

THE FANCY DANCE OF RACIALIZING DISCOURSE

Brenda Farnell

In the United States, the Euro-American practice of using stereotypical Native American imagery and dancing in association with athletic mascots continues despite vigorous protest. This suggests that American Indians occupy a different semiotic space than other U.S. minorities who are no longer subject to such explicit racializing representations. This article asks how and why non-Native Americans endow Indian mascots with significance. Analysis of the discursive formations associated with one such local practice—the dancing Indian mascot at the University of Illinois known as Chief Illiniwek—suggests that the dominant “race-making” population, who are the mascot’s ardent supporters, create and passionately defend a “White public space” in which any contemporary Native American presence is positioned as disorderly. This article seeks to advance the understanding of how racializing discourses create the cultural logic that stigmatizes and stereotypes (in this case) American Indian people.

Keywords: *discourse; racism; United States; American Indians; athletic mascots*

A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom.

—Thomas Paine (1776, Preface)

King and Springwood (2001b) suggest that North America’s narrative about itself centers on a hidden text regarding its relationship with American Indians¹—a central text that must be hidden, sublimated, and, ironically, acted out. For the last 100 years, this hidden text has been acted out with specific clarity on sports fields all over the United States through the appropriation of American Indian imagery and cultural practices (such as dancing) in the form of sports mascots. These range from professional teams, such as the Washington Redskins and the Cleveland Indians, to college teams, such as the Florida State University Seminoles and the University of Illinois Fighting Illini.² The omnipresence of such symbolism has created commonsense pop cultural knowledge out of the notion that Indians are a category of athletic mascot. Such “a long habit of not thinking a thing wrong” survived the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s largely unchallenged, despite the removal of similar derogatory public representations of other American minority populations (e.g. blackface minstrelsy, Little Black

Sambo, Frito Bandito, etc.). This indicates that from the mainstream perspective, American Indians occupy a different semiotic space than other American minorities, one that remains resistant to reconfiguration along nonracializing lines.

This article seeks to shed light on the reasons for this resistance by asking how and why these halftime performances and associated discursive practices endow Indian mascots with such significance for non-Native Americans. I take the position that such institutionalized practices are racializing (Urciuoli, 1996) because they involve processes of mimesis and alterity—that is, imitating to objectify and distance as Other (Taussig, 1993)—and because they continue despite vigorous objections from those objectified.³

The article also provides an opportunity to connect my research interests in discourse-centered linguistic anthropology, Native American ethnography, and the anthropology of the body in performance to my role as an activist against this form of institutionalized racism in the academic institution. In this context, Indian sports mascots make plain that so-called cultural irrationalities, such as racism, seldom turn out to be irrational or the result of ignorance or confusion. “They appear locally as quite rational, being rooted in history and tradition, functioning as important organizing principles in enduring political economies and lending coherence and meaning to complex and ambiguous human experiences” (Hill, 2001, p. 451).

In this article, I examine the discursive formations (Foucault, 1980) associated with one such local practice—the dancing Indian mascot at the University of Illinois known as Chief Illiniwek (Connolly, 2000; Gone, 2002; King & Springwood, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; Spindel, 2000). To understand the local rationales at work in this case, I analyze examples of discourse from the mascot’s supporters.⁴ Hill’s insights concerning the racializing processes that affect Spanish-speaking American peoples have proved useful in this context (Hill, 1993a, 1993b, 1995). I also concur with her belief that understanding exactly how racializing discourses create the cultural logic that stigmatizes and stereotypes (in this case) American Indian peoples can prepare us to contribute in new ways to untangling the complexities of racism. How do such racializing practices manage to prevail in educational institutions that simultaneously espouse a commitment to diversity? Why do the non-Native American people of Illinois feel so strongly and emotionally attached to this symbol? What does it mean for them and why? What kind of discursive formations in mainstream American society generate talk of reverence, dignity, pride, and honor toward American Indians while supporting a refusal to listen to the voices of contemporary Native American individuals and institutions who are vigorously opposed to these practices?

My analysis suggests that as members of the dominant “race-making” (Williams, 1989) population, supporters of Chief Illiniwek create and passionately defend a “White public space” in which any contemporary Native American presence is positioned as disorderly. White public space refers to “a morally significant set of contexts that are the most important sites for

the practices of a racializing hegemony, in which Whites are invisibly normal and in which racialized populations are visibly marginal and the objects of monitoring" (Hill, 2001, p. 453, after Page & Thomas, 1994).⁵ The analysis below reveals how the University of Illinois's athletic symbol plays a fundamental role in accomplishing the "elevation of Whiteness" (Hill, 2001, p. 456; see also Harrison, 1995; Smedley, 1993) that concurs with a regional (state) identity. Some brief historical remarks preface the analysis and help situate current practices in historical context.

THE DANCING "INDIAN" BODY

American Indian sports mascots stage racial difference according to a contemporary Euro-American, neocolonial imagination that is directly predicated on the 19th-century colonial project.⁶ Performances such as that of Chief Illiniwek ritually inscribe the relations of imperial power directly onto the Native American body, typically represented by a White, male student, dressed and painted as Indian, who "choreographs colonialism" in every step of his cavorting "fancy dance" (King & Springwood, 2001a).

In response to criticism, supporters of Chief Illiniwek frequently engage in a rhetoric of authenticity about the choreography performed on the football field. Gone notes that for decades the university promoted—and the students believed—that the Chief's dance was an authentic form of some Indian tribal celebration. This resonates with the emphasis on authenticity promoted by White Indian hobbyist groups, who were particularly widespread in the Midwest region (see Powers, 1988, p. 557). The official university statement regarding Chief Illiniwek was modified in 1990 when administrators recognized that prior claims to the authenticity of the Chief's portrayal were absurd (Gone, 1995/2002, p. 277).

This does not deter others from modifying the claim. For example, former Chief Illiniwek, John Madigan, maintains that the person portraying the Chief is knowledgeable about Native American cultures, dances, and music and that the dance is, or is based on, "fancy dancing" (Madigan in Garippo, 2000). Madigan fails to distinguish, however, between a form of exhibition dancing invented for the Wild West shows of the 1920s and 1930s that was widely disseminated by the Boy Scout movement and a contemporary genre of competitive powwow dancing called "Men's Fancy Dance." Although both may have emerged from similar roots in Oklahoma at the end of the 19th century, the Chief's dance currently resembles no traditional or contemporary expression known to Native people.⁷

In marked contrast to Native American fancy dancing, Chief Illiniwek's performance combines stereotyped gestures from the hackneyed "noble warrior" motif (i.e., stoic painted face, "dignified" posture, arms folded and raised) with exaggerated stepping, supplemented by acrobatic display (splits, leaps and turns) and much traveling across the performance space to be seen from a distance. In addition, Chief Illiniwek wears Lakota ceremonial regalia typical of the Plains region but unrelated to anything worn by the Illinois, who were woodland people. Native American fancy dancers do



