

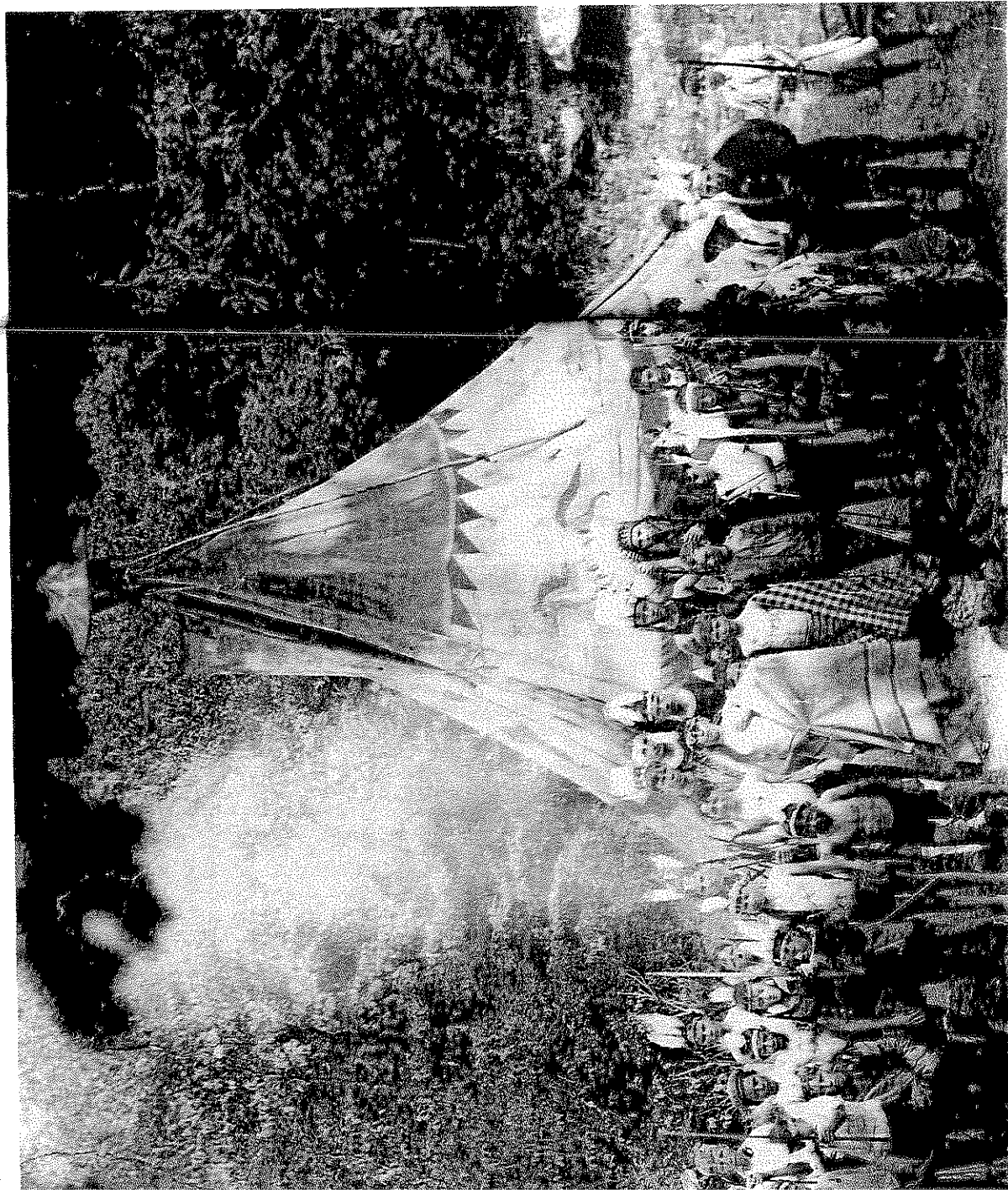
# Playing

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS • NEW HAVEN & LONDON

1998

# Indian

Philip J. Deloria



# Introduction

## *American Indians and American Identities*

Benjamin [Franklin] knew that the breaking of the old world was a long process. In the depths of his own unconsciousness he hated England, he hated Europe, he hated the whole corpus of the European being. He wanted to be American. But you can't change your nature and mode of consciousness like changing your shoes. It is a gradual shedding. Years must go by and centuries must elapse before you have finished. It is a long and half-secret process.

D. H. LAWRENCE,

*Studies in Classic American Literature (1924)*

In the fading evening light of December 16, 1773, Francis Rotch, the son of a Boston shipowner, trudged away from the home of provincial governor Thomas Hutchinson, his petition having been denied. Rotch's ship, the *Dartmouth*, had been anchored in Boston harbor for almost three weeks, the object of a struggle between Hutchinson, who insisted that its cargo—East India Company tea—be landed, and the Sons of Liberty, who refused to allow dockworkers

to unload the tea, which had come packaged with an unpalatable import tax. Customs rules prevented the Dartmouth from leaving the harbor, and the governor had ordered the Royal Navy to fire on any vessels attempting to do so. Even if the ship had escaped Boston unscathed and returned to London, Rotch and the other owners would have borne the ruinous costs of two profitless voyages. And so, on the nineteenth day of the twenty-day customs period, a crowd of Bostonians gathered at Old South Church to discuss the dilemma yet again and to send Rotch to make one final petition. The next morning, customs authorities would be legally empowered to seize the Dartmouth's cargo.

Hutchinson, we know, refused to make any concessions, and when Rotch relayed the news, the crowd inaugurated the night of purposeful craziness Americans have come to call the Boston Tea Party. A chorus of Indian war whoops sounded outside the hall, and a party of what looked like Indian men sprinted down the street to the wharves. Boarding the Dartmouth and two other tea ships, the *Elanor* and the *Bewer*, the Indians "overpowered" the sympathetic guards and dumped tea into Boston harbor for the next three hours. No one tried to stop the tea party, least of all the crowd of spectators gathered on the well-lit wharf. When they had finished, the raiders cleaned up the ships, apologized to the guards for a broken lock, and went home to wash off their war paint. The tea party had been street theater and civil disobedience of the most organized kind. In full costume, the actors had waited patiently in the wings for Francis Rotch to deliver his lines. And the appointed guardians of social order at the harbor had willingly turned a blind eye and deaf ear in order to facilitate the citizens' effort to resolve an apparently unresolvable standoff.<sup>1</sup>

It has never failed to make a compelling story, retold by everyone from grade-schoolers to politicians. The tale has dramatic appeal of its own, but it also offers a defining story of something larger—American character. In the national iconography, the Tea Party is a catalytic moment, the first drumbeat in the long cadence of rebellion through which Americans redefined themselves as something other than British colonists.<sup>2</sup> For the next two hundred years, white Americans molded similar narratives of national identity around the rejection of an older European consciousness and an almost mystical imperative to become new. Although other Americans would appropriate and alter those stories, they often chose to leave the basic narratives in place. And so, in the "long and half-secret" struggle to define and claim American identity, the Boston Tea Party became thoroughly entrenched as a key origin story, one that resonates for a diverse range of people. And yet, one has to wonder. Why, of all the possible

stories of rebellion and re-creation, has the notion of disguised Indians dumping tea in Boston harbor had such a powerful hold on Americans' imaginations?

One hundred and fifty years, a continent, and a nationality removed, the British writer D. H. Lawrence occupied himself with similar questions. In his most significant work of literary criticism, *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Lawrence focused on the issue of American identity, suggesting that American consciousness was essentially "unfinished" and incomplete. An unparalleled national identity crisis swirled around two related dilemmas: First, Americans had an awkward tendency to define themselves by what they were not. They had failed to produce a positive identity that stood on its own. Americans were, as he put it, "not so much bound to any haven ahead, as rushing from all havens astern."<sup>3</sup> Second, Americans (and he did not hesitate to generalize) had been continually haunted by the fatal dilemma of "wanting to have their cake and eat it too," of wanting to savor both civilized order and savage freedom at the same time.<sup>4</sup>

Offering readings of classic nineteenth-century authors, Lawrence revealed a string of contradictions at the heart of familiar American self-images. James Fenimore Cooper, he claimed, was continually trying to work out the tension between a society that promoted democratic equality and the undeniable fact that some people are born more able than others. Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* illustrated the indecisive battle between the equilibratory urges of instinctual "blood consciousness" and self-aware "mind consciousness," the latter defining the former as sin yet never being able to eradicate it and, indeed, often finding its animal wildness desirable. A range of American writers—Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and others—had, even as they explored American contradiction, found themselves captured and humbled by its incessant ambiguities.

Throughout the essays, Lawrence frequently turned to "the Indian," intuitively locating native people at the very heart of American ambivalence. Whereas Euro-Americans had imprisoned themselves in the logical mind and the social order, Indians represented instinct and freedom. They spoke for the "spirit of the continent." Whites desperately desired that spirit, yet they invariably failed to become aboriginal and thus "finished." 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.<sup>5</sup>

Lawrence's intuitive insight was hardly exclusive. Most of the writers he dissected in *Studies* had sensed the ambiguous but important place of Indians in the national psyches they sought to bring to life. Self-exiled to New Mexico, Lawrence himself would be quite literally surrounded by a circle of modernist writers, poets, and painters exploring the same theme.<sup>6</sup> "There has been all the time, in the white American soul, a dual feeling about the Indian," Lawrence claimed, unable, finally, to say much beyond the obvious. "The desire to extirpate [him]. And the contradictory desire to glorify him."<sup>7</sup>

This is, of course, the familiar contradiction we have come to label noble savagery, a term that both juxtaposes and conflates an urge to idealize and desire Indians and a need to despise and dispossess them. A flexible ideology, noble savagery has a long history, one going back to Michel de Montaigne, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and other Enlightenment philosophers. If one emphasizes the noble aspect, as Rousseau did, pure and natural Indians serve to critique Western society. Putting more weight on savagery justifies (and perhaps requires) a campaign to eliminate barbarism. Two interlocked traditions: one of self-criticism, the other of conquest. They balance perfectly, forming one of the foundations underpinning the equally intertwined history of European colonialism and the European Enlightenment.<sup>8</sup>

Yet Lawrence, with his reckless prose and layering of unresolvable dualisms, seems (like his literary subjects) to be struggling to articulate something more. Indians, it is clear, are not simply useful symbols of the love-hate ambivalence of civilization and savagery. Rather, the contradictions embedded in noble savagery have themselves been the precondition for the formation of American identities. To understand the various ways Americans have contested and constructed national identities, we must constantly return to the original mysteries of Indianness.

Lawrence linked American incompleteness to an aboriginal "spirit of place" with which Americans had failed to come to terms. "No place," Lawrence observed, "exerts its full influence upon a newcomer until the old inhabitant is dead or absorbed."<sup>9</sup> Lawrence argued that in order to meet "the demon of the continent" head on and thus finalize the "unexpressed spirit of America," white Americans needed either to destroy Indians or to assimilate them into a white American world. These have, in fact, been two familiar options in the history of Indian-American relations, both aimed at making Indians vanish from the landscape. But losing this unexpressed "spirit" required a difficult, collective, and absolute decision: extermination or inclusion. It is a decision that the American

polity has been unable to make or, on the few occasions when either policy has been relatively clear, to implement.

The indeterminacy of American identities stems, in part, from the nation's inability to deal with Indian people. Americans wanted to feel a natural affinity with the continent, and it was Indians who could teach them such aboriginal closeness. Yet, in order to control the landscape they had to destroy the original inhabitants. Lawrence saw the problem demonstrated most clearly in the writings of Crèvecoeur: "[Crèvecoeur] wanted his ideal state. At the same time, he wanted to know the other state, the dark, savage mind. He wanted both. Can't be done Hector. The one is the death of the other!"<sup>10</sup> The nineteenth-century quest for a self-identifying national literature that Lawrence took as his subject continually replicated Crèvecoeur's dilemma, speaking the simultaneous languages of cultural fusion and of violent appropriation. Likewise, American social and political policy toward Indians has been a two-hundred-year back-and-forth between assimilation and destruction.

Recent scholarship has pointed to similar cultural ambiguities arising from equally conflicted racial imaginings and relations with African Americans. Blackness, in a range of cultural guises, has been an essential precondition for American whiteness, and it has taken material shape in literature, minstrel shows, class and gender relations, political struggles, and spatial geographies.<sup>11</sup> This book will suggest that the figure of "the Indian" holds an equally critical position in American culture. Race has, of course, been a characteristic American obsession—and the racial imagination has been at work on many different groups of people, Indians included. But Americans—particularly white Americans—have been similarly fixated on defining themselves as a nation. As we shall see, those national definitions have engaged racialized and gendered Indians in curious and contradictory ways. At the Boston Tea Party and elsewhere, Indian-ness provided impetus and precondition for the creative assembling of an ultimately unassembleable American identity. From the colonial period to the present, the Indian has skulked in and out of the most important stories various Americans have told about themselves.

"The waves that wrought a country's wreck," observed Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1874,

have rolled o'er Whig and Tory;  
The Mohawks on the Dartmouth's deck  
Shall live in song and story.<sup>12</sup>

In this and a thousand other songs and stories one can find Lawrence's half-secret, half-articulated Indianness, continually lurking behind various efforts at American self-imagination.

It is with this insight, however, that we part company with D. H. Lawrence, for, as suggestively quirky as it is, *Studies in Classic American Literature* deals almost exclusively in the world of texts and images. More interesting are the faux Mohawks slinking home down Boston alleyways on a chill December night. Their feathers, blankets, headresses, and war paint point to the fact that images of Indianness have often been translated into material forms. Mohawk disguises allowed Bostonians not only to articulate ideologically useful Indian identities but also to perform and experience them. If Indianness is a key theme in this book, so too is the notion of disguise.

The Mohawk Indian disguise adopted by Tea Party participants has usually been explained as either an attempt to maintain secrecy and anonymity or as an effort—almost laughably transparent—to cast blame on a third party.<sup>13</sup> Neither explanation will suffice. As an attempt to deflect blame, dressing like an Indian had, at best, a limited rhetorical use. Few took the mammoth leap of imagination necessary to believe that a band of Mohawk raiders had traveled hundreds of miles through now-foreign territory solely to deprive Boston of its tea. The claim of anonymity is equally dubious. Although some participants donned feathers, for most a smear of soot and a blanket proved an easier choice. Others eschewed disguise altogether, making no effort to hide their identities. Having a recent history of political riot, Boston knew its popular street-gang leaders, and guessing the identities of many of even the disguised offenders was not an impossible task for informed observers. It was not the disguises that kept the participants' identities secret but the support of Boston residents and the social sanctions imposed by the enforcer wing of the Sons of Liberty.<sup>14</sup>

Even so, the participants took pains to offer up Indian identities, grunting and speaking stage Indian words that had to be "translated" into English.<sup>15</sup> If they did not care much about actual disguise, they cared immensely about the idea of disguise and its powerful imputation of Indian identity. Dressing as an Indian allowed these pretend Mohawks to translate texts, images, and ideologies into physical reality. In doing so, they lived out the cultural ideas that surrounded Noble Savagery as concrete gestures that possessed physical and emotional meaning.<sup>16</sup>

Costume and disguise—especially when associated with holidays, rituals, or

the concealing dark—can have extraordinary transformative qualities. Almost everyone has experienced the sense of personal liberation that attends the wearing of disguise, be it Halloween masks, cross-gender clothing, or garments signifying a racial, ethnic, or class category different from one's own. Disguise readily calls the notion of fixed identity into question. At the same time, however, wearing a mask also makes one self-conscious of a real "me" underneath. This simultaneous experience is both precarious and creative, and it can play a critical role in the way people construct new identities. As they first imagined and then performed Indianness together on the docks of Boston, the Tea Party Indians gave material form to identities that were witnessed and made real. The performance of Indian Americanness afforded a powerful foundation for subsequent pursuits of national identity.<sup>17</sup>

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. In the beginning, British colonists who contemplated revolution dressed as Indians and threw tea in Boston Harbor. When they consolidated power and established the government of the early republic, former revolutionaries displayed their ideological proclivities in Indian clothing. In the antebellum United States, would-be national poets donned Indian garb and read their lyrics to each other around midnight backwoods campfires.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the thoroughly modern children of angst-ridden upper- and middle-class parents wore feathers and slept in tipis and wigwams at camps with multisyllabic Indian names. Their equally nervous post-World War II descendants made Indian dress and powwow-going into a hobby, with formal newsletters and regular monthly meetings. Over the past thirty years, the counterculture, the New Age, the men's movement, and a host of other Indian performance options have given meaning to Americans lost in a (post)modern freefall. In each of these historical moments, Americans have returned to the Indian, reinterpreting the intuitive dilemmas surrounding Indianness to meet the circumstances of their times.

