

Native Americans in Visual Countercultures: Shaping Italianicity through Cultural Appropriation

Abstract

An examination of underground print culture within a decolonial framework highlights the important political role of the figure of the Native American in the Italian countercultural movement. Influenced by a West Coast hippie culture, the Italian underground appropriated Native Americanness in various ways, such as using nineteenth-century photographs of Native Americans in the zine culture or fetishizing indigenous lifestyles by performing “ethnic drag” within the *Indiani Metropolitani* movement in 1977. Underground artist Matteo Guarnaccia developed a psychedelic interpretation of Native Americanness in his zines whereas Pablo Echaurren used détournement to subvert the macho messages of Far West Italian comics like *Tex*. This article problematizes the widespread appropriation of Native American visual culture while also examining its complex anti-American role in forming a post-war Italian identity.

At first sight, the Italian countercultural movement's appropriation of Native American culture could be considered part of the global countercultural fetishization of Indigenous peoples. Starting with the 1960s, West Coast hippie movement in the United States, the obsession with "alterity" and "non-Western cultures" rapidly featured across countercultural movements in zines, music and dress codes from Europe to Australia.¹ The appropriation of Native American lore, however, played a more intensely political role in Italian countercultural movements, something that has remained largely unchallenged in critical writings.² As a white European art historian I acknowledge that my use of the generic terms 'Native American' and 'Indigenous' are Eurocentric. This is due to my being mostly unable to name the individual peoples to whom the Italian counterculturists were referring, except in cases where specific Native peoples are identified.³ In what follows, I will ask and attempt to find answers to several questions: why did the Italian underground appropriate Native American cultures? In what ways was this fetishization replicating a Western colonial discourse? And, conversely, what does it reveal about the construction of Italianicity?

Current scholarship in the exponentially expanding field of Italian decolonization is forced to deal with the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s, Italy's colonial history was passed under silence. Instead, a politics of the victimization of Italy as a colony of the United States after the Second World War became the dominant discourse.⁴ The nation's political relationship of disempowerment with respect to the United States made it a recipient of American cultural imperialism⁵ even while it constructed its new postwar and postfascist identity within an anti-American paradigm. With national terrorism threatening the social structure after the "economic boom" and relative stability of the 1950s and '60s, the 1970s became a period of radically contested politics silently haunted by the institutional denial of the legacy of the fascist regime. The counterculture in Italy is considered to have begun roughly with the student movement and workers' struggles in the late 1960s and to have ended in the early 1980s. The exponential production of zines in 1977 during the *Movimento del 77* (Movement of 1977) also coincided with the escalation of state-sponsored terror.⁶ This situation mirrored the American experience of about a decade earlier, since in the U.S., the counterculture is deemed to have been already underway by the early 1960s, in the wake of the Beat generation. The hippie mimicry of Native American culture and dress was part of a rebellion of the "heirs of the white middle class of the 1950's against their parents' America, perceived in terms of consumptive excess, alienated individualism, immoral authority, and capitalism."⁷ Italian counterculturists had these and other battles to fight – in particular, the institutional erasure of the fascist past, the silencing of colonial trauma, and the uncomfortable legacy of class warfare from the Unification of the North and the South in the nineteenth century.

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1 Hopkins 2022, p. 203.

2 Critical writing on the appropriation of Native American culture in the Italian countercultural movement includes Mariani 1987; Mariani 2018; Cantilena/Grifo 2018.

3 Dunbar-Ortiz 2016, pp. 325–334.

4 Pinkus 2003, p. 302; Gallo 2020, p. 5; Tolomelli 2016.

5 Baldassini 2008. "America" and "American", as used in the present text, indicate the United States and are not inclusive of Central and South America.

6 For a political-historical overview of the period, see Crainz 2005. For publications on visual cultures of the Movement of 1977, see Salaris 1997; Calvesi 1978; Calvesi 1997; Calvesi 2018; Perna/Echaurren 2016; D'Amico/Echaurren 2017; Galimberti 2020; Caleo/Di Matteo/Sacchi 2021.

7 Deloria 1999, p. 155.

The figure of the Native American, in the case of both Italy and the U.S., served to shore up an insecure identity. Philip J. Deloria's seminal work *Playing Indian* (1999) deconstructs the paradoxes at the heart of the appropriation of Native Americanness to produce identity in a "nation insecure in its collective and individual identities":⁸ Uncertainties about national identity were also central to the Italian experience following Unification (1848–1871), in which the 'Southern Question' abided, and twenty years of fascist rule that were subsequently buried under what has been termed a form of 'national amnesia'. Although Native Americans would seem more relevant to the formation of an American self-identity than to an Italian one, as Michelle H. Raheja has observed in her work on Indigenous peoples in film they "stand at the center of the dominant [Euro-American] culture's self-definition" as its invisibilized counterpart.⁹ Could the Italian cultural appropriation of the figure of the Native American have signified traumatic legacies that were passed under silence, with southern Italians often compared to 'North Africans', in turn signifying an unconscious displacement with regard to Italy's formerly colonized subjects in Africa?

In order to prize apart the entangled symbolisms contained within the cultural appropriation of Native American imagery in an Italian context, literary scholar Giorgio Mariani attempts to distinguish between "appropriation" and "borrowing":¹⁰ Mariani draws out the way in which the image has been exploited by both the left and the right wing, and up to the present day by the far-right political group, *Lega Nord*. He does not, however, delve into the reasons why "borrowing" might be distinguished from, and therefore preferable to, "appropriation"; highlighting the shaky terrain on which these practices were (and still are) taking place. In my understanding, cultural appropriation can be considered a racist practice, by which a majority culture commodifies aesthetic, cultural and spiritual forms of a minority society, but it can also be a postmodern practice based on Situationist ideas of detournement, by which imagery is re-appropriated to ironize over its original political intent. Cultural appropriation can also be interpreted literally within a cultural heritage discourse related to the appropriation of human and archaeological remains, artefacts, traditional knowledge, and music.¹¹ Finally, Native American cultural appropriation of the white man's Indian adds a further layer of complexity to this context.¹²

The analysis by historians Maria Elena Cantilena and Marco Grifo of the figure of the Native American in the Italian underground press in the 1970s offers an in-depth historical and political perspective, but does not challenge cultural appropriation, even in the section "On the desire to become an Indian," a title appropriated from 1970s zine appropriations of Kafka's short story *The Wish to be a Red Indian*.¹³ Like Mariani, Cantilena and Grifo place the Italian representation of the Native American within a defensive psychoanalytic framework in which the seemingly innocuous 'desire' for Otherness, rather than the appropriative drive, is discussed. Additional studies include those on the Indiani Metropolitani (Metropolitan Indians), a 1977 underground movement of radical left-wing students and activists who dressed up as Native Americans as a form of protest. The Metropolitan Indians have been historicized, but the discussion has not addressed the problem of cultural appropriation and lacks in a decolonial critique.¹⁴

8 Deloria 1999, p. 151.

9 Raheja 2010, p. xii.

10 Mariani 2018, p. 327.

11 *The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation* 2009.

12 Schwarz 2013.

13 Cantilena/Grifo 2017, pp. 185–214.

14 Scholarship on the Indiani Metropolitani movement includes: Di Nallo 1977; Mariani 1987; Salaris 1997; Perna/Echaurren 2016; D'Amico/Echaurren 2017; Cantilena/Grifo 2017; Calvesi 2018; Iacarella 2018; Lo Monaco 2019.

Research on cultures of the underground is complicated by the need to rely on interviews and personal opinions since, in counterculturist Marcello Baraghini's words, "no one was writing down what was happening because there was too much going on in real life."¹⁵ Claudia Salaris and Giovanni De Luna both confirm this "state of emergency", in which too few documents remain to permit an adequate history of the period to be written.¹⁶ The political complexity and volatility of the period and the vast production of zines in the 1970s is not something to which I can do justice in this article.¹⁷ Instead, I seek to clarify the issues at stake in the cultural appropriation of Native American aesthetics through a close analysis of illustrations from selected zines and art works. In the first section, I examine the re-use of photographs of Native Americans in the underground press and, comparatively, in the work of Eliseo Mattiacci. In the second section, I discuss the use of comics – in particular, the detournements of *Tex* – in the counterculture. Lastly, the use of language in underground art practices is analyzed in parallel with the Metropolitan Indian performance of Native Americanness. In examining works that could be dismissed and archived as racist and objectionable, I aim to uncover the unconscious geographies and national myths that shaped a postwar identity.

Aesthetic Victimry and Photographs of Native Americans in Visual Countercultures

The Italian underground press reveals the complex range of attributes loaded onto the figure of the Native American within self-validating victimization narratives, as seen in this example from the zine *Paria* (fig. 1).¹⁸ *Paria* (1969–1975), which dedicated a special issue in 1973 to 'Indians', was published by Antonio Rodriguez in Viganello (Ticino), an Italian-speaking district of Lugano in Switzerland, and distributed via *Re nudo* and *Stampa alternativa* channels.¹⁹ Rodriguez' pseudonym, Pariananda, with which he signed his articles in homage to the most stigmatized (Asian) Indian caste, along with the Swiss provenance of the zine, contributed to the self-fashioned image of the *Paria* editorial team as victims of marginalization. In the article "Il bar Nino? Che cos'è?" (Nino's Bar? What is it?), the local hippie community cultivated the idea of living on a "reservation" to protest their eviction from the local bar by the "cannibal-fascists."²⁰ In this case, the fascists are equated with cannibals, reversing the 'noble savage' stereotype of 'Indians' as cannibals.

The use of the found photograph of Geronimo was no doubt modelled on Frank Bardacke's *People's Park Manifesto* from 1969 (fig. 2). The white counterculturists' San Francisco manifesto called for the occupation of university-owned land that the American government had stolen from the Costanoans. While the photographs are both reproductions of Ben Wittick's photograph of Geronimo from 1887, the reproduction in *Paria* is cropped and gives the Chief's eyes a more aggressive expression owed to the red tint of the press. The choice of image

15 Interview with Marcello Baraghini, 13.01.2022. All the interviews were conducted by the author. They remain unpublished and are listed as archival sources at the end of this article.

16 Salaris 1997 and De Luna 2009, p. 162.

17 The main digital source for the zines consulted for this article is the Digital Collection on Art and Politics in 1960s and 1970s Italy from the Archive of the Fondazione Echaurren Salaris, URL: <https://dlib.biblhertz.it/PE> (accessed 08.05.2023). Others include the Postwar Culture at Beinecke collection at Yale University, URL: <https://www.postwarcultureatbeinecke.org/collections> (accessed 08.05.2023), and Le Culture del Dissenso project at the University of Florence, URL: <https://www.culturedeldissenso.com/> (accessed 08.05.2023).

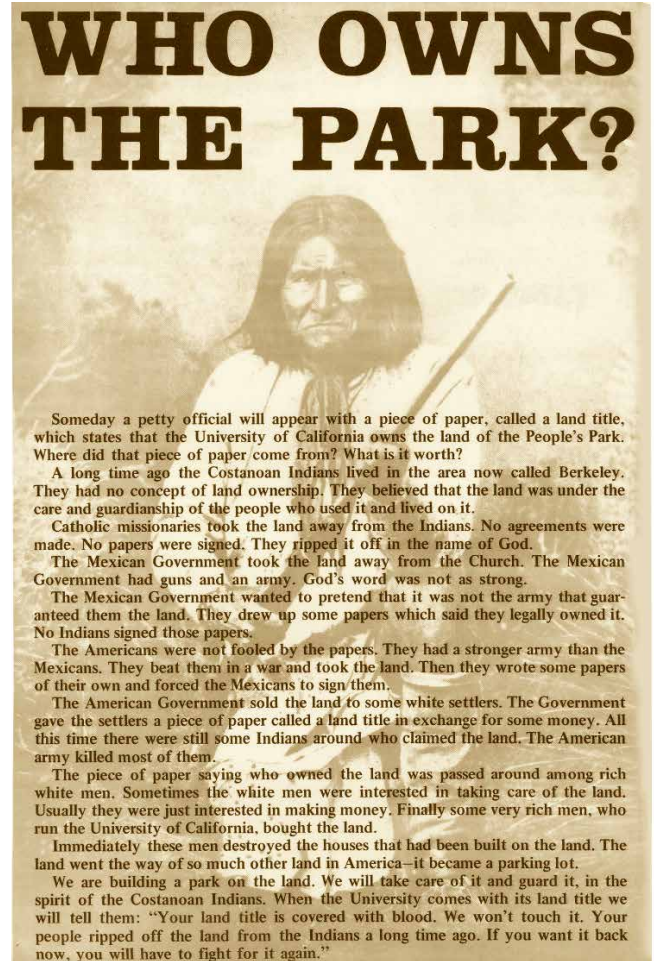
18 I use Gerald Vizenor's concept of "aesthetic victimry" cited in Campbell 2008, p. 250.

