The Deconstruction of *Chief* Blackhawk: A Critical Analysis of Mascots & the Visual Rhetoric of the *Indian.*

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Abstract

This Thesis is a qualitative, critical-visual analysis of the National Hockey League's Chicago Blackhawk's mascot, *Chief* Blackhawk. Through a decolonizing-deconstruction of various Indigenous stereotypes, this Thesis will examine the ethical and moral consequences of the continued use of disparaging Indigenous imagery for professional sports mascots, dominant White society's reliance on the *Indian* as the measure of American identity, and the ramifications of colonial control of Indigenous agency, thereby justifying Westward expansion.

Keywords:
Mascots, Indian, Native American, Indigenous Methodologies, Postcolonialism, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism, Critical Theory, Semiotics, Visual Rhetoric, Stereotypes, Social Justice

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***miigwetchenwandemuk* // Acknowledgements & Thank Yous**

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Dedication

This body of work, as with everything in my life, is dedicated to my incredible wife, Dee. *Chi'miigwetch* for your infinite love, support, encouragement, intolerance, arguments, and eye rolls - my world wouldn't turn, if not for you.

Elliot – Thank you for helping me see what's *really* important in life.

Jackson Thomas – may you grow into a world that no longer has to deal with stupid shit, from stupid people…seriously…

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and last, but never least: to my hero, Thomas Edward Sutton, my Father. Thank you for always being my biggest fan. I love you.

"We're too busy trying to protect the idea of a *Native American* or an *Indian* – but we're not *Indians* and we're not *Native Americans*. We're older than both concepts. We're the people. We're the human beings."

- John Trudell, 2009.

PREFACE

As I sit down to write this in 2020, the World is in month eight of a global pandemic that has ravaged and infected more than 450,000 lives, a number that I'm sure will have swelled exponentially upon publication. It has been one month, to the day, since George Floyd was publicly murdered in the streets of Minneapolis, Minnesota and it has been four years, eight months and four days from my involvement in the pipeline protests on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota.

Currently, the United States is completely enveloped in debates over systemic racism, police brutality, as well as State and domestic terrorism. Every media outlet is repeating a continuous stream of images showing militarized police viciously attacking and arresting protestors, grossly violating the civil rights of Black people, while their White counter-parts move about largely uninhibited. Astonishingly there is a large cross section of the population asking questions such as, *how could we have gotten here? Isn't racism over?* Or *How could this type of thing happen in the United States?*

One moral outcome sparked over the tragedy of George Floyd has been the increased scrutiny over corporations using Black racial stereotypes as their brand identity. In an effort to salvage profit margins, and appear to 'save face' with consumers, rather than acting out of virtue, some corporations have decided to remove their previously racialized identities and rebrand their company's images. Most notably, *Aunt Jemima* is retiring their entire production line, while *Uncle Ben's* Rice, and *Cream O' Wheat* are both rebranding their image.

In addition, despite much less media coverage and social fanfare, *Land-O-Lakes* and *Eskimo Pie*, two companies using racialized imagery of Indigenous people, have also rebranded their corporate identities. To be fair, *Land O' Lakes* did change their corporate image prior to the

recent social unrest. However, the fact remains that these are just more social tradeoffs that come on the heels of yet another terrible conflagration within the United States and these corporate actions are driven by colonial avarice rather than moral dignity. To be clear, a year ago, these conversations would not have happened. If not for the gruesome coverage of George Floyd's death witnessed by a pandemic-captive audience, national conversations about Black injustices would not be happening today, largely because of the effort by the Federal government, and by proxy, dominant White society to control the population through narratives of fear, intimidation, and misrepresentation.

With all of the positive effects of social change that the Black Lives Matter movement has made in recent weeks, the injustices that brought to light police brutality, media coverage, and public critique are now focused on institutions that enable systemic racism and social inequities – in spite of all of this - Indigenous issues remain largely ignored by main stream media, and thus, dominant society. The continued oppression of the Indigenous people of this continent are still *not* part of the National conversation in any meaningful way. The United States government has been resistant to acknowledge the pain and suffering inflicted upon this continent's original inhabitants, through generations of oppressive governmental policies.

The social activism that is currently taking place around the United States and the call for social change and equity under the law have long been plead for by Indigenous groups since the European conquest. This is not meant to dismiss Black Lives Matter as a movement, nor is it my intention to take the space of, or speak for the racial inequities of Black America. Rather, this work runs in congruence with their message, speaking to the racial inequities of Indigenous America, and the inter-generational trauma felt by these communities. These conversations need

to take place and Indigenous people must be the ones to lead them in order to effect real and meaningful change.

If something constructive can be taken from the senseless murder of George Floyd and the social upheaval that came after, it is that dominant White society is witnessing a repressed consciousness surge with renewed energy. It is feeling the crushing reality of the brutal racial inequities this country has perpetrated against people of color, and they are being confronted by the silence of their own apathy.

Five centuries after the arrival of Columbus, Indigenous communities persist in various forms throughout the continent. The struggle for physical and cultural survival continues unabated.[1] The climate of fear that has been created through generations of laws, policies, and rhetoric enacted by the United States government has allowed dominant society the ability to exercise greater powers suppressing dissent and opposition.

In an effort to remain resistant to this illegitimate exercise of state sanctioned terrorism over the centuries, Indigenous people have begun taking up activism roles which typically provokes anti-terrorist responses from state and Federal governments, often with devastating consequences. Survivance, the physical act of survival *and* resistance, is a powerful ethic within Indigenous people. Community and cultural preservation are highly valued and prioritized over outside political and economic pressures. Autonomy is expected. The right to self-governance under Federal law is expected. In our forced abdication, honoring your Treaties is expected.

Indigenous activists, as well as scholars, have raised concerns about the increasing levels of state-sanctioned terrorism (neo-colonialism) in the last twenty years in the Americas, suggesting that colonialism has never really ceased, it just morphed into contemporary models.[2]

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[1] David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, xv.
[2] Ibid., xiii.

The most salient example of this state-sanctioned neo-colonial terror against Indigenous activists was in 2015 at Standing Rock, North Dakota. Tigerswan, the private security firm under commission by Energy Transfer Partners (Energy Transfer Ltd.), worked in conjunction with Morton County Sheriff's Department to subdue Indigenous activists, known as Water Protectors, who were protesting the installation of the Dakota Access pipeline (DAPL) that crossed through the observed Standing Rock Sioux reservation.[3] The Morton County Sheriff's department, along-side unnamed, unidentified militarized officers and jack-booted thugs, branded the Water Protectors as 'domestic terrorists' and 'cultural jihadists' as justification for their heavily militarized assaults against US citizens, the mass arrests of protestors and press, and the use of lethal force to suppress Indigenous treaty rights.[4] However, the question about neo-colonialism is not *how could this happen?,* but rather, *how can we STOP it?*

I think that it is imperative that social and cultural anthropologists, sociologists, critical theorists, Indigenous communities, and dominant White society alike, critically evaluate and speak out against neo-colonial terrorism, and what these ongoing traumas represent to contemporary Indigenous communities and individuals. Throughout American history, it is seen time and time again that as the Government's power increased, so did the abuse and depredations towards Indigenous people. Indigenous rights need to be respected and protected, while their historical traumas, resulting from the terrors of colonization, be acknowledged.

Seth Thomas Sutton
ode'imini-giizis // June 2020
azhashi'akijiwang // Grand Rapids, Michigan

[3] Tigerswan is owned by Eric Prince, brother of Betsy DeVos, National Education Secretary, Trump Administration.

[4] Alleen Brown, Will Parrish, and Alice Speri, "Leaked Documents Reveal Counterterrorism Tactics Used at Standing Rock To 'Defeat Pipeline Insurgencies." *The Intercept*, March 27, 2017, https://theintercept.com/2017/05/27/leaked-documents-reveal-security-firms-counterterrorism-tactics-at-standing-rock-to-defeat-pipeline-insurgencies/.

PROLOGUE

My goal for this research is so academics, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can look to this effort in analyzing racialized sports mascots as a contribution to the survivance of Indigenous knowledges and encourage a continued conversation among Indigenous researchers, and their allies, in the field of visual and critical studies. To accomplish this, it is critical that I address the inherent contradiction of postcolonial research, through an Indigenous lens, within the colonializing hierarchy of Western academia. Having researched, read and reviewed the available body of traditional Western academic scholarship, I can attest to a colonized paradigm that is deeply politicized. Imagery of Indigenous people, in particular, mascots, has been largely ignored as a subject of visual critical theory. Studies of the constructed imagery of George Catlin or Edward S. Curtis have become ubiquitous, but these studies reflect the concerns of non-Indigenous scholars, and have little to do with Indigenous questions of colonization and visual rhetoric.

I intentionally selected an understudied, if not largely ignored, Chicago Blackhawk's mascot, *Chief* Blackhawk because such a marginalized image allows me to apply critical theory to an American cultural icon, that has been as powerful as a Curtis photograph, within the modern era that continues to promote the ideology of colonization and oppression. And although the mascot controversy in professional sports remains a contentious issue today, it would be neglectful of me to not to acknowledge more pressing issues facing contemporary Indigenous peoples today, such as healthcare, alcoholism, sexual assault, and violence towards women; however, most advocates in the struggle to change derogatory mascots view mascots as a

metaphor for the ongoing struggle between reconciliation and trauma while discussing Indigenous identity.

The decolonization of knowledge is key to my research and is at the heart of Indigenous methodologies, because it allows for the deconstruction of oppressive power structures put in place at the time of the European invasion. Since modern academia has recently become open to the Indigenous perspective, I understand that part of my responsibility of undertaking academic research of this nature, is to make sure non-Indigenous people come to know and see our worldview, in a culturally responsible and respectful way. Colonization has had a profound impact on Indigenous knowledge, for Indigenous people, the act of sharing knowledge through teachings/stories, is a way in which each generation is held accountable to the next for the transmission of knowledge. My framework for inquiry is based on the premise that Indigenous methodologies can find a place alongside other qualitative methods, because of the shared characteristics with other relational qualitative methodologies, such as the postmodern, or critical race theory's use of counter-narratives.

Colonialism interrupts the organic transmission of tribal epistemologies. Many Indigenous communities now understand that for their own culture to survive, a part of it must reside within traditional institutions of colonial power, including Western education, academia, and research. However, as the academic landscape shifts to include the growing Indigenous presence, I aim to move beyond the binary *settler/savage* relationships to create new paradigms of research and theory that works to disrupt the homogeneity of Western research methods. I see this project as a catalyst that creates entry points within current academic dialogues, where Indigenous knowledge can serve as a bridging function for non-Indigenous readers.

While critical theory and postmodern analyses from Indigenous scholars such as Gerald Vizenor or Anton Treuer have created spaces within Western academia for literary critiques on representations and stereotypes, Western academic ideologies of visual artifacts remain significantly unchallenged.[5] Meaning, the omission of non-traditional perspectives, such as Indigenous scholars, leaves a large vacuum in academic discourse on the visual production of meaning. Decolonization efforts have been adopted by a number of scholars of color, such as Apollo Amoko.[6] The majority of my research shows only minuscule shifts are needed to include the critical theories produced by Indigenous scholars, such as Vizenor and Treuer. The consequences of dominant Western methodological approaches, are that Indigenous communities are still being studied by non-Indigenous academics who pursue Westernized research, under colonialized terms. Although we live in an age where there is an increase in inclusivity, Indigenous communities are still being subjected to the colonizer's gaze. By selecting a visual artifact, such as the National Hockey League's *Chief* Blackhawk mascot, I aim to advance Indigenous scholarship through the use of a modern image that to most observers has become ubiquitous, and yet, is regularly viewed by a broad cross-section of Americans who unconsciously embrace the commodified visual representation of an Indigenous identity. There is more to the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot than meets the eye.

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[5] Anton Treuer, *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask* (Borealis Books, 2012); and Gerald R., *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance.* (University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

[6] Apollo Amoko, *Postcolonialism in the Wake of the Nairobi Revolution: Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the Idea of African Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan. 2010).

INTRODUCTION

Establishing a Discourse on *Chief* Blackhawk

In the tidal waves of social change that have swelled since the 2020 murder of George Floyd, the Chicago Blackhawks' franchise owner, Rocky Wirtz publicly stated that the Blackhawks will not change their mascot, contending that their use of an Indigenous head, in profile, honors the historical Indigenous person Black Hawk as well as Indigenous people as a whole.[7] A qualitative critical analysis of the Chicago Blackhawks' mascot, *Chief* Blackhawk (figure 1) will establish that the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot is nothing more than a iconic representation of an Indigenous person, inculcated into dominant society's consciousness from colonial American ideologies as a measure of regional identity for White settlers, and by proxy, American identity – and in no way resembles the historical Sauk man, Black Hawk.

