

Native American Mythology

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Midnight Facts for Insomniacs

Podcast Transcript

(Note: transcript consists of episode outline)

We have a new mascot! I have adopted a pocket panther, the coolest little black cat, which means Duncan also now has a pocket panther as we are cohabitating.

Before we get started, a shoutout and thank you to the many insomniacs who pointed out that Katherine of Aragon was not one of the wives that was beheaded by Henry the 8th. We have a very knowledgeable, very meticulous, and very vocal listenership. I did promptly cut that mistake from the episode so most of you have no idea what I'm talking about, but for those who noticed it, oops, and good looking out. Keep us on our toes.

Also, usually we do the reviews at the end, but this one is special, if you recall last time we spent about five minutes bitching about a three star review from someone who claimed to have never actually listened to the show. With that in mind, here is the most recent review

Thank you C-Mack, we appreciate it very much, thank you for helping us by canceling out a negative review, remember every negative review can be invalidated with a positive one, although I guess it wasn't technically negative, it was noncommittal? Technically three out of five stars is more positive than negative, but I have very negative feelings about the person who posted it.

So on today's episode. This episode is a terrible idea. I'll explain why, but you'll probably get the gist when you hear the title ...the topic that the Insomniacs chose for today is Native American Mythology. And this was actually supposed to be last week's episode, but I flipped them for the same reason that I'm still sort of complaining today, which is that this topic is impossible. Or at least it's impossible to do this topic justice in one episode or even a short series of episodes. You could produce an entire podcast on this topic and never fully do it justice "Native American mythology" is a huge subject and kind of doesn't even make sense as a concept. It would be like saying we're going to cover Caucasian mythology. Native Americans are not a monolith. Every tribe

established its own unique framework of myths and legends and philosophies. And to further complicate the situation, very few native American myths were written and/or catalogued by Native Americans... most of the research that is readily available online come from oral traditions that have been filtered through the translations and perspectives of colonizers. We have created an entire genre of "Indian Lore," much of which is completely bastardized. For instance, the concept of a spirit animal...people throw the term around constantly, you can find quizzes online that will tell you your spirit animal, but it's not even an actual concept that exists in the folklore of indigenous people. There is the concept of a totem, but that's different, and certainly has no relation to the most frequent application of the term "my spirit animal, which would be as the caption on an Instagram post of a cat who fell asleep with his face in a food bowl. My favorite "spirit animal" meme: someone named "cuntagious" with a u wrote, "my spirit animal is that little rat looking creature that hangs out next to Jabba the Hut and laughs at shit." so the concept of a spirit animal is fun and it wouldn't even be accurate to say that it was appropriated because you can't steal something that didn't exist. I mentioned totems, and those did exist and are in a similar category, but also kind of bastardized, the word totem is in Americanized version of the Ojibwe term doodeman or doodem, which was similar to a clan designation or a coat of arms. for instance some of the first totems were bare, dog, fish, etc. And of course those doodems could be stacked on top of each other to create doodem poles. That's an actually true statement, I don't know why it sounds like a dirty joke for a kindergartener.

So we're going to start by covering some themes and concepts that are common to the myths how many indigenous tribes, and then dive into a few specific myths that are representative of these themes and these will generally be stories that I find personally compelling. But I just want to make it clear that we are not even pretending we can give some kind of comprehensive overview of Native American beliefs, because that's not even possible. Native American culture is diverse, it's unique, and the mythology of indigenous people certainly can't be encapsulated in a 45 minute podcast.

So to narrow the scope a bit we're going to specifically focus on myths and mythological elements that are common to indigenous people of the North American continent. And many of these themes will be familiar from decades of stereotyping, but that doesn't mean there isn't some truth behind them. Indigenous people of North America were understandably focused on the natural world around them, which had such a huge impact on their lives. Their myths and beliefs revolve around the seasons, the classical elements of earth, water, fire, wind, etc., and of course trees and corn, and maybe most importantly animals are often the main characters in these myths and traditions. many of the legends were clearly developed to explain aspects of nature that were incomprehensible at the time. For instance, if you're wondering why the woodchuck has no hair on its belly that's because, according to the Abenaki people, grandmother Woodchuck plucked all the hairs from her belly and used them to weave a

magical bag... for some reason that I'm not completely clear on, it gets very complicated from there, and honestly I don't fully understand it. If nature is a theme running through native American legends, the predominant theme running through my understanding of Native American legends is bafflement, because as with any religion, many of these stories are flat-out surreal. They're incredibly creative and interesting, but the narrative logic is... Flexible.

