

PLAYING HIPPIES AND INDIANS: ACTS OF CULTURAL COLONIZATION IN THE
THEATRE OF THE AMERICAN COUNTERCULTURE

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2014

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ABSTRACT

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In this dissertation, I examine the appropriation of Native American cultures and histories in the theatre of the American counterculture of the 1960s and seventies, using the Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*, the street theatricals and broadsides of the San Francisco Diggers, and James Rado and Gerome Ragni's *Hair: The American Tribal-Love Rock Musical* as my primary case studies. Defining themselves by points of difference from mainstream America and its traditional social and cultural values, counterculturalists often attempted to align themselves with Native Americans in order to express an imagined sense of shared otherness. Representations of Natives on countercultural stages, however, were frequently steeped in stereotype, and they often depicted Native cultures inaccurately, elided significant tribal differences, and relegated Native identity almost wholly to the past, a practice that was particularly problematic in light of concurrent Native rights movements that were actively engaged in bringing national attention to the contemporary issues and injustices Native Americans faced on a daily basis.

In my study, I analyze the impulses that might have led counterculturalists to appropriate Native culture during this period, highlighting some of the ways in which such appropriations played out in *Paradise Now* and *Hair*, as well as on the streets of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. I examine the countercultural tendency to use stereotyped Native characters as mascots for various—and sometimes competing—

causes, such as environmentalism, hallucinogenic drug use, communalism, pacifism, and violent activism, and I demonstrate how such mascotry appeared in the theatre of the period. I also interrogate the propagation of the troublesome “vanishing Indian” stereotype during the sixties and seventies, tracing its development into the popular myth of the hippie as reincarnated Native. Finally, I examine Hanay Geiogamah’s 1972 play *Body Indian* as an alternative model for more ethical and responsible Native representation, also proposing my own guidelines for non-Native artists engaging with Native subject matter in their creative work.

Dedicated to Dan and Anne Hahn,
to Sarah Mauldin and Daniel Hahn,
and to Quincy Thomas.
In memory of John and Helen Brooks,
and of Robert and Ruth Hahn.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many individuals who have supported me throughout my academic career, and I am grateful for the opportunity to thank them here.

First, I offer many thanks to the members of my committee—Scott Magelssen, Jonathan Chambers, Eileen Cherry-Chandler, and Sheri Wells-Jensen. Your guidance and insights have enriched my work, your comments and suggestions have been highly generative, and your enthusiasm for this project has bolstered and sustained my own. Thank you all for giving generously of your time and energy, and for thoughtfully engaging with my work at every step of the process. Jonathan, I am so grateful to you for stepping in as my advisor this year and helping me to transition seamlessly into the final stages of my graduate career. Scott, I will never be able to thank you enough for all that you have done as my advisor and mentor. You have been there at every stage of the process—from my earliest seeds of an idea to the final keystrokes—encouraging me, challenging me, and helping me to develop the skills and confidence I needed, not only to complete this project, but to become a better scholar and academic professional.

I have been blessed to study under many phenomenal teachers and advisors during my academic career, and I would especially like to thank Scott Magelssen, Jonathan Chambers, Lesa Lockford, Sara Chambers, Victor Holtcamp, Amy Lehman, Deno Trakas, Mark Ferguson, Kerry Ferguson, and Colleen Ballance. Your faith in my work encouraged me when I had none of my own. You've supported me at every turn, offering help and guidance despite the frenzied pace of your own hectic schedules. You've taught me how to ask better questions, and you've inspired me to look at the world in newer and more intuitive ways. You have each modeled for me different aspects

of the kind of teacher, scholar, mentor, and artist I aspire to become, and I hope to continually reflect and honor your influence in my professional work. Thank you all for showing me the way.

Over the past four years, I have had the great fortune of being part of a vibrant graduate community at BGSU, surrounded by the incredible love and support of colleagues who have become some of my dearest friends. In particular, I would like to thank Patrick and Alyssa Konesko, Angenette and Daniel Spalink, Slade Billew, Matthew Nicosia, and Heidi Nees Carver. When I first walked onto this campus, I had no idea that I would be welcomed by such an exceptional group of people, individuals with such caring hearts, brilliant minds, and generous spirits. You've led by example, and you've taught me so much about navigating everything from the classroom to the academic conference to the Midwest in winter. You have seen me through the darkest times, and you've helped me celebrate the best. I'm a better person because of the influence that each one of you has had on my life, and I am so grateful that I was able to share my time in Bowling Green with all of you.

Of all of the amazing people I've met here, however, Quincy Thomas has touched my life most profoundly. Quincy, your friendship and your faith in me have kept me going when I didn't think I had anything left to give. I will never be able to express just how thankful I am that we entered this program at the same time, and I can't imagine how I would have finished it without you. It is a truly unique talent to be able to make someone look back fondly on their years in graduate school, but that's exactly what you've done for me. Thank you for the laughter and the adventures, too many to mention here. Thank you for being there for me every single time the pressure became too much

to handle. Thank you for being a sounding board for my bright ideas and my not-so-bright ones, for engaging thoughtfully with my scholarship, and for supporting me in each and every one of my endeavors. I love you and am so grateful that you are a part of my life.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. Early on, my parents and grandparents taught me that education would be the key to my future success, and it is because of their guidance that I have attempted and achieved many of the things that I have, including pursuing a Ph.D. I am continually inspired by my parents' inexhaustible passions for teaching and for learning, as well as by the influence of my late grandparents, who gave selflessly of their time and energy to help those in need and those they loved. My siblings have also set incredible examples for me, constantly showing me what it means to work hard to reach my goals, without compromise. To my parents, Dan and Anne Hahn, and to my sister and brother, Sarah Mauldin and Daniel Hahn, I offer my heartfelt thanks. You have helped me along this path in so many ways. You've supported my career decisions, engaged critically with my work, sparked thoughtful and generative conversations, allowed me to vent my frustrations, renewed my faith in my own abilities, and much, much more. I love you all and am truly blessed to have the support of such an wonderful family. A million thanks for all you've done to help me reach this point.

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INTRODUCTION

Native American imagery was ubiquitous during the American counterculture movement of the 1960s and seventies. Hippie culture adopted and adapted Native influence on everything from styles of dress to methods of war protest. This surge of interest in traditional Native American subject matter and forms bled into the performing arts as well, appearing everywhere from politically-charged performances and publications by anarchist avant-garde theatre groups such as the Living Theatre and the Diggers, to mainstream productions such as *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*. From San Francisco to New York, and everywhere in between, Native imagery appeared more and more in non-Native performances, often adopted to serve specific social and political goals. Ironically, these goals had very little to do with the civil rights issues for which actual Native American communities were simultaneously fighting. For the sixties and seventies were not only a turbulent political period for Americans involved in war protests, the sexual revolution, movements for rights based on race, gender, and sexuality, and/or groups such as Students for a Democratic Society and the New Left. These decades also saw a dramatic increase in movements for Native American rights. Organizations such as the American Indian Movement took up the fight for land rights, legal protection, reparations for treaties violated by the U.S. government, cultural renewal, and the protection of religious freedoms, among other goals. To attain these goals, such organizations fought for increased visibility, making strides towards educating the American public at large about Native American history, identity, and culture, as well as about offenses committed against Native American tribes from the time of the European invasion to ongoing policy failures of the U.S. government. Unfortunately, even though many countercultural theatre artists professed a genuine respect for and interest in traditional Native American cultures, in practice, they often produced works that ran directly counter to the goals of Native rights movements, perpetuating reductive stereotypes,

making sweeping—and sometimes overtly false—generalizations, and mourning the “vanishing Indian” rather than acknowledging contemporary Native presence.

Throughout the sixties and seventies, non-Native theatre groups freely appropriated Native American imagery as a means of communicating various social and political messages. Tribal symbolism ran throughout the musical *Hair* and was prominently featured in its publicity materials—so much so that producer Michael Butler, who eventually facilitated the show’s move to Broadway in 1968, bought his first ticket to the show because he mistakenly believed that it was about Native Americans (Johnson 175). Meanwhile, the Diggers, an anarchist community of performers and activists based in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district, made frequent references to various perceived aspects of Native American cultures in the broadsides and flyers they distributed on the streets, even adopting the Hopi Running Man symbol as the cover of their final edition of collected works, the *Digger Papers*. The New York-based Living Theatre also incorporated Native themes into its work, most notably in its 1968 play *Paradise Now*, in which the performers demonstrated their eagerness to claim a deep spiritual bond with Native Americans based on an imagined sense of shared victimization at the hands of mainstream America and its cultural and political leaders. They proclaimed the hippie to be the reincarnation of the Native American, evolving towards a “Natural Man” paradigm that would incorporate the best of both modern Western thought and traditional Native culture.

In my dissertation, I examine the often-problematic nature of non-Native counterculturists’ representations of Native Americans during the sixties and seventies. I limit my study to a close examination of the Living Theatre’s *Paradise Now*, Rado and Ragni’s *Hair*, and the performative work of the San Francisco Diggers. By narrowing my focus in this way, I hope to be able to offer an in-depth exploration of three different types of counterculture

performance—the radical anti-war protest piece, the counterculture presented in musical form on Broadway, and performative social outreach. While I do not suggest that any of these groups crafted their Native characters or themes with any malicious intent, I analyze such performances as inadvertent acts of cultural colonization, even as they spoke out, on a superficial level, against the conquest and genocide of indigenous Americans during the years of westward expansion. I also consider the ways in which romanticized non-Native representations of Native figures intersected with concurrent Native rights movements during this volatile period, often inadvertently detracting from the goals and accomplishments of groups that were simultaneously working to secure civil rights for Native Americans. Two of the most detrimental representational practices used frequently in non-Native portrayals of Native Americans were stereotyping and the perpetuation of the “vanishing Indian” myth; in the late sixties, the latter evolved into a new myth that was equally damaging—that of the hippie as reincarnated Native. In this project, I examine the harmful potential of both of these practices in depth. I also offer a case study of Kiowa/Delaware playwright Hanay Geiogamah’s 1972 play *Body Indian* as a model for more ethical representation that does not traffic in reductive stereotypes or ignore the contemporary presence of Natives in favor of a romanticized historical ideal.

My research centers on several key questions. How, and for what purposes, did theatre artists of the counterculture attempt to appropriate Native identities? What impulses lay behind their enchantment with Native imagery? Nostalgia? Residual imperialist guilt? A yearning for a time perceived to be somehow simpler or purer? Or a desire to identify with another marginalized group in the hopes of claiming a shared victimhood?

How did the social and political landscape of America in the sixties and seventies contribute to these appropriations? What were/are the potential consequences of such

appropriations? Which stereotypes were reified and perpetuated by theatrical performances of Native Americans during the counterculture, and how and where do these stereotypes still exist today? How did Native performance groups answer such representations during this period?

How did non-Native performative appropriations intersect with concurrent Native rights movements? Did they propagate ideas that supported or detracted from the power of these movements, particularly as they tended to focus on mourning the “vanishing Indian”? What were the key differences between the methods and strategies of Native performing arts groups who were actively seeking to draw attention to Native American social issues through their drama and non-Native performance groups who were appropriating Native themes for their own purposes?

Finally, how may an examination of Native appropriations during the 1960s and seventies inform an understanding of contemporary appropriations and sites of cultural exchange?

Before continuing further, I would like to offer two brief notes on terminology. Of the several terms commonly used to name the vastly diverse tribes of people who inhabited much of the Western Hemisphere prior to European contact, none are entirely satisfactory. The names “American Indian,” “Amerindian,” and “Native American” all derive from European and Euro-American geographical conceptions that identify these tribes by their location on a continent whose name did not exist in their own lexicons prior to European invasion. Each of these names ultimately defines the indigenous through an imperialist point of view. For the sake of consistency, and for lack of more satisfying options, I have chosen to use the terms “Native American” and “indigenous American” in my study—while these terms do identify their subjects based on the concept of “America,” a non-Native construct, they do circumvent the troublesome history of fifteenth-century misidentification and the subsequent willing conflation of indigenous

Americans with the inhabitants of the Indies. I use other terms, such as “Indian” and “American Indian,” primarily in reference to source materials that employ these terms. For example, the use of the word “Indians” in the title of my study makes reference to popular countercultural conceits, to the children’s game of “Cowboys and Indians,” and to Dakota Sioux scholar Philip J. Deloria’s foundational study on “playing Indian.” I have also chosen to use the word “hippie” throughout my study, in addition to the term “counterculturalist,” in order to identify a broad spectrum of individuals who espoused the countercultural values I examine in my first chapter. The word “hippie” was not in common use until 1965, well into the decade that is the central focus of my study, when newspaper reporter Michael Fallon used it in the *San Francisco Examiner*. Many did not, at first, self-identify as hippies, instead using terms like “freaks” and “beatniks” that were also used to disparage them in the mainstream (Horn 1-2). A majority of the individuals I examine in my dissertation, however, had begun identifying as “hippies” by the late 1960s and have continued to do so in the decades since. The term is also the most frequently used moniker in most of the countercultural texts I examine. For the sake of clarity, then, this is the name I use primarily throughout my study.

As a non-Native writing about issues of Native American representation, I knowingly approach my topic from a position that some consider to be problematic, and I must necessarily speak from a position of both temporal and experiential remove from many of the issues I address. I believe, however, that my research has prepared me to enter into this conversation from the balanced dialogical stance that Dwight Conquergood discusses in his essay “Performing as a Moral Act,” a stance which “struggles to bring together different voices, world views, value systems, and beliefs so that they can have a conversation with one another,” while avoiding the extremes of selfishness, superficiality, cynicism, and sensationalism that he charts on his “Moral

Map of Performative Stances Towards the Other” (Conquergood 5-9). I have undertaken this project with an understanding of the potential problems inherent in my position, but I have made every attempt to complete it with careful and responsible scholarship, as well as with constant cognizance of my own cultural biases.

This project is an outgrowth of my broader interest in constructions and performative representations of American identity, often defined on the basis of a troubled national past and in relation to those considered to be “other.” I also come to this project from the position of a historian and a theatre scholar who has long been fascinated with the turmoil and dynamism of the counterculture movement of the 1960s. I am drawn to the counterculturalists by their art, their acts of protest, and their empowered assertions of a broad spectrum of human rights, and I am similarly attracted to the theatre practitioners of this period because of their passionate beliefs that theatre could both inspire and enact social change. I freely admit that I, too, may at times be guilty of romanticization in my imaginings of hippies and artists willing to risk imprisonment and violent retaliation for their beliefs. My research has granted me a more nuanced understanding of the social and political movements of this period, however, and it is my hope that this project will provide for my readers a new way of looking at this period of American history—one that does not wholly abandon a celebration of the artists of the period, but that tempers such celebration with an in-depth consideration of the acts of cultural colonization implicit in their works.

Though much scholarship exists both on the American counterculture and on its impact on theatre movements of 1960s and seventies, as well as on the Native American rights movements that were born in these decades, there is a surprising dearth of scholarly work linking these topics, despite the counterculture movement’s clear fascination with Native identity—

either real or imagined. Few existing scholarly studies examine non-Native representations of Native Americans during this period in light of the growing number of concurrent movements for Native American rights, and those that do tend to focus on singular case studies rather than examining the breadth of the trend across a number of different performative sites in the 1960s and seventies. Philip J. Deloria's book *Playing Indian* is an exception, and it is a source that has proven invaluable to me as I have completed this study, particularly the final chapter, entitled "Counterculture Indians and the New Age." Here Deloria discusses hippie culture's simultaneous fascination with Native American lore and its lack of understanding, or even of *will* to understand, actual Native American practices and issues. He also addresses the eagerness of non-Natives to identify with Natives during periods of social and political upheaval, a concept that has become a central premise of my first chapter. His scholarship on cultural appropriation has similarly influenced my second chapter, and his observations on stereotyping, my third. Sherry L. Smith's 2012 book *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* also examines the complex social and political relationships between Native Americans and hippies during the sixties and seventies. Her important study, however, focuses primarily on the positive results of hippie participation in the burgeoning movement for Native rights, while I have undertaken to expose some of the more troublesome intersections between hippie ideals and Native rights campaigns of the period. Moreover, unlike Deloria, Smith, and other scholars who examine the hippie counterculture, the Red Power movement, and related topics, I have focused primarily on examining theatrical representations of Native Americans during this period. I believe that my scholarship is significant, however, not only because it fills a gap in discourse. Stereotyped and romanticized images of Native American subjects are still prevalent in drama, film, and other forms of media today, and many of these were born out of this period of American history which

glorified and memorialized the historical Native figure without a real consideration of ongoing struggles in Native communities. So deeply entrenched were problematic images of Native Americans in the art and popular culture of the sixties and seventies, nostalgia for this period (either real or imagined) often goes hand-in-hand with a renewed interest in Native American themes. I believe that by calling attention to the representation of Native Americans on countercultural stages, I may highlight the ways in which contemporary media still makes attempts towards relegating Native identity to stereotyped images of the past.

In her essay “The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective,” Laguna Pueblo scholar Paula Gunn Allen argues that critiques based in non-Native Western thought do damage to traditional Native American literature and ceremonies because of fundamental differences in worldviews. Allen suggests that Western critique may cripple the potentials of Native American literature and performance, as scholars insist upon judging such works based on molds that do not fit Native forms. To a certain extent, I agree with Allen’s argument; much may be lost in translation when non-Native scholars attempt to define the unfamiliar in their own limited vocabularies, and the result may be reductive analyses that seem to weaken or cheapen Native customs, literature, and art. While my choice of subject matter demonstrates that I, as a non-Native scholar, do firmly believe that both Native and non-Native voices can and should be brought to bear in discussions of Native appropriations, I also understand the importance of calling attention to Native scholars who are often less well-known than are many European and Euro-American scholars. Thus I examine representations of Native Americans through critical lenses proposed by both Native and non-Native scholars, though my discussions of Native rights movements and Native drama will be guided primarily by concepts proposed by Native theorists.

In *Playing Indian*, Deloria asserts that “[w]henver white Americans have confronted crises of identity, some of them have inevitably turned to Indians” (156). In my first chapter, I present a historical overview of some of the “crises of identity” that characterized the 1960s and seventies and inspired a turn to the Native during these two decades. I also employ Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined community” to examine the human impulse to create communities and nations where none yet exist, a process that necessarily involves a great deal of introspection and self-examination; as I show in this chapter, struggles to delineate American identity have often inspired individuals and communities to define themselves in relation to the Native Other. Using Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle’s *Imagine Nation: The American Culture of the 1960s and ‘70s*, Alexander Bloom’s *Long Time Gone: Sixties America Then and Now*, and Klaus P. Fischer’s *America in Black, White, and Gray: The Stormy 1960s* as my primary source materials, I provide an overview of the development of the American counterculture, a movement that was born out of crisis and defined by difference. Next, I examine the rise of the student movement and the New Left, considering the personal recollections featured in Wini Breines’ essay “‘Of This Generation’: The New Left and the Student Movement” as well as the Students for a Democratic Society’s 1962 “Port Huron Statement.” I then focus on two movements that galvanized American youth in the sixties and seventies—the Civil Rights movement and the antiwar movement. Using Dominick Cavallo’s *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* as my guide, I consider the profound effects of the Civil Rights movement on subsequent social and political campaigns, and I also examine the sometimes less-than-altruistic reasons that white counterculturalists joined the fight; I believe the latter is revelatory of some of the impulses guiding hippie participation in the Red Power movement as well. I then examine the Vietnam War, with particular focus on the countercultural

disillusionment with the U.S. government that resulted from imperialist crimes abroad and purposeful deception at home. I then provide a brief history of the development of radical theatre in the 1960s, using Arthur Sainer's *The New Radical Theatre Notebook* and James M. Harding and Cindy Rosenthal's *Restaging the Sixties: Radical Theatres and Their Legacies* as my primary source materials. These studies examine several of the characteristics that were common to most radical theatres of the period, characteristics which are readily apparent in the work of the Living Theatre and the San Francisco Diggers, and which clearly influenced some of the artistic choices made in the off-Broadway and Broadway versions of *Hair* as well. Finally, I offer Deloria's concept of "vicarious victimization" and Alison Landsberg's "prosthetic memory" as lens through which to examine the countercultural appropriations of Native identity that I explore in greater depth in my second chapter.

My second chapter is informed by Dwight Conquergood's essay "Performing as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of the Ethnography of Performance." In this essay, Conquergood asserts that performers who fall into the ethnographic trap of the "Enthusiast's Infatuation" inevitably produce unethical performances: "Too facile identification with the other coupled with enthusiastic commitment produces naïve and glib performances marked by superficiality. . . . Eager performers get sucked into the quicksand belief, 'Aren't all people really just alike?' . . . This performative stance is unethical because it trivializes the other" (6). I believe that many counterculture performance artists in the 60s and 70s perpetrated such trivializations of the Native in their eagerness to identify with the Native American victims of colonization and Westward expansion. In this chapter, I examine how the "Enthusiast's Infatuation" influenced the creation of the Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*, the street theatre and various "street sheets" and broadsides of the San Francisco Diggers, and *Hair*. I also examine the histories and cultural

significance of the Living Theatre, the Diggers, and *Hair*; among my primary influences here are essays by Erika Munk and Alisa Solomon on the Living Theatre, Bradford D. Martin's *The Theatre is in the Street: Politics and Public Performance in Sixties America*, Tim Hodgdon's *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius*, and Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. I then use Coco Fusco's concept of "cultural transvestitism" as a tool for understanding the impulses that led countercultural theatre artists to attempt to "try on" Native identity before returning to a consideration of Conquergood's concept of "dialogical performance" as a model for performance ethnography that is more ethical and responsible than performances guided by the "Enthusiast's Infatuation." Here I also consider Ronald J. Pelias' work on empathy in autoethnographic performance, as outlined in his essay "Empathy and the Ethics of Performance."

My third chapter addresses the stereotypes that were propagated by non-Native theatre groups who attempted to represent perceived aspects of Native American life in their dramas, often reducing Native identity to a set of reductive and often misunderstood symbols (the peace pipe, the totem pole, etc.) and highly stereotypical personalities (the noble savage, the brutal warrior, the mystical shaman, etc.). Such groups often used Native Americans as mascots of sorts, for a variety of countercultural causes. I open my chapter with some of Deloria's observations on stereotyping from his book *Indians in Unexpected Places*, and I also cite Carol Spindel and Michael Taylor's work on Native sports mascots, which I find to be a useful metaphor for the Native mascotry of various countercultural goals. I then examine how and why Native identities were appropriated as mascots for causes such as spirituality, communalism, free love, and pacifism, offering examples of each from *Paradise Now*, *Hair*, and the work of the

Diggers. I close this chapter with Norman K. Denzin's reflections of the dangers of stereotyping, found in his book *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture*.

In my fourth chapter, I examine the nineteenth-century "vanishing Indian" stereotype and its development in the sixties into the myth of the reincarnated Native. Here I call upon Johannes Fabian's term "denial of coevalness" (that is, a refusal to acknowledge that two groups occupy the same temporal category) to describe the ways in which many non-Native plays of the counterculture relegated their Native American characters to the past. In *Time and the Other*, Fabian describes the "denial of coevalness" as a method by which the ethnographer may keep his subjects in subordinate positions by suggesting that their "primitive" practices make them somehow less than his contemporaries. By focusing the audience's attention on the genocide of Native Americans during the European conquest, plays like *Paradise Now* invite viewers to acknowledge and to mourn the brutal crimes of America's past. At the same time, however, they also present a hopeless picture that ignores contemporary Native American issues altogether, a particularly problematic move in light of concurrent Native rights movements' attempts to garner widespread attention for the pressing needs of contemporary Native communities. I examine some of these movements and their various goals and strategies in this chapter, before moving on to consider the ways in which countercultural performances worked against these goals. In *Paradise Now*, for example, the Living Theatre moved beyond the "vanishing Indian" stereotype to present the concept of the hippie as the reincarnated Native American, a problematic idea that appoints hippies the rightful heirs of the cultural and spiritual identities of historical Natives, thereby ignoring the contemporary presence of their actual descendants. The myth of the reincarnated Native did not originate with the Living Theatre, however, and in this chapter, I trace its entry into the popular lexicon of the sixties counterculture. To counterbalance the

problematic case studies I have presented throughout my dissertation, I close my final chapter with an examination of Hanay Geiogamah's *Body Indian* as a "survivance narrative" of the type that Gerald Vizenor describes in many of his critical studies. *Body Indian* appeals to an essential "Indian-ness" that binds Natives from many different backgrounds together under a wide umbrella of shared experience.¹ In my study, I frame this strategy through Gayatri Spivak's term "strategic essentialism," as well as Jace Weaver's concept of "communitism." I also draw on criticism by Julie Pearson-Little Thunder and Jaye T. Darby throughout this section. In contrast to plays like *Paradise Now*, *Body Indian* acknowledged contemporary Native issues and, without mourning for a romanticized past, issued a call for a better future.

I close my study by pointing to contemporary representations of Native American identity that are still very much steeped in problematic stereotyping and reductionism, insensitive and often very offensive cultural appropriations, and the relegation of Native identity to images of the past. Native tribes still face constant battles over the unauthorized use of tribal names, culturally insensitive Native mascots in sports, and problematic representations in theatre, film, and television. Furthermore, many non-Native artists remain fascinated with the concept of "playing Indian" without concern for responsible representation (especially when among the responsible choices is the choice to abstain altogether). These contemporary offenses demonstrate that, in certain ways, not much has changed since the sixties and seventies, and it is my hope that this study will be relevant not only to an examination of such practices in the past, but also to a critical evaluation of how Native identity is (mis-)represented and (mis-)appropriated today.

¹ Geiogamah's term, which appears in *Body Indian* and other works.

CHAPTER I: A CULTURE IN CRISIS

“Whenever white Americans have confronted crises of identity, some of them have inevitably turned to Indians.”

Philip J. Deloria

Playing Indian

While appropriations of Native American cultural heritage and identities by non-Native Americans were rampant in the 1960s and 1970s, such appropriations certainly did not begin or end during these two decades. As Native scholar Philip J. Deloria writes in his foundational 1998 book, *Playing Indian*, Americans have been trying on perceived elements of Native identity since the birth of the nation: “Playing Indian is a persistent tradition in American culture, stretching from the very instant of the national big bang into an ever-expanding present and future” (7). In fact, this process of “playing Indian” began well before the United States declared its independence from Britain. Deloria points to the Boston Tea Party as perhaps the most notable example of colonists mimicking Natives in order to serve their own political goals. Deloria writes of the “awkward tendency” of Americans to “define themselves by what they were not,” as those who participated in the Boston Tea Party attempted to do by mimicking Mohawk dress and language (3). Identification with the original inhabitants of the continent was a way of setting the colonists apart from their own ancestry, asserting their non-Britishness in the search for a new American identity. At the same time, real Natives remained as the *other* “Other,” and points of difference between the Native and the colonist again served to define the identity of the latter. As Deloria writes, “Savage Indians served Americans as oppositional

figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national Self. Coded as freedom, however, wild Indianness proved equally attractive, setting up a ‘have-the-cake-and-eat-it-too’ dialectic of simultaneous desire and repulsion” (3). While certain perceived aspects of Native identity were internalized to allow colonists to “oppose the English and be American,” a “savage” version of Native identity existed at the other end of the spectrum. Deloria writes that, “The exterior, savage Other assured Americans of their own civilized nature and, more important, justified the dispossession of real Indians” (36-37).

Deloria describes the “netherworld between Briton and Indian” as a liminal space where early Euro-Americans struggled to discover their own national identity, apart from both the imperial and the aboriginal (35). This search for a defining national identity relates to the concept of “imagined community,” which Benedict Anderson outlines in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. In his introduction, Anderson quotes scholar Ernest Gellner’s claim that: “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist” (Qtd. in Anderson 6). Anderson writes of national identities, boundaries, and distinctions as imagined concepts rather than as concrete facts. There may be a natural human tendency to associate with particular groups, to serve as part of particular communities, and to define ourselves according to particular national identities, but Anderson reminds his readers that there is no essential truth that defines an “America,” a “Mexico,” or a “Germany”; all nations are human constructs. Furthermore, there will always be differences between how individuals of a certain national identity choose to define what it means to be a part of that nation—for example, what it means to be an “American” or a “Mexican” in the first place. Anderson defines “nation” as “an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” He then expounds upon his definition:

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. . . . The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them. . . has finite, if plastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. . . . It is imagined as *sovereign* because. . . nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. . . . Finally, it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.

(6-7)

As the colonists attempted to set themselves apart from their European roots in order to establish a new “American” identity, they relied on their relative proximity to, and simultaneous difference from, the original inhabitants of the continent. They were more “Indian” than the British (where “Indian” connotes a connection to the physical land of America, a freedom from the tyranny that came from across the ocean, etc.), but they were more European than the Natives (where “European” connotes a connection to “civilized” society, Western education and culture, etc.) Thus both the Native American and the British “Others” provided points of difference upon which the colonists could begin to imagine their own national community.

In *Playing Indian*, Deloria tracks numerous acts of appropriation from the seventeenth century to the 1990s, and certainly many of these acts occurred at points that lay before, between, and beyond the birth of the United States in the late eighteenth century and the counterculture movement of the late twentieth. Deloria does suggest a connection, however, between these important periods in America’s national history: “Although these performances have changed over time, the practice of playing Indian has clustered around two paradigmatic

moments—the Revolution, which rested on the creation of a national identity, and modernity, which has used Indian play to encounter the authentic amidst the anxiety of urban industrial and postindustrial life” (7). He returns to this idea in his final chapter, entitled “Counterculture Indians and the New Age,” claiming that, “whenever white Americans have confronted crises of identity, some of them have inevitably turned to Indians” (156).

In this chapter, I offer a brief overview of the period and of some of these “crises of identity” that created a renewed impulse to “play Indian” during the 1960s and seventies. It is not my goal to provide an exhaustive analysis of the complex social, cultural, and political dynamics of this period, as such an endeavor is neither possible in a work of this length nor vital to my project. Instead, I narrow my focus to a set of events and social movements that I argue most heavily contributed to the national “identity crisis” that began in the 1960s, which in turn inspired the widespread trend towards Native appropriations during this period. I then examine how radical theatres of the sixties and seventies responded to the social and political upheavals of the day in revolutionary dramatic forms. Finally, I introduce Deloria’s term “vicarious victimization” as a theoretical lens through which to analyze the connection between cultural identity crisis and Native appropriation.

Defining the Counterculture

In the introduction to their book *Imagine Nation: The American Counterculture of the 1960s and ‘70s*, Peter Braunstein and Michael William Doyle provide a useful analysis of the term “counterculture.” They trace its path of entry into the cultural lexicon of 1960s America, and they problematize its widespread use as an umbrella term that covers multiple, and sometimes competing, perceptions of the term: “. . . there were as many definitions of the term

‘counterculture,’” they write, “as there were utopian fantasies during the actual counterculture” (Braunstein and Doyle 6). According to Braunstein and Doyle, the term originated with Talcott Parson in a 1951 book entitled *The Social System*. Its widespread use, however, originated from J. Milton Yinger’s use of the term “contraculture” in his 1960 essay “Contraculture and Subculture,” in which he explored the differences between the two terms. Yinger defined contraculture as “a full-fledged oppositional movement with a distinctively separate set of norms and values that are produced dialectically out of a sharply delineated conflict with the dominant society.” A contraculture then attempts to reform and ultimately take the place of that dominant society, at which point, the cycle might begin anew as other contracultures form in opposition to it (6-7). In 1968, Theodore Roszak popularized the term “counterculture” as a specific designation for the sixties social phenomenon: “When Roszak revived the original term in his best-selling volume *The Making of a Counter Culture* near the end of the 1960s, it entered the public lexicon as an exclusive signifier for the Sixties version of cultural radicalism, *the* paradigmatic Counterculture” (7). The problem, for Braunstein and Doyle, lies in the lack of specificity with which the term is used. They claim that, soon after Roszak published his book in 1968, the term “was well on its way to becoming a term referring to all 1960s-era political, social, or cultural dissent, encompassing any action from smoking pot at a rock concert to offing a cop” (5). Furthermore, both “counterculture” and its counterpart term, “hippie,” have come to be used pejoratively just as frequently as they are used to signal a romanticized vision of sixties-era peaceful dissent. Braunstein and Doyle cite Ronald Reagan’s 1967 statement that a hippie “dresses like Tarzan, has hair like Jane, and smells like Cheetah,” then fast-forward to Newt Gingrich’s 1995 claim that “counterculture belief [...] had contributed to a thirty-year pattern of social and moral decay” (6).²

² Gingrich also claimed that Bill and Hillary Clinton were “counterculture McGovernicks,” and he waxed hyperbolic

So how do historians define the counterculture? Many have weighed in with their own visions of the movement, and though each vision varies, most emphasize a spirit of dissent and the intention to disrupt the status quo by giving voice to oppositional views. For Braunstein and Doyle, the taxonomic difficulty lies in the fact that the term describes “people who defined themselves first by what they were not, and then, only after having cleared that essential ground of identity, began to conceive anew what they were” (10). This idea bears a striking resemblance to Deloria’s claim about the tendency to define the American “self” by points of difference from outsiders. The Boston Tea Partiers sought to appropriate Mohawk identities in order to define themselves by highlighting their points of difference from their British forebears, and this desire to define self based on not-self was also at least partly responsible for the renewed interest in Natives during the 1960s and seventies. Certainly, the counterculturalists had much to position themselves against during this period, and, as I show in my second and third chapters, they often perceived that real and/or imagined Native values fell closely in line with their own rejection of dominant, mainstream American culture and politics. Braunstein and Doyle imagine the 1960s counterculturalists as the natural descendants of the 1950s Beats, inheriting such values as: “their vigorous denunciation of cold war militarism, anticommunist demagoguery, racial segregation, social regimentation, and rampant, near-orgiastic consumerism” (8). In his introduction to *Long Time Gone: Sixties America Then and Now*, Alexander Bloom offers a similar analysis. He writes of the myriad popular conceptions of this period of history, claiming, “We have a divided—perhaps schizophrenic—legacy from this era. . . . But what is most striking is the way these visions of the 1960s can contradict one another and still coexist in the popular imagination” (Bloom 4). Like Braunstein and Doyle, Bloom focuses his own vision of the counterculture on

in describing the counterculture’s devastating effects on American society: “Sixties values cripple human beings, weaken cities, make it difficult for us to, in fact, survive as a country.” He proclaimed that these values were “to blame for most of the current major diseases which have struck this society.” (Qtd. in Bloom *Long Time Gone* 3).

acts of dissent, particularly those against governmental restrictions and oppressive social constructions. He describes a march led by young adults and fueled by concurrent movements for civil rights, opposition to the Vietnam War, and loss of faith in the United States government, and he calls for a greater contemporary appreciation for the ways in which the social, political, and cultural movements of the period were inextricably intertwined (8). Meanwhile, historian Klaus P. Fischer suggests a theoretical connection between sixties counterculturalists and antinomian societies in his book *America in White, Black, and Gray: The Stormy 1960s*, borrowing an idea from Nathan Adler's 1973 book *Underground Stream: New Life and the Antinomian Personality*. Fischer writes that:

[Antinomian or gnostic] movements usually develop in times of rapid social change or in response to wars, plagues, or famines. . . . Separating themselves from the social mainstream, antinomian groups renounce family, marriage, or occupations and form alternative, communal lifestyles that often involve sexual libertinism and radical changes in dress and manners. Sensing the coming of a new world, antinomian groups systematically reject the prized things of this world, through either passive resistance or military aggression. The goal is to provoke the established powers, to repudiate all values they cherish. If antinomian groups have a political style, it is anarchistic in the sense that it involves a total rejection of the values of contemporary society, a hatred of authority, and a belief in revolutionary change. (17-18)

While Fischer acknowledges the risk of “overextending historical analogies,” he argues that many of the traits of the antinomian societies he describes were also characteristic of those engaged in the “recurring romantic protest movement” of the 1960s (18, 17). Many of those who

were involved in the counterculture movement of the 1960s sought to distance themselves from the dictates of conventional American social mores, choosing free love over marriage, communal living over single-family mortgages, free-flowing clothing over restrictive business suits, etc. Many attempted to reform, rather than to completely reject, mainstream social values, particularly those students who led the charge towards creating more open and participatory conversations about politics, education, and individual and civil rights. A distrust of authority was inherent in such student-led movements, however, as was the “belief in revolutionary change” that Fischer describes.

The Student Movement and the New Left

Like other historians of the period, Fischer emphasizes the important roles that young Americans in particular played in this rebellion against mainstream, conservative values and ideals, and he claims that the participation of these young people set the protest movements of the sixties apart from earlier movements. He writes, “The difference between previous protest movements and those of the 1960s was not necessarily the scope of the protests nor their intensity but the broad involvement of so many young people and the threat the protests posed to the possibility of maintaining any common culture at all in the United States” (18). In her essay “‘Of This Generation’: The New Left and the Student Movement,” sociologist and historian Wini Breines describes her own experiences as part of the New Left, and, like Fischer, she emphasizes the importance of young Americans’ participation in this movement. Breines’ essay demonstrates the surprising ways in which the conservative 1950s actually paved the way for numerous student-led revolts against the status quo. Young Americans began enrolling in colleges and universities in unprecedented numbers in the 1950s, and by 1965, these numbers

had more than doubled.³ While many college students were subject to strict and infantilizing rules in the 1950s and were encouraged by conservative administrators to be complacently apolitical, a new student-led movement soon arose that would give voice to young Americans who were not content with the “comfortable but conformist” world which they had inherited from their parents (25). In 1962, the members of the Students for a Democratic Society at the University of Michigan composed their manifesto, The Port Huron Statement, which articulated their discontent with the university system:

Our professors and administrators sacrifice controversy to public relations; their curriculums change more slowly than the living events of the world; their skills and silence are purchased by investors in the arms race; passion is called unscholastic. The questions we might want raised—what is really important? can we live in a different and better way? if we wanted to change society, how would we do it?—are not thought to be questions of a “fruitful, empirical nature,” and thus are tossed aside. (SDS Port Huron Statement, Bloom and Breines 53)

In her essay, Breines explains that, from the Depression era until the Second World War, the “old Left,” comprised largely of members of the American Communist Party, had thrived in the political arena. After WWII, however, “discredited by vituperative anticommunism and its own internal weaknesses, the old Left was virtually powerless.” In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a student-led New Left was to emerge, focusing less on the politics of the old Left: “Without championing the Soviet Union,” Breines writes, describing the shift, “they criticized the culture, economy, and politics of the United States” (25). In his essay “‘The Revolution Is About Our Lives’: The New Left’s Counterculture,” Doug Rossinow describes the New Leftists as young

³ Breines specifies that, “there were two million college students in 1950, three million in 1960, five million by 1965 (the first baby boomers were college age in 1964), seven million by 1968, and, by 1973, ten million” (24).

Americans who “were entirely alienated from the Soviet Union yet still opposed to the cold war,” and as “red-diaper babies” separating themselves from their parents’ politics in order to escape the “accusations of un-American sympathies” that were flung at members of the American Communist Party in the wake of the Second World War (105). Favoring socialism over capitalism and communism, the New Left argued for the basic rights of all individuals to enjoy financial security, proper healthcare, and education. Inspired in large part by the developing Civil Rights movement, members of the New Left were “passionately engaged in politics and in developing both a strategic and theoretical understanding of capitalism and socialism, of racism and imperialism” (Breines 26). Klaus Fischer writes that New Leftists considered themselves to be “democratic Socialists,” committed to the idea that “all power ultimately originated from and should flow back to the people” and that “ordinary people . . . should determine their own destiny rather than have their lives shaped behind their backs by an exploitative capitalist system and its political lackeys in government” (258). Fischer describes the New Left’s ideology as one born primarily out of socialist and anarchist thought, in opposition to an exploitative system that was soon to fold under the weight of its flaws: “Capitalism, the students believed, was so inherently flawed that it would probably collapse in their lifetime; their task was to prepare the way for it” (258). Observing the great economic disparities, born of a capitalist society, student members of the New Left hoped, and expected, to see the rise of a more just system that would close the gap between the very rich and the very poor, and they wanted to be the ones who made it happen. Out of the New Left movement, in 1960, the aforementioned Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) emerged at the University of Michigan, destined to become the “most important New Left student organization in the 1960s”

(Breines 26). Within a few years, many more SDS chapters would spring up at colleges and universities across the country.