For Your Consideration

The use of any kind of derogatory Indigenous imagery for sports mascots is seen by most in the Indigenous community as a way of sidestepping the acknowledgment of responsibility of colonization by the White American public. To this point, in 2019, the American Indian Center of Chicago (AIC) ended an eight-year partnership with the Chicago Blackhawks Foundation, whose collaborative purpose was to educate the public on Indigenous issues. The AIC cited the Blackhawks organizations' continued perpetuation of harmful stereotypes as the main reason for the split. In their public statement the AIC wrote:

[7] Allen Kim, "Chicago Blackhawks won't change name because it honors the life of an actual Native American." CNN. July 8, 2020. Accessed July 8, 2020. www.wnem.com.

> [the] AIC will have no professional ties with the Blackhawks or any other organization that perpetuates harmful stereotypes. We see this as necessary to sustain a safe, welcoming environment for members of our community as well as protecting our cultural identity and traditions.[8]

The problematics of racialized Indigenous tropes have been the topic of social activism for decades. Yet today, there is still resistance to acknowledging that sports mascots depicting harmful Indigenous stereotypes are a continuation of racialized, colonial violence. Indigenous stereotypes work to promote, justify, and normalize inequity, reifying notions of presumed biological difference. These illusionary concepts of the American racial/ethnic hierarchy, simultaneously amplify and negatively impact contemporary Indigenous concepts of identity.[9] Present-day dominant society engages in a continued practice of adherence to colonial ideologies, which in turn, further normalizes the oppressive power structures that are in place to both support and to be supported by Indigenous subjugation. Postmodern critical theorists, such as Michel Foucault, posit that knowledge is no longer a liberating force, but rather a systemic mode of regulation and discipline.[10] I understand this to mean that the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot is a sign that can be read and understood as embodying numerous codes of colonialism.

One of the methods the colonizers employed in an effort to isolate the Indigenous people from the rest of dominant society was by stereotyping/caricaturing, turning them into a minority in their own homelands. This method reinforces the Marxist notion that the capitalist doctrine is

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[8] "Statement: AIC Ends Ties with Chicago Blackhawks Foundation." AIC Chicago, January 31, 2020. https://aicchicago.org/statement-aic-ends-ties-with-chicago-blackhawks-foundation/.

[9] Since the time I started conducting this research in 2019, two professional sports organizations that have been at the forefront of the controversy around racialized Indigenous mascots, Major League Baseball's the Cleveland Indians, and the Nation Football League's the Washington R*skins (2020), chose to remove their racialized mascot imagery and text from their names and organizations due to overwhelming public scrutiny. To date, the National Hockey League's team, the Chicago Blackhawks openly refuses to change their use of *Chief* Blackhawk, under the claim that it honors the historical figure, Black Hawk. For further information read Allen Kim's CNN coverage, July 2020.

[10] Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1993): 67.

first and foremost a power structure, and the basis of this power structure is class oppression, with an insidious economic influence over government. [11] The use of stereotypes, caricatures, and mascots have helped the dominant White society maintain its oppressive hold over the Indigenous people of the United States since the time of colonization. By their shear visual dominance and repeated use within society and popular culture, *stereotypes/caricatures/mascots* endorse and propagate the long-standing racial divide that is time-honored in this country.[12]

As White Americans continued to settle the American West in the decades following the American Civil War, the original Indigenous inhabitants were still seen as problematic. The United States campaign against the Cheyenne in the Winter of 1869 was extensively covered in the media across the Nation, and as such, greatly influenced popular sentiments towards Indigenous people. By this time, dominant society was in favor of the eradication of Indigenous people even if it meant their inevitable extinction. Appearing in the final months of Andrew Johnson's administration, artist Frank Bellew captures popular attitudes towards Indigenous people with his cartoon depicting General Philip Sheridan's policy of "whip first and talk later." In his January 1869 Harper's Weekly political cartoon, *A School for Savages; or, Teaching the Young Idea not to Shoot* (figure 2), Bellew shows General Sheridan (most famously remembered for his statement "the only good *Indian* I ever saw is a dead *Indian*") poised, mid-swing in the physical assault of an Indigenous child. On the floor directly underneath Sheridan and the child are a tomahawk and a smoking pistol, foreshadowing an end of Indigenous hostilities through continued brutal and inhumane governmental assimilation policies.

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[11] Simon Malpas and Paul Wake, *The Routledge Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 38-41.

[12] I am using the terms stereotypes/caricatures/mascots as a set of interchangeable words that wholly encompass the ideology of dominance and subjugation over the minority. Though I am specifically talking about the National Hockey League's franchise, the Chicago Blackhawks, and their continued use of the *Chief* Blackhawk caricature as their mascot; my aim is to utilize these terms as a signifier to envision the totality of these images, as a way to critique the ethical ramifications of their prolonged use.

A deeper and more nefarious narrative coded within this image is that Indigenous people are mere children, impulsive, irrational, and burdensome, and as such, must be physically made to succumb to the will of dominant society. These notions are reified by the text written above the confrontation that reads, “By the Sweat of thy Brow Shalt Thou Eat Bread,” and “and You Will Be Happy.” Suggesting that only through forced relocation and assimilation can Indigenous people survive. This cartoon is indicative of the ruthlessness of the United States’ policies against Indigenous populations and the demonstrates the scale at which these images proliferated popular ideologies. With dominant White society’s repeated viewing of Indigenous people depicted as racially and physically inferior in the news media outlets of the day

Caricaturing, as a form of stereotyping, is the practice of reducing a single subject, exaggerating its characteristics and qualities while also quantifying its representation as the whole of the subject. In the case of Indigenous stereotypes, characteristics such as large noses, big foreheads, long braided hair (with or without feathers), blank/stoic expressions, etc., become a replacement for individualistic human qualities. It becomes the template for all things Indigenous, regardless of the accuracy of the portrayal. The *Chief* Blackhawk mascot (figure 1) best illustrates this reductive method by exhibiting *all* of these qualities.

Stereotypes are misleading and hurtful because they represent the original subject as generalized, exaggerated, and most often, as a comical misrepresentation. It does not show the totality of the original subject’s existence or any qualities of the *Real*. Rather than responding in an analytical and rational way and recognizing that a stereotype is a hurtful misrepresentation of the *Real*, a stereotype will grow to replace the sign of the *Real,* and eventually be viewed as fact. As political commentator, Walter Lippmann, who coined the term “stereotypes”, writes that they are “the projection upon the world [of the] sense of our own value, or own position and our own

rights…they are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy."[13]

Dominant American society reserves and personifies power over Indigenous people through simplified stereotypes that negate actual Indigenous people's painful past and work to obscure the brutality of colonialism. Claims of innocent ignorance on the part of the United States, and its citizens, can no longer excuse the use of these disparaging images. The removal of the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot would force contemporary White American culture to construct an identity built out of their own diverse and multi-layered cultural heritages, rather than appropriating one from the original inhabitants of this land, whose voices they have denied.

[13] Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), 96.

PART 1

Reframing the Lens

A Not-So-Minor Paradox

A significant postmodern offshoot, *postcolonialism*, brings about new methods of viewing and reading images by considering a shared thematic approach. In order for one to make progress, one has to acknowledge the past, in order to construct a new future. Both acknowledging and constructing offer unique strategies for thinking. Postcolonialism asserts that this world cannot be measured by Imperialism alone, because a colonized view only works to marginalize the exotic other.[14]

Postcolonialism universalizes marginalization and works to deconstruct and reinterpret colonial ideologies. However, labeling the world as being *post*, as in *postcolonial*, suggests that colonialism is over and assumes the complete inculcation of Indigenous epistemologies into the dominant society. As a consequence, to have an Indigenous perspective poses a paradox. To the five hundred and seventy-four federally recognized tribes, two hundred and forty-five unrecognized tribes, and countless other Indigenous communities throughout the United States, colonization is an on-going institution of subjugation. Moreover, the ideals of the word *post* frees White researchers of their moral responsibility of accurate historical analysis. It is my assertion that colonialist ideologies, as a power structure, are still very much a part of the contemporary American identity and are coded within the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot.

Paradox aside, postcolonialism's method of visual analysis rejects notions of the nostalgic connection to Manifest Destiny that stains the modern ideals of American identity.

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[14] Edward W. Saïd, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

Postcolonialism works to trace the history of the construction of colonial apparatuses that were specifically designed to organize and promote Western culture.[15] It makes sense of the contradictions in Indigenous identity that arises from this paradox of dual accountability – to the Indigenous community and to the dominating society. Engaging the world through a postcolonial-lens helps to see the justification for postcolonial artists, academics, and others to explore their space of dual-identity and construct new languages and lenses for analysis and production.

Decolonizing an Image

The term decolonization raises some very challenging questions. It questions authority with identity, as it confronts representations of identity. Decolonization allows for a greater inclusion of Indigenous voices in public discourse, once reserved only for select few. It can be a liberating action taken, or a state of mind. Decolonization can be understood through the resurgence of traditional Indigenous foods, medicines, education, cultural ceremonies, as well as traditional and contemporary artistic practices. That said, the American stereotypical trope of the *Indian* generally falls into three categories: first, the merciless savage, second, the noble savage, with both representations being overshadowed by the third, more modern category, the spiritual *Indian* who possesses mystical ties to the supernatural world and communes with animals (figure 3).[16] These classifications are predicated on racial prejudice and bigotry. Representations of

[15] Simon Malpas & Paul Wake, *The Routledge Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory*, 137.

[16] Throughout my thesis, I will use the italicized word, *Indian,* and variations thereof, as an all-encompassing word that refers to the simulated, representation of Indigenous identity, terms, culture, and epistemologies. I contend that the *Indian* (*Native American*, *American Indian*, etc.) is a false, or hollow *sign*, that displaces Indigenous identity to colonial antiquity, and allows for dominant White society to construct false narratives that are used to oppress and subjugate. Likewise, I will use the term Indigenous as a more appropriate and accurate way to refer to the people living, and specific band affiliations, where known and applicable. The term *Anishinaabeg* will be used in various forms to refer in part, or whole, encompassing the people of the Great Lakes Basin's geographical territory.

Indians are neither true nor false, they are constructions of a colonizing system of domination whose ideologies are perpetuated through ignorance. This racial imagery and language serve an important psychological need for the White American identity, because it allows for the United States to absolve its guilt from the genocide of colonization.

Through a decolonizing-lens, one questions the authenticity of the *Chief* Blackhawk image based on the culturally biased artistic decisions illustrator Irene Castle made while creating the original Blackhawk logo in 1926 (figure 4). Decolonizing these images allows for the manipulation of the subject by resisting the static representations that are embedded in the psyche of dominant society. With decolonizing an image, new narratives can be constructed to challenge the long-standing colonial tropes tied to *Indianness*, savagery, and civilization.[17]

A Nod to Aristotle

Ethics and values lay the groundwork for stability in like-minded social groups and communities. Ethics are a set of rules that govern the behavior of a person, cultural group, or society, whereas, values refer to the set of beliefs that an individual has. These two concepts inundate every aspect of our lives. When we have to make a choice between two things our ethics determine what is right, while values determine what is important. Both severely affect an individual's emotional state of mind, be it personal values, cultural values, or community values. Together, they influence an individual to behave in a particular manner, thus they are our motivators. They are the reasons behind the choices we make and are our impetus towards action.[18]

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[17] Vizenor, *Manifest Manners,* 30.

