

## **"I Heard Your Singing": Ishi and Anthropological Indifference in the Last of His Tribe**

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The moving and poignant story of *Ishi*, the last *Yahi* Indian, has manifested itself in the film drama *The Last of His Tribe* (HBO Pictures/Sundance Institute, 1992). Given the long history of Hollywood's misrepresentation of Native Americans, I propose to examine this cinematic drama attending historical, ideological and cultural axioms acknowledged in the film and concomitant literature. Particular attention is given to dramatic allegorical themes manifesting historical racism, Western societal conquest, and most profoundly anthropological indifference, as well as, the historical accuracy and the ideological differences of worldview -- Western vis-à-vis *Yahi* -- manifest in the film.

In the study of worldviews and concomitant values, there has long existed a lurking "we" - "they" proposition of otherness. Ever since the days of Plato and his Western intellectual predecessors, there has been an attempt to locate and explicate wisdom in the ethnocentric ideological notion of the "civilized" vis-à-vis the "savage." Consequently, Plato's thoughts are accorded the standing of philosophy -- the love of wisdom -- while Black Elk's words are the musings of the "primitive" and consigned to anthropology -- the science of man. Philosophy is, thusly, seen as an endeavor of "civilized" Western man whom in his "science of man" or anthropological investigation may record the "ethnometaphysics" of "primitive" or "developing" cultures. Despite the fact that philosophy and ethnology (cultural anthropology) investigate and explicate the same types of world view concerns, for example metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, etc., this distinction of the illusionary "primitive" - "civilized" dichotomy remains as an ethnocentric qualifier of the nature of wisdom. Furthermore, in "the science of man" thesis, there is the arrogance that a given people's values and worldviews may be explored and recorded in an absolute objective judgment of the recorders.

The dichotomous assumption of the "civilized" and the "primitive" is itself the primary manifestation of cultural narcissism inherent in the distinction between philosophy and anthropology in Occidental thought. Anthropology during its formative years was dominated by a unilinear socio-evolutionary point of view that presupposed that the course of historical changes in human cultures follows a definitive evolution from "savage" to "civilized." Utilizing a comparative methodology, nineteenth century anthropologists, such as Spencer, Morgan, Tylor and Frazier, stressed a unilinear "primitive" evolution of culture. It is from this perspective that "Primitive Society Theory" emerges as a vehicle to intellectually rationalize the earlier Savagism Dogma.

At the close of the nineteenth century, a German anthropologist, Franz Boas published an attack upon the comparative unilinear method that became the first expression of cultural relativism in Western thought. Boas held that all cultures are equal and comparable and that there are no inferior or superior cultures. Concluding that the history of human civilization does not appear to us as determined entirely by psychological necessity that leads to a uniform evolution the world over. We rather see that each cultural group has its own unique history, dependent partly upon the peculiar inner development of the social group, and partly upon the foreign influences to which it has been subjected.

Accordingly, the *a priori* evolutionary scheme of unilinear development was itself an illusion manifesting ethnocentrism.

Characteristically, the Boasian Method constituted a detailed study of customs in relation to the total culture of the tribe practicing them. Examined in connection with geographical distribution among adjoining tribes, emphasis was placed upon accurately determining the historical causes and psychological processes central to the customs' formation and development. Founding the first university anthropology department in the United States, "Boas brought to humanistic studies a severe objectivity, a mathematical exactitude, a wariness of the subjective, the intuitive, the empathetic." This approach reflected his scholastic training that had stressed physics, mathematics and geography. At Columbia, he began producing adherents of his cultural relativism doctrine who following him revolutionized anthropology. His first doctoral graduate in 1901, and only the second "home grown" anthropologist in the United States, was Alfred Kroeber. Attending Boas's seminar on Native American languages, Kroeber shifted his studies from literature to anthropology; he had shown a strong inclination towards the humanities and in reproach Boas called him an Epicurean. Despite the reproach, Kroeber repeatedly denied being a scientist choosing to call himself a natural historian. His principal interests in anthropology remained focused on the distinguishing characteristics of cultures. Julian Steward explains:

The basis of Kroeber's point of view may be called the natural history of culture, with strong emphasis on the humanistic features. That is, Kroeber's main endeavor was to identify the distinguishing features of each culture and to assign them to categories based on the procedures of natural history, but he was wary in drawing conclusions about such a classification because he thought the dominant feature of each, a position of cultural holism, was a means of characterizing the entire culture.