19 Cantilena/Grifo 2017, p. 192.

20 *Il bar Nino* 1976



- 1 "Il bar Nino? Che cos'è?", *Paria*, 15 (1976), p. 5 (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-0213)
- 2 Frank Bardacke, *People's Park Manifesto*, 1969 (photo Creative Commons)



does not appear to have been coincidental since Pariananda is lamenting his community's eviction from Nino's Bar, grandiosely equating his position to that of Geronimo leading the Apache resistance against the American forces. Similarly, a photograph of Red Cloud in the single issue *Nuvola Rossa* in 1975 (fig. 3) is accompanied by a speech bubble: "We are socially dangerous individuals", with bullet holes decorating the image as though the photograph itself had been shot at.²¹ The caption implies that despite being lethally targeted, the sitter continues to live on and threaten the reigning social structure. The countercultural co-optation of these vintage photographs took place not only in terms of the appropriation and editing of the print, but also in the re-use of the sitter's identity.

Critical writing on the fetishization of vintage images of Native Americans has discussed the way that such images, by portraying a romanticized view of the Indigenous peoples, work to bury a history of suffering and genocide.²² Under the guise of sepia-toned portraits of 'authentic' Native Americans, the 'documentary' photographs were often staged and required the sitters to wear anachronistic disguises. Counterculturalists would probably not have been aware that for Charles Milton Bell's original photograph taken in 1880, Red Cloud was loaned a "hide shirt", since he had arrived at the studio "wearing a traditional white man's suit."²³ At a time when Native Americans were dying of

21 *Siamo individui socialmente pericolosi* 1975.
 22 Critical texts that address the problematic aspects of photographs of Native Americans include Lippard 1992; Bush/Mitchell 1994; Egan 2006; Fitz 2012.
 23 URL: <https://npg.si.edu/learn/classroom-resource/red-cloud-1822-1909> (accessed 03.02.2023).

starvation and deprivation, they would have agreed to such photographic reconstructions in exchange for much needed cash. The names of the tribal peoples to which the sitters belonged also tended to be misidentified. These ‘documentary’ photographs in turn were (and continue to be) sold to collectors with nativist interests, completing an exploitative cycle that participated in constructing a “narrative of Indianness that served the artistic and political needs of an Anglo-American culture”.²⁴ The haunting of an Italian present by an American past also pointed to the ungraspable and un-tellable experience of an overwhelming imposition of power, not fully articulated until quite recently, in which studies of documents have proven the full collusion of the state with the extreme right wing during the 1970s, in state-sponsored terror.²⁵

Returning to the colonizing context in which these photographs were originally taken, the way in which anthropological photography, like its counterparts – archaeological, ethnographic and landscape photography – was a tool of soft power within the colonial enterprise that helped claim ‘visual ownership’ of people through images, has been broadly demonstrated in critical writings.²⁶ Because documentary photography implies objectivity and ‘authenticity’, it is compliant with what Abigail Solomon-Godeau has termed “the regime of the image”, which commits a “double act of subjugation” both in the “social world that has produced its victims” and according to the “system that engenders the conditions it then represents”.²⁷ Although Solomon-Godeau was discussing “victim photography” such as Jacob Riis’ work on the underprivileged classes in New York, the concept also applies to the romanticized photographs of Native Americans, who remained subjects of the dominant culture both as sitters at the time of being photographed and when viewed after the fact, even a century later.

Vintage photographs of Native Americans were considered public property; consequently, they were decontextualized and are lacking in provenance. Although a separate issue, the lack of copyright law for photography demonstrated another form of intellectual condescension that impacted contemporary Italian photographers, whose work was rarely, if ever, acknowledged in periodicals, and was miserably paid.²⁸ It is perhaps ironic, therefore, that a fundraising advert in Adriano Sofri’s extreme left-wing zine *Lotta Continua* (1969–1982) places Tano D’Amico’s photographs of student protesters and families being evicted by riot police alongside a cover of his book and two vintage photographs to be sold as posters: one of two Native Americans posing on horseback and the other of Indigenous peoples dancing (fig. 4). None of the photographic posters are titled or numbered, while D’Amico’s book *Se non ci conoscete: la lotta di classe degli anni ’70 nelle foto di Tano* (If you don’t know us: the class struggle of the 1970s in Tano’s photographs) is clearly referenced. The ease with which anonymous photographs of Native Americans were put on a par with D’Amico’s photogra-



3 *Nuvola Rossa* (numero unico), edizioni Ottaviano, Milano 1975, in *La rivoluzione della creatività, Riscoprire*, 2, dicembre 2010–gennaio 2011, p. 39

24 Egan 2006, p. 80.

25 Conti 2020 and Conti 2021.

26 On landscape and power, in particular, see Mitchell 1994.

27 Solomon-Godeau 1991, p. 176.

28 Caruso 2016, p. 106.

Sei manifesti e un libro di foto per la sottoscrizione al giornale



Abbiamo stampato 6 manifesti da vendere per la sottoscrizione: un manifesto costa 500 (6 manifesti 2.500). E' uscito il libro fotografico di Tano, sono 94 foto dal '72 al '77, costa 1.000 a copia. Le ordinazioni del libro e dei manifesti (specificare quale indicando il numero) si fanno attraverso le sedi e comunque non si spediscono a domicilio, vanno ordinate per telefono alla diffusione del giornale e pagati tramite VT intestato alla coop. giornalisti Lotta Continua, via Magazzini generali 32.



4 “Sei manifesti e un libro di foto per la sottoscrizione al giornale”, *Lotta Continua*, 29 June 1977, p. 9 (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-8571)

phic imagery of disenfranchised Italians or students in revolt highlights the counterculturalists' uncritical and superficial self-identification with oppressed peoples, and their unconscious exploitation of such images to raise money for their periodical.

Underground artists were, however, not alone in their collective delusion. The conceptual artist Eliseo Mattiacci's series of works on Native Americans has never been analyzed for its appropriative content. Critical writing has hidden behind the artist's "fascination" with the culture and his identification with the marginalized. In 1972, Mattiacci's first work regarding Native Americans was given a title – *Rituale pellerossa (Redskin Ritual)* – the offensiveness of which has never been challenged.²⁹ A year after time spent at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York in 1974, Mattiacci installed *Recupero di un mito (Recovery of a Myth)* at L'Attico gallery in Rome in 1975 (fig. 5). Claudio Abate's black and white photographs of the artist performing Native Americanness in an array of costumes hung in the garage space of the gallery amongst vintage photographs of 'authentic' Native Americans, for a total of 72 photographs. The gallery floor was covered in sand inspired by the "redskin

²⁹ Celant 2013; *Sculpture in Action* 2022. Neither Celant nor Conte problematize Mattiacci's appropriative works.

tradition of drawing in the sand”; at the center, the artist had installed two, giant “zinc-plated steel cones [...] looking inside you could see some shells filled with organic pigments for face paint.”³⁰ Sidestepping the problematic appropriation of the vintage photographs, dress codes and Indigenous accoutrements, Conte attributes the artist’s “attraction to primitive cultures” to his association with two important artist-critics of the time, Mario Diacono and Emilio Villa, whose legendary trip to the Caves of Lascaux in the early 1960s sparked a fascination with the idea of the ‘primitive’, and had a widespread effect on the artistic community.³¹ Conte does not differentiate ‘primitivism’ from Native American culture, nor does she mention colonialism. Theories on cultural appropriation in relation to colonialism as developed by theorists like Hal Foster, Homi Bhabha or Gayatri Spivak, highlight psychological fantasies within which ‘primitivism’ is couched in Western identity and cultural appropriation is a destructive practice.³² ‘Primitivism’ is considered from a psychoanalytic perspective as “a system of multiple beliefs” that relies on a fundamental contradiction whereby the “regeneration of our [Western] culture is based in part on the breakup and decay of other societies.”³³ The term ‘primitivism’ itself, however, implies an attitude of superiority on the part of the dominant culture, and I use it with this problematic implication in mind.

Recupero di un mito is a quintessential work about ‘playing Indian’, in which Mattiacci unapologetically dressed up to imitate ‘real’ nineteenth-century Native Americans. The artist’s problematic enactment of indigeneity has not been commented upon by Italian art critics, nor has his questionable placement of himself as a dissimulated equal amongst the anthropological photographs. All such silences and denials point to the way in which the memory of Italian-committed atrocities under the fascist regime could not, and still cannot be spoken. To this purpose, the word ‘recovery’ or ‘recuperation’ seems to imply a haunting, as though the Native Americans were phantoms within a nostalgic fetishization of a myth of resistance. The inverted cones, which look like stand-ins for alien props in a science-fiction film, seem to perpetuate a Western stereotype of the white man’s progress and modernization in opposition to the stereotype of face paint and shells as antimodern Native American tropes. These are seen through the cones, as though physically out of reach and psychologically out of sight. The unreachable quality of the Indigenous signifiers suggests the idea of the “vanishing Indian”, a destructive myth against which the earliest critical writing for the empowerment of Native Americans was pushing. Native rights movements such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) founded in 1968 were “fighting constantly to be seen and heard” and to counteract their false historicization, whereby the “popular obsession with romanticized images of the noble Native of centuries past led to a fixation on the absence of the historical Native rather than on the presence of the contemporary Native.”³⁴ Mattiacci was in line with American hippie narratives when he explained: “The work was a tribute to this people who, in my view, represent a defeated people. At the time I was on their side and I still am today.”³⁵ The fact that no critic has challenged these ideas, however, points to another specifically Italian problem: the false myth of Italy as victim rather than perpetrator, inherited from the aftermath of the Second World War and the unspeakable denial of a national memory.

30 Celant 2013, p. 150.

31 *Sculpture in Action* 2022, p. 106.

32 Foster 1985; Foster 1993; Bhabha 1984; Spivak 1999. Scholarship on primitivism and colonialism in Italian art includes Re 2010; Borgogelli et al. 2015; Aguirre 2019.

33 Foster 1985, p. 61.

34 Hahn 2014, p. 173.



5 Eliseo Mattiacci, *Recovery of a Myth*, L'Attico, 1975, photograph by Claudio Abate (photo Archivio Claudio Abate)

Due to the peculiar way in which Italy transitioned from fascism to democracy, the nation entered a process of self-redemption that continues to this day, avoiding any historical reckoning with its fascist legacy. The omission of Italy's criminal history became the accepted narrative, along with the amnesia towards its colonial past.³⁶ These omissions and the resulting narrative translated into a false redemption and an "aesthetic victimry" that arguably already had its roots in the partisan resistance fighters' self-representation as the figure of Christ.³⁷ The appropriation of Native American aesthetics could therefore be read as an updated, 'sexier' form of this Christological antifascist narrative. Native Americans also stood outside, or in-between, colonial history since they were a different nation's symbol of oppression and could not be 'traced back' to Italy's colonies in Africa. Furthermore, the Fascist view of the partisans as cowards who "hid in the woods," under the term *imboscati* (which can mean hidden [in the woods] or evading military service) seems to coincide with the stereotype of Native Americans living close to nature.³⁸ The historical distortion of Italy's fascist past means that the state-endorsed shift from perpetrator nation to victim nation is at the source of an insoluble contradiction in the nation's collective memory, with enormous ramifications in criticism and scholarship.