FIGURE 1: University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) Athletic Mascot, Chief Illiniwek.
 SOURCE: Photo Ted S. Warren, reproduced with permission of Associated Press.
 NOTE: He wears a Lakota Sioux buckskin suit, gloves, a long feather headdress, and has bare feet without moccasins. This typical ceremonial regalia of the Plains tribes was not worn by Native peoples in the Illinois region.

not, and never did, wear buckskin suits or long, ceremonial feather headdresses; they never did dance barefoot (see Figure 1).⁸ This choice on the part of Illinois students in 1926 was far from accidental or arbitrary, however. It followed already well-worn paths that distilled hundreds of diverse Native cultures into the defining characteristics of the Plains Indian male as representing all Indians (Farnell, 2001).⁹

Likewise, the musical accompaniment to the Chief's dance is a rhythmic march that crowds identify with an Indian "tom-tom" beat,¹⁰ a stereotypical misrepresentation derived from early Hollywood movies completely foreign to any Native musical expression. However, precisely as such, it holds tremendous emotional appeal for fans and especially band members:

I fell in love with the songs of Oskee-wow-wow, Illinois Loyalty, and especially 3-in-1. It was amazing how the students and alumni linked together to sing the Alma Matter [sic] and honor the Chief with their roars, motions and celebration. (Dialogue Letter #09146, Dialogue Disk 1, Dialogue on Chief Illiniwek, 2000)

Any genuine form of Native American musical expression would fail in this context, as would anyone dressed as an Illinois tribal leader (see Farnell, 1998) because the visual imagery and sounds would not be recognizably “Indian” to the crowd. That is, the dance, regalia, and music would not function as indexes connecting the colonizing gaze of the audience to their stereotypical image of the noble savage and its associated moral qualities (pride, spirit, courage, bravery). These moral qualities, embedded within the body of the dancing Indian himself, rapidly become indistinguishable from, or indeed actually generate from, strong feelings of loyalty to the institution:

Joining the Marching Illini [band] I have created an extremely strong emotional connection to this University and I can honestly say that this is in part due to Chief Illiniwek. . . . Every single member that marches in the performance is overcome by spirit, pride and loyalty to the university and chief Illiniwek. I will forever hold the chief as the symbol of this school. (Dialogue Letter #09146)

THE DANCING INDIAN BODY IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

That a dancing Indian should be the major trope for this racializing practice is not without import, nor further irony. For the purposes of this discussion, I will summarize and simplify a complex history by noting the fertile tension between disgust and desire over alien American Indian bodily practices that was created for many European immigrants as a result of Puritan theology and other Christian (largely Protestant) forms of bias against the body in America during the 17th through the 19th centuries (Deloria, 1998; King & Springwood, 2001a; Pagden, 1982; Segal & Steinbeck, 1977).

This tension was supported by the Platonic-Cartesian philosophical dualisms that separated and valorized mind over body (Farnell, 1999; Foucault, 1978; Pandian, 1985; Tripp, 1997; Wagner, 1997). Pandian writes, “From the late Renaissance . . . human others became symbols for comprehending what was denied as a valid part of the [Christian] self” (1985, p. 42). King and Springwood (2001a) suggest that the Protestant belief system provided a religio-historical momentum in expansionist Western Europe for viewing non-Christian bodies with pious disdain—that is, as carnal flesh because they were (assumedly) spontaneous, open, and sensual. Dancing, especially, was singled out for Calvinist attention as a preamble to fornication (e.g., Marks, 1975; Stubbs, 1585). Denying such corporeal experiences for themselves, Protestants were thus poised to inscribe and read the non-Western body as representing all these things.¹¹ The dancing Indian body that signified wild, savage, spontaneous, hypersexual, warlike, heathen passions—the dark and dangerous antithesis of all things civilized and Christian—was nevertheless simultaneously pregnant with fascination for the projected wildness and sexuality of the New World Other.

These alien bodily practices included not only so-called wild dancing and exotic rituals but also unfamiliar domestic activities and excesses of

gesticulation. On the whole, the greater the observable variation from acceptable European norms of physical behavior, the more primitive a society was judged to be. This rationale and distancing of Native Americans as Other provided justification for widespread colonial efforts to civilize the savages through the radical control and disciplining of bodily practices—not only dancing but clothing, hairstyles, eating habits, sexual liaisons, social manners, work ethics, and ritual activities (Farnell, 1995, p. 32; see also, Child, 1998; Lomawaima, 1994; Osburn, 1998).

American Indian dance forms, intertwined as they were with indigenous spiritual practices, received special attention, however, and they became subject to a series of prohibitions by the U.S. federal government in the late-19th and early 20th centuries (see Prucha, 1975). Prohibition against dancing continued to preoccupy U.S. government administrators and policy makers for almost half a century. In 1883, for example, the “Rules for Courts of Indian Offences” established guidelines for the discontinuance of “old heathenish dances” on the grounds that they hindered the assimilation of American Indians. By 1892, a modification of these rules identified dancing (along with polygamy, the practices of medicine men, intoxication, and immorality) as a punishable offence. This U.S. governmental attitude continued into the 1920s through circulars issued regularly by the Commissioners of Indian Affairs (Prucha, 1975, p. 187; 1984, pp., 801-803), and it lasted until 1934.

What cruel irony, then, that during this period when the U.S. government attempted to control and suppress these dynamically embodied forms of expressive culture within reservation communities, colonial constructions of dancing Indians began to proliferate off reservations—that is, in Wild West shows and expositions and especially on American university campuses (Deloria, 1998; Moses, 1996). The colonialist message was clear: dancing for the entertainment of a White audience was acceptable, but dancing for spiritual and cultural purposes on the reservation was not (Browner, 2002, p. 30).

In a crystal clear example of “imperial nostalgia” (Rosaldo, 1989), by the end of the 19th century, we find the emergence of a colonialist longing for that which has been destroyed enacted out in new spaces of racial representation—the sports arena. Imperialist nostalgia occurs when “people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed” (p. 69). By the turn of the 20th century, when the potential for American Indian military resistance had disappeared, the actual existence of American Indians was effectively superceded and displaced by the “Indian” as a polysemous sign vehicle for the construction of Euro-American identity.

