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Nava and Barger: *California: Five Centuries of Cultural Contrasts*

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into a full synthesis—Kroeber's time ran out too soon. Much remains for others to do; Kroeber laid the foundations.

My reading began, not with the several prefaces by others, but with the heart of the book. I read Kroeber's descriptions of his more than twenty-three informants, most of them men, the narrative analysis, and sampled footnotes and stories. Years before Kroeber and I had gone over the collection to find, if it were there (as it was), a variant of a story I was working on (Dundes, p. xxiv). More time and study is needed to say whether I agree or disagree with all of Kroeber's evaluations of informants and their narratives.

To read *Yurok Myths* I had laid down Henry James' *The Wings of the Dove*, curiously relevant it turned out. From a wealth-and-prestige conscious Western social class, I turned to an Indian society in which dentalia replaced dollars and "a full marriage" replaced "a good marriage." Near the end (p. 453) came the startling discovery of the Yurok equivalent of James' character who was a "symbol of differences" and the fluttering of this "dove's" wings. James deliberately leaves us to ponder what next; Ann of Espeu does too, but accidentally. Of her first story in which the hero is the symbol of which I write, Kroeber (p.453) says: "All that happens is that a man is overcome with nameless and irresistible drawing to play the flute to the exclusion of everything else, and finally to enter the ocean and swim westward until he passes under the sky and reaches the land beyond. Yet so insistently pathetic is the handling of the slender theme that I, at least, am left in unsatisfied suspense when the story is snapped off by external accident of recording." Kroeber also draws attention to the swimming flutist's poetic exclamation as he turns to look at the mountains he has left. The unnamed flutist sought not wealth or prestige but an answer to the question he repeatedly asked himself: "What is it I am always longing for?" (p. 454).

A strange Yurok, indeed! Ann, like her brother, Tskerkr, one of Kroeber's "best" informants, was concerned, not with action, dialogue, characterization, or plot structure like another of the best, but with a character's emotions, usually those involving pathos, and response to nature.

Little heard these days is the former commonplace that anthropology also encompasses the humanities. Our bond with the humanities weakened with the passing of Boas's students and many of his students' students. *Yurok Myths* by an anthropologist who was also a literary artist and here discusses his informants' skill with words reminds us of that bond. And I recall years ago in the old tin building at Berkeley discussing Kroeber's abstractions and theories. I, at the time a fledgling student, insisted, "But Kroeber is interested in people too." My more advanced peer then emphatically warned me, "Don't ever let Kroeber hear you say that!" Well, friend, here at last is the book to prove my point.



California: Five Centuries of Cultural Contrasts. Julian Nava and Bob Barger. Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1976. 428 pp., many illustrations and maps, index. No price listed.

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The book here under review is a general textbook of California history, written for the high-school/junior-college level. It merits review because one of its objectives is "to describe the impact of minority groups on California's development from a valid perspective." (That last is a good phrase; I always

knew California had invalid perspectives, but never knew it had actually developed away from valid ones.) Indians are included: "We begin not with the European discovery but with the state before the white man, portraying California Indian society as a complex civilization going back over thousands of years" (quotes from preface, which lacks a page number). Clearly this book is intended to influence the thinking of the people of the state, and surely will do so. It presumably represents the most enlightened thinking available in general history texts. Julian Nava is known for his stand on liberal and ethnic issues; old-time Californians (i.e. anyone living here more than ten years) will remember his campaign for the Los Angeles school board, and his election thereto. Newer Californians will learn of it on page 363, for it finds its place in this history.

One would hope and expect, then, that the sections on California Indians would be up-to-date and fair. Unfortunately, while the authors are well-intentioned and have well chronicled the destruction of the Indian world at the hands of the whites, their information is often obsolete, inaccurate, overgeneralized, or biased.

Material on the Indians is concentrated in three places: A special chapter on the Indians before the coming of the Spanish (pp. 26-47), a section on the nineteenth century destruction of the Indians (pp. 267-272), and a short section on the modern ethnic activist movements and associated recent Indian concerns. Other references to the Indians are scattered through the book, mostly in the sections on the Spanish and Mexican periods.