The SDS's Port Huron Statement functioned as a manifesto that renounced the naïve complacency of privileged white American youth and advocated an egalitarian society that would correct such social ills as the existence of great poverty alongside great wealth, racism in a nation where men are purportedly created equal, and meaningless labor in an age of technological advancement. "Some would have us believe that Americans feel contentment amidst prosperity," the Statement asserts, "but might it not better be called a glaze above deeply felt anxieties about their role in the new world?" (SDS Port Huron Statement, Bloom and Breines 52). The SDS argued for a "participatory democracy" in which politics could become an "art of collectively creating an acceptable pattern of social relations," for meaningful employment motivated by neither a thirst for wealth nor a fear of poverty, and for non-violent conflict resolution on local, national, and international levels (55-56). Most emphatically, however, they argued for the transformation of the university system itself, envisioning the university as a place where genuine intellectual engagement is valued, where young people's voices are heard, where liberal and socialist worldviews are valued, and where students are empowered to work towards changing society for the better. As a means of combatting apathy amongst the nation's youth, the Statement encouraged members of the New Left to embrace controversy: "A new left must start controversy across the land, if national policies and national apathy are to be reversed. The ideal university is a community of controversy, within itself and in its effects on communities beyond" (60). In the early 1960s, the Students for a Democratic Society and others organizations like it set the tone for a movement that would welcome certain "crises of identity" as necessary steps towards the correction of the social and political issues that plagued American society (Deloria

156). Through a process of questioning, reforming, and repositioning their own values and those of their elders, the members of the New Left aspired to drastically alter the imperfect world they knew, despite the constant doubt and mockery with which their idealism was met. These identity crises often also invited the turn towards the Native that Deloria describes in *Playing Indian*.

During the fall of 1964, the free speech movement at the University of California at Berkeley brought national attention to university students' struggles to make their voices heard in the political arena. Berkeley officials prohibited students from campaigning or fundraising for political organizations on the university's campus, and students were outraged when they were prevented from raising money for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a student-led initiative that fought for civil rights by organizing radical protest actions such as picket lines and sit-ins. Berkeley students continued to speak out for organizations such as the SNCC, and the university responded with arrests and suspensions, sparking outrage amongst even those students who had not previously been involved in political campaigning on campus. Breines describes the resultant protests:

During one [demonstration], students surrounded a police car that held an arrested activist and enthusiastically discussed politics, philosophy, and strategy for thirty-two hours. At another, they occupied the main administration building, Sproul Hall, until the police were called to eject them. Almost eight hundred students risked their academic careers by getting arrested. It was the largest mass arrest in California history. (31)

Ultimately, the students involved in the free speech movement at Berkeley were successful in expanding and protecting their rights to advocate publicly for political causes on campus. Through nonviolent protest, and with the support of the Faculty Senate, they finally persuaded

the university's regents to overturn the administration's ban on student-led political campaigning. Breines recalls that these events made a great impression on her as a student in Madison, Wisconsin, and many students across the nation were similarly impacted. She writes:

Themes of participatory democracy, opposition to authoritarian and hierarchical organization, student alienation, student identification with the powerless and those deprived of their rights, disapproval of bureaucracy, and the role of the university as an institution of learning removed from corporate and government interests—all these appeared regularly in speeches and writing from this period and struck responsive chords in students on campuses everywhere. (34)

The successes of protest events like the free speech movement at Berkeley galvanized thousands of young people involved in similar struggles on campuses across the country, and students from all parts of the US began to form their own “imagined community” of sorts. Though most of these students would never meet each other, they began to imagine themselves sharing the type of “deep, horizontal comradeship” that is characteristic of individuals united by common life experiences, goals, and enemies, dictated by the shared geographical space of the encompassing “imagined community,” the nation itself (Anderson 6-7).

The lines of demarcation between the New Left, the student movement, and the hippie counterculture are not neatly drawn, and there was significant overlap between all three entities. In her essay, Breines acknowledges the difficulty of distinguishing between the New Left and the student movement, and she suggests a model that takes into consideration the varied objectives of both movements. She describes the New Left as a group of individuals who, starting in the late 1950s, “self-consciously saw themselves developing a Left critique of American society,” while the student movement had expanded well past its roots in the New Left by the late 1960s,

focusing on a number of different issues. Students who were a part of this movement did not limit their activism specifically to Leftist goals, and many did not identify themselves as New Leftists at all. Breines writes that most who joined the student movement in the mid- to late 1960s “were not generally engaged in thinking about socialism or revolution, community organizing, exposing corporate liberalism, or consciously fighting against capitalist institutions” (33). She also marks generational discrepancies between those who were students in the early part of the 1960s and those who joined the student movement later in the decade. As the movement spread, both geographically and into lower economic sectors, its adherents became more diverse. As a result, so did the causes it championed. Breines writes, “The younger activists were usually galvanized by Vietnam, the Black Power movement, the counterculture, repressive high school or campus regulations, or an interest in drugs, sex, and rock ‘n’ roll” (33). American foreign policy had a strong effect on the outlook of these younger members of the student movement, who “were even less interested in and more suspicious of organized and institutionalized politics because they had come of age as the government was being discredited by its brutal policies at home and in Vietnam and by the social movements against it” (33).

Meanwhile, in his essay, “‘The Revolution Is About Our Lives’: The New Left’s Counterculture,” Doug Rossinow is less concerned with distinguishing between the New Left and the student movement, focusing instead on drawing a distinction between the hippie counterculture and a more “politically radical counterculture” espoused by both the New Left and the student movement. “In the second half of the 1960s,” he writes, “New Left radicals came to believe that cultural activism was their most certain path to creating significant political change in the United States” (101). Determined to foster political change through activism and eager to create cultural models to which young radicals could aspire, the idealistic New Leftists

“were critical of the hippie counterculture as a force for political change, so they sought to create their own, politically radical counterculture” (102). Breines’ and Rossinow’s essays highlight the inherent difficulty in drawing neat lines around movements that were so heavily intertwined. Ultimately, no one issue belonged solely to any one of these movements. Though Rossinow sets the New Left’s counterculture apart from the hippie counterculture, for example, there were certainly members of the latter who were as vehemently opposed to the Vietnam War as members of the New Left and the student movement, even if they themselves did not identify as members of either of these groups. Similarly, though Breines draws a generational distinction between the New Left of the early 1960s and the student movement of the later part of the decade, there was considerable overlap between both movements’ goals, ideals, and attitudes towards such issues as U.S. imperialism and capitalism. Both scholars make clear, however, the fact that students played a critical role in the development of the larger 1960s counterculture, their interests spanning both the political arena and the social sphere as they spoke out against corrupt government practices and embraced a widespread rejection of social conformity and conventional social mores. The students and activists involved in the American counterculture also faced very real threats at the hands of government and law enforcement officials, particularly as they spoke out in support of civil rights movements for African Americans and in opposition to the Vietnam War. The impact that both the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War bore on the counterculture movements of the 1960s and seventies cannot be understated, and the protest events that accompanied both revealed a nation in deep conflict with itself, confronting crises of identity on a number of different fronts.

The Civil Rights Movement

Many young white Americans, often students and counterculturalists, were actively involved in movements to establish and defend the civil rights of African Americans. As was also true in the Red Power movement, which I discuss in my fourth chapter, their involvement in these movements was a complex issue. While such well-intentioned activists often helped to produce genuinely positive results, their actions and motivations often carried problematic overtones as well. In his book *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History*, Dominick Cavallo explores some of the stated motives of young white Americans who were quick to join in on sit-ins, freedom rides, and other protest events dedicated to the fight for civil rights. Individual motivations were, naturally, extremely varied and complex. It is unlikely that many of the young, white, and largely middle-to-upper class individuals who participated alongside African Americans in their battles for equal rights during this period were motivated by pure altruism on the one hand or by complete self-interest on the other. As Cavallo's study illustrates, it is not difficult to understand the factors that draw many of the nation's dissatisfied youth into this fight, nor is it hard to imagine how the criminal inequalities suffered by African Americans during the mid-twentieth century sparked widespread outrage amongst the nation's youth, both white and black, contributing to a growing desire to reform American society at its core. Before analyzing the various motivations that brought young Americans into this movement, however, it may be of use to provide a brief history—in necessarily broad strokes—of the Civil Rights movement itself.

After Martin Luther King, Jr., began his fight for civil rights in the 1950s, numerous groups and organizations took up the charge, some using the nonviolent means that King espoused, and some taking more forceful approaches. “Sit-in” movements for civil rights began

in February of 1960, with four African American students who engaged in peaceful protest by refusing to leave a segregated restaurant that refused them service in Greensboro, North Carolina. The movement spread, inspiring more peaceful sit-in events in segregated public areas throughout the South and drawing widespread public attention to the unjust practices of segregation that still plagued the nation. The following year, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) initiated their “Freedom Rides.” Interracial groups of bus riders engaging in peaceful protest faced attacks that ranged from incendiary verbal attacks to firebombs, proving that the Supreme Court’s *Boynton v. Virginia* ruling against segregation on public transportation vehicles was not being effectively enforced, particularly in the Deep South, where the violence was most pronounced. Registration drives for African American voters also began in the early 1960s, and again, participants were routinely targeted by segregationists. Despite the stated support of the Kennedy administration, the federal government rarely intervened on behalf of organizations such as CORE, King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In 1963, King wrote his famous “Letter From a Birmingham Jail” while imprisoned for leading a peaceful demonstration in defiance of segregationist sheriff “Bull” Connor’s injunction against such actions. King urged Americans everywhere to take up the fight for civil liberty: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. . . . Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial ‘outside agitator’ idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere in this country” (Qtd. in Fischer 114). Violence broke out on a massive scale as racial tensions rose in Birmingham, and Kennedy ultimately deployed three thousand army troops in response to bombings and armed conflicts there. In the fall of 1963, the tragic bombing of a Birmingham church took the lives of four young African American girls, less than a month after King

delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech during the March on Washington, to a crowd of some 250,000 Americans engaged in peaceful protest for civil rights. Frustrated with the slow progress of the movement and with the indomitable ignorance of the violently racist segregationists who still held power in much of the South, many Americans involved in the Civil Rights movement began to abandon the nonviolent Gandhian teachings of King in favor of more radical approaches, calling for separatism, reparations, and, in some cases, violent action. Many organizations that had fought for civil rights, such as CORE and the SNCC, ultimately divided and splintered in the 1970s, with only the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League continuing their operations from the 1960s into the present day. Despite the tragic human cost of segregationist backlash against the Civil Rights movement, as well as the disbanding of several organizations that differed over methods of protest and reform, the movement brought revolutionary change to America by bringing public attention to heinous acts of racial discrimination, uniting Americans from across the country under a shared goal, and securing legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that ultimately would protect African Americans against a number of discriminatory practices, at the voting booth, in the job market, and beyond. Klaus Fischer also remarks on the impact this movement had on other movements of the 1960s:

The black civil rights movement was like a rolling stone that set in motion other national protests: antiwar demonstrations, student protests, the feminist movement, hippie power, gay power, brown power, red power, among others. It furnished the rhetorical slogans and the tactics of protest: sit-downs, marches, demonstrations, occupation of land and buildings, boycotts, and so forth. (136)

The Civil Rights movement not only inspired similar protest movements later in the 1960s and seventies, but also provided a model for such movements to emulate. As I show in my fourth chapter, the Red Power movement drew both inspiration and practical instruction from this important predecessor.

In their 1962 Port Huron Statement, the SDS wrote of the successes of students' participation in some of the most significant social movements of their time, including movements for racial equality:

In the last few years, thousands of American students demonstrated that they at least felt the urgency of the times. They moved actively and directly against racial injustices, the threat of war, violations of individual rights of conscience. . . . They succeeded, too, in gaining some concessions from the people and institutions they opposed, especially in the fight against racial bigotry. (SDS Port Huron Statement, Bloom and Breines 56)

Students at colleges and universities across the country heeded the call to take a stand against the social and political injustices they witnessed during the 1960s, and during the Civil Rights movement, students from different racial, geographical, and economic backgrounds frequently participated together in protests, demonstrations, and sit-ins, often facing threats of violence or imprisonment. Dominick Cavallo examines some of the motivations that led white students in particular to take part in these protest actions. Cavallo acknowledges that, first and foremost, these students' actions were "fueled by moral outrage over racism and by the desire to create a just society" (72). He references the recollections of former SDS president Paul Potter, who was beaten in Mississippi in 1961 for taking part in the movement: "The Civil Rights movement . . . ignited in thousands of young whites . . . their 'first sense of hypocrisy and injustice' in

American life” (72). Young white Americans joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, an organization founded by African American students in 1960, where white activists were welcome until their expulsion by chairman Stokely Carmichael in 1966 (Fischer 129). In 1963, the SDS also set up its own initiative, the Economic and Research Action Project (ERAP), designed to be an “interracial movement of the poor” in which white members would live and work with impoverished residents of major cities, fighting racism by addressing the economic hardships that were common across racial lines and working to empower the urban poor. ERAP projects, however, soon became a point of contention amongst members of the SDS, as the group debated on whether it was more effective to work with the impoverished where they lived or to stay on campus to take part in student movements there. Breines writes that, “[ERAP detractors in the SDS] suggested that leaving the campus to live among the poor was based on guilt and a misguided notion of who was going to spearhead social change in America” (Breines 29). Ultimately, ERAP enjoyed small successes but fell short of its goal of uniting members of urban neighborhoods in the fight against racism and capitalism.

Though most white students and counterculturalists likely were attracted to the Civil Rights movement out of a genuine desire to work for racial equality in America, there were other motivating factors as well—primarily, a desire for adventure, a thirst to take part in dangerous and sometimes illegal activities, and a yearning to feel “alive” by moving beyond the confines of a stable, middle-class existence. Cavallo cites activist David Harris’ stated goal of joining the movement to fight for a “colorblind society,” but also to “escape the boredom of routine and the irrelevance of much of his college studies . . . to quench his thirst for ‘adventure,’ to put himself on the line and be ‘tested’” in a “‘hell-bent, wild-west’ sort of ‘manhood.’” Cavallo also quotes Mario Savio, who, like Harris, went to Mississippi to join the fight for civil rights:

I thought about it and my own involvement when I went to Mississippi where I could be killed. My reasons were selfish. I wasn't really alive. My life, my middle class life, had no place in society, nor it in me. It was not really a matter of fighting for constitutional rights. I needed some way to pinch myself, to assure myself that I was alive. (Qtd. in Cavallo 75)

Referencing the statements of several other activists who went south to participate in protest events and voter registration during the early to mid-60s, Cavallo observes that many of the white students involved in the Civil Rights movement experienced a similar desire to “pinch” themselves with this experience: “A sense of exuberance in being challenged, experiencing danger and diving into life on one’s own terms pervaded accounts of going south in the early sixties” (74). Breines’ essay “The New Left and the Student Movement” is also revelatory of both the good intentions and the self-interested motives that prompted white youth to get involved in this movement. “Particularly moved by discrimination against African Americans,” she writes, “early activists were deeply concerned about values of truth and justice and about meaning in their own lives. They began to reject materialism and conformity and sought ways to live honestly, equally, and ethically in relation to others.” A few sentences later, Breines concedes that, “Despite their material comfort, they felt relatively powerless and spoke often of wanting their lives to be more ‘real’ and authentic” (27). Though Breines presents a largely unproblematic view of such motivations, her statement reveals an observation that aligns closely with Cavallo’s more nuanced analysis—that many white American youth joined the campaign for civil rights not only to pursue equal rights for all citizens, but also to search for their own personal meaning, to fill the gaps left open in their own relatively comfortable lives. Such motivations were not altogether dissimilar from those that led many members of the larger

counterculture movement to “play Indian” in potentially damaging ways, even as some of them worked alongside Native Americans in the fight for Native rights. It is fitting, then, that Cavallo speaks of westward expansion as a metaphor used to describe the feelings that drove some American youth to such causes: “Disaffected young people frequently articulated their alienation through words and ideas that conjured an individualism and a sense of adventure associated with the cowboys and Native Americans of the Old West. They spoke of open spaces and open roads in a way that recalled an older, less settle, more challenging, and, most of all, more mobile America” (78).

An examination of the motivations that led American youth to join the Civil Rights movement, the Red Power movement, and others naturally prompts the question, “How much does it matter?” After all, an individual’s motivations for any such commitments are almost always myriad and complex, and a certain level of self-interest does not necessarily preclude a genuine desire to create positive change as well, nor does it efface his or her accomplishments in the pursuit of a greater good. When even well-intentioned self-interest narrows the individual’s, or the collective’s, ability to accurately perceive what is needed and helpful, however, conflict often arises. In their introduction to *Imagine Nation*, Braunstein and Doyle provide a useful example of this issue as they discuss the disconnect between white counterculturalists and the urban poor they often attempted to emulate and/or assist. “Counterculture luminaries” Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, for example, often engaged in showy displays of protest by committing such acts as publicly burning paper money. Braunstein and Doyle point out that, “only white Americans who unthinkingly took material comfort and security for granted would engage in such symbolic actions.” Such protests against capitalism and attempted acts of solidarity with the poor often came across as little more than insults:

The hippies' adoption of virtual poverty as part of their outsider, Christ charade was often regarded as cruel mockery by the black, Hispanic, and immigrant residents of [San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury and New York City's East Village], who dreamed of attaining entry into the very material world the hippie children had casually—and provisionally—repudiated. As a result, tempers flared in the various hippie 'fantasy ghettos' as voluntary poverty met its hereditary other. (12)

In a 1967 issue of *The Village Voice*, Richard Goldstein summed up the issue succinctly by quoting an African American resident of the East Village: "The hippies really bug us, because we know they can come down here and play their games for a while and then escape. And we can't, man" (Qtd. in Braunstein and Doyle 12). As I discuss in subsequent chapters, comparable "games" played by counterculture artists who mimicked or appropriated Native identity had a similar capacity to irk, as well as a potential to inflict actual damage to Native rights causes of the 1960s and seventies.

The Vietnam War

The Civil Rights movement's impact on the development of an American counterculture in the 1960s was powerful, and its level of influence can perhaps be matched only by that of the Vietnam War. As Breines explains, by the mid-1960s, the war had become "the central issue of the decade," and it had profound effects on the ways in which American youth perceived their own nation, both politically and socially: "The war provided a way for students to think critically about American foreign policy, racism, and the role of the military on campuses and in society—and about broader issues of power and democracy" (Breines 35). As I show in my second chapter, opposition to the war also fueled counterculture artists' appropriations of Native

identity, as they used the conquest of Native tribes to protest the American imperialism that they saw recurring in Southeast Asia.

In their co-authored essay “Vietnam War Mythology and the Rise of Public Cynicism,” Christian Appy and Alexander Bloom examine the ways in which this divisive war turned the nation’s “post-World War II sense of idealism” into disillusionment, as hundreds of thousands of Americans lost faith in their own government’s foreign policies, codes of ethics, and credibility (71). Policy makers were entrenched in a “Cold War orthodoxy” that envisioned communism as a perpetual threat to America’s international power and influence and a vehicle by which the Soviet Union and China would ultimately “seek world domination.” This orthodoxy was, according to Appy and Bloom, “based on a set of powerful, though misguided, assumptions,” grounded in a core belief that the growth of communism anywhere on the globe would ultimately prove detrimental to the U.S. and other democratically-governed nations (50). Appy and Bloom also speak of an “imperial arrogance” among policy makers that precluded any serious consideration of the idea that the U.S. might not win in Vietnam and prevented any real attempts to understand Vietnamese history, culture, foreign relations, etc. This overconfidence trickled into the American consciousness from the top down; Appy and Bloom quote both Presidents Johnson’s and Nixon’s naïve statements of American supremacy. Johnson declared Vietnam to be a “raggedy-ass, little fourth rate country,” while his successor believed that all that was necessary to win the war was threatening nuclear warfare, “and Ho Chi Minh himself will be in Paris in two days begging for peace” (Qtd. in Appy and Bloom 51). This “imperial arrogance” persisted despite numerous signs throughout the war that the U.S. would not be successful in its campaign to root out communism in Vietnam, and it contributed to a blatantly racist attitude amongst many policy makers and military leaders who, as Appy and Bloom claim, “viewed the

Vietnamese, at best, as children in need of tutoring, and, at worst, as savage, subhuman ‘gooks’” (52). As the war continued on through the mid-1960s to the early seventies, the initial desire to eradicate a real or imagined threat to the United States faded into an elaborate effort to save face. In a 1964 memo to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, for example, Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNoughton listed the U.S. aims for the war thusly: “70%—To avoid a humiliating U.S. defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor). 20%—To keep SVN (and the adjacent) territory from Chinese hands. 10%—To permit people of SVN to enjoy a better, freer way of life” (Qtd. in Bloom and Breines 164). Both Johnson and Nixon wanted to appear to be relentlessly anti-communist leaders bent on its global eradication, and, as defeat loomed nearer, both were ultimately most concerned about how a loss in Vietnam would affect America’s image: “As Nixon put it, failure in Vietnam would foster the view that the United States had become a ‘pitiful, helpless giant’” (Appy and Bloom 52).

In the late 1960s and early seventies, widespread disillusionment with the U.S. government grew as American citizens began to discover the vast disparities between what they were being told about the war and what was actually happening in Vietnam. Tensions came to a head in 1971, when Daniel Ellsberg leaked the Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times*, proving that the government had grossly misled the public about the scale and extent of American intervention in Vietnam during the Johnson administration. Though the documents were not damning to Nixon’s own administration, the President “considered Ellsberg’s antiwar activism as a potential threat to his own war policies,” and Ellsberg was the first target of his “White House Plumbers,” a covert team assembled for the purpose of breaking into federal government offices in order to plug leaks of information. Such actions would ultimately lead to the Watergate scandal and Nixon’s impeachment. By the time that the Pentagon Papers were published, a large

percentage of the American public had already grown cynical about their nation's government and military operations, and their faith had been laid low just two years earlier, when *Life* magazine ran a devastating exposé on the My Lai massacre of 1968. News of the U.S. military's systematic and unprovoked murder of more than five hundred Vietnamese civilians, most of them women, children, and old men—as well as the subsequent cover-up that lasted for nearly two years—shook Americans at home to the core. Though the My Lai massacre was the most devastating example of such corrupt military operations in Vietnam, it was not the only one; Appy and Bloom explain that, because American soldiers were authorized to “destroy any village from which they received hostile fire . . . a single sniper's bullet from a nearby treeline might result in the American napalming of an entire hamlet” (60). Understandably, this practice led to more aggression against the U.S. military: “Throughout the war, the United States destroyed more than six thousand hamlets, a fact that helps explain why so many rural villages joined the National Liberation Front” (60). In their essay, Appy and Bloom systematically identify and refute twelve central “myths” told to the American people by its leaders, each lie another stepping stone towards the “profound distrust” of the U.S. government that swelled in the 1960s and seventies. Almost all of these myths can be reduced down to a central misleading premise: that the United States' intervention in Vietnam was based on a benevolent desire to free the Vietnamese people from oppressive communist regimes whose successes would ultimately threaten American freedoms as well (54-58).

In a nation riddled with Cold War tensions, widespread McCarthyism, and organizations such as the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) designed to eradicate domestic ties to communism, it is of little surprise that Americans who opposed the war in Vietnam were often vilified and targeted by the U.S. government, labeled as communists

whether or not they actually identified as such. Appy and Bloom write that Presidents Johnson and Nixon “carried with them a profound strain of Cold War suspicion—bordering on clinical paranoia—that their personal power was being undermined by communists at home as well as abroad” (53). The antiwar movement gained momentum, however, as the missteps and corrupt acts of U.S. leaders and policy makers both at home and abroad fueled outrage among American citizens of all ages. Breines writes of how closely the student movement and the antiwar movement were linked, claiming that, “The student movement swelled because of the war,” particularly as men enrolled in universities began to face the reality of the draft upon graduation (Breines 35). Protests were more than personal, however, and many students who had already grown cynical about their government and society saw the conflict in Vietnam as yet another example of the flawed policies, dishonesty, racism, and corruption that plagued the nation. The antiwar movement grew steadily, on university campuses and beyond, led by some of the most influential organizations and individuals of the period. Both the SDS and SNCC issued antiwar statements and held rallies that drew tens of thousands of people, even as the SDS was splitting into factions that held methods of resistance to the war as a central issue—most notably, the Weathermen (later the Weather Underground), a radical communist group that protested with bombings and armed conflicts. Breines sees the recourse to such actions as the direct result of the growing sense of disillusionment and despair amongst American youth: “With this rupture of optimism came a militance and realism about American power that generated movements and ideas markedly different from the hopeful and nonviolent groups of the early 1960s” (Breines 38-39). Meanwhile, resistance groups were organized across the country to discourage young men from cooperating with the Selective Service, and antiwar groups even formed within the U.S. military. In 1967, Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his “Declaration of Independence from

the War in Vietnam,” arguing that Americans could not afford to keep silent on the issue of the war: “If America’s soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read ‘Vietnam.’ It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over” (Qtd. in Bloom and Breines 188). Antiwar movements were often met with great resistance from government and law enforcement officials, who countered with unlawful surveillance, the intentional spread of misinformation, harassment, and occasional armed conflict. The 1970 shootings at Kent State University in Ohio and Jackson State College in Mississippi shocked the nation, as National Guardsmen and police officers, respectively, opened fire on unarmed students engaged in antiwar protest. Four were killed and nine wounded in Ohio, while two were killed and twelve wounded in Mississippi. Breines views these shootings as the events that “broke the heart of the student movement”: “Although demonstrations continued to take place . . . horror and despair provoked by the war’s mounting death toll, violence everywhere, and deaths on campus frightened and discouraged student activists” (40).

Ultimately, the prolonged war in Vietnam led to casualties of unconscionable numbers on both sides, with upwards of three million Vietnamese and fifty-eight thousand American lives lost. The death toll continued to rise well after the war’s end, both in Vietnam and in the United States. As Appy and Bloom write, “hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese officials and military officers were sent to ‘reeducation’ camps where they faced years of hard labor, imprisonment, and political indoctrination,” while more than fifty thousand Vietnamese citizens died in their attempts to emigrate to the U.S. in the late 1970s and early 80s (61). Meanwhile, the number of U.S. casualties doubled at home after the war’s end: “By the 1980s, veterans’ counselors estimated that the number of suicides of Vietnam veterans equaled the number killed in the war” (64). For many American veterans, returning home after the war was merely the start

of a new and deeply personal battle. Having seen gruesome warfare, been ordered to commit meaningless acts of violence, and witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of modern weapons technology, tens of thousands of American vets suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD did not become an official medical diagnosis, however, until the early 1980s, so veterans were often misdiagnosed and misunderstood by their fellow Americans. Many were “labeled schizophrenics, sometimes heavily sedated in Veterans Administration hospitals, and frequently characterized as weaker than their World War II counterparts” (64). Damaging stereotypes of the Vietnam veteran were embraced in the media and entertainment industries in an attempt to wrongly alleviate national guilt, as one such veteran reports: “‘Because we see the Vietnam veteran as crazy, inadequate, second-rate, feeble, we never have to face Vietnam. Or face what was required of him. We can keep our distance’” (Qtd. in Appy and Bloom 64). Many veterans also faced more serious accusations at home. During the war, many American soldiers who had initially believed in the necessity of their cause experienced a bitter realization as they first reached Vietnamese soil: “Told that they had been sent to Vietnam to help the people of South Vietnam, they very quickly realized that most Vietnamese did not regard them as liberators or even as welcome allies” (59). Back at home after the war, these veterans often faced the judgment of those who did not welcome them any more heartily, imagining all Vietnam vets to be war criminals, regardless of their motivations for enlisting or of the actual roles they had played in military operations overseas. Appy and Bloom speak of the striking differences between the treatment of veterans of World War II and Vietnam, the former having come home to “free college educations, low-interest mortgages, and other benefits believed to be the tickets to postwar prosperity and security,” while the latter returned to government funding cuts for veterans’ programs and services. Due in part to their own experiences of trauma and in part to an

unwillingness to listen on the part of their fellow citizens, many Vietnam veterans voices have gone unheard. In 1967, former University of California at Santa Cruz student George Skakel began writing to his school's newspaper under a pseudonym, detailing his experiences in Vietnam as they happened. In a letter written in December of that year, the young soldier, who was killed less than two months before his tour of duty would have ended, spoke of the carelessness of an American government and voting public whose uninformed choices carried steep consequences: "The American voting public does not really appreciate what war is. If the average American housewife or truck driver could see movies of a real firefight or just hear one, they might be less inclined to send young men, other men's sons, into combat for contended and uncertain causes" (Qtd. in Bloom and Breines 172).

The war in Vietnam profoundly shook the American consciousness. Many Americans abandoned the idealistic post-World War II outlook that imagined the U.S. as an all-powerful player in the fight for global freedom and ethical democracy, instead coming to see their nation's government and military as highly fallible and corruptible entities governed by narrow self-interest. In the eyes of many Americans, the U.S. became little more than an "infantile if global thug" (Sainer 13). Appy and Bloom write that, "Vietnam awakened many Americans to the fact that U.S. foreign policy supported virtually any government, no matter how dictatorial, so long as it allied itself with America in the Cold War," and they note the drastic decrease in the American public's professed level of faith in their own government—from seventy-six percent in 1964 to a dismal thirty-seven percent at the war's end, less than a decade later (62). Opposition to the war was a rallying point for counterculturalists across the nation, and the antiwar movement bled easily into the larger counterculture movement, quickly becoming one of its most prominent causes. The Vietnam War, along with the resistance activists encountered as they

fought for racial equality, were two of the largest contributing factors in the “identity crisis” that characterized the counterculture and created the urgent need amongst American youth to define themselves by establishing their points of difference from conservative, mainstream American society. Furthermore, the protest strategies born out of the Civil Rights movement informed the ways in which counterculturalists conducted protest events throughout the 1960s and seventies, and they used similar strategies to speak out not only against the war in Vietnam, but in support of a number of other causes as well. These two decades saw the significant growth of movements for equal rights regardless of gender, sexuality, race, or ethnicity, as well as of movements against environmental destruction, nuclear warfare, and social mores regarded as repressive, particularly those that stigmatized or criminalized activities such as drug use, free love, and communal living. Out of these tumultuous environs grew a radical theatre movement that sought to abandon traditional forms in favor of provocative new methods. Countercultural ideals emerged in theatrical spaces across the nation, from the streets of San Francisco to New York theatres on, off, and off-off Broadway.

Radical Theatre and the Counterculture

Many pre-existing and newly-formed theatrical groups embraced radical experimentation and explored innovative methods of performance in the 1960s, in direct response to the social, political, and cultural climates of the period. Lines between protest and performance also became increasingly blurred during this time, as protest demonstrations adopted performative elements, and as theatrical events rallied audiences into various forms of activism. In 1975, playwright, biographer, and *Village Voice* drama critic Arthur Sainer published *The New Radical Theatre Notebook*, a collection of essays, scripts, interviews, and other materials centered around the

dramatic works of such radical sixties theatre groups as the Living Theatre, the Open Theatre, the Bread and Puppet Theatre, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, and many others. Sainer's work put him in close contact with such artists as Joseph Chaikin, Julian Beck, and Judith Malina, and his reflections on time spent with them, on both professional and personal levels, are revelatory. *The New Radical Theatre Notebook*, revised and expanded by the author in 1997, also provides a useful model for examining the key characteristics of the radical theatres of the 1960s. Sainer is careful to point out that there was no singular "cohesive radical or alternative theatre community," but that, "What did exist in the sixties and into the seventies were parallel efforts by artists and companies that at times supported and at other times worked at cross purposes from one another" (Sainer xi). In the introduction to their book *Restaging the Sixties: Radical Theatres and Their Legacies*, James M. Harding and Cindy Rosenthal expand on this point: "Even within a single collective, the members frequently found themselves at odds with each other and/or entangled in the contradictory tendencies of espousing a militant antiauthoritarian ideology while simultaneously embracing—indeed, at times begrudgingly submitting to—a charismatic figure of authority from within their own ranks" (5). It is important to remember that no two radical theatres of this period shared identical methods or goals, and that, in fact, there was often significant disagreement even amongst the individual members of any particular theatre collective about what those methods and goals should be. Nevertheless, most of these theatres bore, to a greater or lesser extent, certain basic characteristics in common, characteristics which were to set them apart from their more passive and traditional antecedents. These defining traits, as Sainer lists them, are: a movement towards the performance of self rather than character onstage, an emphasis on ensemble and collective experimentation, a fascination with ritual and ceremony, a rethinking of the physical spaces in which theatre could and should be performed, a

desire to take theatre to the streets as a vehicle for tangible action, and an unprecedented push to empower spectators to become participants in the drama themselves. “Changes came rapidly, sometimes with a peremptory abruptness,” Sainer explains. “Everything came into question: the place of the performer in the theatre; the place of the audience; the function of the playwright and the usefulness of a written script; the structure of the playhouse, and later, the need for any kind of playhouse; and finally, the continued existence of theatre as a relevant force in a changing culture” (12).

Each of these characteristic elements ultimately had to do with the artists’ desperate search for truth during a period in which multiple government-sanctioned corruptions and falsehoods were being exposed in both the United States’ foreign and domestic affairs, a period “in which truth and justice were consigned to the dustbin” (xi). These shifts in dramatic methods were also at least partially a result of theatre artists’ perceptions of being left behind as the visual artists who were their contemporaries, and even their predecessors, moved forward into a new age. Living Theatre founders Julian Beck and Judith Malina were among those who eschewed conventional dramatic values, and in his book *The Life of the Theatre*, Beck writes of this urge to catch up with the spirit of the times, speaking of “some kind of sociological lag in the development of the theatre” of the 1960s.” He laments: “we were reading Joyce and Pound, Breton, Lorca, Proust, Patchen . . . *und so weiter*. 1944: the painting of Pollock and DeKooning was implying a life which the theatre didn’t know existed, a level of consciousness and unconsciousness that rarely found itself onto the stage” (Beck 13). For artists like Beck, Malina, and many others, one of the first steps in attaining truth in performance was moving away from traditional written scripts and from plays in which actors performed purely fictional characters immersed in purely fictional worlds. Harding and Rosenthal regard this “tendency . . . to

question the traditional structures of mainstream theater and the authority of the literary text” as a “direct challenge to the normative cultural values of bourgeois society” (Harding and Rosenthal 7). Radical theatre artists began to reject scripted dramas that reinforced conservative mainstream values and allowed spectators to passively absorb dramatic stories that had little to no immediate impact on their real lives. “We began to understand in the sixties,” recalls Sainer, “that the words in plays, that the physical beings in plays that the events in plays were too often evasions, too often artifices that had to do not with truths but with semblances. At best they were about something rather than *some* thing; they were ideas describing experiences rather than experiences” (12). In order to circumvent the neatly artificial nature of traditional dramatic forms, many theatre companies of the counterculture began producing shows in which actors performed as themselves, or at least as strategically performative versions of themselves, rather than as characters. Sainer explains how this method worked in the productions of the Living Theatre:

The performer is watching the performance; he becomes a third party, a bridge between audience and character, an intelligence which breaks in on the illusion of the continuous action of the drama. No longer is there a perfect universe of character embedded in stage setting, like the universe of every important dramatist from O’Neill to Miller. Now there comes into play a spillover of life tainting illusion, the attitude of the performer. The attitude of a particular kind of socially conscious theatre begins to modify the illusion of the drama. If the given problem has a solution, the attitude of the performer as self will keep us from believing that any resolution within the experience of the performance will be adequate. (Sainer 11)

In order to prevent spectators from becoming comfortably lost in the artificial worlds created onstage, artists like Beck and Malina created performance events in which actors continually reminded their audiences of the real world they inhabited together, as well as the real and immediate problems that resisted the facile, neatly-packaged solutions offered by most traditional staged dramas.

Radical theatres of the 1960s also rejected the convention of producing scripted plays written by individual playwrights, instead embracing the process of collective creation, in which the content of a play was generated by an ensemble of artists. This shift, too, reflects a dissatisfaction with politics, society, and the status quo. As Sainer recounts, the rise of ensemble work mirrored a larger frustration with the narrow confines of individual self-interest that characterized America's capitalistic society: "The disenchantment with commercial theatre paralleled a broader disenchantment with the culture at large, with America as a world power, with material well-being, with the ethic of the isolated figure laboring to merit the approval of society" (13). By contrast, "the ensemble tended to make irrelevant the problem of individual glory" (13). Collective creation was not only an innovative method of generating fresh ideas and luring audiences to theatres with the promise of something different. It was also a means of putting into practice, theatrically, a principle around which many counterculturalists built—or at least imagined—their lives. Of the "radical democratization of the creative process of making theatre," Harding and Rosenthal write that: "Making theatre was in this respect as much an experiment in the practice of radical democracy as it was an exploration of the possibilities of theatre as such. Challenging not only boundaries of theatre, collective creation was thus intended to model the sociopolitical ideals espoused by the collectives themselves" (9). Collective creations thus became vehicles for social as well as theatrical experimentation, as they allowed

artists to put into practice the ideals of communal living and radical democracy that many espoused during this period. Harding and Rosenthal point out that the experimental process of creation was just as important to these productions as was the act of performing for an audience: “In these collaborative endeavors, theater and theater-making frequently blurred into a process of investigation and experimentation that became an end in itself and thus provided a viable, enacted counter—indeed, an embodied counterexample—to the cultural and political offerings of bourgeois society” (9).

Sainer describes the radical theatre’s attraction to elements of ritual, rite, and ceremony as the result of a dissatisfaction with “the surface drabness of character and the ordinariness of place and event” in conventional dramas (31). Radical theatres thirsted for performance events that could take performers and spectators beyond the everyday experience of life, enacting rituals that transcended the dramatic event and took on meanings and purposes of their own. Sainer defines “ritual” thusly: “I conceive of ritual as a dynamic process that employs ceremony to heighten occasion and the sense of occasion, rather than as a series of prescribed acts handed down from an earlier time” (13). Repetition and the use of symbolic actions, gestures, and images were important elements of these dramas that sought to evoke such heightened experiences. Both of these elements were particularly evident in the Living Theatre’s *Paradise Now*, which grasped towards transcendent truths by mimicking the ritual customs of several different cultures, borrowing from the I Ching, Hasidic philosophy, the Hindu Chakras, and Kabbalist thought, as well as Native American spiritual practices. Sainer reports that the inclusion of ritual in performance led actors as well as audience members to unpredictable experiences—the drama was no longer “primarily for the spectator,” and the performer found himself or herself to be “vulnerable to the ritual of one’s own making” as the “primordial aspect”

called into question “the surface certainties of the contemporary self.” Ritual also complicated the relationship between performer-as-self and performer-as-character: “One begins as self, not as character, but goes into the ritual as self tentatively examining character—and the ritual seizes the character and assaults the heart of the self (38).” In essence, the performer ideally would be transformed as he or she entered the dramatic ritual both as character and as self, with “self” emerging from the performance profoundly changed by what he or she has experienced via a ritual approached through a shallow guise of character.

Radical theatres of the 1960s experimented not only with ritual and collective creation, but also with the physical spaces in which performances took place. Environmental theatre opened up many new possibilities as unconventional performance spaces informed theatrical productions in multiple and exciting ways. The space between audience and performer was often drastically reduced, producing an effect that Sainer describes as “more real and simultaneously more ‘artificial’ as the artifice of the performer comes into closer physical proximity with the spectator” (44). Found spaces also layered new meanings onto the performances that took place within them, and those same performances encouraged audiences to look at the spaces of their everyday lives in new ways. Environmental theatre also opened new doorways between art and activism. When performances moved from playhouses into the streets, the lines between theatre and protest demonstrations became profoundly blurred. For Sainer, street theatricals answered a call issued by Antonin Artaud that his own Theatre of Cruelty could not fully address: “Artaud wanted a theatre which would generate the kind of electricity that is generated when a mob rushes into the street. But there is no substitute for the passion of the street. The street is urgent, it is capable of fear and cowardice; but even in its moments of hypocrisy, the street is incapable of essential falsehood” (47). Radical 1960s theatres went beyond Brecht’s vision of inspiring

audiences to take action to take action after leaving the theatre, beyond Artaud's desire to recreate the energy of the street within the theatre. These radical theatres took the streets as their stages. Richard Schechner's Performance Group and Beck and Malina's Living Theatre, for example, concluded their performances of *Dionysus in 69* and *Paradise Now*, respectively, by leading their audiences onto the streets of New York in active protest, while the San Francisco Diggers claimed the streets of the Haight-Ashbury as their primary performance venues, staging performance events that protested the evils of capitalism and mass media, among other issues. Embracing the immediacy of the street, such groups often faced threats of violence and arrest at the hands of local law enforcement officers, though the publicity garnered by such altercations often served the purpose of taking their messages to an even wider audience.

