

Review Article: Who is This Really About Anyway?

Ishi, Kroeber, and the Intertwining of California Indian and
Anthropological Histories

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Ishi in Three Centuries. *Karl Kroeber and Clifton Kroeber, eds.* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003. 416 pp. \$49. 95 cloth.

Ishi's Brain: In Search of America's Last "Wild" Indian. *Orin Stam.* New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2004. 320 pp. \$25. 95 cloth.

When I approached Lawrence Straus, the editor of the *Journal of Anthropological Research* and my colleague in the UNM Department of Anthropology, about writing a review essay on two recent books that revisit and revise our understanding of the life and death of Ishi, he in turn asked me, "Is there anything left to say?" The rediscovery of Ishi's embalmed brain in the storage rooms of the Smithsonian Institution a few years ago, and the subsequent repatriation of the brain as well as the ashes of the rest of Ishi's body to a California Indian tribe, certainly had reopened the "case of Ishi," so to speak, stimulating a fresh spate of commentary, recrimination, and interpretation in the literature. But there has been neither ethnographic nor analytic closure as a result of the new discourses about Ishi's life and death, and as a result I would argue there is still much more to say. In that vein, I offer this modest contribution.¹

The two books I review for this essay are very different in form and scope. But they are alike in a manner in which perhaps all books about Ishi are alike: that is, while their titles light up Ishi's name "in neon," and their covers actually feature his photographic likeness, such works are always just as much about Alfred Kroeber—central figure in the establishment of the Department of Anthropology at Berkeley, and the anthropologist whose life had intertwined so deeply and importantly with Ishi's—as about Ishi. Both of these books are also chronicles of how, ever since the deaths of both Ishi and Kroeber, the histories of California Indians and of anthropology have become increasingly and ever more complexly tangled and intertwined.

On the one hand, the sons of Alfred Kroeber have edited a volume entitled *Ishi in Three Centuries*. Karl Kroeber and Clifton Kroeber, Alfred's sons by his second and first wives, respectively, have included diverse authors elaborating a very wide array of current Ishi discourse, including the brain rediscovery and repatriation controversies, but also extending to new archeological, linguistic, artistic, and literary research and analysis. In putting together this book, the Kroebers carry on their family's Ishi legacy, certainly in order to challenge criticisms of their parents which I will detail in this essay, but also to showcase the most interesting and innovative new scholarship about Ishi's life. Many of the contributors to the book participate in disputes over both the intentions and outcomes of Alfred's work with Ishi, and of Theodora's posthumous books about him. But I do not think that the authors in this book contributed their work primarily for those reasons. Ishi has for almost a century put California Indians "on the map," certainly in popular literature about Native Americans, but likely for many students of anthropology as well. This volume is a comprehensive update on the status of Ishi studies, and the contributors to the volume give readers new data and

¹ Revision of this essay has profited from the suggestions of two JAR reviewers and the Editor.

analysis that open a window into such topics as genocide, tribal identity, and culture change and survival, with tremendous relevance for all of California Indian studies.

By contrast, Orin Stam's *Ishi's Brain: In Search of America's Last "Wild" Indian* details one anthropologist's involvement in the brain rediscovery and repatriation controversy, and along the way describes many aspects of research about Ishi's life that have recently unfolded. The book was not written primarily for an academic audience, or if it was, it is directed more at undergraduates than scholars. Its accessible prose and well-paced narrative style are especially useful for readers unfamiliar with the Ishi story, or perhaps for readers who long ago read Theodora Kroeber's books. The reader travels along with Stam, from his boyhood infatuation with Ishi, fully accepting Ishi as "the last of his kind" through initial phases of professional curiosity to becoming the scholar-accomplice of Art Angle, the Maidu Indian who had for a long time suspected the truth about Ishi's brain. What happens to Stam-the-sleuth is fortuitous and always interesting, and along the way all of the important issues concerning the study of Ishi's life and death are explored, organized around the central narrative of Ishi's brain and its repatriation. The author—Stam himself—is by definition a central character in his book, unlike most of the contributing authors but much like the Kroebers themselves in *their* book.

Clearly, it is inconceivable to write about Ishi and *not* to write either about Kroeber or about anthropology's historical engagement with the overall fate of California Indians. So this review, like the books themselves, will also be about Kroeber in three centuries.