The chapter on the Indians in pre-contact times suffers from lack of focus and overgeneralization. Nava and Barger are clearly well-intentioned, and seriously try to cope with the Indians and their heritage (as well as their tragic fate). Unfortunately, they evidently relied on popular and secondary sources and

did not check back with an anthropologist. This has resulted in several errors, but more unfortunate is a lack of any unifying theme or focus for the chapter and a tendency to regard all California Indians as more or less undifferentiated. They are aware of local differences, but not aware enough. Thus they say the "Toloache and Kukusu cults" were "found in all tribes" (p. 42), "the main food source for California Indians was the acorn" (p.31; this is wrong for much of the state's area), and much more in like kind. Even Arizona Indians get their ways transferred to California: "Figurines called *Kachinas* . . . were placed in prominent raised areas where they were worshiped (sic) with food offerings" (p.42), presumably by all tribes. A truly astonishing passage occurs on page 33: "Indians made wine of sorts. Women collected seeds, pine nuts, madrone berries as well as acorns, cactus fruit, wild grapes, brambleberries, and fruit of willows. From these they made mild, pleasant wines." This passage must result from mixing up the manzanita-berry "cider" of California with the cactus wine of the Papagos and their neighbors in Arizona. One wonders how the authors could have thought it possible to make wines from seeds, nuts and the tiny, dry, winged fruits of willows.

The traditional Californian white man's stereotype of the "diggers" is amply evident in the book, in spite of its avowed purpose and intentions. "Compared with other Indians of the Americas, the California Indians were not advanced, leading a simple life very close to a state of nature" (p. 28). "Almost anything was considered edible" (p. 33). "In the north, the Yurok, Karok, and Hupa had completely open societies with no political organization of any kind. As one moved south, the central and coastal Indians possessed a little more social structure" (p. 36), but most groups still had no organization, apparently. Lack of agriculture and other skills is taken to show the low level of the Indians. The authors restrict agriculture to

the Colorado River area, unaware of the evidence that it is much more widespread. They seem completely unaware also of the recent theories of why agriculture was limited, bringing out the hoary old chestnut "the mild climate of California and the abundance of certain foods, particularly the acorn, made it easy for most aborigines to depend on nature to provide" (p. 28). They do not even give all California Indians credit for minimal architecture: "... some large groups along the coast appeared to have no dwellings of any kind—just sheltering in thickets" (p. 31; here, as elsewhere, the source of the mistake is uncritical reading of early explorers' accounts). Scalping is attributed to pre-contact Indians and is not to be blamed on the white man (p. 40); for California this is almost certainly wrong, whatever may be the case elsewhere in the Americas.

There are many mistakes due simply to sloppy scholarship. A map of linguistic groups, on p. 29, is the only locator device in the chapter; it is highly schematic (for no good reason) and manages to leave out all the Athapaskan groups, even the Hupa, who are mentioned often in the text. It gives the Shasta all of northeast California by leaving out the Achomawi, Atsugewi, Modoc, and Paiute. It has a huge wedge labeled "Shoshone" including not only the Shoshone but all the Shoshonean groups except—for some strange reason—the Cahuilla. There is a lot more wrong with it, too, but space in this review is limited. Finding errors in the text is not much more difficult. On p. 33 we find the Indians eating wild pig, and also "stole," a mistake for "atole." Early travelers' accounts are cited for sexual customs (p. 39), with the inevitable biases. The Cahuilla language is said to be extinct except among linguists (p. 30-31). The Chumash canoe is made of only two planks, according to the text on p. 34. And so on.