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. It is, however, a tradition with limitations. Not surprisingly, these cling tightly to the contours of power. The creation of what Carroll Smith-Rosenberg has called a "national subjectivity" has, from the constitutional convention

forward, been largely the domain of white males. They have built that subjectivity on contrasts between their own citizenship and that denied to women, African Americans, Indians, and others.<sup>18</sup> Not until the early twentieth century, when national identity twined so intimately with questions surrounding modernist authenticity, did women don Indian costume on a regular basis. African-American Indian play—especially the carnivalesque revels of Mardi Gras—follows white practices to a degree, but it also stems from a different history of Afro-Caribbean cultural hybridity.<sup>19</sup> Europeans, too, have embraced Indianness, with summertime reenactment camps stretching from Great Britain to Germany to the former Soviet Union. Obviously linked to the United States, these practices are part of traditions that, in this book, must remain tangential. The groups I have chosen to pursue are by and large white American men. Although riven along class lines and differentiated by historical crises, they have been the primary claimants of an American cultural logic that has demanded the formulation and performance of national identities.

What is the connection between “the Indian” and American identity? What has been the role of disguise and costume in this identity play? How does this particular form of identity formation change over time and why? These questions define the primary themes explored in this book. One additional question, however, is essential to this inquiry: How have Indian people reacted to Europeans doing bad imitations of native dress, language, and custom?

It would be folly to imagine that white Americans blissfully used Indianness to tangle with their ideological dilemmas while native people stood idly by, exerting no influence over the resulting Indian images. Throughout a long history of Indian play, native people have been present at the margins, insinuating their way into Euro-American discourse, often attempting to nudge notions of Indianness in directions they found useful. As the nineteenth and twentieth centuries unfolded, increasing numbers of Indians participated in white people’s Indian play, assisting, confirming, co-opting, challenging, and legitimating the performative tradition of aboriginal American identity. When, for example, the Seneca intermediary Ely S. Parker assisted Lewis Henry Morgan in establishing an Indian literary fraternity, he helped create a specific Indian image—one that proved useful in motivating Morgan’s companions to help the Iroquois in their battles with a greedy land company and an unreliable federal government. Tracing the different manifestations of American Indian play invariably requires following the interlocked historical trajectory of native people as well.

The Boston Tea Party, as a generative moment of American political and cultural identity, serves as a likely beginning for the story D. H. Lawrence was trying to read out of the works of classic American authors. But just as America itself did not spring forth fully formed from the continent, neither was the Tea Party the manifestation of a purely American way of performing an identity. In fact, the Tea Party represents the collision of variant traditions in the colonies, themselves transformed from older European antecedents.

The American Revolution was both the beginning of the nation’s struggle to assume an essential identity and the culmination of century-old traditions of popular rebellion. “You can’t change your nature and mode of consciousness like changing your shoes,” said Lawrence. “Years must go by and centuries must elapse before you have finished. . . . It is a long and half-secret process.”<sup>20</sup> At the Tea Party one can witness both the beginning and the end of such half-secret processes. One process—centered in Europe—came to fruition in the new consciousness that was America. With the other, white Americans began a still-unfinished, always-contested effort to find an ideal sense of national Self and to figure out what its new mode of consciousness might be all about.

of American identity continued to carry with them the threads of doubt, ambiguity, doubledness, and contradiction that had been sewn from the very beginning into the fabric of the nation. Indians (and Indian Others) were not going away, and white American identity quests based on Indianness would confront the inevitable consequences of that fact. •

### three

#### Literary Indians and Ethnographic Objects

The moon is dancing in the heavens and the stars are wandering through space, the courthouse of the sky. The silvery waters of the Oneida sleep in the distance and the light is frozen upon the icy beach. Beside this quiet and beautiful inland lake the Tekarihoga has this day stood and in silent meditation recalled the days when the forest cast its shade far over its horizon; and the Indian with his bow and arrow pursued his game to the waters edge and along its winding banks; when that stillness of the wood unknown to us was unbroken even by the Indian hunter, save now and then by the twang of a bow string and whizzing of an arrow or the whoop indicating victory in the chase. But now how changed! Alas Soshawah, in these very places the Yankees are boiling salt. How bad I feel!

LEWIS HENRY MORGAN TO GEORGE S. RILEY

"At the Great Salt Lick," December 12, 1845

After finishing a degree at Union College, reading law for two years, and passing the New York bar in 1842, Lewis Henry Morgan found himself back in his hometown of Aurora, New York, with time on his hands. His legal career on hold as the American economy struggled to recover from the Panic of 1837, Morgan pattered about the family farms, gave occasional temperance lectures, wrote for the popular monthly literary magazine *The Knickerbocker*, and began to think deeply about American art and literature. With several equally thoughtful young men from Cayuga Lake Academy, his hometown school, Morgan formed the Gordian Knot, a literary fraternity that took as its myth the story of Gordius, king of Phrygia, who tied a knot so complex that only a person worthy of being the master of all Asia could unite it. Alexander the Great simply cut the knot with his sword. The fraternity's secretive rituals bound the members to master an equally difficult task: the writing of a native, American epic that would define national identity and put an end to unflattering comparisons between the United States and Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Like the Tammany societies, the Red Men, and numerous other orders, the Gordian Knot used fraternal bonds as an effective organizing principle. Morgan's group, however, had a loftier purpose: seeking American identity through an exercise in unabashedly high culture. The fraternity sought literary inspiration in the familiar mixture of Greco-Roman classicism and the natural antiquity of the New World. As symbols both of a classic past and of American nature, Indians inevitably found their way to the very heart of the tales told by the Gordian Knot. In self-conscious letters and essays, Morgan and his friends lamented that the ancient poets and philosophers had not experienced the truly noble savagery of America. The society dreamed of the artistic transcendence that such a marriage of genius and landscape might have produced and set out to master it themselves.

For Morgan, this well-worn brand of Greco-Indian Americanism yielded insights that far surpassed the standard rhetoric. As he wandered the landscape of western New York, he found himself vividly imagining Indian people walking in the forests and canoeing on the rivers. He made deep emotional connections between archaic Indians and successor Americans and grew increasingly intent on basing his national literature upon the myths and histories of the supposedly vanished members of the Iroquois confederacy. "We are now upon the very soil over which they exercised dominion," the spellbound Morgan told his confederates. "We have the same natural landmarks, the same lake to which

they bequeathed their name; the same hills and forests and streams, even the graves of many generations—indeed everything around us speaks of the ancient and departed Cayugas. Poetry still lingers amid the scenery which they enjoyed and prose has sufficient employment in recording the deeds of the past."<sup>2</sup>

Morgan was a persuasive sort—he would later make a small fortune as a lawyer—and by the summer of 1842, the Gordian Knot had turned from its classical orientation toward a more precise, local focus on the Six Nations of the Iroquois: "We finally concluded," he said later, "to cut this knot and change our organization into an Indian society under the name of the 'Cayugas,' as we resided in the ancient territory of this Indian nation and quite near the site of their principal village." The group began meeting at monthly campfires deep in the New York woods. Garbed in Indian costume, they called one another by Indian names and proffered nostalgic, metaphor-drenched poetry and prose as prototypes of a national literature.<sup>3</sup>

It was a familiar fraternal form of playing Indian, directed now to a new purpose—literary inspiration—that in time would utterly recast the meaning of Indian play. Beginning with romantic notions of vanishing Indians, Morgan's New Confederacy (or Grand Order) of the Iroquois eventually turned from nostalgia toward rationalized, objective scientific investigation. Fictional creation gave way to the compiling of factual knowledge, and what had begun as an effort—firmly rooted in the consciousness of the Revolution and the early Republic—to define a literary national identity took on a modern, ethnographic character well suited to the American social elite of the late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

In the course of this shift, Morgan moved from identities imagined in the context of patriotic nationalism to identities that were the product of a quest for the authentic and the real. The rebels and fraternalists who had imagined and then appropriated the meanings assigned to Indian Others had often disconnected that process from actual Indian people. Lewis Henry Morgan, on the other hand, wanted not so much to imagine and implant import as to find it. That desire allowed Indian people to play key roles in the changing literary society, but it also raised awkward questions about the nature of Indians and the uneven social relations between native people and white Americans. Dealing with the contradictions between the simultaneous meanings found in real Indians and made through Indian Others pointed Morgan to a new set of crises, which I intend to define with respect to the notion of modernity.

For our purposes, modernity is the long cultural moment in which the



positive/negative and close/distant axes of Indian Otherness become inverted. Americans built the nation on contradictory foundations: a highly positive interior brand of Indian Otherness coexisted with exterior savages lurking outside societal boundaries. By the early twentieth century, however, many Americans had become fascinated with a positive exterior Indian Other, one who represented authentic reality in the face of urban disorder and alienating mass society. Indians who had assimilated into modern society were now negative Others, and they could only reflect the savagery and degradation of that world back into American eyes. Morgan, by this definition, was by no means wholly modern. Rather, as he edged into a modern milieu, Morgan found himself caught between it and the older paradigm that had been established during the Revolution. His efforts to deal with these contradictions—especially in relation to native people—helped create ethnography, an extraordinary, contradictory way of knowing that has permeated American encounters with Others from that time forward.

Even before the Revolution, literature and art had been critical venues for imagining American identity. In the 1760s, colonists began to prophesy an imminent outbreak of American greatness in high cultural pursuits. "Not only science," proclaimed Ezra Stiles, "but the elegant arts are introducing apace and in a few years we shall have . . . Painting, Sculpture, Statuary, but first of all the greek Architecture in considerable Perfection among us."<sup>5</sup> In 1771, Philip Freneau and Hugh Henry Brackenridge celebrated their graduation from Princeton by writing "The Rising Glory of America," a poem destined for thirty years of reprints in several versions:

No more of Britain and her kings renowned,  
Edward's and Henry's thunderbolts of war;  
Her chiefs victorious o'er the Gallic foe;  
Illustrious senators, immortal bards,  
And wise philosophers, of these no more.  
A Theme more new, tho' not less noble, claims  
Our ev'ry thought on this auspicious day:  
The rising glory of this western world,  
Where now the dawning light of science spreads  
Her orient ray, and wakes the muse's song;  
Where freedom holds her sacred standard high.<sup>6</sup>

As the United States became a nation, this prophetic tradition redoubled its power. In 1786, for example, Matthew Carey founded the *Columbian Magazine* to propound and nurture an embryonic national culture destined for greatness.<sup>7</sup>

The widespread faith in imminent cultural excellence did not simply reflect a crude nationalistic chauvinism (although it was indeed that). It was philosophically grounded in the prevalent belief that artistic excellence and political empire traveled together through time on a journey from east to west. The trajectory—from Greece to Rome, from Renaissance Italy to Elizabethan and then Georgian England—now seemed to point inevitably to America. Nationalistic Americans gleefully welcomed the corollary: the country's rise to artistic greatness would be accompanied by Europe's decay. "The muses," as the historian Joseph Ellis has wryly observed, "traveled in a flock; they left one country en masse when it began to decline, flew west, then landed in a rising nation-state."<sup>8</sup> And as the ideological contours of the Revolution had taken shape, American intellectuals linked the westward movement of arts and empire with the flowering of their new political ideals—freedom, liberty, and the removal of tyrannical restrictions. Where unfettered freedom held reign, they claimed, the arts would prosper, inspiring the citizenry.<sup>9</sup>

After the Revolution, however (and despite the efforts of Carey's successful magazine), America's art and literature not only failed to inspire—they frequently drew virulent attacks. Ironically, the same political ideals of liberty and egalitarianism could also lead to a critique of art. The rising glory paradigm, many argued, contained the seeds of moral decay and was to be feared. As a free America prospered economically and joined the ranks of mercantile empires, the arts would migrate westward and settle in the New World, scattering new Shakespeares, Popes, and Scotts across the American landscape. Yet even as these literati created a glorious national literature, they would simultaneously call attention to a successful, cultivated class that could afford to patronize arts and leisure. Art, critics feared, was class-bound and intrinsically antiegalitarian.

The Muses, however, seemed to be hesitating on their westward journey. Early America's best painters, Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley, had trained in Europe and could hardly be called native products.<sup>10</sup> And although later critics might praise the works of Charles Brockden Brown, James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, and others, at the time both New and Old World readers refused to accord American writers what one might now consider to be their due. Why was the prophecy of cultural greatness failing to come true? The prolonged absence of Shakespeares and Michelangelos pushed some toward

panic, and, as the years rolled by and the Muses neglected their destiny, worried American intellectuals established another literary tradition, one that would haunt much of the nineteenth century—the frustrated call for a distinctive American poet, a unique American art, a characteristic American epic.