Concerning Ishi

For the sake of those who know rather less about the matter of Ishi than do others, let me review the events around which the main areas of political and academic dispute have coalesced, events which are exhaustively discussed in both of the books under discussion. An emaciated and apparently traumatized California Indian man emerged out of a remote and rugged area near Mt. Lassen at the end of August, 1911, the sole survivor of a tiny band of Indians that had been spotted in the area on and off for some years by local white people. He was taken to the nearby Oroville jail by the three white men who first saw him. From Oroville, and with the express permission of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, this Native man was taken to San Francisco. Under the care of Alfred Kroeber, T. T. Waterman and other anthropologists, as well as a physician named Saxton Pope, he came to reside until his death in 1916 at the Museum of Anthropology (then located in San Francisco, currently on the Berkeley campus) that Kroeber had created with Phoebe Hearst's money. Kroeber named the man *Ishi*, the word for "man" in his dialect of the Yana language, but his actual name was never known. The first major dispute that dominates these books concerns whether Ishi's life at the museum constituted an infringement of his human rights. Was Ishi treated as a living exhibit of primitive culture, the last example of a vanquished Indian world, on display at the museum for both a voyeuristic public and a data-hungry anthropological community? Or was Ishi instead a willing, conscious participant in co-creating a new life for himself in San Francisco, a life that afforded him comfort, dignity, friendship, and personal satisfaction?

If the first dispute concerns Ishi's life from 1911 to 1916, the second derives from the events which occurred at the time of Ishi's death and afterward. Ishi's health steadily deteriorated during the last two years he lived in San Francisco, as the case of tuberculosis he had contracted (unbeknownst to his physician and the anthropologists) advanced. Ishi had expressed a horror at the autopsies he had viewed at the hospital adjacent to the museum; Kroeber, who was not present at the time of Ishi's death, had explicitly instructed his colleagues to respect Ishi's remains. Nevertheless, an autopsy was carried out on Ishi's body, which was subsequently cremated. That much has long been known, mostly via the immensely popular and well-received biographies of Ishi written by Theodora Kroeber, Alfred's second wife. In the mid-1990s, thanks to the investigatory work done by Orin Stam at the instigation of another California Indian man, Art Angle, and in cooperation with Nancy Rockafellar, a historian of science at UC San Francisco, it was revealed that Ishi's brain had been removed at the time of autopsy and then sent to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.,

where it had resided in storage ever since. The subsequent struggles to repatriate Ishi's brain and ashes have led to other contentious questions that also unfold in both of these books. Why did Kroeber decide to send Ishi's brain to the Smithsonian after having expressed unequivocal opposition to the autopsy? In light of that act, what were Kroeber's (and the others') real feelings about Ishi? Why did Theodora Kroeber, who must have known about the fate of the brain, fail to write about it in the popular books about Ishi that she wrote in the late 1950s? Does that omission mean that in general Theodora misrepresented Kroeber's feelings, such as those she described in her biography of her husband's life?

I knew that Kroeber would never have written Ishi's biography. He had lived too much of it, and too much of it was the stuff of human agony from whose immediacy he could not sufficiently distance himself. (T. Kroeber 1970:93)

Do contemporary anthropologists, particularly those in Kroeber's Berkeley department, inherit any responsibility for his decisions, and if so, what should be done about that? In the end, how will the many strands and contradictions of Ishi's life and death affect future relationships between anthropologists and California Indians?

While the blaze of media attention, and much of the discussion in these books as well, has focused on the disputes I have already described, and the desire on the part of many of the interlocutors to provide relatively simple answers to questions about Ishi's post-emergence life and death, deeper questions are also thematically explored in these books. Indeed, these questions are more specifically *anthropological*, and less journalistic, about what *anthropologists* did or do not do after 1911. Who *was* Ishi—in a social and cultural sense—before he emerged from hiding? What happened to the other members of his tiny band, and what was Ishi's role in their fates? Who were they? Did the fact that they all seem to have spoken a particular dialect of the Yana language, which Kroeber called Yahi, really signify that they likewise were members of a distinct sociocultural group, as Kroeber assumed? How did the events of Ishi's life, his relationships with the other members of this band, their values, world-views, and culturally constructed preoccupations shape Ishi's decision to emerge from hiding, as well as his attitudes toward his post-emergence life? Stam and many of the contributors to the Kroebers' book are as concerned about these deeper and much more difficult to address issues as they are about the media-ready disputes.

