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The Secularization of the Modern Brush Dance: Cultural Devastation in Northwestern California

RICHARD KEELING

THE END OF INDIAN TIME

Modern Yurok, Hupa, and Karok Indians insist that, in ancient times, everything used to be religious. Practical activities were ritualized and given a spiritual interpretation. The act of walking through the woods, for example, was given shape through particular places where it was appropriate to rest, or to speak some specific words, or even just to drop a piece of twig, just as some *wahgey*¹ had done.

The Indians believed that they lived where the *wahgey* had lived, fished where the *wahgey* had fished, and spoke prayers and sang exactly as the *wahgey* did, only a few generations before. Traditionally, Indians in northwestern California neither felt that they had a human history nor believed that their customs had evolved gradually or through innovation; rather they supposed that they had inherited their lifestyle from this race of pre-human beings, the authors of their existence, and they strove to emulate their actions out of a conviction that it was the right way to live. Departures from the *wahgey* lifestyle caused a "rotteness" or "pollution" to develop, and from this stemmed all human sickness and misery.

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Stories about the *wahgey*, therefore, served as a manual for correct living. All the religious ceremonies, for instance, were believed to have been conducted as the *wahgey* had done them. People fished, too, where the *wahgey* had fished. But these were the spots where fish were most plentiful and convenient to get, anyway.

For these pre-contact Indians, the *wahgey* did not just establish examples to be followed, but they continued to be a part of Indian time. When the Indians came, they say, some of the *wahgey* turned into animals. All the animals became the way they were because of something that had happened when they were *wahgey*. The buzzard, for example, got his ugly head from greedily sticking his neck into a bowl of scalding acorn soup before it had cooled enough to eat. The *wahgey* also turned into trees, acorns, fish, deer, frogs, lizards, and the like. In fact, all the landscape was charged with their presence, and the Indians were to use the resources of this environment as if they had a continuing pact with these beings. Many of the stories that old people still tell begin with the reminder, "Now a dog (or a hawk, or a deer, or some other character) was a person at one time . . ."

But, curiously, the word *wahgey* also means "White man," and the use of the word in that sense has been recorded as early as 1851 in an essay by Carl Meyer which describes his travels among the coastal Yurok at Trinidad (Meyer, 1851: 265). I had a Yurok friend who lived at Sregon, and I asked him if that didn't seem a little strange—that Indians should talk about praying to learn things from the *wahgey* in the woods in olden times, but, today, if some Indian wanted to get insulting or give me a hard time, he would call me the same thing, *wah-gey*, meaning "White boy," "Honkie," "Don't belong here," or "Don't know anything."

An Indian, Dick Meyers, always acted as if I didn't know anything, and he explained it to me as if to a child, even though we were both in our thirties. "Oh, Rich," he said, "when they brought Indians to live in the world, they never said it would last forever. They said they'd be back, and that'd be the end of Indian time. Then, when they seen the first White people, they figured it was them . . . come back."

For me, that always explained the sardonic fatalism that set the Yuroks apart from the Hupas and the upriver Karoks. For a lot of Yuroks, it was better to give up hope than to act as if you didn't know the score. Indian time was over. It was better not to have such-and-such a dance at all than to do it wrong. The main spokesman for this brand of Yurok orthodoxy, Calvin Rube, agreed that it was dangerous to put on dances like the Hupas did, now that Indians didn't live the way they were supposed to. If the dance was done wrong or was accomplished by an improper person (and some objection always applied), Rube would say the Creator's power

would work in a vice-versa manner. Rube sometimes said that he didn't want anything to do with those dances which did more harm than good. More than that, he repeatedly said that people violated the "Creator's Program" so openly nowadays that the world was going to end pretty soon, anyway.

The Brush Dance at Matilton Ranch: June 25, 1979

In line with this thinking, people found plenty to criticize about any dance that came up. The main complaint against the Brush Dance at Matilton Ranch was that the pit was built on a cemetery. That was considered reason enough not to go, and some people had made it pretty clear to me that they didn't intend to. One Yurok woman (Ella Norris) said,

They put it right *on* a cemetery. Something's going to happen. They found bones when they was digging it, and you're not supposed to disturb the dead. You're supposed to show respect. And something's going to happen. You just watch.

I talked to one old Hupa man (Elmer Jarnaghan) who said he knew all about that pit. He said that he had known the two men who first thought of putting in a pit at Matilton Ranch, up on that flat above the riverbank, a long time back.

They're both dead now. . . . They was gonna fix a pit there, and some older people told them, "No. Don't bother. That's a cemetery." So they covered it up and never bothered no more. . . . Two or three years ago, some boys got to fixing it up. My grandson was one who helped work on it. And believe it or not, when they got through working, he couldn't walk. . . . Damn near a year. He could walk, but he had a hell of a time.

I wanted company, if I was to go to the dance, but it seemed as if none of the younger Indians I knew intended on going. That afternoon, I mentioned it to some Yuroks outside of Pearson's Store, in Weitchpec, and I asked them if they were going. We were all a little drunk, but I thought there was a sort of nervousness in the way they overreacted—sort of spinning away in spasms of laughter. One turned up his palms, shook his head, and said, "We weren't invited." They were going to spend the night hooking eels down at Tuley Creek, or, rather, in an eddy on the Klamath just downstream from where Tuley Creek came into it. I knew from experience that the ugly lampreys would either be there in scores, sucking on the mossy surfaces or boulders just below the water

line, or else they wouldn't be there at all. Probably the Yuroks would just sit out there talking all night, getting up to scrape with their hooks for eels only now and then, and watching the smooth pulse of the Klamath in summertime. "New moon . . ." they might say, unless they only said such things for my benefit, "time to start training, time to get clean." But probably they would just drink all night.

Indians who considered themselves more decent than these lost souls advised me that the Brush Dance was not very important. It was not a religious ceremony anymore. Probably to them, my interest in it just proved I was only a *wahgey* who didn't know anything. They would go to their Deerskin Dance, they said, or their Jump Dance. Besides, there weren't any real medicine women for the Brush Dance left anymore. "Nowadays," one Christian woman said, "I call it the Devil's Playground." One person said that I would probably enjoy the dance quite a bit, as long as I didn't go walking around by myself in the parking lot. If I stayed around the area of the pit, itself, I would be fine, they said.

On the night of the dance, well after the sun had gone down, I found myself standing on a gravel turnout off of Highway 96, considering all this advice and wondering if anybody I knew would be at the dance which I could see in the distance out across the river. From an embankment, I could make out several camps in a grove of fruit trees. Small groups of Indians seemed to be having a night time picnic, each scene illuminated by the cooking fire in the middle. I could hear others singing, faintly at this distance, but I could not exactly place where the pit must have been.

Matilton is a family name which comes from a Hupa word meaning "boat place." The Trinity River makes a huge hairpin turn around the Matilton plain, and below where the yellowish grass starts growing, the beach is wide, flat, and sandy. On the night of a new moon you can see the reflective volume of water moving gradually, eddying in great slow spirals. In ancient times, it must have made a perfect natural dock. Two sleek Indian boats, carved out of redwood logs, slanted into the water as if they were ready to go, and this made the whole tableau seem a little like a museum display, except that to the left of them some young Hupas had placed stones on the sand so as to spell out the words, "FISH ON"—a protest against federal restrictions against Indians taking salmon with their nets—in letters as tall as a man and designed to be read by someone standing on the turnout, as I was.