In the streets and in traditional and found theatrical spaces, the artists of the counterculture frequently welcomed spectators to participate in their performances. Audience involvement was a method inspired not only by an urge to shake off the restrictive bindings of traditional theatrical forms, but also by a desire to more effectively engage audiences and to forge stronger connections between art and the world outside of it. Judith Malina addressed her own dissatisfaction with the traditional separation of audience and actor in 1952, in the program notes for her production of Paul Goodman's *Faustina*: "We are creators in an art where every night hundreds of people are ignored; a pretense is made that they do not exist; and then we wonder that the actor has grown apart from society; and then we wonder that the art itself staggers lamely behind its hope of being part of life" (Qtd. in Munk 37). Harding and Rosenthal describe how abandoning long-established theatrical conventions and directly engaging audiences in the dramatic action helped to serve the revolutionary goals of theatres such as the Performance Group and the Living Theatre:

In their shift from a literary theater to a theater of radical actuality, the collectives thus evinced a belief, first, that the change of which Marx spoke could begin in the immediacy of the performance itself and, second, that the changes enacted in performances—especially those that blurred the boundaries between performers and spectators—could be carried out into society at large. (9)

Audiences often found themselves denied the pleasure of sitting back and allowing fictionalized stories to wash over them, stories that were largely unaffected by their viewers and relatively unchanged from night to night. In the place of this release, however, came an invitation to actively create rather than to passively absorb, a new sense of connection to the events and players onstage, and, often, a transformative new power to explore and communicate new ideas with a supportive community of artists.

In his *New Radical Theatre Notebook*, Sainer writes that, in the 1960s:

a new American theatre was just sending down its roots; it was beginning to nourish a new uncertainty, beginning to ask questions that had to do with the presumptions with which humankind lived conscious and subconscious lives. We were trying to find a new way to express what we had begun to understand about character and society; we had to find a new way to express who we were becoming or who it was that we wanted to become as spectators, more responsible beings, not mesmerized by fictional creatures set in little jewel boxes carrying out their own lives; as writers, directors, and performers, beings who were more aware of the workings of our inner lives and more responsive to the social and political forces at work around us. (12)

Theatre artists were transforming their own creations into instruments for transforming society in turn. The 1960s and seventies comprised a dynamic and exciting period, one that saw great waves of artistic experimentation and innovation happening alongside, and often in reaction to, some of the most sweeping and significant social and political developments in American history. In this tumultuous age, theatre groups across the country used their art variously as a tool for promoting the civil rights of all Americans regardless of race, gender, or sexuality; for advocating principles of anarchism, communism, and pacifism; for speaking out in favor of free speech, free love, communal living, and recreational drug use; and for protesting the Vietnam War and other international conflicts, the arms race, nuclear testing, capitalism, consumerism, and environmental destruction, among other issues. Though they thrived there, countercultural values were not confined to radical theatre spaces; with the 1968 Broadway debut of *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*, hippie characters hit the Great White Way in full force. The musical's reception amongst radical theatre practitioners was, naturally, mixed, as Roger Babb points out in "Ways of Working: Post-Open Theatre Performance and Pedagogy," an essay that privileges radical theatres as the sole legitimate guardians of the methods they developed: "Clearly, part of the legacy of such legitimately radical theater companies as the Living Theatre and the Open Theatre is to have their techniques and methodologies expropriated and assimilated into the omnivorous mainstream culture that they were rebelling against in the first place" (Babb 121). Regardless of their venues, budgets, or target audiences, however, many theatres of the 1960s and seventies were tightly bound to the various sociopolitical issues of a period characterized by numerous "crises of identity." Ultimately, counterculturalists would define themselves, in large part, by what they were not and by the mainstream values they refused to espouse. As Philip Deloria suggests, such struggles for self-definition in a time of national

identity crisis inevitably led to a turn towards the Native, as well-meaning visual, musical, and performance artists of the counterculture led the charge towards widespread Native appropriation. I argue that this appropriation emerged not only as a strategic move to appeal to the public's guilt or nostalgia, but also out of a sense of shared suffering, or "vicarious victimization," on the part of the artists involved (Deloria, *Playing Indian* 161).

Vicarious Victimization and the Appropriation of Tragic Histories

Philip Deloria suggests that struggles for self-definition in a time of national identity crisis inevitably led counterculturalists to turn towards the Native. The motivation behind such appropriations was not altogether unlike that which inspired participants in the Boston Tea Party to mimic Mohawk dress, speech, and mannerisms as they carried out their acts of protest. In *Playing Indian*, Deloria writes that, "Those original rebels had used Indianness to shift the location of their identities from Britain to America. . . . 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" (161). Like the colonists of the eighteenth century, many counterculturalists played at becoming Native in order to define themselves by difference; the colonists dressed as Mohawks to emphasize points of difference from the British, while counterculturalists put on the guise of the Native in order to set themselves apart from mainstream society in a nation where they often felt unwelcome and alienated. This is not to say that Native imagery was altogether absent from the mainstream culture that counterculturalists repudiated. The popular music of the 1960s and seventies, for example, often took on Native themes or attempted to emulate various aspects of Native identity. In 1969, the bubblegum pop group known as the 1910 Fruitgum Company

released their fourth album, *Indian Giver*. The eponymous track earned the group great popular success, hitting number five on the Billboard Hot 100 in 1969 and staying on the charts for thirteen weeks. Its popularity surged again in the late 1980s, as it was covered by the Ramones in 1988. “Indian Giver” uses the offensive term of the title to describe the fickle nature of a former lover: “Indian giver / Indian giver / You took your love away from me / Indian giver / Indian giver / Took back the love you gave to me.” The song’s lyrics revolve around a pejorative term born out of historical misconceptions and racist stereotypes, but the album’s offenses don’t stop there. The cover art is problematic as well, featuring the band members dressed in full Native costumes, complete with elaborate feather headdresses and heavily beaded and fringed buckskin clothing. They smoke peace pipes while a woman in the background, wearing long black braids and a hypersexualizing buckskin dress, brandishes a tomahawk. Native themes also featured prominently in fashion trends of the period, as well as in advertising campaigns for major manufacturers. Featured on the cover of the November 1970 issue of *TEEN* magazine, for example, is a young, presumably Caucasian model sitting cross-legged while grinning at the camera, wearing a boldly-patterned dress covered in fringe and geometric designs. She also wears a matching headband, which serves to fasten two gray and white feathers to the top of her head. To her right, a caption identifies her outfit as “The Pow-Wow Look.” A Clairol print ad from 1971 also used Native imagery to sell products to young women. In the ad, a blue-eyed model peers out at viewers from underneath a massive mane of free-flowing platinum blonde hair. Feathers and beads are braided into her hair, and she also wears a buckskin dress and colorful face paint. Under the bold trademarked caption, “When you go blonde go all the way,” the advertisement promises that Clairol’s “Born Blonde” hair dye can help a young woman to achieve the bold look she really wants, whether she aspires to be a “blonde Pocahontas or a

gypsy moonchild” (Clairol). “When you feel like playing Native,” the ad encourages readers subtextually, “don’t let brunettes have all the fun!” Clairol is only one of many companies that evoked Native American themes to sell products, and such imagery on logos and advertisements remains a pervasive issue today, appearing on everything from butter, honey, and ice cream labels, to cigarette and liquor packaging, to vehicle and sports team names. While Native imagery was likely present, to a greater or lesser degree, in every arena of popular culture during the 1960s and seventies, I narrow my focus to those Native appropriations used strategically by self-identified hippies and counterculturalists to voice dissent and to distinguish themselves from mainstream American society.

Discussing the antiwar movement’s frequent appropriations of Native themes in the 1960s and seventies, Deloria provides a useful lens for examining the motivations that lay behind such appropriations, used strategically as part of many countercultural campaigns. He writes that, “Indianness carried special resonance for antiwar protesters,” as nineteenth-century Native resistance narratives conveniently “provided a homegrown model for opposition to the American military imperialism that protesters saw in Vietnam” (159). Deloria hypothesizes that “playing Indian” became a popular symbol of opposition to the Vietnam War largely because it enabled protesters to profess a sense of empathy for both the defeated and displaced Native Americans of the American past and the war-ravaged Vietnamese of the present:

Donning the symbols of the Indian—the long hair so visible in the poster image of Geronimo and maybe a bandana headband to go with it—signified that one’s sympathies lay with both the past and the present objects of American foreign policy. 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.

(Deloria, *Playing Indian* 161)

The counterculturalists Deloria describes here attempted to call up memories of the United States' crimes against Native tribes as a means of protesting the war and aligning themselves with the victims, rather than with the perpetrators, of American imperialism. Evoking the vanquished Native served as a powerful reminder of past atrocities committed by a nation that seemed more than willing to repeat its violent history in Southeast Asia. Such demonstrations also teetered on the brink of equating cultures that were widely separated, both temporally and geographically, in troublesome ways. Deloria points out some of the convenient imagined parallels between Native Americans and the Vietnamese: "Racially red Indians matched up well with the ideologically red Vietcong. . . . Guerilla 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" (161). Such demonstrations also created problematic narratives by suggesting that non-Native, non-Vietnamese protesters could personally identify with the unfathomable suffering of hundreds of thousands of Native Americans and Vietnamese people. Alison Landsberg examines such acts of imagined identification in her book *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (2004), where she analyzes the roles that modern technology and mass media play in the creation of "prosthetic memory," which "emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theatre or museum." Of an individual's experience of a prosthetic memory, Landsberg writes that, "In the process that I am describing, the person does not simply apprehend a historical narrative but takes on a more personal, deeply

felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live” (2). Landsberg acknowledges that prosthetic memory has the potential to change the way individuals view unfamiliar histories and cultures, heightening awareness and sensitivity by rendering the unknown on a deeply personal level, but the (frequently traumatic) experiences “remembered” are often appropriated for the purpose of self-examination rather than for cross-cultural understanding (3). Prosthetic memory may lead to the oversimplification and romanticization of complex cultural Others and historical events—for example, when an individual watching a Western film imagines that, in the space of two hours, he has gained an accurate and intuitive understanding of what it was to be a nineteenth century Native American. In the 1960s and seventies, counterculturalists often clung to prosthetic memories rooted in centuries-old stereotypes about Native American identity, imagining that they shared certain cultural values with historical Natives and thus could innately understand the vast complexities of widely-differing Native experiences.

Many of these counterculturalists claimed a sense of shared victimhood with Native Americans and other minority groups because they felt that they, too, existed at the margins of American society. Deloria quotes prominent antiwar activist Mitchell Goodman on the perceived connections between marginalized groups of the 1960s and seventies: “Blacks, Vietnamese, Indians . . . 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” (Qtd. in Deloria 160). Jonathon Johnson, one of the original cast members of *Hair*, recalls his own experience of this “common interest” in the introduction to his autobiography *Good HAIR Days: A Personal Journey with the American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*. Johnson speaks of the disenfranchisement felt by many young Americans of the 1960s who faced a war they didn’t support, in addition to other social plagues: “Racism, bigotry, and

homophobia ran rampant in society as a whole and those who were against those values were considered ‘Un-American.’” Johnson continues, “We felt a unity with those groups who had long experienced social isolation and persecution” (Johnson xi). Deloria acknowledges that this perception of mutual marginalization did lead to some positive and productive coalitions between non-Native counterculturalists and Native American rights activists in the 1960s and seventies, citing as examples non-Natives’ participation in fishing protests, the seizure of Alcatraz Island by the Indians of All Tribes in 1969, the Trail of Broken Treaties march on Washington, D.C. in 1972, and the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee. “But just as often as they engaged real Indian people,” he continues, “white radicals . . . plac[ed] their highest premium upon a detached, symbolic Indianness” (163). Often, countercultural activists were happy to pick and choose the aspects of Native cultures that they imagined lining up most closely with their own goals, waving these as banners over their various causes while ignoring the social and political struggles that engaged real Native Americans on a daily basis.

The 1960s and seventies saw the rapid growth of numerous crucially important movements for civil rights and individual liberties across the United States, and the significance of the social reforms born in this period cannot be overstated. Counterculturalists played a vital role in many of these reforms, and the “crises of identity” that they faced as they attempted to define themselves in opposition to the mainstream “Other” were ultimately highly generative. The dynamic spirit of this period led not only to great political and social change; it also created an exciting cultural environment in which revolutionary new modes of artistic expression swept across the visual, musical, and performing arts. As I show in this study, however, well-meaning artists were among those who led the charge towards widespread Native appropriation, using painful histories of imperialist aggression to serve their own social, political, and/or aesthetic

goals, and often claiming a kinship with Natives that reduced the horrific scale of the crimes against indigenous Americans to one that could be likened to their own sufferings on the outskirts of mainstream American society. The counterculture's frequent romanticization and fetishization of Native American culture propagated stereotypes and misconceptions, and non-Native artists often inadvertently exercised their own imperialist power by promoting certain ideologies that ran counter to the goals of concurrent Native rights movements. My study focuses primarily on the Living Theatre's *Paradise Now*, the street theatre and published periodicals of the San Francisco Diggers, and *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical* as case studies of Native appropriations in three very different performative settings, and I also examine how prominent Native theatrical groups of the period provided alternative models for representations of Native Americans onstage. Portrayals of Natives on theatrical stages today, as well as in contemporary popular culture at large, often present problems similar to those of five decades past, and it is my goal to inform more responsible representational practices today through an examination of those of the 1960s and seventies.

CHAPTER II: UNETHICAL ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE APPROPRIATED NATIVE

“During the sixties, my father was the perfect hippie, since all hippies were trying to be Indians.”

Sherman Alexie

The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven

Dwight Conquergood lays out a useful model for examining performative representations of ethnographic subjects in his 1985 essay, “Performing as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of the Ethnography of Performance.” Because responsible ethnography often intersects with embodied representation on tenuous ground, Conquergood exhorts readers to approach ethnographic performance with great care: “Moral and ethical questions get stirred to the surface because ethnographers of performance explode the notion of aesthetic distance” (2). Ethnographers who wish to bring their subjects of study closer to audiences through faithful performative representation must ensure that their work does not fall into any of the irresponsible patterns that Conquergood outlines on the schematic he labels the “Moral Mapping of Performative Stances Towards the Other.” Charting four problematic performative stances along the opposing poles of “Identity” and “Difference” as well as “Detachment” and “Commitment,” Conquergood identifies these stances as: “The Custodian’s Rip-Off,” characterized by selfish acquisitiveness; “The Enthusiast’s Infatuation,” characterized by superficial trivialization; “The Curator’s Exhibitionism,” characterized by dehumanizing sensationalism; and “The Skeptic’s Cop-Out,” characterized by aloof cynicism (5-8). At the center of the map, Conquergood places “Dialogical Performance,” which he identifies as “the

one path to genuine understanding of others,” characterized by a desire to “bring together different voices, world views, value systems, and beliefs so that they can have a conversation with one another” (9).

It is my contention that, when charted onto Conquergood’s “Moral Mapping,” many countercultural representations of Native Americans fall under the category of “The Enthusiast’s Infatuation,” located at the intersection of “Commitment” and “Identity.” Conquergood describes this type of performance as unethical because it “trivializes the other,” by suggesting that the Other is completely comprehensible across any cultural, geographical, and/or temporal distances, that his or her experiences correlate to those of the performer/ethnographer, and that the differences that separate individuals of different cultural identities are essentially negligible. Conquergood writes that: “Too facile identification with the other coupled with enthusiastic commitment produces naïve and glib performances marked by superficiality. . . . Eager performers get sucked into the quicksand belief, ‘Aren’t all people really just alike?’” He claims that this performative stance is not unethical due to a desire to plunder, sensationalize, or discredit the Other, but that its central flaw is a superficiality in which “The distinctiveness of the other is glossed over by a glaze of generalities” (6). Conquergood quotes historian and theorist Tzvetan Todorov on the dissatisfying results of such “facile identifications”:

Can we really love someone if we know little or nothing of his identity, if we see, in place of that identity, a projection of ourselves or ideals? We know that such a thing is quite possible, even frequent, in personal relations; but what happens in cultural confrontations? Doesn’t one culture risk trying to transform the other in its own name, and therefore risk subjugating it as well? How much is such love worth? (Todorov, *The Conquest of America* 168, qtd. in Conquergood 6)

Countercultural performance groups were often quick to profess a sense of kinship with Native Americans that transcended cultural boundaries, but this stated kinship was often designed to serve their own social and political purposes. As a result, the Native figure represented onstage frequently became a “projection” of non-Native “selves and ideals,” and complex Native identities and customs were compressed into the limiting molds of what counterculturalists wanted or needed them to become. In this way, performative representations intended to honor Native Americans became sites of reductive romanticization and cultural colonization, even as the artists involved lamented the physical conquest and colonization of indigenous tribes. Conquergood observes that, “Superficiality suffocates self as well as other” (7). Countercultural artists who attempted to simplify and subsume Native American identities ultimately obscured the actual goals of many Native rights activists, and by re-creating the Other in the image of Self, they also limited the potential of their own understanding.

In this chapter, I provide brief biographical sketches of the Living Theatre and the San Francisco Diggers as well as a short production history of *Hair*. I then analyze Native appropriations in *Paradise Now*, in Digger performances and in their free collective publication *The Digger Papers*, and in *Hair*, illustrating how each falls into the ethnographic trap of the “Enthusiast’s Infatuation.” I also examine these pieces in relation to Coco Fusco’s concept of “cultural transvestitism,” a useful lens for examining the impulses that lie beneath such tendencies to “try on” the cultural garb of another. Finally, I close the chapter with a consideration of Conquergood’s model of “dialogical performance,” complemented by Ronald J. Pelias’s work on empathy, as a positive alternative to representations that center around irresponsible appropriations.

The Living Theatre and *Paradise Now*

In her essay “Four Scenes of Theatrical Anarcho-Pacifism: A Living Legacy,” Alisa Solomon muses on the irony of the Living Theatre’s widely-accepted status as “the quintessential troupe of the [sixties],” as Julian Beck and Judith Malina founded the group in 1947 and “lived in voluntary exile from the United States during most of the 1960s,” touring Europe from 1964 to 1968 (Solomon 57). Erika Munk also speaks of the significance of the Living Theatre’s absence from the United States during the sixties in her essay “Only Connect: The Living Theatre and Its Audiences”: “A paradox: Almost everything that ‘typifies’ the Living as the theater of the American 1960s youth movement developed in European exile, including *Paradise Now*, the anarchist collective that created it, and the political and spiritual ideas driving both.” Munk goes on to highlight the pivotal moments in U.S. history that the Living Theatre missed during their “voluntary exile”: “By leaving the United States in 1963, they were absent for the Kennedy assassination, ‘Freedom Summer’ and the height of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War and its opposition, the beginnings of Black Power and feminism: the country’s great moments of passion, sorrow, and organization” (Munk 42). Though the group’s dramatic work of the late sixties and seventies frequently engaged with these “great moments” and the issues surrounding them, it is worthy of note that the Living Theatre did not experience these events from the United States, despite the group’s preeminence among American experimental theatres. Neither was its work confined to the age of the counterculture; now entering its sixty-seventh year in operation, the Living Theatre is the oldest extant American experimental theatre group. It is all the more indicative of the influence—and, to its critics, the infamy—of the Living Theatre in the sixties, then, that despite its physical distance from American soil during much of 1960s and its important work in the decades that both preceded and followed the counterculture,

the group remains the most iconic of 1960s radical theatres. Solomon asserts that, for many “ideologically cranky critics,” the Living Theatre is synonymous with the countercultural performance of social rebellion:

Still, for better or for worse, the shorthand descriptor for the decade’s theatrical experimentation—as well as for experiments with hallucinogens, communal living, and lefty attachments—is an image of nearly naked, long-haired men and women twined in a sweaty group embrace, groping at the audience, and leading them in Pied Piper procession through the streets. (Solomon 57)

Bradford D. Martin also acknowledges the Living Theatre’s tendency to polarize its audiences and critics in his book *The Theatre is in the Street: Politics and Public Performance in Sixties America*, writing that the group often “angered and frustrated its audiences, inspired the hostility of theatre critics and academicians, and encountered the wrath of police and other government authorities” (50). The very tactics the company employed to create theatrical experiences that were more inclusive of audiences and relevant to ongoing social debates at times served only to alienate the public with their radical unconventionalism. Whether loved or despised, however, the Living Theatre’s revolutionary methods made the group an icon of sixties experimental theatre, one whose offerings would bear great influence on theatre artists not only during the sixties, but in the decades to follow as well.

In *The Theatre is in the Street*, Martin summarizes the Living Theatre’s influence on the theatre of the counterculture and beyond, claiming that, “[t]he company contributed decisively to contemporary theater by challenging popular conceptions of what constitutes a theatrical event, by exploring ways to operate outside the financial constraints of conventional theater, by pioneering techniques for involving the audience, and by infusing its theatrical innovations with

the politics of anarchism and pacifism” (Martin 50). During the fifties and sixties, the Living Theatre revolutionized the theatrical event both in form and function, experimenting with aesthetic styles and with methods of political engagement. When Beck and Malina created the group in 1947, their central focus was on the former, due in part to the fact that political conservatism had spread into the artistic realm, discouraging theatre practitioners and other artists from addressing social and political issues in their work. Martin writes that, because the American government “stifled dissent through the House Un-American Activities Committee and the anticommunist McCarthy hearings in the Senate,” and had “consistently targeted the cultural sphere,” attempts at social engagement via the arts were often muted by “an atmosphere of fear [which] permeated American cultural life” (56). This emphasis on the separation of art and politics was so widespread that, as Julian Beck himself noted, “even the critics would say ‘You cannot mix art and politics’” (Qtd. in Martin 8). For much of the fifties, then, Beck and Malina concentrated on creating new aesthetic forms that would challenge long-held theatrical ideals. They disliked the stale commercialism of Broadway and the trappings that accompanied its theatrical offerings, including “banal star vehicles, high ticket prices, and the stylized realism of modern drama” (Martin 52). Martin describes the couple’s dissatisfaction with the theatrical status quo and their desired reforms thusly:

Expressing a distaste for modern realistic drama with its naturalistic, yet stylized, acting and scenic elements, Malina wrote in her diary, “Broadway buries itself under a sugary realism.” In an era when no significant off-Broadway theater movement existed, Beck and Malina sought a larger, more epic, nonnaturalistic style without the “plush seats” and inflated admission prices of Broadway theaters. (52)

Beck and Malina craved a more satisfying alternative which focused more on the theatrical event itself than on its capacity to make profits, and in the 1960s, they would prove their commitment to transcending what they dubbed the “capitalist, bourgeois money-system” by refusing offers to take their plays *The Connection* and *Paradise Now* to Broadway (Rosenthal and Harding 29). During the 1950s, they focused much of their work on “poetic drama,” defined in a 1951 program note by Harold Norse as “a performance of rites involving wonder and vision—the dramatization of dream and desire” (Qtd. in Munk 36). As noted by Arthur Sainer, this emphasis on ritual, pioneered by Beck and Malina, was to become a key characteristic of the radical theatre of the counterculture during the next two decades. Beck and Malina also offered free admission to their shows, exploded the traditional separation of audience and performer, and experimented with unconventional locales that, in the sixties and seventies, would expand to include the streets of New York and the various cities they toured. As Erika Munk writes, “The Becks wanted to shake up their audience’s perception of theater the way Jackson Pollock shifted the idea of painting” (36).

By the late 1950s, the fear of engaging in politics onstage was giving way to a growing need to express a widespread sense of discontent with the American government. Munk writes that, in the late fifties, “Organized dissent and the counterculture both blossomed: the peace and civil rights movements, the Beats, the folk revival, rock. The sixties were growing inside the fifties, fed by anticolonialism and the United States’ blatantly reactionary world role, and given a final push in 1959 by the Cuban Revolution” (37). Beck and Malina, influenced by the latter’s work with director Erwin Piscator at the New School for Social Research’s Dramatic Workshop, were eager to begin crafting performances that were not only entertaining but efficacious, addressing contemporary social concerns directly and urging audiences towards action (Martin

53). They were confident that their work would have long-lasting and far-reaching effects, an optimism Martin attributes in part to the booming American economy of the late fifties and early sixties. Discussing the Living Theatre, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, El Teatro Campesino, and other politically-minded theatre groups of the period, Martin writes that, “Economic abundance empowered these groups to assume that positive political and social change was attainable, and that art, theater, and culture had a role to play in this transformation” (13). Beck and Malina’s anarchic and pacifist ideals were profoundly influenced by Paul Goodman and Dorothy Day, respectively, and when they were arrested with Day in 1955 for their protests against air raid drills, they dedicated themselves all the more fully to political protest. Martin writes that, “jail radicalized Beck and Malina,” and that their imprisonment inspired “two of their most renowned productions” (57). In 1959, they debuted Jack Gelber’s *The Connection*, which Martin identifies as “a turning point in the company’s combining of formal experiments with its political and social vision,” and one that “shattered the taboos of fifties artistic expression in form and content” (Martin 57, 9). Protesting social inequities such as seemingly arbitrary laws against recreational drug use that made money for the government at the expense of the poor, *The Connection* obscured the lines between real and performed action, and between performer and audience. Their 1963 production of Kenneth H. Brown’s *The Brig* also served as a theatrical commentary on social injustice, specifically as a pacifist protest against military corruption and cruelty, as well as a vehicle for the Living Theatre to further develop their techniques of improvisation (Martin 61). Munk writes that, “the scripts were as nearly documentary as any slice-of-life but staged as if naturalism were indeed out of the question, a contradiction that pulled the audience in deeper than could either theatricalism or realism alone” (38). Both plays, staged environmentally, allowed audiences close-up glimpses into the lives of their characters

and into the issues against which they struggled, at the same time resisting the naturalistic narrative style that dominated the mainstream. Both also encouraged audiences to reexamine the world around them from a fresh and enlightened point of view: “Neither production lent itself directly to the activists’ question: ‘What is to be done?’ Instead both asked: ‘What is this society of ours? Can you look at it some new way?’” (Munk 41).

In 1963, the I.R.S. shut down a production of *The Brig* and closed the Living Theatre’s playhouse on Fourteenth Street, charging Beck and Malina with tax evasion. Malina and others believe that this action was at least partially motivated by the subject matter of *The Brig*. At the time, the couple was actively involved in payment negotiations with the I.R.S., and Malina contends that the real issue was the government’s unwillingness to continue working with them while their play delivered scathing critiques of the U.S. Marine Corps night after night (Sainer 285). The group famously snuck cast and audience members into the theatre for a final performance of *The Brig* and locked themselves inside the brig on stage at the end the show before facing arrest. The next year, following their trial and brief imprisonment for tax evasion and contempt of court, Beck and Malina took their company to Europe, where they toured from 1964 to 1968, producing overtly political plays and developing the process of “collective creation.” Munk writes that, during this time, “The organizational principle was self-governing consensus (the Becks deplored their own guru-status); the practice was drugs, meditation, the occult, vegetarianism, anticonsumerism, and free love; the politics remained—with much debate—anarchism, pacifism, and civil disobedience” (43). Influenced by the work of Brecht, Artaud, and Meyerhold, the Living Theatre produced several collaborative works that continued to experiment with form while engaging in virulent protest against social injustice and governmental restriction of individual freedoms. They crafted four major works during their

European exile: *Mysteries and Smaller Pieces* (1964), *Frankenstein* (1965), *Antigone* (1967), and the collective creation that would eventually become the group's most well-known piece, *Paradise Now* (1968). When they returned to the United States in 1968, they toured the nation with these four plays. Though popular opinions of the Living Theatre's new work were mixed, their tour had a strong influence on students and counterculturalists alike, and *Paradise Now* was of particular interest to young protesters. Martin claims that, "During its 1968-69 American tour, the Living Theatre's audiences consisted of not just the student Left but young people identifying with countercultural rebellion. *Paradise Now*, the tour's centerpiece, linked immediate political issues such as Vietnam to a larger array of social and personal freedoms which the counterculture embraced" (18). Blurring the lines between performance and protest, *Paradise Now* led audiences into the streets in peaceful protest at the show's close, with the actors chanting, "The theatre is in the street. The street belongs to the people. Free the theatre. Free the street. Begin" (Beck and Malina 140). Martin writes that these final words, with their emphasis on audience involvement, the public's anarchic collective ownership of the streets, and the liberation of both the theatre and the individual from societal constraints "encapsulated most of the salient themes of the group's career" (49).

Ultimately, the Living Theatre revolutionized theatre in both form and content. Martin comments on the significance of the group's willingness to fearlessly address pressing and controversial political issues onstage, as well as its focus on mobilizing audience members to take part in both performance and protest:

Though a tradition of political commentary existed in American drama, epitomized by the Group Theatre in the thirties, The Living Theatre along with a handful of other collectives that emerged during the sixties, such as the San

Francisco Mime Troupe, El Teatro Campesino, Bread and Puppet Theater, and the Open Theater (founded by former Living Theatre member Joseph Chaikin), revitalized theater's capacity to address political issues directly after the eclipse of obviously topical material during the McCarthy era. Among these groups, the Living Theatre particularly incorporated audiences into performances as a device to broach political issues. (51)

The Living Theatre's commitment to its ideals, unwavering in the face of public and critical disapproval, the open hostility of law enforcement officials, and the frequent threats of police brutality and arrest, continues to serve as an inspiration for theatre artists today. In a blog post entitled "*The Brig: A Play By the Living Theatre*," Gary Brackett, an Italian dramatist involved in a 2006 re-staging of *The Brig*, puts his finger on a central question that many contemporary dramatists may ask when looking back on the Living Theatre's work in the sixties: "Where is theatre like this today?" Despite the positive influence of the Living Theatre on artists and activists on an international scale, as well as the nostalgia that many today feel for its iconic countercultural creations, the theatre collective also engaged in some problematic cultural appropriations, incorporating select stereotypes about various cultural Others into their plays in order to serve their own political purposes. Native American appropriations were particularly prevalent in *Paradise Now*.

Paradise Now, collectively devised by the Living Theatre in Italy in 1968, was created with the stated goal of inciting revolution by spreading the theatre collective's anarcho-pacifist ideals and allowing audiences a forum for expressing their disapproval of some of the most highly contested social and political issues of the day—including the Vietnam War, anti-drug legislation, and capitalism. Malina and Beck said of the collective creation that, "The purpose of

the play . . . is to lead to a state of being in which non-violent revolutionary action is possible” (Biner 174). The play was not only meant to make political statements, however; Beck and Malina also envisioned it as a “spiritual voyage” that would culminate in the enlightenment of its audiences and, ultimately, in the transformation of society (Qtd. in Munk 44). In his *Life of the Theatre*, Beck outlined the lofty aims of the production:

it is not just revolutionary theatre. it is revolutionary action, direct revolutionary action. . . . if the play succeeds, it should stimulate the growth and development of newspapers, printing services, news services, green revolution cooperatives, handicraft cooperatives, industrial production and raw material production distribution geared for revolutionary services, to hasten the steps for the non-violent revolution. (Beck 16)

As Erika Munk points out, it is difficult to examine the text of *Paradise Now* and understand how Beck might have imagined such profound revolution resulting from the play’s production, but his mindset must be understood in its historical and geographical context: “The radicalism and militancy of the European student, antiwar, anticolonial, and labor movements peaked in 1968 when even sober analysts envisioned revolution right around the corner, the Left with hope, the Right with fear” (Munk 45). A month before the first performance of *Paradise Now* in June of 1968, the Living Theatre had led French students to occupy the Odéon Theatre in Paris as part of a general strike by students and workers. Revolution was in the air in Europe, and Beck and Malina were hopeful that, with their new play, they could bring that sense of revolution with them across the Atlantic. When they debuted *Paradise Now* in the U.S. as part of their 1968-69 tour, however, they faced audiences in various stages of disillusionment and despair. Munk relates the words of two student leaders that summarize the general frustrations of many

American students during the late sixties: “‘To be white and a radical in America this summer is to see horror and feel impotence,’ said one; another recalled later that ‘despair became a cliché among young white radicals’” (46). American audiences responded to *Paradise Now* in various ways. Some were inspired by what they witnessed, while others were angered by the company’s aggressive methods of engaging spectators and by the perceived hypocrisies inherent in the play—for example, performers leading “The Rite of Universal Intercourse” while themselves protected by loincloths, or lamenting “I am not allowed to travel without a passport,” after touring Europe and returning to the U.S. with no apparent problems (Munk 46-47). *Paradise Now* was, not surprisingly, despised by members of the Right, as well as by many theatre critics who were “still wedded to realism” and by members of the radical Left who would have the collective to be more militant in the pursuit of their revolution (Munk 48-49). The charismatic energy of the company, however, as well as its resilient faith in the possibility of positive change, proved infectious for many audience members. Jack Kroll, a writer for *Newsweek* and, according to Munk, “the most intelligent and sympathetic of the large-readership liberal critics,” praised the group’s spirit and dedication even as he acknowledged some of the popular complaints against their work, writing that, “exasperating, boring, outrageous and high-handed as they can be, their authenticity of spirit is beyond question as is their desire to settle for nothing but real change in the human beings who are the ultimate substance of both art and life” (Qtd. in Munk 48).

Paradise Now incorporates elements from many texts and traditions across a number of different cultures. Though I focus here solely on Native American representation in the play, its borrowings from classical Chinese texts and yogic practice as well as from the teachings of Hasidic Judaism, Kabbalah, and Hinduism might each merit their own in-depth examinations.

The play consists of a series of eight Rites, further divided into Visions and Actions, all designed to call audience members to political revolution. In the original programs for the show, its progression is mapped onto the bodies of two nude male figures. One wears a beard and a turban, and his body is inscribed with Hebrew lettering; the other, clad in face paint and an elaborate headdress, bears the symbols of the yogic chakras on his body. Ladders superimposed on the figures divide them according to the eight Rites (as well as eight colors, “Rungs,” and various themes and sub-themes) and the Rites, Visions, and Actions are outlined between them.

Underneath it all are written the words, “THIS CHART IS THE MAP. THE ESSENTIAL TRIP IS THE VOYAGE FROM THE MANY TO THE ONE. THE PLOT IS THE REVOLUTION.”

Munk neatly sums up the effect of the program art, claiming that, “The entire astounding proliferation of hierarchies is at once reminiscent of medieval magicians’ charts, 1950s drawings of ‘evolution’ or ‘progress’ for children, and bad acid art” (44).

Native imagery is featured most prominently in the first Rung of *Paradise Now*, the “Rung of Good and Evil.” Notes in the script and on the program indicate that this Rung correlates to the color black, which represents, among other things, “the shadow of the murdered Indians falling on the culture” (31). When mapped onto the diagram of the two figures in the program, Rung I corresponds to the men’s feet, and foot imagery recurs several times throughout this section of the play. Rung I opens with “Rite I: The Rite of Guerilla Theatre,” which features a series of laments against contemporary societal constraints, with actors approaching the audience, variously whispering, shouting, and “flipping out”: “I AM NOT ALLOWED TO TRAVEL WITHOUT A PASSPORT. I DON’T KNOW HOW TO STOP THE WARS. YOU CAN’T LIVE IF YOU DON’T HAVE MONEY. I’M NOT ALLOWED TO SMOKE MARIJUANA. I’M NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE MY CLOTHES OFF” (15-19). Immediately

following this Rite is “Vision I: THE VISION OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN.” The Vision opens with an image of the cast sitting cross-legged around a ceremonial fire, passing a peace pipe “until they become Indians” (19-20). The actors then slowly begin to rise from the circle, and, on a cue from one actor identified as the “Shaman,” they form human totem poles that advance towards the audience, beating a rhythm with their feet—“They are the figures on the totem poles, grimacing, supernatural, animistic, fetishistic, demonic, celestial” (21). The script describes the ensuing action as follows:

They are the Emergence of Natural Man, and as they move forward one by one, the murderous shots of civilization ring out and they are shot down, each one making the sound of the bullet and the sound of the Indian’s scream as he falls forward face down onto the stage, biting the dust. IMAGE: The Fallen, the Slain Red Man. (22)

This step is a particularly telling, if inadvertent, commentary on imperialist guilt. By simulating the sound of the bullet as well as that of the Native’s cry, the actor who is attempting to become a Native character, or the “Natural Man,” almost simultaneously takes on the role of Euro-American aggressor.

Vision I is followed by Action I, which laments capitalism, colonization, violence, and repression. The actors, who have collapsed face down onto the stage, stay in their prone positions, lifting their heads and shoulders only to deliver their lines. In this way, they maintain the image of “The Fallen, the Slain Red Man” throughout the Action. This section of text includes lines such as “Listen. Under the pavement of New York you can hear the Indians,” and “Don’t step on the Indians” (23-25). After a one-minute pause in which the audience is free to “do anything it wishes to do,” the actors begin beating a rhythm on the floor, “the rhythm of an

Indian dance.” There is more chanting, followed by “an exultant Indian dance” in which the actors “dance out into the audience, up the aisles, chanting to the spectators” (26). Action I ends with these lines:

It is the hippies who have risen up from the pavement, reincarnations of the American Indian, aspiring to be the Natural Man as represented by the great Indian culture, the great suppressed cultures. The culture is assaulted from below. It is the first step in revolutionary action to change the culture. The Natural Man confronts the spectator. The Natural Man knows he can travel without a passport, that he can smoke marijuana, that he can find ways to live without money, that he can take off his clothes. He knows how to stop the wars. That’s the flashout. (27)

This section of text is highly revelatory, and in my fourth chapter, I look more closely at its implications, as well as at the origins of the concept of the hippie as the “reincarnation of the American Indian,” a phrase which did not originate with *Paradise Now*.

In “The Revolution of Cultures,” a set of explanatory notes that concludes the “Rung of Good and Evil,” the Living Theatre reveals its plan to reform society through the destruction of existing social values: “In order to effect a social change, the old values must be replaced or destroyed and either new values set up or an open space of no values created for the wind to blow through.” The collective explains that the audience has just witnessed the germination of this revolutionary overhaul, and that the Native figure symbolizes the values that the new world order will embrace: “[The Revolution of Cultures] is represented here by the Indians as the Natural Man who serve as examples of tribal and communitarian alternatives, bringing with them the gift of beads and the peace pipe” (27). Native imagery is significantly absent from the remainder of *Paradise Now*. The Living Theatre’s vision of the Native American, located at the

foot of the map, thus functions primarily as a sort of cultural ground zero, a foundation on which a revolutionized society can be built. The group's imagined Native becomes precisely what they need him to become, nothing less and nothing more. He is an early incarnation of the idealized Natural Man, who holds all of the answers and is able to "travel without a passport . . . smoke marijuana . . . live without money . . . take off his clothes . . . [and] stop the wars" (*Paradise Now* 27). The theatre collective borrowed those perceived aspects of Native identity that they imagined to align most closely with their own goals—namely, freedom from the confines of the laws and social mores of the United States. This perception of Native freedom is highly ironic given the constant struggles of actual Natives in the sixties and seventies to gain recognition, legal protections, and reparations from the U.S. government, but the Native figure upheld by the Living Theatre is merely a relic of the past, imagined to be part of an extinct race. Furthermore, this imaginary Native is symbolized by a set of reductive stereotypes and images, and Native identity boils down to a set of clichéd and easily-recognizable symbols—the peace pipe, the ceremonial fire, the totem pole, etc. The performance of the Native in *Paradise Now*, to use Conquergood's taxonomy, consists of "naïve and glib" representations "marked by superficiality," and in this play, it is all too evident that, "The distinctiveness of the other [has been] glossed over by a glaze of generalities" (Conquergood 6). As Tzvetan Todorov writes, "Can we really love someone if we know little or nothing of his identity, if we see, in place of that identity, a projection of ourselves or our ideals?" (Qtd. in Conquergood 6). Despite any proclamations of love for Native American culture or mourning for Native suffering, the members of the Living Theatre crafted the Native in their own image, appropriating those attributes that were useful and ignoring the realities of contemporary Native existence. *Paradise*

Now, then, for all of its sincere attempts to promote positive change, fits well into Conquergood's category of "The Enthusiast's Infatuation."