Complaints About Kroeber

What Stam learned during the rediscovery of Ishi's brain and the repatriation of his ashes shaped a point of view quite critical of Kroeber's decisions with respect to both Ishi's life and his death. I found frustrating his initial lack of prior expertise in California Indian history and culture, as that factor surfaced repeatedly throughout much of the book. My frustration was relieved partly by what Stam realized at the end of the book (which I will discuss later on), but even more so by Stam's willingness to respond to the ideas and research goals of a Native person—namely Art Angle—rather than coming up with and then imposing his own research project on the situation he encountered. In that sense, Stam was willing to upturn the usual epistemology of anthropological research, and to put his professional credentials at the service of Angle, a non-anthropologist with tremendous personal and political stakes in the outcome of Stam's investigation. The importance of Stam's collaboration with Angle should not be underestimated or glossed over. Stam also wrote with admirable even-handedness about the Smithsonian's decision not to repatriate Ishi's brain to Angle's Maidu group, opting instead for the Redding Rancheria and the Pitt River Tribe. Under the circumstances, the fact that Stam established a reasonably good working relationship with Mickey Gemmill, who had led the Pitt River tribe's repatriation claim, was an accomplishment.

Stam's characterization of Ishi's life in San Francisco acknowledged the man's dignity, and his exercise of humor, interpersonal intimacy, and free will in creating a life for himself at the museum. Nevertheless, Stam also described Ishi as a victim of *both* the brutal campaigns to exterminate native peoples of California *and* the anthropologists' drive to study the [apparently] last surviving example of the "wild Indian." With respect to Ishi's brain, Stam levels an unforgiving critique not only of Kroeber's decision to send the organ to the Smithsonian but also of Theodora's decision not to discuss the brain's fate in her books. Stam's views resonate most with those of the other main antagonist on this "side" of the debate, Nancy Scheper-Hughes, professor of anthropology in the Berkeley department, and also a contributor to the Kroebers' volume. With a discerning critique of Kroeber's motives toward and analysis of Ishi, she advocated for a strongly worded statement from the Berkeley department, apologizing for Kroeber's "failure" to honor Ishi's wishes. A muted version of this apology was published in the newsletter of American Anthropology Association (*Anthropology News*) in 1999, but it was, according to Scheper-Hughes, as much as a response to the repatriation demands of contemporary Native peoples of California as it was an attempt to transform anthropological discourse.

Scheper-Hughes called Ishi a holocaust survivor, a man “at the end of his existential rope” (p. 123), and a victim of what we now call post-traumatic stress disorder. Acknowledging that she has no expertise concerning California Indian culture and history, Scheper-Hughes defines her intervention as “a foray into public anthropology ... as an anthropologically informed citizen” (pp. 99-100). But it is also clear that Scheper-Hughes’s professional research concerning the burgeoning and illegal trade in human organs from super-exploited peoples of the Third and Fourth World to super-privileged rich individuals predisposed her interest in the fate of Ishi’s brain. The heart of her critical essay seeks to demonstrate that anthropology has had a role in the genocide history of California Indian peoples, and that Kroeber’s lack of interest in this genocide was linked to important characteristics of his scholarship, which dismissed the importance of individual experience and paired scientific objectivity with emotional remoteness. Scheper-Hughes criticizes Kroeber for “exhibiting” Ishi during his five-year residence at the museum, and she engages in considerable, mostly unflattering, speculation about why Kroeber sent the brain on to the Smithsonian. The chapter nevertheless recalls that Kroeber became an advocate for California Indian rights in the Indian land claims battles of the 1950s, and she ends by calling for forgiveness and reconciliation between anthropologists and Native peoples of California.