But here on the bank of the river, I realized that I had driven too far and that I should have turned off the highway about five miles back, before ever crossing to this side. I had to drive back into Hoopa Valley, cross a cement bridge, and head back upstream along Tish Tang Road.

Turning off where the sign said "Hospital," I soon passed the small but modern Hupa Tribal Clinic. The road went on for a quarter mile to where there was a small airport, and there the blacktop ended. For about three hundred yards I avoided potholes that pocked a dusty construction road, and then my Volkswagon climbed a steep bank to bring the area of the Brush Dance pit into view.

There were about thirty or forty pickup trucks, vans, and cars parked helter-skelter around fireplaces where people gathered casually. When I killed my engine, I felt all at once how pleasant it was to be there, even though I didn't know anybody. Mostly, I noticed the gently syncopated singing emanating from the pit and milling silhouettes lit by firelight. Except for the sounds of conversation, there was a pervading natural silence that framed the music. The sky was so starry that it seemed three-dimensional and not flat, as if viewed through a stereopticon. The singing, in its apparent simplicity, had a sobering and spiritual effect that more obviously artful music could not have achieved.

Even though this was a Hupa affair in Hoopa Valley, Yuroks and Karoks were expected to come, and, as the night went on, dancers entered and left the pit from two camps, the Hupa side and the Klamath side, from which Indians of either Yurok or Karok families came out. Nowadays some danced every dance at times, to make enough singers and keep the alternation up all night. At modern dances, the child in the pit with the medicine woman and her helper is usually not really a child who needs doctoring. The dance leader will have arranged for an appropriate baby after he had decided to set up the dance and contracted the medicine woman. Many aspects of the dance have taken on a token or symbolic aspect in modern times, and to many Indians, the dance has come to represent the endurance of tradition itself. Still, when the men entered the pit and side-stepped around its perimeter in a counterclockwise file, their singing for the child in the middle conjured part of the authentic essence of an ancient lifestyle.

The earth was built up around the pit, and split logs made four rows of seats, as if it were a miniature (and rustic) amphitheatre. There were a couple of families that stayed well after midnight, but only a handful of people had committed themselves until dawn. Sunday morning the seats would be filled, to leave a standing crowd, as sleepers awoke, and other, less dishevelled-looking onlookers arrived to watch the climactic final dances.

Those few who made a vigil of it came and went freely between dances, and some even stretched out on the logs to stare up at the stars. There were two middle-aged Indian women, probably wives of older singers, who left the pit between dances to govern the cooking or family affairs,

but returned for each set of songs to watch the proceedings in a critical yet approving way. They conferred about how it had been different in the old days.

"Old days used to have Brush Dance any time . . ." one said to me, ". . . not just for a special deal." Unlike the Deerskin Dance or the Jump Dance, held once a year or, nowadays, once every two years, a Brush Dance could have been made any time between the spring salmon run and the winter rains. It was part of the fabric of prehistoric life and not just the annual occasion it has more or less become.²

Originally, a Brush Dance could have been held at any Indian-style house and not just in one of these permanent pits. The modern Brush Dance pits are actually stylized replicas of the ancient, semi-subterranean houses in which pre-contact Indians lived. Roof planks would have been removed from the prehistoric house, so that people could watch from outside. The modern pit is basically under the open sky, with only a row of planks supported by two beams. Still, the middle planks of this symbolic roof are removed when the pit is in use.³

Between them, the two women talked between dances about the differences between what they called the "old Indian way" and the way things were done nowadays. There never used to be this much wait between dances, they said (about forty-five minutes to an hour that night). Tonight, the dancers came in from two sides, but before, when there were more singers, they came in from three, or four, or even more, camps. Now, I thought, the tradition of the dance had become disembodied from the everyday, and the very performance of the dance was only as a symbol that perpetuated the idea of cultural survival. Then, the dance was an impromptu affair that could happen any time. Singers came to help out the Medicine Woman, and it gradually became an excuse for partying, too.

The Spiritual Bases of Traditional Ritual

In the old days, the dance was for a child who was "troubled." Most of the older people with whom I talked did not try to be more specific than that. After all, they explained, one way or another, the specific physical illness was just the expression of a spiritual problem. Some Indians would elaborate, saying that it was useless to try curing some physical problem because the penalty would just come some other way. Some said that "contamination" could come from the parents, and there seemed to be a general belief, still, that what we would call "destiny" or "luck" followed from whether or not a person lived according to "the Creator's

Program." Whether or not a person spoke specifically of "violations" and "penalties," there was still the intuitive conviction that success and influence came from being "clean." "Stands to reason . . ." they would explain, as the logic of it, and when one of my friend's children got sick, I heard an old woman say, "Of course it got sick, poor thing. He was on drugs when he made the baby."⁴

Living correctly, according to "the Creator's Program", meant doing things a certain way. For example, the taking of deer involved a complex drama in which the deer was considered to be immortal (a *wahgey*, actually), and it was believed that if a man wanted to take deer, he should start by having the kind of house and manners that would earn the deer's respect, so that he would submit. They used to say that the deer disliked houses that seemed dead and empty, and the deer were thought to be thinking, "I always see smoke there. I will go to that house" (Kroeber, 1925:69). While they were eating him, they saved all of the deer's bones, and later took all the unused parts back to the spot where he was taken, "so he could get started again."

Besides sweating to get rid of his man smell, the Indian prayed and fasted and observed other abstentions to insure success, when he finally trekked off, repeating over and over the short motives of his deer hunting song (often an Indian version of "deer talk"), which was designed to make deer come and meet him. Besides "training" to be "clean," the hopeful hunter had to observe other restrictions so that the "Creator's Program" would work in his favor. Nowadays, for instance, Indians who are given to spiritual explanations would say that certain things had to be avoided because their "power" would "clash." For example, a man had to avoid the glance of a woman who was menstruating.

Today, some say euphemistically that menstruation was, "the Creator's way of renewing and purifying (her)," and that the "power" of this feminine process would have a deteriorating effect upon that which a man tried to develop. Whether on account of this belief or simple indulgence of a revulsion felt by the males, through which they might have come to consider her contaminating, a menstruating woman (of the pre-contact period) spent as much as ten days of each month in isolation from the men, and also she wore a little feather in her nose, held in place by a pierced septum, so that a man would not have to do with her by accident.

The "power" of sex or sex organs, some unusually talkative and thoughtful young traditionalist might say,⁵ was believed to "clash" horribly with that of the deer, and also with that of the hunter who wanted to get on his good side. A hunter who wanted to take deer would keep away from his wife or else try to counteract his pollution with a formula, if he had one. To have sex with his wife after eating deer meat would be

grossly polluting. This was the sort of "violation" which could lead to physical illness or to general discontent and a bad life. A person could become "troubled" himself, or else he could pass it on to his children. Perhaps, in the latter case, they would have a Brush Dance in order to help lift the contamination, and many stated that the Brush Dance was for the child of parents who had lost other children, somehow.

