indicative of how the average female love interest was treated in comic adventure stories in the 1950s it is not unique, nor did the producers of this line of dialogue intend to specifically insult Indigenous Peoples, in every way this line is ordinary. But to hear these sentiments exists in the thinking of what western writers feel is a well-presented example of an Indigenous woman makes me also lament the vast gulf that exists in the treatment of women between what I see as the Western Worldview and the Indigenous one. This decision by the writers also points to the ways that even when removed from a sexual context, the visage of the Indigenous woman cannot escape the “Pocahontas Perplex” proposed by Rayna Green. There is only room in the memory of the frontiersman Dan Hunter for Princess Morning Star, in so much that she is offering him aid and legitimacy with the tribe, once he has been reunited with his mentor Tomahawk the great “friend of the Indian,” Hunter no longer has a need to remember his time with Princess Morning Star.

Issue number four of *Tomahawk* seeks to create a sense of identification with the character of Tom Hawk by inserting his sidekick Dan Hunter, a surrogate for the child reader into the story, and then uses the character of Hunter to create a sense of identification with the U.S. National narrative in the reader. Just like Hunter, the youthful reader is meant to envision themselves as a decent immigrant to these lands who was welcomed by Indigenous Peoples, learned from them, but then having done so, returns to civilization having forgotten the very people from whom they supposedly learned from and inherited the land. Ultimately, this identification with the national narrative is an agreed upon assumption of all the stories contained within *Tomahawk* #4, not just those featuring Tomahawk, and to a lesser extent this self-same narrative underlies all of the adventure/hero comic books produced in America in the Golden Age (including those that are superheroes). Within the American narrative, the Western Settler would become the “natural” inheritor of North America and Indigenous Peoples would be relegated to history. The intensity of these assumptions within American popular culture, something we might consider a saturation barrage of messaging, given how ubiquitous it was, might have been sufficient on their own to create the pre-conditions for “Playing Indian,” however the creators of comic books, and other popular media, didn’t stop there. Having created a narrative where the reader sees themselves as “changed” by their pre-existing contact with Indigenous Peoples, the producers of *Tomahawk* would then go on to reposition the history of the Indigenous Peoples of North America as American history through their use of peritexts.

Green, Rayna. “The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture.” *The Massachusetts Review*, Autumn, 1975, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Autumn, 1975), pp.698-714

“Tomahawk: Dan Hunter, the Young Brave” *Tomahawk* #4. (pp. 26)

A Peritextual Script for Embodiment

While we might be tempted to say that it's doubtful anyone would purchase a comic book because of a peritext, rather than for the stories (text) it contains, we often times undervalue the power of peritexts, especially in the world of graphic arts, in which, thanks to the cover art of the book, one of the peritexts are in fact its single strongest marketing outreach.²⁴⁵ However, when I argue that most of the work of conditioning the young readers of America to the performance of *Playing Indian* is due to peritexts, I am referring not to those that sell the book, but instead to all the little bits and pieces of assorted material spread throughout the book that helped fill *Tomahawk #4*'s 54 pages. Peritexts also served as a valuable tool in pushing forward to the parents of comic readers (the perceived true "buyers" of comic books) a performative narrative that DC Comic books were good for educating the youth of America, and thus the pages of *Tomahawk #4* are full of history comics, factoids, activities, exercises, and public service announcements.²⁴⁶ I argue that this large collection of peritextual material does more than simply

²⁴⁵ "Hey wait a minute....catch me up...what's a peritext?" I'm glad you asked. In literary studies when we consider the thing we call "books," there is usually an obvious story or series of stories that the author wants to tell to the reader. Thus, we come to call the main body of story, or the collection of stories, that are contained in the story the "text." Now obviously a book is far more than the main body of that story, there will often be notes and addendums, an introduction, a preface, a title sheet and obviously we need to wrap the book in some sort of rudimentary clothing to protect the valuable thoughts it contains from the elements, and once books were commercially produced in mass scale publishers found that covers and synopses helped sell the book. All of these associated materials fall into the realm of "peritexts" (as do any outside linkages to the book such as reviews, advertising material, merchandising, etc.). In a nutshell "peritexts" are anything that is contained within the book, or addresses the book, but that isn't part of the primary text. While some authors, particularly children books' authors like Maurice Sendak, have used the peritexts of their books to help create imagined world of the narrative (to see an example, try flipping through the front matter of *Where the Wild Things Are*), Golden Age comic books differ from mainstream books because early comic books modeled themselves after the magazines of the time period, Golden Age comics are filled with peritexts and the adventures promised to the young readers of the time period were varied and went well beyond the primary texts of the comic book stories promised on the cover.

²⁴⁶ Peritexts also served as a powerful publication tool for the early comic book industry, as magazines and comic books have historically been beneficiaries of a special shipment rate through the United States Postal Service for periodicals containing prose. To qualify for that special rate, every issue of DC/National comics during the Golden Age required a minimum number of typeface prose per issue, which *Tomahawk #4* accomplishes by including a 500-word short article entitled "They Spoke with Their Hands" which explores the history and adaption of Indigenous hand signals of the plains as the modern-day practice of Wigwag (naval flag signals). Later eras of comic

reinforce the national narrative in the mind of the reader and that these additional texts serve as what Robin Bernstein calls “scriptive things,” objects that serve as the scripts for a performance. As I consider peritexts as scriptive things, I heed Bernstein’s guidance that the “term script denotes not a rigid dictation of performed action but rather a set of invitations that necessarily remain open to resistance, interpretation, and improvisation.”²⁴⁷ In other words, while I will be considering peritexts for how they suggest to the reader they ought to behave/perform in society, I freely acknowledge that not every child in this time period who engaged with these texts would have chosen to accept them and perform in a uniform fashion. I am therefore less interested in the individual incidents of enactment caused by peritexts and instead focus on the assumptions of appropriate performance that the producers of Golden Age comic books bring to the fore. In this effort I marry scriptive things to Robert Stalnaker’s linguistic concept of the “common ground,” in which Stalnaker argues that “[when] speakers speak they *presuppose* certain things, and what they presuppose guides both what they choose to say and how they intend what they say to be interpreted.” In other words, The common ground both regulates and produces the range of socially accepted speech. Further, I argue that the common ground is not just the acceptable

books would move away from prose stories and instead present a “Letter to the Editor” page that would accomplish the same goal.

“They Spoke with Their Hands” *Tomahawk* #4. March-April 1951. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY.

²⁴⁷ Using the example of 19th century African American themed dolls Bernstein suggests that scriptive things do not control our actions, as much as invite us to engage in a particular type of performance that materially changes the world. In her example Bernstein compares 19th century “White” dolls to 19th century “Black” dolls and notes that the White dolls of the period were most often crafted of porcelain and were thus fragile, while Black dolls of the period were made of more robust materials, such as rubber. Bernstein then concludes that this difference in material construction results in the child treating the White doll gingerly in fear of damaging it, and the Black doll more aggressively, in effect banging and smashing it against things without fear of damaging it, and thus preparing the child for the belief that violence committed against black bodies is normal or natural.

Bernstein, Robin. *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*. New York University Press. New York and London. 2011. (pp. 12)

limits of debate (rhetoric), but that it also dictates the socially accepted range of performance, of how we behave in society.²⁴⁸ In essence, I suggest that Golden Age peritexts serve as a proposal between the comic book producer and comic book reader that encourages the naturalizing of embodying the U.S. national narrative (Playing Indian) in American social circles.

I assert that the peritexts associated with Golden Age comic books, comic stories that push the U.S. national narrative, i.e. that the Western settler is forever changed by their contact with Indigenous Peoples and is therefore the natural inheritor of the land, serve as an invitation to the reader to incorporate the national narrative into their own identity creation by physically embodying that narrative. In this I believe the placement of peritexts within the comic book, namely that they are always placed between comic book stories, rather than collected together, is not coincidental. The format structure of Golden Age comic books places an artificial narrative as the first piece of material the reader engages with. When that story features the Western frontiersman myth as its protagonist, assumptions of U.S. dominance over Indigenous Peoples and Western claims to both the land and Indigenous culture are introduced to the common ground, however in this moment those assumptions exist merely intellectually, they reside only in what Alan Moore calls “the Imagine Space” (the shared imaginary of society). These alterations to the common ground now reside in the mind of the reader, but they lack physical embodiment, and as Bernstein has suggested to us, not all children will respond to the script presented by this comic equally. When children set out to enact this comic book through physical roleplay, we might be wise to presume that the majority will act out the part of Tomahawk or

²⁴⁸ Stalnaker in effect suggests that there is an acceptable range of linguistic response within any conversation in a social sphere, and further that the shared and accepted assumptions of the individuals engaged in that conversation become both the boundaries of the acceptable and the rules by which both parties expect to be judge as acceptable.

Stalnaker, Robert. “Common Ground.” *Linguistics and Philosophy* 25. 2002. 701-721.

Dan Hunter because they are the hero of the book. But there is no guarantee all will do so, and some number, perhaps many, will choose to envision themselves as Tomahawks foes, or perhaps more dangerously for American hegemony, as the Indigenous Peoples themselves.

The essence of Tomahawk is to present to a young reader a safe sanitized route to performing an Indigenous Identity, one that seeks to reinforce U.S. power, not challenge it. Thus, I argue that in placing the peritext between the comic adventures of Tomahawk, each peritext becomes an addendum to an individual story, an invitation to take the assumptions learned in the story and manifest that ideology in the real world by embodying the journey of the Western Frontiersmen myth. I further suggest that peritexts take a three-part path to arrive at that goal, the first of which is to view Indigenous history as being a part of the reader's own unique history. To subsume, if you will, all of the collective history of the Indigenous Peoples of North America into the historical record of the U.S., through a series of history-based comic stories and prose collections.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ I find it necessary to note here that many of the peritextual history comics and stories that I have read in my exploration of Golden Age comic books are ahistorical, they should not be taken at face value, that is not to say that all of the material presented in these stories is inaccurate given our modern understandings of history, but much of it is. However, the relative accuracy of these stories and factoids does not particularly pertain to an exploration of their effects on the world. Whether the writer/artists in question believed they were giving the reader accurate history, or instead a false myth, does not change the material outcomes that I believe these efforts had upon the course of events in the United States of the period. But any reader, whether an academic explorer or passionate enthusiast should view Golden Age "history" comics with a critical gaze.

Your History, is MY HISTORY!

The Golden Age comic book presents many venues for Indigenous history, from rather dry prose descriptions of individual Indigenous tribes (what we might think of as 150-200 word biographies of a specific tribe), all the way to short factoids sheets (best thought of as collections of 5 to 6 small pictures of Indian Lore, such as the origins of Indian names, rituals, and dietary practices). Between these two polar opposites rests history comics that fall into three distinct categories: (1) six to nine panel stories that focus on a single event in Indigenous history: (2) biographies of significant Indigenous figures or prominent Indian fighters; and (3) what we might think of as cultural affairs comics (which focused on significant religious or cultural beliefs practiced by Indigenous Peoples). This plethora of information available to the young reader of comic books about Indigenous history and culture serves to make them think of themselves as an expert on Indigenous Peoples and while many of these comics take a tone that we might interpret as unbiased or vaguely journalistic, a common rhetorical strategy demonstrated by the producers of Golden Age comics in many of these history-based comic book offerings, was to place the American Indian within a historical context of the prehistory of the United States. In other words, these history peritexts designate the American Indian as being one of the first distant steps of a natural history that leads to the reader in the present, it becomes not a history of a foreign people, but instead their own history.

When considering this naturalization process of the past history of Indigenous Peoples for sublimation into United States history, I have often found a concept from Science Fiction helpful, namely the “precursor race.”²⁵⁰ Within the realm of Science Fiction, the Precursor Race stands as

²⁵⁰ I am indebted in the creation of this metaphor to Michael Luchuga, who in *Visions of Invasion* sets out to read the Science Fiction tropes surrounding “Alien Invasion” movies through the lens of the political rhetoric which surrounds the immigration debate in the U.S. In pointing to the various unseen and unacknowledged ways that

a symbol of past civilizations now inevitably lost to time, a mysterious and usually magnanimous alien race from which humanity inherited either its own creation/birth or its technology. The precursor race are the people who came before and have since died off, but not before leaving the precondition for humanity's current success.²⁵¹ In committing to the rhetorical strategy of claiming Indigenous history for their own, the producers of comic books have cast the Indian as a distant precursor race from which United States culture gained present day benefit. *Tomahawk* #4 aptly makes this linguistic turn in a two-page prose history story titled "They Spoke with Their Hands," in which the reader is presented a brief literature review of what would have been modern day anthropological theories surrounding the creation of Indian hand signals amongst the Indigenous Peoples of the Great Plains. However, while the story in question does focus on the historical circumstances of Indigenous Peoples, it begins by foregrounding not Indigenous sign language itself, but instead such sign language as inspiration for a piece of Western technology when the story states, "Did you know that the sign language used by the American plains Indians developed the wigwag system of signaling now used by the armies and navies of all nations?"²⁵² This opening line suggests to the reader that the actual subject of the piece is not the Indigenous

Science Fiction, as a genre, has always spoken to fears of immigration, Lechuga encouraged me to consider other long-standing tropes in Science Fiction that might speak to deeply held ideologies.

