

SIX

Counterculture Indians and the New Age

I stood at the entrance to the Beverly Hills Hotel.
The warm wind from the south rippled like clean silk on my skin.
The air smelled like honeysuckle and I took a deep breath.
Every book is rewritten by the reader. If you read a book, it
becomes your personal teacher. You bring to it what you are.

LYNN ANDREWS

Flight of the Seventh Moon: The Teaching of the Shields (1984)

In 1971, a small but dedicated commune lay in the woods outside a college town in the Pacific Northwest. On occasion, my parents would leave for a long weekend, depositing my brother and me there with friends who helped run it. Located on an old farm, the commune had several residents living in the rustic main house and a shifting array of folk wandering in for meals or companionship. In the trees to the south, for instance, a friendly young man had strung together twenty extension cords to power a small circular saw, the only electrical tool he would use to build an octagonal house. Across the nearby stream and up a small hill lay the Indian camp, a set of three Plains tipis that housed a

reassembled family of non-Indians who eked out a living making Aleut soapstone carvings.

I liked to visit the Indian camp, where people in headbands, fringed leather jackets, and moccasins padded quietly about, calling each other names I cannot quite recall but that had the kind of faux-Indian ring—Rainbow, maybe, or Green Wood—that I would later associate with suburban tract developments. The tipis were pleasant enough, although they tended to leak when it rained. Perhaps the Indians had been mistaken in choosing the Plains tents, so inappropriate to the wet climate, over the comfortable cedar-plank Indian homes one learned about in the local schools (not to mention the clapboard and shingle homes that housed contemporary people on the nearby reservation). But the tipis were inexpensive and easy to set up, and that was important on a small communal housing budget. More significant, they carried a full cargo of symbolic value. Tipis shouted, "Indian," and all that it entailed, in a way that Northwest coast log homes, even those marked with Indian totem poles, never could.

Heirs of the white middle class of the 1950s, the communalists worked hard to counteract their parents' America, perceived in terms of consumptive excess, alienated individualism, immoral authority, and capitalism red in tooth and claw. As an antidote, they promoted community, and at least some of them thought it might be found in an Indianness imagined as social harmony. The commune, safe to say, was one of hundreds of places in which counterculture rebels turned to Indians to think about a better way of living together. New Mexico's famous New Buffalo Commune, for example, was rife with tipis. Explaining its name, a longtime member, George Robinson, set up a chronology of Indian-white ethnic succession that echoed that of Lewis Henry Morgan and made communalists heirs, not to the 1950s but to nineteenth-century Indians. "The buffalo was the provider for the plains tribes," observed Robinson. "This [commune] is the new buffalo." Ironically, though the members adopted a Plains Indian ancestry, they looked for subsistence not to the bison, but to the corn-beans-squash combination favored by more sedentary native people.

The communalists at New Buffalo and at similar communes across the United States, according to the breathless observer William Hedgepeth, admired "the Indian's feeling of non-acquisitive contentment, his lack of dog-eat-dog Americanized drive, and his tribal sense of sharing and group ritual." Hedgepeth was one of a legion of journalists who hopped from commune to commune, relaying often-prurient tales of drugs, free love, and communal euphoria to a

curious public. Many communalists enjoyed such publicity, and they offered writers compelling performances of their tribal lifestyles. When Hedgepeth left New Buffalo for the nearby Lorian community, for example, he found fifteen communalists sitting around a campfire near several tipis: "[The] males clap or slap at their chests and yell 'Yi Yi Yi Yi Yi,' Indian-style, real loud with each voice dropping out when a beer can or joint is passed."¹

In spite of such gestures, most communes disintegrated quickly under the pressures of individual wants and wills. Even as an adolescent, I could see the fissures in the communal facade. Preparing for a "Princess and the Frog" guitar duo concert, for example, someone swept the floors of the main house but did not feel like picking up the enormous dustpile. No one else did either, so we laid a piece of tarpaper over it and did not mention the peculiar mound in the living room. And it was one thing to think in the abstract about the warmth of sharing; a very different thing to think about sharing the same unwashed cereal bowl, spoon, and bottom-of-the-bowl milk with ten other people.

Throughout this history, I have suggested that whenever white Americans have confronted crises of identity, some of them have inevitably turned to Indians. What might it mean to be not-British? The revolutionaries found a compelling array of ideas in Indianness. What did it mean to be American? What did it mean to be modern? To be authentic? Using furs and feathers, headbands and hair, generations of white Americans have, at many levels and with varying degrees of intent, made meanings and, with them, identities. In the world of the communalists, however, meaning itself was often up for grabs. Driven by continuing social transformations—the baby boom, civil rights struggles, consumer culture, the war in Vietnam—older, Cold War quests for personal brands of authentic experience gave way to increasing doubts about the existence of God, authenticity, and reality itself. In the 1960s and early 1970s, many Americans found themselves asking a new question: What is the meaning of meaning? Suppose truth had simply dried up and blown away in the blasting wind of nuclear anxiety, cultural relativism, and psychological self-reflexiveness? What if, as the Beatles had suggested, the world is like Strawberry Fields, a mystical, drug-hazy place where "nothing is real"?²

Academic theorists have since devised a vocabulary to describe this skepticism toward meaning. In that vocabulary, one word—*postmodern*—has come to serve as a popular, generic shorthand, describing at once a complicated social world, an equally complex set of intellectual debates, and the interaction between the varied branches of each. That's asking one word to do a great deal of

work, and, not surprisingly, *postmodern* has proved to be extraordinarily slippery, its varied definitions emerging from phenomena as diverse as architecture, linguistic theory, philosophy, aesthetics, popular culture, social relations, and global economics.³

Why should there be any distinction between the class-bound modernist high culture of the gallery/museum and the vulgar advertisements of mass consumer culture? If language is an arbitrary system of signs, is there any reason to think that the realities it frames are not, in some measure, *created* by the language itself? Why not chop up those signs and rearrange them into a new reality? Was it legitimate to impose the dichotomous worldview of Western philosophy on the rest of the planet? Why was the United States so insistent about global military hegemony? These questions engaged oppositional actors from Andy Warhol to Stokely Carmichael to the communalists at New Buffalo. Likewise, they have challenged a host of intellectual critics seeking to understand and describe a culture in which each was also an actor. In 1972, for example, the theorist Fredric Jameson noted the connections, suggesting "a profound consonance between linguistics as a method and that systematized and disembodied nightmare which is our culture today."⁴ At the center of this complicated tangle of ideas and social transformations are three sensibilities that necessarily underpin this final chapter: a crisis of meaning and a concomitant emphasis on the powers of interpretation, a sustained questioning of the idea of foundational truth, and an inclination to fragment symbols and statements and to reassemble them in creative, if sometimes random, pastiche.

What concerns me even more, however, are the ways in which a contradictory notion of Indianness, so central to American quests for identities, changed shape yet again in the context of these postmodern crises of meaning. On the one hand, the refigurings of Indianness produced by the counterculture and the New Age reflect a historical moment unique from those we have already examined. On the other hand, the diverse practices we often subsume under the word *postmodern* may simply echo the familiar toying with meaning and identity we have seen in a long tradition of Indian play. Or maybe both notions are true.

Playing Indian, I've argued, has served as an ultimate tool for grabbing hold of such contradictions, and it has been constantly reimagined and acted out when Americans desire to have their cake and eat it too. Indians could be both civilized and indigenous. They could critique modernity and yet reap its benefits. They could revel in the creative pleasure of liberated meanings while still grasping for something fundamentally American. It should come as no surprise

that the young men and women of the 1960s and 1970s—bent on destroying an orthodoxy tightly intertwined with the notion of truth and yet desperate for truth itself—followed their cultural ancestors in playing Indian to find reassuring identities in a world seemingly out of control. Not only in the communes, but in politics, environmentalism, spirituality, and other pursuits, Indianness allowed counterculturalists to have it both ways. In these arenas, we can also witness the continued unraveling of the connections between meanings and social realities. And, as usual, these disjunctures became most obvious when white people in Indian costume turned and found themselves face-to-face with native people.

Even in the reformist utopias of the communes something was not quite right, and it had everything to do with the soggy tipi on the hill and the well-used communal milk at the bottom of the cereal bowl. The gap between communal intention and personal experience widened as contradictions between individual freedom and social order turned into conflict. The doubledness of Indian meanings reflected perfectly the contradictory dimensions of communalism. Indians signified social harmony—one thinks of the stereotype of the peaceful native village, people interacting in seamlessly pleasant and ordered ways. These were the well-worn antimodern Indians of Ernest Thompson Seton and John Collier. But Indianness also carried a full complement of countermeanings. Dating back to the Revolution, these meanings were linked to the very different idea of radical individual freedom.