"Aesthetic victimry" was also the lynchpin of the dawning ecological movement, anchored in Native American imagery as signifying an authentic connection with nature and forming the counterpoint to the catastrophe of the white man's industrialization. The use of found photographs of Native Americans was practiced to support these ideas: in the two issues of the zine *Pianeta Fresco* (1967–1968), prints of photographs of Native Americans reproduced in bright magenta and yellow are collaged horizontally above photographs of a postindustrial wasteland in dark blue. These parallel and contrasting images symbolized the consequences of a capitalist exploitation of land and served to illustrate a translation of the *The Houseboat Summit* into Italian (fig. 6). Founded by Fernanda Pivano and Ettore Sottsass, *Pianeta Fresco* also had Allen Ginsberg on its editorial board. Pivano, translator of many of the greats of American literature (e.g., Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Kerouac, Ginsberg, etc.) into Italian, and the artist-designer Sottsass belonged to the Italian elite that had first-hand access to a progressive American literary elite, which explains the timely publication of *The Houseboat Summit* conversations between Ginsberg, Alan Watts, Timothy Leary and Gary Snyder. Originally published in the *San Francisco Oracle* (1966–1968) in February 1967, *The Houseboat Summit* treated, among other topics, how to be a drop-out. Those dropping out would naturally come together in "bush tribes," "farm tribes," and "city tribes." Native Americans represented "symbolic figures of authenticity and alternative community [...] holding the key to a non-hierarchical world," and therefore a utopia.³⁹ By forming tribal groups, the four men suggested decentralization and the use of social structures established by Native Americans as solutions for survival. Advocating a simplistic return to 'primitivism,' they also championed Buddhist teachings.

The themes of *The Houseboat Summit* coincided with the questions being raised in the environmental movement, to which the colorful illustrations in *Pianeta Fresco* allude. *Pianeta Fresco* (Cool Planet) contained the idea of a renewal for planet earth in its title, and could be considered as in a dialogue with Stewart Brandt's *Whole Earth Catalog* series (1968–1971). The latter famously featured

35 Celant 2013, p. 150.

36 Srivastava 2018, p. 211.

37 Caruso 2019, p. 202.

38 Caruso 2016, p. 55.

39 Turner 2006, p. 59.



DIALOGO (1)

Alan Watts: Allora, mettiamoci a discutere dove sta andando l'intera baracca, tutto il problema sul fatto se bisogna drop out, ritirarsi, oppure prendere il controllo.
 Timothy Leary: O forse una via di mezzo?
 Watts: O una via di mezzo, certo.
 Leary: Cop out, lasciar andare... Drop in, inserirsi.
 Gary Snyder: Secondo me il problema è se gettare tutte le proprie energie nella « sottocultura » o se cercare di mantenere una certa rete di comunicazione all'interno della cultura ufficiale.
 Watts: Sì, D'accordo. Ma adesso vediamo... Io vorrei fare una dichiarazione preliminare perché tutto acquisti una certa coerenza.
 Qui parla Alan Watts, ed io sono questa sera, sul mio ferry boat, ospite di un affascinante ricevimento organizzato dal San Francisco Oracle, che è la nostra nuova rivista underground, di gran lunga la migliore che si sia vista sino ad oggi. Ed abbiamo qui alcuni membri dello staff dell'Oracle. Abbiamo Allen Ginsberg, poeta e siddhu rabbinico. Abbiamo Tim Leary, di cui non c'è bisogno di parlare (risa). E Gary Snyder, qualche lui poeta, monaco Zen, e amico di vecchia data.

"DIALOGO" da "The city of San Francisco ORACLE" Vol. 1°, N° 7, febbraio 1967.

Allen Ginsberg: Questo swami vuole che tu lo presenti a Berkeley. Sta per avere un Kirtan per santificare il movimento della pace. Così io gli ho detto che doveva invitare Jerry Rubin e Mario Savio e i suoi seguaci. E lui ha detto: « Ottimo, ottimo, ottimo ».
 Così io ho detto: « Perché non inviti anche gli Hell's Angels? » E lui ha detto: « Ottimo, ottimo, ottimo! Quando riusciremo ad abbrancarli? »
 Così io credo che una prossima volta...
 Watts: Tu sai che cosa si dice qui, no: santificare il movimento della pace significa eliminarne la violenza.
 Ginsberg: Sì, portare l'attenzione sulle radici della sua natura, che è desiderio di pace, che equivale alle mete di tutte le scuole di saggezza e di tutti i Saddhanas.

UN PACIFISTA IN AGITAZIONE

Watts: Sì, ma non è così finché non è santificato. Cioè, ho trovato in pratica che niente è più violento dei movimenti di pace. Sapete, quando c'è un pacifista in agitazione, nessuno è più di lui emotivamente limitato e intollerante e pieno di odio. E credo che questa è la cosa che siamo in molti a capire, il

fatto che stiamo tentando di togliere la violenza morale da tutti quegli sforzi che si stanno facendo per portare gli esseri umani ad armoniose relazioni fra di loro.
 Ginsberg: Ora, quanto di tutto ciò è stato capito dalla gente del movimento della pace a Berkeley?
 Watts: Io credo che non abbiano capito per niente. Credo che stiano ancora lavorando sulla base della violenza morale, proprio come faceva Gandhi.
 Ginsberg: Sì... La scorsa notte mi sono turned on, mi sono acceso con Mario Savio. Due notti fa... Dopo che ho finito, mi to... Questa doveva essere la terza o quarta volta.
 Lui descriveva i suoi sforzi in termini di potere motore per grandi movimenti di massa. Riteneva che a muovere le vaste folle siano la rettitudine, l'oltraggio morale, e la RABBIA... La giusta rabbia.

MENTI IN MENOPAUSA

Leary: Bene, fermiamoci qui. L'implicazione di questa affermazione è: noi vogliamo un movimento di massa. I movimenti di massa non hanno senso per me, e non voglio avere a che fare coi movimenti di massa, lo credo che questo sia l'errore che gli attivisti sinistreggianti stanno facendo. Li vedo come

giovani con menti in menopausa. Stanno ripetendo le stesse frasi dispute e le lotte per il potere degli anni trenta e quaranta, del trade union movement, del trotskismo e così via. Credo proprio che dovrebbero santificarsi, ritirarsi, trovare il proprio centro, accendersi, e prima di tutto evitare i movimenti di massa, la leadership di massa, i seguaci della massa. Vedo che c'è una grossa differenza — una differenza completamente incompatibile — fra il movimento degli attivisti sinistreggianti e il movimento religioso psichedelico.
 Prima di tutto, il movimento psichedelico è molto più numeroso. Ma non esprime se stesso così rumorosamente. Penso che abbiano mete diverse. Credo che gli attivisti vogliano il potere. Parliamo di potere studentesco. Questo mi turba, ed allena la mia sensibilità spirituale. Certo, c'è una grande differenza nel metodo. Il movimento psichedelico, il movimento per la ricerca spirituale, o come voi volete chiamarlo, esprime se stesso, come aveva fatto il gruppo di Haight-Abbey... con fiori e canti, e pitture, e collane, e atti di bellezza ed armonia... spazzando le strade. Qual genere di cose.
 Watts: E distribuendo gratuitamente del cibo.
 Leary: Sì... Penso che questo punto debba essere messo in chiaro, ma siccome siamo entrambi (noi movimenti) guardati con sfavore dall'Establishment, c'è questa tendenza ad unirsi assieme... Credo che tale confusione possa solo portare a delu-

6 "Dialogo da 'The city of San Francisco ORACLE', Vol. 1, N. 7, febbraio 1967", *Pianeta fresco*, 1967, pp. 14–15 (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo PE-0319)

the first color satellite photograph of Earth seen from space, taken in 1967, as the cover image of its first edition. Brandt, who is considered to have reinvented the environmental movement, was inspired by Native Americans after spending time on Indian reservations between 1963 and 1966, where he took photographs which he exhibited in a multi-media event in 1966 entitled *America Needs Indians*.⁴⁰ Whether recuperated in the case of *Pianeta Fresco*, or contemporary in Brandt's project, photographs of Native Americans stood in as signifiers for myths such as that of a pristine wilderness inhabited by 'noble Natives,' and the ideals of anticapitalism and living in harmony with the natural surroundings. Conversely, Maureen Trudelle Schwarz has shown that AIM members who participated in the ecology movement "intentionally dressed in Native attire and accouterments when meeting with the media during the closing years of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s".⁴¹ By performing redfacing, the AIM recuperated and subverted stereotypes in order to flatten the barriers between white man and Native American.⁴²

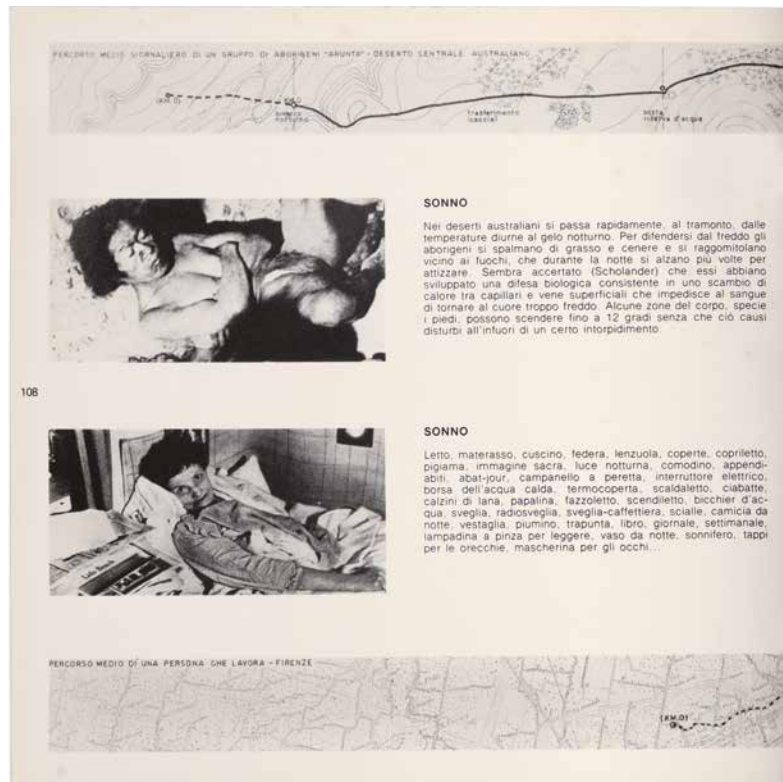
The discourse of Native American connectedness to nature extended to Indigenous peoples around the world, as well as to southern-Italian peasants, as may be seen in the exhibition catalogue *Avanguardie e cultura popolare* of 1975. Associated with a homonymous exhibition in Bologna, *Avanguardie* contained texts on indigenous and Italian peasant cultures by Pivano and Sottsass, as well as other intellectuals, including experimental architects from Superstudio. The fascination with 'Otherness' in the 1970s followed the shifts and discoveries made in the discipline of anthropology, which pioneering studies by the ethno-

40 Turner 2006, p. 66.
 41 Schwarz 2013, p. 15.
 42 Schwarz 2013, p. 16.

logist Ernesto De Martino in the 1950s began to draw attention to peasant cultures in southern Italy. The construction of Italianicity in terms of the ‘Southern Question,’ first treated in 1926 by Antonio Gramsci, contributed to Italy’s uneasy racialized identity.⁴³ After the publication of Carlo Levi’s *Christ Stopped at Eboli* in 1945, it then entered the political debate. Levi’s romanticization of the peasants opened a dispute within the left, and the acknowledgment of the need for the emancipation of the South as opposed to the conservation of its traditions. Communist intellectuals, such as the ethnomusicologist Diego Carpitella and the anthropologist Annabella Rossi, were furthering De Martino’s work on peasant rituals, interviewing and recording Italian peasants, and filming their religious rituals.