Lechuga, Michael. *Visions of Invasion: Alien Affect, Cinema, and Citizenship in Settler Colonies*. University of Mississippi Press. Jackson. 2023.

²⁵¹ A good example of the Precursor Race from the modern lexicon of Science Fiction can be seen in James Corey's *The Expanse*, a multivolume book serial and SyFy/Amazon television series in which a long dormant alien probe is activated in Earth's future and leads to the uncontrolled creation of a giant intergalactic portal that contains gateways to the hundreds if not thousands of habitable planets that make up the long dead alien civilization's former empire. Ironically, much like the United States' own tense relationship with Indigenous Peoples, in which the U.S. both lionizes/fetishizes Indigenous Peoples and also fears their continued existence, the main ongoing dilemma of *The Expanse* revolves around the tension between the exploration and exploitation of all the new planets provided by the Precursor Race and the fear of the other, perhaps still in existence, force that destroyed them.

²⁵² "They Spoke with Their Hands" *Tomahawk* #4. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. March-April 1951. (pp. 38-39)

precursor race that invented this signals language, but instead, how that technology led to modern western standards of communication.²⁵³ The Indians and their “sign language” become an early step in the history of the Western invention of “wigwag” signal flags.

Another important example of this effort to subvert and incorporate Indigenous Peoples history within the mainstream narrative told by the U.S., comes from a historically based Public Service Announcement produced and published by DC/National across multiple comic books between the years of 1961-1962, and was ostensibly intended to help aid assimilationist-minded Indians in incorporating into the “American melting pot” as part of broader assimilationist policy initiatives surrounding Termination and Relocation.²⁵⁴ The 6-panel comic PSA entitled “A Salute

²⁵³ Another good example of this particular rhetorical strategy can be seen in a story called “The First Commandos” from Roy Rogers Comics #53, in which the artistic team informs the reader about how the tactic of nighttime sneak assaults by Ranger units in World War II was inspired by the American Indian, in that “[the] Indian warrior rarely exposed himself to attack, small raiding parties of ten or twenty braves, would patiently stalk and observe the ways and habits of the white men. When the time came, they would attack from ambush with savage ferocity.” The comic also provides the reader with two stark and isolated images: in the first an American GI assaults a Nazi trooper from behind and drives a knife forcefully into his chest; while the second draws a comparison with this earlier image by showing a pair of Indian braves hiding behind a rock preparing to assault an innocent wagon train. Once again in this story, the writer/artist places the Indigenous subject firmly within a U.S. historical context that renders the Indian as the “other” from whom the American Ranger learned to fight. I would also like to take a brief moment here to point to the unintended irony of claiming that the American Ranger, of all things, was born out of contact with Indigenous Peoples, as Citizen Rangers were used extensively throughout the history of first the European colonies, and then later the nation state of the United States. And from the earliest days of contact those Rangers practiced a time-honored European military strategy called “la petite guerre,” or as we know it today “irregular war.” None of that stops the creators of this comic story however from designating this pre-existing skill as an aspect of Indigenous society and culture that has been incorporated into American Identity.

“The First Commandos” *Roy Rogers Comics* #53. Dell Publishing Co., Inc. New York, NY. May 1952.

Grenier, John. *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607–1814*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, MASS. 2008.

²⁵⁴ The story of U.S. Federal Indian Policy is complex and nuanced, and often sees the steering wheel of U.S. policy initiatives yanked back and forth through the years between members of the conservative and liberal establishment, such that there is never truly clear starting point for specific policy initiatives. However, in common historical readings, the Termination and Relocation era is commonly held to have begun with the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Presidency in 1952. Termination and Relocation were a direct conservative response to the more liberal policies of FDR and the New Deal, which sought to empower and reinforce the social cohesion of individual Tribal governments. Conversely the twin policies of Termination and Relocation were a forced assimilation policy aimed at reducing federal financial liabilities by Terminating the rights and privileges of tribal citizens and caused the dissolution of tribal governments. As a part of that policy package, Relocation, encouraged wholesale immigration of tribal citizens from the reservations to urban centers such as Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago,

to Our American Indians!” appeared in no less than 8 separate DC/National comic books in the two-year span between 1961 and 1962, an oddity in the comic book world, which of course did see repetition of peritexts throughout the years as publishers sought to limit costs.²⁵⁵ However, rarely did Indigenous themed peritexts receive such saturation, and certainly not within such a short period, which would suggest that there was a major and intentional messaging push surrounding this story, one might even logically conclude that this Public Service Announcement was likely featured so prominently at the request of the Kennedy administration, as there have been multiple occasions in comic book history where the major publishers were incorporated into official U.S. government messaging campaigns.²⁵⁶

Minneapolis, etc. with the promise of access and support to education, medical service, and good paying jobs. While “A Salute to Our American Indians!” does show that the U.S. government was at least somewhat committed to these policies and put some small portion of the budget to work assimilating tribal citizens, over the course of the two-decade-long life of the policy, conservative members of Congress whose true intention was the destruction of tribal governments, not the betterment of the lives of tribal citizens, soon lost interest and the tax incentives that helped ensure both housing and employment for Relocated Indigenous Peoples were soon sunset, leaving many tribal citizens as a semi-permanent underclass in many American cities.

Fixico, Donald L. *Termination and Relocation: Federal Indian Policy, 1945-1960*. University of New Mexico Press. 1990.

“A Salute to our American Indians” *Action Comics* #275. April 1961, National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL.

²⁵⁵ The associated statistics presented here are drawn from the *National Indian Project*, a two-year bibliographic project I conducted between the years of 2015-2017 as my master’s thesis, which surveyed approximately 15,000 individual comic book stories from roughly 5,000 DC/National comic books published between 1938 and 1975 to locate Indigenous representations in comic books. The final product of that survey is an open use document and can be located at comicbookindians.com.

<http://comicbookindians.com/> (last accessed 8/11/2023)

²⁵⁶ This connection between the editorial powers at DC and Marvel comics and the public relations arm of the U.S. government, would likely be an intentionally invisible component in comic books history were it not for the fact that one of these PR outreach efforts by the government was the literal instigator for the breaking of the Comic Code Authority. Much like the Hays Code in Hollywood, the Comic Code Authority was an intercompany organization that sought to placate the more regressive and prudish elements of American society by establishing a set of rules that self-regulated and prohibited “adult material” in comic books. Ultimately the Comic Code Authority prohibited the glorification of criminality, excessive violence, sexual activity, and drug use (and just in general made the American comic book more boring). For roughly twenty years between 1954 and the early 1970s, all DC and Marvel comic books were proudly published bearing the Comic Code Seal of Approval on the cover. That all came to an end however, when in 1970 and 1971 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services approached Marvel Editor-in-Chief Stan Lee and asked Marvel to create a story that would alert the youth of America to the dangers of

“A Salute to Our American Indians!” tells the tale of an unidentified teacher and student engaged in rehearsing a play about Indians. For the sake of brevity, let’s agree amongst ourselves to call the boy [Timmy] and the teacher [Bob]. As the story begins the rather prudish, balding, bow tie wearing [Bob] is stopped by the earnest young [Timmy] in his smart blue sweater and white button up shirt, who asks him, “[who] wants to do a play on Indians? All they ever did was make war—they were always fighting!” In response [Bob] spends four panels explaining to [Timmy] what he views are the positive benefits of the American Indian to American society, beginning with the sublimation of foods gained from Indigenous Peoples, such as turkey, corn, beans, and sugar into the Western diet. [Bob] then follows up in the next two panels by informing [Timmy] that Western culture has the canoe and the toboggan thanks to the Indian and that prominent Americans, such as sports star Jim Thorpe and Ballerina Maria Tallchief, “of whom we’re proud, are Indians.” The lesson ends when [Bob] conducts a brief description of how American Indians provide useful service to the modern-day economy of the nation by highlighting Indigenous participation in the steel industry of skyscraper construction in New York, and within the jewelry trade and rug making.²⁵⁷ Finally, to make the moral of the story

drug use. In response Stan Lee personally penned a three-issue arc of Spider-Man (*Amazing Spider-Man* #96-#98) in which one of Peter Parker’s new friends falls into drug use, which leads to his eventual death falling from a building, and sadly much like the death of Gwen Stacy, there is nothing that Spider-Man can do to stop it. Despite the fact that the story demonstrates a negative story of drug use, in which the individual who was shown to be a drug addict faces a negative consequence that is intended to make the young reader fearful of drug use, the Comic Code Authority refused approval for the story and Lee was forced to convince Marvel publisher Martin Goodman to release the issues without the Comic Code Authority seal. The series was phenomenally successful from a sales stand point and as a result would greatly reduce the power and prestige of the Comic Code Authority, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Howe, Sean. *Marvel Comics: The Untold Story*. Harper Perennial. New York, NY. 2013.

²⁵⁷ While this description of the economic activity that Indigenous Peoples add to the U.S. economy of the 1960s unduly focuses on Northeastern tribes such as the Mohawk in skyscraper construction and Southern tribes such as the Navajo and the Hopi who figure into the national narrative through the creation of turquoise jewelry and knit rugs, thus giving the reader a somewhat slanted view of how Indigenous Peoples live and work in their present, the art and text presented in this public service announcement are an outlier as compared to most other Indigenous representation in comic books more broadly. However, as the administration of President Johnson continued

explicit to the reader at home, in the comic's final panel [Timmy] seems to have learned that the story of American Indians is much more complex than he at first thought when he says "[we] really could do a **big** play on Indians!" (Emphasis in original)²⁵⁸

On the surface this Public Service Announcement seems to be a positive representation of the American Indian for the time period. When the comic deals with Indigenous Peoples in the historical past it does so by focusing on real aspects of Indigenous cultures and the generosity of Indigenous Peoples at the first Thanksgiving and the comic provides equal footing (two panels each) for discussing Indigenous Peoples in the present, thus pushing back on the Western trope of always locating Indigenous Peoples as a feature of the past, rather than as subjects of the present. However, "A Salute to Our American Indians!" also points to the slippery effects of colonization, to the myriad silent ways in which, even if the explicit intention of the writer/artist is to challenge colonial mindsets and beliefs, some level of colonialism is replicated within the story regardless, which occurs in this story linguistically. Linguistically "A Salute to Our American Indians!" begins by foregrounding a claim that Indigenous Peoples history is U.S. history with the use of the term "our" in the title. The use of "our" in the title positions the Indigenous Peoples of North America not as members of rival nations, a people with whom the

Kennedy's push towards Civil Rights throughout the 1960s, this style of Indigenous representation would become more common in comic books from both DC and Marvel.

²⁵⁸ "A Salute to our American Indians!" Published as a Public Service in cooperation with the National Social Welfare Assembly, coordinating organization for National Health, Welfare, and Recreation Agencies of the U.S.

Action Comics #275. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL. April 1961.

Adventure Comics #283. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL. April 1961.

All Star Western Volume 1 #118. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta IL. April-May 1961.

The Brave and the Bold #35. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL. April-May 1961.

Justice League #4. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL. April-May 1961.

Superman #144. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL. April 1960.

My Greatest Adventure #54. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL. April 1961.

Strange Adventures #127. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL. April 1961.

reader might have foreign relations one day, but instead as a peoples that are entirely contained within the American polity, basically as an already pre-existing ingredient in the “American melting pot.” Thus when [Bob] explains how the early European settlers received new foods from the Indians, he can leave unsaid that the American experiment also received these new subjects, namely Indigenous Peoples, which he then goes on to reinforce by claiming possession of Maria Tallchief and Jim Thorpe two panels later when he says “we” are proud of them. In other words, “We” are proud of Tallchief and Thorpe in [Bob’s] example because “they” are a part of “us.”

Ultimately “They Spoke with Their Hands” and “A Salute to Our American Indians” are subtle in their claiming of Indigenous history and Indigenous bodies, and rest mostly on linguistic framings of the story. The history the reader is learning, and the Indigenous body being discussed become an object that is designated as “our,” as belonging to a part of “us.” The Golden Age comic book peritext however would not end its efforts to reinforce the U.S. national narrative there and would go on to increase in-group sentiments in its efforts to push a habit of Playing Indian on the youth of America.

“Be Sure to Drink Your Ovaltine™.”²⁵⁹

In the 1983 classic Christmas film, *A Christmas Story*, the young protagonist Ralphie has spent many months diligently collecting and cutting out reward points from cans of Ovaltine, in order to send away for a *Little Orphan Annie* decoder ring. About halfway through the film the decoder ring finally arrives, and the audience feels Ralphie’s eager anticipation as he tears open the brown envelope and then smoothly writes down the secret message at the end of *Little Orphan Annie*’s latest radio adventure. Ralphie then locks himself in the apartment’s sole bathroom to decode the message and the intensity of the moment ratchets ever higher and higher as first Ralphie’s brother begins pounding on the door and then his mother begins yelling at him to let his brother use the bathroom, but Ralphie allows none of these distractions to take his attention away from the all-important message that *Little Orphan Annie* has for him, “Be sure to drink your Ovaltine.” While this moment in the film is meant to poke playful fun at the corporate interests that would coldly cultivate brand loyalty through the use of codes and decoder rings, the scene none-the-less points to the reality of the power of membership privileges to generate feelings of in-group belonging, as Ralphie demonstrates while reading his membership certificate and noting that he has “honors and benefits, already at the age of nine.” In the simplest terms, the enactment of a secret code creates by default two groups, those that are “in the know” and those that are “on the outs,” and even though Ralphie feels cheated by the use of that code to provide him a commercial, that sense of belonging to an in-group provides him endorphins and happiness.