The San Francisco Diggers

In the mid-1960s, the Haight-Ashbury district became the center of the counterculture movement in San Francisco, a city that had itself been a bohemian mecca for over a century, widely known as the "Paris of North America" since the 1890s (Cavallo 106). In his book *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History*, Dominick Cavallo writes that, in the mid-1960s, the "center of the city's cultural radicalism shifted from North Beach, with its enclave of Beat writers and bohemians, to the Haight-Ashbury district." He continues: "The fixtures of the small Beat movement—poetry, jazz, alcohol and discreet use of marijuana and amphetamines—were replaced by tens of thousands of hippies who lived in communes, listened to and created new forms of rock music, openly displayed their sexuality and boldly experimented with hallucinogenic drugs" (Cavallo 107). In the early sixties, the student protests at Berkeley contributed to a spirit of political dissent in San Francisco, one that quickly took hold in the area of the city surrounding the intersection of Haight Street and Ashbury Street. At the same time, Timothy Leary, Ken Kesey, and others touted the powers of hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD and peyote, claiming their potential to liberate individuals on social, personal, and spiritual levels. Psychedelic drug culture found a welcoming home in the Haight-Ashbury, or "Pyschedelphia," as the area was alternately known. Self-identified hippies explored their freedoms to live and love communally, and experimentation in the performing arts contributed to a thriving creative atmosphere in the Haight-Ashbury. The district's status as countercultural epicenter was cemented in the summer of 1967, or the "Summer of Love," when approximately

one hundred thousand people, many of them college students or runaway teenagers, converged on the Haight-Ashbury to experience the height of the counterculture for themselves. It was from this fertile artistic environment that the San Francisco Diggers emerged in 1966. Though less well-known today than the Living Theatre, the San Francisco Mime Troupe from which they emerged, or the Youth International Party—more commonly known as the Yippies—whose public demonstrations they inspired, the Diggers were an integral part of the hippie counterculture that flourished in the Haight-Ashbury district in the late 1960s. Cavallo writes that the Diggers became “the most celebrated and influential voice within San Francisco’s hip community” mere weeks after they began making themselves known through broadsides and street performances (101).

The original members of the Diggers were part of the San Francisco Mime Troupe who left the group in 1966 due to ideological differences. Founded in 1959 by R. G. Davis and still in operation today, the San Francisco Mime Troupe focused on using satire and the conventions of sixteenth-century *commedia dell’arte* to deliver political critiques during the mid-sixties to early seventies. Cavallo writes that Davis’s goal for his company was “to push American society beyond what he called the ‘stagnation of the fifties’” in order to “create a relationship between performers and audience that transcended the escapism of ‘bourgeois’ theater and the pedantic pseudo-realism of the theatre of the Old Left” (117). Davis claimed, “My own theatrical premise [is that] Western Society is Rotten in General, Capitalist Society In the Main, and U.S. Society In the Particular” (Qtd. in Cavallo 118). Mime Troupe members Peter Berg and Emmett Grogan agreed with Davis’s position on the corrupt nature of capitalism in the U.S., but they grew to differ from Davis on the subject of theatrical methods of reform. In March of 1966, Berg asserted his view that the stage itself was an impediment to guerilla theatre’s goals of transforming and

mobilizing audiences, as the level of separation between actors and audience allowed the latter to “passively consume even the Troupe’s incendiary message” (Hodgdon 6). In August of that year, Berg, Grogan, Peter Coyote, and others began distributing position papers to the group on their proposed reforms, suggesting that, “the Troupe dedicate itself to mobilizing the Haight bohemians . . . abandon the use of a stage, and reorganize along nonhierarchical lines, abolishing Davis’s position of director” (Hodgdon 6).⁴ Unsurprisingly, Davis refused these proposals, and several Troupe members accompanied Berg, Grogan, and Coyote as they split from the Mime Troupe and joined with Grogan’s friend Billy Murcott to found the Diggers.

In his book *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Countercultural Communities, 1965-83*, historian Tim Hodgdon writes that, while the new collective’s name was taken after the seventeenth century English Diggers, an anarchist group who, “in 1649 resisted the enclosure of the common lands after the overthrow of the monarchy,” it also had broader cultural associations, correlating to the popular Beat slang term *dig*, as used to indicate understanding or appreciation. Hodgdon continues:

Furthermore, it bore coincidental resonance with the nineteenth-century Euro-American pejorative *digger*, which referred to the supposed cultural inferiority of California’s Native Americans, some of whom derived subsistence from the gathering of wild roots. If *digger* named a group whose “crime” lay in living without money or private property, yet within the limits of the ecosystem, then the hippie collective found the name all the more appealing. (7)

Whether or not the group considered this Native American connection when settling on the name “Diggers,” it is likely that it would have served as yet another selling point, had it been

⁴ Né Cohon, Peter Coyote renamed himself when an experience with peyote led him to imagine that his footprints in the snow were like those of a coyote (Hodgdon 91, n. 13).

suggested. As I will show, the Diggers, like many groups and individuals who were part of San Francisco's counterculture movement, frequently romanticized and attempted to appropriate Native American culture and identity. The idea of living without a money system or the need to own property certainly had significant appeal for the Diggers, who were strongly committed to the goal of creating "an anarchist community that circumvented the money system, which they believed caused American society's most pernicious evils" (Martin 87). They wanted to disrupt the status quo in America and create an anarchist society of individuals who were not enslaved by the pursuit of material wealth. Cavallo points out, however, that the group saw capitalism and materialism as symptoms of a larger problem with American society. He writes:

The Diggers did not believe capitalism, or any other institution, was the real problem. The problem and the solution resided within American culture itself.

The problem was the inability or fear of Americans to act upon the freedom their culture claimed to endorse and, in any case, legitimated. The solution was to simply improvise one's freedom, to act viscerally and theatrically. (Cavallo 121)

In his 1972 autobiography *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps*, Emmett Grogan articulated the Diggers' beliefs about individual freedom and the restrictions inherent in capitalist American society. He spoke about the group in the third person: "They agreed that the ultimate goal of the Height community seemed to be freedom and a chance to do your thing, but they felt one could only be free by drawing the line and living outside the profit, private property, and power premises of Western culture" (Grogan 236-37). "Do your thing," and "It's free because it's yours," became the Diggers' two most recognizable slogans, used to exhort members of the Haight-Ashbury community to liberate themselves by claiming and enacting, rather than asking for, their freedoms.

Bradford Martin writes that the Diggers, who were “focused on marrying countercultural lifestyles to a more transformational and oppositional political vision,” tasked themselves with becoming “a political conscience for the Haight-Ashbury counterculture” (86-87). As such, they had very specific views on what their mission entailed and on how they and their audiences should go about the process of overthrowing the status quo. While some of their ideals aligned with those touted alternately by the New Left, the psychedelics, the “flower children,” and more profit- and media-oriented hippie groups, the Diggers also took issue with each of these on various points. For example, they differed from “straight” New Leftists, who they tended to view as “self-righteous” and “puritanical,” in their views on how best to effect change: “Whereas the New Left formulated ideological platforms and made demands in the style of an orthodox political organization, the Diggers repudiated the notion of demands, opting for often playfully theatrical community-based innovations that attempted to provide a framework for the utopian life they imagined” (Cavallo 102; Martin 88). Rather than demanding the social and governmental reforms they envisioned, the Diggers focused on leading their audiences to experience those reforms directly, assuming and acting upon their individual freedoms, instead of requesting and waiting for change. “The Diggers took to the streets of the Haight-Ashbury with the faith that a revolutionary transformation of individual consciousness could undermine the illegitimate American society,” writes Tim Hodgdon. He continues, “When enough people chose freedom, the status quo would simply collapse for lack of support” (xxvii). The Diggers were also openly critical of the apathy they observed among many of the Haight-Ashbury’s less politically-minded hippies. One Digger broadside took aim at the perceived naivety of the flower children, with lines such as, “FORGET the war in vietnam. Flowers are lovely,” and, “FORGET America’s 3300 military bases. Make music” (Martin 92). Neither did the Diggers approve of the

Yippies, who, led by Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman, modeled their acts of public protest in New York on Digger demonstrations they observed in San Francisco. One of Hoffman's most well-known acts, for example, was dropping dollar bills on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and burning them while being interviewed by reporters; the demonstration was inspired by the Diggers, who had begun publicly burning money months earlier. The Diggers perceived the Yippies' actions as little more than media stunts, and they were displeased when Hoffman publicly identified himself as a Digger in the mid-1960s (Cavallo 101-2). In a 1989 interview with Etan Ben-Ami, Peter Coyote commented on Rubin and Hoffman's motivations: "But you know, Jerry was always a media junky. Abbie, who was a friend of mine, was always a media junky. We explained everything to those guys, and they violated everything we taught them." Playing to the media was considered a violation of Digger values on two levels—it rendered the players vulnerable to government intervention, and it called their motives into question. In his 1998 memoir *Sleeping Where I Fall*, Coyote reflected: "The FBI couldn't infiltrate us. We did everything anonymously, and we did everything for nothing, because we wanted our actions to be authentic. . . . [Hoffman] wrote a book called *Free*, and he put his name on it! He set himself up to be a leader of the counterculture, and he was undone by that. Big mistake" (Steinman).

Although its members experimented with LSD, peyote, and other hallucinogenic drugs, the Diggers also disapproved of what Grogan referred to as the "absolute bullshit implicit in the psychedelic transcendentalism" (Qtd. in Cavallo 120). In particular, they were skeptical of the idea that mystical drug-induced experiences could be used to better society:

As Peter Berg put it years later, "the Digger group were more social[ly] oriented than revelatory. . . . Things were real when people did them, and what people do

has to relate to food, shelter, economics, employment, creativity, etc. . . . So, if someone took LSD to find out the inner truth and mystery of life”—and held that that insight alone was sufficient to effect social change—“that kind of individual was disregarded or derided by the Digger people” (Hodgdon 13).

The Diggers believed that, while hallucinatory drugs might be used to produce personal revelations, they had no real power to incite social revolution, and their usage for such purposes served primarily as a distraction from the pursuit of tangible results via “real” action. The Diggers took even greater offense, however, at the hypocrisy implicit in their fellow counterculturalists’ attempts to profit financially from the sale of psychedelic drugs and hippie paraphernalia, even as they professed anti-capitalist values. Such materialism was in direct conflict with their central project of eliminating the monetary system, and with their “It’s free because it’s yours” philosophy, a concept that was central to many of their theatrical experiments.

In his essay “Staging the Revolution: Guerilla Theater as a Countercultural Practice, 1965-68,” Michael Williams Doyle describes the Diggers’ theatrical style, as it evolved from its origins in the San Francisco Mime Troupe:

The Diggers borrowed from the Mime Troupe the ensemble form, as well as the aggressive improvisational style, the itinerant outlaw posture, and the satirical social critique mode of *commedia dell’arte*. They also appropriated Davis’s dramatic form of guerilla theater and gave it a new twist. Where he had taken theater out of its traditional setting to stage it in the parks, the Diggers took theater into the streets. (80)

Influenced by Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and the idea of assaulting the senses in order to provoke audience members to take action, the group crafted their "aggressive improvisational" demonstrations around the belief that theatrical performances, particularly improvisational ones, were useful tools for fostering social change because they could serve as "metaphors for personal freedom and as practical means of enacting that freedom" (Cavallo 102). For the Diggers, society, culture, and personal identity were all as malleable as theatrical improvisations, and American life was itself inherently performative, a constant process of creating and revising individual identity at will. Thus the individual who sought change had only to begin living that change in order to make it real: "An American life could be a consciously performed series of improvised roles. The only permanent lines in the script of American culture were the rights of individuals to create themselves and the continent's expansive stage upon which that freedom was enacted. . . . If an American wished to be free of the past, he simply needed to 'act' that way" (Cavallo 103). Digger performances, or "life-acts," fell largely into two categories: installations and street demonstrations. Most installations were designed to put the "It's free because it's yours," philosophy into practice. In December of 1966, they opened the first of three free stores, dubbed the "Free Frame of Reference." Visitors could stop in to get free coffee and snacks, to do their laundry free of charge, and to procure and exchange free clothing, books, music, and art. Such items were often donated by organizations and individuals, but the Diggers also stole much of what they gave away, a fact that Martin asserts, "squared perfectly with the Diggers' ideological rejection of capitalism and repudiation of public property" (100). The free stores were themselves performative sites; for example, in a 1967 handbill, Peter Berg described several scenarios that might have taken place at the third store, known as the "Trip without a Ticket":

A sign: If Someone Asks to See the Manager Tell Him He's the Manager.

Someone asked how much a book cost. How much did he think it was worth? 75 cents. The money was taken and held out for anyone. "Who wants 75 cents?" A girl who had just walked in came over and took it.

A basket labeled Free Money.

No owner, no Manager, no employees and no cash-register. A salesman in a free store is a life-actor. Anyone who will assume an answer to a question or accept a problem as a turn-on.

Question (whispered): "Who pays the rent?"

Answer (loudly): "May I help you?" (Qtd. in Hodgdon 17)

The Diggers also organized Free Food events in order to enact the new world order they envisioned. Martin calls these events the Diggers' "greatest accomplishment," as, over a period of several months, they distributed food daily to crowds of up to four hundred people in the Golden Gate Park: "This 'Free Food' ritual provided Haight-Ashbury's young hippies with much-needed nourishment, fostered community, and initiated a social practice that served as an alternative to participation in the money system" (98). In his interview with Ben-Ami, Peter Coyote recalled that such events were often mistaken for charity, and that he himself misunderstood the group's purpose at first: "The first time I was offered Free Food, I so completely missed it, I said, 'Oh no, I can afford to buy lunch. Let the people who can't afford it eat.' And Emmett [Grogan] took a look at me like, 'Oh yeah?' And I got it." The purpose of the Free Stores, the Free Food events, and the other free services the Diggers hoped to eventually provide (such as free clinics, restaurants, and a renovated hotel that would serve as an "all night center, sack out places for singles & couples, free movies, theater, acid rescue, dream life for

street orphans”) was not to provide charitable help to the poor (Hodgdon 18). Rather, the Diggers hoped to create a way of life that transcended the monetary system by simply putting their ideals into practice. As Coyote put it, “the Diggers set out to create the conditions they described. And the condition we described was: eternity is now, if you have a fantasy, take responsibility for it and actualize it, build or imply a society around it. And if it’s nice, people will join you” (Coyote interview).

The Diggers’ street theatre, inspired by Allan Kaprow’s “happenings” and other products of the burgeoning trend towards performance art, had a similar focus on actualizing change. One of their most infamous life-acts was the Intersection Game, in which, assisted by two eight-foot puppets borrowed from the Mime Troupe, they led some five hundred participants to assert their freedom from authority by walking in the middle of a busy intersection with the goal of creating as many geometrical patterns as they could. Police responded to the ensuing traffic jam by arresting several life-actors (and both puppets), but they were unable to stop the demonstration; participants continued dancing in the streets until well after the police had given up and left the scene (Hodgdon 19-20). Another well-known Digger demonstration, a parade entitled “The Death of Hippie and the Birth of the Free Man” took place over a period of several days in October of 1967. The Diggers, who by that time had changed their name to the Free City Collective, organized this event as an attempt to “reclaim the counterculture’s spirit of personal freedom from the commodified and ‘stereotyped hippie artifacts’ that many young people donned as a superficial badge of a media-generated phenomenon” (Martin 87). A symbolic funeral for the term “hippie,” rendered virtually meaningless by the media’s overuse, the parade was an appeal to members of the Haight-Ashbury countercultural community to renew their commitment to misunderstood and abandoned ideals. As Coyote points out, Digger street

performances empowered audiences by giving them opportunities to experience firsthand the breadth of possibilities that lay before them: “the Diggers knew what was wrong with the culture and believed that if we created enough examples of ‘free-life’ by actually acting them out on the streets, without the safety-net of the stage, then people would have alternatives to society’s skimpy menu of choices” (Qtd. in Cavallo 121). Berg framed their work another way, calling life-acting a form of “social acid” because it “affected the consciousness of participants in the same way as did LSD, dissolving one’s prior cognitive map of reality in order to open up new possibilities” (27).

Though the group remained in operation under their original name for only two years, the Diggers were a vital part of the countercultural landscape of the Haight-Ashbury, and their influence has outlived them by decades. They were ultimately unsuccessful in achieving the national anarchic revolution they envisioned, however, and two of the main issues that hindered the group’s process stemmed from some of the very ideals that they espoused. Peter Coyote reflects that, “[t]he Diggers were not very good at institutions. Things were based on what you felt like doing. After you’d hustled the food for a while and that got to be a drag . . . you would stop, and then other people would take it over. The churches would take it over, or someone who felt like it” (Coyote interview). The Diggers stayed true to their commitment to personal freedom and their rejection of all forms of authority by encouraging members to help with group’s projects as much or as little as they wanted, but this policy also caused some organizational issues, “key problem[s] of an approach to social change based on contingent, noncompulsory, personal commitment” (Martin 101). Members were free to stop working whenever they wished, and when interest waned to a significant degree, Digger projects were sometimes left to be taken over by other institutions or abandoned altogether. A second central issue, identified by both

Cavallo and Doyle, lay in the Diggers' dependence on the affluence of American society, despite their distaste for capitalism; as Doyle points out, "The Diggers would be unimaginable without their having been able to draw upon the vaunted affluence of a postscarcity society" (81).

Cavallo expounds on this issue:

Ironically, the Digger belief that everything should be free was inseparable from a naïve and rather traditional faith in the power of American abundance and technological ingenuity to solve social problems. Like many cultural and political radicals of the sixties—and other thoughtful Americans since the mid nineteenth century—the Diggers assumed American enterprise and technology could create unlimited abundance and leisure for everyone. They inadvertently hitched their radical dreams to the wagon of American enterprise, affluence, and innovation.

(123)

Though they despised the money system, the Diggers would not have been able to take on many of their "Free" projects without it. Much of the free food that they distributed in Golden Gate Park was homegrown on communal farms, and the Diggers often rejected donations from individuals who had paid money for them. At the same time, a significant portion of the food they gave away, as well as of the products they offered at their free stores, was stolen from businesses that operated on American currency or donated by individuals whose ability to give was dictated by their participation in a capitalist society. Without the surplus of goods and services made available to them by "American enterprise, affluence, and innovation," the Diggers would have had much less to give—an inherent flaw in the idea that a group could separate themselves completely from the money system that surrounded them on all sides.

The year 1967 saw the decline of both the Digger collective and the Haight-Ashbury district itself. Though the “Summer of Love” had brought national attention to the area as one of the nation’s most significant hubs for countercultural activity, the event also caused a huge strain on the Haight-Ashbury’s resources and social structure, despite the efforts of the Diggers, Allen Cohen’s underground newspaper *The San Francisco Oracle*, and several other prominent groups to prepare for the enormous influx of people headed their way. Cavallo writes, “The ‘Summer of Love’ was the beginning of the end of the Haight-Ashbury, both as a bohemian neighborhood and a viable community” (140). At least one hundred thousand people flocked to the area beginning in the spring of 1967, individuals from a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Many came from affluent backgrounds and did not share the strength of the original Haight-Ashbury hippies’ convictions, and others came to the area as tourists and/or as teenage runaways who did not engage with counterculture ideals on the same intellectual plane as the area’s earlier inhabitants (Cavallo 140). The use of hard drugs such as heroin and barbiturates became more common than that of hallucinogenic drugs, and violent crime rates skyrocketed. In 1967, the Diggers claimed, “Rape is as common as bullshit on Haight Street,” and occurrences of violent physical assault, robbery, and murder also increased exponentially (Qtd. in Cavallo 140). Even the Diggers’ free store, the Trip Without a Ticket, was robbed, an incident that Cavallo calls “perhaps the most pointless robbery in the history of the United States” (140). In the face of the area’s changing demographics and the attendant spike in violent crime, those who had begun the countercultural revolution in the Haight-Ashbury began to leave it in droves, often opting for communal life on farms outside of the city instead. The Diggers, who by 1967 were calling themselves the Free City Collective, stopped conducting street theatricals and published their final handbills in May of 1968. Many of the original members of the group relocated to Lou

Gottlieb's Morning Star Ranch in Sonoma County. Though the San Francisco Diggers were a relatively short-lived theatre collective, active in the Haight-Ashbury from 1966 to 1968, their influence spread across the nation quickly. Their street theatricals and free stores were copied in New York City and elsewhere by the Yippies and by other groups identifying themselves as Diggers, and their methods are still emulated today by many artists and activists committed to fighting for social reform.

Native appropriation was widespread in San Francisco during the sixties and seventies, and Haight-Ashbury hippies regularly attempted to emulate many romanticized characteristics of Native American life and history. The Diggers were no different. A group consisting predominantly of young white Americans, many of whom were college-educated and raised in working- and middle-class homes, the Diggers professed a strong sense of kinship with marginalized racial and ethnic groups (Doyle 81). Witnessing the civil rights struggles of Native Americans, African Americans, and Mexican Americans during the 1960s had a great impact on the youth of the period, many of whom chose to participate directly in civil rights protests and demonstrations (Hodgdon xxxvii). In the process, however, they sometimes glossed over significant differences between their own relatively privileged backgrounds and those of the individuals fighting for even the most basic of human rights. In September of 1966, Emmett Grogan and Billy Murcott wrote and distributed anonymously one of the first in a series of handbills that came to be known as the *Digger Papers*. Entitled "Let Me Live in a World Pure," it began with the assertion: "there are no more negroes, jews, christians. there is only one minority in America" (*Digger Papers*). As Hodgdon writes, the handbill assumed the general erasure of distinctions between various minority groups, including the hippies, who were all engaged in battles for social change: "The authors did not elaborate, but the implication was that

the formerly separate struggles for power in America had now merged into one: a conflict between defenders of the status quo and their marginalized opponents” (3). The Diggers correctly identified a pressing need to reform society on a number of levels in order to secure equal rights for all Americans. While it is true that hippies often faced discrimination at the hands of law enforcement officials, civic authorities, and their neighbors, however, the assumptions that the Diggers made about shared experiences and goals are clearly problematic. The assertion that “formerly separate struggles for power” had been “merged into one” elides important distinctions between the needs and goals of various minority groups. While Native American and African American civil rights activists, for example, did share a broad interest in upsetting the status quo, as the Diggers put it, the specific rights they fought for were significantly different, and the primary goals of these rights movements were distinct both from each other and from those of the hippie counterculture. The Diggers also overlooked important differences between the backgrounds and levels of agency of various marginalized groups as they argued that personal freedom had only to be claimed in order to be realized. The “Do your thing” philosophy may have been a useful guideline for those who were not constant victims of extreme poverty, racial discrimination, and/or the oppressive indifference of the U.S. government; to many who were, however, the idea of freedom as a thing that could simply be put into effect by the individual who wanted it badly enough must have been somewhat absurd.

With support from the underground magazine *The Realist*, Diggers published a free collection of their written works in 1968, including not only the most significant of the handbills and broadsides they distributed on the streets from 1966 to 1968, but also several new articles. The second page of the publication was dedicated to a poem written by Gary Snyder, entitled “A Curse on The Men in Washington, Pentagon,” first published in the *San Francisco Oracle*’s

“American Indian Issue” in March of 1967. The decision to reprint this poem in the *Digger Papers* was perhaps due in part to an incident that occurred in June, 1967. That month, Emmett Grogan and Peter Berg accompanied Paul Krassner, editor of *The Realist*, to an SDS meeting in Michigan, eager to disrupt these “square and hypocritical” representatives of the “stodgy New Left” with a guerilla-style Digger performance. The trip itself was an eventful one; Todd Gitlin, a member of the SDS who was present that day, recalls the event in his book, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*:

They had just driven all the way from San Francisco, stopping exclusively at Phillips 66 gas stations because that was the credit card they had hustled; they had been nabbed by the highway patrol for swimming naked in the Platte River, then nabbed for speeding, then narrowly squeaked out of a shoplifting episode and a barroom brawl . . . and then, just down the road, their car had skidded into a canal, and now one of their comrades was in jail. (227)

Once they arrived, the men burst into the meeting and launched into an impassioned diatribe against the methods of the SDS and the New Left, which they saw as offensively ineffectual. After verbally, and possibly physically, attacking some members of the SDS, Grogan produced a scroll of wrapping paper, on which he had written Snyder’s poem. He read the poem out loud, complete with special effects for maximum impact: “Periodically, the Diggers turned off the lights, and Grogan held a flashlight under his face for horror-movie effect” (Gitlin 228). Though Gitlin reports the scene as having an effect that was more comic than scary, the text of Snyder’s poem evokes images of graphic violence.⁵ The speaker in the poem promises to destroy that part of himself which he identifies as “the white man, / the ‘American’ / in me,” just as members of

⁵ It was for this reason that the *San Francisco Oracle* almost refused to publish the poem; Cohen writes that “many people on the *Oracle* staff didn’t want to violate their commitment to the ethic of love and non-violence,” and the inclusion of the poem had to be put to a vote, winning by only one (Cohen xlii).

the American military were attacking and killing innocent Vietnamese citizens. “I won’t let him live,” the speaker vows, “The ‘American’ / I’ll destroy. The ‘Christian’ / has long been dead.” No longer the “crew-cutted Seattle boy / The Portland boy who worked for the U. P.,” he seeks instead to access his original, primitive, and true self—more specifically, it seems, his Native American self: “They [his white American personas] won’t pass on to my children. / I’ll give them Chief Joseph, the Bison herds, / Ishi, sparrowhawk, the Fir trees, / The Buddha, their own naked bodies, / Swimming and dancing and singing / instead.” Freely mixing cultural icons—Chief Joseph, Ishi, and the Buddha—and evoking images of a natural paradise, the speaker determines to secure a better future for his offspring. At the same time, he plans to restore America to its earlier glory, which necessitates killing not only the white man within himself, but the external white oppressor, ostensibly the “Men in Washington, Pentagon” to whom the poem is addressed: “As I kill the white man, / the ‘American’ / in me / And dance out the Ghost Dance: To bring back America, the grass and the streams. / To trample your throat in your dreams. / This magic I work. this loving I give / That my children may flourish / And yours won’t live” (*Digger Papers*). Snyder’s speaker seems to regard himself as a “vicarious victim” of U.S. imperialism, of the sort that Deloria describes in *Playing Indian* (161). White America has crushed him just as it did the vanishing Natives of his imagination, and in order to regain his true identity, he must access that part of him that is inherently Native, suggesting the easy elision of cultural and temporal divides that will allow him to identify with the victims, rather than with the perpetrators, of imperial conquest. Though the Diggers did not compose this problematic text themselves, they took it as both the script for their impromptu SDS performance and the frontispiece for their collection of definitive works.

Tim Hodgdon addresses the hippies' obsession with Native American culture in the Haight-Ashbury of the 1960s, citing several examples of the popularity of stereotypical Native American items: "Books on Native American spirituality, such as *Black Elk Speaks*, sold well at the Psychedelic Shop, and freaks appropriated fringe, feathers, headbands, moccasins, the sweat lodge, and tipis for the countercultural toolkit" (47). The Diggers freely appropriated Native culture as well. Featured prominently on the cover of their 1968 *Digger Papers* collection, for example, was an ancient Hopi swastika symbol; representing "the center of Hopi land," the swastika has been identified in Hopi/Anasazi rock wall carvings dating back as far as 1000 B.C.E. (David 1, 4). Digger leader Emmett Grogan famously embarked on a hunting expedition with a Pueblo named Little Bird in 1967, and the somewhat suspect account of the trip published in his memoir describes the outing as a spiritual journey of sorts. Hodgdon analyzes Grogan's experiences as exercises in "playing Indian":

Grogan drew on the long tradition that historian Philip Deloria has called 'playing Indian,' in which, at seemingly every turning point in the elaboration of American masculinity, white men have adopted a 'tribal' identity in order to distance themselves from those elements of their European cultural heritage that impinged on their freedom to remake themselves in the New World. (49)

Like the hero of Snyder's poem, Grogan attempted to escape the issues and concerns of white American life by playing at becoming Native; perhaps Peter Cohon had a similar goal in mind when he renamed himself "Peter Coyote" following a revelatory peyote trip, with the encouragement of pseudo-medicine man Rolling Thunder. As I relate in my next chapter, many counterculturalists like Coyote, in the Haight-Ashbury and beyond, frequently used peyote in their mimicry and misappropriation of Native spiritual practices. The Diggers also used Native

stereotypes to argue against the actions of artists they deemed materialistic and fame-hungry. In 1966, they took exception to Janis Joplin's band, Big Brother and the Holding Company, agreeing to be featured in *ID* magazine. Their "In Search of a Frame" broadside addressed the issue: "There are tribes of natives that will not be photographed because they believe that the photographer then possesses their spirit. One might laugh, but they are correct. Big Brother had his image lifted while he wasn't looking" (Qtd. in Martin 93). Simultaneously romanticizing the idea and identifying it as a potentially laughable superstition, the Diggers used the concept of certain unidentified Native tribes' hesitance to be photographed to argue their own somewhat unrelated point. The Diggers' central concern, after all, was not likely the fate of Big Brother and the Holding Company's collective spirit; their objections were to the group's perceived pandering to a mainstream publication and their acceptance of payment. Ironically, Martin writes that the Digger broadside "criticized materialistic impulses of the hippie community and of those who appropriated the hippie phenomenon for commercial benefit"; the Diggers showed their disapproval by appropriating another culture's beliefs in turn (93). In these and other incidents, the Diggers, like the Living Theatre in *Paradise Now*, "trivialize[d] the other" by claiming kinship based on partial understanding of those aspects of Native culture most beneficial to their own various agendas (Conquergood 6).

Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical

Paradise Now and the Digger street theatricals were productions created largely by hippies, for hippies, and about hippies. The 1967 rock musical *Hair* provides a useful counterpoint to these performances. *Hair* was created primarily by self-professed non-hippies and aimed at predominantly non-hippie mainstream audiences, but, like the Living Theatre and

the Diggers, the creators of *Hair* were focused primarily on defining hippie identities and values, and on addressing issues faced by counterculture youth onstage. James Rado and Gerome Ragni, co-authors of the musical's book and lyrics who also starred in the original off-Broadway and Broadway productions of the show, sympathized with the young hippies they observed on the streets of New York and frequently attended protests and demonstrations. Rado recalls, however, that, though they were affected by the contagious spirit of the times, their interest remained primarily academic. Kate Taylor quotes Rado in a 2007 article featured in the *New York Sun*:

“There was so much excitement in the streets and the parks and the hippie areas, and we thought if we could transmit this excitement to the stage it would be wonderful,” he recalled in an interview. “We hung out with them and went to their Be-Ins [and] let our hair grow,” Mr. Rado said of the hippies. At the antiwar marches, “[w]e were caught up in the emotionalism of the scene, but we’d be taking notes at the same time, of what the posters said, and what the chants were.”
(Taylor)

Canadian composer Galt MacDermot, who wrote the music for the show, did not identify personally with the counterculture either, reporting that, at the time that he was first contacted about *Hair*, “I had short hair, a wife, and, at that point, four children, and I lived on Staten Island” (Qtd. in Taylor). Because the elements of hippie culture represented in *Hair* were filtered through the creative minds of individuals who did not directly identify as members of that culture and were targeted at mainstream audiences, the musical is telling of the kind of stereotypes that were common in the countercultural mythos of the sixties and beyond. This is not to say, however, that the production was devoid of any “real” hippie presence in the sixties; casting for ensemble roles often took place on the streets of New York and in underground clubs,

as the show's creative teams, both on and off Broadway, attempted to fill the gaps in the cast with long-haired men and women who looked and acted the part.

Rado and Ragni began their collaborations on *Hair* in 1964 and opened the show off-Broadway in 1967. *Hair*—soon to become the first rock musical on Broadway—followed close on the heels of Megan Terry's *Viet Rock*, which opened off-Broadway at La Mama in 1966 with Gerome Ragni playing a leading role. *Hair* was heavily influenced by its precursor, both in musical style and content. Like *Viet Rock*, *Hair* took opposition to the war in Vietnam as a central theme. When Claude (a role originated by Rado) is drafted to serve in Vietnam, he vacillates between the expectations of his parents and his friends (particularly Berger, a “hard-core hippie” first played by Ragni) before choosing to cut his long hair and enlist in the military—a decision that quickly proves fatal (Horn 60). After the musical was rejected by several Broadway producers, Joseph Papp, who had founded the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1954, agreed to produce it off-Broadway. He believed that *Hair* would be the perfect inaugural show for the opening of his new nonprofit Public Theatre in the East Village, due to its timely subject matter and unconventional format: “We must be a modern theatre, engaged in producing modern plays dramatizing the potent forces of our time—events and feelings which shape history and man” (Qtd. in Horn 29). Papp was also drawn in by the commercial appeal of the musical, as appropriated elements of hippie culture—particularly its music—were becoming increasingly popular in the mainstream: “With psychedelic rock topping the pop charts in 1967, the play's celebratory depiction of the flower-powered hippie lifestyle had clear commercial potential, and . . . [Papp] saw *Hair* as a moneyspinner that might subsidize the development of less populist work at his new, foundation-funded Public Theatre” (Bottoms 210). Under the direction of Gerald Freedman, *Hair* premiered at the Public Theatre on October 17, 1967, where

it caught the attention of Michael Butler, a politician from Illinois who was, at the time, preparing his U.S. Senate campaign. Butler fell in love with *Hair*, and when it closed at the Public, he secured the rights to the show and produced it at The Cheetah, a converted discothèque that accommodated much larger audiences. The show ran for forty-five performances at The Cheetah between December 1967 and January 1968 before Butler, Rado, and Ragni took it to the Biltmore Theatre on Broadway, enlisting La Mama Theatre's Tom O'Horgan as director. In his notes in a souvenir program, O'Horgan explained his choice to join the *Hair* team: "I took this assignment because I feel *Hair* is an assault on the theatrical dead area: Broadway. It's almost an effort to give Broadway mouth-to-mouth resuscitation" (Qtd. in Horn 40). The show succeeded in making huge waves at the Biltmore, where it premiered on April 29, 1968, polarizing audiences and critics alike.

Butler insisted that Rado and Ragni rewrite the script before it premiered on Broadway, and O'Horgan further altered the show in rehearsals, employing experimental methods of improvisation learned at La Mama to develop his vision for the production. The changes to the script were both structural and thematic. While *Hair* focused primarily on the war and on issues of racial inequality in its Public Theatre debut, the Broadway reincarnation had a wider scope, encompassing "a wide range of tangential, antiestablishment issues: poverty, pollution, religion, the military, and in particular, sexual freedom" (Horn 58). The "Mom" and "Dad" characters were somewhat sympathetic in the off-Broadway version, perhaps crafted in an effort to "bridge the generation gap," as Horn suggests, but they were reduced to burlesqued caricatures on Broadway (61). O'Horgan also opted to stage the infamous nude scene at the end of the first act, which the show's off-Broadway creative teams had pointedly refused to incorporate into their productions of the show; Freedman had called it "exhibitionism" and claimed that, while he was

not opposed to nudity on stage, its inclusion in *Hair* was nothing more than a gratuitous attempt to provoke a reaction (Horn 59). O'Horgan, however, saw the scene as an opportunity to assert personal liberation from societal constraints, "a symbolic act of freedom, honesty, and openness, a gentle defiance of another of society's taboos" (Horn 59). Changes to the musical's structure were even more dramatic than those made to its content, as thirteen new songs were added, and the already-sparse libretto was cut drastically. Bottoms describes the revitalized script thus:

O'Horgan initiated a radical overhaul of the show's structure, abandoning large parts of the book and narrative in favor of emphasizing the collagelike theatricality that he saw as its underlying strength. . . . Matching the bubbly spirit of the melodies with a truckload of theatrical stunts and gimmicks, O'Horgan collapsed songs and scenes into each other to create an ongoing fusion of music, spectacle, and action. . . . (211)

Village Voice drama critic Michael Smith praised the Broadway musical in his 1968 review, admitting that he found the original off-Broadway production to be a "pushy, phony drag." He applauded O'Horgan for converting the musical from a "patronizing portrait of hippies" into a joyous "direct freak-out," and, for Smith, effects that others called gratuitously provocative were the heart of the musical's charm: "Never has a show been so chock full of shock effects, so manic in pursuit of novelty. . . . Its importance is not anything it says about hippies, though, but the plain fact that O'Horgan has blown up Broadway" (Smith).

Unsurprisingly, *Hair* was met with a great deal of indignation from audience members who were shocked by the musical's language, subject matter, and nudity, as well as from theatregoers who expected a linear, cause-and-effect plotline with songs connected by narrative threads. Many theatre critics were similarly incensed. *Daily News* reporter John Chapman's

opinion of the musical was shared by many of his contemporaries: “[*Hair* is] vulgar, perverted, tasteless, cheap, cynical, offensive, and generally lousy, and everybody connected with it should be washed in strong soap and hung up to dry in the sun” (Qtd. in Horn 86). *Hair* was also met with resistance within the off-Broadway theatre community and the countercultural scene. Michael Warren Powell, an actor and director who had worked with O’Horgan at La Mama, commented on O’Horgan’s use of improvisational and experimental techniques developed at La Mama in *Hair* rehearsals: “I was disgusted by *Hair* because it was filled with the things that we had developed, but it had been sifted down to its basic components. It was just movement, whereas for us, every gesture had meaning, a psychological meaning. There were no empty gestures, but *Hair* was absolutely empty gestures” (Qtd. in Bottoms 212-13). While Powell took issue with the watering-down of La Mama techniques, others complained that *Hair* was a “crass commercialization” of experimental methods developed off-Broadway and considered O’Horgan to be a traitor to his theatrical roots (Bottoms 212). Counterculturalists also resented what they regarded as the capitalist commodification of hippie culture. An unpublished San Francisco Mime Troupe mission statement from 1969 was telling of this concern; the Mime Troupe claimed that their purpose was to persuade other artists “to stop working for art’s or money’s sake and to start working for the people and social change . . . distinguishing the true cultural revolution, which aims to change the institutions, from the fashion ‘revolution’ as represented by hip capitalism and *Hair*” (Qtd. in Mason 201). Historian Stephen J. Bottoms comments on several “insidiously ‘conservative’” elements of the musical that made it more palatable to mainstream audiences and less so to countercultural groups like the Mime Troupe and the Diggers. He cites the fact that Claude chose to enlist rather than burning his draft card as evidence that the character is, “at heart . . . a patriotic American,” working within the system

rather than against it. The show's creators were loath to cross certain boundaries in their work; for example, during the song "Don't Put It Down," a "humorous homage" to the American flag, cast members were "given explicit instructions to keep the flag from touching the ground" as they folded it, despite their characters' stated intention of burning it later (Horn 90). In a 1990 interview, Michael Butler recalled that, while he supported individual artists' freedoms, he was unwilling to see the flag violated in his own production: "I did not want to do anything that would be considered insulting or improper to the flag, which I consider is the symbol of this country, even though I do agree with the artists' rights. If they want to 'pee' on the flag, burn it, whatever, it is their right, but it's not what I choose to do" (Qtd. in Horn 90). Bottoms also notes the "conveniently heteronormative take on 'free love'" in the musical. Sexual freedom is a major theme of the show, and *Hair* was among the first Broadway productions to affirm homosexual, bisexual, and interracial relationships and to feature an onstage kiss between two male characters. While the relationship between Claude and Berger is the most complex and compelling in the show, however, the romantic/sexual relationships that the two men have with female characters Sheila and Jeanie are more explicitly drawn. Furthermore, despite the musical's attempts to explode outdated notions of gender and sexuality, the characterizations of the show's three female leads—Sheila, Jeanie, and Crissy—align closely with traditional gender stereotypes. As Elizabeth L. Wollman points out in her book *Hard Times: The Adult Musical in 1970s New York City*, the women are largely one-dimensional, their actions guided throughout by their romantic attachments to men (92). Of the musical's central female character, Wollman writes, "for all her independence, activism, and intelligence, Sheila's main purpose in *Hair* is to complete a love triangle—a classic plot device, for all of *Hair*'s formulaic innovations—and ultimately to intensify the 'central love relationship in the show,' which is between Claude and

Berger” (93). The original script’s treatment of Sheila is particularly troublesome, as Berger rapes her, then pressures her into sleeping with Claude in an attempt to dissuade him from enlisting, claiming that it is her duty to their community. Neither act is problematized in the script; as Bottoms writes, the musical offers “a bizarre variant on the age-old patriarchal right of men to use and trade women as if they are property” (212). This is not to suggest that hippie communities and countercultural theatre collectives were paragons of enlightened feminist thought during the sixties; the Diggers’ patriarchal practices, for example, have been much noted—particularly their habit of assigning cooking, sewing, and other domestic tasks to their female members. *Hair*’s explicit antiwar-but-not-anti-American stance, its heteronormative focus, and its patriarchal power structure do, however, suggest a certain appeal to the mainstream values of the masses who were buying most of the tickets, a quality that proved alienating to more radical counterculturalists.