[18] S. Surbhi, "Difference between Ethics and Values," *Keydifferences.com, https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-ethics-and-values.html?cv=.*

In 1969, Rhetoricians Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca published their definitive work, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation.* Their rediscovery of the classical Aristotelian rhetorical tradition, encouraged a greater appreciation of the function of public speaking in identifying, proliferating, and adjudicating moral values. They considered moral values to be essential in sustaining social groups. Their analysis of rhetoric rests as much on modern day sociology as it does in classic Greek philosophy. As a modern-day revision of Aristotle's theories, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca make the case that, by the very nature of their structure, speeches are acts of persuasion. Depending on the audience attending a speech and/or the desired outcomes of the speech, the speaker will deliberately alter the structures of the speech to effectively persuade their audience. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca equate this pragmatic augmentation to a question of value judgment. While an epideictic speech can demonstrate the oratory skills of the speaker, an insidious intention of rhetoric is to strengthen the audience's adherence to the values, identified by the speaker, and to reaffirm these values within the audience.[19]

Values are not fixed, nor are they absolute and since these moral judgements are based on biases and personal experiences, values have the ability to develop, evolve, and change over time. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca assert that epideictic speeches are perfect opportunities for the development and evolution of certain types of commonly shared value judgements. These types of epideictic speeches can foster a sense of solidarity, a communal spirit among the members of the audience who share like values. The term they use to identify this form of

[19] For a good illustration of this ideal, take Donald Trump's ability to "play" to his base. He understands the low moral values of his political base and he deliberately alters the content of his rhetoric to intensify the value judgements of his audience and to increase the adherence to his hateful message. On a side note, I am putting this in a footnote, rather than in the body of my essay, because this is the best that Donald Trump deserves, to be but a footnote on disparaging, rhetorical persuasive tactics used nefariously for political and monetary gain.

solidarity is *communion.* Communion, as they establish, sets out to increase the intensity of adherence to the group's value judgments.[20] In this scenario, the speaker will try to establish communion, centered around a particular set of values that are commonly recognized by the audience. To be persuasive in their argument, the speaker will utilize the entire range of rhetorical means that are necessary to amplify and enhance the message, and by proxy, the value judgment(s) of their audience.[21]

Reframing the Lens

In a departure from the commonly held belief of their contemporaries, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca rejected the view that members of the epideictic audience were mere spectators to the performance of the speaker. The very nature of rhetoric aims to increase the perceptive power of a message, and in turn, intensify the audiences' adherence to the value judgments being propagated. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca argue that the increased intensity of adherence, sought by the speaker and the sense of communion that the speech promotes, are hardly passive outcomes. An effective persuasive speech will help to reaffirm the commonly held value judgments that plays a part in future calls to action. This is seen as a means to strengthen the audience member's disposition to act, a disposition that will be made salient when confronted with effective arguments.[22]

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's addition to the discourse of persuasion within the epideictic rhetoric was paramount. However, its sole focus was on oral delivery of content. I

[20] A particular position of dubious judgement can be contested when considered on an individual basis, once separated from the group holding communal values.

[21] Richard Graff, and Wendy Winn, "Presencing 'Communion' in Chaïm Perelman's New Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 39 no. 1, (2006): 47.

[22] Graff, and Winn, "Presencing 'Communion," 52.

assert that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's concepts and languages of examining persuasive epideictic speech can be adapted and applied to critically analyze visual artifacts. By exchanging the notion of a persuasive epideictic speaker/speech with that of an image, one can still critique the effectiveness of its persuasive qualities and the associated group or audience's adherence to their commonly shared value judgements. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's core argument:

> Speeches are acts of persuasion. While a speech may demonstrate a particular set of oratorical properties, it also aims to strengthen the audience's adherence to values identified and reaffirmed within the discourse. This form of argumentation is aimed at increasing the audience's intensity of adherence to value judgments and fosters a sense of solidarity or communal spirit among members of the audience who share these values. The term for this type of solidarity is communion.

With small adjustments to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's language, I can more effectively apply the principles of persuasive epideictic speech to a visual rhetoric lens:

> Images are acts of persuasion. While an image may demonstrate a particular set of visual properties, it [the image] also aims to strengthen the viewer's adherence to values identified and reaffirmed within the image. This form of visual argumentation is aimed at increasing the viewer's intensity of adherence to value judgments and fosters a sense of solidarity or communal spirit among viewers who share these values. The term for this type of solidarity is *visual communion*.[23]

Adapting the ideas of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's core argument allows for an understanding of the way in which disparaging images, such as sports logos function as a means to shape and support social values related to Indigenous people.

Stereotypes/caricatures/mascots of Indigenous people are acts of persuasive epideictic rhetoric. They demonstrate a particular set of visual properties, *ignoble/noble savage,* that are

[23] *Visual Communion* denotes a state in which values are shared by members of a community. It is a crucial variable to visual rhetoric, whether as a product of, or a prerequisite for, visual argumentation. (Sutton 2020)

aimed to strengthen the viewer's adherence to values that are identified and reaffirmed within the disparaging image. This form of visual argumentation is aimed at increasing the viewer's intensity of adherence to value judgments of dominant White society, and by proxy the ideologies of colonialism and fosters a sense of solidarity or communal spirit among group members who share a common set of moral values. The members of the dominant culture engage in a *visual communion* to shape, indoctrinate, and normalize values.[24]

Moreover, the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot functions as an act of persuasive visual rhetoric. It demonstrates a particular set of properties, ie. the *noble savage* that is aimed to strengthen the viewer's adherence to the American mythological trope of the *Indian* and that are identified and reaffirmed within the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot. This form of visual argumentation is aimed at increasing the viewer's intensity of adherence to value judgments of dominant White society, and by proxy, the ideologies of colonialism. This fosters a sense of White solidarity, or communal spirit, among the supporters of these ideologies, and share a common set of moral values. Dominant White culture engages in *visual communion* when viewing the *Chief* Blackhawk image; shaping, indoctrinating, and normalizing colonial values.

When viewers see repeated images *Chief* Blackhawk through television or at a live hockey game, displayed by players and spectators, or other sports memorabilia such as jerseys, hats, banners, and foam fingers waving passionately in the stands, they are psychologically removed from the acts of colonialism that allowed for the image to flourish in the first place. The fans of the Chicago Blackhawks (or any other sports organizations that utilizes Indigenous caricatures as mascots), as well as the members of dominant society that advocate the adherence

[24] Here, I am further synthesizing my reframing of Perelman's and Olbrechts-Tyteca's ideas of epideictic rhetoric, and showing the transformation of their mode of rhetorical analysis to a new visual form of decolonizing rhetorical analysis.

to these moral values, engage in *visual communion*. This engagement is a form of tribalistic adherence that manifests itself in a fierce loyalty to their team, in the face of their opposition. To further demonstrate this point, the Chicago Blackhawks fans, collectively, refer to themselves as a *Tribe.* A human being's need to belong to a social group appeals to our primal sense of self, as well as to the American Myth, as it was built upon a collective sense of the American, White identity. America is a *Tribe* and the people who follow the *Tribe's* moral values are then considered *Tribal* members. The *Indian* has no place in America's *Tribe.* The Chicago Blackhawks are a Tribe, and its fans are its Tribal members. The *Chief* Blackhawk mascot acts as the rhetorical visual device that embodies, represents, and triggers the emotional, nostalgic connection to the American myth, and therefore acts as the badge of *visual communion* for their Tribe as an extension of their identity.

PART 2

Zhigaagong: What's in a Name?

Westward expansion can be traced to the National government's pre-occupation into new and uncharted lands and their attempt to civilize the "*merciless Indian savages"* under the flag of divine providence. This established, justified, and perpetuated the American myth. Thus, establishing a hierarchal power structure were the federal government possesses considerably greater cultural importance then Indigenous people. Expansion led to connection between territory and "Othering" in the same way Saïd theorized the concept.[25] This is to say, American settlers occupying new spaces became an important component to the construction of regional and National identity. The United States government held little regard to Indigenous people's territorial claim to the occupancy of the land, using ethnic categories to justify the removal of Indigenous people based on territory. President Andrew Jackson noted in 1829:

> Indians…lack the honest of industry [of White citizens, and therefore] the children of the forest cannot hold territorial power because they had seen land from a mountain or passed it in the chase. [Whites] are the true Americans; Indians have only artificial distinctions as [the] weaker subordinates.[26]

As an institutional practice, colonization is the physical act of domination and violence meant to sever humans from their relationship with their environment.[27] To lay the ground work necessary to visually interpret the racially charged *Chief* Blackhawk mascot, an examination of the context of the environment created by White society, who adopted *savage* nicknames and

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[25] Edward W. Saïd, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[26] Andrew Jackson, "Draft of First Annual Message, December 8, 1829," in *the Correspondence of Andrew Jackson*, vol. 4, ed. John Spence Bassett (Washington, DC: Carnegie, 1928), 103.

[27] How I am using the word *environment* can also be used to discuss the effects of colonialization in terms of social, cultural, political, and economic environments of Indigenous people.

mascots, evoking the warrior spirit to inspire athletes to greatness on the field of athletic competition, is needed. The obvious paradox that arises from the analysis of the Blackhawk's mascot, is the *actual* historical figure Black Hawk (b.1767 - d.1838). The Sauk leader is most famous for his involvement in what is now known as *Black Hawk's War* (1832), a brutal, one sided massacre that saw a man defending his people from the genocidal tactics of an invading government. This historical context will allow for the establishment of the mythological and emotional connection to the region, today known as Chicago, Illinois. It will develop the context that lifted the Sauk leader from an enemy of the State to one of the most recognizable team logos and most valuable sports franchises in the National Hockey League (NHL).[28]

An Emotional Tie to the Land

John Forsyth, Georgia senator and co-sponsor of the Indian Removal Act said during the Senate debate in 1830:

> The European doctrine of the right conferred by this discovery of new countries, inhabited by barbarous tribes is a reason to take land. The land, the streams, the woods, the minerals, all living things, including the human inhabitants are all the property of, or subject to, the government of the fortunate navigator.[29]

The land to which we are emotionally connected can vary greatly. It can be a specific place, a region, or country. However, it is absolutely crucial to the development of a collective sense of belonging (a communion of value judgments) amongst a group of people, even though this connection to land may change over time. This communal sense of identity can be derived from

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[28] Charlie Roumeliotis. "Forbes Ranks Blackhawks 4th Most Valuable NHL Franchise." *NBCsports.com. https://www.nbcsports.com/chicago/chicago-blackhawks/forbes-ranks-blackhawks-fourth-most-valuable-nhl-franchise* (accessed April, 14th, 2020).

[29] Forsyth's Remarks, April 15, 1830, *Gales &. Seaton's Register of Debates in Congress*, Senate (April 14, 15, 1830), 333.

the physical environment or a landmark that holds some sort of historical significance to the inhabitants around that area, or beyond.

Take, for example, the memory of the writing and signing of the *Declaration of Independence* in Philadelphia celebrated nationally every July 4th, this event has always been viewed by the dominant culture with a sense of grand nostalgia. The connotations that evoke the emotional connection to this event by ballpark fireworks, backyard barbecues, and American flag *everything*, are all signifiers used to symbolize a sense of national identity. These non-verbal signs, often site-specific, are extremely powerful in that they promote and perpetuate these beliefs and ideologies as well as show their subsequent authority over the land and people. In other words, these non-verbal symbols can be so ingrained into the collective conscience of society that they become commonplace to those of the dominant culture. It is important to note here that the British colonies of America, from their inception, always despised the Indigenous inhabitants of the land. Their intended perpetual denigration of Indigenous people and their contempt was so palpable, it was immortalized in the *Declaration of Independence*. Line 31 refers to Indigenous people as *"merciless Indian savages"* (figure 5).

Geographic localities and landmarks connect memories or nostalgia to various communities' sense of identity. Monuments, flags, and statuary depicting the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War (1861-1865) are symbolic of White authority and dominance in the South, just like the Alamo is a symbol most often associated with Texan independence. These symbols have become so rooted in the American psyche that they go largely unchanged, and when faced with opposing arguments to these ideologies, the viewer challenges their own nostalgic viewpoints, and thus, their very sense of self.[30] Imagery of the

[30] Charles A. Hill, "The Psychology of Rhetorical Image" in *Defining Visual Rhetoric* (Oshkosh: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 29.

Indian portray a similar nostalgic phenomenon, depicting a form of dominance over the Indigenous peoples of this continent. For Indigenous people, team mascots are a constant reminder of the continuing inner-generational trauma felt by colonization. However, this nostalgic identity that is linked to place, object, and image can become clouded with controversy due to the opposing viewpoints and meaning they hold for different groups. For example, the Confederate battle flag, whose supports argue that it honors their ancestors who fought and died during the war. What was first a pragmatic need for battlefield identification became an extension of Southerners' White ancestral claim to the land. However, these viewpoints are met with objection from various groups who contend that they are a constant reminder of the legacy of slavery and White supremacy in America.[31]

The fact remains that Indigenous groups played a key role in the development of the American identity. Yet, in order to feel a natural affinity and sense of control over the landscape, White colonizers, first had to sever the original inhabitants' connection. Geographer Richard Schein describes this connection to landscape, "Cultural landscapes ultimately are viewed as material phenomena, reflective, and symbolic of individual activity and cultural ideals, as they simultaneously are central to the constitution and reinforcement of those activities and ideals."[32] A location, especially once it has been imparted with a significant importance, then becomes important to our construction of identity. When a people adjust to the natural environment, they stamp that environment with their cultural impress, and from both the natural environment and the cultural landscape, create a deep sense of place.[33]

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[31] More recently, the Confederate battle flag has been adopted by supporters of Donald Trump to show patriotic solidarity in the commonly shared values of White supremacy and perceived rightful ownership of the land, by *true* Americans.