Kroeber Family Values

The Kroebers' introduction to the volume and a chapter authored by Karl Kroeber, which follows the one written by Scheper-Hughes, leave no doubt that the activist research conducted and published by Stam and Scheper-Hughes has provoked a harsh reaction in turn. An important motivation for producing this volume was to provide the Kroebers with a forum to challenge views of post-emergence Ishi as tragic victim of a "sinister cabal of scientists." Instead, Karl Kroeber sets out to revalidate the Boasian anthropology his father pursued, thereby rescuing the reputations of both his father and mother, even though Alfred himself, according to Theodora (1970), freely admitted that his views and interests had changed considerably over the course of his professional life. This defense of their parents' work foregrounds a showcase of creative and important new research about Ishi in the volume. The anthropologists gave Ishi "refuge," writes Karl Kroeber, and Ishi in turn lived a life of grace and generosity of spirit in San Francisco. Karl Kroeber does not like the word "genocide," which he feels his antagonists (Scheper-Hughes and Stam) deploy casually and faddishly; he prefers terms such as "savage extermination," and "mistreatment." There are serious accusations at the heart of these semantics: "the humanity of Ishi is falsified by those who turn him into a symbol, abstract him into some sort of universal icon . . . much that ostensibly celebrates Ishi is in fact self-disguised exploitation" (p. 139).

Strong stuff, but what does Karl Kroeber himself make of contemporary anthropology, the Ishi story, and the repatriation debate? First of all, Kroeber is angry at the decline of Native American-oriented studies and classes in U.S. anthropology departments. Apparently, he has not reckoned with the effects of the harsh critiques of anthropology's history in Indian Country, appearing during and since the 1960s in the writing of many Native intellectuals and captured quite crisply by Vine Deloria Jr. (1969). It was hard to read Kroeber's comments about what is lacking in today's anthropology departments without the creeping suspicion that he is somewhat out of touch. Much more cogently, Kroeber's essay contextualizes the narrative of Ishi by invoking the hegemonic power of classical Euro-American narrations of "the last of his kind" and "the noble savage." This leads him to conclude that, although the way the story of Ishi is told necessarily makes him a victim, this is not at all the same as celebrating his victimization, which he accuses his protagonists of doing. Kroeber is skeptical of Ishi's repatriation, a process he in fact supported, because it fetishized a dead body, and such bodies in many cases "belong to none of us" (p. 140). Reiterating that Ishi must not be turned into a symbol or an abstraction, because that *is* exploiting him, Kroeber then turns to Greek myth for exegesis, because Homer is all about

“the central problems of humanity.” This confuses me. In Theodora’s telling, “Ishi is exemplary,” Kroeber writes. We must, he admonishes, “honor Ishi’s individuality [to] avoid sentimentalizing him,” but Kroeber once again casts his story in light of iconic tragedies from Sophocles to Shakespeare. Like any scholar, Kroeber cannot resist analyzing Ishi in light of other literature, other experiences, other sensibilities. He comes to his own conclusions, but his methods are not all that different from those of his protagonists whom he so harshly derides.

The antagonism between Scheper-Hughes and Stam, on the one hand, and Karl and Clifton Kroeber, on the other, takes on the character of a family feud as well. Karl Kroeber claimed that his motives in leveling devastating critiques of “academic and popularizing distortions,” if not filial, “sure as hell are personal” (p. 134), but this is splitting hairs, if not disingenuous. On the other side of the coin, Scheper-Hughes and Stam criticized another of Alfred and Theodora’s children, Ursula K. Le Guin, in a way that I found *ad hominem* and simply absurd. Karl and Clifton Kroeber report that Scheper-Hughes misquoted a presentation Le Guin gave at the Berkeley department’s centenary event, and misrepresented comments made during the presentation as part of a conversation between the two women. It is easy to verify that charge because Le Guin published her comments (Le Guin 2004). Reading the published essay, one cannot help but conclude that Stam also misused Le Guin’s comments. The source of Scheper-Hughes’s complaint with Le Guin, I think, is that Le Guin could not provide additional information about Kroeber’s relationship with Ishi. Likewise, Stam wrote that he “admired” the fiction written by Le Guin, but he was dissatisfied that she could not explain her father’s decision with respect to Ishi’s brain. These comments reveal how a narrowed kind of focus upon the Ishi case can lead to distorted views about an interested party.