While many artists and critics considered the individuals who created and produced *Hair* to be sell-outs, others focused on the musical’s ability to bridge cultural gaps between radical hippies and mainstream society. One example of this connective property lies in the musical’s score. In a *New York Times* review of the original production, critic Clive Barnes praised MacDermot’s work: “Galt MacDermot’s music is merely pop-rock, with strong soothing overtones of Broadway melody, but it precisely serves its purpose, and its noisy and cheerful conservatism is just right for an audience that might wince at ‘Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band,’ while the Stones would certainly gather no pop moss” (40). Though the score was, as Bottoms puts it, “an essentially lightweight, sanitized take on psychedelic rock,” it energized audiences and carried with it the potential to pique mainstream interest in the music of the counterculture (211). Contemporary scholars who have looked back on the musical in the

decades since its debut often praise it for making hippie culture accessible to wider audiences in just this way, drawing more attention to countercultural values by playing to mainstream viewers whose fascination with hippies was already on the rise: “*Hair* succeeded, in short, because it had successfully fused middle-brow entertainment values with the now-fashionable appeal of ‘alternative lifestyles’” (Bottoms 211). Rado explains the team’s decision to move *Hair* to Broadway as a missionary quest of sorts: “We always intended it for the uptown audience. . . . We wanted to open hearts to peace” (Qtd. in Taylor). The musical’s reach extended much further than uptown New York, however. *Hair* drew huge crowds and saw enormous commercial success during its first few years of production alone. Barbara Horn writes:

One of the most successful musicals in the history of Broadway, *Hair* ran for five years and a record 1,750 performances at the Biltmore, and thousands upon thousands of showings outside of New York. . . . Fourteen national companies ran concurrently with *Hair*’s Broadway run, as did a score of international companies. . . . *Forbes* magazine reported that during its first two years alone, some 4 million people saw *Hair* and the show grossed \$22,300,000. (Horn xiv)

Hair is still an immensely popular show, regularly touring and being revived on Broadway, across the United States, and abroad. The musical has sold millions of cast recordings, and songs from the show have been recorded by some of the biggest names in pop, rock, jazz, and classical music from the 1970s to the present day, bringing the show’s messages of peace, love, and personal freedom ever further into the international consciousness.

Just as *Hair* invited mainstream audiences to adopt—or at least to try on—a countercultural worldview, it also asked them to think about the theatrical form in new ways. O’Horgan’s work on the show was revolutionary not because he created a new set of innovative

techniques, but because he introduced experimental methods that had once been confined to smaller playhouses in off- and off-off-Broadway settings into the most traditional of theatrical spaces, thus opening doors on Broadway for similarly experimental projects. In a 1990 interview with Barbara Lee Horn, La Mama founder Ellen Stewart commented on the national and international popularity of *Hair* and of the contributions the show made to the global theatre scene:

You can go to the Philippines, you can go to Indonesia, you can go to Russia, you can go to Rumania, you can go to France, to Germany, to Italy, to Africa, you can go to Australia, you can go anywhere you want, and what *Hair* did, it is still doing *twenty years later*. . . . And I'm saying that *Hair* until this date has influenced every single thing that you see on Broadway, off-Broadway, off-off-Broadway, anywhere in the world, you will still see elements of the experimental techniques that *Hair* brought not just to Broadway, but to the entire world. (Stewart qtd. in Horn 137-38)

Not only did *Hair* introduce the experimental techniques of 1960s radical theatre to the world at large; it has also preserved the decade's spirit and dynamism for audiences nearly fifty years later. Perhaps its ability to encapsulate a historical moment stems from the immediacy of its subject matter at the time of its composition; as Michael Smith writes, it was "the first Broadway musical in some time to have the authentic voice of today rather than the day before yesterday" (Smith). Contemporary scholars, including Bottoms and Horn, speak of *Hair* as the cultural zeitgeist of the 1960s counterculture, the musical manifestation of the spirit and energy of the day. Though many counterculturalists of the period understandably took issue with some of its creators' motives and methods, *Hair* remains the most popular and recognizable theatrical

representation of the movement today. It is likely that millions of Americans who were born in the decades following *Hair*'s debut harbor conceptualizations of hippie identity that are based at least in part on the direct or indirect influence of the musical. For this reason, an understanding of how this musical represents Native American culture is vital to a larger analysis of countercultural appropriations and their contemporary consequences.

In an essay featured in cast member Jonathon Johnson's autobiographical *Good HAIR Days: A Personal Journey with the American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*, Michael Butler reflects on his first introduction to the musical: "While in New York I discovered this ad for '*Hair*,' the tribal love-rock musical. It had a picture of Indian braves and I thought, 'Oh my God the Indians put a show together.' Indian rights had been a major concern of mine at that time and they still are. So I went down to see a preview of '*Hair*' at the Public Theatre, Joe Papp's place" (175). It is of little surprise that Butler was mistaken about the nature of the show. The advertisement that caught his eye was a modification of a nineteenth century photograph of Sitting Bull, Geronimo, and three other Native American chiefs—the "Indian braves" that Butler mentions.

Superimposed over two of the men, however, were photographs of Rado and Ragni; the playwrights wore modern dress, though Ragni scowled at the camera in face paint and beads. Butler opted to keep this publicity artwork for the Cheetah production as well. While his assumption that *Hair* was an "Indian show" was off base, the musical was laced with Native imagery, and ideas about tribal living guided the rehearsal process. The program notes for the original musical demand that the cast members should be "approached, directorially, as a 'tribe,'" explaining that "group-tribal activity" was the way of the future, favored by American youth:

A coming-together for a common reason: a search for a way of life that makes sense to the young, that allows the growth of their new vision, however defined or undefined that may be; to find an alternative to the unacceptable standards, goals, and morals of the older generation, the establishment. (No matter that their task may never be accomplished, or that it may.) It's what's happening now. (Rado and Ragni viii)

By requesting that cast members think of themselves as a tribe, the playwrights ask them to adopt the social values of the counterculture, at least in the broadly-stated sense of opposing the “establishment” in favor of a “new vision.” Rado and Ragni go on to say that, though the cast members have a social responsibility to one another as members of a tribe, they also have a responsibility to their audiences:

The Kids are a tribe. At the same time, for the purpose of HAIR, they know they are on a stage in a theater, performing for an audience, demonstrating their way of life, in a sense, telling a story, in order to persuade those who watch of their intentions, to perhaps gain greater understanding, support, and tolerance, and thus perhaps expand their horizons of active participation toward a better, saner, peace-full, love-full world. They are trying to turn on the audience. (ix)

Since *Hair*'s off-Broadway debut in 1967, every cast has been tasked with learning to act as a tribe, and with giving themselves a tribal name—often taking on the name of an actual Native American tribe or concept. The original Broadway cast, for example, called themselves the Manitou Tribe, after the Algonquian idea of a spiritual presence in all inhabitants of the natural world, both animate and inanimate. Scott Miller, who directed the Osage Tribe's production of *Hair* at the New Line Theatre in St. Louis in 2000, writes in his book *Let the Sun Shine In: The*

Genius of HAIR that, “This show, perhaps more than any other, is an ensemble piece, one in which the entire cast must work together, must like each other, and must work as a single organism. All the sense of family, of belonging, of responsibility and loyalty inherent in the word ‘tribe’ has to be felt by the cast” (86).

Native themes are evident throughout *Hair*, beginning with its opening moments. The stage directions call for a bare, raked stage featuring two major set pieces—a “large, authentic, beautiful American Indian totem pole” at stage right center, and a “crucifix-tree” holding a “rather abstract Jesus” covered in twinkling lights opposite it (vi). When audiences enter, they are to find the cast already on the stage, in the process of completing their Native costumes: “informal, dressing, putting on war paint, peace paint, dressed as American Indians; headbands, beads, the guys in loincloths, moccasins, beaded dresses, etc. . . . Possible use of tribal masks, colored greasepaints used freely on faces. . . . Some of The Tribe wear blankets” (1). While a few cast members pitch a “small improvised tent,” others drum on “old tin pots,” occasionally adding “Indian yelps” to the cacophony (1). The scene is meant to evoke images of the ancient past:

The atmosphere of a primitive American Indian Camp at twilight. All looks quite primitive, tribal, and perhaps could be mistaken for another century were it not for the twinkling Jesus on the Crucifix. This is the *Electric Tribe*. Bare feet, sandals, saris, loincloths, beads, old military uniforms, band uniforms, psychedelic design, incense, flowers, oriental rugs, candles, all combine to illustrate the emergence of a new-ancient culture among the youth. (2)

The beginning of the show is meant to evoke the idea of a new culture emerging from the conflation of the trappings of ancient civilizations in the East and the West with contemporary

psychedelic hippie culture. In *Hair*, Native American cultural identity belongs wholly to centuries past, and I explore this focus on “primitive” Native America in greater depth in my fourth chapter. Horn describes the actions that opened the show in its original Broadway run:

Jim Rado sits cross-legged in Indian style, stage center, staring vacantly into a small fire before him. On cue, the tribe members freeze, and then proceed in slow motion to the stage. Claude is joined by Sheila (Lynn Kellogg) and Berger (Gerome Ragni), who cut a strand of Claude’s hair, ceremoniously offering it to the fire, in an act that symbolically foreshadows his sacrifice to the establishment. (Horn 66-67)

Here, the cast conjures an image of Native American ritual sacrifice, mimicking Native customs and hinting at the practice of human sacrifice as a means of silently protesting the war in Vietnam.

After the opening scene establishes the actors’ freedom to cross geographical and temporal boundaries in the interest of strategic cultural appropriation, Native themes and images recur frequently throughout the musical, particularly in the off-Broadway script. In an early scene, Claude reads aloud from a newspaper, which declares its readers to be living in the “Psychedelic Stone Age,” more specifically, “the age of electronic dinosaurs and cybernetic Indians and the daily News, the age where it’s more fun than ever to be young” (14). Later, the all-purpose “Mom” character instructs Claude to take off her beads, admonishing him, “This is not a reservation. Tonto!” (20). The European conquest of Native American tribes is addressed on multiple occasions as a means of speaking out against U.S. imperialism, as when Hud reads the following from a magazine: “The draft is white people sending black people to make war on yellow people to defend the land they stole from red people” (74). In the second act, Claude trips

on acid and hallucinates a bizarre version of American history, reenacted by the entire cast. Berger plays George Washington, leading his troops into battle against the British until he is chased offstage by “Indians in loincloths with tomahawks and war paint.” Three “Indian” characters shout in succession: “White man DIE! Crazy Horse say, White Man DIE! Cochise say, White Man DIE! Geronimo say, White Man DIE! Sitting Bull say, White Man DIE! Little Beaver say, White Man DIE!” In broken English, Indian 1 laments, “This INDIAN land. Oh, Manitou, Great Spirit, White Man steal our land. White Man must die,” and Indian 2 responds, “Many moons since Roanoke. Once again White Man comes. Queen Bess and John Smith from England make peace. Take Papoose Pocahontas. Wahunsunacook kill white man.” The Native characters then “exit in a war dance of victory” as Washington’s men lie massacred on the stage floor (150-51). After the Revolutionary War comes the Civil War, and Abraham Lincoln, Clark Gable, a slave and an African witch doctor, Le Roi Jones, and others all meet onstage to enact the war and the struggle for civil rights before giving over the stage to a group of Buddhist monks. What follows is a succession of massacres: Catholic nuns kill the Buddhists, astronauts kill the nuns, Chinese men kill the astronauts, and four “American Indians, with war yelps, kill the Chinese with tomahawks” before they themselves are murdered by two Green Berets, who also kill each other. The entire scene is then reversed, with each group coming back to life and exiting the stage, then reentering to enact the “killing ritual” twice more (155-56). In this scene, Native American characters play a significant role in the cast’s protest against the imperialist crimes of the U.S. government; ultimately, however, the genocide is invoked for the larger purpose of protesting the contemporary. As the trip winds towards its conclusion, the cast sings “Three Five Zero Zero,” listing the horrors of the “dirty little war” in Vietnam.

No one character in *Hair* more fully appropriates Native identity than Berger. Clad in what Horn refers to as a “hippie-Indian loincloth,” Berger introduces himself to the audience with the song, “Manhattan,” which he prefaces with an “Indian war whoop” (Horn 51; Rado and Ragni 5). In the song, Berger calls himself a Manhattan beggar, gypsy, and Indian in turns, asserts that he is a “WHOLE NEW THING / A MUTATED BREED,” and sings a chorus of “MANHATTAN TOM TOM / MANHATTAN TATTOO / MANHATTAN TOMAHAWK” before begging audiences for handouts to support his drug addiction (5-6). From time to time, he also adopts broken English in stereotyped mimicry of Native speech, as when he greets Sheila, just home from a protest in Washington, D.C., with the line, “This Indian land, buzz off” (72). Throughout the musical, Berger is the most radical voice of the group’s countercultural ideals, attempting unsuccessfully to convince Claude to ignore the draft and live communally with the rest of the Kids. Scott Miller analyzes the characters of Claude and Berger as “two halves of one whole,” claiming that Claude is the “intellectual half, the introspective one, the voice of reason, morality, spirituality, guilt,” while Berger is “the animal half, focused on instinct, courage, pleasure, primal urges.” Miller continues, “But those primal urges are not just for food, water, and sex—they are also to protect the tribe, to be its leader. Only together do Berger (the id) and Claude (the superego) make one healthy person” (87). If Berger represents primal instinct and animal urges, it is telling that this character is also the one who most frequently invokes the image of the Native. This association is particularly troublesome in light of Sheila’s rape scene in the original script, in which Berger accepts and destroys a gift from her, verbally assaults her, and then orchestrates her rape by the character Woof, finally collapsing “as though he [had] just expended himself in an orgasm” (78). Shortly thereafter, he compels Sheila to sleep with Claude in an effort to convince him not to enlist. Berger’s brutal behavior towards Sheila, coupled with

his frequent attempts to adopt a Native persona, evokes long-held stereotypes of Native American sexual aggression in a highly problematic way.

In the 1968 production of *Hair* at the Aquarius Theatre in Los Angeles, O'Horgan asked producer Michael Butler to take part in the show as *Hair*'s "Silver Indian." Butler reluctantly agreed, and Jonathon Johnson describes the scene: "So at the beginning of Act 2, he was to be revolved on stage (The Aquarius Theatre had a revolving platform), painted in silver, with only a war bonnet and loincloth. He was standing on a 50-gallon drum, painted in silver. His arms were akimbo and as he was revolved in and out, he opened his arms and gave the peace sign" (73). Just as O'Horgan created a "Indian" character who had no agency to speak and could move only enough to offer audiences a peace sign, so too did the creative team behind *Hair* craft a musical that silenced actual Native voices, exploiting Native characters to serve their own political agenda while trafficking in damaging stereotypes. At the same time, the musical's creators attempted to suggest a link between hippie identity and Native Americans of centuries past. Like the Living Theatre and the Diggers, *Hair*'s authors, directors, and producers viewed Native culture as ripe for countercultural appropriation and crowned the hippie its rightful heir. In "Performing as a Moral Act," Conquergood quotes theorist Frederic Jameson as he explains the pitfalls of the "Enthusiast's Infatuation": "Secure in our protective solipsism, those of us in this performative stance will never permit the other 'to come before us as a radically different life form that rises up to call our own form of life into question and to pass judgment on us, and through us, on the social formation in which we live'" (7). While the creators of *Hair* made obvious attempts to use Native American characters and themes to "pass judgment . . . on the social formation" of 1960s America and the imperialist tendencies that plagued the nation's present as well as its past, they did so by placing non-Native countercultural voices on the

tongues of their imagined Natives, attempting to elide the gaping differences between them, and by appropriating traditional Native customs for their own entirely separate purposes.

Countercultural Performance as Cultural Transvestitism

Coco Fusco's 1995 essay "The Other History of Intercultural Performance" describes her work with Guillermo Gómez-Peña on the performance art piece "The Couple in the Cage" from 1992 to 1993, in which the artists toured museums in Europe and the United States, displaying themselves in a cage as previously-undiscovered Amerindians from the imaginary island of Guatinau in the Gulf of Mexico. The performance piece was meant to be "a satirical commentary on Western concepts of the exotic, primitive Other," but Fusco and Gómez-Peña quickly discovered that the satire was lost on many museumgoers who took their exhibit as reality and approached it with the same exoticizing curiosity that the artists sought to critique (37). Fusco provides a broad-strokes history of Western exhibitions of "primitive" and "exotic" Others, examining the attitudes and impulses that have lain behind such exhibitionism for centuries. She focuses on the work of Tristan Tzara, among others, and on the cultural appropriations that were central to his project of anthologizing and performing African and Southern Pacific poetry in 1917. Tzara's project was based on the idea that appropriations of non-Western performative styles and practices could help dadaists to overcome the creative constraints of time-honored Western artistic traditions (45). He wrote of the indigenous African or Pacific Islander as his "other brother," claiming a sort of spiritual and artistic kinship with him that transcended actual genealogical lines. Fusco writes:

In the case of Tzara, his perception of the "primitive" artist as part of his metaphorical family conveniently recasts his own colonial relation to his

imaginary “primitive” as one of kinship. In this context, the threatening reminder of difference is that the original body, or the physical and visual presence of the cultural Other, must be fetishized, silenced, subjugated, or otherwise controlled to be “appreciated.” (45)

The recasting of colonial relationships that Fusco mentions here relates to Deloria’s concept of “vicarious victimization.” Like the counterculturalists Deloria describes in his essay, Tzara strategically aligns himself with the colonized rather than the colonizer—this time, not for political purposes, but because there is a perceived artistic advantage to identifying with those who were the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of imperialist crimes. Fusco goes on to describe the dangers inherent in this sort of appropriation, claiming that the Other is necessarily required to be “controlled” in some way in order to fit into the artist’s strategic mold; often this process of exercising control over the other takes the form of fetishization or romanticization, of silencing the Other’s voice or forcing him to speak the words of another. The artist falls into the “quicksand belief” that Conquergood describes, that which asks, “Aren’t all people really just alike?” and thereby diminishes the other under a “glaze of generalities” (6).

Fusco claims that the artist who takes on the guise of the Other using irresponsible representational practices and claiming a controlling ownership over the Other’s cultural identity often imagines himself as the best of both worlds. He boasts a strong understanding of the Other which allows him deeper and more complex insights, but he also maintains a connection to the imperial state, having been raised and educated within it. Fusco writes that, “it is the ‘true’ avant-garde artist who becomes a better version of the ‘primitive,’ a hybrid or a cultural transvestite” (45). Philip Deloria also speaks of this hybridity in *Playing Indian*, as he describes Revolutionary War era appropriations: “A shoemaker in Indian costume was both a shoemaker and an Indian”

(14). A false sense of hybridity is very evident in *Hair*, in certain Digger theatricals, and especially in *Paradise Now*. In *Hair*, the performers dress as Natives, mimic Native rituals, and claim to be part of a “new-ancient culture” signified by an eclectic assortment of contemporary and traditional objects and customs from the East and the West (2). Berger makes his claim of hybridity even more overtly in his introductory character song, as he invokes stereotypical images of Native identity (“MANHATTAN TOM TOM / MANHATTAN TATTOO / MANHATTAN TOMAHAWK”), then claims to be a “WHOLE NEW THING / A MUTATED BREED” (6). In their various publications and performances, meanwhile, the Diggers suggested that white hippies in the Haight-Ashbury faced discrimination and governmental oppression on a scale comparable to that faced by Native Americans, as well as by African Americans and other minority groups. In the poem “A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon,” which the Diggers endorsed through both publication and impromptu performance, Gary Snyder proposed the symbolic murder of the “white man / the ‘American’” inside and the subsequent awakening of an inner being more in tune with nature and the human spirit, represented by images from Native American life and history. The speaker claims, “I’ll give them Chief Joseph, the Bison herds, / Ishi, sparrowhawk . . .”, then states his plan to “dance out the Ghost Dance” after he has killed the “white” and “American” parts of himself (*Digger Papers*). In his autobiography, Emmett Grogan rendered his storied hunting expedition with the Pueblo Little Bird as a spiritual quest in which he was temporarily released from the struggles of everyday life in order to access a more authentic and natural self—one who could then return to his own society enlightened, a hybrid of Native and Euro American identities whose cross-cultural experiences rendered him superior in both worlds. Fusco’s theory of “cultural transvestitism” is most clearly evident in the idea of the “Natural Man” proposed in *Paradise Now*, however. The script declares hippies to be

the “reincarnations of the American Indian, aspiring to be the Natural Man as represented by the great Indian culture.” This mystical figure easily overcomes the problems of the modern world: “The Natural Man knows he can travel without a passport, that he can smoke marijuana, that he can find ways to live without money, that he can take off his clothes” (27). He is, in a sense, the ultimate hybrid, a salvational force and an aspirational figure for hippies, resurrected from the ashes of “the great Indian culture” and standing above them a more powerful being who claims both the social freedom associated in the play with Native Americans and the value system of the counterculture. Fusco identifies a central issue inherent all such exercises in cultural appropriation and assertions of hybridity—those who “play Indian” (or “play Other” in a broader sense) for superficial and self-serving purposes almost inevitably end up perpetuating damaging and reductive stereotypes in order to signify their connection to their representational subjects: “What may be ‘liberating’ and ‘transgressive’ identification for Europeans and Euro-Americans is already a symbol of entrapment within an imposed stereotype for Others” (46). As they were covering themselves in beads, feathers, and war paint, smoking peace pipes around ceremonial fires, and forming human totem poles, countercultural theatre groups might have imagined themselves “liberated” from oppressive social mores. However, in so liberating themselves, such groups often reduced complex Native American histories and diverse Native cultural practices to a series of restrictive stereotypical images and themes.

Dialogical Performance and Empathy

Ronald J. Pelias addresses the potential ethical pitfalls of ethnographic performance in his essay “Empathy and the Ethics of Entitlement,” focusing on the dangers inherent in the process of translating a living being into material to be performed:

[I]t seems less fashionable to discuss the people that serve as a basis for such performances than to focus upon the actors' personal preferences and individual visions. The question is no longer how performers might put flesh on the textual and human "skeletons" they encounter but how they might pull a bone from here and another one from there in order to create their own figures. In short, "*the other*" serves performers. (142)

In the countercultural performances I analyze here, the Native figure serves largely as a means to an end, his "skeleton" picked apart to enhance theatrical visions that ultimately had little to do with actual Native histories and civil rights movements and used to add an imagined cultural legitimacy to the artists' pacifist, anarchist, and anti-consumerist ideals. Because the Living Theatre, the Diggers, and the various creative teams behind *Hair* appear to have had no deeper interest in crafting responsible performances that would allow actual Native voices a chance to be heard, the more ethical option for their work might have been to simply refrain from attempting any semblance of Native representation. Both Pelias and Conquergood, however, offer useful guidance for artists who genuinely seek to perform the Other ethically and responsibly on stage.

Pelias recognizes that, "Even when performers attempt to enact others with care and sensitivity, they are increasingly confronted with the idea that speaking for others is a problematic act" (142). He suggests that performers use empathy—which he defines as "the understanding and sharing of the feelings of another"—not to "gain control, to possess, [or] to master others" or to speak for the subject of ethnographic inquiry, but rather to "speak with others" (142). Pelias's assertions are grounded in Conquergood's concept of "dialogical performance." Placed in the center of the "Moral Map," dialogical performance avoids the

problematic extremes of detachment and commitment, identity and difference, resisting the ethical traps that ensnare performers who take part in the four other performative stances he addresses, including “The Enthusiast’s Infatuation,” on which I have focused here. Conquergood defines dialogical performance as a performative stance that “struggles to bring together different voices, world views, value systems, and beliefs so that they can have a conversation with one another” (9). He continues:

The aim of dialogical performance is to bring self and other together so that they can question, debate, and challenge one another. It is a kind of performance that resists conclusions, it is intensely committed to keeping the dialogue between performer and text open and ongoing. Dialogical understanding does not end with empathy. There is always enough appreciation for difference so that the text can interrogate, rather than dissolve into, the performer. (9)

The cornerstone of dialogical performance is finding a middle ground on which the performer and the subject of performance can openly exchange ideas without judgment or agenda. Pelias acknowledges that this middle ground between what he terms “imperialist venture” (in which the subject is lost in the performance) and “passionate embrace” (in which the performer loses himself in the performed subject) can be difficult to find, and he posits that both parties might benefit most from “dialogical embodiment” that calls performers to act as witnesses:

As witnesses, they offer first-hand accounts of their experiences with others. . . .
Lovers and idealogues become suspect whenever their interests seem to colour what they say. Ideal witnesses agree to speak for the good of the community. They work to provide honest accounts, shunning modest or vain claims. The

testimony they give is carefully constructed to avoid misrepresenting others, falsifying evidence, or making misleading, untrue claims. (147)

The countercultural artists I have examined here fall into the category of “lovers and idealogues” whose “interests seem to colour what they say,” molding their romanticized visions of Native American identity to reflect their own social values. Ethical performance, on the other hand, demands that artists maintain sufficient distance to prevent themselves from conflating their own values and agendas with those of the individuals they aim to represent, while at the same time allowing themselves enough proximity to engage with their subjects openly and respectfully. In describing the qualities required to approach ethnographic subjects with this level of openness and respect, Conquergood references the work of folklorist and scholar Henry Glassie, claiming that, “If we bring to our work energy, imagination, and courage—qualities that can be exercised and strengthened through dialogical performance—then we can hope not to trample on ‘the sweet, terrible wholeness of life’” (10). Performances empowered by such “energy, imagination, and courage” may help performers and audiences alike to come to a more honest understanding of their own cultures as well as those that are being performed; as Conquergood states, “When we have true respect for the Difference of other cultures, then we grant them the potential for challenging our own culture” (9). The artists of the counterculture often attempted to challenge the status quo in their theatrical work, but while their representations of Native identity ostensibly sprang from points of genuine interest and admiration, they frequently missed opportunities to benefit both the cultures they portrayed and the audiences they addressed by presenting works based in sound dialogical understanding.

CHAPTER III: NATIVE MASCOTRY AND THE “IMAGINARY INDIAN”

“The more we try to be ourselves the more we are forced to defend what we have never been. The American public feels most comfortable with the mythical Indians of stereotype-land who were always THERE. These Indians are fierce, they wear feathers and grunt. Most of us don’t fit this idealized figure since we grunt only when overeating, which is seldom. . . .

To be an Indian in modern American society is in a very real sense to be unreal and ahistorical.”

Vine Deloria, Jr.

Custer Died for Your Sins

Philip J. Deloria’s 2004 book *Indians in Unexpected Places* offers an in-depth examination of the behaviors and characteristics that have come to be expected of Native Americans in the popular imagination, particularly for non-Natives whose perceptions are based primarily on highly-stereotypical fictional characters. Deloria analyzes the role of stereotype in determining cultural expectations, opening his study with an etymology of the word. He writes: “Originally a word from the printing industry, *stereotype* referred to a printing plate capable of reproducing copies undistinguished by individual difference. Transferred to human beings, one assumes that it originally meant the idea that all Indians, for example, were exactly alike—just like any given page in every book in a print run” (8). Stereotypes about any particular group of people, based on race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or other common denominators, suggest the homogeneity of the group in one aspect or another, and, often, various stereotypes of the same

group may contradict one another. Deloria continues, “Over time, of course, meanings have been imposed onto the stereotype’s sameness: ‘all Indians are exactly alike . . . in being savage warriors’ (a negative stereotype); or ‘all Indians are exactly alike . . . in being people who live in harmony with nature’ (a positive one)” (8). Stereotypes are frequently used to dictate how one individual or group should act in relation to another. A popular mindset that imagined all Natives to be “heathen savages” in the nineteenth century, for example, made the missionary’s task of conversion clear, while the conception of Natives as brutal warriors motivated frontiersmen, as well as the American government and military, to carry out violent and deadly campaigns against them (8-9). Deloria defines “stereotype,” then, as “a simplified and generalized expectation . . . that comes to rest in an image, text, or utterance. It is a sound bite, a crudely descriptive connection between power, expectation, and representation” (9). Stereotypes are used to exert control, whether maliciously or otherwise, and they often aim to render the Other more comprehensible by defining him with reductive and inaccurate clichés rather than by seeking a deeper dialogical understanding of that which is unknown.

In her book *Dancing at Halftime: Sports and the Controversy Over American Indian Mascots*, Native rights advocate Carol Spindel writes:

If we do a census of the population in our collective imagination, imaginary Indians are one of the largest demographic groups. They dance, they drum; they go on the warpath; they are always young men who wear trailing feather bonnets. Symbolic servants, they serve as mascots, metaphors. We rely on these images to anchor us to the land and verify our account of our own past. But these Indians exist only in our imaginations. (8)

Spindel suggests that these “imaginary Indians” reflect much more on the various needs and desires of non-Natives than about actual Native Americans and their cultures and histories. Some of the most hotly contested “imaginary Indians” of today are those used as sports mascots. Caricatured Native figures are held up as the embodiments of a range of personal characteristics that many owners, players, and fans would like to associate with their teams, and they differ from one another markedly—from the toothy, cartoonish grin of “Chief Wahoo” of the Cleveland Indians, to the somber stare of the Washington Redskins’ beaded and befeathered warrior mascot, to the gleeful war whoop of the Atlanta Braves’ now-retired “Chief Noc-A-Homa.” In his foreword to the book *Team Spirits: The Native American Mascots Controversy*, Oglala Lakota scholar and activist Vine Deloria, Jr., questions the troubling use of these mascots in professional sports, particularly as such representations appear to be a dubious “honor” reserved solely for Native Americans:

Sports mascots have come under increasing fire by American Indians as they try to achieve equal status as an identifiable ethnic group within American society. No other group faces this particular problem, and the unique nature of the situation calls for serious deliberations. Why are Indians singled out as a group of people devoid of the sentiments that characterize other groups? No team in any sport has its logo or slogans used to demean another identifiable ethnic, religious, or economic group. (ix)

Deloria raises a compelling question, one for which there are no easy—or at least comfortable—answers. Why do Natives remain such popular mascots in the twenty-first century, when the mascotry of so many other groups has rightfully been acknowledged as unethical? Is it because the Native is still held up as a figurehead for the imagined and idealized “primitive” past? The

popularity of team names such as “Vikings,” “Spartans,” and “Trojans” demonstrates a particular affinity for using historical characters as mascots, and certainly the Native characters that appear frequently on football helmets and basketball courts are not Native Americans of this century. Or are Native mascots symptomatic of a common yearning for an imagined quintessential state of American-ness, as suggested by the younger Deloria in *Playing Indian*? Is Native mascotry a phenomenon facilitated by the “Vanishing Indian” stereotype, one that conveniently glosses over the continued existence of hundreds of Native tribes in the United States in order to justify the objectification, ridicule, and careless appropriation of the Native body? Do these mascots still exist today because owners and fans cling doggedly to “tradition,” even when such traditions are built around the propagation of blatantly racist stereotypes, or to the mistaken idea that they are in some way honoring Native Americans by calling themselves “Redskins,” rallying under the bright red visage of a toothy, beaming “Indian,” or performing the “Tomahawk chop” as part of their game-day rituals? Likely, all of these factors, and more, come into play. It is my contention that Native sports mascotry is just one troublesome product of a national identity that has historically appropriated Native figures freely as mascots for a seemingly unending variety of groups and causes.

During the 1960s and seventies, the words “hippie” and “counterculture” came to evoke a number of different images for participants and bystanders alike, images that are still very much present in contemporary notions about what the movement was and what it meant. For example, a “hippie” might be imagined today as someone who dressed eclectically, practiced free love and lived communally, experimented with psychedelic drugs, protested the Vietnam War, and was radically opposed to consumerist culture. In reality, the self-professed hippies of the 1960s and beyond constituted a wildly diverse group of individuals who differed significantly from one

another in their goals, beliefs, and ideals. Nonetheless, the majority participated in at least one or two the practices and philosophies that have come to be commonly associated with the counterculture movement at large—including hallucinogenic drug use, free love, communal living, opposition to the Vietnam War, anarchism, anti-consumerism, and mystic spiritualism. These practices, now the material of stereotype themselves in the national imagination about hippie culture, had at least one significant trait in common—all took up various, and sometimes competing, stereotyped images of the Native American as mascots of sorts. The imagined Native simultaneously became a symbol for pacifism and for militant anarchism, for lifestyles tied to the land and for worldviews focused around mystical spiritual realms. In this chapter, I show how a number of movements associated with the counterculture appropriated the Native in the interest of self-promotion, as well as how *Paradise Now*, *Hair*, and the Digger theatricals reflect and expand the influence of these movements and of the Native mascotry that became common to each.

Countercultural Costuming

One of the most immediately recognizable physical manifestations of the “imaginary Indian” amongst counterculturalists was the appropriation of Native dress. Todd Gitlin describes the hippies’ various styles of dress as “antiuniforms.” More than just fashion choices, these antiuniforms were social and political statements in an era in which hundreds of thousands of young Americans in uniform were deployed to fight a wildly unpopular war (215). Men grew their hair long, women went without makeup or bras, and both sexes frequently eschewed shaving. As Gitlin writes, this style signified for the hippies a sense of freedom and a return to their natural states of being, though it was frequently interpreted otherwise by outsiders: “To

orthodox eyes, this meant slovenliness and sexual ambiguity (like many of the androgynous-sounding rock voices); to the freaks themselves, a turn from the straight to curved, from uptight to loose, from cramped to free—above all, from cramped to natural” (215). Actual military jackets were a “tantalizing” choice for those hippies who could get their hands on them, while other aspects of hippie antiuniforms hinted towards a nostalgia for an earlier generation, particularly “granny glasses” and long dresses for women, and facial hair for men: “A beard could be understood as an attempt to leap into manhood, even to age into one’s own grandfather—thus to become spiritual father to one’s own failed, draggy Dad” (215). Other popular clothing choices reached further back into history, spanning across a range of cultures from both the East and the West. Gitlin describes the antiuniforms as “a riot of costumes, with preferences for the old and marginal” (215). Indian culture, for example, inspired a penchant for beads and Nehru jackets, while Native American influences on clothing choices were apparent in the popularity of fringed outerwear, headbands, feathers worn in the hair, and Native beadwork and patterning, whether authentic or imitated. Gitlin claims that, “Beads and amulets, for both sexes, represented the primitive” (Gitlin 215). Long hair, particularly on hippie men, could also represent a certain yearning for the past; Tim Hodgdon writes that, “Mystically oriented hippies” who wore their hair long “took an almost Rousseauvian approach, defending their ‘natural’ appearance as truly superior in terms evocative of the Noble Savage, whose return would mark the collapse of an unnatural way of life” (41). Long hair and Native dress gave hippies a means to express their imagined nostalgia for a simpler collective past, while simultaneously conveying their hope for a return to that simpler, and presumably more natural, existence in the future.

The romanticized image of “primitive” existence was not the only thing that drew hippies towards the imitation of Native American clothing. They were also inspired by their imagined

shared status on the margins of society—again, the sense of “vicarious victimization” that Deloria examines. As Gitlin writes, many hippies felt at sea in contemporary American society, searching for cultural roots that seemed more relevant to them than their own genealogical histories, and, “disordered by a fragmented culture, trying to invent roots, the freak entrepreneurs turned to bypassed worlds. . . . stirring together intoxicating brews from extracts of bygone tradition” (215). This struggle to establish a more genuine, if less factual, relationship to the past led to identification with ancient cultures of the East, as well as “with the American Indians, who were . . . triply attractive: oppressed, ‘nobly savage’ (wise enough to regard drugs as sacraments, too), and more deeply American than anyone else” (215). Gitlin continues, explaining the appeal of these “repressed” and “primitive” cultures to the hippies of the sixties and seventies: “What were the natural, the primitive, the unrefined, the holy unspoiled child, the pagan body, if not *the repressed*, the culture from the black lagoon, the animal spirit now reviving from beneath the fraudulent surface of American life, for which the most damning word possible was *plastic*? Get back, as the Beatles sang, to where you once belonged” (215-16). In the hippie imagination, Native American cultures of centuries past evoked images of a purer state of being, unspoiled by the corruptions of modern day life, brutally repressed and victimized but fighting for rebirth amongst their self-appointed countercultural descendants. By incorporating Native elements into their wardrobes, hippies asserted their perceived connection to a superior culture as well as their empathy with the noble oppressed.

Production photos and candids from *Paradise Now* and Digger theatricals show that their participants followed suit in mimicking Native dress, frequently pictured wearing headbands and beads. Some performers in *Paradise Now* also wore loincloths covered in geometric prints, ostensibly meant to resemble Native patterning. It is *Hair*, however, that explicitly prescribes

Native dress for its participants in its opening stage directions, including “headbands, beads . . . loincloths, moccasins, beaded dresses . . . blankets . . . tribal masks, colored greasepants” (1). In the first act, Claude tries on his mother’s beads, prompting her admonition, “This is not a reservation,” while Berger takes the stage in what historian and *Hair* enthusiast Barbara Lee Horn refers to as a “hippie-Indian loincloth” (Ragni and Rado 20; Horn 51). Scott Miller, who directed the show in St. Louis in 2000, submits an unproblematic view of hippie fascination with Native dress in his book *Let the Sun Shine In*: “Clothing from other cultures, particularly third world and native American, represented their awareness of the global community and their rejection of U.S. imperialism and selfishness. Simple cotton dresses and other natural fabrics were a rejection of synthetics, a return to natural things and simpler times” (18). While the ideals Miller describes here are ostensibly positive ones, his mention of “natural things and simpler times” reflects the common countercultural tendency to elide cultural differences at the risk of reducing that culture which is unknown to a more immediately relatable level, claiming a nostalgic affection for that which is beyond the speaker’s experience. As Conquergood puts it, “The distinctiveness of the other is glossed over by a glaze of generalities” (6).

Seneca anthropologist Michael Taylor addresses the contemporary fascination with Native costuming in his book *Contesting Constructed Indian-ness: The Intersection of the Frontier, Masculinity, and Whiteness in Native American Mascot Representations*. He writes:

As an expectation of popular culture notions of Indian-ness, it is the suit that makes the man, so to speak, and as such, a display marks Indian-ness through visual symbols of the Indian Other. Fringed leather clothing as conventional attire is one of these expected notions of the idealized Indian. Feathered bonnets are also a marker of Indian-ness that the consumer has come to expect in the popular

display of Indian ethnicity. Although full feathered headdresses are typically associated with Plains cultures all Indians are associated with the use of feathers as ornamental and symbolic “decorations”. (4)

Although Taylor speaks of contemporary sports mascots rather than of mid-twentieth century performance artists, he addresses a problem that is widely manifest in performances by both—inaccurate “visual symbols” based on highly generalized stereotypes about “Indian-ness” that conceive of no boundaries between tribes or nations, no changes between past and present, and no distinctions between social ceremony, ritual, and everyday life. He writes: “The public performance of constructed Indian-ness is quite often at odds with the reality of Native American cultural modes, especially when idealized Indians are entertainment for the public gaze” (4). Here, Taylor identifies a central problem with non-Native representation of Native Americans, one that has been prevalent in American society likely since the first days of European contact—that such representations are often based in stereotype rather than in reality, and each uninformed representation perpetuates the stereotypes that have come before. Many clothing choices influenced by Native styles may be harmless—and even beneficial to Native economies when authentic pieces are purchased from Native artisans. Appropriations of Native dress, however, risk offense by eliding tribal differences, by treating items that have cultural and spiritual significance to Native tribes with carelessness, and by crossing the border between Native influence and Native costume, allowing the wearer to casually “try on” a cultural identity in a manner fraught with painful colonialist implications.