[32] Richard Schein, "The Place of Landscape: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting an American Scene," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87,4 (1997): 660.

[33] Richard Nostrand and Lawrence Estaville, *Homelands: A Geography of Culture and Place across America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), xix.

The Place of Wild Onions

Since the time of European contact, communication and translation has been a constant struggle for the *old-world* inhabitants to deal with. The significance of the disparaging use of the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot can best be understand through the etymology of the words most often used in conjunction with the Blackhawk's mascot.

There were many ways in which Europeans laid claim to their new-found economic prosperities and wealth. The most direct and substantial way of showing their physical dominance over the land was by naming it. This act was a way of subjugating and dehumanizing the local inhabitants. Whites often name locations that reflect their European homelands and/or local leaders and icons. They were often unaware, or held little to no regard, for the names that were traditionally and/or currently in place. As colonization in the *new world* continued to manifest through various assimilation tactics, the struggle between veneration and distain for Indigenous peoples became more predominate in the naming, or renaming of Indigenous communities through Anglicized adaptations. Traditional Anishinaabeg place naming practices made use of descriptive terms that described the functionality and/or physical attributes of the area. This concept is easily illustrated in the name of the settler-occupied State of Michigan. The Anishinaabeg locative name for the region is *michi'ziigaaiganan // the place of the big [abundant] lakes,* which is where the derived Anglicized nickname *the Great Lakes State* comes from.[34]

Located on the South-Western shore of Lake Michigan were vast fields of wild onions that were shared by various local Indigenous groups as food sources for their communities as

[34] The translations within this thesis are my own and are based on my working knowledge as a Native speaker of my traditional language. The translations serve as a bridging device for [non-indigenous] readers, is relational to the work and ideas within this thesis. It's also a signal that contained within this body of work are perspectives that are unfamiliar to 98% of the continental United States.

well as a crop used for economic value and trade.[35] With the Great Lakes basin being a humid continental climate region, the extremely pungent odor of decaying wild onion fields in the onset of the humid summer months could not be ignored. These physical characteristics; the abundance of wild onions and their overbearing smell is where the city of Chicago gets its name. Chicago comes from the Anishinaabeg word, *gaa-zhigaagwanzhikaag* // *the place of [abundant] wild onions*; with the word for wild onion sharing the word for skunk (something that smells bad, or has a strong odor), *zhigaag*.[36] Over time, as the Indigenous peoples became bilingual through their dealings with Europeans, this term was truncated to *zhigaagong* // *the place of a bad odor (*or) *the place that smells [really] bad*. This was in part an inside joke by the local Indigenous inhabitants (due to the use of humor in the Anishinaabeg culture to combat trauma) on the European settlers who came to inhabit the area; due to their lack of hygienical practices.

As various correspondences, treaties, and agreements were written by the local and Federal governments, there is a seen Anglicization of the local name, by mispronouncing *zhiigaagong* through a European vernacular, misinterpreting, and subsequently documenting the word/region to its contemporary iteration, Chicago. The White-washing of the original name for the region replaces the connection the Indigenous people held to the land with European mythological-ideologies of Chicago's 'original' Native origins.

The Birth of *Chief* Blackhawk

Mukadaawa-gigek //Black Hawk was born in the village of *zaagiinoog* // *at the inlets*, referring to the convergence of the *michi-ziibii* // *Mississippi River* and the *asin-ziibii* // *the Rock*

[35] Wild onion (*Allium tricoccum*) are also referred to as *ramps* or *Spring onion*, depending on region.

[36] *zhigaag* // *skunk* breaks down to *zhiiw* // *(a distinctive acrid smell and/or taste) i.e., sweet; sour; salty,* and *aa* // (*being in a state or condition of).*

River in the North-Western part of what is now known as the occupied State of Illinois, in 1767 (figure 6). He was an important figure among his people, the *zaagiiwag* // *the People of the Inlets*, better known by the Anglicized mispronunciation, Sauk. He is probably best known for his role in the rebellion against their forced removal from their lands, west of the Mississippi, by the United States government in 1832, fitting into the larger framework of Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830. Though the historical figure *and* mascot is popularly addressed as *Chief* Blackhawk*,* it is essential to note that Black Hawk never held the title of *ogiimaa* // *leader (Chief)* in his community.[37] *Chief* was a title bestowed by Whites, as a way of bolstering victory over *savage* enemies. The vividness of the word *chief* enhances the connotative nostalgia of the defeat of a 'superior enemy', and therefore, makes it an extremely persuasive emotional connection. It is important to understand that collectively, the dominant society's connotative connection to Black Hawk was a synonym for all things *Indian. "*Peaceful leaders are remembered as warriors, while warriors are remembered as heroes," and regardless of their tribal affiliations, all wore feathered headdresses, face paint, and were brutal adversaries.[38]

Black Hawk, along with a small band of warriors, eluded the United States Army in a fifteen-month conflict that concluded with the near annihilation of the band*,* in what is now remembered as *Black Hawk's War* (figure 7).[39] The final conflict fought in Black Hawk's War on August 1, 1832 was the Battle of Bad Axe, best described as a massacre rather than a battle.

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[37] *Ogiimaa* is a contemporary example of cultural-hybridity in language. The Anishinaabeg translated the male European concept of *Chief* into Anishinaabemowin to reference a community position/title that didn't exist. *ogiimaa* means *s/he has a mother, here.* With *ogii // s/he has a mother*, and *omaa // here*. The Anishinaabeg is a matrilineal society, and as such, this is a title of the head female elder who was in charge of the band. Although males do have input in how communities are run, females would dictate most decisions for the community. *ogiimaa* is also an acknowledgment of respect for Mother Earth.

[38] Ezra J. Zeitler, "*Geographies of Indigenous-based Team Names & Mascot Use in Secondary Schools."* PhD diss. University of Nebraska, 2008.

[39] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860,* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press), 359.

The United States Army, under the command of General Henry Atkinson, encircled Black Hawk's encampment in the early hours of the morning, catching him and his band off guard and unarmed. Realizing his situation and with concerned for the safety of this band, Black Hawk repeatedly tried to negotiate a truce with General Atkinson for the surrender of his people. Instead, while Black Hawk was under a white flag of truce, Atkinson gave the orders to open fire on the submitting camp. The United States Army slaughtered hundreds of innocent men, women, and children as they were fleeing the mallei across the river. Black Hawk's people were shot, clubbed, and beaten to death. Their bodies were stripped of their flesh to make leather patches and goods for the soldiers and *almost all* were scalped. Atkinson and the Unites States government considered this to be a military success with the loss of only five U.S. soldiers.[40]

The Black Hawk War, and the county's collective aggression toward Black Hawk's band, united the White settlers in the area. Their regional hatred transitioned Black Hawk from a mere man, to a rallying symbol of conquest and regional identity. The region's nostalgic connection to Black Hawk also saw the simulation of his identity become a regional archetype for the *Indian.* This archetype served to foster a continual sense of a perceived authority over the *savage* other. In a popular account of the battle, published a few years after the conclusion of the war, U.S Major John Allen Wakefield offered his firsthand observations of the battle:

> It was a horrid sight to witness little children, wounded and suffering the most excruciating pain, although they were of the savage enemy, and the common enemy of the country…It was enough to make the heart of the most hardened being on earth to ache [but I] must confess that it filled my heart with gratitude and joy to think that I had been instrumental, with many others, in delivering my country [from] those merciless savages, and restoring those people [White settlers] again to their peaceful homes and firesides. [Wakefield goes on to say,] …if they cannot be made good, they must be killed…and we did not shrink from

[40] Kerry Trask, *Black Hawk: The Battel for the Heart of America* (New York; Henry Hold and Company, 2006), 297.

> this duty. We all joined in the work of death for death it was. We were fast getting rid of the demons in human shape.[41]

In the United States' efforts to tame the frontier, Black Hawk was heralded as the valiant but vanquished hero warrior within days after his capture of the Battle of Bad Axe in 1833. Black Hawk lived to survive his own war and was ultimately sent to live on an *ishkoniganing* // *reservation* (literally, *the place of left-overs*) in Iowa in part as proof of the military's effectiveness in subduing the *Indian* insurrection as well as establishing the illusion of control over the region. Black Hawk's suppression validated that the "winning of the West," by any means necessary, was justified by the dominant White society.

[41] Frank Stevens, *Wakefield's History of the Black Hawk War* (Chicago: Calvin Goudy Press, 1834), 133.

PART 3

The Truth of an Image

Having established the importance of the land to the nostalgic connections of colonization to the White American sense of communal identity and shared values, it is key to add popular culture into our understanding of American efforts to shape and control references to the *Indian*. Expressions of popular culture in nineteenth-century America are very diverse. During the same decade as the Black Hawk War, America's first popular fiction novels were being written by James Fenimore Cooper. This foundational literature strove to express a cultural identity that was separate and unique from the British, paradoxically crafting a frontiersman hero who lived with, and understood, the various tribal groups. Two decades later, with the United States was on the brink of civil war, popular fiction in the form of serial newspaper publications turned to the frontier (still largely east of the Mississippi River), to tell the story of racial identity and honor using the *Indian* trope. During the Civil War, a new genre of fiction was produced that had disastrous effects for Indigenous populations, the dime novel westerns. Westward expansion became the fantasy for anyone desiring a fresh start, and that fantasy reinforced the national dream of Manifest Destiny. The *Indian* as a representation and symbol, occurred at a time when the fabric of the American mythology needed reinforcement. Painters, photographers, and wild-west shows—all furthered the image of the *Indian*.

Visual images have always been used as a form of propaganda and control when referencing the *Indian*. Paintings, often commissioned by the United States government, were made of Indigenous beginning as early as the 1830s. These early images served as a way to persuade the colonists to believe that the *Indian* was an uncivilized heathen who justified

conquest. Some artists did a better job than others in attempting to depict truthful and accurate representations, but most images from the early colonial periods showed Indigenous women as overly objectified and sexualized, while the men were portrayed as the noble or ignoble *savage.* Since the representation of their subject is contrived to be an image, there can be no mistaking the *Indian* identity in the image, because only *Indians* can fit into that image. *Real* Indigenous people and their cultures have vanished into the nostalgic feelings of Western mythological lore.

It is a widely known fact that both Charles Bird King and George Catlin would utilize a prop and wardrobe trunk to dress and adorn their *Indian* subjects in the colonizer's ideals of *traditional Indian regalia*, because the *Indians* didn't look *Indian* enough. This form of cultural invention can also be seen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century photographic practices of Edward Curtis. This practice of homogenizing Indigenous identity, solidified the noble/ignoble *savage,* pan-*Indian,* monoethnic culture into the consciousness of the colonizing, White psyche. It is also a well-known fact that Catlin altered his paintings of Indigenous people in an attempt to make them appear to be more European, and therefore, more civilized, than the primitive, *savage* state that contemporary society saw them in. Catlin would add or remove clothing, facial markings, jewelry, tattoos, and adornments. He would also alter the shape and size of facial features, in part, to persuade Europeans of the docile nature of the *red savage,* as well as to justify and propagate the ideals of Manifest Destiny.[42] Catlin was also guilty of posing his subjects in postures that imply Greek-Roman *Neoclassicalism* and *realism* influences, but showcase his *romantic* captivations with the *noble savage,* such as his painting *Wi-jún-jon, Pigeon's Egg Head (The Light) Going To and Returning From Washington* (figure 8).

[42] Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr, *The White Man's Indian Columbus to the Present.* (New York: Knopf, Inc., 1978), 88.

Printed literature became the most important vehicle for the perpetuation of the romantic American myth. This can be seen in James Fenimore Cooper's American classic, *The Leatherstocking Tales* (published between 1823-1841), a series of five novels, which is most famously known for *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). Themes of White-saviors triumphing in battle against the *savage, red devils* became essential in confirming the superiority of the colonizing civilization. In literature, the *Indian's* savagery and inferiority was constantly juxtaposed to the power and virtue of the colonial White settler, which always prevailed over the *Indian*; no doubt resonating with the European settlers of the Western Great Lakes, having lived through Black Hawk's conflict.