In 1838, for example, Ralph Waldo Emerson lamented the stagnation of American letters. American writing, he said, had nothing active or vital about it. Rather, it was little more than a reflex, the faint, almost vestigial “sign of an indestructible instinct.” “Perhaps the time is already come,” he continued hopefully, when it ought to be, and will be, something else; when the sluggish intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. . . . Who can doubt that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years?<sup>11</sup>

Like many young educated men, Lewis Henry Morgan, too, worried about the dilatory American arts and the critical role they ought to play in establishing national identity. Educated and largely freed from the mechanical labor that seemed to be America’s most successful expression of native talent, Morgan and his friends aimed to revive poetry and put it to the service of the nation.<sup>12</sup> In 1843, Morgan concocted a mythic, usable past for his new Indian fraternity, a distinctly American history that he proffered hopefully as the scene for a national literature. In an address to the membership, Morgan (styling himself Schenandoah) outlined a narrative that transmuted Old World Gordian knot to New World (Indian) American. Drawing liberally on literary imagination, he linked the classical world of Gordius with the Six Nations confederacy, proposed location of the society’s nationalist writing:

Gordius conceived the mighty enterprise of leading his Phrygian children to this western hemisphere. Having gathered the fragments of the knot and left his malediction upon the land, he conducted them through forest, plains and desert, over hill and mountain, to Bhering’s Straits, thence across to this Western World, thence down to the chain of lakes and finally after many years of wandering, and vicissitudes of every character; they followed on from Lake Superior . . . until they reached the verdant lands of

Lake Champlain where they first found rest from their protracted wanderings. Gordius soon assembled them all in council. He took the severed fragments of the former knot and separated them into six strands. He then divided the people into six divisions named one the Mohawks, another the Oneidas, another the Onondagas, another the Tuscaroras, another the Cayugas, and the last the Senecas. He then tied up the six strands into a new and mystic knot, and giving it to them as an emblem of the confederacy and union which should subsist between them, he named it the Grand Knot of the Iroquois.<sup>13</sup>

Once he had chronologically linked the Old World Gordius with the New World Iroquois, Morgan had only to connect the two with the new United States in order to establish the historical framework for an epic national history. He did so by splicing together three “Iroquoian” epochs. The first ended with the migration and the establishment of Gordius’s original Six Nations knot. The second epoch, in which the Iroquois confederacy grew, prospered, and fell, recently had also come to an end. Relying effortlessly on vanishing Indian doctrine, Morgan asserted that “nothing that may properly be called the Iroquois can now be found among us. Their Indian empire has passed away without leaving a vestige or memorial.”<sup>14</sup> In the third epoch, Morgan and his associates in the New Confederacy of the Iroquois would write a national history and literature based on this past. And when they donned Indian clothing and performed ritual initiations in the New York woods, the New Confederacy members lived their mythic connections to Gordius and the vanished Six Nations. The three epochs came together as one.<sup>15</sup>

Just as it had for the various Indian fraternities that had come before, Indian costume played a crucial role in the New Confederacy’s ceremonial initiation. It connected the membership with the Iroquois of the previous epochs and signified rebirth and new identity for members. Penned by Morgan in 1844, the initiatory “Imindianation” ritual was primarily a literary exercise, wrapping high-toned language around the standard tropes of fraternal brotherhood. The ceremony commences with the spirits of departed Indian fathers rising from the grave to chide their Indian children for forgetting them. The children protest, blaming the white strangers whom the fathers once welcomed and who destroyed the Iroquois and drove them from their ancestors’ graves. A third chorus, by a fiercely painted ghost sachem, unleashes an emotional critique of American Indian policy:

Oh! Pale face we took you weak and helpless to our wigwams and warmed you and fed you and saw you become strong. . . . Could you destroy the children whose Fathers saved your lives? Could there not be room for them and you? Could you not leave them a little piece of land? Oh, that we had left you to perish. A curse upon ye palefaces. May your cattle perish and your corn die in the fields. May your children cry for bread, and there be none to give them. May fire-breath of Arecouski consume your dwellings and your enemies [sic] slay you, and plagues destroy you; till not one be left to weep amid the ashes of your desolation.<sup>16</sup>

The ceremony moves quickly, however, to cleanse the initiate's soul, tempering the curse by pointing to the sheer inevitability of Indian disappearance. "I am the Great Spirit," intones a ceremonial voice "deep and heavy." "The red men are my children. Long ago I saw in the future their destruction, and I was very sad." The spirit tells initiates that the only way to placate the mournful Indian shades is to preserve their memory and customs. The society's sachem then replies that the membership will accept the "delightful task." The ceremony concludes by offering the initiate complete redemption and a new life through mystic rebirth as an Indian child. "Spirit," prays the sachem, "receive us as your children. Let us fill too the place of those who are gone." And, of course, the initiate was granted exactly that privilege, being blessed with a new name, "the place of an ancient Cayuga," and an Indian costume that proclaimed his new identity.<sup>17</sup>

With its critique of America's treatment of native people, the Inindianation ceremony reflected the physical gulf that had opened between midcentury eastern Americans and real Indians. Their land safely secured, Americans were able to downplay the Jacksonian savage and turn to guilt-cleansing criticism of the very policies that had emptied the landscape. Indians appeared not only as pieces of an incorporative American history, but as nostalgic reminders of good old days and as object lessons in the chastening consequences of progress. The Inindianation ceremony wrenched members' identities, transforming them from Yankees—the actual beneficiaries of American Indian policy—to aboriginal American Selves. It placed Morgan and his companions in a symbolically powerful and emotionally charged position for creating a literature rooted in America's landscape and nature. New names and Indian dress made the membership indigenuous in the present, while vanishing Indian rhetoric relegated the people of the second Iroquois epoch to the past.<sup>18</sup>

Like the revolutionary mythmakers, the young men of the New Confederacy insisted that liberty and democracy lay embedded in the nation's landscape and its past. With modest effort, one could uncover that history, tracing national ideals back to the second epoch Iroquois themselves. "The Indian," observed Morgan, unknowingly echoing the sentiments proclaimed by the Tammany societies seventy years earlier, "is also a Republican and this is more truly a fact than may at first appear."<sup>19</sup> If the rebels had made Indians crucial political figures, Morgan's followers argued that inspiration for the elusive American literature might also be found in Indianness, waiting to be recovered and revealed to the world:

The Indian loves nature with a boundless enthusiasm and the poetry which breathes through Indian eloquence is but an outbreak of the emotions which it creates. What a loss to civilized man that they had no literature to perpetuate those delicate touches; which would have rivaled the most exquisite periods of Cicero or Demosthenes: What a loss that they had no language to preserve those inspirations of the Indian's Muse, which might have equalled the loftiest flights of Homer or the sweetest strains of Euripides.<sup>20</sup>

By claiming to be the mystic descendants of the Iroquois and using costumed rituals to bring the imagined to life, the New Confederacy hoped to gain emotional access to these native muses who would help them proclaim American identity. As membership increased, the New Confederacy established additional council fires, each named after a different member of the original Six Nations. Utica was home to the Oneidas; Syracuse to the Onondagas. The Senecas had four tribes at Waterloo, Canandaigua, Rochester, and Lima; and the Cayugas branched out from Aurora to Auburn, Ithaca, and Owego. The New Confederacy's membership peaked in 1845 and 1846 at about four hundred.<sup>21</sup> Like many who had come before, however, the Gordian Indians found it easier to postulate an American literature than to create one. Their inspirational literary creations rarely appeared outside of the flowery letters they wrote to one another. Morgan was one of the few to publish a piece of New Confederacy writing, an article in *The Knickerbocker* for September 1844 called "The Vision of Karistagia, A Sachem of Cayuga." In the piece, which overflows with romanticized notions of Indian disappearance, a spirit guide shows Karistagia a vision of the New York landscape as it appears in the 1840s. He then guides the sachem back through time to witness the treacherous ways in which the land and its

people have been conquered. The Cayuga rages over "these multiplied wrongs," but his guide cautions that Karistagia's vow of vengeance "avallith nothing and [that he] must be content." Although the writing aptly demonstrates Morgan's fascination with landscape and the passing of time, it is an unremarkable piece of vanishing literature, a jeremiad against Indian decline that at the same time explains the displacement of native people as nothing more than cruel and inevitable fate.<sup>22</sup>

While "Karistagia" revealed the limits of the young men's literary imaginations, Morgan had already sensed a way to transcend those limits—the scientific acquisition of factual knowledge. The transition from Gordian to Iroquoian knot had been an interim step, taking the fraternity's membership from purely imaginative classic realms into an Indian epoch characterized by a tangible location and an actual history. Morgan made his evolving preferences clear. "The whole charm and imposing character of our scheme," he noted, "is derived from its Indian characteristics and the previous existence of the six nations which are our type and progenitor: the mirror upon which our order must draw its image. Their deeds upon the warpath, at the council fire and at the festival are the materials with which we must work and an intimate knowledge of them is manifestly important."<sup>23</sup> Previous Indian societies had been content to enact imagined rituals using standard metaphoric language. Morgan came to reject such casual fictionalization, both in ritual and in writing. If the New Confederacy's ceremonies and literature were to inspire, he thought, they must be firmly grounded in accurate history and nothing less. And so, as a way of becoming an American writer, playing Indian began to carry increasing responsibilities toward Indian history and, eventually, toward Indian people themselves.

With the Indian past fading away, the documenting of it became a vital activity, and in the society it took on a strange life of its own. The newly composed Inindianation ceremony tied redemption to the recovery and preservation of the customs of the fathers, and the members responded enthusiastically. Morgan, ever fascinated by landscape, began an effort to reconstruct Iroquoian trails across New York. His fellow Cayuga Isaac N. Hurd traced Iroquois political organization and ceremonies into the nineteenth century. In the council meetings, literary and social exercises took on an increasingly historical cast as members presented reports on a range of research projects. Initially a prerequisite for the writing of literature, the reclaiming of Six Nations history quickly became the society's *raison d'être*, a crucial exercise in its own right.<sup>24</sup>

Indian names	Time of life	English names	Residence
Sho-de-ay-ha-ne	April 17, 1844	Richard Thomas	Chipperville Bay Co
Sho-de-dough	1842	John H. Adams	Legend Wayne Co
Sho-de-ah-ah	Sept 86	George W. Weston	Autumn Bay Co
Sho-de-ah-ah	May 15, 1844	John Shiff	Legend
Sho-de-ah-ah	23	William Allen	Autumn
Sho-de-ah-ah	29	Charles Avery	Legend
Sho-de-ah-ah	June 7	Richard Woodwell	Springport
Sho-de-ah-ah	21	John Griffin	Autumn
Sho-de-ah-ah	July 1	Mr. W. Shepard	"
Sho-de-ah-ah		Theresa Ramsey	"
Sho-de-ah-ah		Richard	"
Sho-de-ah-ah		King - Sledge	de Pico Centre
Sho-de-ah-ah		John Singshony	Autumn
Sho-de-ah-ah	Aug 1	West	Northville
Sho-de-ah-ah	9	W. J. Morgan	Autumn
Sho-de-ah-ah		Henry McElvaine	New York City
Sho-de-ah-ah	30	George Avery	Chase Comp Co
Sho-de-ah-ah	Sept 6	Montgomery	Shimansburgh
Sho-de-ah-ah		John White	"
Sho-de-ah-ah	27	John Camp	Springport
Sho-de-ah-ah	Nov 1	James Clark	"

11. New Confederacy of the Iroquois, Schedule of Warriors to August 14, 1845, Wolf Tribe of the Cayuga Nation of the New Confederacy of the Iroquois. Lewis Henry Morgan spurred the membership to adopt complex Iroquois names that required phonetic spelling and were missing the linguistic familiarity of Metamora, Uncas, or Powhatan. Courtesy of the Lewis Henry Morgan Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.

Indians of the New Confederacy turned to other scholarly disciplines. Just as fiction shaded into history, for example, so too could it drift into linguistics. Members began gathering descriptive words and place-names and personal names from books and treaty documents. Like the Indians of the Improved Order of Red Men, the members of the New Confederacy acquired Indian names at their initiation. As the group delved more deeply into its studies, the character of these names began to change from the standard, non-Iroquois Logan, Osceola, and Uncas to more difficult, untranslated Iroquois names. At his initiation in 1844, for example, Henry McElvaine was reborn as Go-ne-ah-gu-u-do. The new member Montgomery Gibbs had to remember his name, the tongue-tripping O-gough-sa-nu-you-te (fig. 11).<sup>25</sup>

Whereas Tammany and the Red Men had used translated, metaphoric names for the days and months (see fig. 9), Morgan, who wrote much of the order's constitution, had his companions adopt a host of unfamiliar Seneca words, each spelled with precise orthographic markings. August, for example, was not simply the Sturgeon Moon, but *Sr-is-gak-nah*. When Morgan discovered that what he thought to be the head leadership title of the confederacy, *Tekarihogea*, was in fact simply the first name on a list of confederacy leaders, he quickly corrected his error, substituting the more correct *Tadodahoh* in its place. Similarly, as he came to understand the clan structure of the original confederacy, he changed the organization of the New Confederacy Iroquois to match it more exactly.<sup>26</sup>

Morgan's growing desire to mirror the second epoch confederacy's political and social organization soon led the group from literature, history, and linguistics into what we have come to label ethnography and, in a broader sense, anthropology. When, as the order's *Tekarihogea*, Morgan instituted the Wolf tribe of the Oneidas in 1844, he urged the new members to move beyond the strictures of the arts: "Seek out and treasure of whatever remains to you of the Oneidas; of the manners, customs and history; of their government, mythology and literature and especially preserve the vestiges and relics of their civilization."<sup>27</sup> The following year, he presented a detailed research plan built upon an efficiency-maximizing division of labor. Tribes, he charged, should devote themselves specifically to the study of their own tribe and area. Each group should exchange and file copies of their work, which they should classify under the headings Government, People, Laws, Religious System, and Historical Events. For each of these categories, Morgan laid out a brief research agenda. By 1846, the group had organized a research committee that proposed sending agents out to interview members of the Huron and Six Nations tribes in Canada and the far west.<sup>28</sup>

The society's shift from literary exercises to systematic ethnographic research changed the ways in which the membership imagined Indianness. The group's initial Indians looked very much like those of the earlier fraternal societies. Interior Indians signified a natural, classic American Self with a long, legitimating history on the continent; exterior Indianness offered an elite custodial identity and a noble outsider position useful for cultural critique.

As New Confederacy members entered the world of fact-finding, however, they found themselves dealing not simply with their own cultural imagination, but with actual Indian people. These people presented the New Confederacy

with the same dilemma real Indians had presented the Improved Order of Red Men: how could Indians be vanishing (as they continued to be in New Confederacy narratives) and yet be physically present in western New York? Having few opportunities to interact with Indian people, the urban members of the Improved Order had simply pointed to vanishing ideology, insisting that Indians were no more. As the New Confederacy devoted itself to unearthing hard evidence about Indian people, however, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the Jacksonian fictions of Indian disappearance. The New Confederacy developed a new, more complicated set of rationalizations that would eventually explain away the contradictions of Indianized American identities in the modern terms of ethnography.

Morgan came to realize that real Indian people offered the best hope for reclaiming the history and culture of the Six Nations. He rapidly abandoned the sparse written materials on the Iroquois. William Stone's works on Joseph Brant and Red Jacket told him nothing about the structure of Iroquois society, and neither did B. B. Thatcher's well-known *Indian Biography*. Morgan held out faint hope for Cadwallader Colden's writings but, in the early 1840s, had been unable to lay his hands on them. In 1844, he turned to primary sources, traveling to Albany to examine Iroquois treaties.<sup>29</sup>

While in Albany, Morgan encountered a very real Seneca, Ely S. Parker, a young man serving as translator for a delegation of Seneca political leaders. Both men's worlds immediately became more complicated. The meeting helped propel Morgan into a founding role in American anthropology and Parker to a unique career as an engineer, military officer, and political appointee.<sup>30</sup> As Morgan later recounted to his friends,

It was my good fortune to encounter one afternoon at a Book Store, a young Indian of genuine extraction. He was about eighteen years of age and of a pleasing and interesting appearance. To sound the war whoop and seize the youth might have been dangerous and to let him pass without a parley would have been inexcusable; accordingly, your humble Prophet assumed a civil attitude and accosted the young warrior in a friendly manner.<sup>31</sup>

Parker, his brothers Nicolas and Levi, and his sister Caroline became Morgan's most valued collaborators over the next eight years. They wrote Morgan letters filled with ethnographic detail, escorted him to ceremonies, and manufactured objects for his collections and those of the New-York Historical Society. In

return, Morgan (acting loosely on behalf of the New Confederacy) sponsored Ely and later his sister Caroline and another Tonawanda Seneca, Sarah Spring, as students at his alma mater, the Cayuga Lake Academy. Morgan's major ethnographic work, *The League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee or Iroquois*, published in 1851, contained illustrations of Nicolas and Caroline Parker, and the book was dedicated to Ely Parker: "To Ha-sa-no-an-da (Ely S. Parker), an educated Seneca Indian, this work, the materials of which are the fruit of our joint researches, is inscribed: in acknowledgment of the obligations, and in testimony of the friendship of the Author."<sup>32</sup>

The relationships that developed between New Confederacy members and the Parkers and other Seneca people took the group far from the distant abstractions of fictionalized Indianness and into the free-for-all of Indian-American political conflict. Ely Parker had traveled to Albany to continue a long struggle being waged by the Tonawanda Seneca, who, under the terms of an imposed treaty, were scheduled to abandon their reservation by 1846. The New Confederacy's subsequent involvement with the Senecas foreshadowed what has since become something of an anthropological tradition: political activism on behalf of the native peoples who serve as the objects of study.<sup>33</sup>

Indian philanthropy had been part of Morgan's vision of the New Confederacy from the very beginning. In the Gordius address, in which he laid out his plans for the group, Morgan stressed that the order's purpose was not exclusively "social enjoyment or literary advancement or historical knowledge":

No! No! No! But it is to—Befriend the Indian—. Commiserate the sad destiny of the unfortunate, but noble Indian. They flee before the overwhelming influence of civilization, as the bark before the tempest and when the last tribe shall slumber in the grass, it is to be feared that the stain of blood will be found on the escutcheon of the American republic. This nation must shield their declining day . . . if it would escape an awful retribution for having appropriated the territory of a whole continent of Indians and consigned them to destitution, to misery and to death.<sup>34</sup>

Morgan's encounter with Parker provided a concrete opportunity for the New Confederacy to befriend the Indian. For years the Senecas had resisted the efforts of the Ogden Land Company to relocate the residents of the four Seneca reservations and sell the land to non-Indian settlers. In 1838, the federal government, having failed to interest Seneca leaders in a treaty that would have sold the reservations to the land company, named alternate chiefs, bribed them, got

them drunk, and procured the necessary signatures. When evidence of this fraud came to light, the government responded with a "compromise" treaty in 1842. The new treaty called for the residents of the Buffalo Creek and Tonawanda reservations to relocate within four years to the other two reservations, Cattaraugus and Allegheny, which, although overcrowded, would remain under Seneca control.<sup>35</sup>

The Tonawanda people fought the new treaty through a variety of strategies. They refused to allow appraisals of individual improvements, forbade whites entrance to the reservation, filed and prosecuted lawsuits, and petitioned state and federal authorities. Three years of classical education at Yates Academy had made Ely Parker fluent in both the language and the customs of Americans, and he took a leading role in presenting the Tonawanda case. In spite of his time-consuming duties as an interpreter and advocate, however, Parker hoped to continue his education. Morgan helped provide him with the opportunity, recruiting Parker into the New Confederacy and persuading him to attend school in Aurora, where he could be close at hand to answer the society's many questions.