The South was seen as a crucible of primitivism and alterity with its archaic rituals, superstitious beliefs, its abject poverty, the frequent illiteracy of the country folk, their oral history traditions, crafts and traditional music and dances, all of which were disappearing from a capitalist, industrialized and modernized Italy. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the ‘Otherness’ of the South became a fulcrum for Italians and foreign intellectuals, with photographers, including Henri Cartier-Bresson, authors, cinematographers, politicians and anthropologists travelling, observing and translating their findings into books, films and periodicals in Italy and abroad.⁴⁴ Pier Paolo Pasolini’s poem “L’umile Italia” (Humble Italy) from 1957 in the collection *Le ceneri di Gramsci* (Gramsci’s Ashes), which bids a nostalgic farewell to a nation of humble people and acknowledges the memory of ancient songs no longer sung and a society on the verge of capitalist forgetfulness of the dead, encapsulates the shared sense that a particular way of life, beliefs and ‘goodness’ was in the process of extinction.⁴⁵ In this way, the myth of the “vanishing Indian” could adequately map onto that of a waning Italian peasant culture. Pasolini, and likewise the singer-songwriter Fabrizio De André, were among the intellectuals who made connections between indigenous cultures and Italian peasant folklore.⁴⁶ In his poem *La Guinea* published in *Poesia in forma di rosa* (1964), Pasolini explores colonial questions of ‘Negritude’ by connecting his fantasy of Guinea to soil from Puglia or Casarola. The poet’s seamlessness between Italian peasant culture and African tribal living emerges from “una fantasia” as well as from a conservative nostalgia that equated the two cultures.⁴⁷

In a similar vein, De André released the untitled “Indian Album” in 1981 after his kidnapping by Sardinian political extremists in 1977. The singer songwriter created parallels between Sardinians and Native Americans, especially in the song *Fiume Sand Creek* (Sand Creek River), for which he had been inspired by Thomas B. Marquis’ transcribed conversations with a Northern Cheyenne native in the book *Wooden Leg: A Warrior who Fought Custer* (1931). The cover of



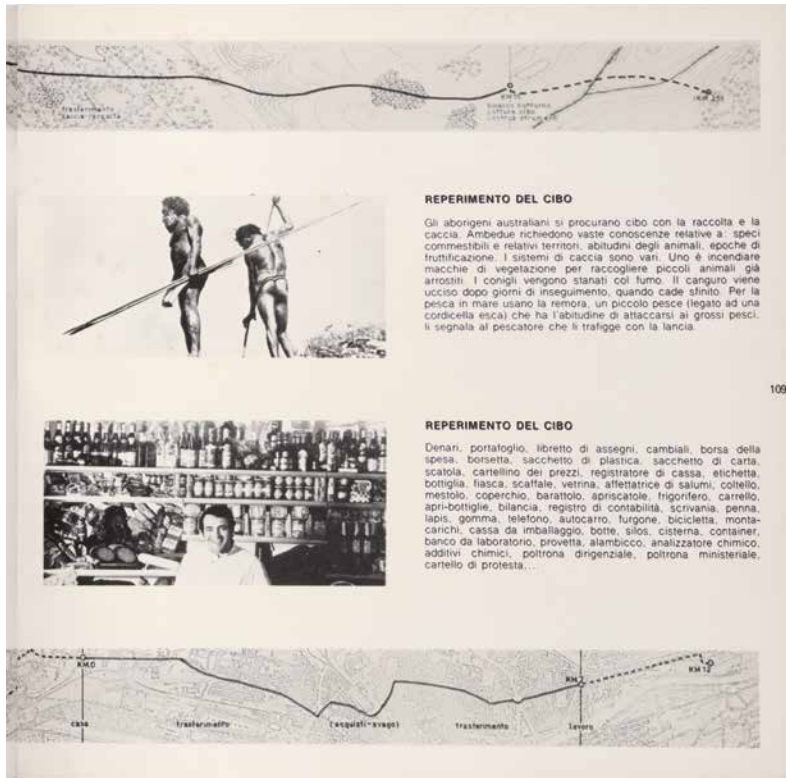
43 For an analysis of Italy’s issues of self-identity within a self-orientalizing paradigm, see Chioldi 2021, p. 103.

44 Caruso 2016, pp. 85–118.

45 Caruso 2016, p. 39.

46 Caminati 2007; Caminati 2010; Trento 2010.

47 See Caminati 2007; Caminati 2010; Trento 2010.



7 Superstudio/Frassinelli 1975, pp. 108–109

the album reproduced the painting of a solitary Native American on horseback, *The Outlier* (1909), by Frederic Remington, an artist who has since been criticized for his outspoken racism against Native peoples.⁴⁸ Were Pasolini and De André’s comparisons unconsciously highlighting the refusal of a culture to reckon with its colonial, racist past? In 1965, Del Boca would be the first historian to tackle the history of the Italian colonies.⁴⁹ Under fascism in the mid-1930s, a Nordic racism had emerged during the colonial conquest of Ethiopia.⁵⁰ By 1938, racial laws were promulgated against non-Europeans and people of mixed race, while Italians were found to be descendants of the Aryan race. In creating connections between Italian natives and indigenous natives, Italian intellectuals in the 1960s and 1970s were attempting to probe entrenched racist barriers, even though they sought their anti-colonial heroes in peoples who their ancestors were not directly guilty of oppressing.

Peasants from the South, like indigenous cultures around the world, symbolized anti-capitalist

alternatives to the “progress” of industrialization and the consequent alienation of humankind from its natural environment. The anthropological and intellectual interest in the South was taking place simultaneously with a hippie return to the land, in what Pivano termed the “agro-ecological” tribes that imitated the ecological turn inherited from North American countercultures.⁵¹ Superstudio’s photo-essay in *Avanguardie* sequenced black and white photographs of Western “civilization” with photographic images of Australian Aborigines, demonstrating the superiority of the latter in their harmonious relationship with the environment, in contrast to the alienation from it of so-called “advanced” societies (fig. 7).⁵² In the photographs accompanying the text, the Aborigines are always male, creating in reverse a negatively feminized view of Westerners, since the images of those weakened and alienated by capitalist commodities are, on the whole, of women. The masculine mask of ‘primitivism’ in countercultures is further examined in the next section of this paper. What has emerged in the present section is the way that vintage and contemporary documentary photography of Native Americans, indigenous peoples and Italian peasants were used indiscriminately to support a variety of contradictory myths, within an aesthetics of victimhood. In the Italian context, this aesthetics had constitutional reverberations that touched on a deep-seated national unease regarding a recently buried history of violence and racism.

Cultural Appropriation, Macho Comics and Detournement

Also known as Shivananda, the “lunatic” Gulmini, editor of the zines *Fuoco!* and *Casale Contro*, contended with various forms of oppression enacted by the Italian State. Like other counterculturists, his aim was to decolonize the practice of ever-

48 Sweeney 1992, pp. 69–70.

49 Del Boca 1965.

50 Gillette 2002, pp. 50–103.

51 Pivano 1975, p. 119.

52 Superstudio/Frassinelli 1975.

yday life using the stereotypical figure of a Native American as a guiding symbol against authoritarian regimes (figs. 8a, 8b). The imagery he used refers to the visual language of comics, both in the tracing of the bucking horse in fig. 8a and in the appropriation of a comic strip in fig. 8b, possibly borrowed from *Tex*, an Italian comics series first published in 1948 that served to circulate an imaginary geography of the “culture and history of the Native Americans”.⁵³ Tex Willer is a cowboy hero who defends the weak, including Native Americans, and marries a Navajo woman. He becomes chief of the tribe, implying that the indigenous people were not capable of governing themselves. As argued by Elizabeth Leake, Tex is a quintessentially Neorealist Italian symbol that impersonates a complex reunification of the country after fascism and the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic regime.⁵⁴ Arguably, he also perpetuates and reinforces the false postwar myth of Italians as good people, since he is a hero created by Italians (Gianluigi Bonelli and Aurelio Galleppini) who fights evil, whether on the Native American or the white man’s side. He is also a white man who is open-minded enough to eat hallucinogenic mushrooms, in a 1976 episode.⁵⁵ This impossible contradiction of a hero from the dominant culture enacting the minority and leading its subjugated peoples, sits well with the Italian postwar myth of Italy’s being on the side of the victims, while simultaneously silencing its own role as the aggressor.

In his zines, Gulmini, like others, used images and language that unconsciously contradicted the hippie desire to decolonize the patriarchy.⁵⁶ Decolonization in the counterculture tended to be associated with macho warrior figures, and at times, sexist language. Gulmini’s first edition of *Fuoco!* is subtitled *Wounded knee: our Sioux brothers are fighting for their lives. Up the ass of the Amerikkkan monster*, in which he writes: “You’ve busted our balls, you’ve busted our balls with BLESSED SCHOOL and BLESSED FAMILY, with POLICE TERROR and the violence of THE ESTABLISHMENT, with the sad reality that surrounds us [...]”.⁵⁷ As Deloria observes, the tradition of “playing Indian [clings] tightly to the contours of power [and has] been largely the domain of white male”.⁵⁸ Tex, while representing the macho enemy in certain countercultural circles, also offered fruitful terrain on which to reinforce masculine stereotypes, terrain that was shared by both the extreme left and the far right. The role of women in *Tex* is basically non-existent and this reflected the reality of mainstream and underground cultures in Italy.

Italian underground artists adopted Indigenous imagery to signify their own political oppression, with little self-reflexivity on the nascent and concurrent feminist movements of the period or on the nation’s recent fascist history of racism,



8a “Wounded knee: I fratelli sioux lottano per la vita”, *Fuoco!*, supplement of *Internazionale Nichilista* n. 5, Milano 1976, n.p. (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-0079)

53 Cantilena/Grifo 2017, p. 193.

54 Leake 2018.

55 Bonelli/Galleppini 1976.

56 Guarnaccia/Baraghini 1995, p. 11.

57 “Wounded knee: I fratelli Sioux lottano per la vita. In culo al mostro Amerikkano!”, in Gulmini 1973; cover page; “Ci siamo rotti le palle, ci siamo rotti le palle della SANTA SCUOLA e della SANTA FAMIGLIA, del TERRORISMO POLIZIESCO e della violenza del POTERE, della miserevole realtà che ci circonda [...]”, in *Fuoco!* 1973, p. 1.

58 Deloria 1999, p. 8.



8b *Fuoco!*, detail of the cover, 1979
(photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection
Pablo Echaurren PE-0085)

colonization, and empire. In her analysis of Carla Lonzi's position on women and the way "male culture operates in a colonial sense," Liliana Ellena extricates the way Lonzi had identified "the matrix that binds together women's positions and the de-naturalization of the subaltern logic behind the forms of identification offered by culture."⁵⁹ In her interview with Lonzi in *Autoritratto*, Carla Accardi asks: "Who is the other in relation to the white man? Woman [...] It is either sex or race."⁶⁰ In spite of Lonzi and Accardi's prescient re-assessment of Italy's colonial history, Italian decolonization did not receive much attention in the counter-culture at the time. An illustrated article in the zine *Le operaie della casa* (1977) offered a possibly unique countercultural feminist critique of the above-mentioned macho figures, including the Metropolitan Indians treated in the next section, a cowboy and Superman, under the title "The new subjects of the revolution."⁶¹ Inserted in the text are rough illustrations, including three Metropolitan Indians in awkward poses, one of which appears to have stuck his hand in his mouth as though unable to articulate his thoughts, or perhaps regretting something he said. The cowboy, complete with spurs, is diving into bed with a woman, roaring an equally inarticulate "Yaaah!"; with the title "Cowboys in bed" implying impulsivity, stupidity and a lack of political sensitivity. These contributions were rare in a world in which most zines were produced by men. Feminist zines were supported by the maverick editor Marcello Baraghini through his publishing house, *Stampa Alternativa*. The zines included the single issue *Rifiut are* (1977), the psychedelic Neapolitan *Le Nemesiache* (1973), *Foeminik* (1977) and *Zizzania* (1977), which was the only zine authored only by women. It included a section entitled "Fallo Fallito" (Failed Phallus) ironizing over the zine *Fallo!*, in turn a play on words on the American zine *Do It!*, with phallic overtones.