Animals will frequently Shapeshift into people, people and animals often enter into marital relations, animals raise human babies... in other words it's just as bonkers as the myths of any other civilization. Religion be crazy. When it comes to other commonalities, allegory and morals are often baked into these myths, as is the belief in some version of a "great spirit," which we will examine in more detail later.

No as pointed out It's going to be challenging to avoid tropes and stereotypes, Most Americans— especially those from our generation— can't help but view native Americans to some extent through the caricature of the Noble Savage, I will never shake the image of a native American shedding a single tear because littering. Do you remember that commercial?

Of course I had to go down a rabbit hole and research the Genesis of this commercial, and I was not disappointed. The star of the ad is a man who calls himself Iron Eyes Cody, and he played a variety of Native American characters in Hollywood. He was also in reality an Italian American named Espera de Corti. This guy is about as Native American as Rock Hudson...who also played a Native American character named Young Bull in the 1973 film "Winchester." Which, if you look up some stills from the film, is... wow. It's basically a hate crime. But to me Hudson's appropriation was not nearly as egregious as Espera de Corti's; Corti insisted throughout his life—despite all evidence to the contrar—that he was Native American, and was well known for "wearing his film wardrobe as daily clothing—including braided wig, fringed leathers and beaded moccasins."

The anti-littering ad had been produced by an organization called Keep America beautiful, which was not in fact headed by environmentalists, but rather by a coalition of bloodless, corporations.

"Keep America Beautiful was founded in 1953 by the American Can Co. and the Owens-Illinois Glass Co., who were later joined by the likes of Coca-Cola and the Dixie Cup Co. During the 1960s, Keep America Beautiful's [first] anti-litter campaigns featured Susan Spotless, a white girl who wore a spotless white dress and pointed her accusatory finger at pieces of trash heedlessly dropped by her parents." I'd say it was smart of

them to switch tactics, because “judgmental brat” doesn’t seem like an effective spokesperson or delivery method for your message. I kind of want to litter right in front of her. I want to pour toxic chemicals into a fragile estuary.

So, far from being a charitable organization with altruistic motives, the keep America beautiful coalition was in fact a cynical corporate coalition using the ads as a strategy to deflect blame for environmental pollution. “By making individual viewers feel guilty and responsible for the polluted environment, the ad deflected the question of responsibility away from corporations and placed it entirely in the realm of individual action, concealing the role of industry in polluting the landscape.” Notice the ad has minimal voiceover, but it makes very clear that “People start pollution. People can stop it.” Dammit, people. Stop starting pollution. We can-makers are fed up with your filthy polluting...you know what? Every time you throw a can on the ground we’re going to spew more toxic chemicals into the closest freshwater stream just to prove that pollution is your fault and has nothing to do with our noxious factories. Also, these ads didn’t mention recycling, because there was no corporate-or-government-funded recycling program back then, so the can makers were basically saying “don’t throw our disposable product on the ground, instead throw it in the garbage so that the garbage truck can throw it on the ground in a landfill.” Silliness.

OK, back to the topic. Are you starting to get the sense that I was sort of dreading the very daunting task of trying to somehow encapsulate all of Native American mythology in an episode? my brain was looking for any distraction or opportunity for procrastination. But we’re going to forge ahead, because we don’t have a choice. We turned this podcast over to the fans, and it was a huge mistake. I just think of Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, brandishing her bags of purchases: Big mistake. HUGE.