Advancing accordingly Boas's cultural relativism, Kroeber gave it a humanistic flavor; nevertheless, he remained attendant to empirical study. In short, these were the conditions and background of anthropology when Alfred Kroeber took *Ishi*, the last *Yahi* Indian as his ward.

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Shadowed with hunger, exposure and fright, an Indian appeared wretchedly near death at a slaughterhouse outside Oroville, California on the evening of August 29, 1911. The curiosity of local Whites compelled the county sheriff to lock him away in jail. It was soon learned that he spoke neither English, Spanish nor any locally recognized Indian language. Newspaper stories concerning this "wild man" brought him to the attention of Alfred Kroeber and Thomas Waterman, anthropologists with the Parnassus Heights Museum and the University of California. Acting on Kroeber's surmise that the "wild man" was a *Yahi* Indian, Waterman journeyed to Oroville and communicated with the Indian through a *Yana* dialect that Kroeber had recorded. Upon return to the museum, Waterman presented the Indian to Kroeber who spoke the *Yana* dialect. In respect for the *Yahi* practice of name-circumlocution, Kroeber gave the Indian the nickname "*Ishi*" which designates "man" or "person" in the *Yana* language. While the Bureau of Indian Affairs sought to resettle *Ishi*, as a ward of the government on an alien Indian reservation, Kroeber managed to have him released to the care of the Museum of Art and Anthropology of the University of California. Thus *Ishi*, the last *Yahi*, came to live out his final years in a museum room under the guardianship of Alfred Kroeber, the eminent anthropologist.

Eloquently imaging *Ishi's* life at the museum, Theodora Kroeber writes:

There came to him as he sat there the silken sound of tiny particles of falling flakes of glass from the next room where someone was at work -- *Ishi*. Kroeber went next door. A barefoot but otherwise ordinarily dressed Indian sat on a piece of canvas tarpaulin, expertly fashioning an obsidian arrowhead with a chipper made of the antler of a deer. *Ishi* smiled a greeting but did not stop the rapid flaking stroke; he was used to having this friend of his sit beside him, watching him at work. In a mad rush for gold, the forty-niners following the Lassen Trail enroute to the Sacramento Valley cut a bloody gash across the *Yahi* territory. Crazy with gold fever, these "settlers" raped, hanged, shot, scattered, enslaved and forcibly removed the *Yana* tribes from their homeland; as a result, the *Yahi* and other *Yana* tribes ceased to exist as social entities. With his mother and sister, *Ishi* had spent nearly forty years hiding from the Whites; at the death of his companions in 1908, he had lived wholly alone during the last three years before his appearance at the Oroville slaughterhouse.

Although he lived out the remaining years of his life in the San Francisco museum, *Ishi* retained his traditional sense of identity. Affirming this point, T. Kroeber writes: "He always knew who he was: a well-born *Yana* to whom belonged a land and Gods and a Way of Life.

These were truths learned in childhood; one lived by them and according to them and at the end one would travel the trail to the west out of the white man's world to the Yana Land of the Dead, there to rejoin one's family and friends and ancestors.”

In her biography of *Ishi*, Theodora Kroeber recognizes the significant differences that existed in the conquests of the California Indians. Guided by a Mediterranean racial outlook, the Ibero-American invasion was far less destructive of human life and values than the subsequent Anglo-American conquest. The Iberians practiced intermarriage with Natives and accepted, as a natural result, the emergence of a *Mestizo* people. While the imposition of Christianity served to compromise Native traditions and significantly alter cultural values, the bloodlines remained. Conversely T. Kroeber notes the Anglo-Americans tended to racism. She continues: “A person with a skin color different from their own was thought to be intellectually and morally inferior; marriage with him was an antisocial act, sometimes legally forbidden; whatever the source for a sense of wonder and sacredness, if non-Christian, it was considered to be superstition and to be reprehensible.”

Significantly exceeding racism, forty-niner J. Goldsborough Bruff projects a cannibalistic ethos in the spring of 1850. Sighting "the fresh tracks of an Indian," Bruff records his monstrous attitude: “Oh! If I can only over take him! Then will I have one hearty meal! A good broil! I examined my caps, they were good. I felt relieved, it gave me additional strength; to think I might soon get a broil off an Indian's leg!... My mouth fairly watered, for a piece of an Indian to broil!” While Bruff did not kill the Indian, he nevertheless projects the forty-niner savagery, a fact that is not without historical foundations among early Anglo-Californians.