Spirituality, Hallucinogens, and the Natural World

In 1932, John G. Neihardt published his well-known biography of Black Elk, a medicine man of the Oglala Lakota Sioux who had survived the Battle of Little Big Horn and the Wounded Knee Massacre, traveled overseas as part of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, and founded his own Indian Show aimed at educating tourists in the Black Hills of South Dakota in the ways of the Lakota people. *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* tells stories of Black Elk's life and recounts many of the revelatory visions that informed his life's work as a spiritual leader and healer. Though the book has met with some controversy, as scholars have questioned the accuracy of Neihardt's interpretation of Black Elk's narrative, it has remained a popular text since the time of its initial publication, and it is still widely read and taught both in the United States and abroad. Vine Deloria, Jr., wrote the foreword to the 1979 edition of *Black Elk Speaks*, and there he addresses the book's striking upsurge in popularity during the 1960s, attributing the renewed interest in Neihardt's book at least in part to a new generation of Americans seeking truth and inspiration as they faced the threats and promises of the future: "But crises mounted and, as we understood the implications of future shock, the silent spring, and the greening of America, people began to search for a universal expression of the larger, more cosmic truths which industrialism and progress had ignored and overwhelmed. In the 1960s interest began to focus on Indians and some of the spiritual realities they seemed to represent" (xiv). Like other popular biographical volumes of the sixties and seventies, such as Carlos Castaneda's *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* (1968) and Doug Boyd's *Rolling Thunder* (1974), *Black Elk Speaks* promised its readers access to a deeper understanding of the universe through the eyes of a Native medicine man. Counterculturalists in the sixties and seventies had often-complicated views on the spiritual

and the supernatural realms. Most hippies tended to reject organized religion, particularly in its dominant traditional forms, but many also viewed their own spiritual beliefs as a sort of new countercultural religion, a pastiche of existing forms, including aspects of Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, and Native American religions (Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values* xxvi). Timothy Miller quotes an unidentified “hip writer” who critiqued traditional Christian worship in a 1969 issue of the *Spectator*, an underground newspaper published in Bloomington, Indiana: “The churches are as flagrant violators of the natural, real religious way, the way of man in harmony with earth, water, sky and fire, and, of course, his fellows as any other institution” (xxvi). This statement reflects a popular countercultural view on the connections between the spiritual and natural worlds—the idea that spiritual transcendence could be activated by recognizing one’s place within the natural world and relinquishing attachments to the manmade products of industry and technical innovation.

Brad Steiger, author of numerous volumes on paranormal phenomena—including ghosts, ESP, and UFOs, among many other subjects—summarized the widespread influence of Native spirituality on American youth in his 1974 book *Medicine Power*. He writes:

Ancient Amerindian metaphysics are influencing everything from our young people’s popular music, their hair styles and manner of dress, to their personal spiritual philosophies. Contemporary Amerindian mystics are demonstrating that the medicine of the Great Spirit can soar beyond science to present modern man with a system of relevant spiritual guidance for anyone who will learn to walk in balance, to live in harmony with Nature and with the Cosmos. (xi)

This concept of an ideal “harmony [of] Nature and . . . the Cosmos” accounts in part for the popularity of a certain stereotype of the enlightened Native American, acutely in tune with the spiritual by way of his innate understanding of and complete existence within the natural world. “As the 1950s gave way to the ‘60s and ‘70s,” writes historian Edward Buscombe in his book *‘Injuns!’: Native Americans in the Movies* (2006), “playing Indian became a major component of the emerging hippie lifestyle and the subsequent New Age movement. Prominent in such thinking was a growing awareness of ecological issues, and increasingly Indians came to be seen as having a special relationship to the earth and uniquely qualified to preserve it” (169). Ethnomusicologist Derek B. Scott reflects further on the image of Native as “eco-warrior” in his book *From the Erotic to the Demonic: On Critical Musicology*, examining the dangers that lurk behind even ostensibly-positive stereotypes:

A new Indian stereotype began to take over the popular imagination from around 1970 on, that of the Indian in harmony with nature, noncompetitive and nonmaterialistic, and profoundly wise about the universe. The eco-warrior appeals today because of a wide range of environmental concerns—to name but a few, greenhouse gasses, oil spills, acid rain, and toxic waste. Unfortunately, this image can prove no less dehumanizing and also has a tendency to imply that Native Americans are unable to cope with the grim practicalities of modern life. (Scott 75)

Perhaps the most iconic embodiment of the Native American as “eco-warrior” in the 1970s was actor Iron Eyes Cody’s portrayal of the “Crying Indian.” Cody, an actor whose filmography includes a long list of Native American roles in movies and television series from 1926 to 1987, became the face of the Keep America Beautiful campaign in 1971. In the campaign’s television

commercial, Cody, decked out in fringed buckskin, feathers, braids, and beads, paddles down a polluted river in a canoe, gazing out at the horizon, where several large factories are pumping toxins into the air. Subsequent frames show Cody standing at the edge of a busy highway, his traditional Native dress bearing a stark contrast to the modern bustle around him. A driver throws a fast food bag from his window, and as it falls at Cody's feet, he looks into the camera, a single tear streaming down his cheek. A voiceover proclaims, "Some people have a deep, abiding respect for the natural beauty that was once this country . . . and some people don't. People start pollution. People can stop it." Print ads for the campaign feature a close-up of Cody's teary face, accompanied by slogans such as "Pollution hurts all of us," and "Pollution: It's a crying shame" (Keep America Beautiful). Ironically, Cody's iconic visage was not that of an actual Native American—though he devoted his life to portraying Native characters and fighting for Native rights, Cody was a first-generation Italian-American, born Espera deCorti to two southern-Italian immigrants in 1904 (Aleiss). As Scott points out, the "eco-warrior" stereotype, still very much present in popular conceptions of the Native today, is damaging in its portrayal of Natives as somehow superhuman in their understanding of the universe while simultaneously subhuman in their inability to function within modern society. The latter view is illustrated clearly in the image of Cody as displaced and heartbroken Native lost in the confusion of contemporary life, and it is problematic especially as it situates the imagined Native within the past while ignoring the ongoing presence of Native Americans in contemporary society, a subject I treat more fully in my next chapter.

Related to the stereotype of the Native as archetypal human extension of the natural world was the idea of the Native spiritual leader achieving enlightenment via hallucinogenic drugs. *New York Magazine* music critic Richard Goldstein interviewed Jim Morrison for his

article “The Shaman as Superstar” in 1968. In the interview, Morrison, known to other members of the Doors as “the electric shaman,” described his own perception of the shaman’s visionary process: “The shaman . . . he was a man who would intoxicate himself. See, he was probably already an . . . uh . . . unusual individual. And, he would put himself into a trance by dancing, whirling around, drinking, taking drugs—however. Then, he would go on a mental travel and . . . uh . . . describe his journey to the rest of the tribe” (Qtd. in Boekhoven 194). Morrison here evokes another highly-romanticized image of the Native—that of the mystic healer or shaman who takes hallucinogenic drugs in order to achieve spiritual awakening. For hippies who were experimenting with peyote, LSD, mushrooms, marijuana, and other psychoactive stimulants, the Native American mystic was a convenient mascot, one who lent an imagined sense of ancient cultural legitimacy to the practice of getting high and set a seemingly-irrefutable precedent for the use of drugs as conduits to spiritual realms. Tim Hodgdon quotes preeminent hippie Stephen Gaskin’s account of the connection between drugs and spirituality, recorded in his autobiographical *Haight Ashbury Flashbacks* (1990): “‘We had this agreement,’ he wrote, that tripping was ‘the church. Not *a* church. *The* church. It didn’t belong to nobody. . . . It was a church meeting *every time* . . . good people . . . got high and loved each other and went into being telepathic . . . with one another, and we tried to be that way about it’” (109). The concept of drugs as church was made physically manifest in the “dope churches” of the sixties and beyond, sites for communal drug use that included Timothy Leary’s League for Spiritual Discovery and the Neo-American Church founded by Art Kleps, known to his parishioners as “Chief Boo-Hoo” (Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values* 8). According to Miller, hippies modeled their dope churches after the Native American Church because it “not only had a historic tradition of drug use for ritual purposes; it was the only place where a psychedelic

substance, peyote, could be used legally” (7). The dope churches differed significantly from the Native American Church, however, as their primary focus was on unregulated, recreational drug use. The Native American Church, by contrast, considers peyote to be only “one of several spiritual tools” whose “use has been guided and controlled by elders” as a means of preserving ancient ritual practices (7).

Miller ultimately pardons the hippie imitators of Native religious practice on the basis of their good intentions and the tolerance of some Native American witnesses: “Despite the large differences between hippies and Native Americans, however, the hippies genuinely admired and often imitated Indian ways, and some Indians felt affinity for the young dissenters who voluntarily placed themselves outside the oppressive social mainstream” (7-8). Certainly, many actual Natives sympathized with the goals of the counterculture, participated in the movement themselves, and welcomed hippies’ legitimate attempts to aid in Native rights campaigns. Good intentions and acceptance by some Native Americans, however, do not absolve counterculturalists of such missteps as propagating harmful stereotypes and appropriating ancient ritual practices for purposes unrelated and even directly counter to their original uses. As Philip Deloria points out in *Playing Indian*, many countercultural misappropriations stemmed from a failure to engage on more than a superficial level with actual Native Americans, and most counterculturalists who claimed a spiritual link with indigenous Americans approached Native subjects only from a safe remove: “Counterculture spiritualists sought out Indians, to be sure, but . . . 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” (168). Appropriations based on observations made across such distances often left out a consideration of crucial issues, such as the struggles for Native religious freedoms that have continued well past the sixties and

seventies. In a 1994 article entitled “Protecting the Right to Worship,” for example, Stephen Buhner, a member of the New Age Church of Gaia/Council of Four Directions, which freely (mis-)appropriated Native ritual for its own purposes, wrote that: “Our church believes that no person because of their skin color, should be prohibited from worshiping God in the manner they choose” (Qtd. in Deloria 171). For Deloria, this statement carries with it an insidious subtext, namely that, “Indianness—coded as a spiritual essential—was the common property of all Americans” (171). He writes that Buhner’s assertion of religious freedom regardless of skin color must have been highly ironic to Natives engaged in bitter struggles to protect their own spiritual practices:

In a series of legal decisions [in the 1980s], 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. (171)

As Deloria demonstrates, an unwillingness and/or inability to engage on more than a superficial level with actual Native Americans not only led many counterculturalists and New Agers to propagate stereotypes based in myths and half-truths; it also led them to certain cultural insensitivities and unwitting verbal offenses, even as they attempted to honor Native American customs and traditions.

Countercultural theatres and publications were themselves sites of spiritual mascotry, as performers often took on the guise of the Native as a means of expressing their desires to connect

both to the natural world and to the cosmos, frequently incorporating real or feigned drug use into their performances and written works. For example, the Diggers appropriated Native spiritual views in their complaints about Big Brother and the Holding Company's appearance in *ID* magazine, proclaiming that, like unspecified Native tribes, the band should have refused to have their images—and thus their souls—captured on film. As I posited in my second chapter, this semblance of concern about Big Brother's souls had more to do with the Diggers' own anti-consumerist ideals than with actual Native spiritual beliefs. The Diggers departed from the common hippie tendency to associate drugs with Native spirituality, however. Though they frequently took and distributed hallucinogenic drugs at their performance events, they viewed hallucinogens as a means of pursuing social action rather than as a source of mystical inspiration, attempting to use substances like LSD and peyote as conduits to enlightened planes on which they could gain new insights on social and political reform, among other topics (Hodgdon 13).

The creators of *Hair*, meanwhile, did associate drug use with Native spirituality. The opening stage directions for the off-Broadway version of the musical contain the instructions: "Note should be taken of the spiritual theme running through the play; outer space, astrology, the earth, the heavens, interplanetary travel, mysticism," and throughout the musical, stereotypical elements of Native spirituality intermingle with conventions of Christianity, as well as with Eastern religious imagery (ix). The stage directions go on to justify the show's depictions of drug use by claiming, "the use of drugs, by the way, has a distinct parallel in ancient cultures, in tribal spiritual tradition, both East and West" (ix). In an early scene, Berger's introductory song, "Manhattan," draws blatant connections between Native Americans and drug use, evoking several stereotyped images of the "MANHATTAN INDIAN" and then, a few stanzas later, rattling off a list of mind-altering substances, clearly linking the former with the latter:

“HASHISH / COCAINE / HEROIN / OPIUM / LSD / DMT. . . .” (6). The drugs used by the characters in *Hair* were often more than props; actors frequently dropped acid, smoked marijuana, or received shots of vitamins laced with methamphetamines during their nightly performances, habits which ultimately contributed to the significant occurrence of dangerous overdoses and addictions, clearly not the intended goals of either real or stereotyped Native spiritual practices involving peyote or other substances (Horn 91).

The connections between Native spirituality, the natural world, and drugs are most deliberately drawn, however, in *Paradise Now*, particularly in its treatment of the Natural Man. In Rite I, the actors lament, “I AM NOT ALLOWED TO TRAVEL WITHOUT A PASSPORT. I DON’T KNOW HOW TO STOP THE WARS. YOU CAN’T LIVE IF YOU DON’T HAVE MONEY. I’M NOT ALLOWED TO SMOKE MARIJUANA. I’M NOT ALLOWED TO TAKE MY CLOTHES OFF” (15-19). As in *Hair* and the Digger theatricals, it was not uncommon for the Living Theatre performers to be high even as they chanted their complaints against restrictive drug laws that did not allow them to smoke pot legally. Later, the performers act out the “Emergence of Natural Man,” symbolized by human totem poles—“grimacing, supernatural, animistic, fetishistic, demonic, celestial”—and culminating in the image of the “Fallen, the Slain Red Man” (21-22). Finally, at the end of Action I, the Natural Man, “as represented by the great Indian culture, the great suppressed cultures,” reemerges, reincarnated in the body of the contemporary hippie: “The Natural Man confronts the spectator. The Natural Man knows he can travel without a passport, that he can smoke marijuana, that he can find ways to live without money, that he can take off his clothes. He knows how to stop the wars. That’s the flashout” (27). Stage directions and performance text throughout Rung I call up stereotypical images commonly associated with Native spirituality, such as the “ceremonial circle” and the “pipe of

peace,” which the performers smoke “until they become Indians” (19-20). The totem poles, too, seem designed to evoke mystical images, as they are described variously as “supernatural,” “demonic,” and “celestial,” perhaps revealing a misunderstanding of the traditional purposes of the totem pole, which have more to do with storytelling than worship. The “Natural Man,” a Native-hippie hybrid, functions as the answer to all of society’s ills; he simultaneously represents the natural world and, having been reincarnated, the supernatural one, and he offers his followers a chance to achieve true liberation and enlightenment, because he knows “that he can smoke marijuana” (27). This statement of liberation, like the one that Stephen Buhner would announce decades later, rings a bit false in light of the simultaneous struggles for basic civil and religious freedoms that actual Natives faced on a daily basis. Moreover, *Paradise Now* trafficked in Native stereotypes in a way that rendered Native characters in ancient and mythic, rather than contemporary and human, proportions. In his book *Genealogies of Shamanism: Struggles for Power, Charisma, and Authority*, historian Jeroen W. Boekhoven writes that many counterculturalists held fast to the notion that “people failed to be creative because their conscious minds were concealed by a layer of dreary conventions.” Therefore, he continues, “Artists, children, natives, outcasts and the mentally ill were romanticized because they were imagined to live close to the unconscious” (Boekhoven 193). In the countercultural theatre of the sixties and seventies, as well as in the mainstream popular culture of the day, Native Americans were frequently treated with this infantilizing romanticization that glorified their imagined connections to the natural and supernatural worlds, while simultaneously representing them as somehow less human than their non-Native contemporaries.

Communalism, Tribalism, and Anarchy

In a 1995 interview for the magazine *Psychedelic Illuminations*, Jerry Garcia reflected on the craving for a simpler and less materialistic way of life that many hippies experienced in the 1960s and beyond: “We would all like to be able to live an uncluttered life, a simple life, a good life and think about moving the whole human race ahead a step, or a few steps, or half a step” (Qtd. in Timothy Miller, *The 60s Communes* 150). The desire to achieve progress through simplification led many hippies to establish communes where like-minded individuals and families could live in harmony with one another and work together for common goals at a safe remove from the pressures and complications of modern life. These goals differed significantly from commune to commune. While some communes were centered primarily around particular social or political ideologies, others focused on the spiritual beliefs of their members, and others still were dedicated to community service, artistic expression, or the practice of free love. A few guiding principles, however, were characteristic of most hippie communes; Timothy Miller enumerates them thusly: “rejection of the dominant order, rural idealism, open land, egalitarianism, community, and environmentalism” (*The 60s Communes* 151). Miller describes the worldview that led hippies to create communes in the sixties as an optimistic one, a “spirit of the times . . . that was rejecting the materialistic old culture and seeking to rebuild society from the ground up, the spirit of ecstasy, expressiveness, interconnectedness, and getting back to essentials” (150-51). Unsurprisingly, the impulse to “get back to essentials” often led to Native appropriations, the virtues of which Miller does not question. He suggests that Native tribes often got along well with their neighbors living on communes, and he highlights the fact that Native Americans occasionally established their own communes where they taught Native customs to non-Natives. Furthermore, he reports that, “even absent a direct local Indian connection,

communards in many places lived in tepees, wore loincloths while hoeing their crops, and came together for peyote rituals,” seemingly suggesting that these appropriations offer proof of the hippies’ genuine understanding of Native cultures (153). Quoting Pam Hanna, a “veteran of several communes,” Miller suggests a natural kinship between hippies and Natives based on perceived similarities in their attitudes towards land ownership: “Parceling up Mother Earth is a foreign and ludicrous concept to so many Indians,” Hanna states, “which is perhaps why hippies and Indians usually got along so well” (Qtd. in Miller 153).

In *Playing Indian*, Deloria takes a more nuanced look at the countercultural tendency to romanticize Native Americans as the quintessential communalists, the ideological ancestors of the hippies. In the early seventies, Deloria occasionally stayed at a commune in the Pacific Northwest when his parents were traveling out of town, and there he often witnessed non-Natives attempting to live as they imagined that traditional Natives had. He recalls that the commune he visited had its own “Indian camp,” where “people in headbands, fringed leather jackets, and moccasins padded quietly about, calling each other names . . . that had the kind of faux-Indian ring—Rainbow, maybe, or Green Wood—that I would later associate with suburban tract developments” (155). Like Miller, Deloria mentions communalists living in tipis, but his tone is one of bemusement rather than of admiration:

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). (155)

Communalists like the ones Deloria encountered in his childhood romanticized Native cultures and enjoyed “playing Indian” by living in tipis, wearing Native-inspired clothing, and christening their new identities with made-up “Indian” names, but the example Deloria offers here demonstrates that their understanding of Native cultures was often superficial at best. These faux-Natives appear to have been more interested in mimicking a stereotype than in doing the requisite research on actual Native histories or contemporary Native ways of life, taking as their mascot the Plains Indian, ubiquitous star of film and television Westerns. Deloria suggests that this conception of Native life seemed to offer more cultural legitimacy, despite the historical and geographical inaccuracy: “[Tipis] 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” (155). Communalists at the New Buffalo commune in New Mexico demonstrated a similar preference for the symbolic over the authentic. They, too, imitated the historical Plains Indian in many respects, even to the point of naming their commune after his primary source of sustenance, but they themselves preferred to eat the “corn-beans-squash combination favored by more sedentary native people” (Deloria 155). They named this food combination the “Navajo Diet,” effectively “ignoring the nearby Pueblos (who had perfected this agriculture) for more symbolically powerful Indians” (Deloria 159).

Many communalists attempted to mimic not only the basic survival skills of Native Americans, but also certain perceived aspects of Native social structures and attitudes towards community and authority. Tribalism was a popular concept on countercultural communes, and Miller writes that many communalists tried to capture a romantic vision of “the close and warm communities that were once the essence of human social life” by thinking of themselves as families or tribes (155). “Here again the image of traditional American Indians was often

invoked,” Miller continues, because, “their tribes were seen as cohesive and rewarding social units, well deserving of emulation” (155). The ideals of tribalism—and communalism, generally—often clashed, in practice, with the ideology of anarchism, a widely held political standard on many countercultural communes. Deloria breaks the discrepancy down as a basic conflict between the desire to act for the good of the group versus the desire to exercise total individual freedom, illustrating his point with the example of an “enormous dustpile” accumulated during a guitar concert at the commune he frequented in his youth—no one wanted to dispose of the pile, so they “laid a piece of tarpaper over it and did not mention the peculiar mound in the living room,” sacrificing the best interests of the community on the altar of stubborn individual autonomy (156). Nonetheless, tribalism had a particular appeal for those communalists and counterculturalists who were dedicated to the cause of anarchy, as it seemed to offer a radically egalitarian alternative to modern democracy with its myriad legal constrictions. Dominick Cavallo addresses the countercultural tendency to hold up the Native as a mascot for both tribalism and anarchism, tracing commonly-held perceptions about Native anti-government back to Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785):

Cultural radicals admired the communalism and communism of Native Americans, the supposed “simplicity” with which they lived and their respect for nature. Most of all, perhaps, they were intrigued by the noncoercive, apparently voluntary nature of Indian communalism. Two centuries earlier, Thomas Jefferson noted much the same thing. Indian society was bereft, said Jefferson, of “any laws, any coercive power, any shadow of government. Their only controuls are their manners, and that moral sense of right and wrong.” (137)

The reductive conflation of tribal self-government with total anarchy often led to disappointment for communalists who sought enlightenment on contemporary Native reservations, because “Native communities, often unexpectedly socially restrictive, did not mesh well with the aggressive individualism of many communes.” These encounters were equally frustrating for Natives, who “grew weary of constantly reeducating flighty counterculture seekers” (Deloria 159). Just as communalists in the Pacific Northwest chose to emulate the more “symbolically powerful” Natives of the Great Plains by living in tipis (at their own soggy peril), many communalists who visited actual Native reservations during the sixties and seventies chose to willfully ignore the realities of Native life they observed there, particularly the social customs that did not conform to their own ideas about anarchy and radical freedom. In *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, his 1969 treatise on the state of Native affairs in America, Vine Deloria, Jr. reflects on an encounter he had with a group of hippies in Denver, observing that their rejection of Native customs prevented them from ever fully realizing their tribal ideals:

They were tribally oriented but refused to consider customs as anything more than regulations in disguise. Yet it was by rejecting customs that the hippies failed to tribalize and became comical shadows rather than modern incarnations of tribes. . . . [Hippies] lived too much on the experiential plane and refused to realize that there really was a world outside of their own experiences. (232-33)

Philip Deloria describes such acts of strategically selective appropriations as missed opportunities: “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” (*Playing Indian* 159). By clinging to the imaginary Native instead of approaching their real Native neighbors with open minds and a

willingness to observe and learn without ulterior motive, these communalists ensured that they would leave the reservations with no insights deeper than the ones they entered with, and that these visits would not benefit either party significantly—beyond perhaps giving the communalists certain bragging rights, however poorly earned. As film historian Jacquelyn Kilpatrick observes in her book *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (1999), while attempting to emulate an imagined Native American way of life might have been an enjoyable exercise for many communalists, it was nonetheless “a nostalgic appropriation of homogenized Indian identity, generally that of a hundred years earlier, and it did little to help the causes of contemporary Native peoples” (66).

The Diggers were an integral part of the communalist movement in San Francisco and its outskirts, and stereotypes about Native American tribalism and individualism made the imaginary Native an ideal mascot for the anarchic Diggers. The group was born from the rejection of the director-performer-audience hierarchy implicit in traditional theatrical settings, and egalitarian Digger principles about art and life alike are evident in their most well-known mottos, “Do your thing!” and, “It’s free because it’s yours!” They rejected the ideas of land ownership, capitalism, and the oversight of the national government, viewing them as corrupt concepts foreign to the earliest inhabitants of America, whose tribal social structures provided more satisfying models for contemporary life. Exhorting their followers to, “SEW THE RAGS OF SURPLUS INTO TEPEES,” they envisioned a more authentic way of life based on a return to the principles that guided life on the American continent before European contact (Qtd. in Gitlin 223). A Digger flyer entitled “The Post-Competitive, Comparative Game of a Free City,” reprinted in the *Digger Papers* in 1968, functions as a manifesto for communal living in “Free Cities”:

Free Cities are composed of Free Families . . . who establish and maintain services that provide a base of freedom for autonomous groups to carry out their programs without having to hassle for food, printing facilities, transportation, mechanics, money, housing, working space, clothes, machinery, trucks, etc. At this point in our revolution it is demanded that the families, communes, black organizations and gangs of every city in America coordinate and develop Free Cities where everything that is necessary can be obtained for free by those involved in the various activities of the individual clans. (*Digger Papers*)

The Diggers themselves lived communally, and in addition to regularly distributing free food and supplies, they established at least thirty-five communal homes for the hippies of the Haight-Ashbury and beyond (Miller, *The 60s Communes* 44). Symbiotic relationships with other communes, particularly Lou Gottlieb's Morning Star Ranch, otherwise known as the Digger Farm, allowed the Diggers to keep their free stores stocked and to feed the general public in Golden Gate Park, participants in events such as the Human Be-In of 1967, and the thousands who made pilgrimages to the Haight-Ashbury during the Summer of Love. As the group began to dissolve following the Summer of Love, many of its members flocked to the Morning Star Ranch to take part in the tribal lifestyle it promised. In 1992, Gottlieb reflected on the principles that guided the tribal organization of the ranch, and on the continuing need for tribalism in contemporary life: "The absence of the tribal relationship in contemporary society is one of its features which makes it so inhumane. There is nothing to fill the gap between the disfunctional [sic] family and the oppressive society. Like minded people living in close proximity is the healthiest environment on earth especially for kids. . . . This Western hemisphere land longs to be lived on tribally" (*Morning Star Newsletter*). For Gottlieb, as well as for the Diggers, tribal

living seemed to be the much-needed solution to many of society's ills, and the American landscape itself begged for a return to traditional Native ways of life.

Tribalism is a central theme of *Hair*, and *Paradise Now* also places heavy emphasis on tribal/communal life, as well as on anarchism and individual freedom from governmental restrictions. Both productions employ Native American imagery to lend a sense of cultural and historical legitimacy to these concepts. In *Hair*, the idea of the ensemble as a tribe is vital not only to the story that plays out onstage, but also to the rehearsal and production process on the whole, as each cast which performs the musical traditionally identifies itself as a tribe, often adopting the name of an existing or historical Native tribe. The opening notes in the original script explain that Rado and Ragni saw this production choice as a reflection of the spirit of the times: "Marshall McLuhan describes today's world as a 'global village.' And today's youth is involved in group-tribal activity. So HAIR should be a group-tribal activity. An extension of what's happening" (viii). The playwrights go on to define "group-tribal activity" as:

A coming-together for a common reason: a search for a way of life that makes sense to the young, that allows the growth of their new vision, however defined or undefined that may be; to find an alternative to the unacceptable standards, goals, and morals of the older generation, the establishment. . . . It's what's happening now. The tribes are forming, establishing their own way of life, their own morality, ideology, their own mode of dress, behavior. . . . (viii-ix)

The stage directions for the first scene describe the atmosphere as that of "a primitive American Indian Camp at twilight," and identify the cast members as "the *Electric Tribe*," representing a "new-ancient culture" that blends elements of the old and the new, the East and the West:

All looks quite primitive, tribal, and perhaps could be mistaken for another century were it not for the twinkling Jesus on the Crucifix. . . . Bare feet, sandals, saris, loincloths, beads, old military uniforms, band uniforms, psychedelic design, incense, flowers, oriental rugs, candles, all combine to illustrate the emergence of a new-ancient culture among the youth. . . . The Tribe is gathering. (2)

Throughout the musical, the chorus acts as a tribe searching for their own purpose and place in the world, for their communal as well as individual identities, led by Berger in his loincloth.

Though Berger envisions them as a protective family unit ready to claim Claude as one of their own, however, they are ultimately unable to incorporate Claude into their group or to save him from the evils of American society, the U.S. military, and his own biological family. The tribal ideal is legitimized as Claude's death is revealed in the final scene—mainstream society has taken a life that the tribe might have saved.

Paradise Now, written collectively by the anarcho-pacifist Living Theatre, unsurprisingly contains many references to tribalism and communalism, anarchy and individual sovereignty. The title of the play itself is a reference to an anarchic utopia, as evidenced by an key moment in the play when the actors spell out words with their bodies: “And with their bodies the actors spell out the word: ANARCHISM. WHAT IS ANARCHISM? And with their bodies the actors spell out the word: PARADISE and chant the word: NOW” (42). The show's opening notes discuss the group's desire to facilitate a mutually-beneficial relationship between the individual and the collective that would preserve the integrity of both: “The Revolution seeks to establish a State of Being of Interdependence between the Individual and the Collective, in which the Individual is not sacrificed to the Collective nor the Collective to the Individual” (7). The play begins with a strident call for the individual to claim those human rights that have been unfairly and arbitrarily

denied to him by a corrupt government. In the “Rite of Guerilla Theatre,” performers wander the auditorium, forming a “community of protest” as they recite to the audience a list of the things they are not allowed to do—namely, traveling without passports, stopping wars, living without money, smoking marijuana, and taking off their clothes (15-19). The remedy for the stifling of the individual lies simultaneously in the past and the present. “The Vision of the Death and Resurrection of the American Indian” begins in much the same way as *Hair*, with the performers seated in a “ceremonial circle,” smoking peace pipes “until they become Indians” (19-20). After the symbolic massacre of their Native alter-egos, the performers express their vision of total freedom in both theatre and society—“Free theatre. Feel free. You, the public, can choose your role and act it out. . . . Free theatre. In which the actors and the public can do anything they like. Free Theatre. Do whatever you want with the capitalist culture of New York” (23). Finally, the Natural Man emerges, “as represented by the great Indian culture.” As previously discussed, he is the ultimate embodiment of freedom, impervious to the laws and social conventions that would prevent him from travelling without a passport, smoking marijuana, taking off his clothes, etc. (27). The notes that follow Vision I explain that, “the Indians as the Natural Man . . . serve as examples of tribal and communitarian alternatives, bringing with them the gift of beads and the peace-pipe” (27). Like the Diggers and the authors of *Hair*, the Living Theatre attempted to appropriate Native culture for its own strategic purposes, and in *Paradise Now*, the imaginary Native stood in as a mascot for radical individual freedom, as well as for “tribal and communitarian” ways of life in which all citizens worked for the good of the collective, without need for money, politics, or social hierarchy. The stereotypes were positive, to be sure, but like many of the communalists Deloria describes in *Playing Indian*, these theatre artists appear to

have “value[d] Indian Otherness and its assorted meanings more than they did real native people” (Deloria 159).

Pacifism and the Sexual Revolution

For centuries, two contradictory stereotypes about Native Americans have competed in popular culture—that of the bloodthirsty warrior, and the peace-loving sage. Both stereotypes were evoked frequently in the art, culture, and rhetoric of the sixties and seventies, and both were used as countercultural mascots, sometimes even championing the same causes.

Counterculturalists, especially those who stood for the open expression of love and sexuality and against the exercise of military aggression in Vietnam and elsewhere, naturally gravitated towards the image of the peaceful Native, but the bloodthirsty savage was not altogether absent from the countercultural imagination, or from hippie theatricals. *Paradise Now* and *Hair* both exhort audiences to choose peace, using Native imagery to bolster their arguments against the war in Vietnam. Nonviolence is a central theme of *Paradise Now*, a vital step towards the total revolution of society: “The Revolution does not want violence but life” (37). Performers began the opening “Rite of Guerilla Theatre” by addressing the audience with the frantic lament, “I DON’T KNOW HOW TO STOP THE WARS.” Notes in the script describe what is assumed to be each performer’s attitude towards war, the motivation behind the lament: “[The performer] expresses his own frustration at his inability to abolish even the most obvious evil: War. His guilt, his responsibility, his need. He cries out against the system and the culture which block his peacemaking efforts” (16). The horror of war is played out for the audience shortly thereafter, as the “murderous shots of civilization” decimate the human totem poles, symbolizing the Euro-American annihilation of Native tribes. Ultimately, it is the Natural Man, the reincarnated

American Indian, who can offer salvation because he “knows how to stop the wars”—an ironic suggestion in light of the fact that tens of thousands of Native Americans fought in Vietnam, the vast majority serving voluntarily (27). In *Hair*, too, peace and love are the orders of the day. The “new-ancient culture” of the “Electric Tribe” demands a more peaceful existence between individuals of different national, cultural, racial, and sexual identities. The song “Age of Aquarius” aptly expresses the concept of peaceful coexistence as a necessary step in the journey towards enlightenment. The song is an exultant celebration of an astrological age in which many counterculturalists believed peace and love would finally take hold across the globe as the moon aligned with Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn in Aquarius for the first time in 2500 years (Scott Miller 6). In “Age of Aquarius,” a solo voice promises: “HARMONY AND UNDERSTANDING / SYMPATHY AND TRUST ABOUNDING / NO MORE FALSEHOODS OR DERISIONS / GOLDEN LIVING DREAMS OF VISIONS / MYSTIC CRYSTAL REVELATIONS / AND THE MIND’S TRUE LIBERATION” (3). Throughout the musical, the Tribe struggles to realize this harmonious ideal in a world filled with violence, greed, and deception. Claude’s LSD trip in the second act leads to a parody of the endless perpetuation of violence around the world, and the musical’s final song delivers a brutal indictment of the irresponsible and immoral glorification of a war that devoured hundreds of thousands of lives: “SENTIMENTAL ENDING / RIPPED OPEN BY METAL EXPLOSION / SENTIMENTAL ENDING / CAUGHT IN BARBED WIRE / SENTIMENTAL ENDING / FIREBALL / BULLET SHOCK / SENTIMENTAL ENDING / BAYONET ELECTRICITY / SENTIMENTAL ENDING / SHRAPNELLED / THROBBING MEAT” and so forth (204). The Tribe, represented throughout as a Native-hippie hybrid collective, argues stridently for peace,

and the entire show, particularly in its Broadway reincarnation, functions as a musical manifesto against the war.

The Diggers also lobbied for peace, and in numerous broadsides and public acts, they expressed their contempt for the war in Vietnam. In anticipation of the Human Be-In of 1967, for instance, they created a sculpture of “chain-link fencing draped with animal entrails” in Golden Gate Park, “a symbolic representation of the destructiveness of the then-raging Vietnam war” (Hodgdon xxviii). Many Digger theatricals and pamphlets were designed to encourage their neighbors in the Haight-Ashbury to live their lives in the pursuit of love, rather than money. Their first broadside, entitled “Let Me Live in a World Pure” and distributed in September of 1966, asked the question: “When will the JEFFERSON AIRPLANE and all ROCK GROUPS quit trying to make it and LOVE?” (*Digger Papers*). Capitalism was an obstacle to harmonious living, and the Diggers sought to overthrow it by establishing an alternative way of life. Citing as examples their free food events, free stores, and the communal housing they opened to the public, Timothy Miller describes the Diggers as “prime models of organized love” (*The Hippies and American Values* 89). The Diggers were not, however, pacifists. They were highly skeptical of the “flower children” who seemed to advocate willful ignorance of the outside world in favor of naïve complacency—“FORGET the war in vietnam,” mocks one Digger broadside, “Flowers are lovely” (Qtd. in Martin 92). Tim Hodgdon writes that, “the Diggers valorized the manliness of the principled outlaw, who, if circumstances required, would fight for his freedom and dignity,” citing a 1967 Digger handbill that proclaimed, “An armed man is a free man” (xxviii). While the stereotypical Native American representative of harmonious communal living might have had a certain appeal for the Diggers, so too did the image of the Native as fearsome warrior. Hodgdon writes that, for the Diggers, the “long-haired man [who] pointed the way to the future”

was not a pacifist; instead, “he resembled the Native American warriors, Hell’s Angels, Western gunslingers, and Black Panthers who defended their liberty with force when necessary” (41).

Hodgdon later expounds on this valorization of the “Blood-thirsty Savage,” claiming that:

In the hegemonic Euro-American imagination, the so-called Blood-thirsty Savage stood as the inferior of the civilized white man. But some hippies, such as the Diggers, inverted this cultural logic, arguing that the Bloodthirsty Savage was the defender of an egalitarian way of life—one who valued the manly qualities of dignity, liberty, and autonomy enough to cast aside bourgeois distaste for personal involvement in violent confrontation. (114)

The Diggers valued peaceful communal living and freedom from the dehumanization inherent in dog-eat-dog capitalist environments, but they differed from many of their hippie contemporaries in one respect—they saw these ideals as ends which justified sometimes-violent means. They therefore romanticized the image of the bloodthirsty savage intent on protecting his way of life at any cost. This romantic vision is particularly evident in Gary Snyder’s poem, “A Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon,” performed by Emmett Grogan at an SDS meeting in 1967 and re-printed in the *Digger Papers* the following year. The final verses are particularly telling: “As I kill the white man / the “American” / in me / And dance out the Ghost Dance: / To bring back America, the grass and the streams. / To trample your throat in your dreams / This magic I work, this loving I give / That my children may flourish / And yours won’t live” (*Digger Papers*).

Graphic violence is rendered as an act of “loving,” for it is through this violence that the speaker can restore the idyllic world he envisions; the trampled throat of the “white man” who has held him back from within is a gift to the speaker’s children and to future generations. Like the speaker of the poem, the Diggers imagined themselves willing to pursue their ideals even when it

required violent action, taking the stereotypically vicious Native warrior as the mascot for their cause.

Many hippies of the sixties and seventies maintained that the virtues of “peace and love” were meant to govern not only communities and nations, but interpersonal relationships as well. A significant portion of the hippie population partook in the sexual revolution, asserting their freedom to express their sexuality however, and with whomever, they saw fit. The fourth Rung of *Paradise Now*, the “Rung of the Way,” connects violence and sexual repression, offering a audiences a different path by inviting them to take part in the orgiastic “Rite of Universal Intercourse.” The notes for this section, entitled “The Exorcism of Violence and the Sexual Revolution,” provide a useful glimpse into the countercultural view of sexual liberation as a pathway to peace:

The fundamental taboo that is channeled into violence is the sexual taboo. To overcome violence we have to overcome the sexual taboo. The work of liberation from sexual repression must be a parallel of all revolutionary work and must take place during all revolutionary stages. But there comes a point at which no further progress can be made without abolishing standards that cripple the natural man sexually, and this point comes precisely when we confront the fundamental problem of violence. (80)

Social taboos cripple the individual’s ability to freely express his sexuality, the Living Theatre explains, and this sexual repression inevitably leads to violence. *Paradise Now* does not connect sexual freedom to any Native stereotypes—having moved on to fixate on Hindu principles, Gandhi’s teachings about Ahimsa, and conflicts between Arabs and Jews in Israel—and though

the “natural man” is referenced briefly here, the lowercase letters seem to indicate that this is not the hippie-Indian hybrid introduced in Rung I.

Though the Living Theatre did not attempt to make the connection, however, stereotypes about Native sexuality were pervasive in the sixties, due in part to the idea that, where sex was concerned, shame and virtue were Euro-American constructions, imposed on Native tribes as foreign and artificial social mores. Timothy Miller quotes counterculturalist Don H. Somerville on the subject, who in 1969 wrote in the Seattle underground newspaper the *Helix* that shared sex brings participants closer not only to their friends, but to their spouses: “The concerned Christian I am sure would not believe this; but consider the Eskimos; they were invariably described as the happiest people on the earth until we gave them ‘virtue.’ Now they too have chastity and adultery and jealousy. Instead of happiness they are as glum as the concerned Christians and with the same hang-ups” (Qtd. in Miller, *The Hippie and American Values* 27). The condescending idea of virtue as the dubious “gift” of white men to the Eskimos likely derives from the stereotype of Native as hypersexualized savage, present in some of the earliest European representations of Native Americans and widely disseminated by dime novels and Westerns films and from the late nineteenth century onward. In her book *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film*, Jacquelin Kilpatrick writes that filmic stereotypes of Natives fall largely into three main categories: “mental, spiritual, and sexual.” She explains the latter as a view of Natives being “intensely sexual—more creature than human, more bestial than celestial” (xvii). In the traditional Western film, this stereotype manifests in two pervasive stereotypes: the savage and sexually-aggressive Native male, and the alluring “Indian princess,” both of whom pose a threat to the “purity of the [white protagonists’] gene pool” (xvii). When, in the 1960s, participants in the sexual revolution began endeavoring to lift the social stigmas against

extramarital, homosexual, interracial, and group sex, stereotypes about Native sexuality also shifted, and the perception of Native sexuality untamed by any rules or social mores held more of a promise than a threat. In 1967, the *San Francisco Oracle* capitalized on this promise, publishing a piece entitled “Indian Sex,” based on an interview with Sun Bear, a Chippewa medicine man who was widely criticized by Natives who protested his practice of selling spiritual guidance and insights to non-Natives for a profit:

To the Indian, everything was natural, and because of this, he had no double standard of sex, where one was a holier-than-thou philosophy, where one refused to talk about it and sat with folded hands, and the other, dirty pictures on the outhouse walls. To the Indian, sex is a perfectly natural thing—his Little Brothers did it, and so did he. . . . But they were first able to live on Earth as men and women and then reach up for higher things, because of having balance and not complexes and psychiatrists and scribes who consumed a lifetime writing volumes on sex. (Hopkins 121)

For hippie readers, this association of sexual liberation with Native American tradition was further justification for the pursuit of free love—because it was compatible with Native customs, it must be a natural pathway to enlightened living.