²⁵⁹ *A Christmas Story*. (1983) Metro Goldwyn, and Meyer (MGM Pictures). (Dir. Bob Clark)

The creators of the Golden Age comic book would also seek to use codes to create a sense of an in-group within their readership, and although we can be relatively sure that their primary intention in doing so was to increase brand loyalty and sell more comic books, as Stan Lee did when he formed the *Merry Marvel Marching Society (M.M.M.S.)*, the in-groups created would likely also have associated a positive impression on the reader of the ideologies expressed by the in-group.²⁶⁰ In other words, while being given a secret dialect, a way of understanding the world and thus privileged membership in a secret society, may have increased the reader's positive feelings for DC, Marvel, Dell, and other comic book companies, it would also have likely increased the readers acceptance of the ideas expressed in both the methodology and the messaging of the code.

As we continue our journey along the multitiered campaign to build and reinforce the Western American subject, the building of a specific in-group becomes a focus for our endeavor because I argue that the sense of belonging to that in-group increases the likelihood that the reader will engage in the enactment of an Indigenous performance (Playing Indian). That as a secret society the "DC readers," come to accept that "the society" has rituals that they should "act out," and that those rituals are proper and correct. After all, DC Comics took great pains to point out to the readers of their comic books, and by extension their parents, what an upstanding

²⁶⁰ Although the M.M.M.S actually began in roughly 1961 with the efforts of Stan Lee to increase brand loyalty at the newly formed Marvel comic books, by first humanizing the writers and artists of the Marvel Bullpen by assigning them nicknames, such as "Sturdy" Steve Ditko and Jack "The King" Kirby, and then encouraging readers to write in and directly ask Stan "The Man" Lee himself questions about the creative process, the official start date for the Marching Society first appeared in print in books dated February 1965. As apocryphal legend goes, the Society drew/draws its name from a gag album recorded by Stan and the bullpen team in the early 1960s which reportedly sold out the initial pressing of 10,000 copies via mail-order within weeks after the initial advertising. (Long Live the Society!!!)

Howe, Sean. *Marvel Comics: The Untold Story*. Harper Perennial. New York, NY. 2013.

Lee, Stan and George Mair. *Excelsior: The Amazing Life of Stan Lee*. Atria Books. New York, NY. 2002.

source they were for the average reader, proclaiming in bold text on the inside front cover of many issues of *Tomahawk* that the DC Comics symbol on the cover “is your guarantee of the best in comic reading.” Additionally, every issue of DC comics contained at least half a page devoted to touting the “DC Editorial Advisory Board,” made up of some of the most respected names in childhood education of the time period, all of whom gave their stamp of approval to DC Comics.²⁶¹ From the perspective of DC Comics and their writers/artists, they were the “good guys,” much like their superheroes, Batman and Superman, who were teaching their readers a way of existing in the world that was just and appropriate, or at the very least, one that their parents would likely agree with. While many peritexts in Golden Age comic books would latently promote the Indigenous subject as an Other against which to build the in-group “Americans,” Perhaps no single series of comics seemed more dedicated to that process than “Indian Album,” which was featured predominantly in *Tomahawk* and throughout DC Western comics more broadly.

To the average reader on the surface a monthly installment of “Indian Album” probably doesn’t look much different than other peritexts we have discussed , usually one or two pages in length and sometimes containing a history comic focused on Indigenous practices, or a brief exercise for the reader to engage in or enact, however “Indian Album” is serialized, meaning that it was rare for a single issue to have more than one “Indian Album.” As “Indian Album” will become more important as we move toward the enactment of identity, the serial nature of comic books requires us by default to move beyond our example copy of *Tomahawk* #4 and consider the series more broadly. DC Comics used “Indigenous Secret Codes” several times through *Tomahawk*’s run to encourage in-group participation, however, the tactic was likely most

²⁶¹ *Tomahawk* #4. (pp. 2 & 16)

effective in issue number 62, where “Indian Album” is featured directly after the first story in what we might consider the “A-Block” commercial break.²⁶² Featuring a quarter page depiction of a lone Indian brave riding beside a large black buffalo as he hunts it, the writer of this 2-page spread has filled the negative space to the pictures right with approximately 100 words of Indian hunting facts, while directly below the image filling the entire bottom of the page is a four by six grid that depicts 24 symbols each representing a word or phrase such as “bird tracks,” “hunt or kill,” and “bow and arrow.”²⁶³ On the opposite page, the artist has used two thirds of the space to depict a large stretched buffalo skin with a story written upon it in the symbols provided, which forms a descending spiral. The final third of the page being dedicated to presenting an inverted copy of the same story in English, requiring only that the reader flip the book to either check their decoding work, or avoid decoding in entirety.

The writer of this piece uses the contained historical facts at the top of page one to push the reader toward an understanding that the symbols on the bottom of the same page are representative of a traditional Indigenous practice, when in the final of the four facts they inform

²⁶² In the parlance of the mainstream media (a good corollary for comic books as both follow a similar structure) the “A Block” refers to the first segment provided by news show and on average is the most watched segment of any television news program. Because of this the first commercial break is often the most expensive to purchase, and as such I argue that we should interpret the early placement of this peritext as equally important within the structure of the comic book.

“Indian Album” *Tomahawk* #62. May-June 1959. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL.

²⁶³ The four facts about hunting suggested by the writer in this upper segment are:

- 1) “The buffalo supplied the Indian with almost everything they needed—their food, material for clothing, covering for teepees, bone and horn for tools, sinew for bows.”
- 2) “When hunting on foot, the Indians had to be very careful not to frighten the buffalo and cause them to stampede.”
- 3) “Sometimes they disguised themselves in coyote skins or buffalo hides and crept close enough to make a kill.”
- 4) “The Indians often used buffalo skins for stories in picture writing, like the one on the next page. Here are the key pictures and their meanings to help you decipher the story.”

Tomahawk #62. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, Illinois. May-June 1959. (pp. 13-14)

the reader that “[the] Indians often used buffalo skins for stories in picture writing, like the one on the next page.” The same factoid then goes on to suggest to the reader that they should incorporate this methodology into their own worldview by proclaiming “[here] are the key pictures and their meanings to help you decipher this story.” In considering this installment of “Indian Album” as a Scriptive Thing, this final “statement” about Indigenous Peoples seems less of a fact meant to inform the reader of actual Indigenous history, than it seems to serve as an instruction from a Stage Manager, i.e. “stage directions,” meant to aid the reader in their performance of what has been established by the facts that predicate it, as an Indigenous practice. The writer’s use of the word “like” in this statement becomes notable when we consider this statement as a stage direction, as the writer is designating the practice the reader has been directed to perform as “like” an Indigenous practice, rather as “being” an Indigenous practice. In other words, the reader is meant to subsume the behavior indicated into their identity creation, but not to envision themselves as the Indian brave. In essence to think of themselves as part of an in-group, but an in-group that is separate and distinctive from Indigenous Peoples. As part of a group that is “like” Indigenous Peoples, and one which, when considered in the broader context of *Tomahawk* the series, would seem to indicate the object with which the reader is most commonly positioned to identify is Tomahawk and his sidekick Dan Hunter and thus the legacy of the Western frontiersman.

“Walk like an Indian”²⁶⁴

As we return to our task of identifying the four part process that encourage the active performance of Playing Indian, the decryption exercise primes the charge of what I view to be the final barrage made by comic producers, by not only encouraging feelings of loyalty and fidelity to the in-group of “Western frontiersman” (read American citizen), but also begins the delicate work of appropriation of Indigenous culture and enacted Indigenous performance, by directing the reader of the true method of the Lakota Winter Count when the comic suggests that “[an] Indian would start his message at the center (x) and continue around to the left in spirals.” In presenting this encoded message as a false winter count, the reader is forced by the comic to engage with the spiral by spinning the book in their grip so that they can continuously engage with the sentence constructed before them. In doing so the sentence becomes not just a spiral, but a labyrinth. Humans tend to treat labyrinths as similar to mazes, however an important distinction between the two is that a maze presents choices some of which lead to dead ends, while labyrinths present the illusion of choice. No matter where we enter the labyrinth, we are destined to arrive at the same ending point, thus within the literary world labyrinths are often presented to us as what Foucault would call a “heterotopic” passage that change those who engage with them.²⁶⁵ In other words the reader enters the labyrinth of this exercise as an

²⁶⁴ For those that are interested, yes this is obviously a reference to the 1986 *Bangles* classic “Walk Like an Egyptian,” which I have inserted here for no good reason, but instead because I happen to think that Susanna Hoffs is the best Front Woman in Pop Rock history.

“Walk Like an Egyptian.” *Different Light*. Columbia Music Inc. 1986.

²⁶⁵ First proposed by Michel Foucault, Heterotopias might best be thought of places of the Otherness, socio-political spaces that are strange and queer and thus challenge our assumptions of reality with additional meanings, in this way heterotopias are often spaces of transformation and change connecting one world or state of being with another. We enter a heterotopia, much like an elevator, one type of person (what we might think of as a “Home Self”) prior to the close of the elevator doors, and we then exit the elevator after passing a realm of uncanny travel to our destination changed (now as a “Public Self”).

individual that is interested in Indigenous Peoples, at least interested enough to buy an issue of Tomahawk, but who by the end of the spinning circle has been transformed into someone who can claim Indigenous performance. Further, as we move toward active performance, I assert that in participating in this exercise, by the spinning of the comic, by the decoding of the message, and by the sitting with the uncomfortable feeling that they are meant to view themselves akin to Indigenous Peoples, but not that they are Indigenous Peoples, the reader is now highly susceptible to messaging that designates what is acceptable Indigenous performance, which “Indian Album” provides them in a series of comics that call on the reader to directly engage with Indigenous culture and appropriate that culture in an active performance of Indigeneity by engaging in “arts and crafts” projects.²⁶⁶

In considering the specific performances of Indigenous identity that Golden Age comic books and pop culture more broadly encourage, a certain level of mediation appears necessary to the process, at least in so far as the opinions of the institutions that most benefit from this style of performance seem to suggest, as we can see demonstrated by “fans” of Indian themed sports teams. As an example, an Atlanta Braves fan can engage in the “Tomahawk chop,” an audience participation performance, in which the crowd in the seats of the stadium makes a downward motion with their right arm as if it held a Tomahawk, while making a series of chanting noises that is meant to represent “Indians on the Warpath,” without the aid of any prop or mediation.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things*. Vintage. New York, NY. 1994.

²⁶⁶ While “arts and crafts” projects may seem like a strange way to transmit cultural ideologies, an important component in the cultural history of the United States in the 20th century was the explicit linkage of “arts and crafts” projects to transmission of Christian theology through the institution of “Sunday School.” Although not all Christian sects in 20th century America embraced this methodology, I can speak from my personal experience of creating many Perler Bead coasters in Sunday school, that it was quite popular in the Unitarian and Congregational churches. It may have, in fact, been the intention of the writers in the Golden Age to take advantage of this trend and a pre-conditioning that already existed in their perceived readers.

However, in recent years, as journalistic coverage of these performance rituals has increased, we have seen that the ownership of the Atlanta Braves often distributes foam tomahawks on the seats of the stadium before important games, thus implying that, the owners at least, believe that the mediation of a prop helps aid the Braves fan to embrace the ritual. Hence while the stadium itself becomes a stage for the fan's performance, complete with an audio score provided by the team that serves to invite a specific action from the fan, the addition of a prop or costume is perceived to make that process more inviting. In a similar fashion, "Indian Album" seems to imply that the writers, in their quest to encourage the reader to roleplay (or play act) the adventures of Tom Hawk (Tomahawk), believed that the inclusion of a costume or talisman would increase loyalty to the character as the first call on the reader to create an Indian costume occurs in issue number three of *Tomahawk*.

The layout and construction of "Indian Album: How to Make an Indian War Bonnet" is similar to the decoding exercise from "Indian Album" discussed previously and the two considered together begin to suggest a house style for the graphic design these kinds of comic book stories.²⁶⁷ At the top, a large scroll, perhaps 2 inches in width unfurls across the length of the page, upon its surface is depicted the title "Indian Album" announcing the combined series of comics. In a piece of well-constructed messaging, the "Indian" in the title is built out of uniformed size logs, almost as if a child of the period built the word out of the Lincoln Logs that they received for their birthday. This positions the reader to think not of comic books, but a physical kinetic activity that would require the reader to leave the world of the mind that reading generates, in favor of an embodied activity, and thus encourages the reader to view the act that is

²⁶⁷ "Indian Album: How to make a War Bonnet." *Tomahawk* #3. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. January-February 1951. (pp.33)

being proposed to them in the story as one that they should engage in and embody rather than simply think about. Now properly prepared to take action, the reader's eyes descend to the rest of the page and find two equally sized panels. In the top right corner of the upper panel sits the finished product (the goal of the activity), a gloriously constructed Indian war bonnet, with a full set of feathers and filled to the brim with "Settler Dreams" of the Indian. Just beneath the war bonnet, split across the two panels, the writer/artist has provided a clear 7 point process for the craft creation of the headdress, using simplistic descriptions and pictures in a manner similar to what the U.S. Army has typically referred to as "idiot proof" instructions. In other words, instructions that show a render of the written material enacted in physical form, which both serves to encourage the reader to enact the script of "Indian Album," but also helps build a claim on the ownership of the war bonnet through the effort required of the activity.