Dime Novels

Dime novels (equivalent to today's comic books or graphic novels) were first published in 1860 and played a significant role in shaping American perception of the *Indian*. Dime novels were mass-produced short stories and once reaching the public, became instant favorites among Americans.[43] The content of dime novels was the American equivalent of Greek hero myths, tales of bravery, heroism, and glory in the conquering of valiant, blood-thirsty adversaries. Hundreds of thousands of them were sold across the United States, particularly during the American Civil War. Soldiers found them easy to carry and read them for entertainment while on cessation from campaigns.[44]

In 1860, the publishing house of Beadle and Adams published the very first dime novel, a love story written by Ann Sophia Winterbotham Stephens (credited as Mrs. Ann S. Stephens)

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[43] Ezra J. Zeitler, "*Geographies of Indigenous-based Team Names & Mascot Use in Secondary Schools."* PhD diss. University of Nebraska, 2008.

[44] Robert Berkhofer Jr, *The White Man's Indian*, 99.

titled, *Malaekska, the Indian Wife of the White Hunter,* set in the eighteenth-century American frontier. It was a heart wrenching tale of the suicide of a man who found out on his wedding day that we was "part savage." Another best seller from that time was, *Seth Jones: The Captive of the Frontier*, written by Edward S. Ellis, the hero, a mixed-blood, Revolutionary War scout attempts to help a White frontier family under duress from a relentless attack by Mohawks. The hero is then captured and tortured in vivid detail. Miraculously, he escapes his peril only to be chased through the wilderness. Once free from his captors, he is revealed, finally, as a person with a high enough moral standard to marry a *good White woman,* the daughter of the settler family.[45]

The violence in these stories share a common theme works with other frontier-themed dime novels that involved Whites and *Indians,* which, in these stories tend to be a virtuous white hunter/*Indian* fighter who must turn to a form of *savagery* to defend colonial frontier expansion that is pitted against a barbarous and brutal *Indian* foe. By the mid 1880's, declining paper costs, better distribution, and an increase in literacy among Americans, the publication industry lowered their prices to meet the demand and expectations of the American public. The increased competition of available publications led to an escalation of violent narratives in hopes of outselling one-another. Dime novels elevated the mythological status of frontier explorers, scouts, mountain men, and settlers through even greater feats of American exceptionalism, while escaping blood-thirstier and even more ruthless *savages*. Like Achilles, whose exploits were exaggerated in Homer's *Illiad,* people like Seth Jones, Natty Bumppo, and Buffalo Bill became legends of the American West, and remained popular in dime novels through the early 1900's.[46]

[45] Ibid., 99.
[46] lbid., 100.

Seeing is Believing

With regard to persuasive imagery, there are two major responses, first, the contemplative, analytic and, second, the nostalgic, emotional response. As visual rhetoric scholar Charles Hill argues, persuasion is directly correlated with an emotional response. From this, it can be understood that the viewer is more likely to process information in a way that requires less thought. Humans like to categorize, compartmentalize, and minimalize information. Traits and similarities between objects get generalized, compartmentalized, and upon further acquisition of information, reduced, re-generalized, re-compartmentalized, until the total collective emotional memory of the trait is the stand-in for all things related to that trait, regardless of the accuracy of the representation. These generalizations are the mental shortcuts that are emotional triggered, rather than rationally considered. Once this association is made, the image then becomes a simulation of the sign and will trigger nostalgic connections and their associated emotions. To be persuasive, the image needs to manipulate the linkage between the viewer's emotions and values. The persuasiveness of a particular image influences the process of thought and decision making, through the transference of an emotional connection to an unrealistic representation of the *real.* Transference allows for its manipulation and use as a form of social conditioning.

Despite the fact that an image purports to represent truth, representations of Indigenous people can be considered highly suspect of what is *seen*, but more importantly, of what is *unseen*. The *seen* may represent family members or clan relationships, or a world that is familiar to them, whereas, the *unseen* are the traumas of colonization and the experience of being

watched and recorded by the penetrating stare of the invaders.[47] The appropriated images of Indigenous people then works to propagate the fantasy of *Indians* living as static historical figures that have succumb to the fate of conquest. These images create a power structure by which the dominate society bolsters their superior stature, and serves as a standard for measuring the material and economic progress within American society.

There is a common misconception that images do not lie, and that *seeing is believing*. Generally speaking, when an image is seen directly by the viewer, that image is viewed as reality. Vision gives the illusion that the viewer is seeing the *thing* itself directly, and therefore, believes that they are seeing an unmediated reality. The physical act of being caricatured renders a subject frozen, static in time, and therefore, ceases to be real, but becomes an image, an artifact. The artificiality of an image, as well as the mediation of vision, is a difficult concept for most to recognize, since it seems to go against the conventional evidence that *seeing is believing*. Susan Sontag's writings on photography helps to illustrate that images are imparted with emotional and meaningful subtexts, and all too often, these emotional connections, made from the mediated image, create a short cut in logic that is rationalized as: If the *thing* seen is close enough to the *real thing* itself, then it must be *real* and consequently, the image must be *real* (figure 9).[48]

Wild West Shows

Contributing to the decrease in popularity of the frontier-based dime novels, often written as an affirmation of Western cultural values, were the traveling *Wild West Shows* in the latter-

[47] Theresa Harlan, "Indigenous Photographies: A Space for Indigenous Realities" in *Native Nations: Journey in American Photography*, (London, Barbican Art Gallery, 1998), 232.

[48] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Doubleday, 1989).

half of the nineteenth-century. William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, taking advantage of his dime novel popularity, took the "wild" West on the road, bringing his stories to vivid-life. Cody's traveling theatre productions offered many Americans the occasion to see *real Indian* people for the first time, greatly influencing the millions of people who witnessed the spectacle. One of the most significant impacts that the Wild West Shows had on the collective American psyche, was that it cast the plains *warrior* as the archetype for the *Indian.*[49]

To illustrate the magnitude of visual influence over the populous these traveling shows had, it is important to point out that they were promoted as "America's National Entertainment" by the late 1880's and were extremely successful throughout the East coast, boasting an estimated five million attendees during a five month stretch in 1885. The show was so successful in New York that it stayed in residence for four months, performing several shows, daily.[50]

Part of the show's appeal was the lengths to which Cody went to create iconic re-presentations of a frontier that was not yet tainted by the industrialized world. His audiences sat mesmerized by elaborate special effects that simulated sunsets and tornadoes. Amazing backdrops that hung in back of staged battles sequences. A contemporary derivative of the Wild West shows would be *Dollywood* in Pidgeon Forge, Tn, or any of the popular *Medieval Times* francizes. Cody's depiction of cowboy's vs *Indians* solidified the ideals of White superiority and further elevated the status of the frontier as the place where the American Identity was born.[51] These and other spectacles recreating the *Indian experience,* portrayed Indigenous people in ways that were exaggerated, if not entirely fictionalized, and supported the audience's preexisting perceptions molded by news accounts, dime novels, and other literature.

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[49] Zeitler, "Geographies," 2008.
[50] Paul Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 84.
[51] Ibid.

A pair of lithographs (figure 10) sold at the show during World's Fair in Chicago in 1893 shows the hero, "Buffalo Bill" and the dreaded antagonist, Sioux *War Chief* Red Cloud, who Cody had hired in an effort to authenticate his theatrical productions. The lithographs were sold as souvenir memorabilia of the Wild West shows, enabling audience members to recall the nostalgic conquest of the continent. In another sense, these images reified and reinvigorated the ideologies of Manifest Destiny.

Cody's and other traveling Wild West Shows mythologized frontier conquest and incited America's twentieth-century love affair with the era, by bringing it to them and reenacting it live and in person with *authentic* performers who had experienced it firsthand. The thematic approach to Cody's Wild West shows no doubt influenced early motion picture directors and later the producers of radio and television shows. But there was another medium that would move the *Indian* from a household word to a super-icon, just over the horizon.

America's Favorite Pastime

At the time of the Black Hawk War baseball had been enjoyed by a wide cross section of colonialists for more than Fifty years.[52] By the mid-twentieth-century baseball in America was proclaimed a "National Pastime," and the popularity of the sport attracted woman, children, amateur enthusiasts, and professional athletes from around the globe, to either participate or spectate. Baseball was a democratic spectator sport where social and economic classes mingled together on equal terms. There was no delineation between doctors, lawyers, or factory workers. They were all spectators at the same game, collectively experiencing commonly-shared moral

[52] '"Baste Ball" Played at Princeton," *Protoball*, accessed October 1, 2020, http://www.protoball.org/1786.1.

values, cheering for their favorite team to be victorious.[53] With the mythologizing of baseball as the Nation's sport, it stands to reason that the identities that the sports teams chose were based on local and regional geographies or icons, as well as, characters from the mythology of the American West. The first professional sports team to adopt the *Indian* as their mascot was the Boston Braves in 1912, whose mascots was named, *Chief Noc-A-Homa*. The team would later relocate to Atlanta, Georgia.

Black Hawk's Other Military Connection

Ice hockey, having been invented in Canada in the late 1800's, remained rather obscure in the United States through the mid-twentieth-century. It wasn't until 1924 when the National Hockey League expanded to include the United States, that the sport of ice hockey captivated the residences of the upper mid-West and North-Eastern seaboard. One of the original six teams to join the league in 1926 was founded by Chicago coffee tycoon, Fredrick McLaughlin.[54]

McLaughlin was a Major who commanded the 86th Blackhawk Division machine gun battalion in World War 1.[55] The use of the Black Hawk name for a fighting battalion was meant to strike fear in to the hearts of the enemy combatants and boosts the Nation's sense of military superiority by reinforcing the myth that the United States Military is always victorious over *savage* enemies. The emotional connection to this myth is more palatable to the larger society, rather than the reality that the United States enjoys significant economic strength and privilege through brutal genocidal tactics. Making the *Indian* to be the vanquished yet worthy adversary,

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[53] Michael Kimmel, "Baseball and the Reconstitution of American Masculinity, 1880-1920," in *Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball in American Culture*, ed. Alvin Hall (Westport: Meckler Publishing, 1989), 293.

[54] Vass, *Black Hawk's Story,*12.

[55] George Vass, *The Chicago Black Hawks Story* (Chicago: Follett Publishing, 1970), 11

lightens the burden of guilt and blurs the line between murder and self-preservation. In whatever measure that this military connection is considered a tribute, its persuasion emboldens a National sense of White superiority. “Through the killing of the Native people, White men came to believe in their own superiority and their right to possess.”[56] The military connection to the Blackhawks suggests to dominant White society that there is no difference between a sports team and a fighting battalion. Both are to be considered synonymously, as warriors who engage in acts of combat on a field of battle.

The *Chief* Blackhawk mascot was originally a crudely drawn sketch done by Irene Castle in 1926, the wife of McLaughlin. It represents an outline of an Indigenous head, in profile, similar to its current iteration. Castle and McLaughlin chose the name of their newly founded hockey team to recall the valiant actions on the battle field and the sense of conquest in the ability to overcome and subdue any adversary. Rightfully assuming that a viewer or fan would be less inclined to engage in visual communion with the *Chief* Blackhawk image had Castle portrayed the mascot as being a light-skinned soldier with a maniacal grin, scalping a wounded child. The other obvious paradox of Castle’s decision to draw the new mascot as an *Indian* is that the insignia patch for Division that McLaughlin commanded is a *black hawk* with a shield across its breast baring the initials “BH” (figure 11). The image on the patch as well as information would have been known by both, yet Castle falsely miscategorized her rationale for her design. This example of homogenizing the Indigenous experience negates the painful history that this image and name denotes.

[56] Trask, *Black Hawk*, 306.

PART 4

In Defense of a Tradition

There are several professional sports organizations that make use of *Indian* imagery for their mascots and logos. The most recent debate over the use of Indigenous imagery surrounded the National Football League's Washington R*skins. 2015 saw a renewed protest by the R*skins' critics, claiming its logo to be openly racist. The Indigenous civil activist movement, *#NotYourMascot*, uses a parody of their logo as their own in their efforts to get professional teams to drop the use of harmful *Indian* mascots. Then there is *Chief Wahoo,* of the Cleveland Indians, with its oddly shaped caricature of a red skinned *Indian*, complete with an exaggerated smile, an enlarged nose, and a head band holding a single feather.[57] *Chief Noc-A-Homa* and the Kansas City *Chiefs* are also highly contested. However, if one were to attend a hockey game at the United Center on Chicago's West side, one would find oneself surrounded by roughly 23,000, mostly White, middle-class men donning face-paint, feathered headdresses, and Chicago's vibrantly colored jerseys, displaying the vividly-multicolored *Indian* mascot, *Chief* Blackhawk across their chests (figure 12).