One did not have to be thoughtless or uncouth to violate a taboo and incur some contamination. Some accidental infraction could pollute a person, without their ever being aware of it, because a "troubled" mind or a "sick" body always spelled "contamination." Not only that, but a problem could be latent, and that is why a Brush Dance could always help parents who might be worried about a baby, even if they didn't think they had anything to confess. Indian Doctors, too, frequently specialized in this situation, for often their main function lay in identifying the source of a "contamination" of which their "troubled" patient was unaware.⁶ In this world of belief, a man had to "train" and stay "clean," but even that was no guarantee. Still, knowledge of correct manners and how to live correctly was passed down in families that we could only call aristocratic. Among lesser families, the very blood-line was thought to be contaminated. Naturally, this belief-system was thrown into turmoil when Whites moved into Indian territory and undermined the relations of the indigenous populations with their environment.

The religious system of which the Brush Dance was a part also served as a repository for practical or scientific information. For example, those who were well-versed in their religion knew that the *wahgey* used to fish at certain places, and these just happened to be the best places to fish. More importantly, perhaps, in terms of practical survival, local religion helped the Indian face fear and loneliness in this, a landscape in which he must have considered himself the weakest link. "You always talked to the trail when you walked," one old woman said. "Old Indians always did that so nothin' would happen to you. Out there all alone. Far away from home." The modern deer hunter heads out at night and covers a lot of ground in his pickup truck. He hypnotizes the deer with his spotlight for as long as it takes to kill him with a rifle. For the old hunter, the deer was much more of an equal, for the Indian was circumspect about leaving the village at all and about putting himself in "the Creator's" hands when he did so.

The moral system and the medicine-making served as a means of strengthening resolve and of being patient, for in those days the human condition was to watch and wait. Still, today, a man could set a gill net, but he could not force the salmon to hit it. He could set a snare, but the deer would still have to find it. A person needed luck.

Indigenous religious beliefs even fit in with the character of local geology. The uplifting which formed steep river gorges was recent, occurring perhaps two million years ago, and this deepened the steep mountainsides so that they fall away with a minimum of help from the rain. In the wintertime, the Caltrans highway workers are constantly picking boulders off of the road or moving back landslides with their tractors and graders. In this setting, the Karok world renewal ritual, which focuses on maintaining the earth's firmness, makes pretty good sense.

Details of the indigenous religion make sense to a person who lives in this unusual landscape and gives some thought to what the realities of prehistoric life must have been. Modern Indians are offended to hear of the essays by psychoanalytic writers who sensationalized the "anxiety and deviance" (Valory, 1970) reflected in religious assumptions and medicine-making practices of their forebears. Amazingly, some modern writers are contributing still to this genre, which amounts to a sort of anthropological science fiction, written by people who never lived on the Klamath and designed to be read by people who have never been there at all.⁷ Anthropologists have always found the Yurok literature more fascinating than real Yuroks, with whom they have had little contact. For their part, the Indians resent scientific analysis on any level, probably sensing that it represents the inevitable philosophic stage of a conquest which has already been achieved, in terms of economic domination.

"Our people are from Pekwon," one downriver Yurok said, "and we didn't come across Alaska on no dinosaur's back. The Creator put us right *here*, to follow his program."

The pathetic part is that they are no longer able to follow the program. Young Indians do not even know its details. Indians have been working for Whites at Weitchpec since 1850. Places where a walking Indian would have been obliged to stop and pray in passing are now ignored as they speed by in pickup trucks.

Environmentalists helped the Indians stop construction of the G-O Road, a channel for logging trucks linking Gasquet and Orleans. Anthropologists, employed by the United States Forest Service, wrote thousands of pages in support of saving this territory, since the proposed road would have cut right through the sacred high country where Indians used to train or make medicine. For better or worse,⁸ the decision to have it set aside reflected the anthropologists' involvement with Indian literature more than with the interests of actual Indians living up on the river. For Indians who make a living off of selling Indian culture, this was a victory, but for Indians who lived off of working in the woods, it meant that a lot of men became unemployed. Today, few could even find the sacred places, and fewer still could actually make the ancient trek to power,

with its obligatory fasting. "Nine-tenths of the people have never been to Doctor Rock," one Yurok said, "and the rest of them went up most of the way by truck."

In his Introduction to *The Yurok Language*, R.H. Robins states that Yurok ceremonies and rituals are "extinct" except for "debased derivatives of one or two Yurok dances" (Robins, 1958:xiii), among which he presumably includes the Brush Dance.

For the remainder of this essay, I shall trace the course of this "debasement"—of the dance and of the culture, generally, and the reader can judge for himself if the very survival of the dance and its songs, once the lifestyle of which it was a part was totally destroyed, was not in itself a notable achievement.

The Devastation of Indian Cultures in Northwestern California

The idea that the first sight of White people signaled the return of the *wahgey*,⁹ and implied the end of the era of Indian existence, was current in 1871, as this story from Powers seems to confirm:

The curse upon Wappeckquenow¹⁰ at the time of his expulsion for disobedience, was that neither he nor his descendants should ever return to the happy lands which they had forfeited. On the first appearance of miners, with their long beards, and without women, they excited of course much interest among the Indians, and much speculation about their origin, their fortunes and objects, and their destination. The prevailing opinion was that they were of a fugitive tribe driven away from their native seats, and their women taken away from them; and this opinion was confirmed by the fact that they had no women with them and possessed long beards—a badge of widowhood among the Indians. Finally, white women followed the miners; the erection of dwellings, the opening of mines, a manifest readiness to fight which did not comport with timid fugitives, and other evidence of permanent occupation caused further speculations, until finally an old seer of Hoopah Valley solved the question by announcing that there was something wrong with the curse-prophecy, and that the descendants of Wappeckquenow had come to reclaim their inheritance (Powers, 1877:63).

In the psychoanalytic literature, much had been made of the *wahgey*'s being "small . . . childlike, (or) innocent,"¹¹ but, pressed on the point, old Indians with whom I talked said that they were not *necessarily* small, just different. The first sight of Whites by Indians who had nothing to compare them with but the primordial authors of their own existence (who were also conceived as an on-going source of spiritual influence) must have

had a devastating effect in itself—an effect which probably invalidated indigenous assumptions about the nature of things and undermined both values and institutions. A thoughtful Indian might have deduced the end of his lifestyle from his first view of a European ship.¹²

The earliest established contact between Yuroks and Whites was in 1775, when Bodega landed at the Yurok village of Tsurai, which is now called Patrick's Point (Heizer and Mills, 1952:21-28; Pilling, 1978:139-140). However, accounts of that visit indicate that the Yuroks who met Bodega's boats were already using iron implements and that they were prepared to trade pelts for more of them. Spanish ships had been passing the area since the start of the regular Manilla galleon run in 1565 (Hoopes, 1966:3-5; Pilling, 1978:139). Therefore, this discussion of pre-contact Indian civilization refers to the period before some point between these dates, 1565 and 1775.¹³

The first known contact between interior Yuroks and Whites took place in 1827. In that year, fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Company reported having seen "various trading articles from American ships" (Murray, 1943:22; Pilling, 1978:140). In May, 1828, Jedediah Smith crossed through the area. Beginning from the Sacramento Valley, the Smith party first moved into this area on the upper Trinity, then descended the Trinity to the Klamath and the Klamath to the Pacific Ocean. Reports of this expedition stated that the Yuroks Smith met possessed trading beads, knives, and iron arrowheads, and, moreover, that they wanted to trade for more knives (Murray, 1943, 35-36 and 43-44; Chase, 1958:15; and Pilling, 1978:140).