Native sexuality was not a common theme in Digger theatricals or in the papers the group distributed—at least not in those that have been preserved in archives. *Hair* also does not make explicit references to sexual stereotypes of the Native. Certain scenes of the musical seem to make implicit allusions to such stereotypes, however, particularly in the treatment of Sheila, who is passed around amongst the men of the tribe despite her own protestations. In the second act of the musical, she asks, “What am I, the tribal sacrifice?” and the question is valid (127). Soon

after Sheila is introduced in the first act, she is raped by Berger—the character most blatantly associated with Native identity. As discussed in my second chapter, the scene in which Berger experiences Sheila’s rape vicariously through Woof is particularly disturbing in light of long-held stereotypes of Natives as violent sexual aggressors. In the second act, Berger continues to exercise sexual dominance over Sheila, persuading her to sleep with Claude as his tribe backs up his entreaties with the song “Easy to Be Hard”—“DO YOU ONLY CARE ABOUT / THE BLEEDING CROWD / HOW ABOUT A NEEDING FRIEND”—promising that he will express his gratitude by having sex with her again (129). Aside from his careless and aggressive treatment of Sheila, Berger instigates many of the acts of casual and communal sex throughout the musical, and he is also the first to remove his clothes for the show’s famous nude scene. That the character who wears a loincloth, sings of being a “Manhattan Indian,” and occasionally lapses into deliberately broken English is also the most sexually uninhibited character is telling of the influences of Native stereotyping on the musical. In *Contesting Constructed Indian-ness*, Michael Taylor writes that:

By putting on the identity or skin of another, the action by the wearer has contexts of intimacy which makes it desired to a degree. By using this agency, white males are able to become a different Other, one that is a more primitive, more natural, a more authentic persona than the one which they currently occupy as contemporary, post-industrial, modern American males. (6)

For Berger, putting on guise of the Native is a way of tapping into this more “primitive” and “natural” self, one that allows him to take what he wants, even when it involves brutality towards another member of his tribe. *Hair*, still an immensely popular musical, not only accepts sexual

stereotypes of Native Americans as historical truths; it perpetuates them with thinly-veiled subtext that has preserved their troublesome implications for decades.

Jacquelyn Kilpatrick critiques the counterculture's use of the Native figure as the mascot for peace and love in all of their various forms. She points out that, for many Native Americans, this period was not a time of profound peace, as they were engaged in bitter struggles for their own civil rights throughout the sixties and seventies (66). While counterculturalists paraded the imaginary Native alternately as a mascot for the antiwar movement, free love, violent activism, communalism, environmentalism, drug use, and spiritual enlightenment, real Native Americans were fighting against crippling poverty at home, oppressive legislation in court, and widespread prejudice in society. Countercultural stereotypes did little to combat any of these issues, though they were predominately positive. In his book *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* (2003), Norman K. Denzin reflects on the detrimental effects of stereotyping on intercultural understanding, and on how filmic images defined his early perceptions of Native identity: "Indians are people too; they are not put here to perform for us, to entertain us. But those movies I watched as a child with my grandfather created a discourse that exists to this day, for we only know Native Americans in their relationship to our whiteness. . . . We were never shown how to take them on their own terms—or any terms, for that matter" (179-80). Denzin is certainly not alone, and his statement reveals the power of theatrical representation to color both our early and continuing impressions of that which may be otherwise unknown to us. For centuries, Native stereotypes, both the negative and the positive, have falsely defined Native identity on non-Native terms, favoring the imaginary Native mascot over human reality. Despite their best intentions, countercultural theatre artists often contributed to this

dehumanization by failing to look past their own agendas in order to create more responsible performances.

CHAPTER IV: MYTHS OF THE VANISHED NATIVE REINCARNATE

“But the doomed Indian leaves behind no trace,
 To save his own, or serve another race;
 With his frail breath his power has passed away,
 His deeds, his thoughts, are buried with his clay;
 Nor lofty pile, nor glowing page,
 Shall link him to a future age. . . .”

Charles Sprague

“Centennial Ode”

“We are shape-shifters in the national consciousness, accidental survivors,
 unwanted reminders of disagreeable events. Indians have to be explained and
 accounted for, and somehow fit into the creation myth of the most powerful,
 benevolent nation ever, the last best hope of man on earth. . . . We’re trapped in
 history. No escape.”

Paul Chaat Smith

“Ghost in the Machine”

In John Mix Stanley’s 1857 oil painting *Last of Their Race*, a small group of Native
 Americans gathers at the edge of the Pacific Ocean, each representing a different tribe. They
 range in age from an infant in his mother’s arms to a stooped elderly man, supported by his
 companions. Their expressions are solemn, and several symbolic details in the painting suggest
 that their ways of life are coming to a close—two buffalo skulls lie in shadow in the lower left

corner of the frame, the sun is setting over the ocean, and in the background, two figures support and watch over a third reclining figure, who appears to be on the brink of death. Stanley's painting has a powerful emotional appeal, evoking the idea of the "vanishing Indian," a common nineteenth-century misconception about the impending and inevitable extinction of all Native tribes in America, a theory that "foreordained that less advanced societies should disappear in the presence of those more advanced" (Deloria, *Playing Indian* 64). In *Playing Indian*, Philip Deloria quotes Supreme Court justice Joseph Story, who in 1828 proclaimed that, "By a law of nature, [Natives] seem destined to a slow, but sure extinction. Everywhere, at the approach of the white man, they fade away. We hear the rustling of their footsteps, like that of the withered leaves of autumn, and they are gone forever. They pass mournfully by us, and they return no more" (Qtd. in Deloria 64). Between 1828 and 1838, Native characters facing this "slow, but sure extinction" played a central role in popular "Indian plays" such as George Washington Custis' *The Indian Prophecy, A National Drama in Two Acts* (1828) and John Augustus Stone's *Metamora; or, The Last of the Wampanoags* (1829), but the popularity of such characters in art and literature has continued well past the nineteenth century. The concept of the "vanishing Indian" is perhaps one of the most insidious and enduring stereotypes about Native Americans, still influencing representations of Natives in art, advertising, and popular culture today.

Although the stereotype is generally accompanied by a sincere sense of respect and mourning for the supposedly rapidly-diminishing Native population, it often ignores contemporary Native communities and the issues they face, implicitly rendering the goals of Native rights movements as futile or irrelevant by suggesting the soon-to-be-total disappearance of indigenous Americans. The "vanishing Indian" was a popular character in the theatre of the 1960s and seventies, and in the countercultural imagination at large. At the same time, Native rights movements were

blossoming all over the country, and one of the central aims of many such movements was to call attention to Natives' contemporary presence in American society and to the very real and pressing social and political inequities they continued to battle on a daily basis. In this chapter, I examine the ways in which countercultural representations of Native Americans counteracted this goal, using Johannes Fabian's concept of the "denial of coevalness" as my primary theoretical framework. I also use this concept to frame my study of the countercultural belief in the hippie as reincarnated Native. While this idea is stated explicitly in *Paradise Now*, I show that its entry into the countercultural lexicon predates the Living Theatre's usage by several years. Finally, I offer a case study of Kiowa playwright Hanay Geiogamah's *Body Indian* (1972), examining the ways in which this play functions as a more responsible counterbalance to the non-Native performances I have discussed. Here I use Gerald Vizenor's concept of survivance to demonstrate how this play, and others like it, may function as models for more ethical representational practices which honor the past without ignoring the contemporary presence of Native Americans or denying the relevance of contemporary Native issues. I also consider the extent to which Native-authored plays like *Body Indian* might inform non-Native artists who take on Native subject matter in their work, and I propose an additional set of guidelines for ensuring more responsible representational practices, informed by the missteps of the countercultural theatre groups I have examined in my study.

Red Power

Though movements for Native rights began long before the 1960s, this decade saw a marked increase in the formation of pan-tribal Native interests organizations and protest events. In his essay "Roots of Contemporary Native American Activism," Troy R. Johnson suggests

that, in the sixties and seventies, the pan-tribal approach proved to be more effective than smaller movements for Native rights led by individual tribes. He writes that such movements of the 1950s were “largely tribal in nature,” and that “very little, if any, pan-Indian or supratribal activity occurred.” Johnson credits the United Native Americans, formed in 1968, with the creation of one of the first highly effective pan-tribal organizations for Native rights: “UNA had a pan-Indian focus and sought to *unify* all persons of Indian blood throughout the Americas and to develop a democratic, grassroots organization” (139, emphasis in original). Native groups were heard most loudly, Johnson claims, when they “faced white America as a united people” (149). This was a guiding principle in the development of such pan-tribal organizations as the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM, created in Minneapolis in 1968, was designed to advocate for Native Americans who were struggling against poverty and racial prejudice, as well in as disputes with the U.S. government over land, treaties, and the suppression of traditional Native rituals, particularly the use of peyote in religious ceremonies. What began as a local organization soon became a national one, and as AIM’s influence spread, more pan-tribal Native rights groups formed across the country, often uniting members of many different Native tribes to advocate together for broad reforms rather than focusing on the specific needs of particular nations. The term “Red Power,” used to describe any number of pan-tribal Native interest movements and organizations during the 1960s and seventies and beyond, was introduced by Mel Thom and the National Indian Youth Congress in 1964 and again by Vine Deloria, Jr., during a 1966 meeting of the National Congress of American Indians (Josephy 13). The late sixties and seventies saw some of the most significant Native protests and demonstrations of the twentieth century, and many of the tactics employed by Red Power activists—such as sit-ins, occupations, marches, and boycotts—reveal the direct influence of the African American Civil

Rights Movement, the student movement, and the antiwar movement. Here I briefly discuss the occupation of Alcatraz (1969-71), the Trail of Broken Treaties (1972), and the occupation of Wounded Knee (1973). While these events were some of the most widely-publicized Native rights protests of the period, they are but a small representative sampling of the activities that characterized the burgeoning Red Power campaign.

Led by Mohawk activist Richard Oakes and calling themselves the Indians of All Tribes, a group consisting primarily of Native college students from the San Francisco Bay Area set out for Alcatraz Island on November 9, 1969, where they claimed the island for Native Americans of all tribal affiliations. While this event lasted only four hours, it inspired the group to attempt a longer occupation on a larger scale, and on November 20, some one hundred Natives traveled back to the island, which they would occupy for nineteen months. The Indians of All Tribes offered a tongue-in-cheek proclamation stating their intentions to purchase Alcatraz, which they claimed resembled many Native reservations in that it lacked opportunities for employment, health care and educational resources, proper sanitation and fresh running water, etc.:

We will purchase said Alcatraz Island for twenty-four dollars (\$24) in glass beads and red cloth, a precedent set by the white man's purchase of a similar island about 300 years ago. We know that \$24 in trade goods for these 16 acres is more than was paid when Manhattan Island was sold, but we know that land values have risen over the years. Our offer of \$1.24 per acre is greater than the 47 cents per acre the white men are now paying the California Indians for their land. (Qtd. in Josephy 40-41)

They went on to state their intentions to establish a Native cultural center, university, and museum on Alcatraz, promising that the newly-formed American Indian Government would deal

fairly with those non-Natives who currently inhabited the island by establishing a Bureau of Caucasian Affairs (BCA), lampooning the U.S. government's Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Unsurprisingly, their demands were not met. In an effort to force the occupiers off the island, the government cut off the flow of water and electricity to Alcatraz and halted the delivery of supplies to the island by boat. The occupiers finally returned to the mainland on June 10, 1971, when Nixon authorized armed federal forces to remove them from the island. Though the Indians of All Tribes failed to motivate the U.S. government to take any real steps towards reform, the event had a strong impact on Natives fighting for their civil rights during this period. Wilma Mankiller, first female chief of the Cherokee Nation, described the occupation as, "the rekindling of the spirit of the native people," a movement that "had a profound impact on the lives of people throughout this country" (Qtd. in Josephy 40).

The following year, activists from a number of different Native rights organizations participated in the "Trail of Broken Treaties," joining a cross-country caravan of protesters who marched on Washington D.C. immediately prior to the 1972 presidential election. They delivered a twenty-point list of proposed reforms, compiled by Sioux-Assiniboine activist Hank Adams. Among other requests, they demanded treaty reforms, more effective governmental recognition and facilitation of tribal sovereignty, enhanced legal protections, increased support of Native communities battling economic crises, and the abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), whose antiquated policies towards Native Americans required a complete overhaul (Josephy 45-47). When the U.S. government refused to consider the list, the activists seized control of the BIA building, renaming it the Native American Embassy. The occupiers did not vacate the BIA premises until five days later, when the White House issued a hollow promise to consider the Twenty Points. Like the activists involved in the occupation of Alcatraz, the protesters in

Washington were unsuccessful in achieving their stated goals, but the march and subsequent occupation of the BIA was another galvanizing event that united Natives from across the country in a common cause. Furthermore, the Twenty-Point Proposal served as a concise and thorough summary of governmental infractions against Native nations. Vine Deloria, Jr., has described the Twenty Points as “the best summary document of reforms put forth in this century,” citing its continuing relevance as a guide for reform: “it is comprehensive and philosophical and has broad policy lines that can still be adopted to create some sense of fairness and symmetry in federal Indian policy” (Qtd. in Josephy 45).

Barring a few isolated incidents, the occupations of the BIA and Alcatraz Island were peaceful, nonviolent protest events. The 1973 siege of Wounded Knee, by contrast, resulted in bloodshed and casualties on both sides of the conflict. The siege began with an attempt to impeach Richard Wilson, the Oglala Lakota tribal chairman of South Dakota’s Pine Ridge reservation, who many on the reservation perceived to be the “corrupt puppet of the BIA” (Josephy 48). The impeachment attempt divided the tribe and ultimately led to a seventy-one day conflict involving “tribal police and government; AIM; reservation residents; federal law enforcement officials; the BIA; local citizens; nationally prominent entertainment figures [most famously Marlon Brando]; national philanthropic, religious, and legal organizations; and the national news media” (Josephy 48). Dennis Banks and Russell Means, prominent leaders of AIM, escalated the conflict by bringing some two hundred and fifty AIM supporters to the reservation to join its members there in protest against Wilson and the BIA, and for the next two and a half months, negotiations between the two factions were peppered with violent confrontations and bloody shootouts. Ultimately, two Natives and several federal officials were killed, and more were injured. Richard Wilson remained in power until the next election, and

many AIM supporters who participated in the conflict were tried and imprisoned (Joseph 48-49). The dramatic siege brought national attention to the difficult realities of life on reservations like Pine Ridge, however, as well as to some of the inadequacies of the BIA and the federal government to deal fairly and effectively with issues facing Native Americans.

Native rights organizations varied significantly in their goals and methods, but at least one objective was a shared priority for many of these groups—to remind the government and the general public of the ongoing presence and pressing concerns of Natives in the United States, drawing greater attention towards the issues and injustices they faced in order to increase the urgency of their calls for reform. Organizations such as the National Indian Youth Council, for example, utilized forward-thinking language that acknowledged the valuable influence of Native ancestors while focusing on a future that would allow Native American youth to occupy a greater place in American society than their forbears, as is evidenced in the following Statement of Purpose, issued by the group in 1960:

WITH THE BELIEF THAT WE CAN SERVE A REALISTIC NEED, THE NATIONAL INDIAN YOUTH COUNCIL DEDICATED ITS ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS TO ATTAINING A GREATER FUTURE FOR OUR INDIAN PEOPLE. WE BELIEVE IN A FUTURE WITH HIGH PRINCIPLES DERIVED FROM THE VALUES AND BELIEFS OF OUR ANCESTORS, WE FURTHER BELIEVE IN A STRONG PLACE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY BEING HELD BY INDIAN BLOOD, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREATER LEADERSHIP WITH INDIAN YOUTH. (Thom 149)

This statement demonstrates a will to communicate the ongoing presence and importance of Native voices, and it expresses a need to draw attention to contemporary Native issues. The

following year, Native Americans from seventy-five tribes gathered at the University of Chicago to compose the Declaration of Indian Purpose, describing the needs of Native tribes across the nation and proposing strategies for reform, including “recommendations for economic development, health, welfare, housing, education, law, and other topics of interest to the Native communities” (Kilpatrick 66). They concluded their Declaration thusly: “What we ask of America is not charity, not paternalism, even when benevolent. We ask only that the nature of our situation be recognized and made the basis of policy and action” (Qtd. in Kilpatrick 67). The authors of the Declaration were uninterested in token efforts to resolve imperialist guilt through largely ineffectual acts of charity; instead, they demanded real action based on their actual needs, free of sentimentalism or condescension.

In 1966, the National Congress of American Indians published a similar statement, attempting to combat the stereotype of the Native vanishing through assimilation. In their newsletter, the *NCAI Sentinel*, they addressed the problem that “a great deal of misunderstanding is being spread by people who are interested in Indians but who don’t have the facts and aren’t aware of the issues involved.” The *Sentinel* article goes on to say:

Basic to misunderstanding is the assumption that has silently been acknowledged as an eternal truth for most of American History: that somehow, in some way, perhaps tomorrow, the American Indian will ASSIMILATE and disappear. He will vanish!!! This theory, the “ten little, nine little, eight little Indians” theory . . . should be laid to rest once and for all. It should not form the basis of Indian policy and groups working with Indians should not base programs and program projections on the natural course of events working toward assimilation (Qtd. in Bloom and Breines 150).

This article acknowledges the popular fascination with, and simultaneous disconnect from, Native rights issues. It also addresses the misconception that Native American identity is slowly disappearing via a process of assimilation into the dominant culture, and that this inevitable disappearance should function as the guiding principle of Native policy. The article concludes by reminding readers that unassimilated Native groups still exist and should be protected as such, not mourned, ignored, or treated like vanishing species: “Should we form a new rhyme? 10 little, 11 little, 12 little Indians?” (150). Six years later, Hank Adams’s Twenty Points, presented during the Trail of Broken Treaties protest, proposed a televised national address, citing the need for the general public to be apprised of the state of Native affairs in America. The third point on the list demands, “An Address to the American People and Joint Sessions of Congress: This would allow us to state our political and cultural cases to the whole nation on television” (Josephy 45). Though the statement made by the National Indian Youth Council focused on developing strong Native leaders, the Declaration of Indian Purpose asked the U.S. government for direct action on pressing Native issues, the NCAI’s article applauded Native Americans who refused to disappear into mainstream American society via assimilation, and Adams argued for the necessity of a televised address to the American people, all of the statements presented here revolve around a central premise: the necessity of eradicating the “vanishing Indian” stereotype once and for all, drawing attention instead to the real needs and powerful presence of contemporary Native communities and individuals.

Well-publicized protest events such as the Trail of Broken Treaties and the occupations of Alcatraz and Wounded Knee were instrumental to the Red Power movement’s attempts to increase public awareness of Native issues, and as the visibility of such protests grew, many counterculturalists and political radicals became interested in the movement and set out to help.

Historian Sherry L. Smith offers an in-depth examination of such hippie-Native alliances in her book *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power* (2012), including in her study a detailed history of hippie participation in the Alcatraz and Wounded Knee occupations, among other protest events. Smith's study applauds counterculturalists of the sixties and seventies who were actively engaged with Native causes, and her stated goal is an optimistic one: "In the end, this book is meant to be part of an ongoing conversation about partnerships in social and political change. Problems are shared and solutions require cooperation, a willingness to engage with those who are different, to breach the boundaries that keep people apart, and to collectively push the nation toward final realization of its promises" (17). Smith's study is a significant one. She addresses a wide gap in existing scholarship about the counterculture's intersections with the Red Power movement, and she draws attention to the power of intercultural cooperation, often demonstrated very effectively by hippies who devoted themselves to the cause of Native American rights. What Smith's book omits, however, is a careful study of the ways in which well-intentioned counterculturalists often misappropriated Native customs and misrepresented the Natives, both real and imagined, with whom they were so fascinated. In *Playing Indian*, Philip J. Deloria also addresses hippie participation in Native rights campaigns, offering aid that was not entirely free of self-serving motivations:

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. (163)

As Smith also points out in her study, many non-Native counterculturalists earnestly labored to support the Red Power movement, though their actions were often motivated by a desire to “harness Indianness” to aid in the pursuit of other causes. Deloria tempers his acknowledgement of white radicals’ participation in Native protest events by reminding readers that many others clung to an altogether different vision of Native identity, preferring a stereotyped image of Native life to its contemporary realities: “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” (163). Ironically, though they were likely inspired at least in part by demonstrations designed to call attention to the continuing struggles of Native Americans, many artists of the counterculture channeled their fascination with Native culture into art forms that ignored or obscured the contemporary presence of Native Americans.

The Denial of Coevalness in Countercultural Theatre

In 1991, Susan Jeffers published a bestselling children’s book entitled *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky: A Message from Chief Seattle*. The book, popular among both Native and non-Native readers, was based on a speech concerning the concession of Native lands to white settlers that was purportedly delivered by the Suquamish leader Seattle in the 1850s. In reality, the text was composed by white filmmaker Ted Perry in 1970, who had come across a speech of contested origins and adapted it for a documentary film on the environment for the Southern Baptist Convention. By the time Perry finished his film, the words were no longer Seattle’s—if they ever had been (Smith, *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong* 14).

Perry's version of the speech exhorts American audiences to take care of the land they inherited from the continent's earlier inhabitants, explaining that Native identity is inextricably linked to the earth itself, playing into the stereotypes about Native spirituality and environmentalism that I examined in my previous chapter. The speech contains a telling prophecy: "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 spirit of my people. . . . Care for it as we have cared for it. We may be brothers after all" (Deloria, *Playing Indian* 166). Philip Deloria speaks of the multiple implications of the speech in *Playing Indian*: "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" (166-67). The speech ultimately portrays Native Americans as shadows of a bygone era, one which had given way to the "white American epoch." It also exhorts white Americans to claim their spiritual inheritance from their Native predecessors, namely, a love of nature and a commitment to protecting the environment. It is difficult to read the text of Perry's film without recalling the image of Iron Eyes Cody, performing in the Keep America Beautiful campaign as the nobly antiquated Native unable to keep up with the mad pace of the modern world or to deal with its destructive effects on the environment. The campaign centered around the image of the Native in traditional dress existing alongside the factories and busy roadways of modern American life, purposefully creating a seemingly-anachronistic scenario meant to be visually jarring. Like the "Crying Indian" ads, the text of Perry's film suggests that Native Americans, unable to keep up with the industrialization and technological developments of modern life, must

necessarily fade away into history.⁶ Both ignore the contemporary presence of Native Americans in the type of strategic move anthropologist Johannes Fabian calls the “denial of coevalness.”

In his book *Time and the Other* (1983), Fabian examines the implications of a scholarly tendency to associate certain cultural Others with the past, measuring them as “primitive” on a Hegelian scale that privileges Western benchmarks of progress and development. Fabian considers the term “primitive” to be “essentially a temporal concept” and “a category, not an object, of Western thought” (18). Thus the “primitive” is not an objective descriptor of *what* the anthropologist studies; rather it is a highly subjective categorization that describes *how* he imagines the culture he studies, one that is ultimately more revelatory of the observer than the observed. Performance scholar Richard Schechner makes a similar point about the constructed nature of scholarly ideas about “primitive” cultures and individuals, claiming that: “There is no such thing as ‘primitive’ peoples. Social Darwinism mistakenly assumes a hierarchy of cultures. Difference does not prove superiority” (Schechner 81). Like Fabian, Schechner emphasizes the fact that the concept of the “primitive” is nothing more than an artificial scholarly construct based on an outmoded way of thinking about history that arbitrarily privileges conventions of Western civilization. Western scholars have traditionally viewed many indigenous cultures as “primitive,” a term synonymous with “inferior” in this context, because of their pronounced difference from that which is familiar. Schechner questions this way of thinking, challenging Western scholars to reevaluate their cultural biases. Later in his study, Fabian introduces his concept of the “denial of coevalness,” writing that, by framing the Other as “primitive,” the anthropologist reinforces his temporal marginality, “a means toward the end of keeping

⁶ Comanche writer Paul Chaat Smith challenges this way of thinking in his book *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong* (2009): “Contrary to what most people (Indians and non-Indians alike) now believe, our true history is one of constant change, technological innovation, and intense curiosity about the world. How else do you explain our instantaneous adaptation to horses, rifles, flour, and knives?” (4).

anthropology's Other in another Time" (148). Thus the anthropologist both creates and maintains distance from the Other by using language that attempts to relegate the Other to the past.

Fabian's "denial of coevalness" provides a useful lens with which to examine countercultural representations of the Native, in which Native identity is frequently portrayed as existing entirely in a "primitive" state. Too often, the popular obsession with romanticized images of the noble Native of centuries past led to a fixation on the absence of the historical Native rather than on the presence of the contemporary Native. While many countercultural representations of Native Americans rightly acknowledged and mourned the horrific atrocities of genocidal campaigns against Native Americans, they often stopped there. With or without conscious intent, such performances implied the total annihilation of Native tribes and seemed to usher in a post-Native age in which hippies were invited to assume the identities of a vanished people, asserting their places as the rightful cultural heirs of long-gone indigenous Americans. While these performances were, for the most part, seemingly well-intentioned, this type of representation ran counter to the goals of concurrent Native rights movements in which contemporary Natives were fighting constantly to be seen and heard.

While the San Francisco Diggers frequently "played Indian" and perpetuated Native stereotypes in their work, the group seems to stand further apart from the pattern I am tracing here than did many of their contemporaries. Emmett Grogan's performance of Gary Snyder's "Curse on the Men in Washington, Pentagon," did conjure the image of the savage Native unable to coexist with the "white man" and endeavoring violently to "bring back America, the grass and the streams" of centuries past (*Digger Papers*). However, in much of their published and performative work, the Diggers acknowledged Native Americans as a contemporary presence, speaking of Native tribes in the present-tense rather than relegating them to the past. For

example, despite other issues with the critique of Big Brother and the Holding Company which the Diggers published in 1966, it is at least worthy of note that they phrased their objections thusly: “There *are* tribes of natives that will not be photographed. . . . One might laugh, but they *are* correct” (Qtd. in Martin 93, emphases mine). Attributing pamphlets and broadsides distributed in the Haight-Ashbury between 1966 and 1968 to the Diggers with any certainty is, at times, a complicated task; relatively few Digger materials are actually labeled with the group’s name, and the *Digger Papers* contain only a sampling of their published works. As I discuss in the following section, there are certain papers which were distributed in 1967, possibly by the Diggers and their devotees, that contain troubling implications about Native absence, but it is unclear which individuals or groups originally arranged their publication. Nonetheless, it makes sense that the Diggers might have avoided the mistake of denying Native coevalness more deftly than did the Living Theatre or the creators of *Hair*—of the three groups, the Diggers seem to have been most invested in working with, studying under, and speaking out in support of contemporary Native Americans. In 1967, for example, Grogan supported the Hopi in their rejection of a proposed Hopi-Hippie Be-In. Believing that Natives were the hippies’ “spiritual fathers,” Richard Alpert had suggested the Be-In as a mutually beneficial meeting of minds in which the Hopi could mentor the hippies, who would in turn use their votes in favor of legislation that would benefit Native American causes. The Hopi were unreceptive, and Grogan helped to kill the idea. In a broadside published shortly after the meeting, as well as in his autobiography *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps*, he critiqued the colonialist implications of the hippies’ attempts to harness Native spirituality for their own purposes, as well as the disrespectful ways in which the hippies conducted themselves while visiting the Hopi reservation (Sherry L. Smith, 73-77).

Meanwhile, the creators of *Hair* seem to have had no problem with relegating Native Americans to a bygone age. In his book *Let the Sun Shine In: The Genius of HAIR*, Scott Miller eagerly touts the musical's potential to tap into performers' and audiences' "primitive" identities, describing the opening scene in which the cast members sit around a ceremonial fire in Native dress:

Hair returns us to our primitive tribal roots. The circle plays such an important role in the staging patterns of most productions of *Hair*, both consciously and unconsciously; it takes us back to the time before recorded history when humans would gather around the fire and tell stories, the true roots of theatre. Now, once again, in our increasingly mechanized, depersonalized world, the *Hair* tribes come together to sit, stand, and dance in a circle, to tell stories, to reach back to the beginning and find the essence of what makes us human and what makes us still so very tribal. (5)

Prosthetic memory is at work here. What Miller describes as the *Hair* tribes' efforts to "reach back to the beginning" essentially constitutes a desire to recall memories which are not one's own, reclaiming an imagined history to satisfy a nostalgia for unlived experiences. His statement also equates Native ritual with an "essential humanness," a supposed common identity lost in the ancient past. All of the Native imagery peppered throughout the musical recalls this imagined past. In the original Broadway production, Berger (played by Ragni) offered a lock of Claude's (Rado's) hair to the ceremonial fire, a symbolic reference to human sacrifice and a foreshadowing of Claude's death (Horn 67). During Claude's tripping scene, Natives are situated as purely historical characters, speaking in broken English as they fight off Washington's troops, throwing out references to Native heroes of the past, including Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull,

Geronimo, and Pocahontas. Throughout the musical, Berger, the character who most blatantly appropriates Native identity, enacts a stereotype firmly lodged in the past; for example, he prefaces his introductory character song with an “Indian war whoop” and later lapses into broken English when talking to Sheila (“This Indian land, buzz off”) (5, 72). Miller feeds into another stereotype of the “primitive” Native in his analysis of Berger, speaking of him as a character whose actions are defined by “primal urges,” describing him as the id to Claude’s superego—Berger is all instinct, Claude is all conscience, and together they balance out one another’s extremes (87). Whenever Native images are evoked in *Hair*, they present a picture of Native life frozen in the past, as immobile as producer Michael Butler in his stage role as the show’s living statue, the “Silver Indian,” in its original Broadway productions. The problems implicit in these images, however, pale in comparison to the blatant assertions of Native absence presented in the Living Theatre’s *Paradise Now*.

Paradise Now and the Hippie-Native Reincarnation Myth

The title of the first “Vision” in *Paradise Now*—“The Vision of the Death and Resurrection of the American Indian”—forebodes the play’s problematic treatment of Natives. Images of the Native American presented here are focused almost exclusively on the Native casualties of American expansion. This in itself is not an entirely problematic move. Though they appropriated this tragic history in order to serve their own antiwar agenda, in urging audiences to reflect on the horrors of imperialist campaigns of violence and biological warfare against Native Americans, the Living Theatre challenged those who might attempt to downplay or justify the genocidal policies of the U.S. government against Natives. Unfortunately, the creators of *Paradise Now* left their Native characters lying massacred on the stage floor, and the

first Vision ends with the image of “The Fallen, the Slain Red Man” (22). In the Action that follows, the performers who have fallen as Natives begin to speak again, but they are no longer playing their Native characters. Instead, they are gradually evolving into the hippie-Native hybrid, the Natural Man. The repetition of the line, “Don’t step on the Indians,” followed by the statement, “Listen. Under the pavement of New York you can hear the Indians,” emphasizes the idea of the total annihilation of Native Americans. There is no acknowledgement of the Natives who tread the pavements of Manhattan alongside the millions of other inhabitants of the city at the time of *Paradise Now*’s American premiere; instead, the play keeps its Native characters silent in their graves under the asphalt (23-25). When the actors do rise, it is to perform an “exultant Indian dance,” but they are no longer Indians themselves (26). The text makes this point explicit: “It is the hippies who have risen up from the pavement, reincarnations of the American Indian, aspiring to be the Natural Man as represented by the great Indian culture, the great suppressed cultures” (27). The hippies, the Living Theatre decrees, are the true spiritual descendants of the American Indian—“cultural transvestites” as Coco Fusco defines the term—and they have risen up where their adoptive ancestors have fallen to complete the “Revolution of Cultures” (27). The idea of hippie as reincarnated Native depends wholly upon the stereotype of the “vanishing Indian.” By its very definition, reincarnation requires the death of the primary being—hippies cannot inherit the identities of their Native American “ancestors” if the latter are still present. Of course, the Natives that the Living Theatre imagined reincarnating *were* necessarily absent, as the text of the play clearly defines the “Indian” as an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century noble savage stereotype, the ubiquitous star of Western films, novels, and television shows. According to *Paradise Now*, Native history must have stopped there. The scenario the show presents completely ignores the contemporary presence of the *actual*

descendants of these earlier generations of Natives. If the hippies are to lay claim to the cultural and spiritual legacies of historical Natives, asserting themselves as the rightful inheritors of deceased Natives' very souls, what are contemporary Native Americans left with? It seems that the hippie characters in *Paradise Now* would usurp Native ancestral heritages as readily as many of the hippies' own ancestors had usurped Native lands.

Paradise Now's claim that hippies possessed the reincarnated souls of Native Americans is undoubtedly extremely troublesome. It is not, however, an idea that originated with the Living Theatre. While it is difficult to pinpoint with any certainty the initial seeds of this notion, it appears to have been germinating in the Haight-Ashbury over a year before the Living Theatre premiered their most well-known collective creation in Italy, and likely much longer. There are several references to the hippie as reincarnated Native in issues of the *San Francisco Oracle*, edited by Allen Cohen. Oddly enough, the most overt references are not to be found in the eighth issue of the underground newspaper, entitled "The American Indian," though in *Genealogies of Shamanism*, Jeroen W. Boekhoven does acknowledge that the concept of hippie as reincarnated Native was one of the factors that inspired the *San Francisco Oracle* to create the issue in the first place (186). Nevertheless, the fifth and sixth issues, titled "The Human Be-In" and "The Aquarian Age," respectively, contain some of the most notable evidence of the growing popularity of this concept.

The fifth issue of the *Oracle* was published in January of 1967, designed to promote the "Gathering of the Tribes for a Human Be-In," held on the fourteenth of that month in Golden Gate Park. One of the first items in the Be-In issue is a poem by Leland Meyerzove, called "A Psalm Upon The Gathering of All Tribes." The poem is an expression of hope that the Be-In would bring about the peaceful unification of like-minded individuals from disparate

backgrounds, and throughout, it returns to the image of hippies as tribe members. The poem also speaks of the Be-In as an event that would dissolve “tribal” differences and allow participants to be reborn as members of one family: “And the tribes shall become one and be no more / Nor shall they weep, but rejoice / In the re-birth of man—” (Cohen 95). This sentiment is similar to the ideas expressed in *Paradise Now*; Native customs would play their part, but ultimately tribalism must give way to a new ideal, just as the slaughtered Native in *Paradise Now* must be reincarnated in a “superior” form, that of the hippie-Native hybrid, the Natural Man.

Also included in this issue of the *Oracle* is the article “Ees Setisoppo” (“See Opposites” backwards), featuring an interview with Richard Alpert, the disciple of Timothy Leary who would change his name to Ram Dass while on a pilgrimage to India later that year. The idea of reincarnation comes up again in this interview, as Alpert describes his quests for spiritual enlightenment in New York City. The interviewer begins: “Speaking of swamis, there’s this guy right here in San Francisco named Van Meter who’s studying under one, and his theory is that all the revolutionaries or the rebels or the revolutionary element of today are reincarnations of American Indians. Have you heard that story?” Alpert replies simply: “No, but it’s a beautiful one . . . beautiful.” The interviewer presents another alternative, briefly suggesting that the hippies are the reincarnations of soldiers lost in World Wars One and Two, then returns to his original point: “There is a Spiritualist church here and every time a hippy shows up, the woman who sees always sees Indians over them.” Alpert again calls the idea a beautiful one, then claims that Native tribes and members of the Haight-Ashbury are “both the same” (98). I am unable to positively identify either the Van Meter mentioned here or the seer at the unspecified Spiritualist church; the interviewer might have been referencing the Golden Gate Spiritual Church, the First Spiritual Temple, or another Spiritualist church or community operating in San Francisco at the

time. While the trail stops cold here, the interview is significant because it demonstrates that, by January of 1967, the idea of hippie as reincarnated Native was rippling over the Haight-Ashbury in widening circles.

The sixth issue of the *Oracle*, “The Aquarian Age,” was published in February of 1967, and it features *Oracle* co-founder Steve Levine’s reflections on the Be-In, recorded in his essay, “The First American Mehla: Notes from the San Andreas Fault.” Levine starts his essay with a problematic bang: “Nearly a century ago the last remaining heroes of the Indian Nations met on the ‘Great Plateau’ in Pow-wow and in prayer to the spirits that the great muds might flow down and cover the ‘white epidemic’ that had never passed as originally presumed, but had instead settled in devastation to their ways and beings.” According to Levine’s creative narrative, the “last remaining heroes of the Indian Nations” died out in the nineteenth century, conveniently enough for the hippies who would inherit their souls in the next. “Now in this twentieth of recent centuries,” Levine somewhat awkwardly continues, “a generation, considered by many to be the reincarnation of the American Indian, has been born out of the ashes of World War Two, rising like a Phoenix, in celebration of the slightly psychedelic zeit-geist of this brand-new Aquarian Age” (123). Later in the essay, Levine returns to this trope, musing on the connections between past, present, and future. He writes: “The paradox of a culture reincarnated by itself: that the ‘white-eye’ who once annihilated the buffalo must now, in action-reacted, be ‘saved’ from slaughtering himself by the Indian incarnate” (123). Thus contemporary white Americans, the biological descendants of the “white-eye” who “annihilated the buffalo” (and, by implied extension, the Native), must be rescued from self-destruction by the hippies, spiritual descendants of the Native Americans—Levine leaves out the fact that many of them are also biological descendants of the “white-eye.” In this essay, Levine effectively denied Native

coevalness and trapped Native Americans in a tragic past, ignored any “heroes of the Indian Nations” less than a century old, and reinforced the idea that reincarnated Native identities were the rightful inheritance of non-Native hippies.

The *San Francisco Oracle* was not the only underground publishing company spreading the hippie-Native reincarnation myth in 1967. That year, Chester and Helene Hayward set up an organization they dubbed the Communication Company (Com/Co), the self-appointed “publishing arm of the Diggers,” printing Digger materials and other Haight-Ashbury “street sheets” free of charge (“The Communication Company”). In March, the Communication Company published an essay by Beat poet Lew Welch; the publication and distribution of this essay could have been overseen by the Diggers, by Welch himself, or by another party. In the essay, titled “A Moving Target is Hard to Hit,” Welch warns readers of the upcoming surge of tourists and dilettantes to the Haight-Ashbury district, urging them to leave the district before its inevitable corruption. He begins his essay: “Whatever tribe I am the reincarnated member of, apparently won, or lost, or survived, as Ishi’s TRIBE, simply by fading away, dispersing, a whisp of fog no one can strike: ‘a moving target is hard to hit.’ This can be the reverse of cowardice, it takes great courage, at times, to back off from what is rightly your place to stand.” Welch goes on to encourage his Haight-Ashbury compatriots to, “Gather into TRIBES of 15 or less,” flee the district for “unfamous forests,” and “volunteer for summer fire fighting work.” He ends his essay by reassuring readers that the district will transcend geographical boundaries: “Most Indians are nomads. The haight-ashbury is not where it’s at—it’s in your head and hands. Take it anywhere” (Communication Company Archives). While Welch at least speaks of Natives in the present-tense in his final point, his opening statements take for granted the fact that he is a

Native American reincarnate, and throughout, he encourages his readers to live in nomadic tribes as he imagines that their spiritual ancestors did.

The same month, the Communication Company published a reflection piece by Michael Abrams that begins, “Talking of Indians and Indians. . . .” In the piece, Abrams describes a conversation with the “seeress” Raihana Tyabji in India about Native Americans and hippies. According to Abrams, Tyabji explained “the relationship of the Indians to the hippies in America” thusly:

She told us what her guru had told her in a vision: that violence in the American scene is the karmakic [*sic*] result of the killing and mistreatment of the American Indians, the rape and destruction of those who were the spirit of the land. Now we are working out the results of that bad karma, she said, and all of those Indians who were done in then are being reborn as the children of those who oppressed them: the young of our generation were the Indians, are Indians. It is up to us to reconcile them, to work out the American karma. That is the word from India.