At the same time the communalists sought social stability, they rejected any notion of authority, a precondition to organizing such stability. Authority was "not only immoral, but functionally incompetent" according to the apologist and social critic Paul Goodman. Young people, he said, "are in an historical situation to which anarchism is the only possible response."⁵ Communal life, as it turned out, was usually incompatible with anarchy, yet many communes existed to take individual autonomy to its anarchic edge. In place of a social contract that protected individual freedom through agreed-upon social restraints, communes offered a collective commitment to "doing one's own thing." A powerful counterculture mantra, "Do your own thing" conflated social order—even social consensus—with authority and rejected both.⁶ The communalists used Indianness in the hope of establishing a particular kind of organic community, political in its exemplary social nature and self-transforming in practice.

What many of them found instead was an individualism—represented equally powerfully by Indian names, costumes, and tipis—that became supercharged by the very experience of living collectively.

Many communes toyed with symbolic Indianness; they were in reality largely disconnected from Indian people. Communalists searched reservations for authenticity and inspiration, but their visits rarely went as well as those made by many hobbyists. Native communities, often unexpectedly socially restrictive, did not mesh well with the aggressive individualism of many communes. And native people grew weary of constantly reeducating flighty counterculture seekers. Very few of these encounters satisfied either party. Communalists might have learned something about individualism and social order from Indian people, but most preferred a symbolic life of tipis and buckskins to lessons that might be hard-won and ideologically distasteful. The New Buffalos, for example, called their corn-beans-squash experiment a Navajo Diet, ignoring the nearby Pueblos (who had perfected this agriculture) for more symbolically powerful Indians.⁷

Although there were certainly exceptions, communalists tended to value Indian Otherness and its assorted meanings more than they did real native people. And they were not alone. Communal tipis pointed to a broad cultural ethos emphasizing the power of symbolic work over actual labor. When Andy Warhol presented a Campbell's soup label as art, he suggested that the manipulation of symbols had replaced the work of painting and sculpture. When the composer John Cage placed radios on the stage and randomly turned the dials, he did the same, dispensing a chance pastiche of sound in place of a practiced performance. Multinational bankers, advertising designers, politicians, and many others seemed to follow similar paths. In this kind of world, the meanings of Indianness drifted away from actual Indians more quickly and thoroughly than ever (fig. 22).⁸

The dissipation of meaning became particularly clear when Indians appeared in political discourse. Communalism and New Left politics occupied very different wings of the counterculture, but they shared similar tendencies to play with the limits of meaning. In politics, Indianness carried special resonance for antiwar protesters, and it appeared frequently in the collages of symbols they cobbled together with often-creative abandon.⁹ The story of nineteenth-century native resistance provided a homegrown model for opposition to the American military imperialism that protesters saw in Vietnam. A popular series of posters,



22. Gathering of all Tribes for a Human Be-In, 1967.

Surrounded by an array of counterculture heroes, the Human Be-In's guitar-playing Indian demonstrated the movement's willingness to paste together symbols—in this case the rebellion encoded in guitar-based rock and roll and the primitive "tribal" community of the Indian. Real Indian people played guitars, but that was hardly the message. Courtesy of Stewart Brand.

for example, paid tribute to Sitting Bull, Geronimo, and Red Cloud, imagined forerunners of the contemporary protest movement. For Mitchell Goodman, the spirit of impending revolution was akin to that of primitive culture. "Blacks, Vietnamese, Indians," Goodman observed. "From them the young in America have something to learn—and they know it. The young are a class, in the neo-Marxian sense—abused, processed, exploited—and they have come to see their common interest. But more important, they are a primitive tribe." And after breaking the LSD guru Timothy Leary out of jail, the would-be warriors of the Weather Underground announced that "LSD and grass, like the herbs and cactus

and mushrooms of the American Indians, will help us make a future world where it will be possible to live in peace."¹⁰ When it came to the war, the semantic linkages could hardly have been more appropriate. Racially red Indians matched up well with the ideologically red Vietcong, and both joined youth as pure, antimodern primitives. Guerrilla warfare, practiced to great effect by the Vietnamese and advocated domestically by some radicals, had its parallels in the ambushes and raids of Red Cloud, Geronimo, and others—at least as they were half-imagined and half-remembered from generic western films.

One of the most popular antiwar films of the time was anything but generic, and it used Indianness to model a whimsical postmodern style of resistance and to launch a critique of American military adventurism. In *Little Big Man* (1970), a white-Indian, cross-dressing Dustin Hoffman wanders through the imperial conquest of the West, constantly crossing and breaking down boundaries of race, gender, and nation. As a white pioneer boy, he is adopted by the Cheyenne. As a Cheyenne, he is first adopted and later saved by the vainglorious Col. George Custer. Flexible boundary hoppers with multiple modes and meanings, the Indians are funny, smart, and sexy. Their playfully serious postmodern nature stands in direct contrast to Custer and his army, who die from rigidity and imperial arrogance at the Little Big Horn. Audiences had little trouble figuring out with whom they were to identify.¹¹

The notion of an oppositional political culture linked to Indianness attracted young Americans, many of whom had been schooled on the iconic nationalism of the Boston Tea Party.¹² Those original rebels had used Indianness to shift the location of their identities from Britain to America. Since the early twentieth century, people had put on Indian clothes to search for authenticity in a modern America more alienating than welcoming. Now, countercultural rebels became Indian to move their identities away from Americanness altogether, to leap outside national boundaries, gesture at repudiating the nation, and offer what seemed a clear-eyed political critique. The wearing of the symbols of the Indian—the long hair so visible in the poster image of Geronimo and maybe a bandanna headband to go with it—signified that one's sympathies lay with both the past and the present targets of American foreign policy (fig. 23). To play Indian was to become vicariously a victim of United States imperialism. For those confronting National Guardsmen and Army Reserves in the streets, such a position inevitably carried a powerful emotional charge.¹³

Yet, if being Indian offered one an identity as a critic of empire, that position was hardly uncomplicated. Indianness may have lain outside the United States'



23. Frank Bardacke, *People's Park Manifesto*, 1969. Geronimo, long-haired sign of imperial victimization and stalwart resistance, served as backdrop for the linkage of white counterculturalists with the Costanoan Indians. Courtesy of Frank Bardacke.

social boundaries when it came to the exercise of imperial power, but it was also at the very heart of the American identities inherited by the predominantly white, middle-class antiwar protesters. Playing Indian replicated the contradictory tensions established by the Revolution. An interior Indianness that signified national identity clashed with an exterior Indianness linked with the armed struggle to control the continent. The only significant point of difference was the inversion that marked modernity: nineteenth-century savages had become authentic twentieth-century victims and critics.

Real Indian people, many of whom were fighting as American soldiers in Vietnam, complicated the picture still further. The contradictions between real and imagined Indians have always pointed to other contradictions bound up within the contours of Indian Otherness itself. One could read the Red Cloud poster, for example, in terms that were not oppositional, but patriotic. Indian-ness represented native, American martial skill as well as it reflected the resistance of national enemies. Indeed, such an interpretation was likely among native people, for whom patriotism and military service have been and continue to be highly valued.¹⁴

Still other Indian people challenged the United States politically themselves, not only on the war, but on native civil rights issues as well. Again, the connections were easily made. "When I walk down the streets of Saigon," observed the Tuscarora activist Wallace Mad Bear Anderson, "those people look like my brothers and sisters." With white radicals appropriating Indian symbols and native people reinterpreting those symbols and launching protests of their own, Indianness became a potent political meeting ground. White antiwar political organizers who sought to harness Indianness often found themselves edging along the periphery of a burgeoning Red Power movement. White radicals helped with logistical details of food and transportation during the Indians of All Tribes' seizure of Alcatraz Island in 1969, for example, and Indian resistance movements appealed to all sorts of non-Indian sympathizers. The actor Marlon Brando reflected that appeal when he sent Sasheen Little Feather to refuse his Academy Award in 1973 (for his portrayal of Don Corleone in *The Godfather*) with a Red Power speech attacking the film industry's portrayals of native people. Brando, she said (hoping to counter charges of trendiness and yet pointing in exactly that direction), had been "a friend of the American Indian long before it was fashionable to pile on the turquoise and the feathers." Eager non-Indians showed up at fishing protests, at the Trail of Broken Treaties caravan to Washington, D.C., and, of course, at Wounded Knee (where Brando himself thought he could be of most use). By the same token, Indian leaders sometimes linked hands with other political movements in gestures of solidarity. In 1968, for example, Indians participated in the Poor People's Campaign, a march on Washington planned by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference that included blacks, Latinos, and poor whites.¹⁵