Indian cultures were seriously disrupted in 1850, when gold was discovered on the upper Trinity River. Prospectors flooded into the territories of the Yurok, Hupa, and Karok, and other Indian peoples who were either annihilated or assimilated onto the reservation, which would be formed in Hoopa Valley. These extinct Indian cultures include at least the following: the Klonomihu, Chilula, Wiyot, Chimariko, and Whilkuts.

There were some good deposits of pay-gravel on the banks of the Trinity in Hoopa Valley itself, and these brought both White and Chinese miners in the early days of the gold rush (Goddard, 1903:9). Inter-marriage between Chinese and Indians is still evident in some families, but not Chinese surnames. The Indians would apparently take their names more predominantly from among those of the Anglos who served at Fort Humboldt on the coast or at the Fort on the Reservation in Hoopa. In the same year, 1850, prospectors searched the banks of the Klamath and the streams which fed into the river all the way from its mouth upriver to Happy Camp (Anon., 1882:104; and Pilling, 1978:140). The next year, 1851, there was a minor rush at Gold Bluffs, in present-day Redwood

National Park (Bruff, 1949:471-83; Bledsoe, 1881:137-40; Crook, 1946:11-12; and Pilling, 1978:140).

Violence broke out immediately, for the miners were, as one writer put it, "unscrupulous individuals who had no intention of establishing cordial relations with the natives" (Barnett, 1940:23). Apparently the upper Klamath offered more attractive prospects for mining than either the Yurok territory downstream or the valley in which the Hupa lived. Therefore, the Karok suffered the most of the three groups, initially. In 1852, most of the Karok towns on the Klamath between present-day Bluff Creek and the mouth of the Salmon River were burned to the ground, the Indians having been driven out. When they returned to their villages, they found the houses and farms of Whites built on their land (Bright, 1978:188). The Karoks fought back, and their persistence was mentioned in journalistic accounts of the period, but for the United States Army and free-lance vigilante groups, these reports of the Indians' resistance only justified the use of more force against the Indians and fed the temper of indignation.¹⁴

Downriver, at Weitchpec, there was an outright climate of violence, too, and the Yuroks put up outraged resistance, but it never had been the Yurok nature to act collectively, nor to seek a consensus for tribal action.

Pre-contact law, for example, had been a system based on giving recompensation for damages, often after much bartering, from one individual, or one family, to another. There was little pretense, on the temporal level, that right was served in life, since it was obvious that a wealthy, influential, or aggressive man could press his demands with more force than a lesser one. This was a society of individuals, traditionally, and today, still an Indian (or a whole neighborhood, like Weitchpec, for example) might criticize someone's immorality, but no one would seriously expect him to correct his behavior. A man did not have to account to anybody.

This anarchic disposition played right into the hands of White journalists, who depicted the Yuroks who resisted as outlaws, observing that many took decent jobs working for Whites (Norton, 1978). Pilling informs us that Yuroks of the period, ca. 1850, were working for Whites at Trinidad, Gold Bluffs, Klamath City, Kepel, and Weitchpec—while at the same time providing evidence that other Yuroks were openly hostile.¹⁵

Greater populations of Whites occupied the adjacent coastal areas because opportunities in business were great. Adequate seaports were necessary to transport goods and supplies for the inland mining industry, and, soon after, the booming trade in lumber and commercial fishing. The area built up fast. Warnersville, which is now called Trinidad, and Klamath City (near the mouth of the river) were both founded in 1850.

Soon after, the town of Union, now called Arcata, was founded. Rather than bringing more civilization to the region, the development of cities and "respectable" urban populations only intensified the violence against Indians, who were apparently hounded and killed upon the least excuse.¹⁶

In Hoopa Valley, things went somewhat different than in the other regions described above. By the year 1858, the Hupa had not been involved in direct conflict with the White settlers, but they were suspected of assisting some Bald Hills Indians who were considered "outlaws."¹⁷ Settlers in the valley wanted to nip any Indian resistance in the bud, and some influential White came up with the idea to take one respected Hupa elder down to the city of San Francisco, by boat, so that he would be convinced how futile it would be to resist against the newcomers who were moving into the valley. An Indian called Captain John, from Medilding (Matilton), made the trip by steamboat:

... (He) could not control his wonder when our city burst into view... as the steamer rounded the point, and he very anxiously inquired, "How long it took to build it?," expressing a strong doubt of the statement when told it had all been done in ten years. He said that his people had never seen many whites, and they believed our numbers to be few, and thought that by killing five or six at one time, and as many at another, in a short while they would have killed them all off. But now he felt how greatly they had deceived themselves... (quoted in Anderson, 1956:97; and in Nelson, 1978:68).

On returning to the valley, Captain John reportedly "told the Hoopa (sic) they had better not fight the whites, and... scooped up dry sand from the Trinity's bank and let it trickle through his fingers to show how numerous they were" (Anderson, 1956:97-98; and Nelson, 1978:68). The reservation at Hoopa was established soon after. It provided a place where Indians from all over northwestern California could be moved to keep them out of the way of murderous Whites, and, at the same time, it provided a base for dealing with Indian lawlessness.¹⁸ Pliny Earle Goddard, who would write his *Life and Culture of the Hupa* nearly forty years later (1903), tried to assess the impact of martial law on the Indian populations in Hoopa Valley:

One company of soldiers, and sometimes two, had been kept here twenty-five years after all need of their presence had passed. This was done in the face of oft-repeated protests of the Agents in charge, civilian and military alike. Nothing could have been worse for these Indians than the maintenance of these men in their midst. It may be said in all truth that if the government, in 1864, had resolved to do all that lay in its power to demoralize this people, it could hardly have taken a course more sure to reach that end than the one followed (Goddard, 1903:11).

Goddard also includes this report, made by H.S. Knight, a lawyer from Eureka who spent some months on the Hoopa Reservation in 1871:

If the reservation was (sic) a plantation, the Indians were the most degraded slaves. I found them poor, miserable, vicious, degraded, dirty, diseased, and ill-fed. The oldest men, or stout middle-aged fathers of families, were spoken to just as children or slaves. They know no law but the will of the Agent . . . (Goddard, 1903:10-11).

As time went on, reservation officials began systematically trying to educate the Indians in modern Western culture and to dissuade them from traditional customs and beliefs, which were viewed as immoral by those in charge. As one official correspondence put it, officials at Hoopa were taking "a lively interest in civilizing and elevating the Indians" (Nelson, 1978:119). There was compulsory attendance at one early reservation school, for example, but it seems to have been little more than a farm which supported itself through the labor of Indians who were supposed to have been its students.¹⁹ By 1893, a boarding school was established (Goddard, 1903:11), which presumably drew students from outside the valley, too, land not just from among those who lived in Hoopa.

This forced and systematic acculturation of Indians at Hoopa, accomplished through total disruption of indigenous economy, more than twenty-five years of martial law, and compulsory attendance at reservation boarding schools, had succeeded by the year 1900. Soon after, Goddard would write,

Allotments of land have now been made, and the Hupa are now self-supporting and capable of becoming useful citizens. They are good farmers and stock-raisers. A few adults have enough education to do smith and carpenter work. They are fairly honest, a few perfectly so, and nearly as temperate as White men under similar temptation (Goddard, 1903:11).