The process of craft creation of the headdress in "Indian Album: How to Make a War Bonnet" is quite complex and far from a simple throw away hat made of colored construction paper, as the comic calls on the reader to deploy a variety of skills including sewing.²⁶⁸ In the

²⁶⁸ "Indian Album's" use of the term "war bonnet" presents me some difficulty as an Indigenous scholar, as I see and recognize a clear delineation between the term "headdress" and "war bonnet" in the cultural use of these symbols. For my own understanding, the term "war bonnet" is not appropriate for the manner in which it is being used by the comic book writer in this exercise sheet, as a war bonnet represent significant cultural value for Lakota, Kiowa, Osage and other Plains tribes that use this form of honorific, that is not called for or indicated by the writer piece. Conversely, the term "headdress" seems to see more common linguistic use when deployed to refer to the style of "Indian costume" piece that the comic book exercise sheet seems to be indicating the reader should deploy here. In other words, a "war bonnet" denotes specific cultural practices, while a "headdress" is a costume. Further, this omission by the artist here seems intentional as at various times throughout this era, producers of comic books routinely informed the reader of the cultural significance of "war bonnets" in other peritexts such as in "Quick Quiz" from *Adventure Comics* #176, in which the writers informed the reader that the phrase "feather in your cap [originated from] the fact that the prestige of an Indian brave was estimated by the number of feathers in his cap, each feather signifying a victory!" (emphasis in original), or in *Hopalong Cassidy* #89's "Strange Indian Bird Beliefs" which marked the sacred importance of eagle feathers to Plains cultures by showing a brave in a war bonnet with the include text that "eagle feathers were worn to ward off evil (sic) as well as single out the brave and (sic) worthy deserving of wearing this honorable mark of distinction" (the producers of *Hopalong Cassidy* really do need a little more time in the English classroom). With this in mind it becomes hard not to feel that the writers of "How to Make a War Bonnet" are trying to pull a fast one here and are encouraging the reader to subsume knowledge of the lesser of these two symbols under the name of the greater, leaving me with something of an uncomfortable feeling

upper panel the reader receives three instructions to prepare the multiple feathers required of their headdress by first affixing a hoop made of a strip of cut leather to the bottom of the feather. The reader is then directed to wrap the contact point of the leather hoop, and indeed the entire calamus of the feather in white adhesive tape to add stability, before completing the final step and adding “fluffs” at the midpoint of each feather for both aesthetic effect, but also to help hide the joining point between the feather and the headdress. Although this may seem rather complicated for a children’s activity, things actually grow quite a bit more complicated in the lower panel, where the final four steps instruct the reader to first cannibalize an old felt hat by removing the brim, leaving only the skull cap, to which the reader should individually lace each feather to the cap before using glue to affix a strong strip of either leather or felt to the joining point around the brim. The comic even provides a series of small Indian designs in the bottom right corner that are correctly sized for placing along the brim of the headdress to add personal flair and may well have been cut out of the comic book in some cases because the reverse panel on page 32 features an advertisement for Columbia bikes, hardly the sort of thing that a child would view as essential reading.

The process of creation spelled out by “Indian Album: How to Make a War Bonnet” is ultimately quite time consuming and calls on the reader to deploy a variety of skills, some of which the reader may have already had, but many of which they would have needed to seek guidance about and would need to practice to perfect, thus we might well think of this activity in

that I should not accept their framing and the naming of this object as a “war bonnet,” however for ease of reference, I will do so.

“Quick Quiz” *Adventure Comics* #176. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. May 1952.

“Strange Indian Bird Beliefs” *Hopalong Cassidy* #89. National Comics Publications, Inc. Bridgeport, CONN. May 1954.

terms of a rite of passage. A rite of passage that literalizes the creation of Western American Identity. The reader enters the process previously initiated into the histories of Indigenous Peoples and is given a task that requires them to learn new skills to create a physical object, a talisman that represents the things they have learned, and once having completed the ritual of creation they are then given license to Play Indian due to the Scriptive nature of the headdress, in that a headdress is a hat, and hats are meant to be worn. Further, and somewhat insidiously, the very arduousness of this craft activity, the fact that it is difficult to accomplish, would likely have provided the reader with a sense of ownership over the object. Whether or not the reader was Indigenous and had any true cultural claim to wearing a war bonnet, they would have been the one who put the hours of effort needed to craft the headdress, hence from a certain point of view, to say that it was “their headdress,” would have been accurate. In other words, by crafting the headdress, the headdress becomes the reader’s possession, and with it comes the performance of Indigeneity, which would have been reinforced for the reader by stories of Tomahawk’s adventures in this very issue.

As we come to the end of our journey and come around full circle to once again to consider the primary comic book texts themselves, issue number 3 of *Tomahawk* begins with a tale of poignant foreshadowing, given our current endeavor, when in the opening story “Warpath,” the titular hero Tom Hawk (Tomahawk) casts aside his Western frontiersman costume and instead dons Indian garb. Dying his hair black and tanning his skin red by using herbs, Tomahawk must Play Indian in order to infiltrate an outpost manned by delinquent outlaws and rogue Indians in order to save an upstanding lady by the name of Alice Mayfair.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ “Warpath” *Tomahawk* #3. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. January-February 1951. (pp. 2-11)

While “Warpath” is not my primary focus here, the fact that this particular issue of *Tomahawk* begins with the title character literally donning “redface,” cannot be ignored. As I discuss the peritext “Indian Album: How to Make an Indian War Bonnet,” which I argue is a Scriptive Thing, intended to invite the reader to Play Indian, it comes in an issue in which the creative team has specifically chosen to provide a prelude in which the main hero of the book, the person with whom the young reader is most likely to identify, engaged in the very same activity (Playing Indian) that I assert this text seeks to engender in the reader. As such I read the list of steps in creating a War Bonnet presented in “Indian Album,” as an explicit list of directives to the reader themselves, whether or not the comic explicitly says that the reader should place the bonnet upon their head and play out an Indigenous performance. Whether the reader chooses to accept or refuse the script provided by “Indian Album,” the foregrounding of the Western frontiersman hero’s assumption of an Indigenous identity leaves little doubt to how we should read the actions of the producer of this comic book. Within their worldview, the reader is meant to play Indian—after all, by his behavior earlier in the issue *Tomahawk* has given them permission, and the wide variety of peritexts contained in an average Golden Age Western comic book likewise provide the reader both instruction and license to perform the same Western American identity espoused by *Tomahawk*.

CONCLUSION: HAND ME THE PURPLE FEATHER BROTHER

Fronted by the blonde-haired twin grandsons of the titular stars of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, the extravagantly named Gunnar and his more mundane counterpart Matthew, the late 1980s Glam Rock band *Nelson* has not figured strongly in pop culture discourse since the mid-1990s. However, for a brief period, powered, at least in part, by the title track of their 1990 debut album, *After the Rain*, the band would garner a number of top 40 singles on the Billboard charts.²⁷⁰ A product of the 1980s musical trend called “Glam” or “Arena Rock,” which softened the early musical quality of Hair Metal, but whole-heartedly stole the aesthetic of the Hair Band genre, the band *Nelson* found their stride and connected with audiences through the use of spectacle, creating elaborate stage shows and highly detailed and often narrative based musical videos. *Nelson* is a band better experienced than described (seriously, go to YouTube, I will wait.), but if forced to describe *Nelson*’s approach to musical performance I would say that the band sought to combine the peppy tones of Glam Metal with a visual aesthetic that was more Country music in origin, what we might think of as the “Rock Gods for the Rodeo.”²⁷¹ While this commitment to Country Music was merely visual, expressed primarily in the band’s costume selection, it can also be seen in the brother’s embrace of American myths and legends within the 1991 musical video for “After the Rain.” A video, which when we look without the rose-tinted

²⁷⁰ While “After the Rain” would reach its zenith at #6 on the charts, *Nelson*’s greatest hit would come in the form of the rock love anthem “(Can’t Live Without Your) Love and Affection” that would last one entire week at the #1 slot of the Billboard top 100. If you are wondering if the awkwardness of that song title had anything to do with the difficulties attaining success this obvious classic of 80s Arena Rock faced?... Well.....”Survey Says.....More than likely.”

Nelson. After the Rain. DGC Records. Geffen A&M Records. 1990.

²⁷¹ To aid you in your video exploration of the spectacle of *Nelson* I recommend the classic “(Can’t Live Without Your) Love And Affection” from 1990. I apologize in advance for exposing you to the horror of Gunnar *Nelson*’s elongated red cowboy boots.

Nelson. “*Nelson - (Can't Live Without Your) Love And Affection (Official Music Video)*” YouTube Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1W6-ErrHls> (Last accessed 2/16/2024)

glasses that make the 1980s so nostalgically powerful here in the 2020s, we can clearly see demonstrates many of the narrative strategies of colonial land claims that I have focused upon in this study.

In what might well serve as foreshadowing for the sense of Western colonial aggrievement that has dominated much of the discourse of the 21st century, the music video for Nelson's "After the Rain" initially takes us to the angst-filled bedroom of a would-be glam rocker who is under appreciated by those in power, namely his parents. The bedroom lives in what I will call a "mildly worn down" mobile-home trailer located in a vast desert, which is surrounded by deep dark storm clouds.²⁷² As the frame fades in from black, the audience immediately hears the screeching irate tones of a familiar trope which I will label "disappointed stepfather," as the faceless man scream-talks from the next room over and says:

You know what, don't, just don't humor me, it's time he grew up. No, no, it's time he grew up. You know what? Your son ain't nothing but a worthless dreamer! He's gonna have to come down to reality right now, cause I've had it! You will never amount to anything!

As this familiar parenteral refrain fills the sound curtain the viewing audience is introduced to our intrepid hero for this music video, the "you" addressed in the previous statement, in the person of a teenage white male, wearing a glam rock required white bandana tied around his head to keep his neatly trimmed, but unruly kept mid-length blonde hair away from his face. The

²⁷² When suggesting that the trailer looks "mildly worn down," I am pointing to the fact that there is deep sense of the Regan 80s in the visuals of this early scene in the video. The trailer's placement as a solitary object in a vast undeveloped desert, as well as the fact that it is a trailer, rather than mobile home, and that while in relatively good repair the trailer appears old, are all meant to be indicators that the residents of this trailer come from lower social-economic tax bracket. However, once we enter the boy's room within the trailer, we find the latest of 1980s/90s conveniences including an electric guitar, an amplifier, a Sony branded Walkman, and even a giant 80 by 62-inch poster of the Rock band Nelson. Just like many other music videos of this period "After the Rain" focuses its story upon the perceived lower classes, while simultaneously selling products to the middle/upper class audience of MTV, leading to a peculiar tension in the visual landscape.

young boy quietly cries while sitting on the bed beside what I presume is meant to represent a mall bought electric guitar, but to my untrained eye might as well be a Stratocaster, as he slowly grows more inconsolable throughout the stepfather's speech and finally throws himself dejected upon the bed. This opening scene in the trailer finally closes with the boy putting on the headphones of a nearby Walkman which as they begin to play music become covered in a strange purple energy, bringing the giant life-size poster of Gunnar and Matthew Nelson beside his bed to life and magically transporting him to a concert where the pair tell him in song that "[only after] the rain, washes away the tears [...] can you live again."²⁷³ Upon the completion of the concert the boy awakens in his bed optimistic and willing to put his past pains behind him and grow into the future. The End. Adulthood Achieved! Well done young man.

As a narrative this initial scene in the video represented an ongoing trend at the turn of the ninth decade of the 20th century, in which young people in America broadly felt misunderstood and unsure of their placement in the world, and "After the Rain" presents a bildungsroman or "coming of age" story to the audience in which the viewer can be hailed into American adulthood. In essence this young boy's participation in this *Nelson* concert becomes his quest for adulthood. But it is not this sense of discontent that was perhaps summed up best by Twisted Sister's Dee Snyder when he shouted "[we're] not gonna take it!" that draws my focus to "After the Rain," instead I want us to take a good long hard look at how the Nelson brothers envision the passage to adulthood in America.²⁷⁴ Between the beginning of the video in the

²⁷³ For the uninitiated a "Walkman" was the primary name brand model of the mobile personal tape deck which was famously popular throughout the latter half of the 1980s and into the early 1990s and unlike earlier 8-track tape players allowed their users to "rewind" and thus listen to albums more selectively.

Nelson. After the Rain. DGC Records. Geffen A&M Records. 1990.

