

Alfred Kroeber, the Yuroks, and Me (Preview)

A Letter to My Daughter

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Abstract

I explore my positionality as a non-Indigenous scholar writing about Indigenous peoples in California. As I think about my relationship with the Yurok people I write about, I also think about my relationship with my father, who did not raise me, and about my relationship with my own daughter. Searching for my own voice, as an academic, as a daughter, and as a mother, I wonder about the similarities between the infamous anthropologist Alfred Kroeber and me. I ask whether there is an ethical way for me to write about the Yurok, or whether I am doomed to replicate Kroeber's sins. I conclude that greater reflexivity about my own positionality is valuable and even essential to my academic work, in relation to my interlocutors, with integrity, and indeed, in solidarity.

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