Another Anglo-California invader, Hi Good, known as "the Boone of the Sierra," practiced extremely barbarous aggression against the Mill Creek [*Yana*] Indians. Writing in 1859, H. H. Sauber declared: "Thrilling tales were told of his [Good's] wonderful prowess, of his almost incredible success, and of the strings of black-haired scalps that adorned his house. In short the Mill Creeks were no more a terror to the whites, than was Hi Good a terror to them."

As the invasion accelerated, the Yanas were pushed into acts of deprivation against the Anglo-Californian. In some cases, it was simply a matter of taking Anglo-Californian livestock and preparing them for food as they normally would with indigenous wildlife. That this was not done out of maliciousness, T. Kroeber notes that when *Ishi* learned "that what they took was the private property of a single person... he blushed, in painful embarrassment whenever he recalled that by white standards he and his brother *Yahi* had been guilty of stealing." Nevertheless, in the 1863 capture of Thankful Carson and the murder of her two brothers, the *Yanas* were significantly implicated among the Anglo-Californian population. Despite the fact that murder of *Yana* Indians had been widely practiced by the invaders, this incident of *Yana* reprisal inflamed public sentiment and further compromised the Anglo-Californian outlook on the Indians. Among the militant respondents, "Captain" Robert A. Anderson waged a war of extermination against the *Yana* during the years of 1857-65. Although the *Yahi* were nearly extinguished by this war, Anderson records the presence of a remnant of survivors along Deer and Mill Creeks who make "stealthy descents upon the cabin of the white man, but committing no serious crimes. The[y] have developed the art of hiding to a perfection greater than that of the beasts of the woods, and while in no wise dangerous, they are probably today the wildest people in America."

These acts of Anglo-Californian barbarity were so indiscriminately practiced that even *Yana* Indians living in towns and working on farms were murdered. Jeremiah Curtin describes the murder of several *Yana* girls who were taken from White homes and killed in the presence of their employers. In case of the murder of a seven-year-old girl, the leader declared "We must kill them, big and little, nits will be lice." Curtin (1864) continues: “The most terrible slaughter in any place was near the head of Oak Run, where three hundred *Yanas* had met at a religious dance. These were attacked in force, and not a soul escaped. The slaughter went on day after day till the entire land of the *Yana*'s was cleared. The few who escaped were those who happened to be away from home, outside their country, and about twelve who were saved by Mr. Oliver and Mr. Disselhorst, both of Redding. The whole number of surviving *Yanas* of pure and mixed blood was not far from fifty.”

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Opening with a series of Bierhorst paintings that convey a sublime sense of the Sierra, the film presents four allegorical images that implicate the Frontier Thesis and the Anglo-Californian ideology of Manifest Destiny. The series of paintings move from daylight to sunset in a Sierra valley.

First there is a daylight scene of the valley implying Nature's sublimity, this painting is followed by a sunset motif with Native lodges suggesting their eminently inevitable demise. In the second scene of daylight, cattle are seen ranging the valley evoking the White man "wise use" of nature; the concluding image of sunset includes wagons offering the sense of a passing frontier. Accordingly the demise of nature and the Natives, as well as, the White husbandry of the land and the forty-niner invasion and conquest is allegorically implicated in the film's opening scenes.

Attending the Anglo-Californian pattern of Indian denigration, the slaughterhouse scene conveys the racism and ethnocentricism applied against California Indians. With a dog attacking him, *Ishi* (Graham Greene) is addressed as both a "Sasquatch" -- implying bestial man -- and a "digger" -- conveying an Anglo-Californian pattern of racism which is again repeated in a waterfront scene where *Ishi* (Greene) has apparently spent a lonely, troubled night; note this scene's dialogue:

Boatman: "Hey digger. You want a job."

Ishi: "Job? Got job."

Boatman: "You got a job? ... and I bet its a picnic of a job too. Why don't you go back to it then? ... and get the hell off my property."

The ugly epithet -- "digger" -- evokes the Savagism Dogma and concomitant dehumanization which was widely applied against the California Indians.