Makes sense to me. (Communication Company Archives)

The encounter Abrams describes may or may not have happened the way he recalls it here, but nonetheless, his testimony was disseminated as fact amongst the residents of the Haight-Ashbury, and it is telling of a very literal understanding of the reincarnation myth based in Indian philosophy. Like Levine, Abrams imagines that Natives have been reincarnated as hippies in order to usher in salvation from the consequences of imperialist crimes. Not only were the hippies Natives in their past lives; according to Abrams, they still *are* Natives, reborn in order to carry out a very specific messianic goal. Of all of the incarnations of the myth I have described here, Abrams is perhaps the most revelatory, demonstrating how Indian philosophy and the

hippie fascination with Native Americans collided to create a reincarnation story that quickly gained traction in the Haight-Ashbury and beyond—as evidenced by the fact that, a year after these five accounts were published, the myth was on the minds of Living Theatre artists composing a new work across the Atlantic.

It is difficult to pinpoint when the members of the Living Theatre might first have been exposed to the concept of hippie as reincarnated Native. Was the idea firmly implanted before their self-imposed exile in 1964, for example, or did they encounter it in Europe? Nor is it easy to judge exactly how seriously the group took the idea. Was the reincarnation myth an attempt to express a metaphorical connection between two groups imagined to be linked by their supposedly shared victim status? Or did the Living Theatre hope to spread a genuine belief in the literal reincarnation of Native Americans as hippies? The idea seemed to function as both metaphor and literal fact in the Haight-Ashbury, the latter becoming an even more popular view when its veracity was affirmed by so-called “medicine men.” One of the most famous of these was Rolling Thunder, who claimed to be a medicine man trained by his Cherokee grandfather in traditional Native ways in the Oklahoma mountains; in actuality, he was John Pope, grandson of a non-Native ice plant manager from Texas (Haley 12). Nonetheless, when Rolling Thunder described hippies as the reincarnations of the Natives of centuries past, his own “Native” identity seemed to lend incontrovertible authenticity to the idea (Haley 13, Boekhoven 186).

Regardless of the origins of the myth, however, or of its various interpretations as metaphor or fact, it contributed to a culture that tended to ignore contemporary Native presence in favor of a romanticized image of historical Natives to whom hippies could imagine themselves the spiritual heirs. As Philip Deloria writes, “Non-Indians began taking up permanent native identities in order to lay claim to the cultural power of Indianness in the white imagination”

(*Playing Indian* 168). The Living Theatre, the San Francisco Diggers, and the creators of *Hair* all attempted to harness this “cultural power” through performances that, despite the best intentions of the artists, perpetuated harmful stereotypes and glossed over the contemporary goals of Native rights movements. Theirs were not the final words spoken in drama on the subject of Native presence vs. absence during this period, however. In the early seventies, the dialogue began to shift as Native American playwrights asserted their own voices, producing plays that focused on contemporary Native concerns and looking towards the future rather than to the past.

Body Indian and Native Survivance

Thus far in my study, I have examined problematic representations of Native Americans in the works of three non-Native performance groups. I conclude my project by counterbalancing my analysis of these performances with a brief case study of Kiowa/Delaware playwright Hanay Geiogamah’s 1972 play *Body Indian*. Geiogamah’s play combats the ethical pitfalls of stereotyping, romanticization, and the denial of coevalness by presenting audiences with characters who are nuanced and complex, by addressing contemporary Native issues without sentimentalism or resignation, and by issuing a call to action rather than a lament. It is my contention that *Body Indian*, along with many other Native-authored dramatic works of the seventies and beyond, upholds the higher representational standards Gerald Vizenor demands in his writing on Native “survivance.”

Gerald Vizenor, Anishinaabe author of numerous works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and criticism, calls for more responsible Native representation in art and literature in many of his critical studies, including *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (1994), *Fugitive Poses: Native American Indian Scenes of Absence and Presence* (2000), and *Native Liberty:*

Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance (2009). In each of these books, Vizenor addresses troublesome representations of Native identity by non-Natives, narratives that keep Native characters situated firmly within the tragic past, where they can be mourned, memorialized, and, ultimately, appropriated for non-Native use. In *Manifest Manners*, Vizenor cites the work of scholar Larzer Ziff, who claims in *Writing the New Nation* that, “Treating living Indians as sources for a literary construction of a vanished way of life rather than as members of a vital continuing culture, such writers [as Thomas Jefferson, James Fenimore Cooper, and others] used words to replace rather than to represent Indian reality” (Qtd. in Vizenor 8). Vizenor concurs with Ziff, writing that “Those who ‘memorialized rather than perpetuated’ a tribal presence and wrote ‘Indian history as obituary’ were unconsciously collaborating ‘with those bent on physical extermination’” (8). Though many countercultural artists attempted to speak out against imperialist crimes rather than to commit them themselves, productions such as *Paradise Now* used the process of mourning as a vehicle by which to facilitate appropriation. Vizenor challenges writers and artists to resist the impulse to fixate on tragic histories to the exclusion of contemporary Native concerns. Instead, he demands from them work that honors Native “survivance” (survival + resistance), asserting the continuing presence of Natives rather than their tragic absence. In the introduction to *Native Liberty*, he provides a succinct description of survivance narratives: “The nature of survivance creates a sense of narrative resistance to absence, literary tragedy, nihility, and victimry. Native survivance is an active sense of presence over historical absence, the dominance of cultural simulations, and manifest manners.⁷ Native survivance is a continuance of stories” (1).

⁷ In *Manifest Manners*, Vizenor defines the eponymous term as “the simulations of dominance; the notions and misnomers that are read as the authentic and sustained as representations of Native American Indians” (5-6).

In his 1983 book of the same name, historian Kenneth Lincoln calls the late sixties and early seventies a period of “Native American Renaissance.” During this time, prolific Native writers produced works of new fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama in ever-increasing numbers. Hanay Geiogamah was instrumental in the development of Native drama during the early seventies, setting new precedents by establishing one of the first Native American theatre ensembles and publishing the first collection of plays by a Native author (Pinazzi 175).

Geiogamah envisioned Native theatre as a powerful site for activism. He writes, “By 1968 my political crusading and my interest in theater began to merge, initially in a conception of writing plays which would depict the *truth* about the condition of the American Indian” (Qtd. in Darby 156). In 1972, this impulse led him to create the American Indian Theatre Ensemble—renamed the Native American Theatre Ensemble (NATE) the following year—at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club. There, Geiogamah collaborated with Native American artists from many different tribal backgrounds who saw in theatre “a means of self-realization and of representing culturally authentic images of themselves” (Geiogamah, qtd. in Darby 156). Scholar Mimi Gisolfi D’Aponte writes that Geiogamah’s theatre gave rise to “the contemporary era of Native American playwriting” in its fusion of traditional, and often tribally specific, Native American legends with contemporary pan-tribal issues faced by thousands of American Indians at large (Qtd. in Darby 157). Soon after Geiogamah established NATE, more Native theatre groups began appearing across the United States and Canada, including the Red Earth Performing Arts Company (Seattle, 1974), the American Indian Theatre Company (Tulsa, 1976), the Spiderwoman Theater (New York, 1976), and the Native Earth Performing Arts Company (Toronto, 1982). With the exception of REPAC, all of these companies are still in operation today (Pinazzi 190). In addition to pioneering the Native theatre movement in the 1970s,

Geiogamah has also edited several anthologies of Native plays and critical studies, and, together with Jaye T. Darby, he is the co-founder of Project HOOP (“Honoring Our Origins and Peoples”), a program designed to increase the visibility and develop the talents of Native theatre artists in American schools, universities, and communities.

Body Indian was Geiogamah’s first play, and it is among his most popular, frequently anthologized in collections of American and Native American literature. The play functions as a dramatic treatise on communal self-destruction; while alcoholism, unemployment, and poverty are major themes, the central focus of the play is on the destructive powers of hypocrisy and desperate self-interest in Native communities. The main character, Bobby Lee, struggles with alcoholism, a disease that has led to the loss of one of his legs; the final scene of the play reveals in flashback that Bobby Lee was struck by a train while passed out on the tracks. The opening of the play finds Bobby Lee visiting with a small group of family members at home. Though he has made plans to enroll in an AA program, he readily accepts the wine his relatives offer him. Soon, he gets drunk and passes out—but not before casually mentioning that he has saved four hundred dollars for his AA enrollment. For the rest of the play, Bobby Lee fluctuates between consciousness and unconsciousness, and each time he passes out, his relatives steal more of his money from its not-so-secret hiding place in his artificial leg so that they can buy more alcohol for themselves. At the end of the play, they have taken all of the money, but still want more, so they steal the leg itself, planning to pawn it off to buy more wine. Bobby Lee’s uncle justifies the action by saying it is in his best interests:

HOWARD: Y’all know how Bobby Lee gets when he’s been drinkin’ for a long time and runs out. . . . He gets real sick, haw? . . . He’s going to have [withdrawals] again if he don’t get a drink. He don’t have any more al-hong-ya

[money]. It's all gone. He spent it all. . . . He don't have anymore wine hid. I'm goin' get him some more wine before he wakes up. He's goin' need it. (*Pause*) He sure is goin' need a drink when he wakes up. Y'all know that! (35).

When Bobby Lee finally wakes up at the end of the play, he flashes back to the scene of his accident, which has been foreshadowed throughout the play with the sound of a train whistle. He has lost his leg all over again, and he has also lost the financial means with which to enter a program that might cure him of his addiction. His own alcoholism is partly to blame for these losses, but in a 1989 interview with Kenneth Lincoln, Geiogamah places most of the blame on Bobby Lee's family, a group that claims to love and care for him while systematically robbing him of all that he has. Geiogamah describes his own experiences of such hypocrisy:

The hypocrisy that Indi'n brotherhood, Indi'n love, and this Indi'n kind of thing . . . to me was an hypocrisy that I felt very strongly about, 'cause I had seen it, experienced it, and believed in every part of my mind and my heart that it was a real thing. The really pernicious part was that so many Indi'ns did it without really knowing it, without really understanding what they were doing to each other. (Lincoln 73)

With *Body Indian*, Geiogamah entreats Native audiences and readers to take better care of each other and their communities, issuing a dire warning about the consequences of such selfishly hypocritical behavior. For it is not only Bobby Lee who is destroyed in the play; when his relatives steal his money and his leg in order to buy more alcohol for themselves, they are feeding the disease that has already rendered them unable to care for themselves or each other.

Historian Annamaria Pinazzi has translated four of Geiogamah's plays into Italian, and in her essay "The Theater of Hanay Geiogamah," she writes of the multiple meanings of the play's title:

An ironic metaphor and an oxymoron at the same time (the second word denying the first one, since what is Indian today cannot possess the articulated and homogenous structure implied by the concept of body), the title of *Body Indian* refers both to Bobby Lee and to Indians collectively. Maimed entities in both cases, the crippled body of the young alcoholic and the "body" of his friends and kin—equally devastated by need and booze—show an irreversible decline and a disharmony that are more than just physical. . . . To reach its purpose this innocent and cannibal being does not hesitate to sacrifice a part of itself. (181)

Though Pinazzi talks of "irreversible decline and disharmony," however, Geiogamah himself speaks with more optimism in his interview with Lincoln. He describes the beliefs that guided his crafting of the final moments of the play, in which Bobby Lee wakes and understands his loss with a "sardonic smile" on his face:

I think that Indi'ns always have the capacity to look at themselves. Indi'ns know themselves, and that's part of the sardonic thing that's in Bobby Lee's life. They know what the hell they're doin', what they're capable of, and they know their weaknesses, they know their strengths. They haven't grasped how to activate them in this terribly new world in the past four hundred years, at least not in the right kind of way—instead of *misactivating* them in the sense of militancy, and racism, reverse racism, and blame, blame, blame. Of course we've lived through a

tragedy, there's no doubt about that, but the capacity to renew oneself, and to heal oneself, and to take care of oneself is always there, always has been there. (75)

Geiogamah does not hesitate to address the weaknesses he has observed in Native communities, but he ultimately affirms the capacity for change within these communities, which he claims begins with individuals learning how to harness their strengths and heal themselves. He acknowledges the tragedies suffered by Native Americans, past and present, but unlike the non-Native artists I have examined in my study, Geiogamah does not fixate on these tragedies—rather, he looks towards the future and encourages his audiences to do the same.

Geiogamah purposefully chooses not to ascribe specific tribal identities to the characters in *Body Indian*, as evidenced by the pan-tribal language of his notes to actors and directors, which refer to an “‘Indian frame of mind,’” “‘Indian’ speech,” and “the requisite Indian style of drinking.” He further specifies that it “is not necessary to distinguish what tribes the various characters belong to,” claiming that it is enough that audiences are aware that there are tribal differences and that the characters know what those differences are (*Body Indian* 8-9). In her essay “Acts of Transfer: The 1975 and 1976 Productions of *Raven* and *Body Indian* by Red Earth Performing Arts Company,” Creek scholar Julie Pearson-Little Thunder describes the ways in which the REPAC casts of *Body Indian* and Nic Di Martino’s *Raven* casts took on the challenge of creating “pan-Indian” performances that might have wide appeal to Native American audiences of different regional and tribal backgrounds. Pearson-Little Thunder acknowledges the potentially problematic nature of performances like *Body Indian* which are built around the “mixing of tribal and cultural contexts,” a concern that is of particular import given the frequent tendency of non-Native performance groups to ignore tribal distinctions in their reductive representations of a singular “Indian” identity. Ultimately, though, Pearson-Little Thunder

reaffirms the value of performances in which tribally-specific knowledge is transferred to performers outside of the tribe, acquiring new meanings and significations along the way as it is colored by practices brought into the process from other Native tribes as well as by the tertiary influence of Western acting training (116). Though the reviews of *Raven* that she cites are almost completely positive, however, the reception of *Body Indian* seems to have been complicated somewhat by Native audience members' reactions to Geiogamah's representation of "the seamy side of Indian life"; Pearson-Little Thunder explains that some Native audience members considered the play to be a "disservice to the Indian community," and a production that "merely perpetuated stereotypes and added to distorted representations of Indians within the dominant society" (124). In particular, many of these audience members objected to the alcohol abuse featured in the play.

Much of the current discourse on Native American alcoholism engages with the inherent dangers of the "drunken Indian" stereotype. In their book *Native American Postcolonial Psychology*, Eduardo and Bonnie Duran suggest that the stereotype not only does damage to the perception of Native Americans by Natives and non-Natives alike, but that it also serves as a sort of self-perpetuating definition of Native American identity. "It is our contention," they write, "that alcohol-related behavior for many Native Americans is determined, in part, by the need to ascribe to this overloaded sign in all of its negative and positive associations in order to be recognized as Indian" (108). Duran and Duran warn against the perpetuation of negative stereotypes that may encourage Native Americans to fall into destructive behavioral patterns out of a need to identify themselves with a certain conception of "Indian-ness"—not an uncommon fear amongst scholars who study the history and current patterns of alcohol abuse in Native American communities. The impulse to ascribe to a certain set of behaviors, whether positive or

negative, in order to prove membership in a particular group is certainly not specific to Native Americans. In his essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” Louis Althusser explores the ways in which all ideologies—whether they are born from associations with tribal, ethnic, religious, or other groups—shape and create individual identity. He writes that, “*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*, by the functioning of the category of the subject” (162). Henry Bial comments on Althusser’s theory of hailing in his essay, “The Play Review as a Means of Querying Difference,” writing that when the individual is hailed as a member of a particular group (the example Bial uses is “Hey Jew!”), he or she has only two options: “1) to answer, and by implication to accept the validity of both the identification and the significance of that identity, to subject oneself to the categorization; or 2) to ignore the call, and risk exclusion from the culture while simultaneously—perhaps—denying one’s own notion of self” (27).

What concerns scholars such as the Durans, then, is the idea that many Native Americans willingly play into the stereotypes of Native alcoholism in order to prove their own authenticity as Indians; when this happens, the ideology of the negative stereotype reinforces its own assumed “truth.” In a 1994 interview with Paul Rathbun for the *Native Playwrights’ Newsletter*, Assiniboine/Nakota playwright William S. Yellow Robe, Jr., offers a rebuttal to such arguments, addressing concerns about stereotyping in his 1986 play *The Independence of Eddie Rose* that are similar to the complaints leveled at Hanay Geiogamah:

One of the things that always amazes me about *Eddie Rose*, about reactions among Native American tribes, is that whenever you deny the problem of alcoholism on your reservation, you are also denying the fact that today, someone is going to die from alcoholism. You are denying the truth that ‘Yes, there is a

drinking problem.’ This amazes me, because when you do this, you are walking a double standard where on the one hand, you can’t talk about alcoholism because it’s a stereotype; at the same time, if you don’t deal with it, people will die. (350)

In this interview, Yellow Robe addresses a painful reality about the choices that playwrights must make regarding their Native characters and themes, particularly in plays like *Eddie Rose* and *Body Indian* that are geared towards motivating social change. A key difference between the portrayal of alcoholism in these two plays and the problematic representations of the issue found largely in non-Native stage dramas, television shows, and films, is tone. In *Body Indian* and in *Eddie Rose*, the “drunken Indian” is not comic relief, nor is he a tragic figure with no hope of redemption, the inconsequential remainder of a dwindling race. Geiogamah and Yellow Robe seem to agree that in order to inspire change, the playwright must first show that change is possible, and neither of these plays, however bleak, present worldviews that are entirely devoid of hope. Yellow Robe continues on the subject of stereotyping with advice for fellow Native playwrights: “If you do it right, if you can make the audience feel what’s going on, and understand what’s going on, the stereotype disappears, and the real human quality comes out” (351). Though *Body Indian* presents characters who, on a surface level, may appear to conform to “drunken Indian” stereotypes, closer analysis reveals them to be the more nuanced and human voices of the playwright’s urgent call for reform.

Jaye T. Darby’s essay “‘People with Strong Hearts’: Staging Communitism in Hanay Geiogamah’s Plays *Body Indian* and *49*” offers a generative response to concerns about the blurring of tribal distinctions in *Body Indian*, as she situates Geiogamah’s work within the historical context of the movements for Native American rights in the 1960s and seventies. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the period saw a major strategic shift in which Native rights

activists from many different tribal backgrounds came together in organizations of unprecedented size and scope, fighting for the common interests of Natives across the nation rather than focusing on the more specific demands of individual tribes. Darby sees plays like *Body Indian* as the dramatic extension of this strategy, as they maintained the potential to inspire positive change in many different Native communities rather than alienating certain Native audiences with specialized language and subject matter specific to other tribes. Darby explores *Body Indian* in relation to Cherokee scholar Jace Weaver's term "communitism." Weaver explains this term in his 1994 book *Other Words: American Indian Literature, Law, and Customs*:

It is formed from a combination of the words *community* and *activism* or *activist*.

Literature is communitist to the extent that it has a proactive commitment to Native community, including the wider community. In communities that have too often been fractured and rendered dysfunctional by the effects of more than five hundred years of colonialism, to promote communitist values means to participate in the healing of the grief and sense of exile felt by Native communities and the pained individuals in them. (49)

Body Indian serves as an example of Native "communitist" writing in its active commitment to rebuilding a sense of community shattered by the forces of oppression, poverty, and alcoholism. Scholars across the field of Native American studies agree on the vital importance of community in Native tribes. Weaver writes that, "The need for collective survival in diverse, often quite harsh, environments naturally led to such an emphasis," and he likens the "continuance of society" in Native communities to the Christian concept of salvation while drawing a parallel comparison between the Christian concept of sin and the "failure to fulfill one's responsibilities

to the community” in Native American cultures (75). In *Body Indian*, Geiogamah emphasizes the importance of community by demonstrating the devastating potential effects of its absence. The play serves as an appeal to an “imagined community” of Natives; as I discussed in my first chapter, Benedict Anderson describes nations as “imagined political communit[ies]—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6). The pan-tribal nature of Geiogamah’s writing seeks not to erase tribal distinctions, but to point to similarities across boundaries and to identify the common issues that face members of many different Native American tribes. The constructed nation is “imagined” because Geiogamah visualizes a certain cultural link between the Native American members of his audiences; despite the fact that many of these individuals do not know each other and will not see each other again after the closing curtain, they share certain conceptions of what it means to be “Indian.” *Body Indian* also speaks to a “limited” nation, one that acknowledges distinct boundaries between what it means to be a Native or a non-Native American. The play also addresses a “sovereign” nation that seeks to elude control by any other nation or entity, and finally, *Body Indian* appeals to the “deep, horizontal comradeship” that is especially vital to the well-being of Native communities (Anderson 7).

The concept of “strategic essentialism,” developed by Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak, may also usefully be brought to bear on a discussion of *Body Indian* and similar pan-tribal productions. In one of her foundational texts, the 1987 volume *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, Spivak writes that the process of “strategic essentialism,” a term which she applies to feminist and postcolonial discourse, involves the “strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (205). Spivak also spoke of this process in a 1986 interview with Walter Adamson, as documented in his essay, “The Problem of Cultural Self-representation.” Here she claims that:

[I]t is not possible, within discourse, to escape essentializing somewhere. The moment of essentialism or essentialization is irreducible. In deconstructive critical practice, you have to be aware that you are going to essentialize anyway. So then strategically you can look at essentialisms, not as descriptions of the way things are, but as something that one must adopt to produce a critique of something. (51)

Spivak asserts that, as the process of essentialization is unavoidable in scholarly discourse, it should be embraced for clearly articulated strategic purposes in order to serve specific political goals. The scholar must acknowledge that she is essentializing her subject as a means of advocating for, rather than reducing, that subject. It is my contention that Native playwrights like Geiogamah who embrace pan-tribalism as a means of community outreach use this process of “strategic essentialism” in order to advocate for members of Native American communities across the country. The artists and activists involved in performance groups like the Native American Theatre Ensemble or in political organizations like the American Indian Movement purposefully essentialize certain wide-ranging Native American social issues in order to advocate for Natives of many different tribal distinctions. Some generalizations in plays such as *Body Indian* must necessarily be made, though they risk a problematic reductionism; a play steeped in references to only one specific tribe could easily alienate members of other tribes who might not understand, or, at any rate, fully appreciate the subtle nuances of dramatic representations of the customs and traditions of another tribe. *Body Indian* seeks to address a problem that affects Native Americans of many different tribal affiliations, and as such, it strategically uses the generalized terminology of “Indian-ness.” It is important to note that, in later years, Spivak distanced herself somewhat from her own terminology, warning of the potential dangers of attempting to use strategic essentialism as a one-size-fits-all theoretical tool.

In an interview with Ellen Rooney published in Spivak's 1993 volume *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, she explains, "The strategic use of essentialism can turn into an alibi for proselytizing academic essentialisms." She further argues that any form of essentialism must be used as a strategic tool, not as an academic lens through which to view particular groups, claiming, "A strategy suits a situation; a strategy is not a theory" (4-5).

Geiogamah's work withstands this test. In *Body Indian*, he addresses a very real and specific social concern and uses essentializing language in order to make his message heard across tribal boundaries. This act of "communitism" is, as Weaver puts it, an attempt to "participate in the healing of the grief and sense of exile felt by Native communities and the pained individuals in them" (49). Geiogamah both affirms and validates the imagined Indian nation, of which his Native audience members are a part, inviting its members to temporarily cross tribal boundaries in the interests of the larger community of Native Americans from east coast to west. After all, if all nations are, at base, imagined, as Anderson suggests, then the Indian nation built up by Geiogamah and his contemporaries is no more imaginary than any other. There are obvious dangers inherent in the process of attempting to reduce the diverse experiences of many individuals who happen to share a particular social identification—whether that identification is based on nationality, ethnicity, gender, race, sexuality, or other factors—to one "essential" truth or statement of experience. *Body Indian*, however, along with other Native American theatrical performances that similarly elide tribal distinctions, addresses those issues that affect many different Native American tribes in order to better serve the diverse individuals who make up each tribe. Certainly, such elisions always have the potential to harm when not executed with care, but in plays like *Body Indian*, and for the purposes of community activism which it serves, this elision also became somehow essential. Ultimately, *Body Indian* functions

as a strong voice for Native presence and survivance, one that neither romanticizes nor ridicules its Native characters. It does not paint a naively optimistic future for Natives that fails to take into account the often-brutal challenges of contemporary Native life—nor does it relegate Natives to the hopeless past depicted in many of the performative works of non-Native counterculturalists.

In 1973, English director Peter Brook invited Geiogamah and the Native American Theatre Ensemble to participate in a workshop with ten of his own actors at the Chippewa Reservation in Minnesota. The collaboration was ultimately unsatisfactory for both parties, due primarily to Brook's troublesome expectations of the Native group. Geiogamah recalls:

It became increasingly obvious that Mr. Brook had encouraged his company members to look for elements of the primitive or atavistic in us and our performances, and that is what they applauded when they thought they had detected it. . . . [Y]et their preconception of "Indian theater" as something akin to ritualistic mumbojumberry was certainly not to our liking. (Qtd. in Polizzi 180)

Like the hippie communalists Philip Deloria describes in *Playing Indian*, Brook approached his work with the Native artists with preconceived notions based heavily in stereotype, and as a result, neither Brook's company nor Geiogamah's left the workshop with any of the insights that might have otherwise emerged from such a meeting of powerful minds. More interested in the "primitive and atavistic" qualities he had anticipated than in an open-minded engagement with NATE's actual creative processes, Brook squandered a valuable collaborative opportunity. What might Brook and other non-Native theatre artists have learned from Geiogamah in the 1970s, and what might contemporary practitioners learn from his work today? In particular, how might Geiogamah's plays inform a better understanding of how non-Natives might approach Native

subjects in their own work? While plays like *Body Indian* established models of ethical representation that many Native theatre companies in the 1970s and beyond could emulate or adapt, defining responsible representational practices for non-Native portrayals of Native American characters, issues, and histories is a more complicated task. Certainly some of the Geiogamah's methods are effective across racial and temporal boundaries. Others, like his strategic use of essentializing language, are more problematic when attempted by non-Native artists. As Spivak points out, when artists and writers fail to make blatantly clear the specific goals they wish to serve, strategic essentialism too often reads, simply, as essentialism. It is vitally important that essentializing images of any groups connected by race, gender, sexuality, etc. are presented "not as descriptions of the way things are, but as something that one must adopt to produce a critique of something" ("The Problem of Cultural Self-representation" 51). Unfortunately, over the past four centuries, non-Native essentializations of Native American subjects that are intended as "descriptions of the way things are" have far outnumbered those designed to "produce a critique of something." Too often, these representations have reduced complex Native histories and cultures to narrow sets of stereotyped images, not for the purposes of social or political critique, but because of the genuine ignorance or indifference of the creative artists. Thus non-Native artists seeking to use essentializing strategies like Geiogamah's must contend with long histories of unethical practices. Moreover, even when they do use such processes to produce successful social or political critiques, the use of willful reductivism by one group to represent another is rarely good practice—especially when the former has historically occupied the position of colonizer and the latter, the colonized. On the other hand, *Body Indian* provides a useful model of survivance drama for Native and non-Native artists alike, demonstrating how theatre practitioners of any background might effectively engage with

contemporary Native American issues and portray Native characters in ways that celebrate Native presence, even in the face of seemingly interminable challenges, rather than allowing their narratives to taper off in images of defeat and annihilation. While *Body Indian* and other plays like it may recall tragic pasts and acknowledge the grim realities of the present, they ultimately call for reform in ways that affirm the potential for Native communities to close the rifts that divide them and to move forward into more promising futures. This is a strategy that can certainly be adopted by non-Native artists. Such an approach, utilized in countercultural productions like *Paradise Now*, might have constituted a significant shift towards supporting rather than detracting from the goals of concurrent Native rights movements.

I propose that contemporary non-Native artists who seek to represent Native American subjects ethically and responsibly should undertake such projects with mindful self-awareness, interrogating their own work in three primary areas—purpose, position, and precision. First, and perhaps most importantly, the artist must ask himself why he is compelled to represent Native identity in his chosen medium. Does he seek to draw attention to specific Native issues, for example, or to relate forgotten or overlooked stories of significant historical or contemporary Native figures? Or are his purposes more self-serving? Do his characters function as dramatic interpretations of the realities of Native American life, or are they merely the embodied symbols of the artists' own pet causes—as were the stereotyped Native characters of the sixties and seventies, who waved their banners for everything from environmentalism to free love? Next, the artist must examine his own position in relation to his Native subjects. Conquergood's "Moral Mapping of Performative Stances Towards the Other" provides a helpful framework for this line of questioning. The artist may ask himself if his representations come too close to the extremes of "detachment" or "commitment" that Conquergood describes, or to those of "identity" or

“difference.” Does the artist attempt to appropriate Native cultures or identities for personal gain (the “Custodian” position), to dehumanize and sensationalize Native subjects (the “Curator” position), or to voice his own cynicism or a perceived sense of superiority (the “Skeptic” position)? Does he adopt the “Enthusiast” position in order to express an imagined kinship with his Native subjects that ultimately trivializes Native identity and reduces it to a handful of superficial stereotypes, as did many artists of the counterculture (5-8)? Or does he approach Native subject matter from a more balanced dialogical stance that seeks to bring disparate voices into honest and open communication with each other, free of self-interest and personal agenda (9)? Finally, if the artist finds himself possessed of both an ethical purpose and a responsible position, he should then consider the precision with which he is depicting his Native subjects. Is he relying on stereotyped or romanticized ideas about Native life to inform his work, ideas that, like the “vanishing Indian” stereotype, may ultimately do damage to contemporary struggles for social reform and the protection of Native rights? Does he employ reductive symbols to quickly sum up Native identity for audiences whose limited understandings of Native cultures have been informed largely by similar images? Does he treat objects with great historical and religious significance carelessly? Or are his portrayals of Native Americans based in reality and on careful research? While the guidelines I propose here are by no means an exhaustive insurance policy against unethical representation, they may provide a useful starting point for non-Native theatre artists who seek earnestly to avoid the types of missteps that all too frequently characterized the performance art of the 1960s and seventies.

CONCLUSION

The 1960s and seventies in the United States were tumultuous decades characterized by a number of momentous shifts in politics, art, and culture. The Civil Rights movement fostered many significant social reforms, though it also suffered crushing blows, including the violent resistance of segregationists and white supremacists that often resulted in brutal and senseless loss of life—from the four girls killed in the 1963 bombing of a Birmingham church to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968. While King's dream of a future in which all live in a world free of racial prejudice has yet to be fully realized, the movement resulted in a number of major triumphs against discrimination, including the protection of voting rights for African Americans, the integration of schools and public spaces, and several important acts of legislation that worked to counteract discriminatory practices in both the workplace and the marketplace. The Civil Rights movement also had a profound impact on other campaigns for change during the sixties and seventies, and several other movements adopted protest strategies pioneered by its participants, including movements for women's rights, gay rights, and the rights of Native Americans, Latinos, and other racial and ethnic groups. At the same time, the growing student movement empowered young Americans to assert their voices on a number of vital issues, one of the most significant being the controversial war in Vietnam. U.S. imperialism abroad combined with dishonest policies at home led to a widespread sense of disillusionment amongst American youth. Many of these young people would find solace in the counterculture, working to disrupt the status quo alongside tens of thousands of similarly disillusioned Americans. This period saw the parallel rise of the radical theatre movement, which revolutionized the theatrical event and questioned some of the most basic and traditional conventions of the theatrical form, including the presentation of character versus self, the

separation of audience and performers, and the physical space of the theatre itself. The radical theatre movement was born from the work of such innovative theatre collectives as the Living Theatre and the San Francisco Diggers, and its influence was clearly evident even in more mainstream theatrical productions such as *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*, which continues to be revived on Broadway, in regional and academic theatres, and in theatres abroad to this day.

In a period of such significant tumult, it is unsurprising that Native American appropriations were widespread and widely varied. As Philip Deloria asserts, times of crisis in America have frequently led to a preoccupation with Native American cultures and themes, as non-Natives have attempted to find self-definition and a sense of national identity by measuring themselves against the earlier inhabitants of the Americas. This impulse seems to be based on a commonly-held conviction that, as Paul Chaat Smith puts it, “nothing is quite as American as the American Indian” (6). For counterculturalists, definitions of self in relation to the Native Other often involved a sense of vicarious victimization, as hippies imagined themselves to be the victims of corrupt government policies and restrictive social mores on a scale similar to that of historical and contemporary Native Americans. Native appropriations ran rampant through the theatrical spaces and texts of the counterculture—*Paradise Now*, *Hair*, and the work of the San Francisco Diggers offer but a few representative examples. Countercultural theatre artists mimicked everything from Native dress to spiritual ceremonies, and though their intentions were ostensibly positive, they often represented Native identity in damaging and insensitive ways. Native Americans became mascots of sorts for a number of different countercultural causes, including spirituality, environmentalism, hallucinogenic drug use, communalism, anarchism, pacifism, and sexual liberation. Typically, there was a vast disparity between real Natives and

the “imaginary Indians” represented onstage, and the latter were generally highly-stereotyped caricatures, playing into character types such as the noble savage, the bloodthirsty warrior, the wise elder, and the mystical shaman. Representations of Natives on countercultural stages, on the streets of New York and San Francisco, and on hippie communes frequently glossed over important tribal distinctions, reduced Native identity to a series of clichés, and abused sacred ceremonial objects and articles of clothing, such as the peace pipe and the headdress. These performances were characterized by the ethical fallacy Dwight Conquergood identifies the “Enthusiast’s Infatuation,” as well-meaning artists trivialized complex cultures with superficial performances (6).

Of the many Native stereotypes perpetuated by countercultural productions such as *Paradise Now* and *Hair*, one of the most insidious is that of the “vanishing Indian.” This centuries-old stereotype suggests the inevitable disappearance of the Native American, either through violent eradication or total assimilation, based on a mistaken assumption that he is unable to exist alongside contemporary Americans in modern society—a belief Johannes Fabian terms the “denial of coevalness” (148). The continued popularity of the stereotype in the sixties and seventies is particularly troublesome in light of concurrent movements for Native rights, in which Native Americans were embroiled in often-bitter struggles to educate the U.S. government and its citizens about the urgent needs of Native American communities and to correct inequitable and outdated governmental policies towards Natives that ignored the complex realities of contemporary Native lives. *Paradise Now* took the “vanishing Indian” stereotype one step further, touting the rise of the “Natural Man,” or the hippie reincarnated from the spirit of the historical Native American. This concept is predicated on a blatant act of cultural colonization in which the hippie attempts to lay claim not only to Native spiritual practices,

styles of dress, and ceremonial objects, but also to the ancestral roots of Native identity itself. Though the Living Theatre may have been the first group to physically embody this troublesome concept on a theatrical stage, the idea of hippie as reincarnated Native was in popular circulation in San Francisco well before the American premiere of *Paradise Now*, appearing as early as January of 1967 in the underground newspaper the *San Francisco Oracle* and in the “street sheets” printed and distributed by the Communication Company, as well as in the teachings of self-styled medicine man Rolling Thunder. Theorist Gerald Vizenor encourages Native writers to combat destructive stereotypes like those of the vanishing and reincarnated Indian, instead producing “survance narratives” that assert the contemporary presence of Native Americans and address the pressing concerns of Native communities. Hanay Geiogamah’s play *Body Indian* is a text that does just that. Geiogamah crafted his play as an instrument for social reform, a call for Native Americans to recognize and alter the attitudes and actions that, according to Geiogamah, prevent many members of Native communities from taking adequate care of one another and of their communities at large. In the interest of making his message heard and understood by the greatest number of Native American audiences possible, Geiogamah employed a pan-tribal approach. By “strategically essentializing” his characters’ central conflicts, Geiogamah appealed to Natives of many of different tribal affiliations, avoiding the risk of alienating audience members with the specialized, and necessarily exclusionary, language of any one particular tribe. Ultimately, though *Body Indian* is bleak, it is not a hopeless lament—rather, it is a strident call to action, an affirmation of Native Americans’ abilities to adapt to adversity and to heal themselves, and a total rejection of the idea that Natives are vanishing and/or awaiting reincarnation. As a survance narrative, the play continues to serve as a model of responsible dramatic representation that sidesteps the ethical pitfalls that ensnared many non-

Native dramatists of decades—and even centuries—past, a model that may effectively inform the work of contemporary Native and non-Native artists alike.

During the 1960s and seventies, damaging stereotypes about Native Americans abounded, and many were far more negative than those perpetuated by groups like the Living Theatre, the San Francisco Diggers, and the creators of *Hair*. In film and television Westerns of the period, for example, Native characters often remained either the villains, the comic relief, or the hypersexualized and exoticized Others. In countercultural representations like those I have described in this study, artists rejected the popular inclination to portray Natives in ways that ultimately worked to downplay or justify the genocidal actions of Euro-American imperialists. Instead, they portrayed Natives as the spiritually-enlightened keepers of otherworldly wisdom, and as “primitives” whose lifestyles were superior in their supposed simplicity. Are these romanticized stereotypes preferable to representations of Natives as amoral beings whose savagery justified mass murder? Certainly. But as Paul Chaat Smith points out in *Everything You Know about Indians Is Wrong*, however, romanticization has its own insidious implications:

The discourse on Indian art or politics or culture, even among people of goodwill, is consistently frustrated by the distinctive type of racism that confronts Indians today: romanticism. Simply put, romanticism is a highly developed, deeply ideological system of racism toward Indians that encompasses language, culture, and history. From the beginning of this history the specialized vocabulary created by Europeans for “Indians” ensured our status as strange and primitive. (17)

Though not overtly ill-intentioned (and oftentimes, just the opposite), romanticization still functions as a means by which to exercise control over the Other. In countercultural theatre, this control tended to take one of two forms: an emphasis on points of difference between Natives

and non-Natives that portrayed the former as “primitive,” inadvertently ignoring contemporary Natives and suggesting the irrelevance of ongoing Native rights campaigns in the process; or a “too facile identification” that reduced complex Native histories and identities to a more relatable scale, frequently for the purpose of appropriating these histories and identities for countercultural goals entirely unrelated to actual movements for Native rights (Conquergood 6).

Sadly, the romanticization of the Native American remains a cultural epidemic today. As I discussed in my third chapter, many athletic teams still hold fast to Native mascots, a practice that is troublesome enough without the mascots’ offensive names and/or caricatured visages. The Native American of stage and film is often still a comic and/or exoticized figure, and white Americans still don actual or symbolic redface to portray Native characters—for examples, see outdoor dramas such as Paul Green’s *The Lost Colony*, still performed annually on Roanoke Island; Johnny Depp’s Tonto in Gore Verbinski’s *The Lone Ranger* (2013); and Rooney Mara’s casting as Tiger Lily in Joe Wright’s upcoming film *Pan* (anticipated 2015). The image of the stereotyped “Indian maiden” still graces the packaging of products such as Land O’ Lakes butter and Sue Bee Honey, and Native imagery is also used to sell Crazy Horse Malt Liquor, Natural American Spirit cigarettes, and likely thousands of other products sold daily in America and abroad. And just as the fashion industry latched onto pseudo-Native styles in the 1960s and seventies, controversies over Native appropriations in the contemporary fashion world crop up regularly; from Urban Outfitters’ “Navajo panty” and similar products that bore the name without permission from the Navajo Nation; to Native headdresses worn in Victoria’s Secret fashion shows; to the multiple offenses committed by Heidi Klum’s *America’s Next Top Model* franchise (Fonesca, Kindelan, Martin). The “hipster headdress” now seems to be as ubiquitous at the annual Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival as Native-inspired apparel was at

Woodstock in 1969. And hypersexualized Pocahontas costumes remain among the most popular Halloween costumes today. The sexual exoticization of Native Americans in fashion and costume today is particularly troubling in light of the fact that, as stated on the U.S. Department of Justice's "Tribal Communities" webpage, "American Indians are 2.5 times more likely to experience sexual assault crimes compared to all other races, and one in three Indian women reports having been raped during her lifetime." In almost every case of problematic Native representation today, the responsible party, when called to answer for its actions, claims to have been attempting to "honor" Native American cultures in some way. These claims reveal a profound, large-scale misunderstanding of the word, and it is unsettling that popular conceptions of "honoring" Natives today may not have changed significantly since the 1960s. Regardless of the potentially positive intentions of the responsible parties, "honor" does not involve caricatures, racial slurs, redface, exoticization or eroticization, the misappropriation and misuse of sacred objects, or a fixation on a romanticized ideal of the past that obscures the realities of contemporary Native life. Artists and others today must examine Native representation in their work with great care and mindfulness, honestly interrogating their own agendas, the positions from which they approach Native subject matter, and the accuracy of their portrayals. To this end, the problematic representational strategies modeled so abundantly in the art of the counterculture may serve at least one constructive purpose, instructing contemporary artists by negative example and informing more ethical representational practices in the present and future.

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