So we were discussing tropes, and I think it’s important to remember that they often do come from somewhere valid, there is a kernel of truth buried within every cliché, and in this case there absolutely is a native American focus on the sanctity of nature, and also on gratitude for the world around us. While this particular drum has been beaten to death by Hollywood in movies like *Dances with Wolves* (one of my own guilty pleasures) The truth is that Europeans colonizers did view the natural world as an antagonist that had to be tamed and made useful, while the philosophies of indigenous people centered around their reliance on and connection to —and appreciation of—the natural world. Nature could be dangerous, it could be cruel, but also was the source of food and shelter and tools. Native American studies professor Jack Forbes attempted to explain these differing viewpoints—the ways that Europeans tend to fetishize the individual and view us as entities that exist in opposition to hostile forces, while native people often view their own interests as being aligned with the well-being of nature...he summarized it like this:

"I can lose my hands and still live. I can lose my legs and still live. I can lose my eyes and still live. . . . But if I lose the air I die. If I lose the sun I die. If I lose the earth I die. If I lose the water I die. If I lose the plants and animals I die. All of these things are more a part of me, more essential to my every breath, than is my so-called body..." And yes I'm aware of the fact that earlier I bemoaned the tendency of the media to rely on Native American philosophies as filtered through the research of white men, and I just quoted a white man who was purporting to understand indigenous philosophy. I'm part of the problem, and I acknowledge that. But I'm doing my best dammit. This episode is cursed.

Anyway, it's time to actually get into the topic. And I think the best way to start is to give a quick overview of the history of the indigenous people of North America. Delay delay delay. Native American history starts with the paleo Indians, a term that immediately makes me uncomfortable. It sounds not PC, but is still apparently an accepted term for the Paleolithic humans who crossed the Bering Strait via a land bridge, a strip of land which at the time connected modern day Siberia in Russia to modern-day Alaska. This would have been approximately 17,000 years ago, during the Pleistocene ice age, when sea levels were lower because much of the seawater was locked up in glaciers. There is some debate about the details and the timeline of this migration, but Indigenous people of today do have genetic links to the people of Siberia, lending credence to the theory. By around 8000 BCE the climate had stabilized into something resembling our climate today, and by tracing specific types of stone tools and implements throughout the Americas it becomes clear that the Paleo Indian people gradually diversified into hundreds of tribes and nations. One of the first, largest, and most well-known populations of indigenous Americans is the Clovis people, named after the town where evidence of them was first discovered (Clovis New Mexico) in the 1930s. They are identifiable and their progress is traceable via distinctive "Clovis point" stone spearheads. It's amazing to me that these spearheads were so recognizable, and consistently distinctive, almost as if they were manufactured to specifications. If I had been a member of the Clovis people my spearheads would have been confounding to modern scientists, my spearheads would have looked like literal puzzle pieces. They would have been utterly useless as weapons but great for throwing a wrench into the entire discipline of anthropology. Scientists would have been like "apparently there were two warring tribes that existed simultaneously in the same area, one of which was populated primarily by the developmentally disabled." Anyway, the Clovis were a hunting and gathering people, and at least occasionally engaged in big game hunting, though how effective their tools would have been at taking down large game is debated. But more effective than mine would have been, of that there is zero debate. Tools, implements, arrowheads, and construction projects have proven extremely useful when it comes to identifying and tracing Populations of indigenous Americans, for instance the distinctive Folsom tools associated with the Folsom culture that is believed to have evolved from Clovis, and the famous mound builders in the eastern United

States, the most prominent example of which was the Mississippian culture that developed along the Mississippi and Tennessee rivers. And we're going to stop here, because there is no point in us trying to trace the lineage of every indigenous tribe... that would be way too ambitious for any podcast and especially one hosted by two ignorant WaSi'chu, a famous slur for white people. Suffice to say that as Native Americans proliferated and diversified, so did their philosophies and mythology, and we're going to start with origin myths, because every civilization obviously has to explain from whence they come. Kids are going to ask, and you have to sound like you know what you're talking about. I feel like that's where half of myths come from: parents improvising. One of the most common origin myths—and probably one of the most well-known concepts in Native American mythology—is the “great turtle” or turtle Island. This was a myth common to a large number of tribes most notably including the so-called Delaware people, known as the Lenape (leh nu pee). The Lenape people were based in this area, actually, they migrated seasonally from central CA to the Yosemite valley. No, they lived in Delaware. You might not have heard of the Lenape but you're probably more familiar with one of the other tribes that famously developed a version of this tale: the Iroquois.