But if Morgan used Parker, Parker was equally astute at putting a willing Morgan and his society to use. He took Morgan to the reservation and vouched for the good intentions of the New Confederacy. After gaining Seneca approval, the group launched a campaign of protest. They sent a Memorial to the Senate, featuring the names of prominent (although suspiciously recent) honorary members Senators Lewis Cass, John Adams Dix, and Ambrose Sevier.<sup>36</sup> Members of the group began a comprehensive petition drive across western New York, and Morgan helped organize a mass meeting that the *Rochester Daily Advertiser* saw as "indubitable evidence of the almost universal sympathy which pervades this community" for the Senecas' cause. Morgan himself took the resulting testimonials to Washington. A New Confederacy member, Charles Porter, began courting the pioneer ethnographer and Indian policy administrator Henry Rowe Schoolcraft for the fight. Parker, who had met Schoolcraft in the summer of 1845 when the author had addressed the New Confederacy's annual council, made his own contact, requesting Schoolcraft's expert testimony on Seneca decision-making processes and the carrying capacity of the two reservations.<sup>37</sup>

When Lewis Henry Morgan donned his Indian costume, he imagined his identity along the same contradictory lines laid down by the Tea Party Indians and the Tammany societies. As he became an interior part of the American

landscape, he reserved for himself a position as an elite, outsider critic. Other dilemmas were more contradictory—and more pressing. There was, for example, a disciplinary question. Was Morgan a scientist or a writer? The New Confederacy seemed to point him in both directions. Even more troubling was his relation with Indians and Indianness itself: were native people like Ely Parker vanished or were they neighbors and informants? The New Confederacy and its leader walked a fine line in the years 1845 and 1846. On one side lay the literary, the subjective, the boyish, and the fraternal; on the other, the scientific, the objective, the mature, the disciplined. Indians looked different from each perspective. In a larger sense, Morgan was wavering between the traditions of the Revolution and the inclinations of modernity. He was prisoner of the revolutionary urge to put on costume and become one with an interior American Indian Other. But he was equally inclined to a modernist quest for a supposedly authentic Indian reality always located someplace outside American society. Morgan's varied uncertainties seemed, oddly enough, to crystallize around the question of fraternal secrecy and ceremony.

He wanted desperately to maintain positions in two different camps. Just as he had pushed the society into a systematized, scientific inquiry that engaged real Indians, he argued equally forcefully for the importance of imaginary ritual, secrecy, and costume—the metaphoric tools through which members gained new American identities and positioned themselves for the writing of the national epic.<sup>38</sup> Morgan had no doubts as to the necessity and importance of meeting in Indian costume. “The first thing necessary is a costume, without which you never can organize,” he told William Allen (Opocanough) of the Cayugas. “It is perfectly understood with us that we do not stir a step until our equipment is right. If you do not get costumes the Confederate Nations will hardly admit you at the anniversary.”<sup>39</sup> “In relation to costume,” he told the Wolf tribe of the Oneidas, “you are aware that every association—Masons, Oddfellows, fire and military companies etc. all wear uniforms. They lend dignity and interest to the organization, and in my way of viewing the subject an Indian costume is indispensable and one of the most interesting ornaments of the Order. Have the whole equipage—Chief's bow, tomahawk and head dress off feathers.”<sup>40</sup> And he was punningly eager to supply the guest speaker Schoolcraft with a costume: “I send this not to make a suggestion in regard to the address but to a dress. All the warriors will be in the costume of their respective Tribes, not only during the initiation which will precede, but also during the

Conclusion. If therefore it would meet with your approval, we should be pleased to

have you appear in costume also.”<sup>41</sup> Schoolcraft's decision on this matter remains unclear.

Disagreements about the secrecy that accompanied these costumed revels revealed the uncertainty of Lewis Henry Morgan and much of the membership. The issue of secret versus public identity split the society into factions, forcing members to decide in which of the two enterprises—objective study of alien Indians or ritualized acquisition of Indian Americanness—they really believed. Morgan consistently argued against making the existence of the order public. In 1845, for example, he promoted Henry Rowe Schoolcraft as an honorary member (Alhalla) and invited him to give the annual address at the summer council, which was to be held in Aurora, the hometown of the Cayuga Wolf tribe. Pleased at the prospect of having brought such an eminent figure to their town, the majority of the Cayuga membership voted to forego the order's policy of secrecy and open the council and the address to the public.<sup>42</sup> The order's other tribes, however, spoke vehemently against the idea. “Let not the council of Alhalla and the war-song of our Brothers from Lean-ne-wa-gus be open to the ears of the pale-faces,” implored the White Deer Senecas of Utica. “Let not the coward pale-face hear the name of the golden link of Brotherhood that binds together the tribes of our confederacy.”<sup>43</sup> Morgan asked Schoolcraft's advice: “Do you think it would be advisable to announce the name of the Order to the World? We have thus far kept everything entirely secret, but the time is near at hand when it may be proper to announce as much as that but it would not do to make any explanation or answer any questions concerning it, because the whole would escape. It must be essentially secret to be successful.”<sup>44</sup>

One might have thought that Morgan would have agreed with the public faction. He would make no attempt to hide his activities on behalf of the Seneca Indians against the Ogden Land Company the following year. He had certainly been willing to expose his Indian writing, in the form of “The Vision of Karistagia,” to a public audience, and he did not hesitate to bring individual nonmembers like Schoolcraft into the society's secrets. A broad, public awareness of the developing ethnographic mission of the society might have generated more knowledge and inquiries, and the presence of Schoolcraft offered an opportunity to go public with dignity and credibility. Ever the promoter, Schoolcraft himself advised making at least his own address open to the public. Morgan demurred, however, arguing that no matter how high their aims, the public often looked at secret societies with suspicion. Even though the Cayugas might be strong enough to stand up to public disapproval, he observed, the

other tribes were not, and he preferred to wait at least one more year before publicly admitting their existence. The disagreement intensified the following year, as several members proposed either a full public council or, at the very least, a torchlight parade in full Indian dress.<sup>45</sup> Morgan again spoke, a bit defensively, in favor of preserving secrecy: "The public has no claims upon us whatever. We are not engaged in pursuits which need justification. We are pursuing proper objects and until public sentiment is attracted towards us in a way as to render an exposition of our organization necessary to its justification, the question of how far we will be open is one of expediency only."<sup>46</sup>

Morgan almost certainly recalled the experience of his father, a devoted Freemason in the heart of anti-Masonic territory during the worst of the anti-Masonic crusades. Indeed, the New Confederacy sometimes met in the abandoned Aurora Masonic lodge that his father had helped build. His hesitation to open the proceedings stemmed in part from a deeply rooted fear of public censure, for if anti-Masonic activity had generally ceased, its leveling impulses lingered. As a privileged group pursuing the sensuality of literature and landscape, a public New Confederacy presented a fine target for those who saw elites—artistic, scientific, or economic—as corrupting the American polity and disrupting the egalitarian ethic. And on the egalitarian side, the savage white anti-rent farmers of the Hudson valley were, at that very moment, using Indian dress to challenge political and economic authority only a few hundred miles away.<sup>47</sup>

More important to Morgan and the serious members, however, was the need to conceal the frivolous way in which they had manifested their intellectual interests. Even in the 1840s, serious scholars worked through historical societies and respected national publications, not fraternal groups. As a would-be scholar, the Morgan of 1845–46 seemed more than a little embarrassed at the thought of the public's knowing about the rituals and costumes of the New Confederacy. To Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, for example, he offered a sheepish apology for the social and "boyish, if you please," aspects of the society, claiming that the organization needed both imaginative vitality and scholarly seriousness.<sup>48</sup>

Morgan was perhaps realizing that he might have been better served by enjoying secrecy, ritual, and fraternal fellowship as a Freemason or an Odd Fellow, while keeping his Indian studies dignified and scholarly. Poised to enter (and help create) a rationalized intellectual world in which literary imagination had no place, yet drawn by the power of ritual and the inertial hold of his own role in the order, Morgan found it best to keep the existence of the society secret. Secrecy allowed him to avoid confronting the disjuncture between his

subjective literary quest for Indianized national identity and his turn toward objective analysis and ethnographic inquiry.

If, in the end, Morgan's deep unease stemmed from revolutionary identities of American nationalism colliding with still-forming identities of American modernity, these paradigmatic contradictions showed up in more visible ways throughout the fraternity. As the New Confederacy moved from fiction to history to ethnography, its members worked out a range of doubled identities. When the order postulated a new approach to American literature, for example, it conjured a familiar interior Indian Other, an egalitarian, republican figure who, like Tammany, captured the land's democratic essence. The members fused their identities and that of their literary America with this Indianness through a ritualized performance of mythic descent and resurrection. At the same time, becoming this egalitarian Indian also gave the society members a sense of elite authority. Like the Red Men and the Improved Order, the New Confederacy became guardians, a special class that represented an egalitarian polity and yet simultaneously transcended it. In this transcendence of American cultural bounds, the interior figure of the Indian Other inevitably became exterior as well.

At the same time, the Indian-garbed New Confederacy writers self-consciously imagined themselves as a different kind of exterior Indian Other, a no-apologies group of educated intellectuals and cultural critics. If playing Indian placed writers outside American cultural boundaries, it also allowed them to promote artistry, nature, and tradition in a society increasingly inclined to mechanical achievement and economic profit. When Morgan wrote George S. Riley (Soshawah) about how bad he felt that the Yankees were boiling water from the once-pristine Great Lick in order to produce salt, his sadness sprang from a complicated mixture of nostalgic romanticism and puritanical guilt.

Morgan's bad feeling was made possible only by his ability to be Indian and thus differentiate himself from the deceitful, profit-oriented Yankee society the salt-boilers represented. Being an Indian outsider not only allowed Morgan to mourn like an Indian, it also protected the very enterprise of romantic, imaginative artistry from those who valued the manufactured and the monetary. Although the order drew its members from a privileged elite, they chose not to differentiate themselves in terms of economic class. Exterior Indianness was a more important line, allowing the members to see the class distinctions that existed between themselves and Yankee salt-boilers as boundaries of cultural difference. Preserving the illusion of economic egalitarianism, Morgan—



especially when he became Schenandoah—disdained the salt-boilers for their profane approach to what should have been a landscape of nostalgia and patriotic aesthetics.

Equal ambivalence dogged the New Confederacy when it moved into the realm of history. The group had turned, on the one hand, from a mythic Greco-Indian past to the reconstruction of a factual history, the lost past of the second epoch Iroquois confederacy. The historical Iroquois were temporal outsiders. On the other hand, the Inindianation ritual existed solely to close the historical gap between the vanished Iroquois and the members of the New Confederacy. According to the Inindianation, people from the second (Iroquois) and third (New Confederacy) epochs had common American ancestors and were therefore kin, ordained through costume and ritual to share the same national identities. When they confronted initiates around late-night campfires, the members of the New Confederacy experienced both the historical distance between first and second epochs and the fusing of those epochs in the heat of ritual emotion.

After Indian removals, Americans often denied the physical and social presence of real Indians, reimagining vanishing Indian savages as now-noble parts of a unified American past. The Improved Order of Red Men, for example, had no interest in querying Indian people about their customs or recruiting them into the society. They desired Indianness, not Indians. Indeed, admitting the existence of living Indians called vanishing ideology into question. Likewise, the presence of real native people revealed serious cracks in the idea that one could solidify a postrevolutionary national identity by assigning troublesome aspects of the Revolution to a commemorative Indian-American past.

Lewis Henry Morgan's plans for a fraternal Indian organization that would be patterned more than imagined suggest that, even as he looked back to the Revolution, he was looking forward to something new. His protomodernist pursuit of authentic Indians, however, proved no less contradictory. Taking Indian disappearance seriously, feeling bad about it, and being in contact with native people pointed Morgan to what later scholars would call salvage ethnography. Salvage ethnography—the capturing of an authentic culture thought to be rapidly and inevitably disappearing—has from the beginning been haunted by fractures of logic. The salvage workers are required to believe in both disappearing culture and the existence of informants knowledgeable enough about that culture to convey worthwhile information. Morgan, for example, could insist that “nothing that may properly be called the Iroquois can now be found among us” while, at the same time, he or his friend Isaac Hurd could attend

Iroquois ceremonies, talk to Iroquois informants, and commission the manufacture of Iroquois material culture.

The New Confederacy did attempt, almost intuitively, to resolve the contradiction between vanishing Indian ideology and an ethnography of preservation. The result was a confusing interplay between notions of individual and culture (although this was not the term Morgan used). Morgan and his friends made a subtle, unspoken change: Indian people (in the form of individuals) were not necessarily physically vanishing, but their traditional culture was. Because it was that culture that made them really Indian, Morgan could believe that the actual Iroquois really had disappeared. The people living at Tonawanda and Buffalo Creek were in fact something different.

The only culture allowed to define real Indian people was a traditional culture that came from the past rather than the present. Even as they continued to live and propagate, then, Indian people in the present were necessarily regarded as inauthentic because their culture did not conform to that of the second Iroquois epoch. Real Indian people both had—and had not—disappeared. For pragmatic reasons, Morgan and his protoethnographers saw a select few as being close enough to tradition—their memories were authentic, even if their lives were not.<sup>49</sup>

At the New Confederacy's summer council in 1845, Ely S. Parker strode headlong into this mass of contradictions, making them visible for perhaps the first time. The result was confusion over the very nature of the fraternity. Which mission—fraternal, literary, historical, ethnographic, or philanthropic—defined the society? Should the New Confederacy view Ely Parker as a catalyst for national literature, a scientific curiosity, or a tragic victim in need of assistance? Even more perplexing were the questions raised by Parker's status as flesh and blood rather than image. Was Parker a fraternal brother, an interior part of contemporary American society? His education, social skills, and participation in the New Confederacy seemed to suggest as much. But one could also see him as exterior, a relic of the second epoch. His role as an ethnographic informant suggested that the latter definition was also true.<sup>50</sup>

The New Confederacy followed familiar American patterns, imagining Indians as both close and distant, assigning values (primarily positive) to them, and then assuming those identities through costume and ritual. Parker's presence required the society to come to terms with a third variable. Real Indian people could themselves be both inside and outside of American society. They could be defined closely as subjects—people with whom one could share

Peak  
Influence  
Morgan's  
writing

empathy—or as remote objects—things outside social boundaries, to be investigated like flora or fauna. Whereas the revolutionaries at the Boston Tea Party got along just fine without an Indian in sight, Morgan's protomodern Indian play would rest on the assumption that real Indians existed and were, for a variety of reasons, worth knowing.