As the discourse analysis presented below illustrates, the efforts to erase American Indian dancing only to reincorporate it as colonial mimicry on the sports field serves to reconcile a dominant pattern of violence—ethnocide and genocide—for the purposes of constructing a morally viable White identity. King and Springwood chart the direction of this movement:

The Indian was appropriated to serve as the central object of fascination and longing in the development of a white masculine character building movement whose emergence bridged the *fin-de siècle*. . . . This movement—whose agenda was articulated in a popular series of youth novels, health manuals, speeches and the literature of the Boy Scouts of America—encouraged young boys to embrace certain elements of Indian life as a way of instilling in them discipline, courage, intimate knowledge of nature, health and moral character. Essentially the aim was to teach white children Indian ways (Mechling, 1980, p. 19), but what constituted “Indian ways” were a set of highly idealized stereotypes of Indians as scouts, hunters and craftspeople. (King & Springwood, 2001a, p. 206)

The precise way in which Chief Illiniwek and the Boy Scout movement served—and continue to serve—as an important local vehicle for engendering White moral character through these idealized stereotypes is captured in the following statements:

From the time I was little my mother would include the Illini fight song in with Jack and Jill and the Farmer in the Dell at song time. As children we knew that the Indian heritage was a very special part of living in Illinois. In elementary school, one of our favorite assemblies every year was when Robert Bitzer, a former Chief Illini came to demonstrate Indian dances. He alone inspired a whole generation of Cub Scouts in Central Illinois to study Indian dances and traditions and he instilled in all of us an interest in Indian heritage. You can't imagine how hard those boys practiced their dances and how they all dreamed of one day becoming *The Chief* themselves. (1971 alumnus, Dialogue Letter #09140, 2000)

My son is 20 months old—he already recognizes the chief. One of my favorite parts of the game experience is when the chief comes out at half time to perform. . . . I hope my son has the opportunity to see the chief as he grows up. If the chief goes our children will be missing something special. (University accounting staff, Dialogue Letter #09457, 2000)

As I understand it, as passed on to me through class after class at the University of Illinois, the Chief was selected as a symbol of honor, respect and dignity. . . . I listen to friends of mine tell their children about the Chief and what he stands for and the children are hanging on every word, eventually saying that when they grow up they want to be like the Chief. Show me the problem with that. (Alumnus, Dialogue Letter #09110, 2000)

ETHNICIZING AND RACIALIZING DISCOURSES

Urciuoli (1996) identifies processes of “ethnification” and “racializing” that can usefully be extended to this context. “Ethnification” works in contexts such as folk-life festivals or campus multicultural days to make racial difference “cultural, neat and safe” (see Figure 2). Urciuoli shows how, outside of these contexts, Puerto Ricans in New York City experience the public sphere as an important site for their racialization because they are always found wanting by this sphere’s standards of English-only linguistic orderliness. Many Native Americans frequently experience the public sphere as a site for their racialization because they are always found wanting by this sphere’s standards for being a noble savage, predicated on White myths about American history and neo-colonial appropriations of an imagined

8 Monday, April 9, 2001

Lu'au packs Union

Hawai'i Club share traditions at annual show

BY JESSICA JOHNSON
The Daily Illini

Nora Malawatase, sophomore in LAS, wore a bright pink flowered dress and white flip-flops as she handed out programs at the entrance of the Illini Union Ballrooms on Sunday evening.

"I've been here at the door for about an hour now," said Malawatase, a member of the University Hawai'i Club. "It's pretty packed. We have a good crowd."

Malawatase and the Hawai'i Club hosted their annual lu'au with food, dancing, games, raffles, prayer and music Sunday evening.

While the club is open to anyone, most members of the Hawai'i Club are natives of Hawaii. Members of the club try to keep Hawaiian culture and tradition at the University, even though they are not in their home state, said Karen Uejima, lu'au coordinator and secretary of the Hawai'i Club.

Uejima, a native of Oahu, said the purpose of this annual lu'au is to pass on traditions in the club.

"When the seniors leave, they always try to make sure the traditions get passed on," Uejima said. "That's part of our theme this year, 'Cherished Traditions.' We try to incorporate and learn different things here, and then share those things with our members and guests at the lu'au."

Although the people who attend-



Michelle Lohmann The Daily Illini

JoAnne Wong, junior in engineering and president of Hawai'i Club, performs "Maunaloa" at the Sixth Annual Hawai'i Club Lu'au in the Union on Sunday evening. The event included dinner, musical performances, prizes and floral decorations that had been imported from Hawai'i.

ed bought tickets, the purpose of the night was not to yield a profit for the club, Uejima said.

"We usually break even," Uejima said. "We buy and cook the food ourselves, and the price the guests pay just covers that cost."

The lu'au started with a prayer and meal and ended with the audience participating in games, songs and dance.

"We just want to share our traditions," Uejima said.

A live band, "The Gregory Boyz," played a set while guests finished their meals of rice, pig, chicken, coconut pudding and salad. Entertainers included JoAnne Wong, Hawai'i Club president, dancing the Maunaloa—a hula dance.

"It's our way of having some way to share our culture, food and dancing," Wong said.

Uejima said the tally of guests was 310.

"Most are students, but we have a few families that come every year," she said.

Guests watched the entertain-

ment from tables with centerpieces of flowers and pineapples.

"We have some very generous contributors," Uejima said. "We also have a lot of sponsors from Hawai'i shipping in supplies."

The program continued with Tahitian dancers followed by a quartet of males dancing to a performance named "Noho Pali Pali-Rocking Chair." The master of ceremonies took over after the quartet's final step.

"I think we'll have a little game of 'Who wants to be a Hawaiian?' now," said Mark Ambler, senior in engineering.

Six audience members were picked to compete in two rounds answering Hawaiian trivia questions.

Russal Patal, one of the contestants, did not win a pineapple, but walked away with a Hawaiian scene calendar.

"I'm just here for fun," Patal said. "But I really wanted the pineapple. That's what I was going for."

FIGURE 2: A Typical Example of "Ethnification" on a College Campus.

SOURCE: Daily Illini, April 9, 2001.

NOTE: Such events frame racial difference as "cultural neat and safe."

Indian identity. As we shall see, any action or imagery that disrupts this dominant discourse positions Native American people as disorderly.

American Indian mascots generate a variety of racializing and ethnification processes. For example, on the campus of the University of North Dakota (UND), protests against the "Fighting Sioux" in March 2001 unleashed a storm of vulgar racist discourse in which terms such as "prairie nigga" work to stereotype Native American student protestors as nontaxpaying loafers with unfair privileges who should go "back to the rez" if they don't like the White public space that is UND (see Figure 3). Because such hate speech racializes its objects overtly, most Whites will recognize it as such and admit it is racist (whether or not they agree with it). In contrast, the caricature employed by the Cleveland Indians baseball team racializes its objects less overtly perhaps, but it is, nevertheless, a representation that directly indexes racializing processes (see Figure 4). Most supporters of Chief Illiniwek admit as much because they explicitly contrast their Illinois symbol with the kinds of mascots and caricatures found elsewhere. For example, John Bitzer (Chief Illiniwek from 1970 to 1973) defended the role by saying, "Other university mascots are just caricatures but Illiniwek portrays the Indians as they *would want* [emphasis added] to be portrayed" (cited in Dialogue Report, File V, Dialogue Disk 1). This ideology is echoed by the university administration, up to and including the Board of Trustees.