So The turtle Island myth starts off pretty bleak, and very similar to many creation myths with which we are already familiar. In the beginning there was the void, just inky blackness, perhaps even darker than inky midnight. Within the void lived a spirit, and I have struggled with this concept before, a void is not a void at all if it has an occupant, but whatever, the spirit was named Kishelamàkânk I tried to find an online pronunciation for that word and failed, so please cut me a little slack on this one. Kishelamàkânk eventually fell asleep, which, yeah, there's not much else to do in the void. And while he was asleep he dreamed of the Earth as we know it today, and the heavens, he conceptualized all of creation in a night of slumber. although I guess there's no day or night in the void, I constantly wrestle with the concept of voids. Kishelamàkânk dream included humans, he envisioned the indigenous people and the ceremonies they would perform, it was a very long and detailed dream. I bet when he woke up it was a lot like waking up from one of those dreams of flying where you're just like aww, I can't fly at all, back in the void. So Kishelamàkânk set about creating the world he had envisioned, but he was very pragmatic, so his first act was to create some minions, because crafting the entirety of the universe is surprisingly more labor-intensive than you might think. so he create helper spirits: the grandmother of the south, and the grandfathers of the north, east, and west. Together they conjured into existence the world, all of nature, and also a very special tree, and from the roots of that tree was born a man, and when the man had been created he bent down and kissed the earth, from which sprang woman. You're welcome ladies.

So now the Earth was doing pretty well, everyone was getting along, as long as getting along includes animals slaughtering each other for food and such, but then a problem

arose, because there existed in this world a magical Bear tooth which granted its own special powers. The tooth was coveted by power-hungry humans, and they split into warring tribes, all competing over this magical molar. Kishelamàkânk was displeased, and came up with a plan. He sent down a spirit named Nanapush with instructions to light a sacred fire on top of a high mountain, and the smoke from the fire drew the attention of all the peoples of the world, and they gathered together to investigate. With the humans of the world in one place, Nanapush conjured a pipe and stuffed it with tobacco provided by Kishelamàkânk, and passed it around, presumably this took a while with one pipe, but he then instructed the people that whenever there was anger or strife or conflict, they should similarly smoke a bowl and chill, and they would be imbued with wisdom. This philosophy is suspect, but has been adopted by many of my closest friends.

After some time had passed, that pesky Bear tooth once again began causing problems, this time it instigated a fight between an evil snake and a giant toad. The toad was a water spirit, he was responsible for the all waters of the world, and in the conflict he swallowed both the snake and the tooth. The snake bit his belly from inside, causing water to burst forth and a flood engulfed the world. The spirit Nanapush quickly began climbing to higher ground, and as he did so he snatched up animals left and right and stuffed them in his sash to save them. Sound familiar at all? Pretty much every society has a flood myth. He finally reached the top of a mountain but the water was still rising, so he climbed to the top of a cedar tree and began singing a magical song to make the water stop, seems like maybe he should've thought of this earlier, but I guess it was a very stressful flooding situation, to the point that he forgot he had the ability to sing floods away. anyway now he was stuck at the top of a tree But at least the water had stopped rising. This is when the turtle came to the rescue, he offered to allow all of the animals to gather on his back, but in a rare nod to logic and physics, the weavers of this myth acknowledged that the turtle was just a bit too small to accommodate the entirety of the Animal Kingdom. So Nanapush asked for volunteers to dive down under the waters and bring up some earth so that he could enlarge the turtle. A number of animals tried and failed, and the only animal who was able to make it all the way down and return to the surface with some mud on his nose was the humble muskrat. And thus Nanapush decreed that the muskrat would forever proliferate and prosper in the world. And when does the day go by that you don't see a prospering muskrat? Also...Muskrat hero, I didn't see that coming. Nanapush took the tiny amount of earth that the muskrat had procured and once again began to sing, and the turtle and smudge of dirt ballooned to massive size and scale, so massive that Nanapush lost sight of the other side and so he sent animals out to explore. First he sent a bear, who returned two days later after reaching the far shore. But the world continue to expand, so he next sent a deer, who was able to reach the end of the land and return within two weeks. Finally he sent the wolf, but at that point the Earth had expanded so much that the wolf became lost and never returned, and that is why the wolf howls , because he is