The level of sexual repression and oppression of women in Italy was such that the activist and editor Baraghini, who played a fundamental role in guaranteeing the existence of the underground press, was sentenced to eighteen months in prison for offering advice on abortion in his book *Contro la famiglia* (Against the Family) of 1975.⁶² His sentence was based on a footnote which provided a London-based phone number offering Italian language support to pregnant teenagers from a female gynecologist. Baraghini had already been indicted on multiple legal charges on account of supporting over 180 zines nationwide, but as a result of the sentence he received he was forced to become a fugitive for a year in 1976, or else face up to two years' incarceration.⁶³ With a forged press pass, Baraghini circumvented the repressive laws against the clandestine press inherited directly from fascist censorship rules.⁶⁴ Anyone trying to publish an under-

59 Lonzi 1978, p. 950; Ellena 2020, p. 115.

60 Lonzi 1968, p. 158.

61 *I nuovi soggetti rivoluzionari* 1977, [n.p.].

62 Interview with Marcello Baraghini, 13.01.2022.

63 Interview with Marcello Baraghini, 13.01.2022.

64 For further reading on censorship under fascism, see Bonsaver/Gordon 2005.

ground newspaper without the correct registration with the Ordine Nazionale dei Giornalisti (National Order of Journalists), itself founded in 1925, was liable to censorship and the seizure of the paper by the police. The only way to be registered was to have written and published twenty articles in a mainstream press or for a clerical newspaper, accompanied by a letter of reference from the editor-in-chief. With his signature, Baraghini ensured that he would take legal responsibility for the existence of the underground newspaper. If the paper was considered illegal, Baraghini would be held responsible, whereas if the contents were deemed inappropriate, the editor was responsible. Illegal contents included, among other things, contempt for the pope, defense of abortion or defense of underage civil rights, or any comment in favor of conscientious objection, or against the Italian president, the police force, or the Church, which still wielded enormous power over women's rights and social policies such as divorce.

The political impasse in the inherited fascist culture of the Italian press solidified the efforts of the underground press in their search for symbols of freedom against the repressive social orders and lack of civil rights, which resulted in part in the uncritical appropriation of Native American imagery like that seen so far. The violent warrior imagery from *Tex* was the ideal hook for appropriation and detournement to express the level of violence and state secrecy that hung over the 1970s. The documentation that was generated by the killings that took place during this period, from the 1969 Piazza Fontana bombing in Milan, to the Bologna massacre in 1980 was investigated with significant delay. To this day, the killings continue to be the object of conspiracy theories against the left.⁶⁵ The collaboration of the extreme right wing with the state and the secret services at the Convegno dell'hotel Parco dei Principi in 1965 was effectively renamed the "Conference on revolutionary war", and marks the beginning of a covert military state operation to disempower the Italian Communist Party and the left wing.⁶⁶ The response to the denial and silencing of a fascist, or Nazi, history, was the formation of the Red Brigades, who like the Red Army Faction in Germany, manifested extreme political and psychological violence. In the re-use of images from *Tex*, Native Americans nearly always symbolized resistance against the state, acquiring the form of a simulacrum in which appropriated cartoons of Native Americans replaced the politically ambiguous mainstream narrative from which they were sourced. Native American imagery was a way of talking about an amputated past in which the atrocities of the fascist regime had been denied, erased and institutionally forgotten.

The underground artist Pablo Echaurren, who also plundered *Tex* for imagery for his collages, did so in the form of postmodern pastiches revealing another layer of critical interpretation, often referencing his cultural hero, Marcel Duchamp, in aphorisms. For example, in *Duchamp per tutti!* (Duchamp for all!) (fig. 9), cut-out Native American figures from a color version of *Tex* combine institutional art and popular culture. The speech bubble: "What do you think, would this look good in my teepee?" suggests a Native American obsession with Duchamp and interior décor. Working as a self-taught underground artist, Echaurren sought freedom from the art system in surrealism, Dada and futurism. *Duchamp per tutti!* could be read as a caricature of Native Americans having an unlikely interest in Duchamp's *Large Glass*, or else interpreted as a comment on the hypocrisies of bourgeois political revolutionaries enacting Native Americanness, or as a critique of the Metropolitan Indians, who performed Native Americanness with little self-awareness.

Armed with Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (1967) – translated into Italian the year it was published in France – Echaurren was creating work inspired

- 9 Pablo Echaurren, *Duchamp per tutti!*, 1977, ink and collage on paper, 34 × 24 cm (photo Massimiliano Ruto/Fondazione Echaurren Salaris)

65 Conti 2020; Conti 2021.

66 Conti 2021.



CHE NE PENSI?
CI STAREBBE
BENE NEL MIO
TEEPEE?

OASK!!!

DUCHAMP À TOUS LE ÉTAGES

DUCHAMP PERTUTTI

Pablo Echavere n'77



by the revolutionary project of the Situationist International (1957–1972) to combat commodity fetishism and consumer culture through the sampling, disrupting, remixing, and subverting of messages from the media. Raoul Vaneigem’s *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (1967) – translated into Italian in 1973 – formed another ‘spiritual’ guide for counterculturalists like Echaurren, who borrowed aphorisms from Vaneigem for his collages. One of the artist’s first inspirations, however, was Jean Gimpe’s *The Cult of Art: Against Art and Artists* (1969) translated into Italian in 1970. As a self-taught artist who rejected a burgeoning art career, Echaurren sought to challenge the art world system and its market. In 1976, aged twenty-two, he ‘went underground,’ giving up his gallery connection – Arturo Schwartz in Milan (which also represented Marcel Duchamp) – and going to work for Adriano Sofri’s extreme left-wing periodical *Lotta Continua*, organ of the autonomous Lotta Continua movement. This was the start of his collaboration with the journalist Maurizio Gabbianelli, who, in a politically tense environment, also acted as his protector. They both accepted the worker’s salary of 5000 Lira (circa 22 euros) a day for six days a week, living hand-to-mouth.⁶⁷ In Echaurren’s view, *Tex* was boring, repetitive, macho and mainstream, and he would never have read it.⁶⁸ However, he embraced the language of comics in order to highlight – and undermine – the art-world elite’s condescension towards it.

Alternative comics were another form of counterculture that emerged in the United States in the 1960s, with the likes of the American cartoonist Robert Crumb, whose fundamental role in *Zap Comix* took the medium underground and challenged the codified system of mainstream serial comics.⁶⁹ Matteo Guarnaccia’s psychedelic cartoons of Native Americans living in utopian scenarios can be considered as inspired by the alternative comics movement. To Gulmini’s violent symbolism, Guarnaccia offered a peaceable alternative, especially with his cult publication *Insekten Sekte* (1970–1975). The zine’s title was inspired by a group of Dutch ecological activists, whose wall writings Guarnaccia had seen in Amsterdam, where he lived as part of “the most advanced alternative society of the time, where happenings, performance and music took place daily.”⁷⁰ The “sect of insects” idea came from the sight of large gatherings in parks of hippies who emerged from their sleeping bags like butterflies out of a chrysalis, “as though embodying the anthropological mutation that was taking place.”⁷¹ *Insekten Sekte*, along with *Pianeta Fresco*, is considered to be one of the “best examples of Italian

10a Matteo Guarnaccia, *Insekten Sekte* n. 12, n.d. [1972?] (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-0155)

67 Interview with Pablo Echaurren, 25.01.2022.

68 Interview with Pablo Echaurren, 15.11.2021.

69 Pablo Echaurren 2022, p. 23.

70 Guarnaccia/Baraghini 1995, p. 15; interview with Matteo Guarnaccia, 16.01.2022.

71 Interview with Matteo Guarnaccia, 16.01.2022.



10b Detail from 10a

dense psychedelic illustrations and the ‘dreamy’ gazes of the gender-neutral figures allude to a society free from the patriarchy, and with the free consumption of recreational drugs. Guarnaccia had “very long hair at the time” and having played at “Cowboys and Indians” as a child, he was “firmly on the side of the Native Americans”, whose iconography influenced his vision of “tribal life as respectful of nature and highly creative”.⁷⁶ As Deloria observed, for many in the counterculture, “Indianness [was] imagined as social harmony”.⁷⁷ Guarnaccia’s fetishization of Otherness was not only rooted in an inherited hippie perspec-

psychedelic graphic art”.⁷² The zine was produced irregularly in a number of formats, from a small brochure to a large poster-size, and offered the possibility to reproduce the matrix, exponentially increasing distribution numbers.⁷³ A six page concertina fold of the twelfth issue features four pages illustrated by Guarnaccia and two by Crumb, referring to the latter as a “korrespondent and a guest of honor” (fig. 10a). The connection with Crumb was probably through Angelo Quattrocchi, who was one of Guarnaccia’s friends.⁷⁴ Quattrocchi, who had helped found the London version of *Oz* with Richard Neville in 1967, moved in the early 1970s to California, where he met Crumb and began translating his work, as well as that of the feminist Angela Davis and the activist Jerry Rubin. Quattrocchi’s access to the American cultural underground was also facilitated through his relationship with the civil rights and social justice attorney Beverly Axelrod, who worked for the Black Panther Party. Quattrocchi founded *Fallo!* (1971–1976), a zine based on Rubin’s *Do It!* with phallic overtones in Italian, as well as *Roman High*, *Roma Sotto* modelled on the London version of *Time Out*. Axelrod’s presence in the group of counterculturists that clustered around Quattrocchi and included Baraghini exposed several of the most pioneering Italian counterculturists to the Black Panther movement, as well as to the work Axelrod had done for the Chicano Movement in New Mexico. Quattrocchi and Axelrod gave the otherwise “provincial” Italian countercultural scene new life with a renewed approach to communication.⁷⁵

In the detail from figure 10a (fig. 10b), Guarnaccia’s trademark child-like figures appear according to a romantic stereotype of Native Americans as hippies with long hair, animal skins, long-sleeved tunics, and a dagger sheath with an eagle head. The

72 Lo Monaco 2019.

73 Lo Monaco 2019.

74 I was able to fill in aspects of the historical context with the interviews I conducted and two seminal non-academic books by Guarnaccia: *Underground italiana: interviste ai beautiful losers* [sic] and *Underground italiana: gli anni gioiosamente ribelli della controcultura*, see Guarnaccia 2000 and Guarnaccia 2011.

75 Interview with Marcello Baraghini, 30.03.2022.

76 Interview with Matteo Guarnaccia, 16.01.2022.

77 Deloria 1999, p. 155.

tive, but can also be considered to have homegrown advocates and icons, such as Emilio Salgari's trilogy, *Adventures in the Far West* (1908–1910), which featured the Native American as both a victim and a rebellious hero.⁷⁸ The mixed heritage hero, Sandokan, known as the “Tiger of Malaysia” in Salgari's anticolonial narratives from the early twentieth century, could similarly be considered a forerunner of Tex, in terms of the insider/outsider narratives. This racial in-betweenness formed an attractive narrative for center-periphery relations, and justified the inherited racial hierarchies that identified Blacks and Jewish people as their main targets. The idea of Native Americans instead legitimized the bonds of ‘racial brotherhood.’

Like many artists, Guarnaccia was inspired by Far West films, with *Soldier Blue* (1970) marking a watershed by shifting the traditional perspective on Native Americans as the ‘bad guys.’ He also cited John G. Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* (Alce Nero parla) from 1932 – translated into Italian and published by Adelphi in 1968 – and Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970), published in Italian in 1972, as his introduction to the story of the Native American genocide, as well as to their vision of life. Laying aside the nostalgic stereotypes he promulgated about Native Americans, Guarnaccia was a talented illustrator and a leading figure in Italian underground culture, and yet he remains undiscovered by the art world. Silvia Bottinelli, in her important article, “The Discourse of Modern Nomadism: The Tent in Italian Art and Architecture of the 1960s and 1970s”, refers to Guarnaccia's book *Underground italiana* (2000) as testimony of communal nomadic life from the times, but fails to mention his art practice.⁷⁹ This omission, like many with respect to the art historicization of the counterculture, is owed to the way in which the canon has ignored underground art practices.

