

UC Merced

The Journal of California Anthropology

Title

Kroeber: *Ishi in Two Worlds*

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9zk433bh>

Journal

The Journal of California Anthropology, 3(2)

Author

Elsasser, A. B.

Publication Date

1976-12-01

Peer reviewed

California Indian population, published in 1976 and reviewed in this issue, has more than doubled this figure.

Despite subsequent elaboration on certain of the ideas set forth in the original six essays, taken together they will almost certainly remain as one of the towering landmarks in studies pertaining to California Indians in the Historic Period.



Review of Non-Distinctive Arguments in Uto-Aztecan. Ronald Langacker. Berkeley: University of California Publications in Linguistics, Vol. 82. 1976. xiii + 241 pp. \$7.50.

Reviewed by WICK R. MILLER
University of Utah

This is an important contribution to both linguistic theory and Uto-Aztecan linguistics.

Langacker is concerned with the historical development of four kinds of sentences: passives, impersonals, reflexives (including reciprocals), and unspecified arguments. These sentence types are semantically related, and in many languages, including most of the Uto-Aztecan languages, they are also syntactically related. Using the theoretical framework of generative semantics, along with insight, imagination, and lots of data, he offers suggestions for their source and historical development. One can always quibble with some of the details, but I find myself in agreement with his basic arguments and proposals.

Langacker combed the literature, both published and unpublished, for this study. Twenty Uto-Aztecan languages are treated. This was a herculean task, particularly when

one considers the varied nature and quality of the source material. After having pulled all this material together, Langacker is in an excellent position to do historical grammar in a number of areas, and he promises us that this work is just the first in a series. If the following contributions are of this high quality, Uto-Aztecan studies will indeed be in a fortunate and enviable position.

An extremely valuable byproduct of this study is an extensive bibliography. If any published items of linguistic importance are missing, I have not found them. Additionally, many unpublished items and published works that are of secondary linguistic importance are listed. The bibliography is not limited to items cited in this monograph, nor to the twenty languages used in this study. The bibliography is especially useful because it is arranged by language and language branch. It will be valued by all of us who work in the Uto-Aztecan field.



Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America. Theodora Kroeber. Deluxe, Illustrated Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press. 259 pp. \$14.95 (cloth).

Reviewed by A.B. ELSASSER
Lowie Museum of Anthropology
University of California, Berkeley

Attempts to account for the popularity of books or exhibits about Ishi may lead anyone into the region of deep psychological speculation. Surely there is something extraordinarily compelling about Theodora Kroeber's elegant prose concerning this apparently simple-living

man, but why, for example, does one small cover picture of a smiling man swimming in clear water also have a recurring emotional pull upon us?

We are told on the jacket of the new edition that 500,000 copies of *Ishi in Two Worlds* are now in print. The text of the new issue is unchanged from the original, but the new format has somehow transformed the impact of the story—it seems much more than a mere handsome visual dressing up of a haunting story. Many of the pictures have been carried over from the old edition, but they have been rearranged, and their quality of reproduction has been much improved. The addition of about thirty delightful historical or contemporary color plates, plus some new line drawings or black and white photographs serves to place Ishi in a new light. Of new photographs added, for instance, one relatively small portrait from the 1860's includes the smirkingly self-confident faces of three well-known Indian fighters of the time. This is almost sufficient explanation in itself of why Ishi's immediate ancestors and Ishi himself became recluses in their native land. Anyone having worthies of this stripe after him would surely be better off migrating to Patagonia or beyond. Other new pictures somehow give us a deeper understanding about how Ishi must have felt in the land of his birth and later in San Francisco.

Probably it is safe to say that most readers of the *Journal of California Anthropology* have read one or another of the earlier editions. If this is true, reading the new volume will allow one to experience an impressive and subtle alchemy performed by Theodora Kroeber and the University of California Press.



Willie Boy: A Desert Manhunt. Harry Lawton. Banning: Malki Museum Press. (2nd edition, 1976). 224 pp., 24 plates. \$8.95 (cloth). \$4.95 (paper).

Reviewed by A. B. ELSASSER
*Lowie Museum of Anthropology
University of California, Berkeley*

The first edition of *Willie Boy* appeared in hard cover in 1960 and probably went out of print before it had time to be properly appreciated by many potential readers. The new edition is reproduced from the original by lithography, and the only additions are a new picture and biography of the author, plus a back cover with extracts from various reviews of the first edition. Anyone reading the book now for the first time will find little to complain about in the review quotes—the book is indeed gripping and exciting. Moreover, it tells us a great deal about California Indian-White social integration around the turn of the century.

Lawton has handled most adroitly the chronicle of a search in the Mojave Desert in 1909 for a renegade Paiute Indian who had killed the father of his girl and then the girl herself. There is not even a hint of the usual one-sided judgments which such a story could ordinarily be expected to inspire. One may easily come away with the feeling of involvement in a so-called universal theme (cf. for example Mozart's *Don Giovanni* or Kipling's *Ballad of East and West*): Willie Boy was perhaps confused, but he was not an unspeakable murderer, nor were the members of the White and Indian posse which tracked him down heartless oppressors.

The feeling of participation in the search surely is enhanced for the reader by presentation of the excellent documentary photography of the places and persons figuring in the drama.