forever seeking his lost ancestors. The continent of North America had now been formed and became forever known as turtle Island.

You'll notice that The creation myth does include what you might refer to as a god—Kishelamàkânk— but he's not the kind of God that you've made sacrifices to or pray to on a nightly basis, he is not constantly demanding devotion and fealty. He's not a jealous, needy God, the Christian guide is a little bit of an insecure narcissist, he's like you must love me, you must worship me, pray to me. He's clingy. What is prayer if not having to call and check in with your boyfriend, I mean God every night. In fact There isn't a perfect analogy for the Christian concept of God within any particular native American mythology. but Europeans were certainly looking to find one, and the closest they came was what you might have heard referred to as the great spirit And the great spirit once again gives us a chance to talk about some of the pitfalls of trying to understand and contextualize Native American mythology within a European framework... the idea of a great spirit appeals to Christians because in their minds it echoes their own concept of an all powerful, all seeing, all knowing God, but the Native American activist Russell Means explains that in the Lakota language, a more accurate translation would be "great mystery." the Lakota words for this entity specifically are Wakan Tanka, and in some ways it reminds me of the Japanese Kami we explored in our episode on Shintoism in Japanese mythology. The great spirit exists in every natural living thing, it's a power or force that inhabits natural phenomena and imbues them with what we might call holiness, or sacred life force.

Chief Luther Standing Bear (1868–1939) of the Lakota Nation described the great spirit's role in creation thusly:

From Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit, there came a great unifying life force that flowed in and through all things – the flowers of the plains, blowing winds, rocks, trees, birds, animals – and was the same force that had been breathed into the first man. Thus all things were kindred, and were brought together by the same Great Mystery.[11]

Similarly, "The Lakota medicine man Lame Deer says that the Great Spirit "is not like a human being. . . . He is a power. That power could be in a cup of coffee. The Great Spirit is no old man with a beard."

There are so many versions of great spirit origin myths that it seems pointless to even pick one, but I'm going to, because I think this is a great chance to once again highlight the diversity of Native American culture and the futility of this entire episode. Let's look for example at the Chitimacha tribe of Louisiana. Once the most powerful tribe between Texas and Florida, and estimated to have been in existence for more than 6000 years, it has dwindled down to a little over 1100 people but is the only tribe in Louisiana to still control a portion of their native land. That portion numbers slightly less than 1000 acres. Contrary to the popular native American stereotype chitimacha society is not on

egalitarian utopia, they had rigid hierarchy and were organized into various clans designated by animal: wolf, bear, dog, etc. members of different social strata even spoke different dialects and intermarriage between them was forbidden. However like many tribes they were matrilineal, with possessions and land being passed down through female members of the family, and while the clans were guided by male chiefs, those chiefs were selected by a council of female elders. The chitimacha were expert basket weavers, and they famously practiced artificial cranial deformation—similar to ancient Egyptian and Mayan societies—which means they would flatten the foreheads of their male children through binding during infancy, when the skull was still unformed and pliable. This might've been used to indicate social class, as it was with the Maya, or maybe it was simply considered aesthetically pleasing. I don't know about you, but I'm partial to a round butt, a skinny waist, large boobs, and a flat forehead with an elongated conehead-style skull. Some people are breast men, some are ass men, I'm a deformed-forehead man.