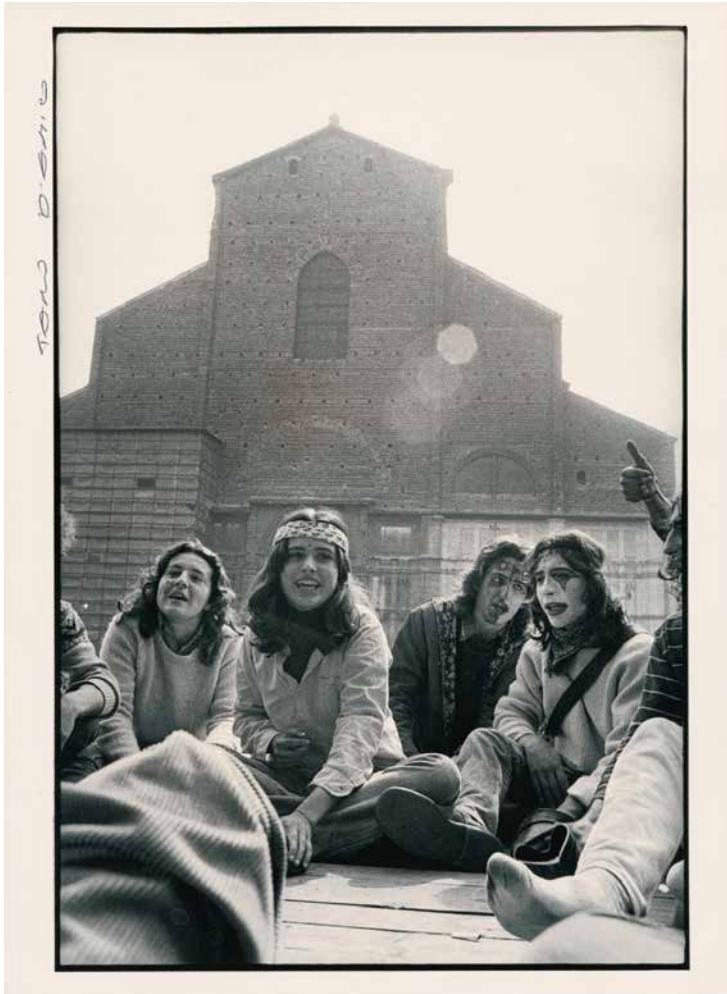
The few studies that have been published on countercultural artists are by historians who did not necessarily concentrate on the authorship behind the visual practices. Art historians, instead, are automatically confronted with the difficulties of identifying specific artists, partly because they worked anonymously or as part of collectives. Just as connoisseurship is necessary to confirm the authorship of Guarnaccia's illustrations in *Insekten Sekte* or in the other zines he illustrated, such as *Paria* and *Fallo!*, so an informed eye is necessary to identify Echaurren's cartoons in *OASK?!*, *Lotta Continua*, and the many other publications to which he contributed. In his illustrations of Metropolitan Indian lore in *Lotta Continua*, Echaurren references the language of comics in a satirical, post-modern vein. For instance, in *I piccioni di Siena sono in OASK?!* (Are Siena's pigeons in OASK?!), the cartoon of the pigeon dressed as a Metropolitan Indian, and therefore as a Native American, creates a surrealistic displacement of the stereotypical symbols (bandana and cloak) onto the stereotypically reviled bird, in turn an allusion to social marginalization (fig. 11). This image could be read literally as disrespectful to Native American dress codes, or it could be read as a postmodern critique of the appropriations being conducted by the Metropolitan Indians. In the next section, I examine the Metropolitan Indian movement



11 Pablo Echaurren, “I piccioni di Siena sono in OASK?!”, *OASK?!*, 1977, detail from the original proof copy (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-8552)

78 For scholarship on the Far West in Italian culture, see *L'invenzione del west(ern) americano* 2010; Pollone 2020.

79 Bottinelli 2015, p. 78.



12 Tano D'Amico, no title [*Indiani metropolitani*], 1977 (digitized photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-8444)

and its critical reception in terms of “ethnic drag,” as well as the role played by language and lifestyle in the countercultural world.

Performing Native Americanness through Language, Lifestyle and “Ethnic Drag”

In 1977, the Metropolitan Indian Movement emerged in Bologna, Rome and Milan as a form of political protest in which students dressed as Native Americans or in disguises that alluded to Carnival-like stereotypes. Mariani considered the Metropolitan Indians to be “the first to embody this desire for renewal shared by most of the movement,” entrenched in a fantasy of the “Wild West as portrayed in countless Western movies and comics.”⁸⁰ While Mariani may discuss the Metropolitan Indians’ innocuous desire for renewal, this peculiar type of activism can only be read today as disrespectful towards Native Americans, and as what Michelle H. Raheja refers to as “the cultural work of redfacing.”⁸¹ A form of “ethnic drag,” the Metropolitan Indians emerged from an uncritical equation of Native Americans with notions of peaceful revolution (fig. 12).⁸² The many histories of the Metropolitan Indians in which Tano D’Amico’s photograph of hippies dressed up as Native Americans and clowns are reproduced, have never raised the issue of cultural appropriation. Concurrently, the Movement of 1977, that belonged to a moment in time when national violence,

demonstrations and bloodshed reached an apex, has been amply covered in countercultural and sociopolitical terms, but not with regard to “performing alterity”⁸³ The notion of “playing Indian” subtended the Metropolitan Indians’ performance. Speaking of the different forms that Euro-Americans historically appropriated in order to seek political liberation, Deloria divided the idea of “playing Indian” into two traditions: “carnival and misrule.”⁸⁴ In the case of the Metropolitan Indians, these traditions seem to overlap, falling into the countercultural melting pot whereby Native Americans ultimately represented an “ill-defined, culturally centered notion of rebellion.”⁸⁵ In this framework, a “headband might mean Geronimo, but it also meant Che Guevara.”⁸⁶ The counterculturalists interviewed for this essay, including D’Amico, Scuro, Echaurren and Olivier Turquet, claimed that the media latched onto the idea of the Metropolitan Indians as a catchy concept, turning them into a consumer brand. Similarly, in the United States the Sixties rebellion was “influenced by media saturation and the co-optative codes of fashion.”⁸⁷

The fascination with the image of the Far West, and consequently of Native Americans, had sedimented in the national consciousness through photography and comics as seen earlier, but even more importantly through film, travel books

80 Mariani 1987, p. 589.

81 Raheja 2010, p. 20

82 I borrow the term “ethnic drag” from Sieg 2002 cited in Campbell 2008, p. 230.

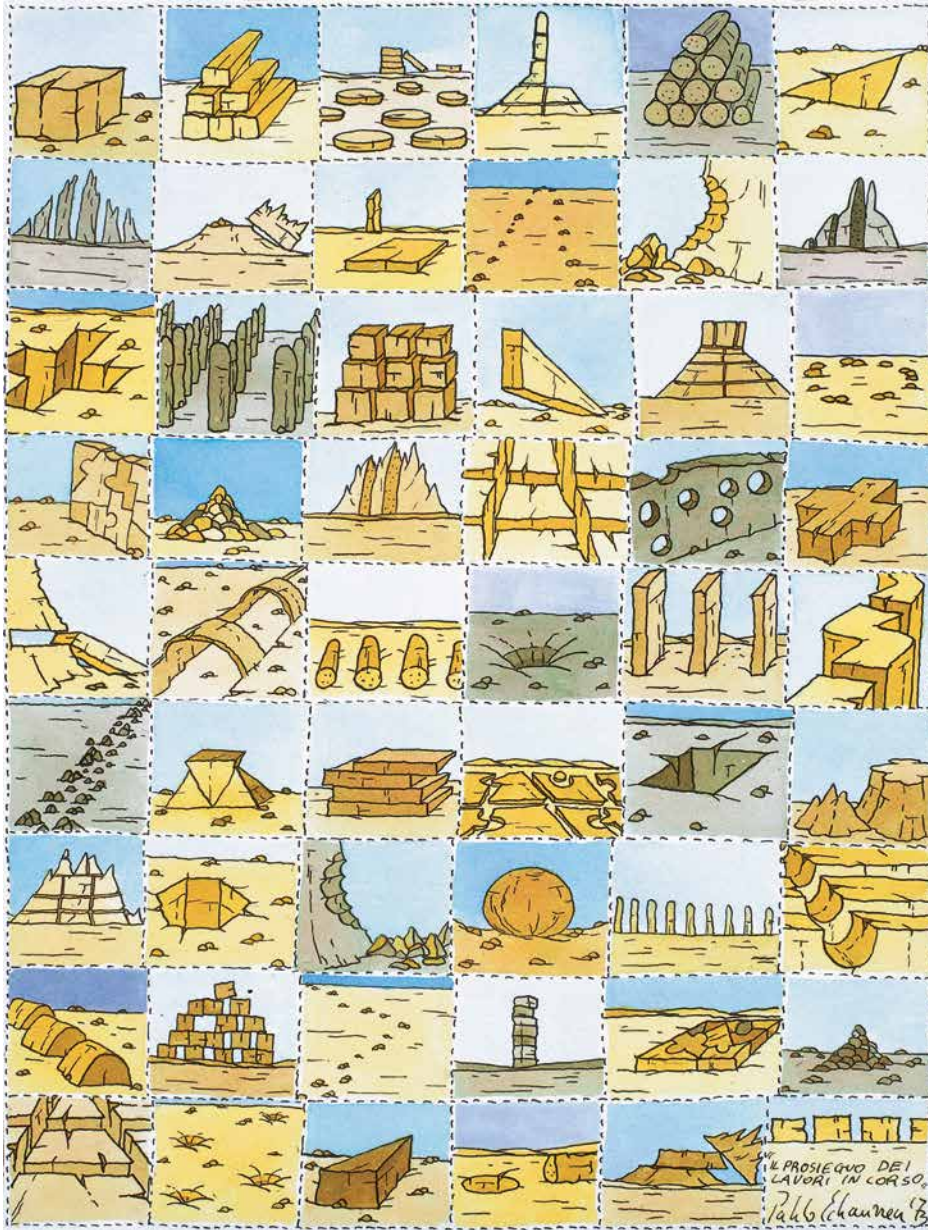
83 See note 7 for an overview of publications on the Movement of 1977.

84 Deloria 1999, p. 14.

85 Deloria 1999, p. 165.

86 Deloria 1999, p. 164.

87 Deloria 1999, p. 164.



13 Pablo Echaurren, *Il prosieguo dei lavori in corso*, 1973, watercolor and India ink on paper, 24 x 18 cm (photo Fondazione Echaurren Salaris)

and magazines. Cinematic imaginary had fed, for instance, into Echaurren's earliest grid works, such as *Il prosieguo dei lavori in corso* (The continuation of the works in progress) from 1973, in which 54 land art sites allude to a geographical alterity (fig. 13). Echaurren interpreted his images of the desert as "sediments of sentiments" that spoke of his intimate relationship to a layering of time, drawing on his exposure to Western films and the books and travel magazines he was able to afford.⁸⁸ The artist, aware of the contradictions within a primitivist discourse, considered his images of the desert as "mental images" that are not reality-based, but rest instead on an imaginary geology built through fleeting apparitions of the desert. Recalling the Situationists' refrain "the desert is expanding," he was interpreting the desertification of culture in a capitalist society. Echaurren would re-propose the grid format with desert scenes to satirize politicians and Metropolitan Indians in *Lotta Continua* (fig. 14). In *La metropoli e gli indiani buoni* (The metropolis and the good Indians), the identifying symbols for Native Americans appear in the form of feathers, arrows and a tomahawk, while cacti, animal bones and rocks feature in others. The seemingly nonsense slogans, such as *Potere Drome-*

88 Interview with Pablo Echaurren, 13.04.2022.

14 Pablo Echaurren, detail from
 “La metropoli e gli indiani buoni”,
Lotta Continua, 22 March 1977, p. 8
 (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/
 Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-8570)



dario (Camel Power) instead of *Potere Operaio* (Workers' Power) used in each of the nine illustrations were pointed, political references to Christian Democrats and Communists, exploitation and capitalism, which if deconstructed would each merit a page of explanation. For example, the slogan “Lama o non Lama? Non Lama più nessuno” was a pun on the name of Luciano Lama, General Secretary of the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL), a trade union under the influence of the Communist Party. Lama as a South American quadruped also lent itself to being misread as “*l'ama*” (s/he loves him/her) as in “Does s/he love him/her or not? Nobody loves him/Lama anymore”. When Lama came to give a speech at La Sapienza University on 17 February 1977, *Lotta Continua* members planned to borrow a lama from the zoo as a joke. These anecdotes, however, contrasted with the events which had already been in ferment since 1 February, when a group of sixty, extreme right-wing militants had stormed the university and seriously wounded two students, one barely surviving a gunshot wound to the neck.

