

Myths that hide the american indian essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Nearly everyone in this world is guilty of stereotyping against a certain race, religion, ethnic group, nationality, etc. One of those groups that are stereotyped is the Native Americans. Ever since the Europeans “discovered” the New World, there have been myths about the Native Americans that lead to this stereotyping. In the essay, “Myths That Hide the American Indian” by Oliver La Farge, many of those myths are brought up. Due to these myths about the Native Americans, people’s views, past and present, of who and what they are have become extremely distorted, or essentially hiding the Native Americans from white people.

One of the many myths that the Europeans created about the Native Americans is that they are bloodthirsty, ruthless savages. Oliver La Farge does a good job in his essay of discounting this myth by giving multiple examples of how most groups of Native Americans were a peaceful group of people that just were not quite as well developed socially, economically, technologically, etc. as the Europeans. Because of this lack of development on behalf of the Native Americans, the Europeans looked at the Native Americans as uncivilized savages. The reason that this myth was even created was to justify the slaughtering of thousands of Native Americans at the hands of the Europeans, with the justification being that they were inferior beings, which is another myth brought up.

Once the Europeans had conquered the Native Americans, this myth was altered, now proclaiming that the Native Americans were drunken, lazy good-for-nothings. La Farge also discounts this part of the myth in his essay. Going back to the point of the Europeans thinking they were superior a superior race when being compared to the Native Americans, that would

happen in any situation if the circumstances were similar because it is human nature to believe that if one race able to conquer another race, then they will believe they are superior. This is one of the continuing myths that have hid the Native Americans from white people.

Another one of the myths that plagued the Native Americans is that the early European settlers tended to assume that all or most of the Native Americans had one culture and that they were all at about the same stage of development. This myth could not be further from the truth. " The tribes and nations that occupied North America varied enormously, and their condition was anything but static" (pg. 7). The cultures of the Native Americans were like snowflakes; no two were alike. Many different types of cultures are described in detail in the essay, proving that the myth is completely wrong.

Each tribe of Native Americans had a culture that, while considered backwards and wrong by the Europeans, was unique. This myth helped to hide the Native Americans from white settlers because if the whites got to know the culture of one tribe, they would just assume that all of the other tribes had identical cultures. If that culture they learned had some barbaric practices, like the Aztecs sacrificing men by tearing out their hearts, they would assume that all tribes did that and further prove the myth that Native Americans were savages. That is how this myth hid the Native Americans from white people.

The first myth that was ever started about the Native Americans is the Noble Red Man or Child of Nature myth. What this myth is about is the Europeans

considered the Native Americans to be children of nature. Also, it “ credited the Indian with either a penchant for flowery but dull oratory or an inability to communicate beyond ‘ Ugh’ and grunts” (pg. 4). This myth puts the Native Americans on the same level as an animal. If the Europeans thought the Native Americans were that ignorant, then it is no wonder why they thought that they were a superior race. The Native Americans became hidden by this myth because it is so completely false and completely misrepresents them as a whole because they had developed languages and could communicate with one another.

Myths about Native Americans have, and will continue to be a cause of people stereotyping them. Because of the stereotyping, most people will never know the truth about Native Americans and they will remain hidden from white people. This stereotyping has gone so far that today, Native Americans will get dressed up for tourists in a costumes and put on war dances just to please tourists who believe in the myth because if they did not, the tourists would question the legitimacy of them. That is how myths of the Native Americans have hid them.