Sociologist, S.S. Slowikowski tells us that identity is often preformed, and as such, mascotting too is a performative act. Performances of sports mascots borrow from history as well as create alternate versions of history that form a paradox of truth, subsequently forwarding these alternative histories as authentic.[58] The conflation of nostalgia for the West blends contemporary fan identity and team identification, creating an argument for who rightfully "owns" the mascot,

[57] See footnote 27.

[58] S.S. Slowikowski, "Cultural Performance and Sports Mrscots [*sic*]," *Journal of Sports and Social Issue,* (vol 17, 1, 1993).

and thus, who becomes the arbiter of its continued use. There are some mascots depicting blood thirsty, *merciless savages*, while others, the noble stoic *Indian,* displaying honor and strength. Either depiction is meant to embolden its athletes and strike fear into the hearts of their opponents. The use of *Indian*-themed imagery for mascots allows for the collective American consciousness to freeze Indigenous peoples in the past, while simultaneously appropriating the misrepresented simulation as a basis for community and regional solidarity, as well as economic gain. The misconception is that the *Indian* as a contemporary identity is gone and there is no one from that nostalgic era to object them being turned into cartoons. It then becomes nearly impossible to imagine real Indigenous people ever transcending this *savage* or primitive state, let alone wearing blue jeans and tennis shoes, listening to an iPod. This is yet another example that the "post" in postcolonial has yet to be achieved.

Zhigaagong mukadaawa-gigekoog // Chicago Blackhawks

A powerful example of visual persuasion and manipulation can be seen in the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot *Chief* Blackhawk is portrayed with a large forehead and large nose (figure 13). Once used to impress civility onto the *Indian*, it is here used to illustrate inferiority through a depiction that more closely resembles a Neanderthal than an Indigenous person. Flattening of the image is another way the mascot works to dehumanize Indigenous people. Its stoic profile is a one-dimensional portrayal of a three-dimensional being. The human face is our first point of connection and recognition. By only showing a facial profile, the mascot logo effectively negates our ability to recognize them as an individual, removing any remaining individualistic qualities that made them human. Had this image been shown with more of a three-quarter view, showing more of a sense of depth, the viewer would be more able to assign humanizing traits to the

image. The profile view is purposely restrictive as a way to retain the *Indian* as being mysterious and elusive. This one-dimensional flattening of the image results in a lack of depth, which suggests that the individual is shallow thought, and therefore, renders them inferior to the White colonizer civilized intellect. The caricature also has a slight, sly smile, which would suggest that *Chief* Blackhawk, and by proxy all *Indians*, are coy and deceptive in nature. They are not to be fully trusted. The contemplative response to the image is lessened due to the repeated viewing of the simulated image of *Chief* Blackhawk. The more visually present and normalized an image of a stereotype becomes, the more desensitized the viewer becomes to the image, which works to reinforce the perceived experiences and generalizations of the nostalgic simulations of the *Indian*. Therefore, *Chief* Blackhawk (the mascot), is perceived as *real*.[59]

If the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot is taken on face value, then the *thing* in the image*,* and in the viewer's mind, is real; or at least a suitable substitute. It's worth noting again, that the principal idea of representation is that an image is not the *thing* itself, but a thing in *itself* with its own formal properties. This may seem like a redundant and obvious statement, but when a viewer's predisposed biases enter into the perception of viewing the image (such as colonial American epistemologies) then they view the represented image as something that uniquely represents the original *thing.* This short-cut in logic acts as a triggering mechanism for an emotionally constructed nostalgic connection. In the case of the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot, the nostalgic connection is the antagonist of the American Frontier myth, the *Indian.*

Chief Blackhawk has been used as a symbol of regional pride for fans of the Chicago Blackhawks hockey team. The team's history ran in tandem with that of the growing National narrative. Today the nostalgic connection to the *Indian* has been misleadingly woven into the

[59] Charles A. Hill. *Defining Visual Rhetoric,* 30.

American myth to be a symbiotic relationship, that many assert, the very existence of the caricature, and by proxy the mascot, proves that the United States cared enough about Black Hawk to immortalize him - as a way to honor the valiant, but vanquished warrior. According to the Chicago Blackhawks' website, their name and logo are a tribute to the bravery and fighting spirit of the Sauk warrior, whose spirit, their players seek to evoke in the ice rink. The claim that *Indian* iconography honors and recognizes tribal identity is ironic because the majority of *Real* Indigenous communities continue live below the poverty line and their treaty rights are repeatedly ignored and violated. How can any mascot honor tribal sovereignty, identity, and legal statuses that are simultaneously challenged by dominant White society and the federal government?

The use of Indigenous iconography and language in sports is justified within the dominant culture because there are sports teams with nicknames, such as, the Vikings or the Celtics. The validity of this argument is easily deconstructed; of course, they are the ancestors of people from our epoch. However, a Viking, as a person, no longer exists as themselves and now represents an era in time. Indigenous peoples remain a living ethnic group with the same language, religions, and customs. Yet, others point to teams such as the Cowboys, the Pirates, or the Oilers, to justify the use of Indigenous iconography, but these are professions, whereas, Indigenous peoples are human beings and cannot be a professional category. Most fans, owners, or administrators will defend the use of Indian imagery by eliciting longstanding institutional traditions of honor and pride – an act of adherence to the moral values of the community, or more precisely, *visual communion*.

At best, mascots can be considered cultural appropriation, and at worst, explicit racism. The sense of ownership that comes through appropriation, however, is problematic. The question

becomes, who *owns* what, and who can speak for something if it is *owned*? Mascots work to deny and ignore the racial indications of the subjugated minority as they normalize common events, beliefs, or traditions by presenting them as universal truth. The tradition is being upheld through a symbol that signifies the sense of local pride. It was invented to rally the community as their team competed against visiting teams. Chicago sports commentator Tim Baffoe defended the team's mascot during their 2013 championship season:

> The Hawks don't use a caricature or slur that the other teams have come under fire for. In fact, there is almost zero Native American 'Stuff' used by the organization other than their very famous logo…like the Indian head on the Washington R*Skins helmets or the goofy Chief Wahoo. Black Hawk's head and face is not distorted: it's just a sort of 'badass profile of a fierce looking Native American warrior.[60]

This shared *visual communion* on mascots lead owners, athletes, and fans to believe that these stereotypes actually show Indigenous people in a positive light. Therefore, the depiction of *Chief* Blackhawk isn't seen as problematic, because it conforms to the moral values of dominant White society. However, through a post-colonial lens, its misleading to assume that the history of colonialism is the only history of the Indigenous people of this continent, because it is a direct result of the violent and oppressive relationship with the colonizing power. Therefore, it is the Indigenous people, as the oppressed minority, who have the right and obligation to speak out against Indigenous mascots as a reclamation of these hurtful images. However, ending the use of the *Indian* as a mascot cannot alone come from the resistance of those who are being depicted, it must also come from the willingness of dominant White culture to acknowledge the oppressive

[60] Tim Baffoe, "Should the Blackhawks ditch Their Indian Head logo?" *CBS, Chicago 2*, June 17, 2013. Accessed November 2, 2019. https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2013/06/17/baffoe-should-the-blackhawks-ditch-their-indian-head-logo/.

nature of these mascots and actively work to displace them from their current nostalgic standings.

Nothing is Absolute

It is broadly accepted that racial stereotypes of Black people, such as *Blackface* from the early American Minstrel shows are morally irreprehensible. From an ethical standpoint, Social and Political Philosopher Lynne Tirrell would say that this is the position of an Absolutist - the *Absolute* belief in a political, philosophical, ethical, or theological set of values. They hold to the conviction that all degrading imagery should be completely removed from social lexicons.[61] Ironically, rooting for, or watching, a favorite sports team conquer the Washington *R*skins*, Kansas City *Chiefs*, Cleveland *Indians*, or Chicago *Blackhawks*, on TV is commonly overlooked. The use of Indigenous caricatures as sports mascots have not yet reached the level of cultural or social awareness that other hurtful caricatures have, such as *Little Sambo.* This, I believe, is largely due to the fact that caricatures and mascots of Indigenous people remain normalized.

The Absolutist holds that only positive *versions* of the once derogative stereotype should be allowed to be represented in our society. Take for example Disney's 1995 animated movie, *Pocahontas*. This film can be argued as an Absolutist filtering of this narrative. This caricature depicts Pocahontas as the beautiful, metaphysical, *Indian princess*, who can commune with her animal helpers, and more importantly, is age appropriate for her "love affair" with Captain John Smith. However, there is an inherent problem with this line of rationale - it does not consider that the very process of making *positive versions* of *negative versions* is still the act of *making*

[61] Lynne Tirrell, "Aesthetic derogation: Hate speech, pornography, and aesthetic contexts." in *Aesthetics and Ethics: Essays at the Intersection*. Jerrold Levison (ed.) (Cambridge University Press, 1998): 283-314.

versions. By rendering an Indigenous person through only positive attributes, one continues to negate the fundamental tenant of the human condition, emotional consciousness. Altering Pocahontas' screen age allowed for the denial of responsibility for the rape and pedophilic encounters perpetrated upon countless Indigenous children. These types of *positive* stereotypes also act as an endorsement for the social eraser of colonialism. From this perspective, This Disney animation is an example of *visual communion*, reflecting and advocating the new norms of twenty-first century dominant White society towards Indigenous people.

To an Absolutist, *Chief* Blackhawk is seen as an acceptable portrayal, regardless of the fact that the caricature depicted is a complete fabrication of the historical figure. There are no known photographs of Black Hawk, his band, or his war. The only known images of the Sauk man are the paintings from Charles Bird King, George Catlin, and Homer Henderson (figure 14). Of these three paintings of Black Hawk, Henderson's arguably being the most well know reproduction, however, themes can be found throughout all three of the images, calling into question the authenticity of each of them. Because of this, Black Hawk is considered a construction of pure colonial fantasy.

The *Chief* Blackhawk mascot is seen with vivid streaks of *war paint* brazenly spread across his face, and adorned with brightly colored feathers. However, without any factual documentation, there is no way to know if the *real* Black Hawk wore *war paint*, or feathers in his hair, or how big his nose was? According to the only known images of Black Hawk, there were no such marks on his face, nor were there feathers in his hair. His face is stern and full of focus, hardly the shallow depth of mind portrayed in the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot. So where did the mascot representation come from? In the almost one hundred years between the paintings of Black Hawk and the creation of the mascot, the National sentiment towards Indigenous people

had dramatically shifted. In the early twentieth century, there was an effort by the United States to establish its identity in the wake of World War I. As a nation, this National identity would forever secure its hold over this land. The *Indian,* as a mascot, became a mere symbol. Through generations of misrepresentations and simulations through popular culture, the mascot rendered the factual Indigenous people obsolete. Instead, generalizations and mischaracterizations, present since the colonization, of the *Indian,* were manifested in 1926 as excessive ornamentation and decoration.

In contrast to the Absolutist's argument, a *Reclaimist*, calls for the acknowledgment that these types of images come from and are rooted in colonization. Their very existence is evidence of Indigenous subjugation. The Reclaimist would further say that these stereotypes must be cited to prevent their inevitable return. The Reclaimist ideology deploys the use of stereotypes as a way to critique society's moral hypocrisy, and by asserting re-ownership of forbidden images.[62] By using the American mythical trope of the *Indian,* contemporary Indigenous artists can comment on the United States' lack of obligation to Treaty rights, the denial of responsibility for Manifest Destiny, or their genocidal practices that cost millions of innocent Indigenous lives.

In 2015, Mike Ivall, an Ojibwe artist redesigned the Chicago Blackhawks' team logo, crafting a more culturally and socially appropriate image of a black hawk, the predatory bird that the historical Sauk figure, Black Hawk, was named for (figure 15). In an interview in 2015, Ivall discussed his reimaging of the Blackhawks' team logo:

> We're seen as cartoon characters. So, until we're taken seriously and seen as human beings and not these ancient relics or ridiculous stereotypes, we won't be taken seriously…to me this is of the most utmost importance.[63]

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[62] Lynne Tirrell. "Aesthetic derogation," 283-314.

[63] Joshua Ostroff, "A Cooler Replacement for the Blackhawks Controversial Logo Goes Viral", Huffington Post, 2015.