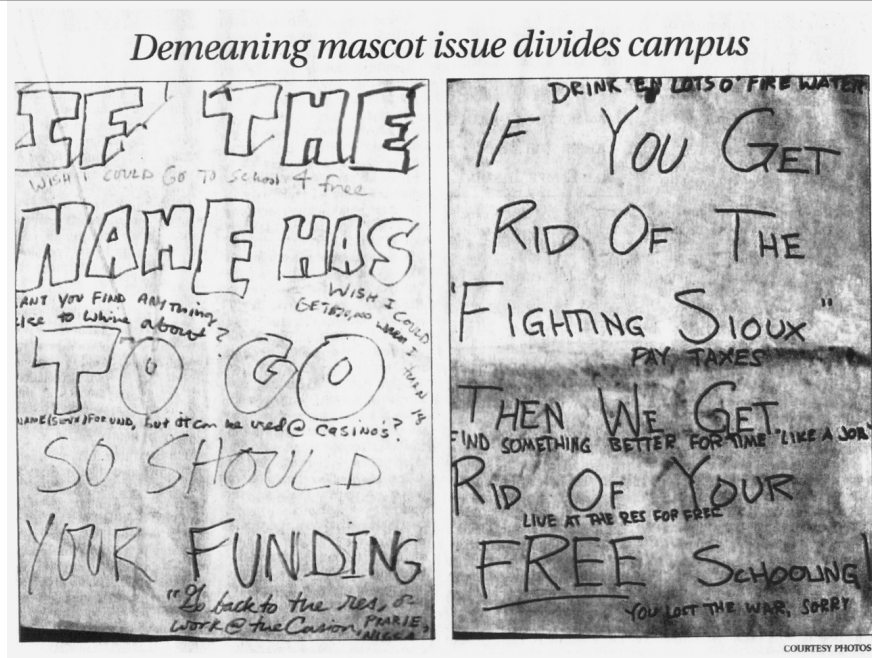


FIGURE 3: Graffiti in the Halls of One Building at the University of North Dakota.

SOURCE: Published on the front page of *Indian Country Today*, a national American Indian newspaper, on March 21, 2001. Reprinted with permission.



FIGURE 4: University of Illinois Students at a Protest Against the Cleveland Team Mascot, 1998.

SOURCE: Photograph by Carol Spindel. Reprinted with permission.

For example, on October 11, 1990, in response to unrest caused by anti-Chief demonstrations, the university's Board of Trustees passed the following motion by a vote of 6 to 1:

For more than sixty years, the Chief has been the *symbol of the spirit* of a great university and of our intercollegiate athletic teams, and as such is loved by the people of Illinois. The University considers *the symbol* to be dignified and has treated it with respect. . . . I feel that those who view the Chief as a "mascot" or a "caricature" just don't understand the Chief's true meaning to thousands of U of I students and alumni—he is the spirit of the Fighting Illini. The tradition of Chief Illiniwek is a positive one and I move he be retained. (emphasis added; Trustee Hahn, cited in Dialogue Report, File V, Dialogue Disk 1)

The echoes reverberate all the way up to state politics. In 1996, Illinois State Representative Rick Winkel, a University of Illinois alumnus, introduced a bill in the Illinois House of Representatives, stating, "Consistent with a long-standing, *proud* tradition, the General Assembly hereby declares that Chief Illiniwek, is and shall remain, *the honored symbol* (emphasis added) of a great University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign" (Bill 1106).¹²

Illiniwek supporters thus claim to occupy a different discursive field from either vulgar racist discourse or directly indexed racializing processes such as caricatures. They accomplish this via what I will call a "rhetoric of honoring," the use of which enables supporters to claim a moral high ground for their practices and effectively mask the underlying racializing discourse.

To examine precisely how this rhetoric of honoring accomplishes its goals, I draw on theoretical resources from semiotically informed linguistic anthropology, especially the concept of indexicality (Silverstein, 1976; Urciuoli, 1996).

DIRECT AND INDIRECT INDEXICALITY

I have found Ochs's (1990) distinction between "direct" and "indirect" indexicality, which is predicated on Silverstein's earlier treatment (1976), a fruitful resource for exploring the semiotics of racial stereotyping. For example, athletic fans in Illinois—including alumni, members of the Board of Trustees, and even the State Legislature—repeatedly say they want to keep Chief Illiniwek because the chief is a revered symbol of a great university that symbolizes dignity, honor, respect, sincerity, and pride.

This message can be quite explicit (i.e., these and similar words are used) or directly indexed (pointed to) in various ways in the discourse of supporters. Such directly indexed messages are acknowledged by speakers because talking this way positions speakers as morally upstanding and loyal citizens of the state and/or school. However, further analysis reveals that such talk is predicated on another set of messages that projects profoundly racialized constructs of Native Americans, which serve to accomplish the "elevation of Whiteness" (Hill, 1998/2001). These are the products of indirect indexicality, a source of meanings that are not acknowledged by

speakers. Although supporters almost always deny that Illiniwek could be in any way racist, I shall argue that to make sense of their symbols and practices, supporters require access to such indirectly indexed racializing constructs that are widely shared and accepted.

For the purposes of this article, I analyze two letters from among the many thousands written to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees about the athletic symbol and dancing mascot during a so-called dialogue on the controversial issue in the spring of 2001. I chose these two letters because although unique and interesting compositions in their own right, the utterances therein are typical.¹³ They illustrate conceptualizations that emerge repeatedly in the discourse of the mascot's supporters—including state government, university administrators, and members of the Board of Trustees—in many different contexts. While keeping the discourse of these letters as the focal point, I provide some additional examples that illustrate their normative quality, where possible.

THE DIALOGUE

dialogue *n.* **1** a conversation. . . **2** a discussion, esp. one between representatives of two political groups.

Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus, American Edition (1996, p. 391)

The University of Illinois administration's belated call for a "dialogue" on the Chief Illiniwek issue in 2000, after more than a decade of protests, was in direct response to strongly worded criticism from the regional accrediting body, the North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools.¹⁴ Having failed in their attempts to exclude the controversy over the athletic symbol from the accreditation process on the grounds that "this is not an educational issue," the administration's call for dialogue was an explicit move to avert the unexpected threat of NCA sanction. The dialogue was marketed by the university administration as an open invitation for concerned citizens to voice their opinion by sending e-mails and letters to the Board of Trustees. In fact, such letters and appeals had been flowing to the board in ever-increasing numbers for more than a decade by this time.

On April 14, 2001, as part of the dialogue, a televised public "intake session" was held on the University of Illinois campus, at which the letters analyzed below were presented in person by their authors. This event was a highly charged, all day affair, with many hundreds of supporters from both sides filling a large auditorium at the heart of the campus. The dialogue turned out to be nothing of the kind as this word is commonly understood. Rather than an exchange of views—a conversation or discussion—participants were subjected to a series of carefully controlled, alternating monologues from preselected representatives on both sides of the issue, framed according to a courtroom model. The courtroom format was hardly surprising as a retired local judge moderated the proceedings. Ironically, Judge Garippo was not appointed to judge on the issue but merely to collect

information from all sides and write an “objective report” for the Board of Trustees (Garippo, 2000).¹⁵

As in a court room (and iconic of his former status), Judge Garippo surveyed his domain, sitting alone at his “bench” (table) in the center of the large empty stage overlooking the audience. Individual “witnesses”—the people who had been preselected and scheduled to appear—came forward to a microphone to speak or read their statements for a strictly enforced 3 minutes each (organizations were allotted 5 minutes). Also reminiscent of a courtroom, the judge prohibited any cheering, clapping, or other responsive noises that might interfere with or delay the proceedings. Security guards and campus police were prevalent. The physical absence of members of the Board of Trustees endowed them with an overwhelming virtual symbolic presence at the event, iconic of the absolute higher power they held to decide this issue.