As the summer council of 1846 approached, members of the New Confederacy once again began wrangling about making the society public. Attendance at some local meetings dwindled, and members of both public and private persuasions began sending in their regrets. Morgan's term as Tadodahoh was complete, and the group at Owego began lobbying on behalf of their candidate, a hanger-on named Hamilton Morgan. Morgan lost the election, but it was becoming clear that the organization was having difficulty coming to terms with the contradictions embedded in its costumed rituals. Lewis Henry Morgan had proved exceptional in being able to deal with these difficulties, and, without him in the Tadodahoh's seat, the New Confederacy began to disintegrate quickly. Membership declined, and in the fall of 1846 the society revised its constitution in order to make honorable dismissal a more streamlined process. The tribe in Waterloo shattered, the more dedicated members painfully experiencing the disappearance of the third epoch of the Iroquois at first hand.<sup>51</sup>

Morgan had queried the *American Whig Review* about publishing a series of "Iroquois letters" and in September 1846 received a positive response from the editor George Colton. His correspondence with members of the New Confederacy began to dwindle, and he turned his energy instead to lengthy ethnographic exchanges with Ely and Nicolas Parker. When he stopped attending meetings in the winter of 1847, the New Confederacy's demise was almost total. From a youthful and romantic literary beginning, Morgan had made his first steps toward a more mature, ordered, ethnographic project. In 1851, seeking to complete his Indian work before being married, he assembled the material into *The League of the Ho-de-no-sou-nee* and bade farewell to Indian studies for several years.<sup>52</sup>

Lewis Henry Morgan had transformed the Gordian Knot into an Indian society dedicated to creating a deeply rooted, authentic American literature by making the landscape and its earlier inhabitants its subjects. Playing Indian, he and his companions in the New Confederacy of the Iroquois placed themselves imaginatively and symbolically in the position of these interior Indian subjects, enfolding them into a mythic-historical construction of American identity. But

it soon became apparent that Morgan was equally attuned to system building and rationalist methodology. As he sought what he assumed to be the authentic and imaginative literary exercises, he conducted a parallel search that relied upon a rigorous history and ethnography of the Iroquois. Morgan's later anthropological work (from the 1850s through his death in 1881) moved away from the interior literary experience he had gained playing Indian in the New Confederacy and focused instead on scientific paradigms that viewed both Indian people and Indian pasts as objects—figures and histories of significant difference that were thus suitable for a detached analysis.<sup>53</sup> The anthropological discipline that eventually grew to maturity around figures like Morgan gradually institutionalized this subject-object dichotomy, which insisted that authentic Indian people were not just Others, but exterior Others.<sup>54</sup>

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, ethnography became an increasingly powerful and influential method, and many Americans came to see Indian people through it. Emerging academic departments and private philanthropists joined the Smithsonian Institution (founded in 1846, four years after the New Confederacy) and the Bureau of American Ethnology in sending parties west to record the mysterious primitive practices of indigenous people. In practice, anthropology proved to be a problematic science at best, and its adherents bolstered their intellectual authority by insisting on its objective character. The insistence on ethnographic objectivity helped reinforce the perception that its primary research object—Indian people—existed far beyond the pale of American society.<sup>55</sup>

If it was cocksure in its scientific claims, American anthropology nonetheless continued to dance along a faultline of ambivalence. The discipline came eventually to turn upon a new (but related) contradiction. Participant observation—an insider approach that relied on empathy, subjectivity, and close contact with one's subjects—existed in continual tension with the analytical system building of objective, outsider comparative anthropology. Like Indian-American patriotism and vanishing Indian ideology, ethnography offered powerful—and powerfully conflicted—ways of seeing, conceptualizing, and interacting with both Indian people and other Americans.<sup>56</sup>

As the American colonies prepared for revolution, cultural shapers had turned to the Indian, an imagined figure based upon real native people who existed outside the lines of colonial society. Tea Party Mohawks and Tammany celebrants constructed a sympathetic ideological image, brought it inside their social and cultural boundaries, and claimed a kinship with it. After establishing the nation,

fraternals and agrarian protesters wrestled with the Indian many times, shifting the figure back and forth across social borders in a series of redefinitions always compromised by the contradictory presence of real Indian people.

Lewis Henry Morgan's own particular form of wrestling proved especially conflicted. By placing actual Indian people as well as imagined Indians into a disjunctive past, Morgan pointed toward a sea change in the ways Americans imagined their identities using Indianness. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Americans' fascination with playing Indian would shift from the tradition founded during the Revolution—in which Indians represented quintessential American identities—to a new, modernist tradition characterized by an obsessive desire for authentic Indians far outside the temporal bounds of modern society. Ethnography could point one toward such authenticity, and early twentieth-century Americans swirled that together with tourism and a new primitivism in order to address deep-seated social and cultural anxieties. The result was yet another reinvention and dramatic appropriation of Indianness, this one no less uncertain and ambiguous and, in its ambiguity, no less indicative of the continual problems in defining American character.<sup>57</sup>

## four

### *Natural Indians and Identities of Modernity*

Mr. Dan Beard	Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton
Christian	Pagan
Whiteman	Indian
American	Englishman
Democratic Government	Monarchy
"That the American Flag is beautiful"	"That it is the ugliest among nations"
"That it is the best of governments"	"That it is the rottenest on earth"
"That the pioneers were clean and moral men"	"That the American pioneers were scawlags and low types"

DANIEL CARTER BEARD

personal memo comparing himself with Seton (ca. 1915)

On December 5, 1915, the Canadian author Ernest Thompson Seton, one of the cofounders of the Boy Scouts of America, announced his resignation from the organization, claiming that the group had adopted militarist policies to which

recruited Sioux people from the Dakota reservations, hired Comanche dance champion Charlie Chibitty as a special guest star, and, as usual, asked those taking part to "invite any other Indians you know to attend."<sup>1</sup>

By the early 1960s, one could find an almost continuous "powwow highway" of hobbyist gatherings stretching across summertime America. The hobbyist could begin with the Wushte-nongs in late May, travel west to Wisconsin's Wa-Be-Ski-Wa white Indian Fair in early June, catch the Eastern States powwow the next weekend in Maryland, take a week off before the Chank-Tun-Un-Gi powwow near Indianapolis, and so on throughout the summer, winding up the season with the Hotnoweh powwow in western New York the last week of August.<sup>2</sup> In almost every instance, powwow organizers followed the Wushte-nongs in recruiting actual Indian singers, dancers, and crafts vendors.

The white hobbyists' powwow highway paralleled an Indian circuit of intertribal gatherings that had developed in the early twentieth century from older dance and meeting traditions.<sup>3</sup> Some Indian people alternated between the two powwow circuits, visiting hobbyist gatherings to sell crafts and to sing songs for cash and their own events to see friends and relatives in the larger Indian community. Many serious hobbyists engaged in a similar kind of cultural crisscrossing. They sang and danced in full regalia not only at white powwows, where they were surrounded by fellow hobbyists, but also at Indian events, where they joined Indian people in the dance circle. Unlike such early antimodernists as Ernest Thompson Seton and Arthur C. Parker, who had set themselves apart as cultural mediators, individuals who bridged implacable social, racial, and temporal gulfs between Indians and modern non-Indians, the new hobbyists placed a premium on unmediated personal contact with native people.

In the Cold War United States, the more direct kind of Indian play addressed anxieties focused on a perceived lack of personal identity. As we have seen, playing Indian has been central to efforts to imagine and materialize distinctive American identities. Indianness helped enable the American Revolution, and it aided in solidifying and expressing new national ideals. At the turn of the twentieth century, Indian play helped preserve a sense of frontier toughness, communal warmth, and connection to the continent often figured around the idea of the authentic. While the revolutionary tradition dominated the nineteenth century, it is this modernist search for authenticity that has reverberated throughout the twentieth, and it took on new contours in the years following World War II.

## five

### Hobby Indians, Authenticity, and Race in Cold War America

Two things that most hobbyists have in common are the owning of a costume and a liking for attending powwows (The word "powwow" indicates a gathering of hobbyists—usually for a weekend—during which they wear Indian costumes, sing and dance Indian, and trade).

WILLIAM K. POWERS

*Here Is Your Hobby: Indian Dancing and Costumes* (1966)

When the Indian lore hobbyists of the Wushte-nong society promoted their annual Ann Arbor powwows, they made sure that prospective participants knew they would be bumping elbows with real Indians. "White groups," noted an announcement promoting the event in 1961, "will want to take advantage of this opportunity to dance with Indian singers." At the powwow, one could expect to find native people of different tribes mingling with costumed non-Indians interested in the recreation of detailed craftwork and the performance of Indian dance and song. To guarantee attendees real Indian flavor, the Wushte-nongs imported carloads of Sauk and Fox singers and dancers from Oklahoma,

If the early twentieth century marked a subtle pulsing away from revolutionary nationalism and toward antimodern authenticity in the use of Indian Others, that new quest was still collective and nationalist in nature. And just as notions of nationhood and authenticity blurred together for Seton, so too did worries about the threats to both collective and personal identities blur for many Americans as they lurched toward midcentury. When the reformer John Collier fled New York City and California for his epiphany at Taos pueblo in 1920, for example, he summed up the close relation between the personal and the social: "There were [at Taos] solitary vigils which carried the individual out into the cosmos, and there were communal rituals [of] grave, tranquil, yet earth-shaking intensity. Only the Indians, among the peoples of this hemisphere at least, were still the possessors and users of the fundamental secret of human life—the secret of building great personality through the instrumentality of social institutions."<sup>4</sup> And indeed, Collier devoted a long career to social activism on behalf of Indian people, seeing an infusion of Indianness as a solution to America's collective worries and to the anxiety of its individuals. Still, for all its social character, antimodern worry took on an increasingly personal cast as the twentieth century unfolded.

By the 1950s, detachment, alienation, and anomie had become popular culture buzzwords for the members of what the sociologist David Riesman notoriously termed "the lonely crowd."<sup>5</sup> Riesman's bestseller of the same name suggested that the United States, which had once been a nation of "inner-directed" individuals with autonomous goals and ethics, was becoming a gray nation of conformists. Now, "other-directed" folk—those "whose conformity is insured by their tendency to be sensitized to the expectations and preferences of others"—were pointing the country toward decline. Riesman was one of a large cohort of writers who feared the effects of a two-fisted combination of atomic shock and postwar materialism. William Whyte warned of the dangers posed by "the Organization Man," and Sloan Wilson painted a disheartening picture of the colorless "Man in the Gray Flannel Suit."<sup>6</sup>

The sense of national community that seemed so self-evident during the Great Depression and World War II had declined, many feared, into a shallow conformism that turned individuals into automatons. For ironically, if the war had united Americans, it had also confirmed every antimodern anxiety about the meaninglessness of the individual Self. We were all subject, mourned Norman Mailer, to a death that would be "unknown, unhonored, and unremarked, a death which could not follow with dignity as a possible consequence to seri-

ous actions we had chosen, but rather a death by *deus ex machina* in a gas chamber or a radioactive city . . . and so our psyche was subjected to the intolerable anxiety that death being causeless, life was causeless as well, and time deprived of cause and effect had come to a stop." "From the end of the 1940s to almost the end of the 1950s," the historian Warren Susman has suggested, "the problem was fundamentally defined as that of personal identity."<sup>7</sup>

These critiques—which spoke almost exclusively to the newly expanding white middle class—came at a time when their readers (and subjects) enjoyed unprecedented material prosperity. As they flipped burgers on the backyard grill and drove big new cars to work in the city, psychologically informed suburbanites sourly wondered whether meaningful personal roles were possible in this contradictory new world. A glance around the cultural landscape revealed, on the one hand, high living standards, happy nuclear families, shiny advertising, proud patriotism, and a feeling of national consensus boosted by powerful social and political institutions. On the other hand, one also found a dark sense of alienation, middle-class citizens constantly suspecting a dry rot beneath their cheerful veneer. If America looked to some like a land of liberty and sunshine, for others it was a world of McCarthyite paranoia, deep racial tension, and hysteria in the face of rock and roll, comic books, and teen delinquency. And it was not just that these two emotional modes patterned postwar life. Many Americans perceived—and quietly obsessed about—the unresolvable disjuncture between them. The enormous distance between happily mythic and popular-critical ways of seeing oneself forced many Americans to think, not necessarily about reevaluating their lives, but about what it would mean to reevaluate their lives. Such difficult imperatives have rarely been welcomed or embraced. They are fertile ground for the contradictory kinds of consciousness so well represented by playing Indian.<sup>8</sup>

Ernest Thompson Seton, John Collier, and their peers had felt a particularly social sense of unease. They worried about the fate of America as a collective and responded by trying to teach individuals to be socially responsive by putting them through exercises in primitivist communalism. Now, postwar Americans turned their anxious eyes toward individuals and their quests for meaningful lives. These quests for meaning took a variety of forms, but they often involved personal searches for authentic experience. Artists like Jackson Pollock explored the deepest parts of their psyches through spontaneous painting. Beats like Jack Kerouac and Neal Cassady made the road and movement itself authentic, crossing the boundaries of states, classes, cultures, and consciousnesses.

Blues, jazz, folk, and rock and roll pointed one toward potentially authentic experiences with race, class, ethnicity, and region.<sup>9</sup> And if most white Americans could not afford the time to be free and inner-directed beat poets, they followed along vicariously, and they looked for their own sources of individual identity in toned-down touristic encounters and a range of hobbies and leisure pursuits.

For whites of all classes, the quests for personal substance and identity often involved forays into racial Otherness. Among the many boundaries that separated “inauthentic” Selves from Others imagined to be real and pure, race was perhaps the most visible and the most interesting. Mailer’s antidote to a postwar world of meaninglessness, for example, lay in the appropriations of white hipsters, who “drifted out at night looking for action with a black man’s code to fit their facts.” Drugs, music, art, literature, liberating crime—all of these featured, in the white imagination and sometimes in practice, covert connections to the more authentically rooted culture of Black America. But blackness was not all. In California, white Americans materialized another kind of romantic past when they dressed as Indians and Mexican settlers in staging the town of Hemet’s yearly *Romona* pageant.<sup>10</sup> And a diverse set of hobbyists sought authenticity and identity in America’s original signifier of unique selfhood—the Indian.

Although such racial crossings have been a part of American life since the seventeenth century, these particular exercises came at a time when many Americans were rethinking their understandings of racial diversity and cross-cultural encounter. Triggered in part by a war in which people of color had caught a glimpse of freedom and opportunity, Americans of all classes and colors struggled to address the contradictions between the nation’s rhetoric of social equality and its history of race-based oppression. The trajectories of African Americans, Indians, and Latinos were similar: returning from national service, minority veterans refused to reassume their second-class status. Many attended college on the GI Bill; others went directly into political organizing. By the mid-1950s, their presence in the courts and the streets had made whites acutely aware of “the race problem.”<sup>11</sup>

The conjoined issues of race and social opportunity, on the one hand, and authenticity and meaning, on the other, converged in a widespread reworking of notions of color and culture. Many Americans began playing with the categories into which people seemed so naturally to fall, wondering how those boundaries could (or could not) be bridged, and becoming dimly curious about what it meant to make some part of somebody else—music, speech,

authenticity—some part of you. This larger context is essential to understanding why non-Indians turned to a new kind of Indianness, one that, for the first time, actually seemed to require a significant number of real Indians.