²⁷⁴ "We're Not Gonna Take it." *Twisted Sister: We're Not Gonna Take It* (Pressed Single). Atlantic Records 1984. (Dee Snyder Songwriter & Vocalist)

trailer and the young man's life-changing engagement with Nelson at the concert, rests a small piece of connective storytelling tissue that serves as a mystical passage through which both the Nelson brothers and the young boy must pass in order to provide meaning to the video's story. Visually and explicitly formatted as a "ritual," this heterotopic passage that serves as the boy's introduction to adulthood adds approximately 60 seconds of length to a song that is only four minutes in duration and speaks not to the content of the songs lyrics, but instead to the placement of the song itself within the broader American national narrative, as first Nelson, but then finally the boy appear to be granted the liberty to be their true selves as they are awarded an eagle feather by an old Indigenous shaman.

In the video as the boy finds himself dragged into the poster by Gunnar Nelson's luxurious hands, he seemingly falls down through a purple tornado that evokes the long history of the Wizard of Oz, until he finds himself slamming to the ground and wedged between the Nelson brothers at a campfire. While Dorothy's experience with the tornado sees her delivered to the magical land of Oz, the boy finds himself in a place no less fantastical or fictitious, as he arrives in the myth of the American past across a campfire from an elder Noble Savage.²⁷⁵ Sitting cross legged, in the position that was referred to as "Indian style" in the vernacular of 20th century America, a Hollywood Indian, depicted as an elder from some nameless southwestern tribe, the nameless Indian elder holds his hands to the boy and the Nelson brothers. Opening his hands, the Indigenous man shows to the trio a pair of floating globes, one red and one blue,

²⁷⁵ Director James Yukich use of a sepia tone filter for the first 90 seconds of the video, in which both the boy's present in the trailer and his experience with Indian in the cave are prominently featured, seem to suggest that the filmmaker wants us to view both of these moments as an artificial limiting of life possibilities that the confidence presented by the Nelson brothers is meant to combat. In other words that the sepia-colored boy of the beginning of the video becomes the brightly colored man of the end of the video. Although that reading is a bit muddled in this video, I do agree that it is the most logical one to make, however the choice of sepia-tones also places this Indigenous character into a visual framework that the audience has been primed to accept as a depiction of the past.

which the elder then transforms into purple energy, and from it, materializes a single eagle feather which he gives to the Nelson brothers, who briefly glow purple and then vanish.²⁷⁶ Shocked and concerned, the boy is taken by the hand and led from the campfire toward the cave mouth by the elder. At the cave entrance the boy looks back upon this Noble Savage and finds him transformed into a great warrior of the plains, wearing a bone breastplate and with a single large strip of black warpaint across his eyes. The Elder pulls an eagle feather from his hair and holds it out to the boy, but as the boy reaches for it, the man glows purple and vanishes, leaving the boy to descend the foothills on his own and “rock out” at the Nelson concert being held in the valley below. Although this will be the last moment that we see the Indian elder in the video, the eagle feather he offers will magically appear on the boy’s bedside table when he awakens from his nighttime adventure with Nelson. Picking up the eagle feather, the final shot features a close up of the boys’ face as the eagle feather briefly glows purple just as the frame fades to black. The boy, just like the Nelson brothers, has thus through his contact with an unknown nameless Indian now become a full-fledged American Adult, ready to Glam rock out “after the rain has gone.”

I start us here, with Nelson’s video for “After the Rain” not simply because it so aptly retells the story that I have been presenting in my case studies (after all what is the imagery in this video if not an anointing of both the Nelson brothers, and the audience in the form of the nameless protagonist, by an Indigenous elder?), but because of the ease with which it makes its argument. This scene of an Indigenous man holding out a red and blue orb to three western

²⁷⁶ If your pop culture radar is ringing like the U.S. Air Force looking for signs of Santa on Christmas Eve, you are not mistaken, the framing of this shot of the by Yukich is very similar to the scene from 1999’s *The Matrix* by the Wachowskis siblings, in which Morpheus offers the Keanu Reeves Neo the choice of the “red and blue pill.” Additionally, much like the scene in that film the red orb floats above the elder’s right hand, while the blue floats above his left.

The Matrix. Warner Brothers Worldwide Media. 1999. (Directors, the Wachowskis)

subjects visually shares much in common with a scene featured nine years later in the Wachowskis' *The Matrix*, when Morpheus offers Neo the Red and Blue pill. However, notably in this later version of the scene, Morpheus has to go to extreme lengths to explain to both Neo, and the audience, what the stakes of the choice before him are. Indeed, what surrounds this choice, both before and immediately after Neo's removal from the Matrix is perhaps the longest expositional dump of the movie, as the audience learns so many of the facts that build the world of the film. In contrast what does this brave and stoic Indigenous elder tell us, the audience, of the choice before us? The answer: nothing. We are met with only silence from this Noble Savage. Although we will be treated to the opening bars of "After the Rain," which of course due to the bands Western aesthetic embraces the use of both skin drums and flutes, the Elder himself will do nothing to explain the choice before these Western subjects, nor why they need anointment by an Indian to become a full-fledged American adult. No, unlike Morpheus who must give us so many facts and ideas (the artificiality of our modern world, the war with the machines, the artificial nature of the Matrix) to help fill Neo's choice with meaning, musical video director James Yukich trusts that his audience already instinctively understands this choice being offered to his characters. Yukich is correct to do so, even though most Americans cannot fully articulate what it means to "be American," the propaganda campaign that I have focused on in this study, is an essential ingredient that they have now essentially accepted as natural and default, and they have thus forgotten its origins. It has become "baked in the cake," as it were.

Unlike other previous efforts at combating this national narrative, in the beginning of this study I suggested that the Hollywood Indian was "the most successful psychological warfare operation in history," and throughout my case studies I have endeavored to shift my focus from discussions of the ways in which this iconography is an inaccurate, incomplete, and vile

representation of the Indigenous Peoples of North America, and instead to a deep engagement with asking the question of how that campaign was effective? How this iconography is defended in the present? And how Indigenous artists and activists might learn from these tactics to make a better world? My goal in doing so was not without bias. I did not ask these questions out of academic interest, curiosity, or requirement, but instead as part of a cold-hearted and calculated desire to change the world. When the first European Settlers arrived on these shores, they did not know what to make of these new and strange people that they would come to call Indian and Indio. Some would fear them. Some would trade with them. And some would set out to conquer them. But for nearly two centuries as the European powers met with and came into contact with Indigenous Peoples, they seemingly acknowledged that each of these peoples were a distinct and unique people, and then like the flipping of a switch, all that changed and Choctaw, Haudenosaunee, Cherokee, Wampanoag all became a single nation, or perhaps worse yet, a single subject, “the Indian.” In the birth of the Indian, its opposition “the American” was also born. Over the three centuries that followed, those Americans came to believe “hard” about the world, much to the detriment of many peoples, my own included. Selfishly, I wanted to know how they did that, so that we could do it as well. So that we might learn to create a similar will and sense of purpose in our own political coalitions. Here is what I learned.

The American national narrative, even though it is presented as a story, isn't really a narrative, it is a brand and just like any brand, it is linked to a visual icon, “the Indian,” which is why so many people have had such struggles in working to retire Indigenous mascots. We may never know for certain why the early American psyche latched upon Indigeneity as the defining characteristic of the American Settler, but American iconography from our national bird (the Bald Eagle) to our dear old friend Lady Liberty (who we used to know as Columbia) all harken

back to the Indigenous Subject almost as if, even after three hundred years of trying the American people still can't draw a picture of "what an American is," so they must draw a picture of "what an American is not." Thus, to try to take their Indian Mascot from them is to literally try to take their sense of self, their brand. And ultimately that is what we must do if we want to (re)make the country, what we must do if we want to alter what it means to be a citizen of that country, then we must change the brand of that country.

Now there may be some that question my use of the concept of a brand here, for these important social justice issues regarding identity and citizenship, but in selecting it, I am being neither flippant nor dismissive of these concerns. In the modern era when we hear the word "brand," we often think of silly and performative marketing campaigns by multinational corporations, but for me, a third-generation expatriate of Oklahoma, that word brings a much different set of images to mind. A brand can be more than a sales tactic, it can also be a violent act, committed against a living being, in order to lay claim to and assert ownership of that subject. A mark burned in the skin that not only renders a living being into an object, but also sets that subject into a narrative that will determine how they live, and ultimately how they die. This is how I see the brand that is America. Much like the rancher or farmer places the hot metal on the horse or cow's skin and forever changes its destiny, the people of any country are branded by their national narrative, and just like the rancher doesn't ask the horse for permission, neither do countries ask their citizens if they want to accept the myths and legends that form the national character. As we struggle over Indian mascots and seek to dismantle White Supremacy, we should remember that those that oppose us in the community have been marked by the national narrative. That narrative was placed upon them, it is a brand. A way of knowing the world, of relating to the beings around us. It creates a sense of ownership and also provides a sense of

being claimed, of belonging. It makes them, in their mind, “American,” and if we truly want to change the world, then we need to provide them a new brand to believe in. For if there are so many in our society so unwilling to surrender this previous brand, one of the logical conclusions we must draw is that our rebranding efforts to date have been mostly unsuccessful.

Now this is not to say that the political left has not created well-made brands to shift public opinion, after all, the left center of this country has moved significantly towards embracing greater relationality and interconnectedness throughout the course of the last three decades. In fact, my favorite of these brands of interconnection revolves around the organic online codification of Wheaton’s Law. In many ways the actor Wil Wheaton is a polarizing figure. Until the second decade of the twenty first century, Wheaton was best known for his performance as the underaged wunderkind Wesley Crusher on the TV show *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which notably triggered what may be the first example of what we have come to think of as Toxic Fan Culture. Wheaton’s performance as Crusher would split the fan base, with some young fans coming to see themselves in the young Acting Ensign and finding an avenue into the world of Star Trek, while others seemed to fixate on a perception that it was “unfair” that Wheaton received special treatment and was able to live in the dream world that they coveted. Wheaton would experience significant fan backlash, even by pre-internet standards, and would go on to discuss the detrimental effect that the hatred of the fans would have on his mental health. In the present as a cultural critic and social influencer, Wheaton now serves as a social barometer, as it were, to a certain segment of the “nerd community,” and his success in that endeavor can, at least in part, be attributed to Wheaton’s Law.

Although the creation of memes is a world filled with apocryphal legends, for no meme is ever created by a singular author, the general story goes that Wheaton’s Law was first uttered in

August of 2007, in a keynote speech addressing online sportsmanship given by Wheaton at the Penny Arcade Expo (PAX) in which Wheaton suggested that the key to fair online play was simple, just “don’t be a dick.” This simple axiomatic statement would conjure in the minds of many in the online gaming community, a hundred-year long history of entertainment personalities like Fred Rogers, Bob Ross, and Big Bird advocating for each of their watchers to treat the other people around them with decency and respect. Those gamers took it from there and shared and reshared Wheaton’s statement until it spread so far throughout the internet that it has become one generally accepted rule of online discourse. In the 2020s within the online space Wheaton’s Law has become a significantly powerful brand, helping sort the typical online user into one of two broad identities: those that in general follow Wheaton’s Law consider themselves to be relatively normal everyday people; while those that explicitly set out to violate it consider themselves and are generally considered by everyone else to be “trolls.” The creation and codification of Wheaton’s Law proves that we are able to create brands that advocate for interconnectedness and mutually beneficial relationships. Not only can we create a new identity within American culture that embraces a world of related subjects, but at least some portion of the populus seems hungry for it, which we should take as very promising. However, Wheaton’s Law also points to what I believe is the chief reason that our efforts today have only been partially effective, namely a lack of saturation.

This study has traced the path of an imaginary subject, the Hollywood Indian, as they strutted across the stage of the United States in the 20th century, filling Americans everywhere with a renewed faith in what it means to be an American. We have traced that path, and its aftermath, through three powerful popular mediums (film, comic books, and sports), but the truth is, the only reason that we did not find that subject in more mediums (literature, advertising, art,

radio, public displays, museums, political speeches, etc.) is because I, as the author of this study, chose to limit our field of vision. Shine the spotlight on any American endeavor of the early 20th century and you will find the Hollywood Indian there, shift the beam to look at the end of the 20th century and you will find people having to deal with that earlier history. The effectiveness of the Hollywood Indian rests not just in its brand design, but in how widely it was disseminated, and Wheaton's Law while effective in providing online operators with a new identity that they can cling to, has not in general moved into discourse beyond the online world. If we wish to be successful in altering the world, we need to engage in the same saturation messaging that worked for the generations of the past and I argue that the first, and perhaps most important, step in that process is accepting that the cultural conflict we are trapped within is nothing new, even if it does seem more pronounced in the present. We are fighting a war for tomorrow, and it's time we started fighting it like a war we want to win. Because the adherents of the status quo, those that would see our inequitable world remain unchanged, they have been giving the fight their all, every single day, ever since they wrestled the reins of the story out of our hands.

APPENDIX A- CONTENTS *Tomahawk #4*

Page 1: Cover depicting the primary action of “The Flying Frontiersman.” The hero Tomahawk flies through the blue skies of the American revolution wearing a pair of Da Vinci inspired flight wings. On the ground below him two Indian braves in the background have drawn arrows, and point them up at the death-defying feat, while from the foreground of the front left cover, two additional braves likewise have arrows drawn and are pointing them back toward Tomahawk.