LETTER 1

A male alumnus from the class of 1972, who currently works for the University of Illinois Office of Business Affairs Network, wrote the first letter. I will first present the entire letter and then break it into sections for analysis before turning to the second letter.

Friday April 14th, 2000, 11:08 a.m.

Dear University of Illinois Board of Trustees:

Thank you for this vehicle to voice opinions on the Chief Illiniwek controversy. My immediate inclination was to quickly send off a letter of support for keeping the Chief: thank you for allowing time to justify my strong feelings. Perhaps this will be a new slant for you to consider.

I believe God challenges us to think with our hearts and keep our eyes open for direction. There is an incredible coincidence between the Chief Illiniwek and Elian Gonzalez controversies. All parties convincingly claim a love for a principal person, and purport to know what is best for him. One side claims an undisputable right of lineage while a much larger group claims a basic instinct of love and honor. And there isn't room for much compromise—one side will largely prevail.

There is no easy answer, but my conclusions are much easier to form when compared to the heartbreaking decision that will happen with Elian. Native Americans can rightfully be angry with injustices their previous generations have suffered. Yet the Illini nation and any chiefs were not persecuted by white people then or now. Since there are no direct generations of Illini to speak out I claim my right to speak for them is stronger than non-Illinois Native American nations! I am from this land that holds the dust of those people. It is more likely that those referred to as Illini suffered genocide from the very nations that now claim to speak for them. Where were their spokespersons when Chief Illiniwek became the University of Illinois symbol over 50 years ago?

We are all suffering an age when too many people use the position of being personally offended to serve their own agendas and get attention. I heard the Native American spokesperson on the quad this afternoon spewing words of anger and even hatred. These emotions have never been present in the symbol of Chief Illiniwek.

Choosing the athletic symbol of the University of Illinois was done with the best spirit and intent—I believe the vast majority of us true successors of the Illini nation agree. There is no blood lineage to support custodianship of Chief Illiniwek—the wishes of the natives of Illinois should prevail. The speaker on the quad shouted that the Chief is dead, but the spirit lives on and the University of Illinois has made it so!

—[name removed], native Illinoisan, class of '72.

UIUC Office of Business Affairs Network Administration

For the purposes of analysis and exegesis, I have broken the letter up into a number of segments that do not necessarily occur in the same order as in the letter. Bold face text highlights specific words or phrases I discuss, and numbers in parentheses relate to analytic points made below.

A. *Opening Gambits:*

Thank you for this vehicle (1) to voice opinions on the Chief Illiniwek controversy. My immediate inclination was to quickly send off a letter of support for keeping the Chief: **thank you for allowing time to justify my strong feelings** (2). Perhaps this will be a new slant for you to consider.

I believe God challenges us to think with our hearts and keep our eyes open for direction (3). There is an incredible coincidence between the Chief Illiniwek and Elian Gonzalez controversies. All parties convincingly claim **a love for a principal person** (4), and purport to know what is best for him. One side claims an undisputable right of lineage while **a much larger group** claims **a basic instinct of love and honor**. And there isn't room for much compromise—one side will largely prevail.

The speaker begins his address with polite thanks and deference (1). He moves immediately to position himself as an emotionally responsive religious person who is open to divine direction (2 and 3) and, therefore, as someone occupying a positive moral space. He supports this by evoking some parallels between Chief Illiniwek and a national political event (the Elian Gonzales custody battle) that was subject to much media hype at the time. He presents himself as a reasonable neutral observer who, despite his “strong feelings” (2), can understand competing claims by opposing interests. Note that for this speaker, the Chief is not an invented role performed by an actor, but a “beloved person” (4). In terms of direct indexes, these are messages the speaker would probably acknowledge.

Additional indirect indexes emerge if we note a connection between the speaker's admission of “strong feelings” (2) and his framing of the two sides of the debate, given statements that appear later in the letter. Far from being neutral, the speaker, in fact, aligns himself with the “much larger group” (5) as he frames them as the democratic majority. The appeal to a “basic instinct of love and honor” (6) is an appeal to a spurious or mistaken authority from the natural/biological realm that he uses to counter the opposing authority of biological lineage. He assumes that the latter would be the rationale used by American Indians to claim their right to “own” the mascot. The issue for this speaker is, thus, primarily about ownership.

B. *Indians 'R' Us:*

Choosing the athletic symbol of the University of Illinois was done with the best spirit and intent (1). I believe the vast majority (2) of us true successors of the Illini nation (3) agree. There is no blood lineage to support custodianship of Chief Illiniwek (4)—the wishes of the natives of Illinois (5) should prevail.

Direct Indexes:

1. Our good intentions make our actions moral (independent of consequences).
2. The majority should rule in a democracy (appeal to national political and moral value).
3. We are now the Illini nation (born again?).
4. There are no real descendents who can claim to own the chief—he is ours.
5. Real “natives” are those who are born in the state, not indigenous people.

Indirect Indexes:

These statements require the speaker to have access to the following neocolonial racializing constructs of contemporary Native Americans:

- (i) Whites own the land; therefore, Whites own the imagery (i.e., the White majority has “inherited” the right to appropriate and control Native American imagery).
- (ii) The Illini are dead. We are the Illini (a neocolonial appropriation of identity).
- (iii) White claims are superior to those of contemporary Native Americans.

Supporters frequently and literally invoke and refer to Chief Illiniwek as if it/he were a part of them. For example, one alumnus wrote,

Over time, year after year, class after class, the alumni and present students of the U of I have become a tribe of their own. While the president of the university is the functional head of that tribe, the Chief is the spiritual head. (Dialogue Letter #09110, Dialogue Disk 1)

This poses a real conundrum because, as University of Illinois history faculty member David Prochaska notes,

In the heart of the heart of Chief Illiniwek country, there is literally nothing, a historical absence, a non-person. Chief Illiniwek is a sign without a historical referent, a free floating signifier in a prairie flat land wiped clean, erased of Native Americans. (Prochaska, 2001, p. 165)

C. *Protestors are Egotistic Agitators not an Ethnic Minority:*

We are all (1) suffering (2) an age (3) when too many people (4) use the position of being personally offended (5) to serve their own agendas and get attention (6).

Direct Indexes:

1. "We" (inclusive pronoun)—you and I share this position (co-opts listener as a member of a group of "all reasonable people").
2. "Suffering"—a metaphor invoking pain and endurance (political dissent is a disease/violent force; co-opts the listener as sharing this negative view).
3. This is a problem of the times "we" live in—it is new, unusual, and unworthy (i.e., it is not genuine political dissent).
4. These are not the actions of a legitimate ethnic group but of "too many" individuals ("too many" co-opts the listener into sharing the negative assessment).
5. People who protest the Chief are misguided, oversensitive individuals; this is not about/from an ethnic minority (i.e., it is not genuine political action, just an indulgence of personal feelings).
6. Protestors are egotistic attention seekers without genuine political motives.

