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languages began as a result of being hired as a research assistant to copy and sort some of Harrington's notes; the same is true of several other young California specialists I know. All of us have wondered many times about this man whose career has—literally over his dead body—been a major motivating force in our own careers. I do not consider Harrington a “genius” in the sense of “idiosyncratic” or “paranoic” or “erratic” alluded to by Heizer—a view which he seems to feel is the dominant one among the scholarly community; nor do my colleagues who have worked extensively with the Harrington manuscripts feel this way. We are not blindly worshipping that image of brilliance and eccentricity portrayed on the dust cover of *Encounter With An Angry God*: that image is meant to sell books to a more general audience, an audience who will never have any more contact with Harrington than that book. The rest of us, whose professional interest must make us grateful for whatever information we can have on groups like the Chumash, Salinan, Costanoan, Yokuts, and all the others Harrington worked with, have the man to thank. We can argue with his ethics, but to what avail unless it teaches us something about the ways in which scholarship is most (and least) productively accomplished? If that is the lesson of Heizer's piece, why teach it with bitterness?

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Comment on “A Note on Harrington and Kroeber”

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Robert F. Heizer's note on Harrington and Kroeber (Winter, 1975) rightly deplores the tendency to equate eccentricity with genius and suggests that we reserve the latter word for those endowed with great creative insights. But my Winston dictionary also defines “genius” as “remarkable natural fitness for some special pursuit,” and in this sense, John P. Harrington was fully deserving of the term. Although he had little formal training in phonetics, he possessed an extraordinarily acute ear which enabled him to accurately record literally carloads of material on American Indian languages.

I became aware of this accuracy while sorting through his material at the Smithsonian Institution in 1962. I compared his Karok notes with William Bright's *The Karok Language* and found extremely close correspondence. Other linguists have given similar testimony.

Amerindianists whose research suffered because the Harrington material was unavailable may wish, along with Dr. Heizer, that he had published more of it during his lifetime. But his genius lay in data collection, not in publication. I found enough material in his archives to compile grammars and dictionaries of nearly a dozen now-extinct Coastal California languages alone. He would never have managed to rescue this large a number if he had taken the time to publish as he went along. His accurate transcriptions are now enabling others to complete the tedious process of systemizing the data.

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