In 1950, the magazine *Scientific American* asked a group of leading academics to assess the state of their respective fields at midcentury. Surveying the achievements of anthropology, Alfred L. Kroeber celebrated the victory of the concept of culture over the idea of biological race as a principle for categorizing societies:

The most significant accomplishment of anthropology in the first half of the twentieth century has been the extension and clarification of the concept of culture. The outstanding consequence of this conceptual extension has been the toppling of the doctrine of racism. . . . We have learned that social achievements and superiorities rest overwhelmingly on cultural conditioning. . . . Anthropologists now agree that each culture must be examined in terms of its own structure and values, instead of being rated by the standards of some other civilization exalted as absolute.<sup>12</sup>

Although Kroeber was probably correct about the rise of cultural relativism, he was almost certainly wrong about its toppling of racialist thinking. If cultural relativism had toppled anything, it was an older idea of culture defined by social Darwinism and the very specific configuration of race that went along with it.

For Edward Tylor, who introduced the idea to anthropology in 1870, the word *culture* had been singular rather than plural. There was one culture, and the world’s various societies represented stages in an evolutionary hierarchy that featured white, Western society at its pinnacle and any number of so-called primitive societies below.<sup>13</sup> In order to account for the wide distribution of societies along this scale, theorists of the Tylorean school invoked the biological idea of race. Racial character or temperament, they thought, determined the values, beliefs, and practices of a society. These qualities were believed to be genetic and inheritable in the same manner as physical characteristics. The character of Indian people, for example, was innate, and it channeled Indians almost inevitably toward lower-level subsistence practices like hunting or farming. The problems many Indians experienced as their societies came under American domination could be assumed to result from racial tendencies that made living in a civilized society difficult.<sup>14</sup>

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the anthropologist Franz Boas and his students (of whom Kroeber was one) challenged this view. The

Boasian group gradually redefined culture, shifting its meanings away from social Darwinism and toward cultural relativism and racial equivalence. In 1946, Kroeber defined culture as "the patterns of form, style, and significance" that embodied a society's overt and implicit values. Culture, he said, was passed from generation to generation through individuals. Despite its dependence on individuals, however, culture was impersonal and anonymous.<sup>15</sup> By World War II, this new definition of culture had become entrenched in universities. In more intuitive forms, it began to enter the popular mainstream, while at the same time underpinning the postwar critiques of racism offered by people of color. The war and the propaganda surrounding it helped solidify the rise of cultural relativism over social Darwinism. Nazi Germany emphasized Darwinian hierarchies defined by biological race. The Allies, on the other hand, were supposed to represent tolerance and equality, even across racial lines. Thus, when the British scholar Raymond Williams returned to Cambridge after the war, he found that he was hearing the word of victory—culture—with much greater frequency than he had only a few years before.<sup>16</sup> Its toppling of racism became a prominent postwar narrative on both sides of the Atlantic.

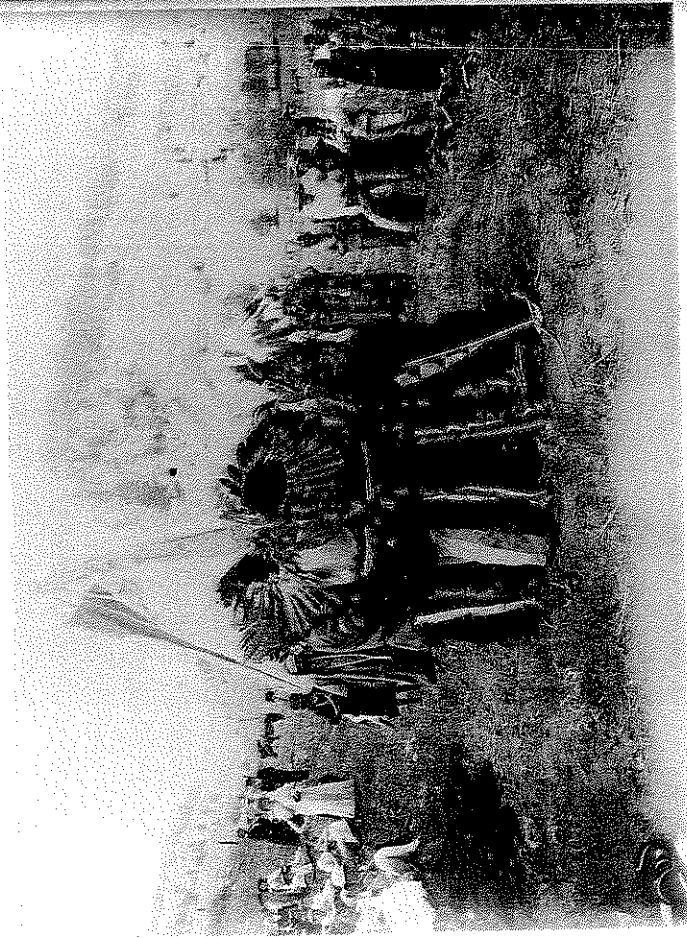
Proponents of cultural relativism and racial equality proved to be overly optimistic. Even as behavioral, relativist ideas of culture became common intellectual currency, many Americans simultaneously insisted on racial and biological essentialism or they rejected relativism altogether. The large audience for books like Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture and Race and Racism*, Ashley Montagu's *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, and, especially, Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma* testified to both the prevalence of the ideal of cultural relativism and the staying power of racialist thinking. Many midcentury white Americans used—and appeared to accept—the unifying rhetoric of cultural relativism and racial equivalence. But their practice often did not reflect that rhetoric. As Susman has written, "The people believed in the democratic creed, but when it came to treating blacks equally, they did not really believe in the democratic creed."<sup>17</sup> Whether or not one denounced racism, race itself continued to offer Americans familiar markers of difference that coded African Americans, Indians, and others as either inferior or authentic (or frequently both).

These interlocked crises of race and authenticity were essentially modernist in nature and, if they owed their newfound visibility to a World War II fought in the name of community and freedom, they often blurred back across the decades to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Within the Indian lore

groups criss-crossing the two powwow highways, for example, one found a mix of modern/antimodern and postwar approaches to race and authenticity.<sup>18</sup> One group, bearing the informal label of object hobbyists, favored the replication of old Indian artifacts and costumes. They were generally uninterested in dancing and singing with native people, seeing Indians in classic antimodern terms as exterior figures. Racially different and temporally separate, Indians were objects of desire, but only as they existed outside of American society and modernity itself. Another faction—people hobbyists—enjoyed the intercultural contact and boundary crossing they found at contemporary powwows. Emphasizing cultural boundary blurring, the people hobbyists constructed interior, us versions of the Indian Other, well inside contemporary America. These interior Indians might have been cultural kin to the interior Others constructed by the Tea Party Mohawks and the Tammany societies, but for a crucial social distinction: Unlike earlier groups, the people hobbyists had to reconcile their cultural imaginations with the real Indian people they wanted to see dancing next to them in the powwow circle.

This tension between imagination and social encounter reflects a history that can be traced back to Ernest Thompson Seton's time. Until the postwar period, antimodern primitivism dominated the hobby, and its object-obsessed adherents focused on the preservation of an allegedly disappearing native culture and the exacting reproductions that object hobbyists called artfakery. This older generation traced its roots to the Woodcraft Indians, Boy Scouts, and Campfire Girls of the early twentieth century. Many hobbyists had grown up in such organizations, become fascinated with Indianness, and now spent their adult leisure time learning Indian crafts, duplicating costumes, and meeting to compare notes and to powwow. They tended to be male—although the hobbyist population became increasingly gender-diverse throughout the 1950s and 1960s—and typically middle and lower-middle class.<sup>19</sup>

Some Boy Scout groups, most notably the Koshare troop of La Junta, Colorado, made Indian lore the very foundation of their programs and slowly drifted away from scouting (fig. 19). Founded in 1933, the Koshares replaced scouting's military hierarchy with Indian terms: papoose, brave, and chief for the various ranks, and Navajo and Sioux tribes for the traditional patrols.<sup>20</sup> They dedicated themselves to the public performance of Indian dances and the perpetuation of what they called vanishing Indian cultures. In striving to keep Indian culture alive, the scouts created a museum that housed both Indian objects and the Koshares' own detailed replications of Indian material culture.



19. Indian Pageant War Dance, 1915. A pageant involving girls and boys from the Boulder Training Academy. Like many early Boy Scout groups, Ralph Hubbard's troop, which performed in Europe in 1920, revolved around Indian costume and ceremonialism. Many hobbyists became acquainted with Indian lore in similar situations. Photograph by Edwin Tangen. Courtesy of the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History.

Boulder Historical Society Collection.

Revenue from the highly theatrical dance performances funded the group's museum and its sophisticated costumes. During the 1930s and 1940s, scouting tried to bring such groups back into the fold, ordering them to scale back their emphasis on Indian lore. Many troops compromised, but others—like the Koshares, who remain vital today—maintained their interests independently, creating small but self-perpetuating hobbyist organizations.<sup>21</sup>

A similar impulse to preserve vanishing Indian culture inspired other hobbyist groups outside the direct aegis of scouting. The Smokis of Prescott, Arizona, for example, emerged yearly from their kiva to perform a version of the Hopi Snake Dance.<sup>22</sup> Founded in 1921 by the town's Chamber of Commerce, the Smokis performed their annual ritual for seventy years, until pressure from Hopi people caused them to stop. The Smokis originally intended to create an annual tourist event but they soon began to develop a deeper interest in pre-

serving Indian culture. Located on Prescott's main street, their kiva museum houses an impressive artifact collection and racks of Smoki dance costumes. The group became one of Prescott's primary venues for working out not only modern identities, but also local and personal ones. The Chamber of Commerce organization gradually metamorphosed into an exclusive secret society replete with Indian names and identities and identifying tattoos in the form of small "rattlesnake bites" on the hand. Yet while the Smokis played Indian on a regular basis, they felt strongly about not being mistaken for real Indians. Although their name—Smoki—was originally chosen to evoke Moki, an alternate name for the Hopi people, the group started shifting the pronunciation from a short to a long *i*, becoming the "Smoke-eyes," a change that helped to emphasize their difference from the real Hopis, who have never viewed their masquerade as anything but insulting.

Object and people hobbyists looked to Indianness for very different kinds of identity, and this led them to different understandings of racial boundaries and the locations of authenticity. The object hobbyists envisioned an antimodern, exterior Indian Other, one that logically fit into the cluster of ideas that accompanied social Darwinism. Indians were easily differentiated along racial lines, but the object hobbyists more often marked Indians as temporal Others, reflections of a primitive stage of cultural existence outside modernity. When actual Indian people did not match this primitivist ideal, object hobbyists tended to dismiss them as tragic, degraded figures, interior Others who had been rendered inauthentic through contact with modern society.

For object hobbyists, the redemptive value of Indians lay not in actual people, but in the artifacts they had once produced in a more authentic stage of existence. To meet the criteria of cultural primitivism, authentic objects should be (or should look) Indian made, the older and more traditional their materials and manufacture, the better.<sup>23</sup> Confining themselves to periods before the twentieth century, material culture hobbyists searched for or replicated authentic materials—real Venetian glass trade beads, bison skins tanned by using the animal's brain, bone and shell wampum, and old-style wool cloth and velvet. A small industry supplied serious hobbyists with materials, photographs, and technical advice. The *American Indian Hobbyist*, a periodical founded in 1954, became a clearinghouse for information, traders, and dealers. It ran advertisements for genuine eagle feathers and old artifacts and how-to columns illustrating the making of war clubs and hairpieces (fig. 20).<sup>24</sup>

This particular construction of the authentic had a long, reassuring history,



**PLUME TRADING & SALES**  
SINCE 1927

Specializing in American Indian Crafts and Supplies. All types of Authentic Indiancraft kits for Hobbyists, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts.

**Catalogue . . . Send 25¢ Refundable with your first order of \$2.50 or more.**

**P.O. BOX 585, MONROE, NEW YORK**

*Classified . . .*

Hobbyists, historians, students, anthropologists, linguists! "Sioux Language, Grammar, Vocabulary." Accurate, result of 15 years research on Sioux. \$2.00 per copy. Frederick Goshe, 153 Harrison, Valparaiso, Indiana.

**FREE & CARRIER** Indian tanned and beaded: Gloves, Gauntlets, coats, moccasins.

**COLLECTORS ONLY:** NEW HAIDA and Kwakiuti Masks, \$35.00 - \$125.00 send 10¢ for price list. Wm. Guy Spittal, RR #2 Ohsweken, Six Nations Res., Ontario, Canada.

Crowbelt, 75 rare feathers, plus 10-layer bustle--genuine trade cloth trailers, \$125.00. Otterhide breastplate with four rows metal-back mirrors, \$40.00. New Jersey Indian Homecoming Powwow, 50 Lincoln Ave., Toms River Borough, N.J.

Classified ads - Ten cents per word Minimum of 10 words; maximum, 50. Your name and address are included free.

When patronizing our advertisers, please mention POWWOW TRAILS.

**Special Group Rates-** For 10 or more subscriptions mailed to one address, the cost is only \$2.50 per subscription.

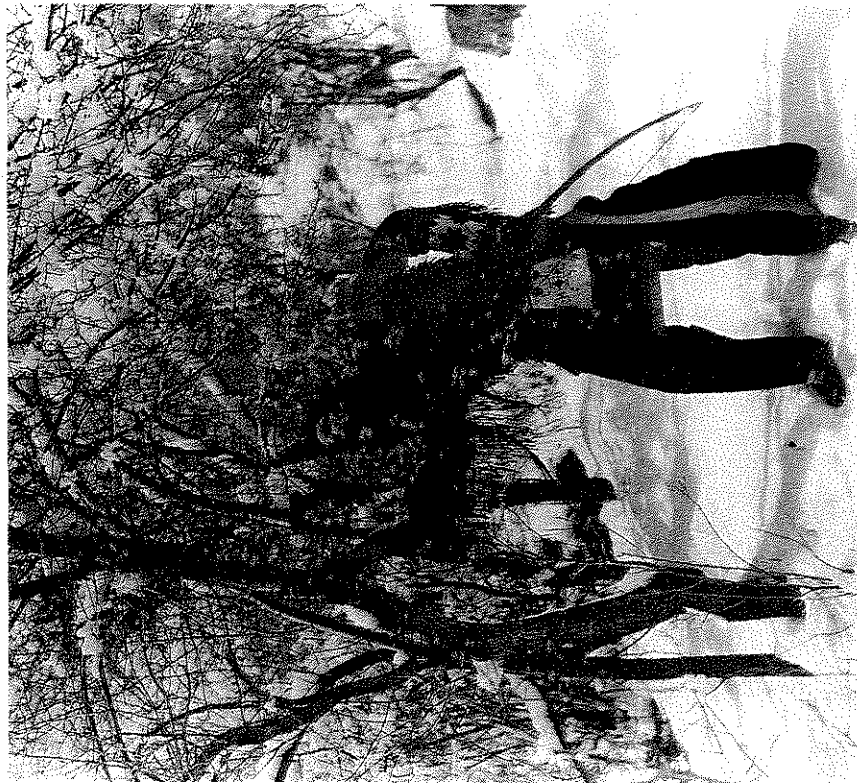
20. Advertisements page, Powwow Trails, 1964. Serious hobbyists established a hobby economy that peaked during powwow season and sustained itself during the rest of the year through classified advertising. Products were highly specific, and words like "authentic," "genuine," "rare," "accurate," and "Indian tanned and beaded" marked the ideology that underpinned the trade. From

Powwow Trails 1 (September 1964): n.p.