I happen to believe Le Guin when she relates that her father did not talk about Ishi, having myself grown up with adults who took similar approaches to painful and embarrassing issues. Moreover, LeGuin was born thirteen years after Ishi died, so what she does know about Ishi is received wisdom via her mother’s biographical work, itself derivative of other people’s memories, since Theodora married Alfred some ten years after Ishi’s death. In another essay (also in Le Guin 2004), Le Guin discusses at length the relationship between two other Native American men— Robert Spott (Yurok) and Juan Dolores (Papago)—and her father and her entire family. There is a great deal of importance in what she reveals about her father in this essay (and in others) that sheds light on Alfred Kroeber’s character and his professional work, which she calls, without irony and with the greatest possible compassion, both “an act of imperialism,” and “an act of human solidarity” (2004:29). Bridging the polarized views of the antagonists in these two volumes, this is what Le Guin has to say about her mother’s biographies of Ishi:

My mother continued [Alfred’s] work with her history of the frontier, the native Californian Ishi. I admire her book as deeply as I admire its subject,

but have always regretted the subtitle, *A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America*, for it contradicts the sense and spirit of the story she tells. Ishi was not wild. He did not come out of the wilderness, but out of a culture and tradition far more deeply rooted and soundly established than that of the frontiersmen who slaughtered his people to get their land. He did not live in a wilderness, but in a dearly familiar world he and his people knew hill by hill, river by river, stone by stone. Who made these hills a wilderness of blood and mourning and ignorance? (Le Guin 2004:29)

More of Le Guin's fantastically diverse work could also have been consulted to respond to some of Scheper-Hughes's other questions about Alfred Kroeber's character with respect to issues of life and death. Le Guin confides:

The first *Tao Te Ching* I ever saw was the Paul Carus edition of 1898, bound in yellow cloth stamped with blue and red Chinese designs and characters. It was a venerable object of mystery, which I soon investigated and found more fascinating inside than out. The book was my father's; he read in it often. Once I saw him making notes from it and asked him what he was doing. He said he was marking which chapters he'd like to have read at his funeral. We did read those chapters at his memorial service. (Le Guin 1998:ix)

One could easily respond: well, many people read the *Tao Te Ching*. That is quite true. But from all I thought I knew and had read about Kroeber, particularly in the Stam and Kroebers' volumes, I did not expect that he should be one of those people. I too have "Kroeber-bashed" in my own work with California's tribes, and I found Le Guin's essays illuminating and sobering.

Which Side Are You on?

The polarizing effects of the struggle to interpret Ishi's life and death are profound throughout the Kroebers' volume. I found many strange inconsistencies and strong denunciations sprinkled amongst the innovative and creative research. But I also noted that not all of the chapters in the Kroebers' volume participate in these polarizing antagonisms. One chapter, by Fred Zumwalt Jr., offers a childhood memoir of Ishi, written in the form of a previously unpublished letter to Theodora in 1962. Grace Buzaljko, currently writing a history of the Berkeley department, offers a clearly written chapter which outlines as nearly an objective history as is probably possible of the main players in post-emergence Ishi's life and death. Stuart Speaker authored the Smithsonian's report on how Ishi's brain came to be in the Institution's storage rooms. Speaker's chapter details the legal basis for repatriation, based upon national legislation known as NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act), as well as the historical, anthropological, linguistic, and oral narrative evidence the Smithsonian used to determine to which Native group (the Pitt Rivers) the brain should be given. Other chapters that are not characteristically polemical include Victor Golla's superb analysis of Ishi's Yahi language and the significant presence of words from Wintu, Maidu, Atsugewi, and Spanish in Ishi's lexicon, and Jean Perry's riveting translation of stories Ishi recorded in Yahi on wax cylinders with Kroeber and the other anthropologists. Ironically, Orin Stam's short contribution to this volume, which discusses the presence of multiple Spanish and Spanish-derived words in Ishi's lexicon, is very much aligned to the "new research about Ishi" current in this book. Such chapters are sprinkled throughout the volume, and it occurred to me that an alternative way to have organized the book would have been to put these chapters up front, before all the denunciatory fireworks among the prime antagonists and their various allies. Reading the book for the third time, I realized that these chapters lend a clarity to the overall presentation that might be cultivated and refined so that readers can make up their own minds about the various disputes.