Acknowledging the Good-Anderson massacres of the *Yana*, the movie supplies reflections from *Ishi* (Greene). First, during a dinner scene at Kroeber's home; *Ishi* (Greene) recalls, "the day the *Salut* killed his father." This painful scene references both *Ishi*'s personal loss and the historic Anglo-Californian wars of extermination. The dinner scene wherein *Ishi* (Greene) remembers the massacre of his tribe is effective in affirming Waterman's account of the end of the Mill Creek war, which he calls:

A party of armed whites, acting without other authority than resentment and an inborn savagery, surprised the tribe on the upper waters of Mill Creek in 1865. Their effort apparently was to wipe out this Indian group on the spot. On the admission of men who took part in the action, fire was opened on the defenseless Indians in the early morning, and an uncertain number of them, men, women and children, shot down. A few, not more than three or four, perhaps, escaped into the brush and got clear. The Mill Creek tribe as a tribe disappeared from history at this time. With one or two possible exceptions, nothing was seen of it again for over thirty-five years.

Clearly the film does not exaggerate this cruel event; the extreme barbarity is potently manifest in the film when *Ishi* (Greene) recalls the murders of his sister and mother at the hands of the Anglo-Californians. This scene faithfully conveys the ugly spirit that accompanied the historic genocide of the *Yana*. Although Kroeber and Waterman were adherents of Franz Boas's cultural relativity theory, the unilinear socio-evolutionary theories of an illusionary primitive society were largely the theme of the day. The film conveys this cleverly when at the Oroville train station, a prominent society woman bestows a basket of fruit upon *Ishi*; she declares: "The women of the Oroville Monday Club... with this luncheon basket for your trip to San Francisco and knowing of your life as a free ranging man of nature, we offer our fondest hopes that our civilization will not disappoint you." This scene serves to implicate the Savagism Dogma and its implicit "wild man" or "man of nature" motifs. When juxtaposed with *Ishi's* arrival at the museum and his interest in Mrs. Gustafson's women's suffrage movement button proclaiming, "Votes for Women," a splendid irony is implied. Moreover, the so-called "primitive" man confronts the proud but un-enfranchised women of Western civilization.

Immediately prior to this scene, Kroeber (Jon Voight) implicates the hidden anthropological agenda of primitive society theory when he explains, "It's an historic moment Mrs. Gustafson. We are about to meet the last truly primitive man in our continent and offer him punch and cookies." Despite the Boasian Revolution, anthropological theory retained elements of primitive society theory and even Kroeber doesn't appear immune to the fallacy. In consequence, the film is very effective in exposing Anglo-American ethnocentricism, racism, genocide and concomitant primitive society theory while cleverly juxtaposing the repressive treatment of women with the hubris of civilized superiority.

Governmental paternalism, a disguised manifestation of the primitive society illusion, is also manifest in *Ishi's* life among the *Salut* (Whites). While the Department of Indian Affairs had directed the Oroville Sheriff to release *Ishi* to the custody of Kroeber and the museum staff, the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. E. B. Merritt, subsequently wrote directly to Kroeber expressing the popular ethnocentrism of the era.

The opinion was given [whose, the letter fails to state], that owing to his [*Ishi's*] advanced age -- about sixty years or more -- he was not likely to speak English with any degree of fluency: and that, owing to his previous manner of life, his mental development as far as understanding of our manner of life was concerned, was not beyond that of a six year old child. Kroeber replied to Merritt's condescending remarks with the pride of a teacher recommending a promising pupil: "Ishi has taken readily to civilization and has been self-supporting for over a year, serving as assistant janitor and general helper about the museum. His age appears to be between fifty and fifty-five, and he has learned English slowly, but succeeds in making himself understood. Every month he is adding slowly to his command of the language. His ignorance of civilized life was complete, but by no means stunted or sub-normal. He has picked up practical matters with the utmost quickness. He has been free to return to his old home and manner of living ever since being with us, but much prefers his present condition."

Dramatically posing this incident as a contest of will between Kroeber (Voight) and Mr. Whitney of the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the film uses the encounter to explore governmental paternalism. Mr. Whitney's post with the "Wild Indian Division" subtly conveys the bureaucratic "pork" given *Ishi's* status as "the last wild Indian." Furthermore, Whitney's expressed intent to send *Ishi* to Oklahoma so that "he'd be around other Indians" confronts the simple mindedness that stereotypes "Indians" as a homogenous whole. Given the Waterman and Kroeber exchange with Whitney, the film inveighs a powerful irony to educate viewers to these issues of BIA bureaucratic fraud and the stereotype of an Indian homogeneity.