More than the Metropolitan Indians, one of *Lotta Continua*'s principal targets was the Communist Party, which had gained 7 percent more votes in 1975. The Communists had become the common enemy among the extreme left, which had, however, splintered into autonomous factions, each seeking hegemony over the ‘Movement’ (e.g., L'Unione dei Comunisti italiani, Autonomia Operaia, L'avanguardia operaia, La lega dei marxisti-leninisti and I circoli del proletariato giovanile). Communist Party adherents were considered the enemy in disguise. Living through the “compromesso storico” (historical compromise), which saw the convergence of the Christian Democrats, who were in power, with the increasingly dour and traditionalist Communist Party, Echaurren and Gabbiellini refused to be identified with their frayed politics.

The rebellious levity of the Metropolitan Indians also appeared in their slogans. Turquet, whose nickname was Gandalf il Viola (Gandalf the Purple) inven-

ted the name “Indiani metropolitani” because “it rhymed well with Mohicani” in a slogan he created during a protest at Piazza di Spagna in Rome with his group, Geronimo: “Sioux, Apache, Mohicani, siamo gli Indiani Metropolitani!” (Sioux, Apache, Mohicans, we are the Metropolitan Indians!).⁸⁹ Enrico Scuro, who like D’Amico, documented the Metropolitan Indians and the Movement of 1977, defended the students’ use of face paint in Bologna as a method of circumventing the harsh policing enforced during a time when demonstrations had been prohibited. The then Minister of the Interior, Francesco Cossiga, forbade any demonstrations from 22 April to 31 May 1977 in a bid to quell the violence that had resulted in the murder of the student Giordiana Masi on 12 April and of a policeman, Settimio Passamonti on 21 April. Scuro said: “Had we not painted our faces and paraded the dragon, the police would have certainly assaulted us.”⁹⁰ During his studies at the Dams (*Discipline delle arti, della musica e dello spettacolo – Disciplines of Art, Music, and Drama*), Scuro and his fellow students used the Chinese New Year as an excuse to parade through the streets with a homemade dragon as though celebrating a form of *Carnevale* (fig. 15). A student holding up the head of the dragon appears to have dressed up as Pippi Longstocking, with braids and freckles.

Because of the variety of folkloristic references used by the Metropolitan Indians, the Native American identification ought to have been subsumed by the idea of the Italian *Carnevale*. Most of Scuro’s photographs of Metropolitan Indians show students dressed as clowns with face paint that imitated the more traditional Italian figures of Arlecchino and Pierrot from the *Commedia dell’Arte* (fig. 16). Italian Carnival is oriented towards children and could be mapped onto Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque developed in *Rabelais and His World*, first published in 1965. The Bakhtinian carnival, which highlights the hierarchies and assumptions of the dominant culture, has also been used to discuss the Western appropriation of Native American likeness in film.⁹¹ However, by using Bakhtin to explain redfacing, Native Americans are automatically associated with the marginal culture, with its racist elements more easily ignored. The infantile, and therefore disempowered, evocation of games of “cowboys and Indians” remains unchallenged.

In an effort to perhaps eschew the racism implicit in certain aspects of Metropolitan Indian cosplay, Claudia Salaris suggests that their use of face paint had avantgarde roots in Italian and Russian futurist practices.⁹² Her point, however, along with the fact that the media exploited the term “Metropolitan Indian” for effect, also helps to adjust the importance of cultural appropriation, which is both central and not, with regard to the movement, and is similarly replete with jarring contradictions. A paradox of primitivism and progress was projected onto Native Americans: “Indians could be both civilized and indigenous. They could critique modernity and yet reap its benefits.”⁹³ One of the aspects of Native



15 Enrico Scuro, *Drago n. 43, Il drago del movimento*, Bologna, 20 febbraio 1977 (photo Enrico Scuro)

89 Interview with Olivier Turquet, 06.12.2021.

90 Interview with Pablo Echaurren, 11.01.2022.

91 Campbell 2008, p. 12.

92 Salaris 1997, pp. 123–126.

93 Deloria 1999, p. 157.

16 Enrico Scuro, *Indiani metropolitan*
n. 37, *Indiani metropolitan*, Bologna,
20 febbraio 1977 (photo Enrico Scuro)

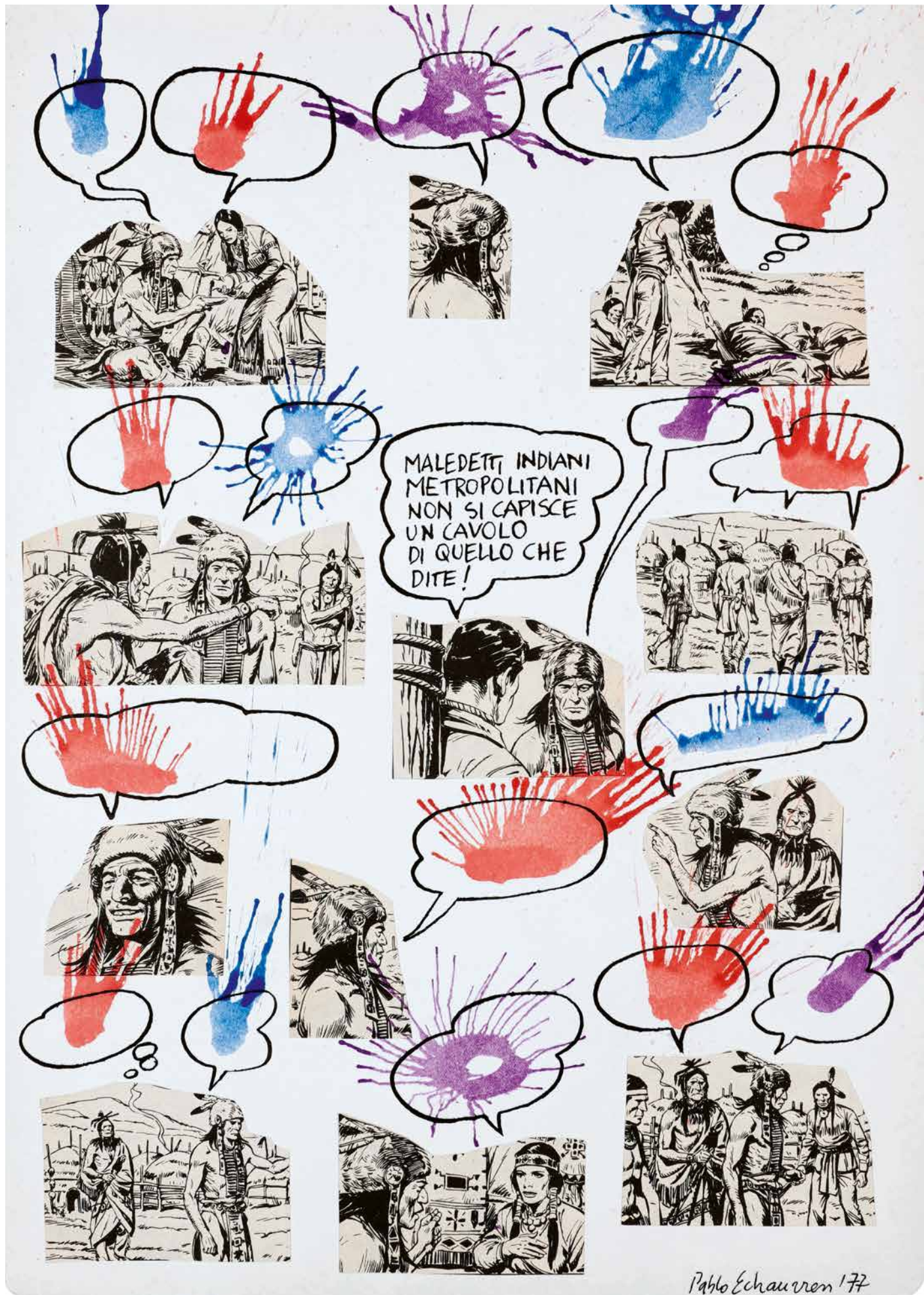


American ‘primitiveness’ exploited by the Italian underground was in the form of language, subverting one of the main definitions by which a culture self-identifies. Metropolitan Indians enacted this subversion using nonsensical slogans during demonstrations and making incomprehensible speeches at gatherings with politicians: the written and spoken word became a battleground. Counter-culturalists’ rejection of Italian rules of syntax both defied authoritarianism and signified a desire for social reform by attacking the roots of culture and communication.⁹⁴

The title of Echaurren’s trademark zine, *OASK?!*, founded in 1977 with Gabbianelli, Gandalf and Carlo Infante (who was in *Avanguardia Operaia*), was an anagram of *caos* (chaos) and *caso* (meaning chance, a Duchampian reference to the aesthetics of chance), while the question and exclamation mark reference the language of comics. The letter ‘K’, non-existent in the Italian alphabet, added to its exoticization. The texts in these zines were often written in stream-of-consciousness styles, which Echaurren himself claims to no longer understand today. This incomprehensibility was also a form of cultural appropriation from Far West films in which Native Americans are portrayed as speaking in a simplified form of language, or communicating wordlessly by smoke signals or hand gestures. Echaurren translated the idea of incommunicability in other works, such as his *Maledetti Indiani* (Damned Indians) by filling speech bubbles with blotches of paint (fig. 17). In the middle of the page the bubble reads: “Damned Indians it’s impossible to understand a thing you say!”. In 1977, Umberto Eco wrote about the avantgarde use of language by the *A/traverso* collective, as well as about the linguistic transformations of what he termed the “new barbarians”, suggesting that an “Italo-Indian” language was emerging amongst the young.⁹⁵ Thus, with his use of a pejorative term like “barbarians” in relation to the Italian student movement, it is possible to consider even the great semiotician’s use of language as inappropriate.

A Deleuzian philosophy of language has been fruitfully put into relation with Native American studies, in particular Gerald Vizenor’s concept of “trickster hermeneutics”, as a way of interpreting Native Americanness, opening up new thinking about the use of language to contest the dominant culture. A “minority language” rejects the unanimity of the majority culture, bringing in the voices of

94 Di Nallo 1977, pp. 45–62.



Pablo Echavren 1977



17 Pablo Echaurren, *Maledetti indiani non si capisce un cavolo di quello che dite*, 1977, ink and collage on paper, 34.5 × 24.5 cm (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-8391)

the absent to probe a national consciousness.⁹⁶ Campbell discusses Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the “creative stammering” of “minor languages”, which offered innovative forms and themes within texts on Native American literature.⁹⁷ The invented language shared amongst Italian counterculturalists was interlaced with repetition, nonsense, rhymes and rhythmical forms of stammering. Echaurren observed that this happened on a contradictory, individual-mass scale, in which counterculturalists across the country began employing a new language without realizing their comrades elsewhere were doing the same. This broken language, or language of fragments, spoke of an experience of loss and, perhaps, of trauma. It was a radically creative way of expressing a story untold, a story that could not be spoken, of state oppression and denial.

Echaurren and Gabbianelli’s use of puns via Dada provocation and hermeticism meant that *OASK?!* was one of the main zines that Maurizio Calvesi chose to analyze. As the first art historian and critic to consider zines as cultural objects to be critically examined, Calvesi, like Eco, was crucial to the historicization of the visual countercultures.⁹⁸ Calvesi, however, was fairly dismissive of their anti-authoritarian aspirations: “*OASK?! is cultural and not as spontaneous as it would like to appear; objectively, it comes ‘after’ pop art, and it certainly is puerile fairy-taleism following the poetics of the primary.*”⁹⁹ By “the primary”, Calvesi meant futurism and other avant-gardes, which he identified as the visual inspiration for zines like *OASK?!*. Calvesi ventured into the Italian visual underground with no guidance, and it was an impenetrable world to the uninitiated. As Asor Rosa observed, two societies had emerged from the political protests nationwide: the guaranteed and the non-guaranteed.¹⁰⁰ The only way to belong to the underground or have any access to it was by becoming a *non-garantito*, that is, someone who was marginalized, or unsupported by any syndicate or system.¹⁰¹ It would not be until 1997 that Calvesi, in *Vent’anni dopo* (Twenty Years Later, the catalogue of the exhibition *Oltreconfine* at the Museo Laboratorio di Arte contemporanea in Rome) would realize that Echaurren was the artist behind the fanzines.¹⁰² Calvesi’s adventures underground, in which he misidentified the authors, wrongly imagining Bifo Berardi to be behind the self-organized *OASK?!*, have echoes in the much-quoted concept of guerrilla warfare in the arts.