But just as often as they engaged real Indian people, white radicals joined the communalists in placing their highest premium upon a detached, symbolic Indianness. Different perspectives on rebellion and rights—Red, Black, and

Brown Power, antiwar, and women's liberation movements, for example—produced sets of symbols that, for all their distinctions, shared similarly mobile meanings. Red Power drew ideological weight from the far more visible Black Power movement. Indeed, the habit of yoking any number of themes with the word—peace power, love power, people power—points to a certain migratory tendency on the part of the signs of revolt. Sixties rebellion rested, in large part, on a politics of symbol, pastiche, and performance. Influenced by media saturation and the co-optative codes of fashion, the emblems of social protest were plucked from different worlds and reassembled in a gumbo of new political meaning. That headband might mean Geronimo, but it also meant Che Guevara and Stokely Carmichael. Indeed, it meant many things, depending on its context and its interpreters. Sacred pipes, Black Power fists, Aztlan eagles, peace signs, Hell's Angels, beers and joints, Peter Max design—everything fed into a whole that signified a hopeful, naive rebellion that often had as much to do with individual expression and fashion as it did with social change.¹⁶

While in the 1950s Indian lore hobbyists had sought personal freedom by leaping across the boundaries of a behaviorally defined notion of culture, by the mid-1960s, symbolic border-crossings of culture and race had become so painless that the meanings defined by those boundaries began to disintegrate. With them went a certain kind of social awareness. In 1957, for example, Norman Mailer's celebration of the "white negro" transgressions of the beats still carried a sense of the outrageous. The social world worked differently for blacks and whites; everyone knew it, and they recognized that difference. Now, however, one might lay claim to the more heavily laden word *nigger* without blinking an eye. Paul Goodman argued that his homosexuality had "made him a nigger." Writing as a yippie named Free, Abbie Hoffman claimed the word for young white activists harassed by police. A California professor, Jerry Farber, suggested that students themselves were enslaved niggers. Marginalized by antiwar planners, Hoffman and Jerry Rubin complained that they had been treated like niggers. And John Lennon and Yoko Ono would soon pronounce that "woman is the nigger of the world."¹⁷

Similar dynamics characterized the more positive meanings being attached to and detached from Indianness. White radicals sought political power by appropriating and cobbling together meanings that crossed borders of culture and race. In the process, they devalued words like *Indian* and *nigger* and deemphasized the social realities that came with those words. Such attempts to create political solidarity worked to the benefit of whites, but they could have negative political

consequences for Indians and African Americans. After all, those social realities underpinned civil rights protests. And if whites claimed and then diluted the very words that described those social worlds, they could offer in return only a power more linguistic than actual.

This looseness of symbolic meaning, with ideas, statements, and signs chopped up and reassembled in bold, antiestablishment collages, pervaded oppositional rhetoric. Indeed, it characterized not only the counterculture, but much of American culture itself. Children might continue to dress Indian in Camp Fire and Order of the Arrow groups, but when scouts turned to crafts work, they also found themselves cutting up magazines and gluing together picture and word collages, the understandings of which were both personal and evasive. In politics and in scout patrols, such pastiches could be read in multiple ways, depending on angle of view and the identity one half-glimpsed when one passed in front of a mirror. No one owned—or could even lay claim to—long hair and an Indian headband, much less its myriad meanings. So while some counterculture rebels sought to use Indianness to express antiwar sentiments or revolutionary identities, they found that those identities had power only as the symbols crunched together around an ill-defined, culturally centered notion of rebellion. Otherwise, meaning resided with individuals and their interpretations. "Revolution for the hell of it?" asked Free. "Why not? It's all a bunch of phony words anyway. Reality is a subjective experience. It exists in my head."¹⁸

Free's key notions—an empowered individualism and a flyaway sense of meaning—were closely related. As individuals insisted upon the power of their own interpretations of symbols, those symbols began to lose their collective significance. At the same time, as symbols and signs became increasingly flexible, individuals found themselves asserting the validity of their right to interpret and to find import. Whereas the hobbyists had embraced an open, relativist understanding of culture, oppositional Indian play went farther, assuming that not only behavior but also meaning itself could be relativistic.

The world looks different on the far side of the 1960s, for the diverse ambitions of the counterculture did in fact produce significant changes in American society. Nonetheless, the movement often worked most effectively in the realm of cultural gesture. "Expressly political concerns," suggests the historian Peter Clecak, "existed fitfully, even secondarily." And Charles Chatfield observed that "symbolism was used to challenge social and cultural conformity in general. This left the antiwar movement open to extraneous attack, since the contest over the war was waged more on the level of symbols than on issues."¹⁹ As the

signs of rebellion—that bandanna headband, for instance—had filled with an array of common revolutionary meanings, the groups that used those signs followed fragmented social agendas. Indianness had a certain heft for many white, middle-class men and some white women, but its meanings, like those of Black Power and antiwar protest and feminism, once uprooted from social realities, could not bring together people separated by faultlines of gender, race, and ideology. Red Power, for example, which sought to refocus Indianness on larger audiences, came eventually to matter more to Indian people than to non-Indians. In building the political movement, young Indians looked to elders and traditionals, fundamentally altering the ways subsequent native people would construct their identities.

As meanings became liberated from their social moorings, what began to matter most was the relation between the interpreter and the text being interpreted, be it book, rally, disobedient act, or piece of clothing. In that relation, individuals found new ways to define personal identities. Perhaps nowhere were the powerful interpretive links between a text and its readers (as opposed to authors and their intentions) so visible as in the counterculture's environmentalist wing, which made its own a speech purportedly given by the Suquamish/Duwamish leader Seattle in 1855. Widely quoted and reproduced, the speech offered an emotionally powerful manifesto for living on the land and a set of instructions for white Americans:

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people . . . we are part of the earth and it is part of us . . . Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. This we know. The Earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. When the last red man has vanished from this earth and his memory is only the shadow of a cloud moving across the prairie, these shores and forest will still hold the spirits of my people. For they love this earth as a new born loves its mother's heartbeat. So if we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. We may be brothers after all.²⁰

In an Indian death speech that echoed *Metamora*, Logan, or *Susquesus*, the text gave Seattle's purported blessing and a gentle admonishment to white successors. Yet while the speech tendered a classic tale of succession, it also permanently implanted Indians—spiritually at least—in the American landscape. And

at the same time that it set up distinct Indian and white American epochs, it linked people in one aboriginal, nature-loving family. Like the vanishing Indian plays of Jacksonian America, Seattle's words erased contemporary social realities and the complicated, often violent history of Indian land loss. Instead, all people were one, bound by a universal web of blood connections and their relations to the earth. The speech, which pasted together the classic tropes of Indian Americanism, proved one of the most powerful artifacts of the time.

As the words journeyed through American popular culture, jumping from magazine articles to posters to Sierra Club calendars to collective folk wisdom, the fact that Chief Seattle never uttered them fell easily by the wayside. In truth, "Seattle's wisdom" came from the pen of a white screenwriter from Texas, and his moving words were the single highlight of an obscure television script on pollution produced by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1972.²¹ What really mattered, however, was not the speech's authorship or its history, which was tangled and complex, but the words themselves and the people who encountered them, interpreted them, and derived meaning and import from their emotionally charged cadences. The text seemed to float suspended above the social world of Indians and whites, environmentalists and screenwriters, generating its own culturally resonant meanings. Those meanings could then be acted out in familiar ways—in the tipis at New Buffalo, the Geronimoesque headband, the "Yi Yi Yi Yi Yi" chant, the reassuring purchase of a beautiful calendar.