Included Text statements:

In the Upper Left: “52 Big Pages”

In the Upper Middle: “Brand New Adventures of America’s Favorite Frontier Hero”

In the Center, just below the title: “The Buckskin Hero Halts an Indian War When he Becomes ‘The Flying Frontiersman’”

Page 2: DC/National Comics Add: “Tops in Comics. This Symbol on the Cover of *any* Comics Magazine is Your Guarantee of the Best in Comic reading!” (Emphasis in original)

Pages 3-15: Tomahawk Story

“Tomahawk: Wanted: Dead or Alive” Tomahawk #4. March-April 1951. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY.

Plot: In 1768, an exiled rebellious Lord named Robert Fenwick (who’s facial features appear modeled after Vincent Price) arrives in the young British colony of America intent on building himself the kingdom he failed to take from King George in England, by starting a war between Indian and colonists. Only one thing stands in his way, the noble warrior, Tomahawk, whom Fenwick’s aide-de-camp designates as a ‘champion to Indian and colonist alike,’ a man who “represents an army.”

Thus the “evil” English lord hatches a plan to send a military officer to fool the local Indian tribe, led by Chief Strong Bow, into believing that Tomahawk intends to lead a military assault against them, while simultaneously convincing Tomahawk and the local colonists to bury their weapons near the Indigenous village as a sign of peace. With the fuse primed and these two armed groups brought in a common place the Indian tribe opens fire on the colonists leading to what they believe is an “Indian Ambush.” On the colonial side, Tomahawk soon finds himself a wanted man with a one-thousand-pound reward on his racoon hat wearing head.

While avoiding capture, the reader is taken on a journey through the frontier skills that Tomahawk has gained from his time among Indians, as finding himself without gun powder, Tomahawk is forced to fashion a bow and a spear in the wilderness in order to hunt birds and fish

in the local stream. Tomahawk also displays his inherited tracking ability by using branches from a nearby tree to obscure his trail, but in a poignant bit of foreshadowing for the fate of Indigenous Peoples broadly, none of Tomahawk's "Super Indian" abilities keep him safe when corrupt colonial officials deploy the full might of the local colonists in seeking his capture, leading to the need of his sidekick Dan to raise a small group of loyal Indians to affect a rescue mission.

From these friendly Indians Tomahawk learns that the local Indian tribe is being led by the earlier mentioned English officer against the local colonists. In order to break through the nefarious plot of these foreign British influences, Tomahawk casts aside his traditional buckskin garb, dyes his skin, and enters Chief Strong Bow's village in "Indian Disguise" or what we know of as "Playing Indian." When challenged by the now Indigenized Tomahawk that his words are lies, the English officer decides to forego any waiting for proof and instead challenges Tomahawk to an "Indian style" game of strength, however, knowing that Tomahawk is an expert in both marksmanship and wrestling, he instead challenges Tomahawk to a joust, an activity Tomahawk says he "has never seen." None-the-less the unique blend of former European subject and Indigenous contact as represented by the American settler "playing Indian" quickly learns the game and unseats the pompous British Officer.

Having demonstrated the nefarious plot and once again having brought peace amongst the colonists and the Indians, Tomahawk ends the story, in the final frame once again in his traditional frontiersmen garb and basking in the appreciation of the Indian tribe.

Page 16: Royal Desserts pudding advertisement: "Collect *Royal Stars* of Sports and Movies. *Free* of Extra Cost" (Emphasis in original)

Page 17: (Half page split)

Top Half: Fleers Double Bubble Advertisement.

Content: A small group of children are playing Indian around a normally dressed girl who has been tied to a pole staked in the ground, they make ridiculous motions while dancing around the pole and speaking in broken English (or what Sheyahshe calls "Tonto Talk"). They are demanding a ransom, claiming that they will soon "burn-um at the stake," when a boy (who I believe is meant to appear foolish, as he is presented as overweight and is wearing a red and white striped shirt with a red and white beanie cap) returns with the ransom, a pack of Double Bubble Gum.

Bottom Half: DC/National Editorial Board Notification/Advertisement, touting the approval of DC Comics by significant members of the academic world of the time, including: Dr. Laretta Bender; Josette Franks; Dr. W.W.D. Sones; and Dr. S. Harcourt Peppard.

Pages 18-26: Tomahawk Story

“Dan Hunter, the Young Brave” Tomahawk #4. March-April 1951. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY.

Plot: Once again, a Tomahawk adventure begins with a nefarious European land baron trying to steal Indigenous land. This time the year is 1772 and the baron appears to be French and goes by the name De Rhon. De Rhon’s evil plan is to set loose a couple of colonial specialists in creating wars amongst Indigenous Peoples, however this plan immediately backfires, and the two Western men are discovered by the Indians. Tomahawk, and his young companion Dan Hunter, notice the two men fleeing the Indigenous village and set out in pursuit. Forced to separate by the fleeing men, Dan is soon caught by a trap left by the departing bandit and is hit by a tree branch, knocking him from his horse and is rendered unconscious.

Briefly thereafter Dan is found by a young Indian maiden who summons Indian braves to take him to the village as she fears that if she leaves him there unattended “he will die.” Upon Dan’s awakening the Indigenous maiden introduces herself as Princess Morning Star (look out world, here comes a literal “Indian Princess”) and Dan, finding himself suffering from amnesia decides to remain among those he “consider my friends [the Indian]” and casts aside his frontiersman buckskins to become an Indian brave. We then see a three-panel montage of Dan learning (or perhaps demonstrating, might be a better term) Indigenous skills as he bests older braves in stick fighting, hunting and riding. So proficient is Dan that Princess Morning Star says that his “skill at the games and the hunt have impressed the others! They consider you a leader!” (Now much like Tomahawk, Dan through close contact with Indigenous Peoples has learned how to “out Indian the Indian.”)

Meanwhile, Tomahawk, now concerned over Dan’s absence, decides to return to the village where he is mistaken for the white settlers that attacked the village previously. After a confrontation, the braves pursue him led by their newest member Dan Hunter. As Tomahawk will often do throughout his 140-issue run, he jumps off his horse once he reaches the trees, in order to avoid a confrontation and in doing so happens across the very miscreants that he has been hunting. However outnumbered and unarmed, Tomahawk is overpowered by the pair, leaving it to Dan and the Indian braves to save the day. However, in the fighting, Dan is thrown from his horse and hits his head, recovering his “natural” memory and losing all memories of his time with the beautiful Princess Morning Star. The Comic ends with Dan returning to his frontiersman garb and Western life. (In other words, Dan can be the best Indian that the tribe has, with little or no effort to gain or build the skills needed, but he cannot take any of the Indigenous identity he built with Princess Morning Star back to his “normal” life as a Western frontiersman.)

Page 27: (Split Page)

Top 2/3rds: “Chief Hot Foot” (5 panel comic strip)

Content: Created by Henry Boltinoff, Chief Hot Foot was a popular newspaper comic strip that appeared most predominantly in DC/National comic books between the 1940s and the 1950s. In this month’s adventure Chief Hot Foot is sending the tribe a smoke signal when his friend Rain-in-the-face arrives and he realizes he has made a mistake, to which Chief Hot Foot responds by ascending the mountain beside him to use a firer stoker to erase his mistake.

Bottom 1/3rd: Columbia Built Bicycles Advertisement: “Be KING of the ROAD with this GREAT BIKE!” (Emphasis in original)

Page 28: (1 Page History Comic) “Sequoyah”

Content: This 6-panel history comic tells the history of Sequoyah and the creation of the Cherokee alphabet from a mostly 1950s liberal perspective. The comic itself is flattering of Sequoyah but takes several steps to present Sequoyah as an assimilationist Indian including identifying his English name, George Guess, and thus claiming him as a Western subject versus the other Cherokee presented in the comic. Additionally, Sequoyah is presented as fully clothed in the comic, while the other Cherokee are presented as scantily clad and shirtless Hollywood Indians in buckskin pants with shields and spears. Finally, the comic positions these Cherokee warriors as backward luddites standing in the way of the progress that Sequoyah seeks to bring his people in the form of reading and writing.

(Like most liberal themed comics of this time period, this comic is doing good work in general of humanizing Indigenous Peoples for the reader, but it cannot break free of retransmitting the underlying colonial narrative that privileges Western worldviews over Indigenous ones, and ultimately Sequoyah’s acceptance of an English name allows the young reader to interpret this history as part of their own Western history, rather than as Indigenous history.)

Pages 29-34: Tales of the Arrow Maker Story

“Tales of the Arrow Maker: The Legend of the Red Quarry” Tomahawk #4. March-April 1951. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY.

Plot: As is common for this long running back-up feature, this comic book story begins with a young pair of Indian braves engaged in a social taboo behavior, that the elder Gray Beaver must correct by telling them a story. In this case the behavior is threatening to shoot arrows at dignitaries from another tribe who are coming to the camp for a parlay and a smoking of the peace pipe, to which Gray Beaver tells them the story of the Indian brave Eagle Feather, the creator of the peace pipe.

In the tale told by Gray Beaver, Eagle Feather goes on a vision quest and asks the “Great Spirit” to help him bring peace amongst the people (while the Great Spirit is shown in visual images, the story is specifically ambiguous about whether Eagle Feather receives an answer). Completing his vision quest, Eagle Feather swears off warfare and now refuses to wear his armor and weapons.

Despite facing ridicule at the hands of most the braves of his people, Eagle Feather finds a small number of braves willing to listen to him and he hatches a plan to challenge the four great chiefs (North, South, East, and West) to parlay with him at the Red Quarry, an important mystical location that fills many of the chiefs with dread and forces them to accept or be viewed by their peoples as cowards.

While the chiefs of the Peoples of the East and West have little interest in peace, they appear to be content to meet with Eagle Feather in good faith, if only to argue about why they should be the leader of all of the people. However, things play out differently in the South, where the chief gathers his forces in order to attack all who attend the gathering, and among Eagle Feather's own People of the North, where the chief refuses to listen to him. In order to force his chief to attend, Eagle Feather challenges him to a wrestling match, which of course he wins, forcing the reticent chief to attend the gathering.

As the gathering begins, things go about how you would expect with every chief shouting to the others that they should be in charge, right up until the chief from the Southern Peoples calls for his forces to attack. But never fear faithful reader, because it is at this point that Eagle Feather demonstrates for the reader that he is running a giant confidence scheme and that guessing at least one of the fierce war loving leaders would try to take advantage of the gathering, he has dispatched his followers to the heights of the Red Quarry at which they are meeting to prepare a large explosion with lots of fire and smoke. Calling on the Great Spirit to send a sign, he signals his men to detonate the explosion and as Gray Beaver explains to the young braves at the end of the story, seeing the fire and smoke, the chiefs agree to a parlay structure structured around the peace pipe. The story ends with the two braves accepting the lesson and agreeing to meet and welcome the incoming delegates.

Page 35: Split Page

Top 2/3rds: "The Indian War Over a Dead Cow"

Content: In a bit of a departure for this particular issue of *Tomahawk*, the 4-panel comic "The Indian War Over a Dead Cow," presents the circumstances of a confrontation between the forces of Chief Stirring Bear (depicted as Lakota and referred to as Sioux in the story) and a cavalry Lieutenant outside of Laramie Wyoming in 1851.

In the story Stirring Bear and his people attend the signing of the Laramie treaty of 1851 at the invitation of famous Army Scout and Mountain Man Jim Bridger. But when one of Stirring Bear's braves kills an old cow, 2nd Lt. Grattan (seemingly inspired by John Lawrence Grattan) decides to assault Stirring Bear's camp and orders his detachment of 30 men to fire into the peaceful gathering, at which point the Lakota turn on the cavalry and destroy the detachment.

(Although like most other history comics in this genre “The Indian War Over a Dead Cow” is littered with ahistorical inaccuracies, it is none-the-less an interesting outlier in this genre as the text of the story firmly takes the side of the Indigenous Peoples in the circumstances surrounding this battle. The story clearly indicates in the text that the murdered cow was “an ownerless, decrepit cow,” and that before turning on and attacking the cavalry, that Stirring Bear’s village had been fired upon and that the “Indian patience had run out.” Finally, the story ends not by lamenting the dead cavalry troopers, but instead claims that thanks to Grattan “it took forty years to effect another binding treaty of peace!” While it still presents Indigenous Peoples as firmly objects of the past, of all the stories and peritexts in *Tomahawk #4*, “The Indian War Over a Dead Cow” is progressive thinking and does the amplest job of considering that Indigenous Peoples, in this case the Lakota, were the equals of American citizens.)

Lower 1/3rd: Nestle’s Crunch Advertisement.

Content: Large depiction of a Nestle Crunch bar surrounded by the disembodied heads of four children enjoying Crunch bars.

Text: “Our Bunch, All Munch” on the Left. “Won’t you join us, too?” On the right. “Delicious—Different” on the Lower Right margin.

Page 36: Public Service Announcement “Buzzy Scores one for the Handicapped [Disabled]!”