So the Chitimacha have a unique great spirit origin story. In their version, the great spirit crafted the earth from his own body. First he took the form of a giant body of water, with the earth submerged inside. Similar to the great turtle origin myth, he then enlisted animals to dive down and retrieve the earth to make dry land, but this time it was not the muskrat but rather the crawfish who was a hero and brought up land that could be formed into the island of America. The Great Spirit then created man to live on the land, but man became increasingly wicked, so to placate him, the great spirit created and gifted to him tobacco and women. So ladies, you weren't created BY man, you were created FOR man...like a bribe. You were like a dog treat to get an uppity chihuahua to settle down. Also, do you see how these myths are sort of undermining the noble utopian egalitarian stereotype? Indigenous societies were not perfect.

The great spirit next created the sun and the moon to provide light and heat, "The moon was a man, and the sun was his wife. The Great Spirit told them that they must bathe often in order to be strong enough to give off light and heat. The sun did what the Great Spirit said. She bathed often, and kept herself bright and shining. The Chitimacha have always honored the sun, and she has always been kind to them. The moon did not obey the order of the Great Spirit. He took no baths. To this day, he is pale and gives off no heat. He can still be seen chasing across the sky to catch the sun, who runs from her disobeying husband." I love that the moon is just a slovenly pig-man, and the sun is fleeing from poor hygiene.

Trickster and Coyote

Ok, we've covered creation and the Great Spirit, but arguably the most famous character in all of indigenous mythology is coyote. He is a complicated figure and once again can't be summarized because every version of coyote is a little bit different...or a lot different, like radically opposite. In general however, Coyote is typically neither fully good nor fully evil; he can be beneficial to humankind or act an antagonist, but his motivations are never simple. in the Apache tradition coyote is athletic and a warrior; in Navajo myths he is ancient; he already existed back when the first man and women

were created. perhaps most often we think of his famous depiction as a trickster, he has frequently been compared to Loki in Norse mythology, and tales of coyote can be used as parables to teach important lessons. Learn from his shenanigans. Coyote factors especially prominently in the mythology of Midwest and western tribes, such as California tribes like the Miwok and Wappo. This makes sense because coyotes tend to prefer Prairie land and desert—Wide Open Spaces—and so while they exist pretty much all across America you're more likely to encounter a coyote in the sprawling western United States rather than in the densely packed East Coast. In fact, north eastern tribes focused on characters such as the great Hare, aka the Master rabbit, Who would later be incorporated into southern African-American tradition in the form of Brer rabbit. In coyote myths the coyote is usually male, and depicted anthropomorphically, walking upright in the manner of a human. He occasionally uses his sneakiness and trickery in service of humankind— in many of the tales he is a lupine Prometheus, stealing fire from the greedy spirits to bring to humankind— but he's not always so benevolent. "Some stories depict Coyote as the embodiment of evil lechery: a serial rapist who uses trickery to attack a variety of victims including, for example, his own mother-in-law [7] and his sister.[13] Such tales may have served to reinforce the community moral code, by using outrageous humor to portray examples of intolerable behavior." Nothing more outrageously humorous than incestuous rape.

Coyote is associated with the creation myth in some tribes, for instance the Miwok myth in which coyote creates all of the animals and then calls a giant meeting to discuss and debate whether they should create man. And I think their decision kind of backfired there, it's like a council of oats getting together to create horses. Coyote is also the star of many flood myths as well, he often is the cause of the flood as you might imagine. In many popular myths coyote battles his most powerful nemesis, a small but speedy and colorful Chapparral bird. In these tales coyote is often depicted as determined and resourceful, but that resourcefulness does not extend to the arena of rocket technology, a discipline in which he is sorely deficient. Although it's not always his fault, as the rocket-supplier company is notoriously unreliable. In these tales coyote also has a tendency to fall for the old tunnel-painted-on-a-mountain trick.

I mentioned coyote has frequently been associated with death myths, and specifically with the creation of death. I like this one from the Caddo nation, located around the Oklahoma area.

Story 4: Coyote and the Origins of Death

In the beginning, death did not exist. Everyone stayed alive until there were so many people that there wasn't room for anyone else. The chiefs held a council to determine what to do. One man arose and said that it would be good to have the people die and be gone for a little while, and then to return. As soon as he sat down Coyote jumped up

and said that people ought to die forever because there was not enough food or room for everyone to live forever. [Coyote was definitely a Conservative. He was like the dead people are trying to come back, build that wall] The other men objected, saying that there would be no more happiness in the world if their loved ones died.