I think the polemics may really come down to some nasty politics within and about the Berkeley department *and* the official apology, the muted version of which (published in *Anthropology News*) is presented in a chapter authored by professor and ex-chair Stanley Brandes. These politics are no more apparent than in a chapter by another ex-departmental chair, George Foster, whose "alternative interpretation" of Ishi's life and death rejects the need to apologize for Kroeber's decisions. According to Foster, Kroeber did *not* "exhibit" Ishi; Kroeber and Pope did *not* unduly risk Ishi's health; the anthropologists did *not* exploit Ishi for information; Kroeber did *not* violate Ishi's

trust by mailing his brain to Washington, D.C.; and Theodora did *not* excessively romanticize Ishi in her books. There are no ambiguities here. Foster's essay does not actually read like a polemic, and he tries to be gracious to the "other side," but he finds that he cannot validate their opinions in any way, finding their views entirely implausible.

It is clear why Foster's argument proceeds the way it does, but much less apparent why M. Steven Shackley's otherwise tremendously enlightening chapter also has to sling insults at other scholars. Shackley, a research archaeologist at the Hearst Museum at Berkeley, analyzes the tools Ishi made while living at the museum in San Francisco and finds that Ishi's work resembles historic Wintu and Nomlaki tools far more than forms made by ancestral Yahi-speaking people. Ishi seems to have been a Yahi-speaker who made Wintu-Nomlaki tools, often with non-traditional materials such as bottle-glass, which suggests the fading of identity boundaries in this region of post-conquest California. The care and subtlety with which Shackley's analysis proceeds on the basis of his data contrasts with his denunciation of anthropologists and historians "who do not work with Native Americans as colleagues or consultants, nor teach courses on Native American subjects" (p. 162) but who still have the nerve to involve themselves in the discourse about Ishi. These critics, he argues, seek to put themselves in the lime-light using the disputes over Ishi's brain and repatriation, have shown "disregard for factual evidence," and are simply "posturing." By their own admission, Scheper-Hughes and Stam are non-specialists in the field of California Indian or even North American Indian anthropology. From the vantage of having worked in Native California for the past 14 years, I am not one of those who would criticize other scholars simply because they are not specialists. The arguments that Stam, Scheper-Hughes, and others offer must stand on their own merits, not on someone else's measurement of who can and cannot participate in these debates, a kind of criticism which resembles nothing so much as posturing.

Contributions to the Kroebers' volume from other Berkeley scholars indicate that the politics of criticizing Alfred Kroeber and writing about Ishi, beyond the issue of the apology, are quite complex. The focus of the chapter by Ira Jacknis, a research anthropologist also at the Hearst Museum, is a technological, cultural, and historical exegesis of the wax cylinder recordings Ishi made with Kroeber, an opus which he calls "an amazingly personal document" (p. 249) and "Ishi's personal message to the future." Jacknis's fascinating, intellectually stimulating chapter considers Ishi a "Holocaust survivor" (p. 243) but does not expend energy on criticizing Kroeber. Herbert Luthin, and Leanne Hinton (the latter a professor of linguistics at Berkeley; the former, now teaching English at Clarion University, did graduate work in linguistics at Berkeley) contributed a marvelous translation of Ishi's "The Story of Lizard," as well as an additional chapter in which they decipher "what Ishi's stories can tell us about Ishi." They find that Ishi's stories are in some ways similar to other documented stories told by Yahi-speakers, but also "strikingly unlike anything else known in California oral literature" (p. 294). Ishi's stories focus a great deal on "setting the scene" and the

details of daily life activities, rather than on plot-lines. He was particularly reticent about sexual aspects of stories such as “Coyote and His Sister,” which featured overt sexual themes. Luthin and Hinton speculate about why Ishi told stories the way he did, and whether he was giving the anthropologists what he thought they wanted. Even though Saxton Pope and Kroeber considered Ishi “well-adjusted,” Luthin and Hinton discuss the effects of stress on Ishi narrations, and the way that his memories may have compelled him to tell stories in order to recall all that he had lost. Luthin and Hinton offer an interesting mixture of defense and critique of Kroeber: Ishi’s life at the museum protected him from exploitation at the same time he became a living exhibit. He lived his years in San Francisco “in relative contentment and ease, unlikely though this may seem” (p. 294), but Kroeber and the other anthropologists were wrong to have considered Ishi “wild” or uncontaminated. Like Jacknis, they favor the trope of Ishi as a holocaust survivor—indeed, as a California Indian Anne Frank (p. 351)—and conclude that his stories were about his values and the comfort he found in them. These measured words and the wisdom in them certainly did not draw the ire of the Kroebers.