Content: This 7-Panel Public Service Announcement focuses on Johnny, a young high school student who has lost his hearing due to an accident. When Johnny appears to be having a good time dancing with Suzie at a school dance, another boy named, Wolfie, decides to cut in and ruin his fun. But when trying to cut in from behind Johnny, Wolfie is inadvertently shoved into a nearby record player, causing the boy to become incensed and Buzzy must step in to de-escalate the situation and let Johnny know he did nothing wrong. The comic action comes to a close with Johnny playing piano for the group, and Wolfie realizing he has been a “kill-joy!” The final panel contains a summation of the moral of the story by Buzzy in which he tells the young reader that “a handicapped [disabled] person wants to join in too!”

(This PSA obviously suffers from what we think of as dated language, “handicapped” versus “disabled,” but it also reveals much about what the producers of comic books viewed as an appropriate disability for public consumption in the 1950s. Johnny, while designated as “deaf” discusses with Suzie in the comic how he is going to get his hearing aids in the coming weeks and his disability is presented as the result of an accident and not as one that has been inherent since birth. Additionally, the PSA is strongly gendered, while it is true that the story revolves around Johnny and Johnny is coded as male, Buzzy’s final speech states that “his attitude depends on how you act toward him, so give him your help and understanding and he won’t feel handicapped [disabled]” suggesting in this moment, when linguistically one would be extrapolating this advice for relating to all those with disabilities, not just Johnny, that perhaps the reader should only be concerned with showing respect to the disabled if they are male? This

moment feels very strange to me and deserves further inquiry from someone with more experience surrounding the rhetoric of disability.)

Pages 36-37: Two-page activity sheet “Indian Album: The Northwest Indians/How to Make a Totem Pole”

Page 36: “The Northwest Indians”

Content: This one-page sheet sets the historical context for the activity to follow. The title “Indian Album” scrolls across the top of the sheet and two totem poles appear on the page, the first is in the upper left corner as part of a landscape that shows the totem pole in front of two long houses with a mountain in the background, while the other appears in isolation along the entire right side of the page. Beneath the landscape picture are two “factoids” about Northwest Indian tribes, the first of which locates the production of totem poles as an activity of Pacific Northwest Indigenous tribes, and the second one which describes the creation of Indigenous canoes.

Page 37: “How to make a Totem Pole”

Content: Under a drawing of an Indigenous man sitting on a log and carving a totem pole, the reader is encouraged to follow an eight-step process and create a small balsa wood replica of a totem pole which they can then use as a tie or shirt pin. Finally on the bottom of the page is a fairly good definition of the term “totem.”

Pages 38-39: Prose story “They Spoke with Their Hands”

Contents: This two-page prose story focuses on reporting on the development of Indigenous hand signals amongst the Plains tribes of North America and per the anthropological and historical principles of the time period seems to be little more than conjecture and lacks any research to actual Indigenous Peoples or ethnography, either of which would likely increase the fact pool that historians in this period could have drawn from. Notably the story does position “Indian hand signals” as being an antecedent to American flag signals such as Naval wigwag, thus encouraging the reader to draw the conclusion that these Indigenous communications systems are a part of their own history.

Pages 40-49: Tomahawk story

“Tomahawk: The Flying Frontiersman” Tomahawk #4. March-April 1951. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY.

Plot: As the third of three Tomahawk adventures begin, the year is 1771 and Tom Hawk (Tomahawk), and his young protégé Dan Hunter, are concerned over conditions in the “good” Chief Grey Cloud’s village, as with the Chief ill his much more aggressive Medicine Man, the

“evil” Red Pine seeks to turn the braves of the village against the colonists. While looking for signs of intrigue on the part of Red Pine, the pair happen across an inventor named Jonathan Craig, who has plans to test a flying machine. But when Tomahawk and Hunter are drawn away by a wagon train in need, the inventor is assaulted by Red Pine who steals his flying machine in order to gain prestige amongst the braves of his village, due to a local legend of a warrior who will come to the village on wings and save them in their time of need. With the braves of the village properly motivated by the legend of this wing warrior, Red Pine is able to illicit an attack on the local homesteads of the settlers of the region. Tomahawk must take to the skies in a second pair of wings to defeat Red Pine in battle and thus prove that he was, in fact, the winged warrior that was promised, which is confirmed by the braves of the village in the second to last frame. The story concludes with Jonathan Craig destroying his own invention for “though it stopped a war, [it] also led to war.”

Page 50: DC Comics Advertisement “Strange Adventures”

Content: On the left side of this one-page advertisement we see the cover of DC Comics *Strange Adventures* #5 while surrounding it are sales pitches meant to encourage the reader to purchase “The Magazine You Wanted!”

Page 51: American Seed Company Advertisement “Wanted: Boys and Girls to Get These Swell Prizes”

Content: This complicated one-page advertisement shows 15 potential prizes that young people can gain through earning points by selling American Seed Company products to their friends and families and door to door. Potential prizes include Daisey air rifles, Cinderella watches, Dick Tracey cameras, basketballs, and gold-plated cowboy pistols.

Page 52: Correspondence course advertisement “be a Success as a Radio-Television Technician”

Contents: Too much to summarize in detail, but the main sale pitch is “Extra money in spare time. Good pay job. Bright future. America’s Fast Growing Industry Offers You All Three!”

Page 53: Daisey Air Rifles Advertisement

REFERENCES

“AFI'S 100 YEARS...100 MOVIES — 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION The 100 Greatest American Films Of All Time” The American Film Institute. https://www.afi.com/afis-100-years-100-movies-10th-anniversary-edition/?gclid=Cj0KCOjwyt-ZBhCNARIsAKH1174_3Cok06QSTSVIUetO13Lx4ltn7jKRrMDiNqlYVUA8dFNV7cC5RHUaAjvQEALw_wcB (last accessed 9/30/22)

Ahmed, Sara. “Happy Objects” *The Affect Theory Reader*. Melissa Gregg and Gregory G. Seigworth (editors) 2010. Duke University Press. Durham and London. (pp 29-51)

AJP-3.10.1(A) ALLIED JOINT DOCTRINE FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). October 2007. <https://info.publicintelligence.net/NATO-PSYOPS.pdf> (last accessed 10/1/2022)

Aleiss, Angela. *Making the White Man's Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood Movies*. Greenwood Publishing Group. 2005.

Althusser, Louis. “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)” From *The Anthropology of the State : A Reader*. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated 2006. (pp.86-111)

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso. London and New York. 2016.

“Appendix A.” Personal notes as taken from an archival copy of *Tomahawk* #4.

@LeslieGaming. Tweet. <https://twitter.com/LesliGaming/status/1544124896556580870> (last accessed 9/6/2022)

Bakhtin, Mikhail, (H. Iswolsky, translator). “Rabelais and his world.” *The Applied Theatre Reader*. Routledge. London. 2020.

Barbour, Chad A. *From Daniel Boone to Captain America: Playing Indian in American Popular Culture*. University of Mississippi Press. Jackson, MS. 2016.

Bernstein, Robin. *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights*. New York University Press. New York and London. 2011.

Blackmore, Susan. *The Meme Machine*. Oxford University Press. England. 2000.

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Theatre Communications Group; Tcg ed. Edition. New York, NY. 1993.

Boeck, Scott. “Cardinals rookie Ryan Helsley, a member of the Cherokee Nation, says Atlanta's

tomahawk chop 'devalues us'" USA Today. Oct. 4, 2019.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/mlb/2019/10/04/ryan-helsley-cardinals-braves-tomahawk-chop/3869933002/> (last accessed 1/20/2022)

Blackhawk, Ned. *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London. 2023.

Brady, Erik. USA Today. May 9, 2013.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/redskins/2013/05/09/washington-redskins-daniel-snyder/2148127/> (Last Accessed 8/22/22)

Brooks, Joanna. *Why We Left. Untold Stories and Song's of America's First Immigrants*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 2013.

Carrico, Richard. *Strangers in a Stolen Land: Indians of San Diego County from Prehistory to the New Deal*. 2008. Sunbelt Publications.

Carter, Jill. "Discarding Sympathy, Disrupting Catharsis: The Mortification of Indigenous Flesh as Survivance-Intervention" *Theatre Journal*, Volume 67, Number 3. October 2015. pp. 413-432.

Choctaw Dictionary. (online resource) Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.
https://dictionary.choctawnation.com/word?sf_s=begin Press. Boston, MASS

A Christmas Story. (1983) Metro Goldwyn, and Meyer (MGM Pictures). Bob Clark (Director)

Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. 2001. Wordsworth Editions Ltd.

Coulthard, Glen. *Red Skin, White Masks Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2014.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. () "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8.
http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8?utm_source=chicagounbound.uchicago.edu%2Fuclf%2Fvol1989%2Fiss1%2F8&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
(last accessed 8/30/23)

Curley, Johnathan. "Spokane Indians mascot Otto celebrates 8th birthday ... again" *The Spokesman-Review*. Sun., June 24, 2018.
<https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2018/jun/24/spokane-indians-mascot-otto-celebrates-8th-birthda/> (last accessed 4/11/22)

"Daniel Boone—King of the Hunters!" *Star Spangled Comics* #88. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. January 1949.

Danto, Arthur. *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 61, No. 19, American Philosophical Association

Eastern Division Sixty-First Annual Meeting (Oct. 15, 1964), pp. 571-584 (14 pages)

Dave. 1993. Warner Bros. Pictures. Ivan Reitman (Director) Gary Ross (Screenwriter).

Davis, Wes. "Twitter is being rebranded as X: After Elon Musk tweeted about it all night, the bird site is shedding its feathers." *The Verge*. July 23, 2023. <https://www.theverge.com/2023/7/23/23804629/twitters-rebrand-to-x-may-actually-be-happening-soon> (last accessed 8/29/23)

Deloria, Philip. *Indians in Unexpected Places*. The University of Kansas Press.

— *Playing Indian*. 1998. Yale University Press. New Haven, London. 2004.

Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America: 1860-1880*. First Free Press Edition. The Free Press. New York, NY. 1998.

Donne, John. "No Man is an Island." *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*. Sermon/Poem. 1624. <https://allpoetry.com/No-man-is-an-island> (last accessed 8/30/23)

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Beacon Press. Boston, Massachusetts. 2014.

Dune. (1984) Universal Pictures. David Lynch (director).

Eminian, Dave. "How the Peoria Chiefs long ago moved away from Native American imagery" *Peoria Journal-Star*. Oct. 11, 2020. <https://www.pjstar.com/story/sports/mlb/2020/10/11/how-peoria-chiefs-long-ago-moved-away-from-native-american-imagery/114380860/> (last accessed 2/8/2022).

Eye of the Beast (2007) Paramount Home Entertainment. Gary Yates (director).

File Under Miscellaneous. (2010) Dir. Jeff Barnaby. Prospector Films. V Spot.org. Bravo. YouTube Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SEyAs-FSHQ&t=126s> (last accessed 1/7/2022)

"The First Commandos" *Roy Rogers Comics* #53. Dell Publishing Co., Inc. New York, NY. May 1952.

Fisher, Anna Watkins. *Safety Orange*. Forerunners: Ideas First. 2021. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London

Foucault, Michel, (A. Shepard, Translator). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, New York, NY. 1995.

— *The Order of Things*. Vintage. New York, NY. 1994.

—"Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* October, 1984; ("Des Espace Autres," March 1967 Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec)

Francis, Daniel. *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* Second edition. Arsenal Pulp Press. Vancouver Canada. 2011.

G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero. 1983-1986. Sunbow Productions. Marvel Productions.

Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. "History Resources: The Doctrine of Discovery, 1493: A Spotlight on a Primary Source by Pope Alexander VI"
https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/doctrine-discovery-1493?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwwYSwBhDcARIsAOyL0fgWfKSZVRdVlq28UKrHcAPZMy9_PbqWf1ypeK5PtyJVbmr0o-syNdQaAi76EALw_wcB (Last accessed 3/25/2024)

Glaude, Eddie S., Jr. *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*. B/D/W/Y Broadway Books. New York. 2016.

Goold, Derrick. "Cards' Helsley, a member of Cherokee Nation, calls 'chop' chant 'disappointing, disrespectful'" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Oct.5 2019.
https://www.stltoday.com/sports/baseball/professional/birdland/cards-helsley-a-member-of-choerokee-nation-calls-chop-chant-disappointing-disrespectful/article_4150156e-89ae-5e55-8e0d-7936eeef8ded.html (last accessed 1/20/22)

Gramsci, Antonio. "Gramsci in Prison: 1926-1937." *In The Modern Prince & Other Writings*. International Publishers. New York. 1957. 2016.

Green, Rayna. "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture." *The Massachusetts Review*, Autumn, 1975, Vol. 16, No. 4 (Autumn, 1975), pp.698-714

Grenier, John. *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*. Cambridge University Press. 2008.

Harwood, Rodney. "Spokane Indians Take Historic Step With Logo in Salish Language" *Indian Country Today*. DEC 27, 2013, UPDATED:SEP 13, 2018.
<https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/spokane-indians-take-historic-step-with-logo-in-salish-language> (last accessed (4/9/22)

Hatchet. (2006) Anchor Bay Entertainment. Adam Green (director).

Higgs, John. "Alan Moore talks to John Higgs about the 20th Century" Nov 1, 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpajFQECzAk> (last accessed 9/1/2022)

— The Ezra Klein Podcast. Vox Media. 2019. (38:00-40:00)
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/a-mind-bending-reality-warping-conversation-with/id1081584611?i=1000448075759> (last accessed 10/10/22).