All except Coyote decided to have the people die and be gone for a little while, and then to come back to life. [the other option would have been to just stop breeding, but I guess Coyote liked to bang so that wasn't on the table]

After the council, the medicine men built a large grass house facing the east. They gathered the men of the tribe and told them that the people who died would come to the medicine house and then be restored to life. The chief medicine man said that he would put a large white and black eagle feather on top of the grass house. When the feather became bloody and fell over, the people would know that someone had died. Then all of the medicine men would come to the grass house and sing a song that would call the spirit of the dead to the grass house. When the spirit came to the house they would restore it to life again. All of the people were glad about these rules regarding death, for they were scared for the dead.

After a time they saw the eagle feather turn bloody and fall and they knew that someone had died. The medicine men assembled in the grass house and sang for the spirit of the dead to come to them. In about ten days a whirlwind blew from the west, circled the grass house, and finally entered through the entrance in the east. From the whirlwind appeared a handsome young man who had been murdered by another tribe. All of the people saw him and rejoiced except Coyote, who was displeased because his rules were not carried out. In a short time the feather became bloody and fell again. Coyote saw it and at once went to the grass house. He took his seat near the door and sat with the singers for many days. When at last he heard the whirlwind coming he closed the door before the whirlwind could enter. The spirit in the whirlwind passed on by. Coyote thus introduced the idea of permanent death and people from that time on grieved about the dead and were unhappy. Now whenever any one meets a whirlwind or hears the wind whistle he says: "There is some one wandering about." Ever since Coyote closed the door the spirits of the dead have wandered over the earth, trying to find some place to go, until at last they find the road to spirit land.

After this day, Coyote ran away and never came back for he was afraid of what he had done. He always looked over his shoulder, afraid that someone was pursuing him. Since then he has been starving because no one will give him anything to eat.

So what happens after you die? Well again...there's no point in generalizing. Some tribes believe in reincarnation, and of course we're all familiar with the romantic idea of the spirit world, but some tribes like the Apache and Navajo had a more wary view of ghosts, believing that certain people might come back as malevolent spirits bent on revenge. And of course I imagine a few listeners are probably waiting for me to talk

about the so-called happy hunting ground. Well, you can tell just by that phrase that there's a little bit of infantilization involved. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, there is no single overarching concept of the afterlife among indigenous peoples, and while there are indigenous concepts of the afterlife that do involve hunting, the term happy hunting ground is probably an example of what is known as "Hollywood Injun English," created for the cowboy and Indian genre. This is similar to Native Americans using the term "paleface" for white people or holding up one hand and saying "HOW"... these are the General Tsos chicken or fortune cookies of Native American beliefs... concepts created by European-Americans and retconned into native lore. The bottom line is that pretty much every so-called fact about Native American beliefs is basically a trap, and hopefully we didn't piss off any native listeners. I'm doing my best out here. And look...

We I have a new maniac!

Good question about the artwork. Apple recently implemented cover art, I use the Apple podcast player, and it made me realize that I don't like cover art. There are certain podcasts that I always listen to regardless of what the episode is about, so the individual cover art is just making it harder for me to find and identify the podcast I listen to because every week they have some new wacky cover. I just want to know that AHC has a new episode, I don't need AI generated picture of Mussolini or whatever. I still create it and typically use it for Instagram posts, but I just think the feed looks a lot cleaner with some consistency, and I like our logo. But Let me know if you disagree, if there are enough people who want the cover art back I'll definitely consider it.

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turtle_Island_\(Indigenous_North_American_folklore\)#:~:text=Turtle%20Island%20is%20a%20name,Northeastern%20Woodlands%20of%20North%20America](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turtle_Island_(Indigenous_North_American_folklore)#:~:text=Turtle%20Island%20is%20a%20name,Northeastern%20Woodlands%20of%20North%20America)

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