In sum, the use of the inclusive pronoun "we" co-opts the listener as a member of the group of "all reasonable people" (1). "Suffering" introduces a metaphor that structures political dissent as a disease or violent force, again co-opting the listener to share the negative view (2). Protest is dismissed as merely a product of the times (3) rather than genuine political dissent, and it is denied legitimacy as the actions of misguided, oversensitive egotistical individuals (4 and 5) rather than those of an ethnic minority with genuine political motives (6).

Indirect Indexes:

The speaker employs the racializing strategy of denying legitimacy to those who oppose the White status quo (with whom he identifies). In my experience, supporters hold tenaciously to this status quo despite being presented with contrary evidence from numerous national American Indian professional organizations (educational, psychological, and political), tribal groups, and individuals. The underlying rationale is that "this cannot be genuine political action by an ethnic minority because it contradicts the beliefs of White people like me." Such sentiments position all Native American voices of protest as disorderly. The rhetoric of honoring is thus predicated on the belief that all real Indians are dead.

D. *The Only Good Indian . . .*

I heard the Native American spokesperson on the quad this afternoon spewing words of anger and even hatred (1). These emotions have never been present in the symbol of Chief Illiniwek (2).

Direct Indexes:

1. "Real" Indians (as noble savages) are proud and noble and silently stoic, or they should be (especially about their treatment at the hands of Whites)—real Indians do not angrily confront racism.
2. "Our Indian/ness" is nobler than yours.

Indirect Index:

This statement requires the speaker to have access to the romantic, racializing stereotype of the noble savage. Any actions that contradict this stereotype entail conceptions of irrationality and disorderliness and thereby automatically disqualify the actor. In this manner, contemporary notions of Native American disorderliness within White public space build on and update those stereotypical “childlike” qualities attached to the “primitive” noble savage. Again, the rhetoric of honoring is predicated on the belief that all real Indians must be dead.

E. Our Hands Are Clean:

Native Americans can rightfully be angry with injustices their previous generations have suffered (1). Yet the Illini nation and any chiefs were not persecuted by white people then or now (2). . . . It is more likely (3) that those referred to as Illini suffered genocide (4) from the very nations that now claim to speak for them (5)

Direct Indexes:

1. Injustices against Native Americans exist in the past not in the present (“previous generations” + past tense).
2. Injustices existed only elsewhere, not in Illinois (i.e., our hands are clean).
3. My version of history is correct (“more likely” is good enough if it serves my purposes).
4. The Illini no longer exist (past tense + “genocide”).
5. Other Indians (as wild savages) were/are responsible for the demise of the Illini and, as a result, have no right to speak out today or to speak for them.

Indirect Indexes:

Note that in the first sentence, the speaker appears to set up a sympathetic frame toward the sufferings of Native Americans, only to confine any potential reflection about injustices to “previous generations” (and use of the past tense—i.e., “have suffered”). He then locates any such injustices outside of the state of Illinois and absolves Whites from any responsibility for such practices, using the simple declarative “were not persecuted.” Note also that whereas Native Americans who suffered are confined to the past, Whites (“then or now”) past and present receive absolution.

This narrative strategy is typical of what Prochaska (2001) calls “settler colonialism,” in which colonial culture reconfigures and renders often-violent transactions in terms of “anti-conquest” narratives. Such historical narratives state, “the land was vacant, we really didn’t expropriate it,” or “we took the land but really without bloodshed.” These are representations “whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they insert European Hegemony” (Pratt, 1992, cited in Prochaska, 2001, p. 164).

The narrative strategy that insists the Illini are extinct not only places them firmly in the past, but it also denies legitimacy to any contemporary statements by the Peoria Indian tribe of Oklahoma (the descendents of the surviving members of Illinois confederacy who were forcibly removed from the state in 1830). I have learned that any different version of Illinois history is usually rejected as mere “opinion” or “that’s your interpretation,” especially if it challenges the narrative that the Illinois tribes were wiped out by other Indians.

Note also the speaker’s “divide and conquer” strategy here. His discourse denies Native Americans any collective identity. At the same time, many fans talk in terms of a monolithic collective “Indian” identity when defending their practices, asserting that because not all American Indians agree on this issue, they have the right to continue. Again, divide and conquer.

F. I Claim My Right to Speak for Them:

Since there are no direct generations of Illini to speak out (1), I claim my right to speak for *them* (2) is stronger than non-Illinois Native American nations! (3) I am from this land that holds the dust of (1) those people (4).

Direct Indexes:

1. The Illini no longer exist, so there is no legitimate voice (no direct generations, the dust of).
2. I/my versus them/those; I therefore claim the right to speak for them.
3. Legitimacy comes from who is on the land here and now; it is not judged on the basis of historical precedence or ethnicity.
4. Birthplace confers legitimacy to speak as a real Illini.

Indirect Indexes:

Confining any legitimate voices to the past leaves the way clear for Whites to appropriate the Native American voice directly. The speaker claims the right to speak for them and represent them in any way he sees fit. Note that in contrast to his complaint about protestors, “I claim my right” is not interpreted by the speaker as his personal agenda.

The autochthonous claim contained in the phrase, “I am from the land that holds the dust of these people,” inserts a powerful marked metaphor that seeks to legitimize the speaker’s claims over those of contemporary Native Americans by asserting his shared ancestry with the Illini on the basis of being born in their former territory. This strategy, like the mythical version of historical events, seeks to legitimize the presence of Euro-Americans on the Illinois landscape. The drama played out on the football field during the football game against Penn State in 1926, when Chief Illiniwek first appeared and shook hands with “William Penn,” confirms this interpretation (see King & Springwood 2001b for further description). It supplies a

mythology that reconstructs Indian/White relations as friendly, equal, resolved.

LETTER 2

Friday April 14, 2000, 4:56 p.m.

As a member of the Marching Illini (1972-1977)¹⁶ I was fortunate enough to see the competition for two chiefs. They were almost invariably Eagle Scouts who had practiced long and hard on the authenticity of their dance. Competition was brutal, but it was worth it. Every home football and basketball game, the pride swelling from the band, the crowd and the players was palpable when the Chief made his entrance to the soft chants of “Chief, chief, chief.” He wasn’t a mascot or a caricature like Bradley University’s brave. He was the embodiment of those qualities to which Native Americans should aspire.

Rather than protesting those things Native Americans have not taken the time to study and understand perhaps they should interview the chief and former chiefs to find out what spirit caused them to dance wearing the buckskin costume that weighed pounds as it became soaked with sweat during the furious performance, and the hours of practice with the band that took away time from social and academic pursuits. Few on campus were more revered. Not because he was pretending to be a Native American, but because he was the spirit come alive.

Most sincerely,
—[name removed]

A. *The Innocence of Neocolonialist Power:*

As a member of the Marching Illini (1972-1977) I was fortunate enough to see the competition for two chiefs. They were **almost invariably Eagle Scouts (1)** who had **practiced long and hard (2)** on the **authenticity of their dance (3)**. Competition was brutal, but it was worth it. Every home football and basketball game, the pride swelling from the band, the crowd and the players was palpable when the Chief made his entrance to the soft chants of “Chief, chief, chief.” **He wasn’t a mascot or a caricature like Bradley University’s brave (4)**. **He was the embodiment of those qualities to which Native Americans should aspire (5)**.