But Indianness has always been about contradictions, and its uses were hardly confined to this creative, confusing world of free meanings. Indeed, in such a decentered world, many people found themselves searching for something fixed, real, and authentic. Paul Goodman concluded that what really drove the counterculture was a crisis of meaning that was spiritual at base and that "in the end it is religion that constitutes the strength of this generation and not, as I used to think, their morality, political will, and common sense."²² Playing Indian gave the counterculture the best of both worlds. On the one hand, Indianness—in the form of a communal tipi or a speech by Chief Seattle—seemed as open and unfixed as a sign could be. It could mean whatever one wanted it to mean. On the other hand, and almost alone among a shifting vocabulary of images, Indianness could also be a sign of something unchanging, a first principle. This other kind of Indianness also had a powerful, if often half-conscious, history.

After World War II, these twinned desires gained power relative to the other, for each proved critical to the construction of identities. If everything was fair

game, including Indianness, then desire for something fixed—also represented by the Indian—increased proportionately. Seattle's speech, with its mystical evocation of edenic nature and aboriginal Americanness, pointed the way to a particularly spiritual form of Indianness. Likewise, Goodman's revelation came after meeting a young hippie: "He was dressed like an (American) Indian, in fringed buckskin and a headband, with red paint on his face. All his life, he said, he had tried to escape the encompassing evil of our society that was bent on destroying his soul." Although much of the counterculture search for spiritual insight would revolve around hallucinogenic drugs and Eastern mysticism, playing Indian offered a familiar and powerful path to the reassuring fixity of ultimate enlightenment.²³

In the 1960s and 1970s, many spiritual seekers turned to Sun Bear, Rolling Thunder, and other so-called medicine people for guidance in questing after the Great Spirit. There was nothing innocent about these searches. In an oppositional culture, one targeted Christianity as part of the authoritarian structure from which one sought escape. And, as we saw in political and communal discourse, the symbols and practices of many countertraditions blurred and overlapped. Hallucinogenic drug use could be knit together with Plains Indian vision quest rituals, known for the intense experiences that came with their mental and physical deprivations. The paperback edition of John Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (1972), for example, promised eager seekers an account of a "personal vision that makes an LSD trip pale by comparison," and books like *Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions* by John Fire Lame Deer and *Seven Arrows* by Hyemeyohsts Storm were steady sellers.²⁴

Indians represented spiritual experience beyond representation. Ironically, books and instruction proved the standard means of gaining access to that experience. The hobbyists of the 1950s had used texts, but many had also turned to real Indians. Counterculture spiritualists sought out Indians, to be sure, but, like the communalists, the number of people who actually "studied with" Indian teachers was small relative to the many more who read and interpreted the books and periodicals. And the path was not always clear even for those who engaged Indians. As cultural boundaries opened up, the role of mediator, already difficult to pin down, proved almost impossibly slippery. Non-Indians began taking up permanent native identities in order to lay claim to the cultural power of Indianness in the white imagination. Likewise, many native people found empowerment in a white-focused, spiritual mediator's role, and they acted accordingly. It became difficult to sort out who was whom

along this continuum, and the question of mediators' Indian identity has been fiercely and frequently contested ever since.²⁵

The spiritual entrepreneur Sun Bear is an instructive example. In the late 1960s, his *Many Smokes* magazine had a small circulation of Indian readers. Sun Bear editorialized on all manner of native issues, from Office of Equal Opportunity policy to the role of claims settlement money in economic development.²⁶ Yet, he was clearly already a mediating figure—his masthead photo showed him playing an Apache on the television show *Death Valley Days*. In the 1970s, however, the nature of Sun Bear's intercultural brokerage changed, and *Many Smokes* metamorphosed into a full-blown New Age periodical aimed at a much larger, non-Indian audience. In 1986, it changed its name to *Wildfire* and proffered a montage of articles dealing with Christian theology, crystal magic, spirit channeling, vision questing, land brokering, Afghan relief, natural childbirth, and smudging one's computer with purifying smoke. Catalogue goods were always on sale, as were stock offerings for the Bear Tribe, which, in a 1980s move, became a visible collective through legal incorporation.²⁷ The Bear Tribe, primarily a collection of non-Indian followers, offered a path to tribal Indianness that relied not upon spiritual experience, cultural crossing, or accidents of birth, but upon economic exchange. Many Indians rejected Sun Bear and his enterprise.

Like its counterparts in communalism, politics, and environmentalism, this brand of countercultural spiritualism rarely engaged real Indians, for it was not only unnecessary but inconvenient to do so. Ambiguous people like Sun Bear proved acceptable, for they served not to reveal the lines between Indian and non-Indian but to blur them even further. The most prominent landmark in this ambiguous tradition of texts and mediators may have come in 1968, when Carlos Castaneda published *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*, a faux encounter with a Yaqui sorcerer whose spiritual insights and desert adventures were presented as true ethnography rather than fiction. *The Teachings of Don Juan* became required reading for spiritual seekers, and Castaneda continued to dish out Don Juan's insights in a series of books published throughout the next two decades.²⁸ Although one heard occasional reports of seekers waiting futilely at grimy downtown bus stations in the Southwest for Don Juan's arrival, most followers were more than content simply to buy the books and discuss them among themselves. Likewise, while many traveled to Harney Peak and Bear Butte, holy places named in other Indian books, they rarely engaged the Lakota or Cheyenne people who also visited these places. Even in a quest for fixed

meaning, Indian people were basically irrelevant. Indianness—even when imagined as something essential—could be captured and marketed as a text, largely divorced from Indian oversight and questions of authorship.

The disconnections of the 1960s and 1970s may have reached peak development in the activities of the New Age, a movement for an aging counterculture. Like counterculture itself, *New Age* spans an ambiguous time period and serves as a general rubric for a wide range of practices. Although one might trace its roots back to the counterculture or to the self-actualization movements of the 1970s, it was not until the early 1980s, with the popular writings of Shirley MacLaine and the noodlely music of Windom Hill recording artists like George Winston and Will Ackerman, that New Age first became visible under that name. Heavily based in self-help and personal development therapies, its proponents await a large-scale change in human consciousness and a utopian era of peace and harmony. In New Age identity quests, one can see the long shadows of certain strands of postmodernism: increasing reliance on texts and interpretations, runaway individualism within a rhetoric of community, the distancing of native people, and a gaping disjuncture between a cultural realm of serious play and the power dynamics of social conflict. New Age thinking tends to focus on ultimate individual liberation and engagement with a higher power, having little interest in the social world that lies between self and spirit.²⁹

Take, for example, the Church of Gaia / Council of Four Directions, a gathering of spiritual seekers in my hometown who found themselves easy targets for a *New York Times* writer:

In an ancient rite of American Indians, wisps of smoke rise from burning herbs in prayer to Mother Earth and Father Sky, as the woman with the pipe intones solemnly, "Creator, we come to you in a sacred manner." There were Indian chants of "ho," a song about the return of the bison, and some reverent words offered for "the red nation." All that was missing in this gathering on the second floor of an office building over a Boulder pizzeria was an Indian.³⁰

When the article was reprinted in Boulder's local paper, Stephen Buhner, one of the church's board members, responded in kind. Emphasizing the pedagogical qualifications of the authors of New Age texts and his own First Amendment rights, Buhner captured the mix of interpretation and self-focus that has characterized many New Age pursuits. "Sun Bear and Ed McGaa," he argued, "[were] given the right to teach traditional native religious ways by their teachers. That

right has never been rescinded." According to Buhner, McGaa's Vietnam combat record and medicine "training" legitimated his text, *Mother Earth Spirituality*, while Sun Bear's role as Medicine Chief of the recently incorporated Bear Tribe Medicine Society made his a worthy voice.³¹

These are, one should note, particularly Western views of the ways in which spiritual knowledge can be understood and transmitted. Even as the Church of Gaia sought Indian spiritual essentials, then, its members disengaged themselves both physically and intellectually from native people. Adopting the behaviorist dynamic of the hobbyists, Buhner suggested that spiritual insight resulted from a teacher-learner encounter, and that it was manifested through a certification process in which one's qualifications might be revoked for cause. Yet in many native societies, and especially among the Plains people so beloved by New Age seekers, real spiritual authority comes not so much from tutelage as from spiritual experience itself. Buhner valued Sun Bear and Ed McGaa not only for their spiritual experiences but for their compiling of cultural knowledge—texts that could be purchased, interpreted, mastered, and materialized.³²