Turning to sections on early contact, we find the Spanish given what can only be

described as a whitewash job. Race prejudice in Colonial America is downplayed. Great attention is given to contradicting the "Black Legend" about Spanish treatment of the Indians (p. 61 *et seq.*), though the Black Legend derives not from English prejudice (as Nava and Barger assert) but from Las Casas' all too accurate descriptions and statistics. It was no legend. The California missionaries are given full marks for altruism, though the soldiers with them are accused of less worthy behavior. Yet the death statistics and descriptions of harsh conditions on pp. 106-107 seem to contradict the picture of purely benevolent missionaries; why did these missionaries continue a regime that was clearly murderous? At a more remote level, why did the Colonial government give California to the harsh Franciscans rather than the more tolerant Dominicans and Jesuits, who had more success keeping their charges alive? The Dominicans had been put out of (Lower) California, and the Jesuits out of all missionary activity, to a great extent because they were too successful at protecting their charges from Spanish land-grabbers. The Colonial government realized all too well that the Franciscans were unbeatable at clearing the country, (whatever the latter's intentions). This interpretation is not discussed by Nava and Barger. To their credit, Nava and Barger do not pull their punches on the statistics or on the destruction of the Indians after 1833; their comments throughout the remainder of the book are very good if somewhat brief.

The book's intentions include documenting the heritage of minority groups but for the Indians there is little heritage mentioned. The main point raised is that the Indians made wise use of the landscape, were ecologically sensitive, and did not build big smoggy cities. This is of course the popular romantic stereotype of our nostalgic age. I know that most anthropologists naturally share it to some extent, but I personally find it dehumanizing. The Cali-

fornia Indians were human beings, not ethereal Noble Savages. They had their ecological failings: they probably exterminated the giant ground sloths and perhaps other late Pleistocene game; they left the huge garbage dumps that now delight archeologists; they did so much burning that Cabrillo named Santa Monica the Bay of Smokes, thus introducing smog to California history right at the beginning. They had their ecological virtues too, and more to the point they left a beautiful and intensely personal vision of the world in their mythology and art (little mentioned in this book). Treating "the Indian" as a noble savage, in tune with nature, is a way of shoving him off into a world we can romantically yearn for but regard as past. It is no way to create a framework for dealing with contemporary Indians as people.

I wish I could be more positive about this book. I like the idea; I like the parts that do not deal with the Indians. Unfortunately, my charge here is to deal with the parts that do so deal, and those parts too often are flawed by uncritical reading of poor sources and by use of out-of-date information (e.g., Kroeber's population estimates and many other Kroeberian positions now long superseded). The result is that California's students who use this book will not only absorb the old errors about the primitive and undifferentiated "diggers" and the wise, fatherly missionaries, they will have these errors from a modern, apparently authoritative, and above all openly pro-minority source! No doubt many will assume that the truth is even worse than Nava and Barger tell it, since the authors are openly supportive of (and somewhat apologists for) minority groups. Since anthropologists seem never to be consulted, nor the Indians either, by historians writing books of this kind, we can only drown our sorrows in whatever wine we can make from pine nuts and willow fruits.



The Cave Paintings of Baja California: The Great Murals of an Unknown People.
Harry Crosby. San Diego: A Copley Book, 1975. 174 pp. \$18.50 (cloth).

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Although much has been heard during the past fifteen years about the so-called "great mural" or "giant figure" art of Baja California, Harry Crosby must here be credited with defining its limits for the first time in a comprehensive way. These larger-than-life rock paintings, first noted historically by several Jesuit missionaries in the 18th century who traveled through the isolated mountain ranges or sierras of central Baja California, were described in some detail by Leon Diguët in 1895. However, they received little more attention until Erle Stanley Gardner "rediscovered" them around 1962. Since then, there have appeared good descriptions of several of the sites, together with some initial attempts at analysis of the human and other animal figures like deer and bighorn sheep which make up the series.

The present book is really a report of an extensive survey undertaken at various times since about 1971. It includes about 40 splendid photographic plates in color, a few excellent colored drawings of some of the murals, and a great number of attractive small black and white drawings, mostly of unusual elements particularly interesting to the author. More than 80 "painted caves" are reported upon, as well as a number of lesser sites.

Surely a great part of the success of this book is based upon Crosby's apparently special talent at enlisting the help of livestock ranchers and others in the three sierras. The reader gets the impression that many of the residents in or around the three locales were