In the case of Rachel Adams, a professor of English at Columbia—neither an anthropologist nor involved in any way with the Berkeley department’s apology—pointed criticism of both Alfred Kroeber and of anthropology certainly does not incur the Kroebers’ wrath. Adams writes about the relationship between early twentieth century anthropology and the contemporaneous Wild West Show culture. In a time period in which museums first came to function as a form of mass entertainment, Adams asks about the role of anthropology and how Kroeber and Ishi fit in. In San Francisco, popular media of the time frequently cast the anthropologists as Ishi’s jailers, while Kroeber was determined to distinguish anthropological knowledge from popular conceptions, as a part of establishing the discipline’s expertise, legitimacy, and authority. Adams finds that although Kroeber—like his mentor Boas—struggled to debunk popularized social Darwinist notions of human evolution and instead to promote cultural relativism, he in fact reinforced a view of Ishi and “the Yahi” as representatives of an inferior culture stuck in primitivism.

Native Points of View

Quite severe criticisms of Kroeber and of anthropology similar to those made by Adams characterize the contributions from other scholars who are identified as Native American. None of these scholars are taken to task by the Kroebers. Jace Weaver, professor of religion at University of Georgia and self-identified Cherokee, compared Ishi's post-emergence experience in the museum and in San Francisco with the experiences of a number of other "wild men" who were made into spectacles for consumption by white society in the early twentieth century. These individuals include Greenland Inuit brought to New York by Admiral Peary and later housed at New York's American Museum of Natural History under Franz Boas' aegis, and Ota Benga, a Central African pygmy exhibited at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, then at the American Museum of Natural History, and finally at the Bronx Zoo. Weaver considers all of these individuals to have been "haunted," isolated, and solitary, and all died miserable deaths: Benga committed suicide in 1916, the Inuit died in influenza epidemics of 1918, and Ishi succumbed to tuberculosis, also in 1916. Weaver holds the entire society responsible for the brutality of these racist spectacles, but also the specific individuals who facilitated such "living exhibits," including anthropologists.

Another contributor, Karen Biestman, also Cherokee, teaches in American Studies at Berkeley, but is not an anthropologist. Her critical analysis extends to all sides of the Ishi dispute. Theodora, she writes, never interviewed a single Native person and ignored Ishi's cultural, social, linguistic, and possibly familial ties to the many Native peoples who lived in the Mt. Lassen region, and was thus able to immortalize Ishi with the trope of "last of his kind." Yet Biestman also acknowledges the revolutionary nature of Theodora's work as an expose of the destruction of California Indian peoples. Considering Theodora's books romantic yet respectful, the sticking point for Biestman is that Theodora skirted the issue of the brain. Biestman takes the anthropologists in the contemporary Berkeley department to task for resisting the repatriation movement, even after NAGPRA was enacted. Yet she also distrusts those in the department who pushed for the apology, wondering whether they have created an exploitative celebrity cult around Ishi. This chapter takes perhaps the most risks of any in the volume, and, as she considers Ishi an "imaginative survivor" (p. 153), she demands that all those who write and talk about Ishi to work with integrity and be accountable for their words.

The most renowned Native authors included in the volume are Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe) and Louis Owens (Choctaw-Cherokee). I was a little disappointed with Vizenor's chapter, which in the main is a strange chronicle of litigious pettiness sparked by Vizenor's admirable efforts to get some part of the Berkeley campus named after

Ishi. He has written much more perceptively and acerbically about Ishi in his essay “Ishi Obscura” (1994) and in a script for a play entitled “Ishi and the Wood Ducks” (1995). The latter was based on a story Ishi told, one that is redacted in Owens’s chapter. In his essay in the Kroebers’ volume, Vizenor notes:

Kroeber was not sentimental enough, and anthropology was not ethical enough at the time, to consider the spiritual presence, the natural unity, and repatriation of his good friend, the Native humanist he had named Ishi. (p. 366)

This comes on top of Vizenor’s observation that Kroeber, “the eminent academic humanist,” and the other “culturologists” had rescued Ishi. Owens’s summary of Vizenor’s work on the subject of Ishi also highlights many highly critical insights about the treatment Ishi encountered in his relationships with Kroeber, anthropology, and the larger world of white people.