Rather than protesting those things Native Americans have not taken the time to study and understand (6) perhaps they should (7) interview the chief and former chiefs to find out what spirit caused them to dance wearing the buckskin costume that weighed pounds as it became soaked with sweat during the furious performance, and the hours of practice with the band that took away time from social and academic pursuits. **Few on campus were more revered. Not because he was pretending to be a Native American, but because he was the spirit come alive.**

Direct Indexes:

1. Boy scouts are honorable young men; they work hard, practice hard, and endure brutal competition to earn the right (indexes core American values).
2. The dance is “authentic” because Boy Scouts say so and worked hard to achieve it.
3. If supporters experience positive emotions such as pride (+ reverence and “the spirit”), then the practice must, by definition, be good.
4. Our symbol is not racist, because it is not a caricature.

5. Native Americans should study our representations and aspire to the values we assign to their image.
6. Native Americans do not understand.
7. We claim the moral right to tell you Native Americans what you should aspire to and what you should do.

Indirect Indexes:

This writer attempts to claim the moral high ground by positioning Chief supporters in a positive moral space and American Indians in a negative moral space. She invokes core American values such as hard work, competition, and the Boy Scouts (that impeccable training ground for mimetic practices) to position the Chiefs as honorable.

The mass experience of positive emotions such as pride, reverence, and school spirit is accepted without any critical reflection. The historical fact that the manufacture and manipulation of similar emotions has inspired crowds to follow leaders like Hitler and Mao Tse Tung or join the Klu Klux Klan is, apparently, beside the point.

In contrast, Native Americans who protest are positioned as ignorant troublemakers who have not done their homework on this issue; Whites are being misunderstood. Blind to the blatant imperialism revealed by her discourse and taking the superior moral stance, the writer tells Native Americans (“them”) what “they” “should” do (i.e., study why the “chiefs” dance, and aspire to the superior cultural values Whites assign to the image and practices). In effect, she is saying, “Shut up—we Whites will tell you Indians what you will mean for us.”

A variation of this imperialist discourse occurs in the following patronizing statement from a member of the Board of Trustees who engages in ethnocentric reasoning from the position, “If I were an Indian:”

Though they are Native Americans, they are not as involved as we are in this situation. Perhaps they really don't understand how we're presenting the chief. Perhaps they ought to come to a game. . . . I can't imagine that the chief who departs himself with such dignity, and such solemnity . . . I can't imagine that that can be perceived as a racial insult or a slur on the Native American Community. To me it is a compliment. . . . If I were an Indian I would be honored by the chief. (emphasis supplied; Trustee Susan Gravenhurst in Rosenstein, 1996)

CONCLUSIONS

The positive moral high ground directly indexed by these writers/presenters is predicated on a constructed narrative of the past, typical of settler colonialism, which supports a strong emotional desire on the part of Whites to feel legitimate on the Illinois landscape. It is predicated on the premise that real Indians must be dead. In declaring the Illinois Indians to be extinct and absolving Whites from any responsibility for this, imperialist nostalgia then clears the way to appropriate an Illini identity as part of a collective

White heritage. The call is to “celebrate our Illini heritage” (Honor the Chief, 2001). This mythical blending of White/Indian is an ethnification process that seeks to make racial difference neat and safe. It provides an “ethnized” comfort zone wherein an unproblematic shared ancestry can be imagined. However, it is predicated on the romantic but racializing stereotype of the noble savage, whose qualities are literally as well as figuratively embodied in the emotion-laden presence of the dancing mascot and its graphic symbol.

According to this worldview, all real Indians are those who conform to this romantic vision from the past, and the narrative provides a powerful neocolonial rationale to position all contemporary Native American protest as illegitimate and disorderly. This racializing discourse empowers Whites, not only to claim a superior right to determine the representations but also to silence Native voices, insisting with neocolonial impunity that Whites will determine what Indians will mean for this community. These indirect indexes reveal the institutionalized racism at work here. The rhetoric of honoring presupposes a racializing discourse, accomplishing the racialization of its subordinate group targets, through indirect indexicality, messages that are available for comprehension but are never acknowledged by speakers.

The method employed here exposes cultural assumptions, beliefs, and values as normative, discursive formations that enable and empower actual discourse. This repositions culture as “localized in concrete, publicly accessible signs the most important of which are actually occurring instances of discourse” (Urban, 1991, p. 1; see also Farnell & Graham 1998; Silverstein & Urban, 1998).

This particular racializing practice aims to be accepting and incorporating of difference—there is no doubt that the good intentions of many Illiniwek supporters are genuine, and it is a shock for them to discover it is not acceptable. But this is a double-edged sword because their terms for acceptance and incorporation are premised on exclusion and appropriation, and so it becomes another strategy for homogenizing heterogeneity in the construction of White public space. And, not surprisingly, it will brook no dissent—you either accept “our” terms or you are out. As one fraternity member put it, “People who oppose the chief are just crazy—where’s the school spirit in that? I think anyone who opposes the chief should not come here.”¹⁷ This sentiment was upheld by University of Illinois Trustee Thomas Lamont who replied to a letter of complaint from a Native American student by suggesting the latter find another school because “the University of Illinois is not for everyone.”¹⁸ The message is clear—this is an exclusive club not an inclusive, diverse, educational environment.

The ongoing power of this racializing discourse also comes from the fact that to be White is to collude in these practices or to risk censure as being politically correct or having no sense of fun or school spirit. Because the discourse of supporters is predicated on the discourse of those who

oppose the practice, it is not surprising to find the words *race* and *racism* absent from the rhetoric of honoring. Any mention of race is consistently dismissed by supporters as mere political correctness. This correlates with a number of neoliberal discourses that use political correctness as a weapon against social change, (such as affirmative action and women's rights). These discursive arguments thus reference race by not naming it; to do so would be to risk being positioned by the discursive terms of the opposing side and, hence, to open oneself to moral sanction.

I have argued that discourse surrounding support for Chief Illiniwek accomplishes the "elevation of Whiteness" (Hill, 1998/2001, p. 456) and construction of a valued White persona in two ways; first, it directly indexes positive moral qualities of the speakers as preservers of an honorable tradition that seeks to honor the former American Indian peoples of Illinois; second, and most importantly, it indirectly indexes and points to negative and racializing messages consistent with a Foucaultian discursive formation that manufactures consent. I maintain that it is through indirect indexicality that the practice of using Native Americans as sports mascots constructs White public space—an arena in which the discursive practices of Whites is rendered invisible and normal, whereas attempts by Native American people to render themselves visible in this space are viewed as disorderly and are effectively silenced.