What mattered most was Buhner's claim to be able to acquire and practice sacred traditions. He made the claim not in terms of his own training or experience, but by calling on essential Americanisms—freedom of religion and equal opportunity—that rang with an intensity equal to that of McGaa's military service. "Our church," claimed Buhner, "believes that no person because of their skin color, should be prohibited from worshiping God in the manner they choose."³³ Indianness—coded as a spiritual essential—was the common property of all Americans. Yet for native people Buhner's argument could hardly have been more ironic. Indian First Amendment rights, protected only by a congressional vow of good faith and long the target of white reformers, came under severe attack during the 1980s. In a series of legal decisions, the Supreme Court gutted the already-weak American Indian Religious Freedom Act, curtailing the exercise of Indian religious freedom in favor of federal environmental law, tourism and hydropower production, Forest Service-supported logging operations, and state regulation of controlled substances. Coming from a man who lived in a solar home on thirty-five acres of pricey Boulder real estate and who did as he pleased with regard to native spirituality, the claim of discrimination had to ring hollow.³⁴

And yet, was Buhner really wrong? Not in a world in which contingent meanings mixed with the power of individual interpretation, endless information, and good intent. And if New Age followers graze freely on proliferating

information about other cultures, they usually do so with a sense of compassion and concern. Like the communalists, they tend to be good people bound up in contradictions. McGaa caught the sincere tenor of New Age participants from a sympathetic Indian perspective: "If we want the white man to change, we must teach him." And, echoing Chief Seattle, "We're all brothers."³⁵ In this universalist interpretation, cultures inevitably bump up against each other and when they do, they exchange and share cultural material, each becoming a kind of hybrid. Making sense of this hybrid world is less a social activity than a personal one, and individuals should be able to use every available tool in doing so. In a world of free-flowing information and multicultural mixing, no group of people has exclusive rights to culture, even if they bound and define it as their own.

Buhner's final argument drew on such multicultural information, at once universally accessible and personally meaningful: "The religious war in the former country of Yugoslavia, fought over just such differences, should be warning enough of the wisdom of the First Amendment."³⁶ Moving quickly from individual rights to global crisis, Buhner skipped his own social milieu. It was apparent to most Indians that the Church of Gaia/Council of Four Directions—economically powerful and racially unmarked—was probably the last group needing to wage war in order to practice its religious beliefs. Despite its misleading nod to Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, Buhner's argument was both superficial and common: self-creative cultural free play was the prerogative of individuals, and it had little to do with the relations between social groups or the power inequities among them.

But if Buhner's suggestion was superficial, it was hardly simple. Rather, it drew upon a newly empowered multiculturalism, forcing it into an uncomfortable alliance with a postmodernism that emphasized the openness of meaning. The nation's strength, suggested a long line of multiculturalists from the critics Randolph Bourne and Horace Kallen to the historian Gary Nash, lay not in the genteel tradition of white America, but in its diverse array of different peoples and traditions. Difference, they argued, was not to be rejected, but rather embraced. First framed in the early twentieth century, confronted more directly in the post-World War II years, and quasi-institutionalized during the 1970s and 1980s, multiculturalism had become a key idea around which social meanings could be negotiated.

And yet, multiculturalism itself was hardly clear-cut. Bourne, suggests the historian David Hollinger, spoke for a cosmopolitan tradition that emphasized dynamism and openness. Kallen, on the other hand, planted the seeds for a

sterner pluralist focus on the autonomy and singularity of ethnic groups. In the wake of the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s, the pluralist form of multiculturalism came to be persistently linked with the questioning of unequal power and opportunity for the nation's diverse peoples. And, through a variety of institutions and programs, white Americans began to think about ways to remedy those inequities.³⁷

With its focus on difference and rigid categorizations, however, a multiculturalism based upon pluralism proved troublesome to those who lived identities along more complicated racial-ethnic, gender, sexual, occupational, and geographic lines. Indeed, the breaking down of inequities and social restrictions enlarged the numbers of people who fit multiple categories at the same time: one might be Swedish, Dakota, and Latino all at once. A cosmopolitan focus on culture-crossings and simultaneities, on the other hand, suggested that one's identity was a matter not so much of descent as of consent and choice. This particular kind of multiculturalism gained increasing power and visibility during the 1980s. And yet, placed in the context of a postmodernism that emphasized relativism and openness, it was easy to read cosmopolitan multiculturalism as a license for *anyone* to choose an ethnic identity—Indian, for example—regardless of family, history, or tribal recognition. When non-Indian New Age followers appropriated and altered a cosmopolitan understanding of Indianness, they laid bare a slow rebalancing away from the collective concerns with social justice that had emerged in the 1960s and toward the renewed focus on individual freedom that has characterized America since the 1980s.³⁸

New Age adherents found numerous ways to push the scales toward individual liberty, a notion often materialized through the consumption of other cultures. Committed, sincere people like Stephen Buhner surveyed the traditions the world has to offer, mixing Indian spiritual practices with Zen Buddhism, tantric exercise, neopaganism, druidism, and other exotic brands of knowledge. The New Age men's movement, for example, created a complex brew of interpersonal psychology, group therapy, and sensitivity training in Indian-tinged settings. Gathered out-of-doors, men's movement enthusiasts made and wore masks, chose self-reflecting totem animals (usually big, masculine animals), passed an Indian "talking stick" around as they shared repressed experiences, and meditated alone in the wild in a sort of well-tempered vision quest experience. The focus was on healing a wounded Self. Women's groups had similar bonding rituals, often centered on an essentialist vision of women's intrinsic connection to the earth. And, of course, New Age followers of both sexes

bonded over someone else's cultural knowledge in situations ranging from conferences at swank hotels to sweatlodge ceremonies in backyards.³⁹

Like their countercultural predecessors, New Age devotees relied on books to package and circulate the cultures they consumed. In the mid-1980s, New Age writing exploded, and followers had a wide array of mediating texts to teach them the ways of Indianness. A familiar format involves an old Indian person who, for whatever reason, turns, not to other Indians, but to a good-hearted white writer to preserve his or her sacred knowledge. John Neihardt's moving and sympathetic *Black Elk Speaks* set the trajectory in 1932, and, if the quality of the writing has deteriorated, the model remains the same. Lynn Andrews's *Medicine Woman* series, for example, began with this format and expanded to include other world cultures. Andrews's pastiche accounts leap wildly around native North America. She finds, for example, a Choctaw woman living near a Canadian Cree community in a Pawnee earth lodge, described in such a way as to sound suspiciously like George Catlin's paintings of Mandan houses from 1832. And it is her Cree teacher, Agnes Whistling Elk, who collapses ancient wisdom with postmodern insight: "Every book is rewritten by the reader. . . . You bring to it what you are."⁴⁰ Numerous other books gave readers the opportunity to imagine identities through such rewriting. Clarissa Pinkola Estes suggested ways in which women could "run with the wolves," Robert Bly and Sam Keen offered up equivalent myths for men, and James Redfield's abominable *Celestine Prophecy* showed heroic whites learning deep secrets from disappearing South American Indians amidst an insignificant backdrop of social struggle. Readers of such texts then put the words into concrete forms, performing them through vision quest weekends and pipe ceremonies in National Forest hide-aways, many of which carried the heady price tag that signified conspicuous bourgeois consumption.⁴¹

The tendency of New Age devotees to find in Indianness personal solutions to the question of living the good life meant that Indian Others were imagined in almost exclusively positive terms—communitarian, environmentally wise, spiritually insightful. This happy multiculturalism blunted the edge of earlier calls for social change by focusing on pleasant cultural exchanges that erased the complex histories of Indians and others. Even lingering nineteenth-century images of bloodthirsty savagery have been rendered ambivalent or positive. In spite of almost twenty years of Indian protest against his team's nickname (to cite the most egregious example), the late Washington Redskins owner Jack Kent Cooke insisted that the name honors rather than degrades native people.⁴²

For hundreds of years, Indianness had been an open idea, capable of having its meanings refigured by Americans seeking identities. The Orwellian pronouncements of people like Cooke, however, suggested that, for many, postmodern Indianness had become so detached from anything real that it was in danger of lapsing into a bland irrelevance.

What are we to make of this transformation? Since the colonial era, Indian Others had been objects of both desire and repulsion, and in that raging contradiction lay their power. Now, they were almost completely flattened out, tragic victims who brought the last powerful remnants of their cultures as ethnic gifts for a pluralistic American whole. I have showed how non-Indians constructed Indian Others along two different scales: First, an axis of distance on which Indians could appear anywhere between a remote inhumanity and a mirror reflection of one's Self, and second, an axis of value on which Indians appeared in gradations of positive and negative. Now, these lines of difference and value threatened to disappear. The social boundaries that marked Indianness as either inside or outside America almost vanished before an all-encompassing universalism. For Stephen Buhner and Lynn Andrews, everything was inside. Likewise, the axis of value occupied by savage and noble Indians also shrank in importance as Indians became genial objects of fashion, style, and cultural play. What was there not to like about Indians?