Not to overstress the point, but I do wonder why the Native authors do not provoke the ire of the Kroebers. While the Kroebers included these authors in the volume because of the value of their creative and insightful scholarship, I would also hazard that it was assumed that their nativeness predisposed them to legitimate sympathies, empathies, and analytic predilections because of the common experiences of all Native peoples in this hemisphere. Yet if Native American affiliation invokes a kind of legitimacy that non-Natives may hesitate to challenge, such affiliations do not predispose anyone to specifically understanding California Indian realities, histories, and cultures. On a lighter note, I would imagine that most scholars would not needlessly tangle with as sharp a wit as Vizenor’s! Dwelling further on the issue of Native legitimacy, it should not be forgotten that the majority of Native Americans currently living in the state of California are the progeny of non-California Indian people, many of whom migrated to the state during the federal relocation policies of the 1950s. Much more recently, large numbers of indigenous peoples have migrated to the state from Mexico, Central America, and other Latin American countries.¹ In the 1990s, while working with California Indian tribes, I often observed non-California Indian Native Americans evincing the same common sense notions as Euro-American Californians to the effect that most if not all California Indians had gone extinct. While this is not an observation relevant to the non-California Indian Native intellectuals who contributed to this volume, let us note that there are in fact only two specifically *California Indian* voices in the Kroebers’ volume.

¹ According to the 2000 census, of the ten most populous Native American affiliations in California (in descending order, Cherokee, Latin American Indians, Apache, Choctaw, Navajo, Blackfeet, Sioux, Pueblo, Yaqui, and Chippewa), not one is *California Indian*. Together, these peoples comprise 42.5% of the total Native American population of the state. In addition, 33.15% of all self-identified Native American individuals reported having no tribal affiliation whatsoever (see Lopez 2002).

Live From California: Ishi's Story Continues

The two contributions from California Indians to the Kroebers' book are in fact rather extraordinary, and because of them the volume ends in a way that resonates with the ending of Stam's book. Both of these short chapters focus on paintings; one by Frank Day (Maidu), finished in 1973 and entitled "Ishi and Companion at lamin Mool," and the second by Frank Tuttle (also Maidu), painted many years later and incorporating an image from Day's original, entitled "What Wild Indian?" A short transcript of an interview conducted in 1973 accompanies Day's painting. He recalls an event in early August of 1911, some three weeks before the fateful day when Ishi entered the world of white men permanently, when he and his father encountered two Indian men, one of whom was Ishi. In the interview, Day recalls watching Ishi conduct an utterly unique healing procedure on his injured companion. These memories indicate that Ishi had not been the isolated, lone survivor that he is assumed to have been, that the short hair he wore when he emerged likely signaled a state of mourning, and, most importantly, that he had been a knowledgeable healer amongst his people. In "Ishi Obscura," Vizenor had argued that perhaps the most important details of Ishi's pre-emergence identity were unknown and would remain forever so, but Day's memories substantiate that suspicion.

In the same vein, Stam ends his book with a haunting encounter he had with elderly speakers of Mountain Maidu, during which he played recordings of Ishi singing songs in their language. Their reaction also suggested that Ishi had been privy to esoteric knowledge: not healing, but what is usually called "doctoring" in northern California Indian circles, practices which are often far from benign and can be deadly. The Maidu elders' remarks recall other old-timers' fragmentary memories about Ishi and the truth about who he really was. These discussions are part of a wholly different discourse within California Indian communities about the meaning of doctoring: whether after the Europeans arrived Indian people had actually been glad to leave behind those practices and the dangers and jealousies they enfolded, or whether a deeper knowledge still relevant to the current time is at the heart of doctoring. I have been exposed to several different points of view about these issues over the past last dozen years, and it seems to me that both of these books ended just as profound cultural matters relevant specifically to California Indians were raised. But this is not surprising or ironic, and those matters are and will probably remain quite private. Ishi's story, for better or worse, has developed into an extended discourse about his relationship both with the

Kroebers and with anthropology, and about the still-unfolding, larger relationship between anthropology's history and the history of California Indians. Although Ishi's remains are finally at rest, these contentious relationships will for the foreseeable future continue to be the subject of extended negotiations, to which both of these volumes have contributed.

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