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NOTES

1. For the purposes of this article, I use "American Indian" or "Indian" when discussing people as icons or symbols from the largely White/Euro-American/non-Native point of view. I use "Native American" when referring to the sociohistorical and contemporary identity of the indigenous peoples of the United States. Most of my colleagues and consultants use both terms without making this distinction, but I find it serves a useful heuristic purpose here.
2. Additional forms of "playing Indian" can be found in several other contexts, from the Boy Scouts and associated "Indian hobbyist" practices to fraternity rituals and Wild West shows (see Bird, 1996; Deloria, 1998; Green, 1988; King & Springwood, 2001c; LeBeau, 2001; Moses, 1996; Powers, 1988; Spindel, 2000; Taylor, 1988).

3. For example, see the cogent statement by Dr. Joseph Gone (1995/2002) written while he was a graduate student at the University of Illinois; see also <http://www.aistm.org> for a partial list of Native American political and professional organizations who have repeatedly voiced their opposition to this practice.
4. In this article, I do not address the associated visual imagery, which is, of course, an equally salient semiotic component of these practices.
5. The arguably racializing epithet of “White” is used rather than Euro-American as an explicit strategy to mark the invisible and unmarked norm. I recognize that Whites position themselves on both sides of this issue. My usage follows Frankenburg’s (1993) research on the construction of “Whiteness,” which shows that Whites construct the domain of color and exclude those racialized as colored from resources. I also recognize that Whites are by no means a homogeneous population, but this does not detract from the recognition that such norms exist. They are built as bricolage from the bits and pieces of history in a nationalist process aimed at “homogenizing heterogeneity” (Williams, 1989, p. 435; see also Hartigan, 1997; Page & Thomas, 1994).
6. I use “colonial” here to refer to domination by an imperial power that appropriates land and economic resources and destroys or severely disrupts social organization and political autonomy. “Neocolonial” refers to symbolic domination via processes such as the cultural appropriation of imagery, symbolism, religious practices, and arts.
7. Historical records suggest that in the late-19th century and early 20th century, White producers of Wild West shows in Oklahoma urged their Indian dancers to invent “fancy” additions to the older dances of Plains warrior societies to please non-Indian audiences (Browner, 2002, p. 30). Such audience demands led to the invention of fancy war dances that had never existed in Native cultures. This is undoubtedly the source of inspiration for Chief Illiniwek’s dance, which was disseminated through the Boy Scout movement. Incorporated in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America modeled many outdoor activities on real or putative American Indian themes. In 1915, the Order of the Arrow, a national Scout camping fraternity, was founded in which ceremonies of initiation were based on “Indian themes,” and local lodges and chapters were given “Indian names.” The first three individuals who portrayed Chief Illiniwek (Lester Leutwiler, Webber Borchers, and William Newton) became interested in “Indian lore” through their involvement with the Boy Scouts. They spent time at summer camp learning so-called Indian dances as well as arts and crafts from Ralph Hubbard, a renowned enthusiast who traveled widely in the United States and Europe producing “Indian pageants” (Powers, 1988, p. 558).
8. Instead, male fancy dancers wear two large, gaily colored turkey-feather bustles attached to the shoulders and hips and moccasins or beaded sneakers. Dance movements specific to the genre make the feather bustles blur the outline of the body through fast turns and changes of direction within a relatively small amount of floor space inside the dance arena. The arm and body movements combine with fast footwork that must not lose the beat of the drum (in competition, musicians frequently try to trick dancers into missing the final beat and thus lose vital points off their score). The combination of moves in fancy dancing are improvised, but they must conform to the choreographic constraints of the genre; only certain kinds of steps, jumps, and turns are acceptable. Clearly, the Oklahoma exhibition dancing that evolved into today’s fancy dancing developed in ways quite distinct from Chief Illiniwek’s dance, as Madigan in fact admits. Ironically then, the invented, romanticized White image and its choreography has been frozen in time under the trope of White tradition.
9. An additional factor in this choice was that “the Indians of Illinois shaved the sides of their heads and he [Borscher, the second Chief] couldn’t quite picture himself or any future Chief Illiniwek walking around campus for two or three years with only a

- scalplock on his head.” (Chief Illiniwek homepage, available at www.ChiefIlliniwek.org).
10. It is interesting to note that this march was composed in 1922, 4 years before Chief Illiniwek was created; this reflects the widespread presence of Indian imagery on campus prior to the invention of the Chief. An examination of the *Illio* magazine beginning in 1901 reveals countless images of American Indians—Indian heads similar to the present logo; sketches of muscular, nude, or minimally clothed Indian men in headdresses; medicine men; natives dancing with tomahawks; and so on. This imagery was already prevalent in pop culture at the time, so the choice of an Indian was a likely selection for the performance, as was the case with thousands of other colleges and schools across the United States.
 11. King and Springwood (2000, n4) argue that although “Puritan theology largely underscores the ambivalent mix of colonial desire/disgust for New World Others this does not preclude the fact that Catholic colonists, everywhere, also embodied such angst.” They suggest that the structure of feeling with Catholic imperialism was less dramatically marked by a discomfort with the carnal body and bodily forms of celebration among Catholics. Forms of idolatry that were not prescribed by Catholic doctrine were viewed as dangerous, however.
 12. After an amendatory veto by Governor Jim Edgar, the bill became law effective June 1, 1996. The amendatory veto changed “shall remain” to “may remain” so that the issue remains a university decision (110 ILCS 305/1f).
 13. It would be fruitful but beyond the scope of the current article to analyze a much larger sample of letters. It would also be pertinent to conduct a similar analysis of letters from the opposing side because they exist in dialogical relationship to each other—in Bakhtin’s sense of this term—and each discourse needs the other to articulate its arguments.
 14. The 30-page North Central Association (NCA) *Report of a Special Emphasis Visit to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, September 27-29, 1999*, devoted more than 8 pages to the mascot issue, citing the fact that the university was out of compliance with its own governing principles because it failed to adhere to its institutional policies and its stated goals of promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination. This meant that the university did not meet NCA standards for institutional integrity (see relevant extract of the report in the *Garippo Report* at http://www.uiuc.edu/dialogue/report_files/VI.html)
 15. This process cost the taxpayers of Illinois over \$300,000. Judge Garippo’s report is available on-line at <http://www.uiuc.edu/dialogue/index.html>. The Board of Trustees commented on the report publicly on November 11, 2000, reading from prepared statements that primarily repeated their reasons for retaining the mascot. They announced that they would appoint a committee to study the issue further. The only non-White person on the board, African American trustee Roger Plummer, was subsequently appointed to make recommendations. After an additional 10 months, on March 13, 2002, Plummer concluded that there are two choices, retain the Chief or retire the Chief; he layed out the pros and cons of each choice. Suzan Shown Harjo, a prominent Native American public figure who addressed the board March 13, commented that such a statement is what Oscar Wilde once called a “blinding glimpse of the obvious” (Harjo, 2002). As I write, almost 1 year later, the board continues to avoid making any decision on the issue.
 16. Many current and past members of the Marching Illini Band are staunch supporters of the Chief. His appearance is part of their halftime performance at football games.
 17. Male fraternity member interviewed on WILL radio, October, 2000.
 18. See Winneshiek/Lamont correspondence at <http://www.csulb.edu/winnesh/hos-tile.html>

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