In an estimation of *Ishi's* character, Saxton T. Pope, M.D. (a University of California Physician and Professor) recalls an encounter at Buffalo-Bill's Wild West Show between *Ishi* and a Plains Indian. The dignified Sioux warrior speaking perfect English addressed Pope inquiring about *Ishi*:

"What tribe of Indian is this?" I answered, "Yana, from Northern California." The Sioux then gently picked up a bit of *Ishi's* hair, rolled it between his fingers, looked critically into his face, and said, "He is a very high grade of Indian." As we left, I asked *Ishi* what he thought of the Sioux. *Ishi* said, "Him's big cheap (Chief)." Apparently their estimates were equally complimentary.

In the use of "chiep" for "chief," the film manifests consistency with this anecdote.

Affirming both patience and wisdom, Kroeber declared *Ishi* the "... most patient man I ever knew. I mean he had mastered the philosophy of patience." Calling *Ishi* a stoic, Pope commented that "...he looked upon us as sophisticated children, smart but unwise... he had the soul of a child and the mood of a philosopher." These comments convey the qualities of a Zen Master upon the last *Yahi* survivor. Certainly, the question of *Ishi's* patience is answered in his lonely existence as a sole survivor and monolingual *Yahi* Indian when meeting Kroeber. While the film suggests that Kroeber immediately communicated with *Ishi* in the *Yahi* language, there is evidence that a central *Yana* interpreter named Sam Bautui was required until *Ishi* learned English. In order to demonstrate these qualities of *Ishi's* humanity, the film uses a meeting with the press. At this conference, the press core asks, "Why's his hair so short?" and Kroeber (Voight) replies, "He's in mourning. They do that, they singe their hair." "Who's dead?" a reporter rejoins. "Everyone he ever knew," responds Kroeber (Voight) matter-of-factly. The *Yahi* mourning customs are implicitly conveyed in this dramatic exchange that concludes with a triumphant *Ishi* (Greene) shooting an arrow into a hat to the delight of the press. This feat of archery marks an actual event in *Ishi's* life in San Francisco.

T. Kroeber noted in her biography of *Ishi* that there existed a tendency to misconstrue the name -- *Ishi* -- that in *Yana* means man or one of the people as "quaint or childlike." Although Alfred Kroeber's profession was the "science of man" or anthropology, it is clear that he did not create the name out of any disrespect; rather, it was Kroeber's intention to honor *Ishi's* tribal custom of name circumlocution among strangers. Moreover, the practice of telling, "his actual name to a stranger and hearing it used by other strangers" was taboo among the California Indians. The film handles this matter with great effectiveness when Kroeber (Voight) explains the practice to his secretary Mrs. Gustafson, although there is a poignant moment when Kroeber (Voight) addresses *Ishi* (Greene) with the new name.

Perhaps this moment of cinematic poignancy is intended to convey anthropological audacity that is manifest to some degree in T. Kroeber's writings concerning *Ishi*. In an incident involving Pope's and Kroeber's killing of a rattlesnake, T. Kroeber reveals this extrinsic condescension; she writes:

"Popey and the Chiep killed a rattlesnake and brought it proudly into camp. This was in itself wrong. One should be wary toward a rattlesnake, careful to step aside from its path or coiling place, leaving it to itself as the best assurance of reciprocation in kind. But, having foolishly killed it, they were compounding foolishness by insisting on cooking it, someone having told them that its flesh was as good as that of frog's legs. The Appersons and young Saxton sided with Ishi in refusing so much as to taste the cooked reptile, their acquiescent silence seconding his prognostications of trouble: in fact, Ishi expected those who had eaten the snake to die.

"Rattlesnake proved to be tough and unrewarding fare, but there were no calamitous aftermaths from eating it. This could be explained only by the Kuwi's truly strong power, and to Ishi's personal discretion in withdrawing from use the machete with which the rattler had been beheaded and sliced for cooking, as well as the contaminated frying pan in which it had been cooked." Describing *Ishi's* hunting practices, T. Kroeber has written, "Ishi took no aspect of hunting lightly, [his] ceremonial preparation [ran] in two strains: the practical, which seeks to reduce to a minimum the special odors attaching to man so that the game will not suspect his presence; and the magico-moral that seeks to channel the libido totally toward the hunt." While on the surface these references may seem innocent, the condescension manifests itself in the anthropological category of "magico-moral" customs that deem *Ishi's* actions of moral "discretion" to be less than rational.