Whether or not the concentration of Indian population at Hoopa, brought about by the establishment of a reservation there, contributed to the survival of indigenous traditions and "slowed down the disruption of native life," as Wallace argues (Wallace, 1978:176), Indians throughout the area had been thoroughly demoralized by the year 1900. After that, they viewed their customs more or less as Whites saw them, and even the oldest of them who are alive today view their traditions through a filter of Euro-American values. "Forget the Indian way," Sregon Jim told his daughter around 1900 even though he remembered Indian stories subsequently told to Kroeber and included in *Yurok Myths* under the name, "Jim of Pekwon."

Economic Aspects of Indian Subordination

Carl Meyer, who traveled among the Yurok at Trinidad in 1851, left notes describing them as a proud people who considered themselves morally superior to Whites²⁰ and little interested in intercourse with them except to acquire implements and other trade goods. The Yuroks Meyer met were secretive, out of pride, as the following quotation from Meyer suggest:

These . . . beliefs of the (Yurok) Indians are very involved, and it is very difficult, in the absence of an exact knowledge of their language, to investigate their significance . . . for they strive to conceal them even from their most trusted alien friends (Meyer, 1851:268).

The Yurok of 1900 were secretive, too, but for different reasons. By that time, they had become ashamed of their traditional customs, which seemed "old fashioned" and stigmatizing. In 1904, Winifred S. Fry wrote:

Of the Indian ceremonial and tradition it is very hard to gain satisfactory information. The things one learns must be learned a little here and a little there . . . (The) younger generation of Indians . . . does not wish to talk about the old ways because (they) feel (themselves) above them (Fry, 1904:8).

Among his observations of 1871, Powers noted that the Yuroks hoarded their Indian money and other traditional treasures but treated White dollar pieces as if they were worthless, either passing them on freely for this or that, using them as ornaments on Indian dresses, or the like. Modern old-timers are fond of telling that their ancestors used to like to "sail them dollar pieces clean across the river," because they went through the air so well.

In regard to items of traditional wealth, Powers wrote as follows:

No Indian will part with a white deerskin on any consideration. I offered several of them \$100 in gold coin for one, but they simply laughed at me. There are other articles paraded and worn in this and other ceremonial dances which they will on no account part with, at least to an American, though they sometimes manufacture them to order for one another. One of these is the flake or knife of obsidian or jasper (Powers, 1877:79).

In the period between Powers' visits and Kroeber's, the Indians became more willing to sell these treasures, a sign of the degree to which the Indian had lost a grip on their lifestyle during that period (1871-ca. 1900). In his Preface to *Yurok Myths*, Thoresen tells us that when Kroeber went up on the Klamath for a combined honeymoon and collecting expedition

during the month of July, 1906, he was able to acquire "over three hundred specimens of material culture and about one hundred and ten phonograph recordings, mostly of a religious nature" (Kroeber, 1976:xxvi).

Probably it was his involvement in the White economy, more than anything else that made pre-contact custom seem more and more insignificant and old-fashioned to the late nineteenth-century Indian. Powers, writing of Yuroks and Karoks, left us this view of a changing Indian economy in 1871:

Though they have not the American's all day industry, both these Klamath tribes are job thrifty, and contrive to have a considerable amount of money by them. For instance, the trading post at Klamath Bluffs alone sold, in 1871, over \$3,000 worth of merchandise, through there were only about six miners among their customers. Here is a significant item: the proprietor said he sold over 700 pounds of soap annually to the Yurok alone. I often peeped into their cabins, and seldom failed to see there wheaten bread, coffee, matches, bacon, and a very considerable wardrobe hanging in the smoky attic. They are more generally dressed in complete civilized suits, and more generally ride on horseback, than any others, except the mission Indians.

How do they get the money to procure these things? They mine a little, drive pack-trains a good deal, transport goods and passengers on the river, make and sell canoes, whipsaw lumber for the miners, fetch and carry about the mining camps, go over to Scott Valley and hire themselves out on the farms, etc. These Indians are enterprising. . . (Powers, 1877:46).

Probably the Yurok had always been enterprising in his own way. He was probably a sharp trader, since before the Whites came, and willing, too, to range far out of his territory to make a good exchange. His very religion, with its medicine-making and "training," suggests a quality of determination or willfulness—trying to get rich or lucky by constantly hoping, praying, or singing for it. It was not in his nature to be "job thrifty," as Powers tellingly puts it, and probably, if Powers' usage were explained to some Yurok of substance, the Indian would have found it humiliating.²² A Yurok man fancied that he was substantial in his own right and would not have taken pride in laboring for others or making it off the sweat of his brow. Once, I was down at a place where Aunt Queen James lived, near where Tuley Creek came into the Klamath. She was a Yurok woman who recently died at ninety-five, but in her time, they said, men had killed for her, and besides, everybody knew she made the best Indian baskets on the river. She epitomized Yurok femininity. We were looking at an old photograph of her wedding day: two young people in Victorian outfits and starched collars. She looked like just a

girl, then, in the tinted sepia print, and standing next to her was an intense-looking Indian, full-grown, with a bullet-shaped head. After all those years, in a weak and faltering voice, the old woman described Coyote Jim, her husband, with this tribute: "He was a good man. Never worked a day in his life. . . . All the time played Indian cards."

Initially, perhaps only the lowest order of Yuroks took jobs working for the Whites in the industries that Powers describes—mining, cutting trees, or farming, because each of these industries implied the wholesale destruction of a landscape which had been the basis of society and religion for the Indians. What it must have looked like, to Indians, when the hydraulic miners trained their giant hoses on the slopes of the gorges and simply blew the hillsides down with the river-water!

In a paper which has become a classic example of structural analysis in anthropology, Walter Goldschmidt considers local Indian cultures on the basis of his observation that indigenous societies seemed to parallel European ones in manifesting a "protestant ethic" and a "capitalistic structure" (Goldschmidt, 1951:506).²³ Goldschmidt spent the summer of 1937 in Hoopa, but he basically relies on Kroeber's data and follows Kroeber in the use of a fictive "ethnographic present" tense for his description. That is, he tacitly renders a depiction of pre-contact, indigenous culture, and he projects his Weberian thesis against that background. Goldschmidt does not consider that the Indians might have been previously influenced by Euro-American ideas, and he omits to mention that reservation authorities had been purposefully trying to restructure the value-systems of poor and degraded Indians for nearly one hundred years by the time his article was published.

Imposed Concepts of Religious Propriety

After the year 1900, or thereabouts, Indians had absorbed modern Western ethics and values to a great degree, and many of the old people today seem to express an exaggerated concern with correctness, decorum, and industry. They describe their own religion in terms reflecting an overlay of Protestant, or at least Christian, belief.²⁴ By then, the Indians seem to have developed a sense of inferiority about many of their own customs. They began to view things as the Whites saw them, and none of their native pastimes fell into disrepute faster and more completely than the Brush Dance, which took its very name from the impression it made on White people when they first saw it—an impression of Indians, crowding around in a pit, dancing and singing from behind bunches of Brush which they held in front of their faces.