In the sense that everything in a postmodern world could be seen as a game or a project, playing Indian had reached its contradictory apotheosis. It retained its proven creative power—play is a crucial way in which we shape identity and meaning—but, at the same time, its substance tended to slip away. For while play is a critical experience, it is also a powerful metaphor for that which is frivolous and without significance. Postmodernity—as both concept and cultural moment—embraces play, perhaps, because one of its ultimate modes is almost humorously ironic—a firm belief in the contingency of meaning. Such belief might lead one to argue that the way meanings are made and materialized is vitally important. On the other hand, if no meaning is any better than any other, it might also suggest that the practice of meaning-making matters very little.⁴³

New Age meaning-making was reflected in the concrete experience of native costume, always a crucial element in Indian play. It was perhaps indicative of the nature of the movement that its followers tended to play Indian in ways that were low-grade. A bandanna headband, an assumed name, a personal fetish—any one would suffice. Many Indian objects were embedded in the conspicuous

consumption campaigns that took shape around Santa Fe Style and American Country West.⁴⁴ In contrast, the hobbyists (who had made authenticity into their own kind of fetish) had experienced a particularly social kind of interaction. They had sought out Indians and made and worn painstaking reproductions of native clothing. In the New Age, authenticity had few material or social forms. Rather, it resided—like all good, unknowable essentials—in a person's interpretive heart and soul. Yet, as we have seen, putting on costumes had always been an essential element in Indian play. "We do not stir a step until our equipment is right," insisted Lewis Henry Morgan, referring to his new confederates of the Iroquois. The Camp Fire Girls' self-designed Indian dresses, expressing personal character in a material way, underpinned their entire pursuit. The Improved Order of Red Men cherished the smoky canvas costumes that went into the storage locker after a night's ritual.

The concrete nature of clothing had always insured that, even in the midst of creative play, a thread of social connection bound real Indians to those who mimed them. And indeed, it was the social reality of authentic, aboriginal Indians that gave Indian play significance and power. When the New Age turned to disjointed signifiers—a headband rife with associations, a stylized pipe influenced (one would almost swear) by J. R. R. Tolkien, a set of tropes from one's personal library—adherents allowed some of the true creative power of Indianness to slip away. Yet most New Agers, confronting the contradictions between a self-focused world of playful cultural hybridity and a social world of struggle, hatred, winners, and losers (with Indians usually numbered among the losers), understandably tended to the former.⁴⁵

Indianness retained a certain degree of power, however, and that power suggests that markers of Indian difference necessarily remained in place. Ironically, the social realities that New Age devotees tended to avoid helped fuel the sense of Indian-white difference that made Indianness meaningful. Indians lived poverty-stricken lives on faraway reservations. Their poverty and geographical and social distance marked them as different—and thereby authentic. Incorporative multiculturalism, on the other hand, has tended to focus on distinctive cultural contributions—food, music, language—and to attenuate cultural differences within a larger human whole. The asymmetrical relations of power that both undergird and undermine the system linger, however, in the uneasy collective unconscious. Mexican food, for example, is a more palatable ethnic gift than Mexican agricultural stoop labor, although in its concrete ex-

pression of social inequality and physical distance, it is the latter that defines whatever authenticity one might find in tortillas and frijoles.

Native people who reject this kind of cultural incorporation find themselves in a curious and contradictory position, shunted outside the boundaries of a universalism that purports to be without boundaries. Reluctant to share their cultural heritage as a common property, they are marked as exterior. And yet, as is true of the Mexican agricultural worker, it is the social difference of these Indians that guarantees Indian authenticity. In this relentlessly contradictory interplay, such people have been simultaneously granted a platform and rendered voiceless. In the summer of 1992, for example, the Indian-published newspaper *Indian Country Today* ran a series of articles indicting many New Age "medicine people" as frauds and inviting their response. Most refused to grant any legitimacy to the critiques and failed to respond. Some did, and they were rebutted effectively. But the newspaper's detailed investigative reporting had no appreciable effect on New Age audiences. Indian presence was noted. Complaints, however, were ignored and suggestions rejected.⁴⁶

Yet while these oppositional Indians were ignored, it was nonetheless important that they speak—and speak critically, for in doing so, they offered one of the only indicators of authentic difference functioning in the world of texts, interpretations, and unchained meanings. Whereas Sun Bear and Medicine Woman Lynn Andrews inhabited a cultural world easily shared by Indians and non-Indians, oppositional native people focused on social and political worlds, where the differences between the reservation, the urban ghetto, and the Beverly Hills Hotel, with its silky breezes and honeysuckle air, stood in stark relief. When they tried to force non-Indians to translate from the cosmopolitan language of open cultural meanings to the pluralist languages of power, struggle, and inequality, they rethreaded the material connections that made Indianness so real. And so one multicultural tradition—that of cultural pluralism—provided the "reality" that empowered a distorted, postmodern version of a more cosmopolitan multiculturalism. Indian reality fed back into the textual world, increasing the power of Indianness, even as it contradicted the particular form that Indianness took. The presence of multicultural images and statements, however, let Indian players claim a sincere, but ultimately fruitless, political sympathy with native people. Indeed, the New Age's greatest intellectual temptation lies in the wistful fallacy that one can engage in social struggle by working on oneself.

As the hobbyists demonstrated so clearly, a multicultural order requires markers of difference in order to make its blurrings of that difference meaningful. Even as it is often ignored, then, the critical voice offered by *Indian Country Today*'s Tim Giago—an interestingly middle-of-the-road voice, one should note—matters more to both New Age postmodernism and to materialist social criticism than that of Dirk Johnson, the *New York Times* reporter who went after Stephen Buhner's church. Racism, poverty, poor health care, underfunded educational facilities, pollution and toxic dumping, domination by extractive industries—these are the issues through which social and political power has figured difference in Indian Country. When the Indian staffers of *Indian Country Today* report on these topics, they reflect that difference, so easily ignored by postmodern multiculturalism and yet so vital to the authenticity of its Indianness.

The quicksand dynamics of power link these two worlds in intimate and confusing ways, for the power that dominated Indians could, at the same time, be turned to their advantage. *Indian Country Today*, which features Giago's frequent attacks on the lack of Indian voices in the mainstream media, has been partially funded by the Gannett Foundation, a mainstream institution. There was certainly no mistaking the meaning and the money when the paper left behind its original name, the *Lakota Times*, for a connection with that most postmodern of print news outlets, *USA Today*. And yet, *Indian Country Today* is, at the same time, a significant power base for native people. If Indian people found themselves disempowered in one social realm—the mainstream press—they also found power in that same place. It is, paradoxically, the same power, and it makes a difference that it flows through different channels. One channel maintains a social hierarchy; the other maintains a contradictory ethic of multicultural egalitarianism. The power to define and exclude, the power to appropriate and co-opt, the power to speak and resist, and the power to build new, hybrid worlds are sometimes one and the same, and that power flows through interlocked social and cultural systems, simultaneously directed and channeled by humans and yet often beyond strict human control.⁴⁷

Indian people have, for more than one hundred years, lacked military power. Being militarily defeated, they found that social, political, and economic power were often hard to come by as well. Native people have been keenly aware, however, that in their relations to white Americans they do in fact possess some mysterious well of cultural power. When the Red Power activists of the late 1960s and early 1970s took over Alcatraz, marched on Washington and trashed

the office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and sniped at the besieging army at Wounded Knee, they were not engaging in simply military or revolutionary actions. Above all, they were committing cultural acts in which they sought social and political power through a complicated play of white guilt, nostalgia, and the deeply rooted desire to be Indian and thereby aboriginally true to the spirit of the land. Among American ethnic and racial groups, Indians have occupied a privileged position in national culture, and native people have often put the power that came with this exceptionalism to political and social ends.