It was Germano Celant, in his 1967 article “Arte Povera: Notes for Guerrilla Warfare”, in *Flash Art*, who famously advocated the guerrilla tactics of invisibility in the arts. Celant’s use of military language was partly in imitation of the language of the student protests against the Vietnam War.¹⁰³ He spoke of Italian artists’ new-found capacity to “choose where to fight [and] have the advantage of mobility, of surprise and attack”.¹⁰⁴ The underground press used similar allusions to guerrilla warfare through image and text, as we saw in the first section. Celant interwove his text with indecipherable spiritual-shamanic terminology, as in this passage: “The linguistic components that thus return to the field include primor-

95 Eco 1977a; Eco 1977b.

96 Deleuze 2000 cited in Campbell, 2008 p. 233.

97 Deleuze/Guattari 1996 cited in Campbell 2008, p. 151.

98 Most critical writing on the Movement of 1977 highlights Eco and Calvesi’s seminal role in understanding the importance of underground culture.

99 “*OASK?! è culturale e non spontaneistico come vorrebbe apparire, e oggettivamente ‘dopo’ la pop art, e certo infantilismo fiabesco dopo le poetiche del primario*”, Calvesi 1978, p. 72.

100 Salaris 1997.

101 Interview with Pablo Echaurren, 27.01.2022.

102 Calvesi’s original 1978 essay was republished in Calvesi 2018.

103 For an overview of art practices responding to the Vietnam War, see Gallo 2020.

104 Celant 1967, p. 5.

dial aniconic paradigms free from every system of iconological categorization. Elements of a doing that are not bound to the image to be created but present themselves to ‘pretend’ themselves.”¹⁰⁵ The critic’s linguistic performance and his recurring reference to “symbolic violence” was dubbed a form of “macho-Marxist” discourse. It can also be read, however, as imitating the linguistic ‘stammering’ evoked by Deleuze and Guattari and the desire for renewal mirrored in the counterculture.¹⁰⁶ As Deloria observes: “Guerrilla warfare, practiced to great effect by the Vietnamese and advocated domestically by some radicals, had its parallels in the ambushes and raids of Red Cloud, Geronimo, and others – at least as they were half-imagined and half-remembered from generic western films.”¹⁰⁷ Others have pointed out that this parallel was destructive for Native Americans. For example, the film *Soldier Blue* was an attempt to speak out against American imperialism in the Vietnam War through the figures of Native Americans, who were consequently deprived of the specificity of their Indigenous heritage by being made to serve as a symbol for a different political battle. Dunbar-Ortiz, however, sees the parallels between the Indian Wars and the Vietnam War as suggesting “a long-overdue reinterpretation of Indigenous-US relations as a template for US imperialism and counterinsurgency wars.”¹⁰⁸

The Marxist interest in class, economics and alternative forms of community was also a mainstay in Italian film-making about the Far West, from Sergio Leone’s Spaghetti Westerns to Communist Party-funded political Westerns featuring the Mexican Revolution.¹⁰⁹ The Italian Maoist support for the Mexican Revolution was couched in the 1919 Gramscian proletarian revolution and the southern conflict between peasants and land-owners. Starring in the Spaghetti Western *Requiescant* (1966), Pasolini enacted an Indigenous rebel who opposed the oppressive tyranny of the colonizers. This type of cultural appropriation could be read as a way of bringing the past into the present through an ‘Other’ that was neither the colonized in Africa, nor the southern peasant, both of whom had suffered atrocities in the construction of an Italian national identity. The counterculture used Native Americanness to retell trauma that had been silenced. *Requiescant* was about the Mexican Revolution rather than the Indian Wars, but ultimately it can be seen as reflecting the silenced history of state oppression.

The masculine prerogative of guerrilla warfare can be considered to have translated into the do-it-yourself ecology movement, in which Celant briefly participated in the form of a conversation in an appendix to Mizio Turchet’s *Fallo da te! Manuale pratico di vita quotidiana alternativa* (1974) entitled “Global Tools.”¹¹⁰ The conversation included seven other men, among whom Sottsass, showing how omnipresent the latter was in the countercultural movement, and possibly providing the underlying connection between the *Whole Earth Catalog* series which heralded *Fallo da te!* and *Avanguardia’s* tools for countercultural modes of living interpreted through new technologies. Celant’s intervention in the conversation speaks to the necessity of leaving art alone and not letting it be “reduced to words or critical readings [...] it offers itself only in its magical and ritual naturalness.”¹¹¹ Dantini, speaking of Celant’s personality, identifies the “sha-

105 “Le componenti linguistiche ritornano così in campo quali paradigmi, primigeni, aniconici liberi da ogni sistema di collocazione iconologica. Elementi di un farsi, che non si vincolano all’immagine da realizzare, ma si presentano per “fingere” se stessi”, Celant 1967, p. 5.

106 Dantini 2012, p. 155.

107 Deloria 1999, p. 161.

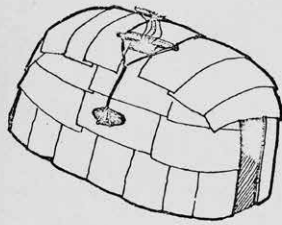
108 Dunbar-Ortiz 2016, p. 349.

109 On the connection between Italian anticolonialism and the Mexican Revolution in film, see Uva 2005.

110 Turchet 1974, pp. 168–175.

111 Turchet 1974, p. 175.

L'uomo chiamato cavallo dove tra l'altro si vede un gigantesco wigwam capace di contenere più di cento persone. La



copertura si può fare con scorza di betulla, tela, foglie o in

versione più moderna con sacchi di polietene, stoffa, p.v.c., oppure uno di questi materiali ricoperti di schiuma di poliuretano. Il tipo di copertura dipende dal clima. Più fitta è l'intelaiatura, più piccoli dovranno essere i pezzi di copertura. Cuccette fatte di pali allacciati si possono costruire dentro il wigwam. Si può usare ogni tipo di albero verde flessibile. Le estremità sono ficcate per una trentina di centimetri nel terreno. Ricordarsi di fare o lasciare da qualche parte un foro per l'aerazione e per il fumo, possibilmente munito di alette di direzione.



"Buckminster who?"

(da "Playboy", febbraio 1970)

15

18 Mizio Turchet, *Fallo da te! Manuale pratico di vita quotidiana alternativa*, 1974, p. 15 (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Collection Pablo Echaurren PE-8079)

the single idea of nomadism. Much has been written on nomadism in the art practices of the 1970s. What is revealed, however, from an analysis of visual countercultures, is the proliferation of literature and step-by-step sketches inviting individuals to set themselves up independently for living on the road, free from the trappings of home-owning.¹¹⁴

Conclusion

The richness, diversity and problematics of the material unfurled in examining the Italian counterculture through the lens of Native Americanness undoubtedly deserves a more in-depth analysis than what I have attempted here. The phenomenon was so widespread that it appears not only in obvious places like films on the Far West, but also in underground press cultures, dress codes, institutional art practices, critical writing, mainstream and alternative comics, the do-it-yourself culture and the ecology movement. In this article, I have tried to analyze the sources of the appropriative urges within the Italian political context of state violence in the 1970s, while mapping the many inherited stereotypes of Native Americans from Far West films and American hippie culture. Individuals like

man-artist" as one of the latter's critical-curatorial roles, which function as his criteria for producing "patriarchal myths".¹¹² While ironizing over this 'virile' form of spirituality and cultural heroism, Dantini may also have been alluding to the personal connection Celant developed with the Navajo people in Colorado during Christo and Jeanne-Claude's installation of *Valley Curtain* in 1972, which may in turn have inspired his shamanic-like words in the 'Global Tools' conversation two years later.

Beyond the many possible hypotheses regarding intellectuals' positionality vis-à-vis Native Americans, *Fallo da te!* offered practical tools for living more ecologically, in the same way as numerous zines included do-it-yourself sections, for example on how to build a teepee, recycle your clothes or make your own leather sandals. In a section describing how to build a wigwam, Turchet observes that "the wigwam is the typical refuge for Indian tribes on the East Coast, in particular from Massachusetts. This type of shelter is quite rough compared to the elegant 'teepees' of the redskins from the West Coast."¹¹³ Aside from the offensive use of "redskins", the author's implied connoisseurship comes across as superficial and overly concerned with aesthetics. In the next section, he references the presence of a huge wigwam in the film *A Man Called Horse* (1970), and includes a cartoon with an igloo and two Indigenous people, whose pithy question "Buckminster Who?" queries the comparative innovativeness of Fuller's geodesic dome (fig. 18). Here, the igloo is referenced within a description of a wigwam, collating separate Indigenous building practices under

¹¹² Dantini 2012, p. 156.

¹¹³ Turchet 1974, p. 14.

¹¹⁴ Two reference articles on nomadism in 1970s art practices include Bottinelli 2015; Viva 2015.

Angelo Quattrocchi and Beverly Axelrod, Fernanda Pivano and Ettore Sottsass also formed direct lines of communication with West Coast influences that allowed imagery and ideas to circulate more easily at a time when travel beyond national borders was not affordable for many. The resulting imaginary tourism in the form of books, films and zines contributed to constructing an image of Native Americanness that needs to be considered both in relation to the context of its period and to present-day identity politics.

Problematic cultural appropriating took place on a variety of levels: in the exploitative and damaging re-use of vintage photographs of Native Americans, but also in the appropriation of imagery from *Tex*, a homegrown comics series that inadvertently re-asserted the white man's superiority over Native Americans. Although detournement worked to place Native Americans at center stage, stereotypes of Indigenous peoples were still being reproduced in the same way that alternative comics validated the use of clichéd symbols (bandanas, feathers), which could tend towards the caricatural, especially in the case of the Metropolitan Indians. This movement has not been adequately examined for its appropriative aspects, partly due to the label that erroneously subsumed the carnivalesque variety of cosplay under the idea of "playing Indian." The performative protest against oppressive state violence and killings was taken further with the development of an incomprehensible language, a form of 'stammering' in defiance of language. The stuttering gaps can be interpreted as a struggle to tell the truth about a denial of trauma, or the impossibility to do so.

Notwithstanding their rebellious spirit, the counterculturists battled with endemic forces of nationalism and racism inherited from the fascist dictatorship, with which the nation had not yet reckoned. On the contrary, the Italian secret services were colluding with the extreme right-wing from the mid-1960s on, to stymie the growing popularity of the Communist Party. In the re-emergence of violence, the trauma of a repressed memory of fascism returned to haunt the nation in a new form: that of normalized, state-sponsored terror, and the radical responses to it. In the same way that the denial of the Nazi past in Germany has been seen as the root cause of the radical violence of the Red Army Faction, so the Red Brigades have been interpreted as the result of the erasure of Italy's fascist history. Native American imagery, in this context, was adopted as a way of bringing the past back into the present, of revisiting national traumas of repression and atrocity. The hauntings arose not only from the atrocities committed by the fascist regime against Italian partisans, civilians, Jews and the colonized, but also from the crimes committed against the peasants in the South during the Unification of Italy, and their continued oppression into the twentieth century. The imagery of a Native American 'Other' offered an attractive alternative to reckoning with an erased national history. Native Americans could tell stories of cultural imperialism, and appealed to Italian counterculturists because of their 'in-betweenness' since they did not speak directly to Italy's colonial past in Africa, but of atrocities that could not be attributed to Italians.

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