but many young hobbyists found it insufficient. It failed to address a contemporary reality in which cultures and times seemed not separate, but in constant collision. Neither did it offer the unmediated experiences that now signified a more personal kind of authentic. These people hobbyists drew on a long legacy of their own, best known through the intercultural work of the revered hobbyist Ralph Hubbard (fig. 21). A Montana rancher, schoolteacher, and writer, Hubbard assembled Indian dance groups and took them on tours throughout the West. His own costume was authentic, and he joined the performances without missing a step. His American Indian Crafts (1935) extended a detailed course of study for children and Indian lore enthusiasts. Hubbard later became involved

in scouting and other hobby venues, building some of the first bridges between Indian people and white Indian lore aficionados.<sup>25</sup>

Soon after it began publication, the *American Indian Hobbyist* began courting the emerging group of people hobbyists who had turned from the duplication of museum-quality artifacts to music and especially dance, activities that could not be effectively duplicated by combing museums and studying ethnographies. Although published sources for music and dance did exist, they were often inadequate, and hobbyists trying to catch a song or the intricacies of a dance turned to Indian people for instruction.<sup>26</sup> William K. Powers, for example,



21. Ralph Hubbard in Indian Costume, 1922. A Boy Scout leader, Indian dancer, writer, promoter, and hobbyist icon, Ralph Hubbard personalized the hobby's diverse origins. Photograph by Edwin Tangen. Courtesy of the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History; Boulder Historical Society Collection.

began making yearly trips to South Dakota's Pine Ridge reservation in 1948, studying and performing Lakota music and dance. Between 1960 and 1962, he presented his findings in a series of detailed articles in *American Indian Tradition* (successor to the *Hobbyist*). James Howard started dancing at age twelve and eventually made the rounds of most tribes on the Plains and western woodlands. Parlaying his interests into a career in anthropology, Howard published numerous scholarly articles while continuing to follow the powwow circuits. He would later claim to have participated in the Sun Dance, the most sacred of Plains Indian rituals, and to have led the peyote ceremonies so essential to the Native American Church.<sup>27</sup>

As real Indian people rather than museum artifacts became central to their interests, people hobbyists reconsidered the familiar trajectory of Indian history. Since the early nineteenth century, Americans had frequently insisted that Indians were disappearing—either dying out as a result of social Darwinian inadequacies or melting into American society as detribalized individuals. As the body of knowledge that contemporary Indians had to offer became important, hobbyists began portraying Indian cultures not in terms of declension and unreachable temporal distances (as Lewis Henry Morgan had done for Ely S. Parker and the Senecas, for example), but through a narrative that accorded authenticity to real Indians. Powers summed up this new historical interpretation: "Although the American Indian has resigned himself to wearing Whiteman clothing, working in Whiteman factories, and attending Whiteman schools, he has not forgotten the traditions of his forefathers. During the last twenty years, the Indian has become more interested in his own culture than ever before."<sup>28</sup> Powers argued that Indians were assimilating, becoming equal participants in American society and economy, while at the same time renewing cultural differences built around a native past. The new narrative accompanied a reformation of the authentic that was consistent with the cluster of ideas by then joined to culture.

Viewed simply as members of one among many equivalent cultures, living Indians could be considered as authentic as dead ones, according to people hobbyists. Authenticity lay not in the archaic object, but in the contemporary Indian person dancing and singing at the powwow. In constructing their dance outfits, for example, the new hobbyists tended to ignore historical styles in favor of the costumes worn by the Indian people with whom they danced. As they crossed the permeable boundaries of culture, people hobbyists found that the problem that had dogged Ernest Thompson Seton and the antimodernists—

access to Indian authenticity—had disappeared. Under the older, racistist regime, truly becoming Indian meant passing—devoting one's entire life to acting out a fraud. White mediators like Seton had belonged to a select clique that established idiosyncratic ways of crossing into Indianness. Now, however, it seemed that the line between white and Indian did not have to be a rigid biological border. Being Indian was most of all a matter of behavior—replicating, in Kroeber's words, "patterns of form, style, and significance."<sup>29</sup> If authentic Indian culture was, as Kroeber claimed, learned behavior, then individual non-Indians could also learn it, grasp hold of the authentic, and thus consolidate a unique personal identity.

In this free-form world, hobbyists tended to forget that there might be problems associated with crossing the line that separated Indians from non-Indians. In the late nineteenth century, the mimetic anthropologist Frank Hamilton Cushing had been viewed (perhaps justifiably) with suspicion by the scientific community for his deep immersion in Zuni society. The newer atmosphere of cultural relativism, however, subsumed the racial taboos invoked against Cushing for literally becoming Other. In fact, anthropology—through the heroic figure of the participant-observer—now supplied a quintessential example of such cross-cultural boundary hopping. James Howard, whose intimate connections with native people echoed those of Cushing, met with a more positive reception from anthropologists seventy years later.<sup>30</sup>

Unlike the unreachable authentic Indians of the early twentieth century, many postwar constructions of ethnic and racial Others emphasized close interior qualities that encouraged white appropriation and self-discovery. A range of ideas suggested that social boundary crossing was primarily a question of behavior. Anthropology provided a model for such transgression. Music, dance, and literature afforded personal paths of entry into other cultures. In the postwar United States, these notions transcended the hobby, as Americans constructed a variety of extraordinarily accessible Others. Carey McWilliams, for example, identified himself closely with California Latinos (North from Mexico). In New York, Warren Miller found a literary voice representing African-American ghetto life (*The Cool World*), and, of course, Mailer sang the black virtues of the hip (*The White Negro*). John Howard Griffin went further, dyeing his skin black for a literary tour of the South (*Black Like Me*). William Whyte associated himself with Italian immigrants (*Street Corner Society*), and Herbert Gans, after defining suburban Americans as Others, moved into Levittown for a spell of participant-observation (*The Levittowners*).<sup>31</sup> Americans in the hobbyist tradition followed

suit, locating authenticity in an accessible Indian Other and seeking personal experience and identity by sponsoring and attending powwows. Indianness, with its multilayered history of evocative symbolisms, offered a rich palette of additional meanings—nature, patriotic rebellion, freedom, and Americanness itself. Indeed, these distinctive meanings gave Indian play a slightly different character than other kinds of appropriations. For hobbyists, many of whom inclined more to conservative American tradition than to beat rebellion, crossing into Indianness evoked primal, national truth as much as it did racial exoticism.

Yet these were engagements not only with authentic identity, but with racial anxiety. People hobbyists knew that Indians occupied the same time and place as themselves. Although that proximity gave hobbyists a new way to play Indian and to gain access to a racially defined authentic, it also threatened the sense of difference that defined Indian Others. For if culture was behavioralist in nature, what happened when Indians (or Latinos or African or Asian Americans) altered their behavior, trading in acts marked as both racially distinctive and authentic for those unmarked and therefore white? In the absence of firm lines around blackness and redness, the very notion of being white became unstable.<sup>32</sup>

In fact, during the 1950s, the sense of exotic difference that lay at the heart of Indian authenticity grew increasingly tenuous. The shared national traumas of economic depression and world war tended to reinforce ideas—among Indians and non-Indians alike—of American cultural unity and homogeneity. Large proportions of the native population had fought in the war. As a result, many non-Indians came to view Indian people as either assimilated or imminently assimilable. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, committed to an urban version of Indian assimilation, inaugurated a termination policy whose aim was to eliminate all tribal political and social structures in order to turn Indian individuals loose into American society. One of the keys to terminating the tribes was relocation—a policy that transplanted Indian people from reservations to urban areas and furnished job training and employment counseling. Relocation helped create inter-Indian communities in almost every major city in the United States. These communities frequently held Indian powwows that were open to both white urban and suburban hobbyists.<sup>33</sup>

The Indian who sang and drummed at the weekend powwow might return to an urban factory job on Monday, making him close cultural kin to the white worker who changed into Indian clothes on Friday night for a weekend of singing and dancing. As the cultural boundaries between Indians and non-

Indians seemed to blur and break down outside the powwow grounds, it became harder for hobbyists to imagine Indians as something Other. It was not easy to see Indians as antimodern and organic when you both rode the same bus to an urban job; difficult to find them more authentic when the lines between your respective cultures seemed to fade in and out of view. By the 1960s, some hobbyists had found hobbyist partners and married, producing “a generation of children who grew up in an atmosphere in which it was difficult to separate non-Indian from Indian culture.”<sup>34</sup> Whereas the antimodernists imagined an Indian so distant as to be unreachable, the new hobbyists confronted an Indian figure so close as to be dangerously indistinguishable from themselves.

Within the open borders of cultural relativism, however, one also found re-affirmations of Indian difference that were racialist in nature. Perhaps the most important was Indian blood quantum—a genetic measure of one’s degree of Indianness. Blood allowed white hobbyists to differentiate Indians, and thereby the authentic, from themselves.<sup>35</sup> But while blood renewed the hobbyists’ authentic, it also proved a tricky concept to negotiate, for it commingled racial essentialism with the behavior that helped define a culture. Was a so-called mixed-blood dance champion more or less authentic than a full-blood with less polished skills? If push came to shove, which one should be invited to the powwow? Culturalist criteria helped people hobbyists rank relative levels of Indian blood quantum. One such factor was place—did an Indian person live on or off the reservation? Another was attitude toward white society—traditionals, who favored the old ways, were better than progressives, who had made moves toward assimilation. As hobbyists imagined an accessible Indian culture, they also refigured racial difference around at least three variables—genetic quantum, geographical residence, and cultural attitude. The highest possible degree of authenticity inhered in the traditional, reservation-based full-blood. The least authentic figure was the progressive, urban, low-quantum mixed-blood—ironically, the figure often available to urban hobbyists. In the end, regardless of behavioral patterns, an Indian still had to be an Indian.

Attendees at hobbyist powwows clearly valued real Indian singers, especially those hired from reservations. William K. Powers published a list of reservation singers in his hobbyist newsletter, *Powwow Trails*, as well as guidelines for concerts, transportation, lodging, etiquette, and proper compensation for performance and taping.<sup>36</sup> This preference for reservation singers may have indicated a variation in performance—they might simply have been better singers—but it also signified the celebration of the reservation as a marker of authenticity and

racial difference. Being a temporary visitor from the reservation rather than a permanent expatriate meant that an Indian person was still involved in an Indian community defined, in a subtle nod to an antimodernist past, as more authentic than those forming in inter-Indian urban centers.

The reservation signified the racialized authenticity of Indian people. To many hobbyists, it also looked like the ultimate powwow—a huge, contradictory cultural playground that featured both boundary crossing and authentic difference. Nowhere was the vital role of the reservation in generating authenticity more apparent than in the profiles of white hobbyists published in *Powwow Trails*. Each profile described a rite of passage: the grand reservation tour and eventual acceptance by reservation people. Frank Turley, who joined the staff of *Powwow Trails* in 1966, was the consummate Indian powwow tourist. He made the transition from Scout to hobbyist in 1949 at age thirteen and made his first reservation visit the following year. In 1954, he toured reservation powwows in Oklahoma and New Mexico. After two years in the army, he visited reservations in Nebraska, South Dakota, and Montana. In 1960, he moved to Albuquerque and began “Pueblo hopping.” By mid-decade, he had ended up in Oregon, “dancing with the Yakimas at the Pendleton Roundup.” Larry Morgan, who had been a hobbyist since the mid-1950s, finally made his trip in 1966, shortly before assuming the editorship of the *Trails* newsletter. He attended powwows at “Rosebud, Spring Creek, Red Leaf, Parmalee, Porcupine, Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge, Mission, and Eagle Butte. At Rosebud he participated in a Yuwipi meeting.” Admittance into a Yuwipi ceremony, in which a medicine person is wrapped in robes and tied, only to appear among the participants unbound after a period of darkness, marked Morgan’s rite of passage. Dennis Lessard enjoyed almost complete immersion, playing a part in ceremonies, being given an Indian name, and living “with a full-blooded Sioux family for four months.”<sup>37</sup> The reservation—and the authenticity and racial position it helped define—had become a fetish and a legitimating tool within hobbyist circles.

As it did to Ely S. Parker, Arthur C. Parker, and Charles Eastman, Indian play offered often-conflicted forms of empowerment to some native people. Because hobbyists craved authenticity and because they located it in Indian ancestry, Indian powwow-goers found themselves able to voice opinions and be taken seriously. Such empowerment stood in marked contrast to past experience, when those constructing Indian Others could, if they wished, ignore real Indian people. At the powwows, non-Indians in effect ceded a degree of cultural power to Indians. That cession stemmed from a complex and contradictory set of ideas

about assimilation, equality, and consensus on the one hand, and, on the other, a racial difference that was both desirable and frightening. Even as they ceded power, however, white hobbyists maintained—in a classic formulation of Cold War liberalism—control over the ability to give it away.

Nonetheless, the cession had consequences for real Indians, who now exerted at least a small amount of true control over the exchange. Many native people, for example, did not appreciate being the subjects of a hobby, something akin to model trains or old coins, and they protested. *American Indian Hobbyist*, the founding journal of Indian lore devotees, responded in 1961 by changing its name to *American Indian Tradition*. “The name change,” an editorial explained, “was made at the request of many of our Indian readers.”<sup>38</sup>

Indians frequently put white hobbyists on the defensive. Both Indian people and hobby leaders cultivated hobbyists’ sensitivity and deference, attitudes infrequently displayed toward Indian people at the time. This was especially true as more hobbyists began to attend Indian powwows. *American Indian Tradition*, for example, reprimanded some of its readership after being confronted once too often by Indian people demanding, “Why don’t [hobbyists] do things the Indian way?”

About all we could reply was that some hobbyists do try to do things right.

But as we look around we realize that there are many individuals and groups who don’t even try. They know about three more facts and a lot more fiction about Indians than the audiences for whom they perform; and beyond that, they feel that improvising is the key to success. . . . This attitude may be appropriate for modern dance, but it has nothing to do with Indians.

The editors went on to lambast “girls clad in white (or black or tan) nighties whose only real interest is in the male dancers,” and the men of the “Indian Dance Team who will put on any kind of show or ceremonial to please any audience, anywhere.” Again and again, editorials in *Tradition* and *Powwow Trails* enjoined dancers not to enter the dance floor at Indian powwows unless invited. “Conduct yourselves as model guests,” implored *Tradition*. “Don’t be overly forward or demanding, don’t try to impress anyone, and watch and listen so that you don’t violate Indian etiquette in the area in which you visit.”<sup>39</sup> *Powwow Trails* inaugurated a column called “When the People Gather” devoted almost exclusively to spelling out etiquette guidelines.

The desire to conform to Indian cultural practices led in turn to a degree of

social power for Indian people, demonstrated perhaps most appropriately by white-Indian conflicts over racial integration. Many hobbyists reserved their cultural relativism and tolerance exclusively for Indian people, maintaining racist stances toward other groups. According to Powers, many hobbyists shared a "tacit philosophy" that "it was appropriate for Whites to dress and paint up but that 'others' looked 'strange' posing as Indians." And how could it not? Americans had a long history of imagining and claiming an Indianness that was about being indigenous, free, white, and male. Their understandings of African-American identity, however, circled around contrasting notions—importation, enslavement, and a sometimes-feminized blackness. Indianness was the province of whites, but not blacks. By the early 1960s, however, the logics of integration and of Indian play had led some African Americans and Puerto Ricans to participate in powwows. White organizers tried to make the events by invitation only, but native singers were able to insist that Indian celebrations should not be occasions for discrimination. Hobbyist powwows remained (or became) integrated, if only in minute proportions.<sup>40</sup>

Indian people also covered the economic opportunities presented by the hobbyist powwows. Not only did singers receive wages for their performance, but as part of the attempt to promote Indian etiquette, they were often "given-away-to," that is, members of the audience offered them money or goods in order to demonstrate their generosity. Singers also received pay for informal tape recordings made by hobbyists seeking to learn songs and, on occasion, had the opportunity to make professional recordings for small folk music record companies.<sup>41</sup> Some Indian people were sought out as contest judges, and champion dancers might be hired as special powwow guests.