That such a politics of culture resonated so thoroughly—even in a world in which symbols had spread their meanings hopelessly thin—suggests the continuing depth and power of Indianness for white Americans. Community and individualism, spiritual essence and precarious meanings, cultural universalism and social difference—paradoxes like these continue to drive contemporary Indian play just as surely as the problem of Briton and aborigine drove the original revolutionaries. Likewise, if the Indian plays of the counterculture and the New Age reflect the cultural moment we have called postmodern, they also reveal the ways in which its practices have a longer history. There is little about the postmodern—linguistic relativism, epistemological crisis, pastiche, and bricolage—that has not appeared in the past. Indeed, many of these interpretive tropes have shown up in the history of Indian play. Indian costume has been the site of a host of language games and remade meanings, and people like Lewis Henry Morgan and Ernest Thompson Seton and Arthur C. Parker have used it to rethink the very ways they understood the world. Writers, fraternalists, Boy Scouts, and bohemian reformers have all chipped off fragments of Indianness, put them into new contexts, and turned them to new uses. Granted, says the theorist Fredric Jameson, but what makes postmodernism a thing unto itself is the changed social realities of the post-World War II world, with its new relations of power, its global character, its inclination to turn culture—and multicultural—into marketable commodities. And indeed, Indian play has reflected such underlying changes, as Americans of all sorts have negotiated, rebuilt, and forgotten the cultural differences that help produce collective and individual identities.⁴⁸

My weekends visiting the tipi camp and slurping used milk from the collective cereal bowl were part of something new in the sense that Indian play has always taken on new shape and focus to engage the most pressing issues of a particular historical moment. I, too, was an actor in a world in which questioning the common sense of everyday life was bidding to become the common sense

of everyday life. But in other, and perhaps more crucial ways, I was participating in a long, unbroken tradition in American history. My communal Indian friends were attempting to redefine themselves and their local community. In doing so, they hoped, in some small way, to offer an example to the nation as a whole. Like many before them, they had turned to Indianness as the sign of all that was authentic and aboriginal, everything that could be true about America. But they had also turned to Indianness as a way of making an absolutely new start. Yet like those who had come before, they found that Indianness inevitably required real native people, and that those people called everything into question. Playing Indian, as always, had a tendency to lead one into, rather than out of, contradiction and irony.

conclusion

The Grateful Dead Indians

When the colonials dressed as Indians, they sent the signal of total rebellion. To associate with "savages" (the natives) was the sign that the colonists would go to the last measure to obtain their freedom. The Society of Indian Dead invite all peaceful tribes to send representatives to the New American Revolution.

APACHE RISES FROM THE GRASS

Live and Let Live #9

Entering a Grateful Dead show in the early 1990s, one might have been handed the latest issue of *Live and Let Live*, published by the Society of Indian Dead. If you looked up from the hand that proffered the single-sheet newsletter, you might see paint, buckskin, even feathers. And if you followed the Indian-garbed pamphleteer through the vans and tents in the parking lot surrounding the stadium, you might have been invited into a tipi pitched atop the asphalt. Chicory coffee, hummus and pita bread, skulls, bears, roses, and the smell of patchouli oil on skin. Beat-up guitars, endless rounds of the Dead classic "Fire on the Mountain,"

of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Olson and Wilson, *Native Americans in the Twentieth Century*, 157–219.

Chapter 6. Counterculture Indians and the New Age

1. William Hedgepeth, with photographs by Dennis Stock, *The Alternative: Communal Life in New America* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 73, 84, 81. For corn, beans, squash, see Robert Houriet, *Getting Back Together* (New York: Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1971), 170–71. Although my understanding of countercultural communalism relies on certain personal experiences, I have also drawn upon Keith Melville, *Communes in the Counterculture: Origins, Theories, Styles of Life* (New York: William Morrow, 1972); Richard Atcheson, *The Bearded Lady: Going on the Commune Trip and Beyond* (New York: John Day, 1971); Lewis Yablonsky, *The Hippie Trip* (New York: Pegasus, 1968); Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); Benjamin Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: Free Press, 1980); Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Communities in Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 279–406.

2. The Beatles, "Strawberry Fields Forever," *Magical Mystery Tour* (EMI, 1967).

3. In thinking about this cluster of ideas, I have been informed by, among others, Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), esp. 141–221; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1989); Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983); Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulations*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

4. Fredric Jameson, *The Prison House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), ix.

5. Goodman, as quoted in Melville, *Communes in the Counterculture*, 114. See also Goodman, *The New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative* (New York: Vintage, 1969), 143–54; Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 3–73. On Paul Goodman, see Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1969), 178–204; Morris Dickstein, *Gates of Eden: American Culture in the Sixties* (New York: Basic, 1977), 74–83.

6. See, for example, Abbie Hoffman [pseud. Free], *Revolution for the Hell of It* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), 10, for "Do your own thing" as a mantra; Goodman, *New Reformation*, 145.

7. Stewart Brand, "Indians and the Counterculture, 1960s–1970s," *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 4, *History of Indian-White Relations*, ed. Wilcomb Washburn (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 570. For "Navajo," see Houriet, *Getting Back Together*, 170.

8. For Warhol, see Robert Rosenblum, "Warhol as Art History," *Andy Warhol: A Retrospective*, ed. Kynaston McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 25–36, 183–97. See also John Cage, *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (for twelve radios, twenty-four players, and conduc-

tor), 1951, with performances in 1951 and 1959; Cage, *Radio Music* (for one to eight radios), 1956. On Cage, see *John Cage Catalogue* (New York: Henmar Press, 1962), 36, 38; Eric Salzman, "Imaginary Landscaper," and Richard Kostelanetz, "John Cage as Hörspielmacher" in *Writings about John Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 1–7, 213–21. See also Douglas Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins," *Anti-Aesthetic*, ed. Hal Foster, 43–56.

9. For antiwar movement, see Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), esp. 242–60, 285–304; William Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II*, 3d ed. (New York: Oxford, 1995), 320–28; Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 244–46; Nancy Zarouli and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? American Protest against the War in Vietnam, 1963–1975* (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1984); Charles DeBenedetti with assistance from Charles Chatfield, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990). For the relation between antiwar and counterculture protest, see David Farber, "The Counterculture and the Antiwar Movement," *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 7–21. For a general survey, see Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994).

10. Mitchell Goodman, "What's Happening," *The Movement toward a New America: The Beginnings of a Long Revolution (A Collage) A What?* (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press/Knopf, 1970), vii. For LSD, see Farber, "Counterculture and Antiwar," 19.

11. *Little Big Man*, directed by Arthur Penn (Fox, 1970).

12. Naomi Feigelson, *The Underground Revolution: Hippies, Yippies, and Others* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1970), 7, 64; Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 37.

13. See Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 71–73, for appropriation of racial victim identity. For crossing to the Vietnamese position, see Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 261–82. See also Karin Ashley et al., "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows" (1969), in *A History of Our Time: Readings on Postwar America*, ed. William H. Chafe and Harvard Sitkoff (New York: Oxford, 1983), 235–38.

14. See Tom Holm, *Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls: Native American Veterans of the Vietnam War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 118. One should note as well the tendency of American ground troops to reprise nineteenth-century Plains warfare, designating North Vietnamese territory, "Indian country." See Holm, *ibid.*, 129.

15. For Indian activism, see *Indians of All Tribes*, ed. Peter Blue Cloud, *Alcatraz Is Not an Island* (Berkeley: Wingbow Press, 1972); Adam Fortunate Eagle, *Alcatraz! Alcatraz! The Indian Occupation of 1969–1971* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1992); Vine Deloria, Jr., *Behind the Trail of Broken Treaties: An Indian Declaration of Independence* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985); Stanley David Lyman, *Wounded Knee 1973: A Personal Account* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior, *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* (New York: New Press, 1996). For Anderson, see Troy R. Johnson, *The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-Determination and the Rise of Indian Activism* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 32. For Brando, see "Brando Has Long Backed Rights of Racial Minorities," *New York Times*, March 28, 1973, 40. For Poor People's Campaign, see Paul Cowan, "Indians Meet the Press: It's Pride vs. Prejudice," in Goodman, ed., *Movement toward a New America*, 249–50.

16. Feigelson, *Underground Revolution*, 11; Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 164, for pastiche poster. For revolutionary bandanna, see Jerry Avorn, Robert Freedman, et al., "Up against the Ivy Wall," in *Our Time*, ed. Chafe and Sitkoff, 246. For bandanna in drug and communal culture, see Yablonsky, *Hippie Trip*, 64, 74, 80. See James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 346, for Indianness encoded in a bandanna headband. For the compression of high and popular culture, see William L. O'Neill, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 200–27, 245–49.