Representing *Chief* Blackhawk as a cartoon, further dehumanizes the factual Sauk man. It turned Black Hawk into a silly character that no longer resembles a human being, but a set of commonly held stereotypical traits of Indigenous people. Ivall's redesign of the Blackhawk mascot works to rebalances the power structures within dominant society, as a way to reclaim the power of lost Indigenous agency. It is also important to mention that the complete removal of these images from our lexicon would not eradicate their existence, nor would it remove the longstanding class and social hierarchies established at the time of colonization. Doing so would contradict the ideologies of the American myth and therefore, challenge the very notion of the *American* as an identity.

False Absolutism

Dominant society can praise a television program in the name of *realism,* so long as it provides a nostalgic connection that affirms the dominant culture's values, desires, and practices. This affirms America's *visual communion*. The long running series, *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman* (1993-98), can be seen as an example of this. Dr. Quinn is a retooling of James Fenimore-Cooper's American classic, *The Leatherstocking Tales*. The series sees Sully, a buckskin clad, White savior, who becomes a trusted ally and eventual love interest of Dr. Quinn, the 'White Medicine woman.' Alternately, society is also quick to dismiss a film if they are asked to face a reality that does not fit into the dominant society's moral values and power structures, such as Alexis Sherman's' 1998 film, *Smoke Signals.* This film centers on a self-discovering journey embarked upon by the film's main character, Victor Joseph. The struggles of "postcolonial" reservation life, through the eyes of Indigenous adolescents, received panned reviews in large part because of the humanization of the *Indian.* Typical Hollywood movies depict the *Indian* as

having a score to settle. Although Victor Joseph does have a score to settle, it takes form in the reconciliation of a broken relationship with his deceased father, a victim of the trope and trappings of the stereotype of the *Drunken Indian*.

When discussing the disparaging use of the *Chief* Blackhawk caricature as a mascot there is another aspect of the Absolutist viewpoint that enters the debate. However, it conflates the viewer's value judgements with the aesthetic value of the image itself. Whereas, a classic Absolutist, would rationalize that all disparaging images should be removed as an act of moral censorship. A *false Absolutist*, similar to that of the Marxist notions of false consciousness, would contend that the continued use of these caricatures and stereotypes act as a badge of honor to the subject to which it is depicting.[64] This rationale is a direct result of generations of systemic programing by dominant society through educational institutions, houses of worship, and popular culture. These visually argumentative images, repeatedly shown to generations far removed from the actual events, are then perceived as a sort of hyper-icon that reflects and activates the nostalgic connections of the American Myth and furthermore, denotes a sense *visual communion*. Mascots arouse the *false Absolutist's* sense of bravery, courage, and ferociousness while simultaneously being reflective of the proud *Indian*, collected in temperament and possessing a primitive, metaphysical wisdom that eluded the European.

This nostalgic connection is woven into the American Myth and because of this falsely constructed, symbiotic relationship, a *false Absolutist* would challenge that the very proof of the existence of stereotypes and caricatures, and by proxy, the mascot, is the proof that the United States cared enough about Black Hawk to immortalize him - as a way to honor the valiant, but

[64] *False Absolutism* is a label for the set of values-judgments that this particular subset of Absolutists, be it an individual, a society, or community; holds to be truth and therefore ethically defended. It is equally the product and prerequisite for acceptance into their like-minded social groups. (Seth Thomas Sutton, 2020)

vanquished warrior. It is because of this deep rooted, nostalgic connection that the *false Absolutist* would assert that these images should *absolutely* stay in the country's social lexicon. This is further complicated by the lack of education surrounding colonialism and how it works to systemically denigrate the minority populations. The *false Absolutist* argues that *Chief* Blackhawk is depicted as a handsome and noble warrior, adorned with brightly colored feathers, *war-paint* across his high cheek bones, and wearing a pleasant smile on his face, rather than being depicted as a blood-thirsty *savage* who is engaged in the terrors of colonial slaughter. To a *false Absolutist*, this is an accurate image that depicts a real *Indian*. Their shared "version" of *visual communion* of the *Chief* Blackhawk image lead them to believe that these stereotypes actually show Indigenous people in a positive light. Therefore, the depiction of *Chief* Blackhawk isn't seen as problematic to the *false Absolutist*, because it conforms to the moral value judgments of their social group; an extension of dominant White society.

A Case for *Johnny Hawk*

One of the most confusing aspects to the resistance to the change of the Blackhawk's imagery, is that, unlike the R*Skins, or the Indians, Braves, Chiefs etc., the Blackhawks have no need to change their name to remedy the offense. The obvious conclusion would be to modify the spelling of their current name to "Black Hawks" and change the current image to that of a *black hawk* - the motif shown on McLaughlin's Division insignia patch (figure 11). This change would act as a perfect metaphor for the player, suggesting that the player is a swiftly skating predator swooping down to overcome his opponent and gaining control of the loose puck. The change would not be out of line with the other professional sports teams that already call Chicago home, the Bears, the Bulls, and the Cubs. It would be entirely appropriate to have the

Blackhawks become something other than the hurtful caricature that adorns the clothing and household goods of hockey fans around the world. This point becomes even more confusing by Chicago's costumed mascot that physically attends the games, *Tommy Hawk*, an anthropomorphic black hawk wearing Chicago's jersey (figure 16). Tommy's name can easily be changed to *Johnny,* with little-to-no impact on marketing and branding considerations.

This said, the continued use of *Indian*-themed mascots is especially problematic for communities that have little to no contact with Indigenous peoples or their culture. Ivall's redesign is a striking image that is full of fierce, strength, and vigor. Its bold colors reflect the current color scheme of the team, so the transition would be almost effortless. I argue that the Indigenous motifs be considered concessions to the White majority. Keeping the feathers and facial markings would make the change less emotionally painful to dominant society, and therefore, more tolerant and accepting to the change.[65]

[65] As of the time of this publication, the Chicago Blackhawks retain the use of their derogatory mascot, *Chief* Blackhawk, that for the local Indigenous community brings to the forefront feelings of tragedy and horror rather than nostalgic feelings of pride and identity.

CONCLUSION

The Need for a New Nostalgia

As previously stated, the use of *Indian*-themed mascots for professional sports organizations remains a hot-button issue in the United States, because to acknowledge the violence that was perpetrated on the Indigenous people of this continent, is to acknowledge the dishonorable means that the United States took to obtain its land and economic wealth. As I said before, mascots are an important issue in the struggle for Indigenous autonomy. Americans reserve power over Indigenous people and embody this power by depicting the *Indian,* in a manner that confines them to antiquity. Such a simplified stereotype reduces Indigenous people's painful and resilient pasts to caricatures, and masks the legacies of colonialism. It is only through critical analysis that we are able to see how powerful these visuals images are and how much persuasive power they hold over the collective conscience. Indigenous people played a key role in the development of the American identity and the removal of these mascots would enforce white, American culture to construct an identity built out of their cultural heritages and not appropriating it from the original inhabitants of this land.

Is Our Moral Compass Broken?

What does it mean to have a *moral compass*? A common held understanding goes something like: moral compasses are thoughts and actions taken by the belief holder, based on a set of ethical judgments. Of course, the supposition of a moral compass is predicated on the belief holder truly understanding how to judge what is *right* versus what is *wrong.* In order to achieve a moral outcome in a particular situation, we need to be aware of our moral compass so we can acknowledge that it is colored by our principles and values. This acknowledgment serves

two purposes, first, it allows for humility to enter into the decision-making process, which fosters a more empathetical set of values, and second, it makes us take responsibility of our thoughts, words, and our actions. Whereas ethics determines the rightness or wrongness, motive or products of our actions, on our sense of moral duty; values determine our priorities and what is important to us, in short, values are our impetus towards action.

It's important to keep these things in mind when discussing the ethical implications of professional sports organizations like the Chicago Blackhawks, and their continued use of their racially stereotyped mascot, *Chief* Blackhawk (figure 1). Cultural scholar, Homi Bhabha poses that the act of stereotyping allows for the continued subjectification, and conceptual construction of the *Other* because to acknowledge existence, forces the recognition of differences in race, color, and culture. Stereotypes also act to strengthen the dominant culture's "desire for originality."[66] Mascots function as a discriminatory power, by actively rejecting the implications of an emotional or social relationship with the dominant culture and furthermore, perpetuate the colonial stereotype of Indigenous people as political and cultural tokens. The use of Indigenous based mascots and names is an effective method of indoctrinating colonial ideologies into new generations of Americans. Reflecting back to the question of moral outcomes when discussing the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot, one has to be aware of, and responsible, for the knowing that these caricatures are harmful and work to subjugate Indigenous populations by continuing to assert colonial control through the manipulation of the population through disparaging visual rhetoric.

With the unpacking of the ethical ramifications of the racially charged *Chief* Blackhawk mascot, comes an understanding: Ethically, there is no logical or rational explanation for professional sports organizations to continue to utilize hurtful Indigenous caricatures as mascots.

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[66] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 107.

Mascots are artifacts of visual rhetoric. They reiterate, simplify, and agitate; they create the illusions of consensus. Further illustrating this point, is the fact that there are not any 'new' or existing professional sports organizations who are adopting the use of Indigenous imagery as their mascots. However, knowing something versus recognizing something and acting upon this recognition, are two different things. Knowing hurtful mascots are wrong, but not acting on that knowledge, allows the viewer and their *visual communion* to side step the guilt and blame associated with the challenging of their hierarchal power structures, and their social groups' sense of moral values. Disparaging images of Indigenous people work to produce a collective memory, not as a way of remembering, but as a way of stipulating *what* (i.e. values) is important. The rhetoric of the mascot *is* the story about colonization.[67] Recognizing that mascots are harmful discriminatory practices sanctioned and encouraged by dominant society, will force the *false Absolutist* to take responsibility for their moral judgments and actions. Responsibility is a foundation of humility. Humility is the cornerstone of empathy and empathy is the basis for truth. Dominant white society must then acknowledge the ideological symbolism that is inherent in racialized sport mascots, and imagery of Indigenous people, as a way of defining American identity, and perpetuate colonial ideologies.[68] Truth is the compass that will lead to this positive moral outcome – the secession of the disparaging Indigenous trope, the *Chief* Blackhawk mascot.

[67] Susan Sontag. *Regarding the Pain of Others.* (New York: Picador, 2003), 6-86.
[68] Ibid.

Illustrations

Figure 1. *Chief* Blackhawk, Chicago Blackhawks current logo. www.nhl.com/blackhawks. Last accessed July 31st, 2020.

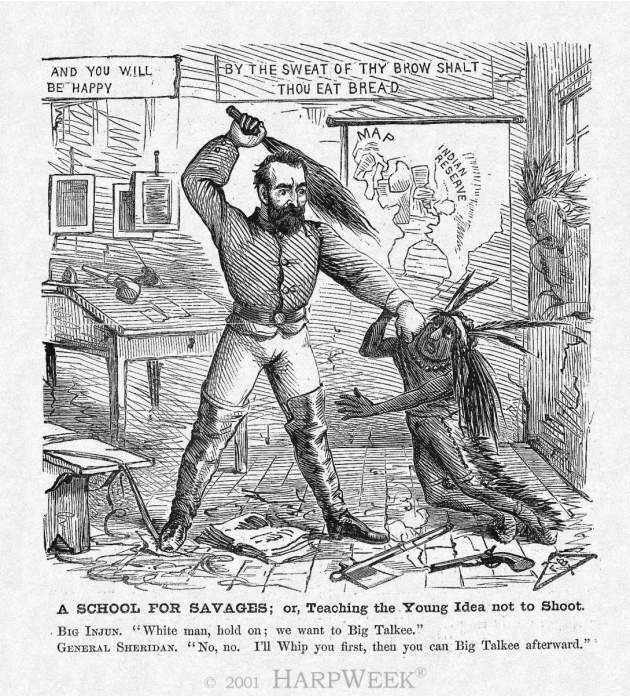

Figure 2. Frank Bellow, *A School for Savages; or, Teaching the Young Idea Not to Shoot*, Harper's Weekly, January 16th, 1869. Last accessed November 9th, 2020.

Ignoble Savage Noble Savage Metaphysical Indian

Figure 3. the Ignoble *Savage*, the Noble *Savage*, the Metaphysical *Indian*. Composite. (left to right, *The Death of Jane McCrea*, Vanderlyn, 1804, Charlie Bronson in *Run of the Arrow* (1957), *Pocahontas* (1995).