A further manifestation of Western condescension is manifest in an account concerning *Ishi's* objection to using camping gear, which had been "stored against departure in the old-bones room of the museum. To put them there, of all places, was to invite trouble, as Ishi told Popey plainly. The outraged spirits of those desecrated bones would enter the gear and food, making the trip trebly hazardous. Popey listened. He pointed out to Ishi that he was aware of this risk and had already taken measures against it. Each article was tightly sealed in a can or bag; his, the Kuwi's magic was strong against any spirit's breaking or opening locks or seals or buckles. The Kuwi's magic was potent; Ishi could only hope potent enough to keep the contamination of that room, into which he himself never went, from penetrating the seals and buckles." While T. Kroeber cannot be faulted for this presentation, Pope's attitude and his patronizing of *Ishi* convey a paternalistic attitude masking an implicitly "superior" rationality. The delivery is that of a caring parent explaining the mystery of Scientific Rationalism to a precocious child.

Kroeber, himself, as an anthropologist, was not without some paternalistic interest in *Ishi*. It is clear from the start that he intended to study his prized Indian man recording his life and life ways in a book. While this paternalism is treated in several ways in the film, I wish to direct attention to the scene with the prostitute. In the film, the woman addresses him: "Mr. *Ishi*. I'm Ms. Edna Block. Your friends thought we might have something in common. I like your friends. They are very generous. They told me you are very clean. This is perfectly in order Mr. *Ishi*. People do this all the time. You must of heard of it. All perfectly in order." Seductively spoken, the monologue is delivered while she undresses thereby creating a sense of sexual arousal and its impending consummation. Early the next morning, *Ishi* (Greene) is singing joyfully and polishing the museum display cases with a special vigor. Exuding a sense of disapproval, Kroeber (Voight), in subsequent conversations with Pope (David Ogden Stiers), he conveys a Puritanical morality suggestive of the Victorian Age. As Kroeber (Voight) discusses it with *Ishi* (Greene), the guardianship duplicity is further revealed. Moreover, the ethos of governmental paternalism is transferred to the anthropological "father" where guardianship morality and purity of tradition are treasured in the subjects of "scientific" study. With *Ishi's* (Greene's) response concerning the *Salut's* doing this thing, Kroeber (Voight) contends, "It is not wise." Inveighing this clearly duplicitous answer, the film evokes a subtle irony concerning the propriety of *Ishi's* wardship.

Although fictional in the cinematic drama, the prostitute incident appears to have been based upon *Ishi's* experience with a 1911 Vaudeville show. *The urban White community as the "Noble Savage" viewed Ishi "the uncontaminated man, the man who had never told a lie and who lived without sin.* As such he represented the fanciful projections of spotless purity characteristic to Rousseauian Romanticism. A writer describing the event declared: "Ishi had never been brought into contact with the contaminating influences of civilization; therefore to permit the barbarian to mingle with our unsettled civilization is to expose him to contamination."

While Kroeber expressed no Puritanical disdain as conveyed in the film, the incident clearly reflects the projective fantasies of the romancive tradition and its implicit paternalism. Enthralled with the Orpheum headliner, Ms. Lilly Lena of the London music halls, *Ishi* was reminded of the *Yahi* narrative of "the Lying Coyote." Although scorned by the wonderful dancing maiden, Coyote cleverly deceived her:

"Wait," said the wily Coyote. "A great chief will come. You will know him by his oiled and painted face. If you dance before him you may win his love."

Retiring in secret, Coyote painted and greased his face and when he returned, the maiden danced for him; in this way, he was able to take her for his wife. Recorded by the Priests at the mission of San Juan Capistrano in the late 18th century, the story lacks the ribald character of similar Native American narratives; the mythic theme of Coyote's seduction of the dancing maiden, nevertheless, metaphorically implies the essential forces of creation and ongoing life processes active in Nature. Manifesting a *Yahi* metaphysic of Nature, the narrative is free of Western centered morality, although the ideological debates of "original sin" vis-à-vis "savage innocence" are implicitly engaged in the popular interpretation. The film's use of the prostitute and subsequent debate acts to convey the ordinary nature of human need across cultures thereby dispelling the popular romancive image of "uncontaminated man." There is in addition an ironic simile in this scene with Kroeber (Voight) moralizing against *Ishi's* (Greene's) sexual encounter, yet having previously told *Ishi* (Greene) that not all white men are alike. Allegorically the tragic irony of a civilization that rationalized the extinction of the *Yahi* is metaphorically revealed in the anthropological study of the prized last survivor.

Although *Ishi* received several marriage offers from Anglo-Americans, he never chose to marry. When asked about a wife, he answered with mythic narratives, such as Coyote stealing fire, and stories of women's work, as well as, imitations of women cooking mush complete with boiling sound effects. Commenting on this behavior, Waterman declared: "Its as though you asked a man when he got his divorce and he began to tell you the story of 'Cinderella.'"