17. Paul Goodman, *New Reformation*, 194; Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 71–73; Jerry Farber, "Student as Nigger," in Goodman, ed., *Movement toward a New America*, 303–04; Farber, "Counterculture and Antiwar," 17; John Lennon and Yoko Ono, "Woman is the Nigger of the World," *Shaved Fish* (EMI, 1972).

18. Hoffman, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, 9.

19. Peter Clecak, *America's Quest for the Ideal Self: Dissent and Fulfillment in the 60s and 70s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 117; Chatfield, "The Antiwar Movement and America," *American Ordeal*, 396.

20. As quoted in Rudolph Kaiser, "Chief Seattle's Speech(es): American Origins and European Reception," in *Recovering the Word: Essays on Native American Literature*, ed. Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 517.

21. For a tracing of the speech's diffusion, see *ibid.*, 497–536, esp. 515.

22. Goodman, *New Reformation*, 59.

23. *Ibid.*, 54; Feigelson, *Underground Revolution*, 50–51, 64–65; Roszak, *Making of a Counter Culture*, 124–77.

24. John Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* (New York: Pocket Books, 1972); John Fire Lane Deer and Richard Erdoes, *Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972); Hyemeyohsts Storm, *Seven Arrows* (New York: Ballantine, 1972). On drugs, see William Braden, *The Private Sea: LSD and the Search for God* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967); Melville, *Communes in the Counterculture*, 223–27; Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 437–39, 442–44.

25. Doug Boyd, *Rolling Thunder: A Personal Exploration into the Secret Healing Powers of an American Indian Medicine Man* (New York: Random House, 1974); Sun Bear, *The Medicine Wheel: Earth Astrology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980); *Walk in Balance: The Path to Healthy, Happy, Harmonious Living* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1989). See also James Clifton, *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers* (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989).

26. Editorial, *Many Smokes* 2:1 (1st Quarter) 1967: 3; 2:3 (3d Quarter) 1967: 3.

27. I make these observations after reading several issues of both *Many Smokes* and *Wildfire*. For specific examples listed, see *Wildfire's* inaugural publications, 1:1, 2 (Spring-Summer), and 1:3, 4 (Fall-Winter).

28. Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); *A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971); *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972); *Tales of Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974); *The Second Ring of Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977). To date, four other books follow, the most recent being *The Art of Dreaming* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993).

29. MacLaine, *Out on a Limb* (New York: Bantam, 1983); *Dancing in the Light* (New York:

Bantam, 1985). Artists on the tastefully packaged Windom Hill label included the pianists George Winston and Bill Quist, the guitarist Ackerman, and the bassist Michael Manring, among many others. See also Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, 1980).

30. Dirk Johnson, "Spiritual Seekers Borrow Indians' Ways," *New York Times*, December 27, 1993, A1. Also printed as David Johnston, "New Age Rites Seen as Robbery," *Boulder Daily Camera*, December 27, 1993, 5C.

31. Stephen Buhner, "Protecting the Right to Worship," *Boulder Daily Camera*, January 3, 1994, 2C. See also Ed McGaa, *Mother Earth Spirituality: Native American Paths to Healing Ourselves and Our World* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990); *Rainbow Tribe: Ordinary People Journeying on the Red Road* (San Francisco: Harper-San Francisco, 1992).

32. I do not mean to suggest that there are not teacher-student relationships in native religious traditions. It may be important, especially in discussing northern Plains traditions, to distinguish between healing and spirituality, the former relying more heavily on teaching. Sacred bundles and spiritual power have in fact been subject to transfer, although as often in an economic or kinship exchange as in a master-learner one. See, for example, Peter Nabokov, *Two Leggings: The Making of a Crow Warrior* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1967), 143–54. For Plains spiritual tradition, see James Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Elaine A. Jahner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); Lee Irwin, *The Dream Seekers: Native American Visionary Traditions of the Great Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994); Raymond J. DeMallie, "Lakota Belief and Ritual in the Nineteenth Century," *Sioux Indian Religion*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Douglas R. Parks (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 25–44; Joseph Epes Brown, ed., *The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953).

33. Buhner, "Protecting the Right to Worship."

34. See, for example, *Badoni v. Higginson* 638 F.2d 172 (1980); *United States v. Dion* 476 U.S. 734 (1986); *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association* 485 U.S. 439 (1988); *Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon, et al. v. Alfred L. Smith et al.* 494 U.S. 872 (1990). See John Wunder, "Retained by the People": *A History of American Indians and the Bill of Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 180–99.

35. Johnston, "New Age Rites."

36. Buhner, "Protecting the Right to Worship."

37. Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America," in *War and the Intellectuals: Essays, 1915–1919*, ed. Carl Resek (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), 107–23; Kallen, "Democracy versus the Melting Pot," *Nation* 100 (February 18–25, 1915): 190–94, 217–20. See also Gary B. Nash, "The Great Multicultural Debate," *Contention* 1 (Spring 1992): 1–28; and Nash, "The Hidden History of Mestizo America," *Journal of American History* 82 (December 1995): 941–64. See also David Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 11; Lawrence W. Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 105–20 and *passim*.

38. See, for example, Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

39. I make this summary after years of reading Boulder's New Age periodicals and talking with friends who have been involved in New Age activities. Particularly useful have

been *Men's Council Journal*, *Nexus*, *The Eagle's Cry: A Journal for Holistic Experiences, Wisdom, and Education*, and the nationally circulated magazines *Shaman's Drum* and *New Age Journal*.

40. Lynn Andrews, *Flight of the Seventh Moon* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 26. For others in the series, see, for example, *Medicine Woman* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981); *Jaguar Woman and the Wisdom of the Butterfly Tree* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985); *Star Woman* (New York: Warner, 1986); *Shakki: Woman of the Sacred Garden* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1992).

41. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* (New York: Ballantine, 1992); Robert Bly, *Iron John: A Book about Men* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1990); Sam Keen, *Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man* (New York: Bantam, 1991); Diane Stein, *Dreaming the Past, Dreaming the Future: A Herstory of the Earth* (Freedom, Calif.: Crossing Press, 1991); James Redfield, *The Celestine Prophecy: An Adventure* (New York: Warner, 1993); Michael Rossman, *New Age Blues: On the Politics of Consciousness* (New York: Dutton, 1979). For more analytical treatments, see Michael Schwalbe, *Unlocking the Iron Cage: The Men's Movement, Gender Politics, and American Culture* (New York: Oxford, 1996); Michael York, *The Emerging Network: A Sociology of the New Age and Neo-Pagan Movements* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995). For a critique, see Henry Gordon, *Channeling into the New Age: The "Teachings" of Shirley MacLaine and Other Such Gurus* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988). Numerous other authors, ranging from "Indian" mystery writers Tony Hillerman and Jean Hagar to high culture writers like M. T. Kelly and W. P. Kinsella, have assumed the literary voice of "the Indian." Others, such as Jamake Highwater and Forrest Carter, have taken Indian identity as their own.

42. For mascots, see Philip Deloria, "Mascots and Other Public Appropriations of Indians and Indian Culture by Whites," *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, ed. Frederick Hoxie (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1996), 359-61; Dennis Banks, Laurel R. Davis, Cynthia Syndnor-Slowikowski, and Lawrence A. Wenner, "Tribal Names and Mascots in Sports," *Journal of Sports and Social Issues* 17 (April 1993): 1-33. For Redskins, see, for example, Ward Churchill, "Crimes against Humanity," *Z Magazine* (March 1993): 43-47.

43. On play, see Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 8.

44. Christine Mather and Sharon Woods, *Santa Fe Style* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1986); Mary Emmerling and Carol Sama Sheehan, *American Country West: A Style and Source Book* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1985).

45. This is not to say that New Age followers have offered no political help to native people, or to suggest that they have completely failed to engage Indians. Rather, it is the nature of that engagement which is at issue. New Age participation in Plains Sun Dances, for example, has been so overwhelming and so lacking in etiquette that many dances have been closed to non-Indians.

46. *Indian Country Today* 13:3 (July 14, 1992): 1, 2, and subsequent editions throughout the months of July and August.

47. On cultural difference, see Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 34-35. On power, I have been influenced by Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978); *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977); *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

48. Jameson, *Postmodernism*, x-xxii, 3-6. See also Huyssen, *After the Great Divide*, viii-x, 178-221.

Conclusion. The Grateful Dead Indians

1. Society of Indian Dead, *Live and Let Live*, #9.

2. *Ibid.*

3. See Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 191-92; Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

4. Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 68-87.

5. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 31-39, 40-65.