Figure 4. Irene Castle, *Chief* Blackhawk, 1926, Chicago Blackhawks original logo. www.nhl.com/blackhawks. Last accessed July 31st, 2020.

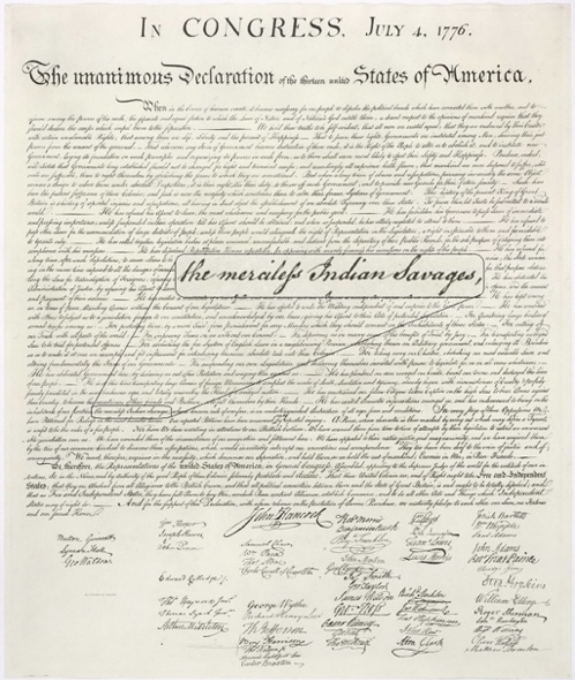

Figure 5. Thomas Jefferson*, et al, July 4 Declaration of Independence*. 1776. www.archives.gov. Last accessed July 31st, 2020.

Figure 6. George Catlin, *Múk-a-tah-mish-o-káh-kaik, Black Hawk, Prominent Sac Chief,* 1832, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1985.66.2

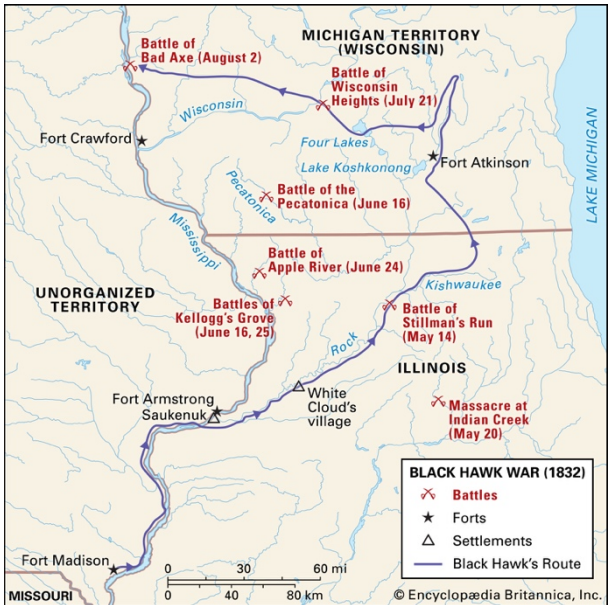

Figure 7. Battle Sites and Key Events in the Black Hawk War. Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. https://www.britannica.com/event/Black-Hawk-War/Indian-removal-and-growing-tensions-in-Illinois. Last accessed November 10, 2020.

Figure 8. George Catlin, *Wi-jún-jon, Pigeon's Egg Head (The Light) Going To and Returning From Washington,* 1837-1839, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1985.66.474

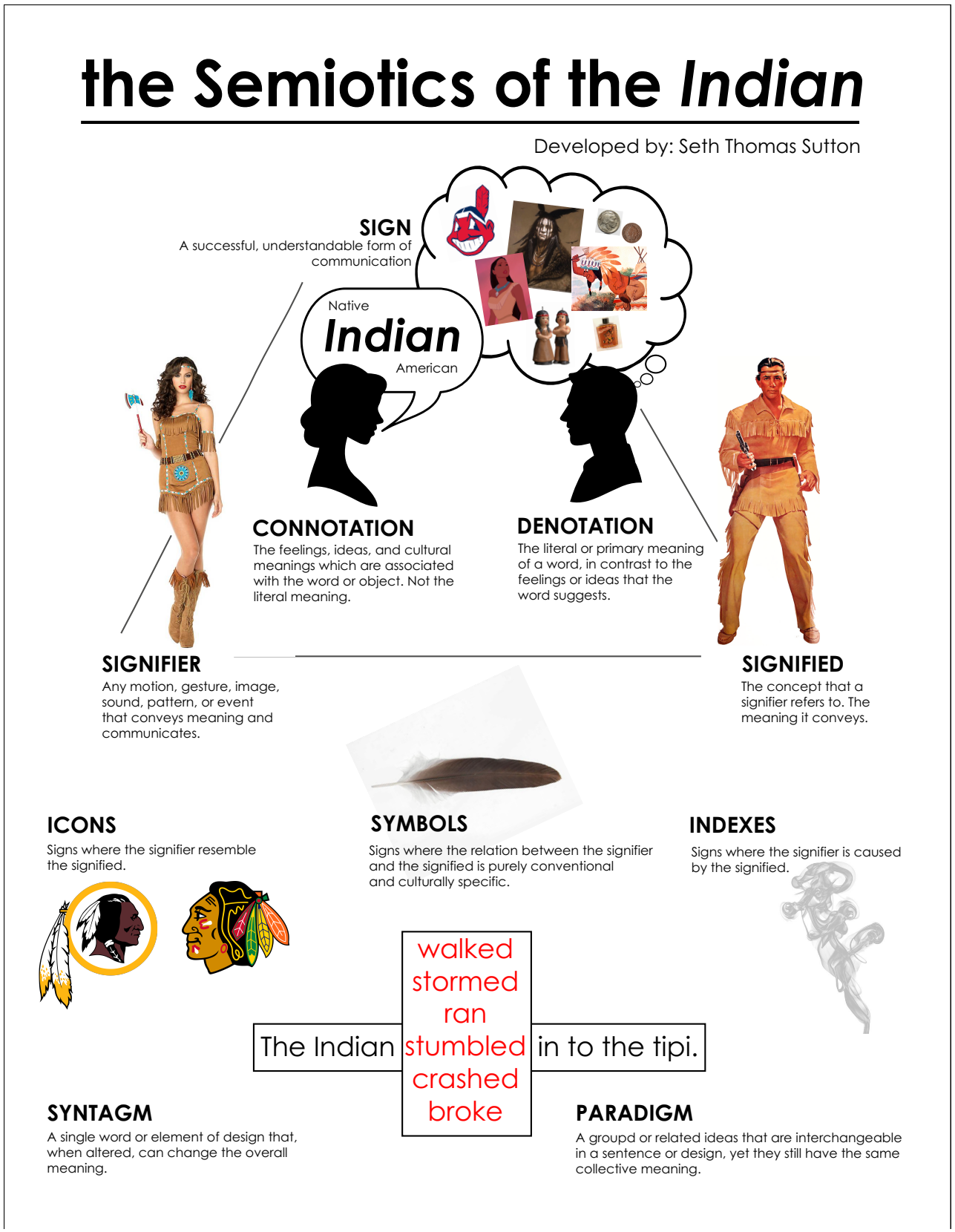

Figure 9. Seth Thomas Sutton, *the Semiotics of the Indian*, 2019.

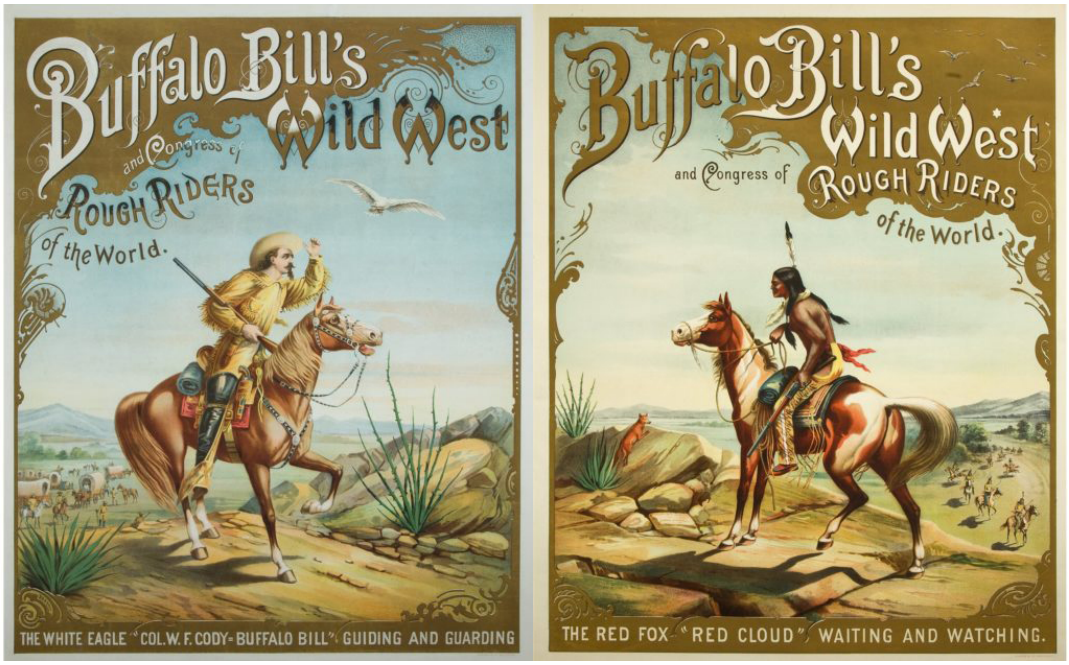

Figure 10. A. Hoen & Company of Baltimore. *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Rough Riders and Congress of the World, 1893.* Lithographs, 21x26". McCracken Library, Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

Figure 11. *86th Infantry Division Shoulder Insignia (Blackhawk Division),* Infantry, United States Army, Patch, Active 1917-Present. http://usamm.com/products/86th-infantry-divison-class-a-patch.

Figure 12. *Chicago Blackhawk Fans*. Composite. Google. 2020.

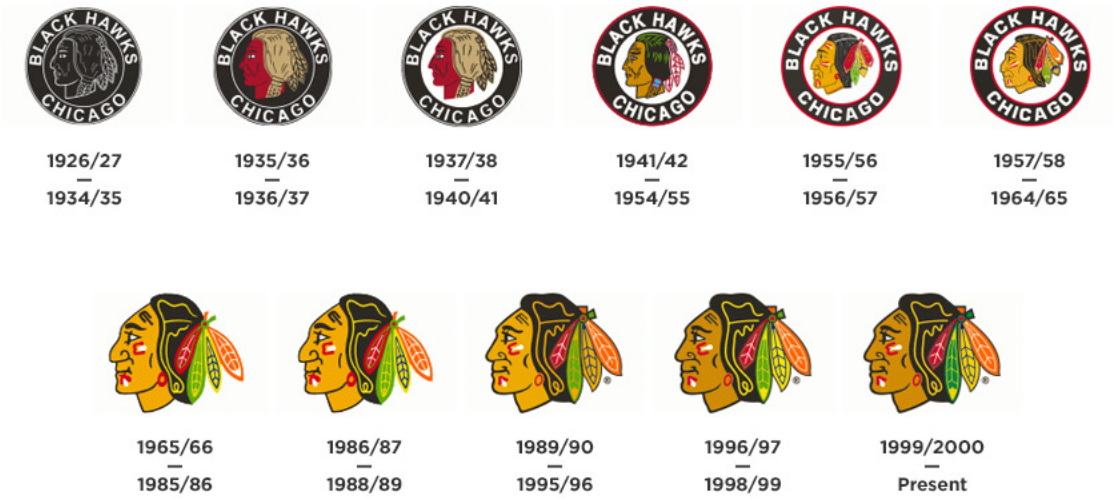

Figure 13. *Chief* Blackhawk, Chicago Blackhawk's logo evolution. Google. Composite made by author.

Figure 14. Charles Bird King, *MA-KA-TAI-ME-SHE-KIA-KIAH, from History of the Indian Tribes of North America*, hand-colored lithograph on paper ca.1938, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Museum purchase, 1985.66.153,268

Figure 15. Mike Ivall's alternative logo concept for the Chicago Blackhawk's, 2105. https://i1.sndcdn.com/avatars-000156104313-5uwhij-t500x500.jpg.

Figure 16. *Tommy Hawk*. Chicago Blackhawk mascot. www.nhl.com/blackhawks. Last accessed July 31, 2020.

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