In his essay, "Dances of the Hupa," Charles Woodruff described the dance in 1892 as follows:

To a weird grunt they keep time by beating the ground with the right foot, all acting together. . . The girls, keeping time with the men, merely move the body up and down, the body being kept strictly vertical. At the same time, the girls sing a not unpleasant tune in a weird minor key. . . During the figure one man usually prances up and down in front of the others, at the same time singing a tune of his own, shaking his head to make the feathers wave or rotate and performing antics similar in most respects to the artistic soloists of the woodpecker dance.²⁵ The figure is repeated. . . six or eight times by one set of dancers, who then file out and are replaced in about an hour by a set from another band, who go through the same monotonous figure, competing for the honor of being considered the best dancers (Woodruff, 1892:59).

After 1900, Indians still spoke proudly of their "religious dances"—the White Deerskin Dance, the Jump Dance, or even a minor dance like the Hupa Flower Dance—because the step and singing in these dances was dignified and solemn, as a "religious" ritual should be, according to White standards. Indians did not point proudly at their Brush Dance, whose "bad name" got worse and worse as time went by. For example, consider the following comments, which Edward Sapir collected from (Hupa Indian) Sam Brown in 1927²⁶:

When a bad person dies, he goes to a bad place. His body goes there. His ghost stays here. If a person likes singing, he goes to a good place where the *kixunai* (cf. *wahgey*) stay. If he likes the Flower Dance he goes to (the heaven) where they always dance the Flower Dance. If he likes the religious dances—the White Deerskin Dance—he goes to the heaven in the north, where they always dance. Or if he likes the Jump Dance. . . (to) the heaven in the south, where they always dance. The Brush Dance, also the War Dance, is not good, and for that reason, we Indians do not like it very much. That's all I know (from Golla's notebooks, 1975).

The earliest reference to the Brush Dance which I have found is by Stephen Powers, a traveling journalist, who witnessed the dance in 1871. Power's stylized description is based on a fundamental misinterpretation and incorporates at least one mistaken translation. But it tells us that the dance was, among other things an occasion for having a good time, even at that relatively early date:

The birth of a child is celebrated with a dance. There is a dance called *u-me-laik* (salmon dance), which bears a general resemblance to the Propitiation Dance of the Karok. It is held in-doors in early spring, when the first

salmon of the season appears. We can well understand with what great joy the villagers engage in this, when after a long and dreary winter of rain during which the wolf has hardly been kept from the door, and the house-father has gone down many a time to peer into the Klamath, if perchance he might see the black-backed finny rovers of the great deep shooting up the river, but in vain, and has then sadly turned on his heel and gone back to his diet of pine-bark and buds—when, at last, as the ferns are greening on the mountainside, and the birds of spring are singing, the joyful cry resounds throughout the village, *Ne-peg-wuh ! Ne-peg-wuh !* (the salmon ! the salmon !). As among the Karok, this dance is generally followed by a licentious debauch (Powers, 1877:56-57).²⁷

Whereas the songs of the Deerskin Dance seem dignified and have a noble quality, and those of the Jump Dance are long, unusually slow in tempo, and rather hypnotic, Brush Dance songs express a wider range of feelings, and, of the three types, only the Brush Dance songs provoke that big, clenched-tooth grin that goes with the feeling of being a man and having the world on a string. The Brush Dance was a religious dance, basically, but the rhythm of the singing is lascivious, too, and the music can be used to underline lyrics that ridicule or question authority.

Brush Dance songs have been a focus for expressing Indian resistance and a bastion for Indian spirit. In the 1890s, for example, there was an Indian rights movement on the Hoopa Reservation. Indians there protested against the reservation officials for appropriating school-children as a labor force, permitting illegal sales of whiskey, and withholding certain rights which the Indians felt were due them according to existing treaties (Nelson, 1978:129). This movement was led by an Indian named Billy Beckwith. Beckwith sent letters to newspapers and petitions to administrators off the Hoopa Reservation, but his response locally was more traditional: Beckwith put on a Brush Dance to gain support for his protests and to express the peoples' feelings. Probably the light songs they sang at that dance included songs of longing for days gone by, songs expressing the iniquities of reservation life, and more of their share of songs ridiculing Isacc Beers, the Indian Agent whom Beckwith most antagonized in those days (Nelson, 1978:130). Ridicule that a person got in the Brush Dance tended to stick with them through life, and some of the oldest songs that Indians remember today were light songs whose words insulted their friends or relatives generations before.

In recent times, there was a Brush Dance held for Hupa veterans returning from the Korean War. Pilling mentioned the widely-known contemporary story that Yurok troops taught the Brush Dance to Whites and that they all put on a Brush Dance together while getting ready to fight the Battle of the Bulge during World War II (Pilling, 1978:148).

Kroeber's appraisal of the Brush Dance was relatively short and unsympathetic, compared with his treatment of the White Deerskin Dance or the Jump Dance, both of which must have impressed him. Although published in 1924, Kroeber's observations are derived from a slightly earlier period, between 1900 and 1908. By that time, the baby for whom the dance was held was evidently already a symbolic focus for the dance, at least some of the time. That seemed to ruin the dance for Kroeber, who wrote:

A minor dance is called the "brush Dance" by the Americans. It is ostensibly held to cure an ailing child. As a matter of fact, it is often made when the young men are desirous of a holiday. Whether, however, the initiative comes from those who wish to enjoy themselves, the sick child must be provided. It is kept at the dance all night, and the woman who recites the formula speaks it for the child's benefit (Kroeber, 1925:61).

While Kroeber played the iconoclast in this instance, other writers tried to express the spiritual intent of the Brush Dance more sympathetically. These included Pliny Earle Goddard (1903:67-69)²⁸, Edward Curtis (1924:44 *et seq.*), and Charles Graves (1929:22-23). By the time he wrote *Lore and Legends of the Klamath River Indians*, Graves had evidently spent quite a bit of time there, and his writing captures much of the flavor of the place and the people that trained observers missed. Graves seemed irritated that people should question the spiritual authenticity of the Brush Dance, and he gives testimony of its religious significance:

I first witnessed the "Brush Dance" over fifty years ago. The last time I witnessed it was July 4, 1927, at Orleans. They danced all night for the purpose of saving the life of a little child. They were not dancing for amusement. When they want amusement they dance "White man dance." All the members of the tribe, and Indians from all other tribes were there, as were also many pale-faces, and I was among their number. And with one accord, we asked the Great Spirit to spare the life of the child, and the baby's life was spared (Graves, 1929:23).

Conclusion: Ancient and Modern Elements in the Contemporary Dance

In the modern Brush Dance, elements of ancient practice and subsequent developments are juxtaposed in an amalgam somewhat like geologic deposits in convoluted formations. To modern Indians, all these things are part of Brush Dance tradition. Even to complain about departures from tradition seems to be part of the heritage, nowadays, and if it all

seems contradictory and confusing to outsiders, then so much the better, because Indians fancy that they are complex people, not to be figured out easily.

