

"The Nih'āⁿcaⁿ of these traditions is the Arapaho Manabozho, Napi, or Ictiniké. He is sometimes named as the creator, but sometimes is not. Some old men say that perhaps Nih'āⁿcaⁿ made the world, but that it is not known who did it. The word is now the ordinary word for white man in Arapaho, just as in Cheyenne the name of the mythical character Vihuk has been applied to the whites. This is in accord with a tendency found elsewhere in America. Among the Arapahoes it may have contributed to a change in the conceptions of the creation, especially as the name Hixtcaba Nih'āⁿcaⁿ, above-white-man, is the Arapaho name for the God of the missionaries. Nih'āⁿcaⁿ means, however, also spider, and this is no doubt the original signification of the word, just as the Menomini character that corresponds to Nih'āⁿcaⁿ is the rabbit. Among the Dakota the trickster Unktomi is the spider.... In none of the Arapaho myths is there the slightest trace of any animal or spider-like qualities attributed to Nih'āⁿcaⁿ. He is entirely human. Apart from the hesitating identification of him with the creator of the world, he is not found as the hero of any serious myths, but always in a ridiculous form and often in obscene tales. ...The word Nih'āⁿcaⁿ is explained by the Indians as meaning wise or skillful, and again as slender or narrow-bodied, in reference to spiders and insects; but both etymologies are uncertain."

Reference to the use of the same word for "spider" and "white man" can be found in some of the tapes by Jess Rowledge and John Pedro.