Observing *Ishi's* domestic life, T. Kroeber commented upon his orderliness comparing it with Japanese aesthetics. Articulating this aesthetic of orderliness, she writes: "There is a temperamental, and possibly a kinesthetic something in this trait not to be explained by poverty in the variety of things owned, or difficulty of replacement and consequent need to take good care of them." Throughout the film, *Ishi* (Greene) manifests this aesthetic attention to order; Greene's portrayal suggests that *Ishi* was a man who could work without staining his clothes. In a scene where Pope (Stiers) removes *Ishi's* (Greene's) tie during their visit to the *Yahi* homeland, this orderliness is conveyed, as well as, *Ishi's* intrinsic civility. Central to *Ishi's* aesthetic of cleanliness, both physically and spiritually, was the *Yahi* traditional sweat bath. Utilizing a solution of leaves and nuts from the bay tree, they soothed their bodies with it following the sweat bath. According to *Ishi*, it acted as a soporific -- "like whisky tree," he declared. *Ishi* also enjoyed tobacco that he'd known with the sacred pipe ritual and prayer ceremony among his people. In these activities, as well as others, he manifested a strong religious outlook.

According to T. Kroeber, "his mysticism [was] as spontaneous and unrestrained as his smile." Acting on the traditions of the Old Ones, "he believed in a Land of the Dead where the souls of Yana live out their shadow community existence." In his understanding of the "White God," he held the conviction that this deity "would not care to have Indians in his home." Thus, he lived his life in San Francisco with apprehension of Western medicine and care for the dead; these concerns are evident throughout the film. Given that dream is a powerful conveyor of mystical power and knowledge in Native philosophy, the film provides an interesting juxtaposition of this perspective in a scene where Kroeber (Voight) is teaching English to *Ishi* (Greene) with flash cards. Observing a card with a White man sleeping, *Ishi* (Greene) asks, "What is *Salut* doing?" Closing his eyes and making a pillow with his hands against his tilted head, Kroeber (Voight) responds: "He's sleeping... sleep." "What is the White man dreaming?" asks *Ishi* (Greene), implicitly referencing the dream/vision and its power and meaning in his worldview. Answering Kroeber (Voight) declares: "The picture doesn't tell us what he's dreaming." Metaphorically this scene serves to implicate the emptiness of the *Salut* mythology and concomitant worldview.

Saxton Pope, M. D., head of surgery at the University of California medical school next door to the museum, became one of *Ishi's* closest friends. Showing interest in the hospital, *Ishi* met Pope who received him kindly; in turn, *Ishi* taught Yana archery to the doctor.

At the behest of Kroeber (Voight), *Ishi* (Greene) is the film examined by Pope (Stiers). During the examination, *Ishi* (Greene) fearfully notices an anatomy chart that visually implies his recorded thoughts that they (the *Saluts*) were fattening him up to eat him. Later *Ishi* (Greene) shows interest in a patient of Dr. Pope (Stiers). As the doctor and the Indian look on, the man awakes to Pope (Stiers) explanation of *Ishi's* (Greene's) interest. With this explanation, the frightened patient declares: "You let an Indian operate on me!" These scenes reflect *Ishi's* traditional concern for medicine, as well as, the *Salut* skepticism at Indian healing competency implied in the patient response.

Noting that the operation occurred during the patient's sleep, *Ishi* (Greene) is deeply concerned with this surgical practice. *Ishi* (Greene) inquires of Kroeber (Voight): "If you were asleep... and Dr. Pope cut into your body... would you not awake?" Kroeber (Voight) answers: "Well it's a different kind of sleep." *Ishi* (Greene) asks: "How many kinds of sleep do the White men have?" Kroeber (Voight) replies: "How many kinds? That's a good question. I don't know." This exchange conveys their incomprehension of each other's worldview. *Ishi* traditionally viewed sleep as a time for dream that reveals metaphorical insights into the process and powers of the world. Whereas for Kroeber dreams are merely the irrational musings and base desires of a person and thereby lacking in any real meaning. The scene, thereby, serves to further expose the Western world's lack of mythological awareness.