Highway, Tomson. *A Tale of Monstrous Extravagance: Imagining Multilingualism*. Henry Kreisel Lecture Series. University of Alberta Press. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 2015.

Hillman James. *A Terrible Love of War*. Penguin Books. New York and London. 2004.

—*Kinds of Power: A Guide to Its Intelligent Uses*. Currency Doubleday. New York, NY. 1995.

Horn, Maurice. *Comics of the American West*. Winchester Press. 1977.

Howe, Sean. *Marvel Comics: The Untold Story*. Harper Perennial. New York, NY. 2013.

Humanoids of the Deep. (1980) New World Pictures. Barbara Peeters (director) Jimmy T. Murakami(uncredited).

IMDB page: *File Under Miscellaneous*. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1666349/> (last accessed 1/8/2022)

“Indian Album” *Tomahawk* #62. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL. May-June 1959.

“Indian Album: How to make a War Bonnet.” *Tomahawk* #3. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. (pp.33) January-February 1951.

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) (Pub.L. 95–608, 92 Stat. 3069)

Iron Man 3. (2013) Marvel Entertainment. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. Shane Black (director).

Johnson, Jeff. “Reasonable Person Standard: Legal Definition & Examples.” Forbes.com. Sep 19, 2022, 9:19am. /<https://www.forbes.com/advisor/legal/personal-injury/reasonable-person-standard/> (last accessed 10/7/22)

Johnson, Lyndon B. “Remarks at a Dinner Meeting of the Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.: May 04, 1965. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-dinner-meeting-the-texas-electric-cooperatives-inc> (last accessed 10/1/22)

Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. Bold Type Books. New York, NY. 2017.

Kershner, Jim. “Spokane Indians baseball uniforms sport Salish word” Sun., March 16, 2014. *The Spokesman-Review*. <https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2014/mar/16/spokane-indians-baseball-players-uniforms-sport/> (last accessed 4/12/2022)

King, Thomas. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Indigenous Peoples in North America*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2013.

Lachance, Lindsay. “The embodied politics of relational Indigenous dramaturgies” Dissertation. University of British Columbia. 2018

Last Gasp (1995). WarnerVision. Scott McGinnis (director).

Lechuga, Michael. *Visions of Invasion: Alien Affect, Cinema, and Citizenship in Settler Colonies*. University of Mississippi Press. Jackson. 2023.

Lee, Stan and George Mair. *Excelsior: The Amazing Life of Stan Lee*. Atria Books. New York, NY. 2002.

Lesaffer, Randall. "Argument from Roman Law in Current International Law: Occupation and Acquisitive Prescription" *The European Journal of International Law* Vol. 16 no.1 © EJIL 2005. <chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcglcfindmkaj/http://www.ejil.org/pdfs/16/1/289.pdf> (last accessed 3/25/2024)

Loewen, James W. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension in American Racism*. The New Press. New York, London. 2018.

Lorde, Audre. *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* (Penguin Modern 23). Penguin UK. London, England. 2018.

McLuhan, Marshall. "Marshall McLuhan - The Medium Is The Message [1977] (Media Savant)" YouTube video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoCrX0scCkM&t=2450s> (last accesses 1/6/22).

Million, Dian. *Wicazo Sa Review* , FALL 2009, Vol. 24, No. 2, Native Feminism (FALL 2009), pp. 53-76

MSNBC YouTube. "Blaming President Donald Trump Is Too Easy: This Is Us. | Deadline | MSNBC" Aug 5, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKiB0APdxTo> (last accessed 10/1/22)

NFL.com. "Super Bowl LVI total viewing audience estimated at over 208 million." Mar 01, 2022. <https://www.nfl.com/news/super-bowl-lvi-total-viewing-audience-estimated-at-over-208-million#:~:text=Nielsen%20found%20that%20nearly%2090,a%20truly%20unique%20watching%20experience.> (last accessed 9/4/2022)

Nightwing (1979). Columbia Pictures. Arthur Hiller (director).

O'Connor, Lauren R. *Robin and the Making of American Adolescence*. Rutgers University Press. New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark, New Jersey, and London. 2021.

O'Kane, Caitlin. "The Federal Reserve says Taylor Swift's Eras Tour boosted the economy. One market research firm estimates she could add \$5 billion" CBS News. July 18,2023. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/taylor-swift-eras-tour-boosted-economy-tourism-federal-reserve-how-much-money-made/> (last accessed 2/3/2024)

Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study*. E-book, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb03237.0001.001>.

“Peace” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/peace#:~:text=%2Fpis%2F,peace%20between%20the%20warring%20factions. (Last accessed 8/5/2023)

Peoria Chiefs Online Store. Caps Section. <https://peoriachiefs.milbstore.com/collections/all-caps> (last accessed 10/16/22)

“Pinball Wizard.” *The Who’s Tommy*. 1993. Masterworks Broadway

Pool, Tim. “Taylor Swift PSYOP Theory GOES WILD After KC Chiefs Head To SUPER BOWL. Media Says OBAMA SWIFT 2024” YouTube Video. Timcast. January 29, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phOcUp3ujiI> (last accessed 2/3/2024)

Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. 1993. Vintage. New York, NY.

Pratt, Richard. Speech “Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections.” 1892. 19th Annual Conference. Denver Colorado.

https://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/sites/all/files/docs-resources/CIS-Resources_1892-PrattSpeech.pdf (last accesses 10/1022)

“Quick Quiz” *Adventure Comics #176*. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. May 1952.

Reddy, William M.. *The Navigation of Feeling : A Framework for the History of Emotions*, Cambridge University Press, 2001. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sdsu/detail.action?docID=202058>. (last accessed 3/12/2024)

Renegades (1989) Universal Pictures. Jack Shoulder (director).

Reservation Dogs (2021-2022) FX Productions. Sterlin Harjo and Takia Waititi (creators).

Rifkin, Mark. *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2014. pp. xvi.

Rives, T.M. “What the sale of Manhattan doesn't tell us about Native Americans | T.M. Rives | TEDxGowanus” (YouTube Video). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQcqKsIf1A> (last accessed 10/17/22)

Rubin, Rebecca. “‘Spider-Man: No Way Home’ Becomes First Pandemic-Era Movie to Smash \$1 Billion Milestone Globally.” *Variety*. Dec 26, 2021. <https://variety.com/2021/film/box-office/spiderman-billion-dollars-box-office-pandemic-1235143308/> (last accessed 1/6/22).

Rutherford Falls (2021-2022) Universal Television. Ed Helms, Michael Schur, Sierra Teller Ornelas (creators).

“A Salute to our American Indians” *Action Comics* #275. April 1961, National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, IL.

Saw. (2004) Loinsgate Films. James Wan (director).

Scalps (1983) 21st Century Film Corporation. Fred Olen Ray (director).

Schechner, Richard. *Between Theater and Anthropology*. University of Pennsylvania Press. 1985.

Seigworth, Gregory. Let’s Talk About Art and Culture YouTube Channel. “What is Affect Theory?” July 8, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuKIqF72Bwo&t=907s> (last accessed February 15th, 2024)

Seth, Anil. “Anil Seth: How your brain invents your "self" | TED” Nov 24, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7_LwuuPsAE (last accessed 9/10/22)

—*Being You: A New Science of Consciousness*. Penguin Random House LLC. New York, NY. 2021.

—“Your brain hallucinates your conscious reality | Anil Seth” TedTalk. YouTube Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyu7v7nWzfo> (last accessed 1/10/22)

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet: Revised Edition* (The Arden Shakespeare Third Series) 2nd Edition. 2016.

The Shawshank Redemption. (1994) Castle Rock Entertainment. Frank Darabont (director).

Sheyahshe, Michael. *Native Americans in Comic Books: A Critical Study*. Mcfarland & Company, Inc. Jefferson, North Carolina. 2008.

Shin, Tony. “Riverside Teacher Fired Months After Video Shows Her Dancing in Mock Native American Headdress” NBC Los Angeles. Published February 4, 2022 • Updated on February 4, 2022 at 7:48 pm. <https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/riverside-teacher-fired-video-sohcahtoa-headdress-native-american/2817486/> (last accessed 4/20/2023)

Simpson, Audra. “On Ethnographic Refusal: Indigeneity, ‘Voice’ and Colonial Citizenship.” *Junctures*, 9, Dec. 2007. (pp. 67-80)

Simpson, Leanne Beatsamosake. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis. London. 2017.

—*A Short History of the Blockade: Giant Beavers, Diplomacy, and Regeneration in Nishnaabewin*. CLC Kriesel Lecture Series. University of Alberta Press. Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 2021.

Singer, Beverly. *Wiping the War Paint Off the Lens: Native American Film and Video* (Visible Evidence, Vol. 10). University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2001.

“SOH CAH TOA Riverside California School Full Video (Archival Re-Upload)” YouTube Video. The Library Of Alexandria. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJPOABO6vvY> (last accessed 4/20/2023)

Some More News. “A Brief Look at Jordan Peterson - SOME MORE NEWS” Aug 3, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSNWkRw53Jo> (last accessed 8/12/2022)

“Spokane Indians” Wikipedia entry. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spokane_Indians (last accessed 4/9/2022)

“Spokane Indians Change Jerseys to Salish Language” *Indian Country Today*. OCT 12, 2015, Updated SEP 13, 2018. <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/spokane-indians-change-jerseys-to-salish-language> (last accessed 4/9/22)

Spokane Indians Online Store. Caps Section. <https://spokaneindians.milbstore.com/collections/all-caps> (last accessed 10/16/22)

“Spokane Tribe of Indians” *Spokane Indians Official Team Website*. <https://www.milb.com/spokane/community/spokanetribe> (last accessed 4/8/22)

Stalnaker, Robert. “Common Ground” *Linguistics and Philosophy*. Vol. 25, No. 5/6 (Dec., 2002), pp. 701-721 (21 pages)

Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace. (1999) Twentieth Century Fox. (George Lucas Writer/Director)

Star Wars: The Return of the Jedi. (1983) Twentieth Century Fox. (Richard Marquand, Dir.)

Steinberg, Alison. “Alison’s Angle: Massive Super Bowl Psy-Op” One America News via Twitter (X). @AlisonOAN “Is Taylor Swift an asset and is she being used to influence the 2024 election? Let me know your thoughts below” 4:18 PM Jan 29, 2024. <https://twitter.com/AlisonOAN/status/1752124163236761739> (last accessed 2/3/2024)

“Strange Indian Bird Beliefs” *Hopalong Cassidy* #89. National Comics Publications, Inc. Bridgeport, CONN. May 1954.

“They Spoke with Their Hands” *Tomahawk* #4. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. (pp. 38-39) March-April 1951.

Thunderheart (1992) Tri Star Pictures. Michael Apted (director).

Tomahawk #4. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. March-April 1951.

Tomahawk #62. National Comics Publications, Inc. Sparta, Illinois. May-June 1959.

Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization is not a metaphor" *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40.

Turner, Fredrick Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Essay delivered to the American Historical Association. World's Columbian Exposition. Chicago, Illinois. 1893.

V for Vendetta. (2005) Warner Media. Warner Bros. Releasing. (James McTeigue Director)

Vizenor, Gerald. *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*. 1999. Bison Books. University of Nebraska Press. Lincoln, Nebraska.

Waldstein, David. "Why One Team Named the Indians Won't Be Changing Its Name" *The New York Times*. Aug. 3, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/sports/baseball/indians-team-names-mascots.html> (last accessed 8/17/23)

"Walk Like an Egyptian." The Bangles. *Different Light*. Columbia Music Inc. 1986.

Wallisch, Pascal. "Two Years Later, We Finally Know Why People Saw "The Dress" Differently." *Slate.com*. April 12, 2017. <https://slate.com/technology/2017/04/heres-why-people-saw-the-dress-differently.html> (last accessed 10/01/22)

"Warpath" *Tomahawk* #3. National Comics Publications, Inc. New York, NY. (pp. 2-11) January-February 1951. (last accessed 4/12/22)

Watters, Jesse. "Jesse Watters: Biden wants a Taylor Swift endorsement" YouTube Video. Fox News. January 31, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuMhIDgz6JM> (last accessed 2/3/2024)

Weatherby, Leif. "Politics is Downstream from Culture, Part 1: Right Turn to Narrative." *The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture*. Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. FEBRUARY 22, 2017. <https://hedgehogreview.com/web-features/infernal-machine/posts/politics-is-downstream-from-culture-part-1-right-turn-to-narrative> (last accessed 10/1/22)

"What Was The First Toy Ever Advertised On Television." S.B.M. Small Business Mentor. December 16, 2021. <https://www.smallbmentor.com/blog/what-was-the-first-toy-ever-advertised-on-television> (last accessed 7/2/2022).

"WHO OWNS THE TEAMS?" HSW Group. <https://www.hwsgroup.com/who-owns-the-teams/> (last accessed 4/11/2022)

Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. Random House. New York, NY. 2020.

Wylie, Ann. “How to Make Your Copy More Readable: Make Sentences Shorter.” PR Say. The Public Relations Society of America. <https://prsay.prsa.org/2009/01/14/how-to-make-your-copy-more-readable-make-sentences-shorter/> (last accessed 2/25/2024)