Presumably, the ritual evolved through various stages before the intrusion of Whites in the area, beginning with the custom of men coming together to sing in the shadows of the Indian house while some woman made medicine for a baby in the center. As time went by, the custom developed into a social institution as well. The dance became an occasion for the presentation of Indian girls who had become old enough for marriage. Even today, girls who dance are supposed to be virgins, or, at least, unmarried. For young men, too, "jumping center" at the dance was an occasion to show off.

In the old days, Indians of quality, those who were "clean," abstained from sex through the winter. Young men left the family house to learn and make medicine in the sweathouse with their elders. They slept there apart from the women. When spring came, the whole landscape came to life again. There was dancing, a carefree and happy occasion where young men and girls might surely meet some time during the night. For older folks, it was a social occasion, too. There would be feasting, and respectable talk. But gradually they, too, would let their hair down as the fun started, the gossiping began, the absurd joking took over, and the making fun of each other prevailed.

Pre-contact Indians probably never considered whether this was "religious" or not. But by 1900, at least, Indians had largely become ashamed of their own customs and had come to view them as the Whites did. In this context, ceremonies such as the Deerskin Dance and the Jump Dance were still considered to be respectable, probably because they paralleled Western standards of what was dignified, and straight-laced Indians of the turn of the century gave that much weight.

The rhythm of Brush Dance singing, which usually features a soloist who seems to improvise over the beat which the "helpers" establish, can give the impression of gentle and sophisticated syncopation, with a sort of arch delicacy. Other times, there seems to be a driving and intense cross-accent that is virile-sounding and powerful. Sometimes, too, though, the sound from the pit reflects the pain and frustration of people who are angry and depressed. When there are too many helpers, singing too loudly, their rhythm overwhelms the soloist, making a loutish and deafening wall of sound that reiterates the main beat with a clumsy obsessive-ness. Above this chanting of a tragic "oh", there are only the shouts of the spectators.

With the passing of time, moods affected the character of Brush Dance tradition. But basically the songs of the dance are supposed to be a

vehicle through which the singers concentrate good thoughts on the child who is the object of the dance. One young Indian put it this way:

There are different kinds of sickness. We have physical sickness and mental sickness. Not like being insane, but when you're down. So they'll give a (Brush) Dance and have the Medicine Woman make medicine for this child, to uplift his spirit so that he'll have a good life... The heavy songs are slow, and they bring in the spirit, and the people all magnify their attention on this one thing, and this is what brings it about. If you pray good, and you're there for the right reason and have the right thought, these things are good, and it brings good to the child... (Loren Bommelyn, Tolowa-Karok, in recorded conversation, 1976).

The idea that singing can be used to focus a person's intent, or to "magnify" the attention of a group of singers, reflects only one small part of a musical philosophy so different from our own conception that even to describe it as "music" represents the imposition of parochial associations, just as our foisting of the concept "religion" had done. For the pre-contact Indian, singing grew out of spoken prayer or wishes. Speech, too, was only an extension of thought. In early medicine songs, often only one phrase was repeated and repeated, just as in prayer one said his wish over and over again. In the dissertation from which this essay has been adapted, I have tried to describe what singing must have meant in the world of the pre-contact Yurok, Hupa or Karok, and to characterize some of the broader assumptions which Indians in northwestern California seem to have held regarding human nature and the world in which they lived.

NOTES

1. *Wahgey* (woge, wogey, etc.) is the Yurok word for these beings, who are known to the Hupa as *Kixunai* and to the Karok as *ikhareyavs*. The religions of these three groups are distinct in detail but have much in common also, including the assumption that Indians were created on the territory they recognize as ancestral, and instructed in the forms of their lifestyle by members of a pre-human race.

2. As early as the 1920s, they had begun having Brush Dances on the Fourth of July, but even though some referred with arch pleasure to "that 4th of July rhythm," people generally thought that it was incorrect to have identified the dance with a "Whiteman's holiday." In 1979, there were only two, at Matilton Ranch and at Hostler Ranch. Next year, in 1980, they hoped to make dances at these places and also at Rekwoi, Sregon, Weitchpec (See map in Kroeber, 1925:9), and at Katimin, called Somes Bar today, close by the mouth of the Salmon River on the Klamath.

3. It is hard to estimate when the modern pit must have come into being. Locals have told me that Brush Dance pits existed around the turn of the century and before because they could accommodate a bigger dance than an actual Indian house. I have seen a photograph of such a pit, which was supposed to have been taken at Johnson's around 1930.

Kroeber wrote that, "The dance is held in the living house, but the roof and most of the walls are taken down for the occasion" (Kroeber, 1925:61). Presumably, this observation refers to the period of Kroeber's first visits on the Klamath, which began in the summer of 1900.

Kroeber also includes the following information: "A count of . . . 17 villages on the lower Klamath in 1895 revealed a total of 151 houses . . . the majority of these 151 dwellings were built in American fashion. It was customary, by this time, for a family to have two or three houses, or a native house and an American house" (Kroeber, 1925:19).

Probably the pit replica developed at this time (ca. 1895), at least in principle, through decreasing use of the Indian house except for traditional activities such as the Brush Dance.

4. At this writing, one can only speculate about the correspondence between these specific verbalizations on the "Creator's Program" and actual pre-contact belief. To modern Indians, even the oldest living ones, these are traditional explanations, but anthropologists have generally not noted them, nor analyzed the Christian influences they suggest.

5. Such explanations were actually given, time and again, by younger Indians and by some older ones. Some say that Indians would have made such explanations earlier, if they had enough command of English, but it may be, too, that it is the belief-system as much as the language they would be approximating, in this case, because the oldest ones I know, and those whose knowledge I trust most, do not seek to explain things but only state them. Such-and-such is given as "the Indian way" or "the right way," and the question "Why?" will often get you, simply, "That's our religion."

6. The role of an Indian Doctor is entirely different from that of a Brush Dance Medicine Woman. These terms are used quite specifically and their meanings will be described in the chapters that follow.

7. Most of this literature grew out of Kroeber's research, which forms most of the basis for subsequent analyses. The tradition begins with Erikson (1943). Roheim (1950), Posinsky (1954, 1956, 1957), and Valory (1970) continue the trend through their efforts to interpret Yurok life and religion in the familiar terms of Freudian psychoanalysis. None of these writers spent much time among the Yurok, and it is not clear whether Roheim or Posinsky ever found it necessary to visit northwestern California. Since Kroeber's original research was an attempt at reconstruction rather than forthright reportage, and subsequent research has generally been based only on short visits and repeated interviewing of the same informants, the gap between academic writing and actual Yurok life has simply widened and widened.

8. Strong argument could be made on either side of this question, from an Indian point of view, and I do not mean to imply my own value judgement. I do

not feel that I have the right to express an opinion on this for it is a topic for local Indians to decide.

9. The etymology of *wahgey* will be pursued further in the discussion of religion that follows. The meaning may have been transferred in the direction opposite from that which most people assume.

10. An important figure in many *wahgey* stories.

11. See, for example, the Folkloristic Commentary by Alan Dundes which precedes Kroeber's *Yurok Myths* in the University of California Press edition (Kroeber, 1976:xxxii).

12. Consider, in comparison, the effects of Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds" broadcast in 1938. It reportedly caused such a panic that scores of adults in New York and New Jersey had to be treated for shock or hysteria. The *New York Times* headline (Monday, October 31, 1938) read: "Radio listeners in panic, taking war drama as fact. Many flee homes to escape."