Ironically, the opportunity to sing, dance, and teach Indian tradition may have helped some Indian people consolidate a native sense of self.<sup>42</sup> If the 1950s were a self-conscious age of alienation for whites, they were that and much more for Indian people. After the paternal, but generally friendly policies of the New Deal, the new federal termination policy aimed aggressively to devalue Indian cultures. Urban wage labor opportunities—a much-criticized feature of relocation, but also a draw for many Indians—seemed to represent an even deeper threat to unique Indian identities. Indeed, many native people, in talking later about the 1950s, used the anthropological trope of disappearing culture.<sup>43</sup> Yet the high value that some hobbyists placed on Indian cultures may have helped to fortify Indian identities in the face of the perceived loss of older traditions. As

hobbyists fabricated Indianness in terms of authenticity, Indian people, in fact, "became" more authentic. In the early twentieth century, Arthur C. Parker and Charles Eastman had mimed white-created Indian Others back at white Americans in order to subtly alter perceptions of Indian people. Now, many Indians found it more valuable to imitate their own elders. Mirror-image exchanges between Indians and hobbyists exhibited a new tendency to point Indian people toward native cultures rather than toward non-Indian stereotypes.<sup>44</sup>

For their part, the hobbyists' explorations of racial difference offered unique, if contradictory, social identities. Few hobbyists actually went native. That was not the point. Indian play, delineated temporally and spatially by the weekend powwow, the scout meeting, and the downstairs workroom, carried much of its sense beyond these temporary confines. Dressing and dancing Indian at a powwow with real, live Indians was a wildly uncommon experience that helped constitute the individual identities of men like Turley, Morgan, and Lessard. Standing around the watercooler at the office or pausing between frames at the bowling alley, hobbyists would have exotic tales to tell, stories that differentiated them from other-directed coworkers and leisure partners.

But if hobbyists pursued self-realization, they did so with an equally troublesome kind of Other-direction, one that forced them to rely either on Indians or fellow hobbyists for validation. In neither case did they escape the rigorous social conformity of which Riesman had warned. Indeed, following the rigid patterns laid out for costumes and dance steps and learning songs note-for-note hardly left much room for displays of heroic individual creativity. And yet, crossing the divide of Indian Otherness—and doing it in the company of Indians—surely meant something. Like the revolutionary who was both shoemaker and Indian chief, hobbyists were simultaneously nonconformists and people who worked doubly hard to comply with two cultural codes. As Indians, they were not only members of two well-defined communities, but also unique, self-directed individuals—confident actors in an organic world of tradition and successful denizens of modernity. These dual identities were possible because hobbyists imagined Indian Others as authentic, yet accessible—culturally close and racially distant.

Real native people called both cultural closeness and racial distance into question. Playing Indian had always been subject to the ideological contradictions between nobility and savagery and the identity confusions of interior and exterior. But unlike previous Indian players, the people hobbyists meant to meet

large numbers of Indians on social ground that was both native and intercultural, and this contact could not help but create new sets of contradictory dynamics for both Indians and non-Indians.

If hobbyists found authenticity and some part of their identities on the reservation, for example, Indian people sometimes found it in the cities, at the gatherings of local hobbyists. Relocated urban Indians often entered the hobbyist orbit, where they sometimes began acting more Indian than they had previously. The hobbyists' Indian Other had, in fact, become a point at which Indian and non-Indian identities might be mutually constituted. "Indians who never sang or danced on the reservation," claims William Powers, "did so when they became involved with whites from the cities."<sup>45</sup> New York's Medicine Drum Dancers celebrated in 1964 when they recruited a Lakota from Rosebud. A New York X-ray technician, George Soldier was an "excellent singer" who had previously sung with a Washington, D.C., hobbyist club.<sup>46</sup> Soldier's Indianness made him special and unique to hobbyists. But that Indianness may itself have been the product of his relation with the Medicine Drum hobbyists. On the streets of New York and Washington, Soldier undoubtedly faced discrimination. At the powwow, he found, at worst, a semblance of deference and, at best, an affirmation of his personal and social identity as an Indian person.

Such ironies cropped up all over the powwow grounds, appearing most visibly, perhaps, in the craft stalls, where authenticity—for both object and people hobbyists—could be bought and sold in material forms. If the hobby involved an escape from an industrial world to authentic handcraftsmanship and unmediated labor, that escape relied upon the establishment of a hobby economy in which racially defined Indians served as both laborers and market mediators. Hobby leaders clearly felt an obligation to promote Indian hiring at powwows and to support Indian craftspeople, especially against the threat posed by cheap foreign knockoffs. Powers argued that "to promote good arts and crafts and thereby help the economy of the American Indian grow, it stands to reason that foreign-made beadwork be weeded out of all craft exhibits."<sup>47</sup> He advised hobbyist powwow committees to enjoin white traders from selling anything but Indian-made goods. It would seem, then, that good crafts consisted of Indian-made objects produced from native materials. The restricting of the market to such goods, authentic by standards of both blood and cultural production (although lacking the age and tradition required by object hobbyists), would benefit contemporary Indians, who were the only ones capable of creating such authentic products. But then Powers narrowed his definition of

Indianness to blood quantum alone, noting, "There are some American Indian [run] shops which sell foreign-made beadwork. If the beadwork is clearly labelled as being foreign, there is no problem. Indians can make more profit selling foreign beadwork than they can their own."<sup>48</sup> This strategy made economic sense, but it contradicted hobbyists' own emphasis on Indian cultural production, favoring instead the idea of a racial authenticity that could be attached to objects through economic exchange.

The historian Howard Lamar tells a story about shaking the hand of a woman who had shaken the hand of a man who had shaken the hand of a man who had shaken the hand of George Washington. "I'm only four handshakes away from the first president," Lamar jokes, albeit with something of a sense of wonder at this personalization of time and history. Indianness, defined by blood for pragmatic, economic purposes, carried the same magical qualities of transmission. If the item was authentic according to the new hobbyists' guidelines—Indian-made with traditional handcraft methods of production—then it was acceptable for non-Indians to sell it. The back pages of *American Indian Tradition* carried dozens of advertisements for Indian goods that passed through non-Indian traders. Such objects carried even greater weight and authenticity if they were sold by an Indian, of course, but non-Indians could legitimately act as middlemen—simply a handshake or two away from the source of authenticity who had crafted the product. Japanese beadwork, however, which was inauthentic for non-Indian traders, acquired (even when labeled "not-Indian-made") a cachet of authenticity as it passed through the hands of an Indian seller. The purchaser could in fact claim that the object had been purchased from an Indian. The artifact itself mattered less than the Indianness that came with the final handshake that closed the deal.<sup>49</sup>

The hobby economy encapsulated the wide-ranging contradictions that haunted the entire hobbyist enterprise. Relying on a culture-based blurring of social boundaries, hobbyists nonetheless imagined Indians and Indian objects in racial terms that redefined Indians as different. Seeking to escape the inauthenticity of a consumerist, mass production-oriented American economy, they created an equally problematic economy of their own. Hobbyists abstracted a magical quality of Indianness from their material relations with native people and poured it into commodities like Japanese beads. At the same time, they forced Indian crafts marketers to make a material performance of their Indianness—one that visibly defined native people's racial difference. In the craft booths, one could see the inevitable disjunctures between different kinds of

imaginary Indians and their real counterparts, between conflicting notions of racial difference and human sameness, and between the interlocked edges of the doubled consciousness of middle-class white Americans during the Cold War.

After World War II, people hobbyists transformed a search for authenticity that had been figured around Indians since the turn of the century. Playing off popular conceptions of culture and tuned into Cold War rhetorics of national consensus and racial assimilation, they nearly eliminated the barriers that differentiated Indians and whites. Indian people themselves broadened the scope of this boundary crossing through their presence in urban wage labor economies. Within this integrationist paradigm, however, one might also find refigurings of racial difference, refigurings that were arguably vital to the notion of a desirable Indian authenticity. If Indianness had been remade as an interior quality, something shared by both Indians and white Americans, it nonetheless relied upon an exterior otherness that marked Indians as Indians and thus different and authentic.

Notwithstanding its omnipresent racialism and contradictory character, the hobby also displayed a degree of mutuality that can only be described as new. At no other time in the long history of Indian play did the arcs of native people and non-Indians swing so close together. But if mutualism characterized the hobby in some ways, differences over such social interaction lay just beneath the surface. I've painted the people hobbyists in broad strokes, but, in truth, they thought very differently about the relations they were willing to establish with Indian people. The elite group that published the journals, handed down the etiquette guidelines, and made the reservation tours reflected the optimistic notions of tolerance and community that undergirded Kroeber's "culture over race" narrative. They seemed to suggest a multicultural ideal—an egalitarian blending of sameness and difference within a range of cultural activities both Indian and white in nature.<sup>50</sup>

Unlike the solitary reproduction of a pair of nineteenth-century moccasins, the sensual sociality of dance and song led many of these individuals to think about themselves and their world in ways that challenged the verities of everyday life. Many such hobbyists developed insights into society and culture that charted their personal and professional lives. Howard and Powers turned to academic anthropology. Norman Feder and Richard Conn became prominent museum curators. Others taught at tribal schools or nearby colleges. Almost all of them came to understand the textures of Indian life, and some went native.

Influential voices in the hobbyist movement, they tried to lead others to their own more reflective, cross-cultural experience, and many of them translated their experience into the nonhobbyist world.

Most hobbyists, however, were more casual actors, enjoying a familiar variety of usable primitivism. Like other Americans, they played Indian in order to address longings for meaning and identity that arose from the anxieties of their time. Powwows granted them freedom from their own culture, but, as with the rebels in Boston, such escape did not result in the solidity of a secure identity. Rather, it left them in an uncertain borderland that was both exhilaratingly creative and frighteningly unstable. Social convention and conformity could be swept joyfully away. The hobbyist Conn has recalled, for example, the spates of "extramarital hanky-panky" and the all-too-frequent drinking binges that accompanied many powwows. On the other hand, such incomplete liberation also suggested "the D. H. Lawrence problem"—a nation unfinished, insecure in its collective and individual identities.<sup>51</sup>

If hobbyists played out such familiar American patterns, they also altered them by engaging native people. Both weekend warriors and superhobbyists made performance—dancing, singing, costume design, and craftsmanship—the basis upon which one might judge the identities they sought to build around Indianness. For the superhobbyists, the critical judges were Indian people as often as they were fellow hobbyists.<sup>52</sup> Weekend warriors, on the other hand, were more reluctant to place Indian people in the position of judging them. Giving up smidgens of social and cultural power to Indians was one thing; giving up the power to define some part of one's identity was quite another. For some, the presence of Indians could even be an annoyance. Powers, for example, fled the movement in disgust after a weekend warrior observed that a powwow would have been great except "there were too many Boy Scouts and too many Indians."<sup>53</sup> Most weekend warriors, however, joined the superhobbyists in making at least some effort to defer to Indian people.

By acknowledging—and yet simultaneously refusing to acknowledge—Indian social and cultural power, people hobbyists nudged the hobby toward what Richard White has termed a middle ground, a complex constellation of intercultural forms that comes into existence when Indian people possess enough power to force non-Indians to accommodate native social and cultural practices.<sup>54</sup> When *American Indian Tradition's* editors tried to teach etiquette, when Indian dancers invited Puerto Ricans to sing with them, when Indians and non-Indians negotiated their meanings through the exchange of crafts and money—

each time hobbyists and Indians jostled each other they joined in shaping this ambiguous hybrid terrain.

The culmination of this brief tradition may have come in 1953, when the Koshare Scouts prepared the costumes needed to perform the Zuni Shalako dance. Traditionally given only at midwinter, the Shalako ceremony features huge painted costumes that tower over the dancer inside. For the Zunis, however, the dance is not simply a series of steps and a collection of costumes. It is a vital ceremony that, if performed incorrectly or at the wrong time, will bring unpleasant consequences to everyone. The Zunis, who have become leaders in the movement to protect tribal heritage, protested the Koshares' plans, and they threatened to bar non-Indians from all future dances and ceremonies in retaliation. After visiting the Koshare kiva, however, the Zuni people changed their minds. They decided that the scouts' precisely copied Shalakos were authentic and real, and they took the masks back to Zuni and built a special kiva for them.<sup>55</sup>

In making their Shalakos so exact that they met with Zuni approval—and in giving the Zunis the right to pass judgment—the Koshares moved beyond the simple reproduction of Indian material culture to the mimetic production of new intercultural forms. The historian Jay Mechling argues that although the Boy Scouts of La Junta were not Indians, they were also more than simple, straightforward white boys. After having their craft and the identity that accompanied it authenticated by the Zunis, the boys became something peculiarly new—Koshare. And they could have arrived at this odd status only through a process of meaning-making that was collaborative and strikingly cross-cultural.

Yet if some hobbyists recognized Indian power and allowed themselves to be pulled onto the middle ground, and if others sought and accepted Indian affirmation, these experiences were small, personal, and confined largely to the powwow grounds. Outside, Indian people still faced racism, poverty, and coercive government policies aimed at destroying the very qualities hobbyists cherished. In response, native people engaged in a series of political struggles to reclaim their autonomy during the 1950s and 1960s. These battles included the fifteen-year fight to reject the government's termination policy, West Coast "fish-ins" to protest infringement of treaty rights, the highly publicized seizure of Alcatraz Island, the Trail of Broken Treaties march to Washington in 1972, which resulted in the takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs building, and, in some tellings, the armed occupation of Wounded Knee.<sup>56</sup>

These social conflicts inevitably changed Indian notions of native identity. As

Indian people once again rejected the idea of assimilation, they began flirting with ethnic separatism and developing their own figurings of racial essentialism. And, as successful political battles gave them increasing confidence, Indian people began installing cultural boundary lines of their own. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, many Indians would exercise real, albeit local, power on reservations and in urban communities by closing many powwows and gatherings to non-Indians. The troublesome question of access to an Indian authentic came eventually to rest squarely in the hands of Indian people.

In 1957, Norman Mailer thought he saw people finding their way out of Cold War America. White hipsters, resisting the traumas of a life devoid of meaning, had "absorbed the existentialist synapses of the Negro." Mailer saw Black Americans as Others of deep psychological import who brought a meaningful "cultural dowry" to a metaphoric marriage with whites. In the same years that Mailer described a glamorous collection of "white negro" cultural rebels, an equally compelling group of middle-class hobbyists were playing with ancient and equally substantive traditions of Indian Americanness. And, as had their cultural forbears, they found Indian Others along contradictory axes—so close as to be part of a slowly forming multicultural society; so distant as to be racially distinct. The contradictory tensions resonated thoroughly in Cold War America. Addressing the problem of inauthenticity meant addressing the problem of race and inclusion; seeing a multicultural, consensual America required a simultaneous vision of racial difference. Americans put paradoxical notions of sameness and difference into material practice on a regular basis, not only at powwows, but at drinking fountains, public restrooms, buses, schools, nightclubs, and on radio and television shows. If Indian play had retreated from the public eye during the economic and military crises of depression and world war, it reemerged as the nation began to struggle once again with its oldest and most contradictory cultural dilemmas—on the one hand, the withholding of liberty in the land of the free and, on the other, the constant tension between the anarchic inclinations of individuals and the social unity of the whole. And, as Indianness pointed back to America's revolutionary origins and to the polar reversal that marked its crises of authenticity and modernity, it also pointed forward to the trials of a world in which meaning became tenuous and meaning-making itself an increasingly problematic enterprise.