13. Modern Indians assume that pre-contact civilization stretches back to a virtually timeless period which followed the occupation of the *wahgey* by only a few generations (cf., *ikhareyavs* in Harrington, 1932:2). In an admittedly speculative article, Kroeber suggested four periods of California Indian prehistory: I. 2000-1500 B.C. to 500 B.C.; II. 500 B.C. to 500 A.D.; III. 500 A.D. to 1200 A.D.; and IV. after 1200 A.D., and the distinctive northwestern California cultures considered here would fall into Period IV of this scheme (Kroeber, 1923: 112-31). The scattered and inconclusive archeological data assembled by Pilling (1978:138) does not seriously challenge this hypothesis, but Byron Nelson, in a history reflecting the official position of the Hupa tribe, cites radiocarbon evidence to support the contention that one ceremonial site had been in use for a period of five thousand years (Nelson, 1978:201). Insofar as I shall speculate, further in this paper, on the character of pre-contact culture, it will be in a synchronic way—accepting at least the figurative validity that things had been done in such-and-such a way since time immemorial. Whether or not one accepts the Nelson contention, there is not enough undisputable archeological evidence to render these cultures more recent, say, than Kroeber's guesses of 1923. In any case, a synchronic pre-contact analysis would probably fit most closely with indigenous conceptions of time and the significance of its passage.

14. The history of atrocities committed by Euro-Americans against the Indians of northwestern California is recorded in *Genocide in North-west California: When Our Worlds Cried* by Jack Norton. Norton produces much documentary evidence depicting the cruel and cowardly aspects of White "pioneering" in this area.

15. George Gibbs, who traveled through Weitchpec on October, 1851, made the following account of a hostile Yurok he met there:

... (The chief, with great formality, displayed a bone, marked on one edge with twenty-six notches, being the number of white men admitted to have been killed upon the Klamath; while the other side of it contained twenty-seven, as the number of Indians killed by whites (Gibbs, 1853: 145; and in Pilling, 1978: 140).

The Yuroks did not have "chiefs," but it is not at all unlikely that some Indian might have claimed to be one to Gibbs, or that Gibbs might have jumped to that conclusion.

16. Indian officials who worked for the government spoke up against some of these crimes, and the very formation of the reservation at Hoopa was based largely on the need to protect Indians from being murdered by Whites. By and large, however, those few who spoke out against these crimes could do little to stop them. For example, consider the following charges which were made by a man named Hanson, a State Superintendent of Indian Affairs, describing the treatment of Indians in Humboldt and Mendocino Counties:

... Indian children are seized and carried into the lower counties and sold into virtual slavery. These crimes against humanity so excited the Indians that they began to retaliate by killing the cattle of Whites. At once an order was given to chastise the guilty. Under this indefinite order, a company of United State Troops, attended by a considerable volunteer force, has been pursuing the poor creatures from one retreat to another. Ten kidnapers follow at the heels of the soldiers to seize the children when their parents are murdered and sell them to the best advantage (Nelson, 1978:76).

17. This account is in *Our Home Forever: A Hupa Tribal History* by Byron Nelson, Jr.

18. After the wholesale importation of Indian refugees from various places in northwestern California to Hoopa Valley, there must have been a great mixture of populations and culture-elements which has not, to my knowledge, been explicitly considered in subsequent writings on Hupa culture.

19. Nelson (1978:122-23) includes this account of the reservation school circa 1890:

At Hoopa, as at many reservation schools, "manual labor" made up 50% of the curriculum. Boys worked on a small farm, and girls did the cooking, laundry, sewing, and housekeeping. Since the students did this as "part of their training," the school did not have to hire many employees (Correspondence from Captain William E. Dougherty, Acting Indian Agent, to I.H. Albro, Superintendent of Indian Schools).

20. For example, Meyer writes:

Although unfamiliar with the abstract conception of morals, the Allequa (Yurok) faithfully observes and practices (moral) precepts, and although only dimly conscious of his superiority to the White man in this respect, he intuitively realizes the latter's moral shortcomings and calls him "paleface" or "weakling" (Meyer, 1851:271).

21. In an informal conversation, George Blake, who manages the Hupa Tribal Museum in Hoopa, told me that he had seen memoranda from White collectors or museum scientists to locals who apparently helped them buy specimens to the effect that they had more of the blade treasures than they could use. In the period after 1900, there was apparently a glut of ceremonial flints in the possession of collectors.

22. Kroeber, too, made an observation which is relevant to the question: "The greatest reliance for acquisition is on the supernatural and ones own will—a

willing through abstinence and deprivation, and by sheer pertinacious wishing, weeping, insistence, and proclaiming—devices psychologically effective because they direct and focus volition. In short, the Yurok depend more on concentration of mind to acquire wealth than on extraverted activity (Kroeber, 1959:237).

23. Goldschmidt introduces his essay as follows: "(The) present paper brings data from the culture (sic) of Northwest California, a culture (sic) which reflects in surprising degree certain structural and ethical characteristics of emergent capitalistic Europe. This was the culture of the Yurok, Hupa, Karok, and some of their neighbors" (Goldschmidt, 1951: 506).

24. Hupa scholar Jack Norton told me that there has been a particularly strong and continuing Methodist influence on the reservation in Hoopa, but to try and treat such questions in a thorough way would take us critically far from the actual subject at hand.

25. Probably Woodruff is referring here to the deer-like head movements made by the "hook men" in the Deerskin Dance or the "center man" in the Jump Dance. I never heard of a "woodpecker dance," but the scarlet headfeathers of the pillated woodpecker are prominent in the decoration of local Indian ceremonial items.

26. This text, entitled "The Afterworld" in the manuscript, is a sentence-to-sentence translation by Victor Golla of comments originally made in the Hupa language and collected by Sapir. Golla, who kindly lent me this and other important translations, asked that readers be reminded that the texts are literal translations, often tentative, and not finished literary products.

27. The idyllic tone of his Victorian prose is offensive to many modern readers, and to those who have spent a little time trying to see things from an Indian viewpoint. There is often even an ignorant cruelty in the subjects which Powers found ironic or worth mentioning about California Indians. Nevertheless, his *Tribes of California* will long remain a classic of ethnographic writing. His are not only some of the earliest observations on record, but there is also, in his personal and haphazard observations, a vividness that later, more systematic writers would not approach. The word which Powers transliterates as *u-me-laik* is actually a Yurok word which means, simply, "Brush Dance," or, rather, which referred to the dance before that English term for it existed. The other word, which he spells *Ne-peg-wuh*, does refer to the first salmon of spring, in Yurok (Cf. Robins, 1958: 291), but in this context, it might have also been *noh-pe-wuk* which he heard. My authority, Frank Douglas, said this was the Yurok word for a "heavy song" or, literally, "What (song that) you go in (to the pit) with." Robins translates the word (*nonpewil*), "to sing solo at the Brush Dance" (Robins, 1958: 230).

28. Of these, Goddard's account of the Hupa Brush Dance is the most complete. Besides this description, in "Life and Culture of the Hupa," Goddard also translated a statement entitled "Directions and Formula for the Brush Dance," which he collected from a woman he called "the wife of McCann." This is in *Hupa Texts*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Goddard, 1904:241-51).

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