In the *Yahi* metaphysic of death, a dead person's soul lingering in the land of the living is caught in an unhappy and lonely limbo that is dangerous to the living, particularly family members. Traditionally, the *Yahi* promptly cremated the remains of their dead as an act of liberating the soul. Freed from the desire of the body and place, the dead are thus released to travel southward on the "Trail of the Dead" and dwell in the "Land of the Ancestors." An account of this practice and its implied importance is given by the Indian fighter R. A. Anderson; following a massacre along Chico creek, the surviving *Yahi* returned to bury their dead, no doubt at great risk. Accompanying the ritual burning, a mournful incantation was chanted in order to send the dead on their way.

In 1907 Kroeber married Henreitte Rothschild who within a few years developed tuberculosis and died in 1913. Cleverly presenting Henreitte's death, the film introduces *Ishi's* traditional metaphysical beliefs concerning the dead. A somber *Ishi* (Greene) gently questions Kroeber (Voight):

*Ishi* (Greene): "There was no singing today?"

Kroeber (Voight): "No."

*Ishi* (Greene): "You don't sing for your dead?"

Kroeber (Voight): "Not always."

*Ishi* (Greene): "How can she find the trail of the dead... unless you sing for her?"

Burdened in grief, Kroeber (Voight) gives no response but his personal doubts are visible, as the scholar of the "science of man" has no answer. A compelling moment, the scene confronts the anthropological challenge of comprehending alternate worldviews. Utilizing this worldview clash to great effect, the film succeeds in metaphorically suggesting the inevitable subjectivity of anthropological science. For example, during the dinner scene at Kroeber's home, Waterman (Jack Blessing) explains a procedure for studying skirt lengths and Kroeber (Voight) responds: "That's it Tom, you've made my point, everything's anthropology." Following this conversation as they prepare to eat, *Ishi* (Greene) looks upon the silverware in apparent confusion over which instrument to use. Giving him subtle hints, Kroeber (Voight) delicately instructs him and noting the moment, Henreitte (Anne Archer) comments: "He reminds me of you among the Arapaho trying so hard to make a good impression." Accordingly, the worldviews with concomitant customs and manners are juxtaposed.

In subsequent scenes involving dinner and her death, Henreitte (Archer) becomes the primary dramatic vehicle to explore these worldview differences raising the theme of anthropological indifference that is central to the allegorical meaning of the film. During dinner she inquires: "Ask him how he came to be alone." With Kroeber (Voight) translating *Ishi* (Greene) responds:

He says that the *Salut* -- white man -- first came to *Yahi* lands before he was born. There was always trouble between the *Yahi* and *Salut*, he remembers when he was very young that the world of the *Yahi* seemed unchangeable to him, as permanent as the sacred mountain....

Every summer the *Yahi* lived in its shadow and in the cold winter months they moved down to the lowlands. His strongest early memory is of a bear his father and uncle killed. They skinned it where it fell and hauled the meat back to camp and they buried it there and called the spot... the bear's hiding place."

Subsequently, *Ishi* (Greene) relates the Anderson-Good massacre that is dramatically portrayed. Followed with his accounts of ritual respect: "That evening those that were left burned the bodies and sang to help their friends find the way to the trail of the dead."

At thirty-six years old, Henreitte Kroeber died in the early spring of 1913. Following Henriette's death, Kroeber found in *Ishi* strong comfort for his loss. T. Kroeber notes "through the few words they exchanged, through the comfortable silences between the words, he felt *Ishi* trying to help him in his own loss, to comfort him...". A sense of *Ishi's* comforting is implied in the film following the dinner engagement. Upon returning to the museum, *Ishi* (Greene) seeing a basket remarks: "*Yahi*." "It was my grandmother who made that basket." Accordingly something of a bond is established with Kroeber (Voight) who tries to reassure *Ishi* (Greene) of his sincerity. Following the account of the *Yahi* massacre referenced at dinner, Kroeber (Voight) declares: "You know not all white men are alike."

In a later scene following the funeral, *Ishi* wanders among the autopsy room amid hospital cadavers creating a cinematic simile that heightens the drama of Henreitte's death while further explaining the worldview differences.

*Ishi* (Greene): "White man do this to their dead?"

Kroeber (Voight): "Not to all, to some."

*Ishi* (Greene): "A man's body should be burned... You should not allow this."

Kroeber (Voight): "It's not for you to say. What you believe is not what we believe."

*Ishi* (Greene): "Chiep believe nothing. You tell them stop."

Kroeber (Voight): "I will not."

*Ishi* (Greene): "She haunts you because ... she cannot find the trail of the dead."

Kroeber (Voight): "How dare you speak to me about my wife."

Delivered with charged performances by both Greene and Voight, this exchange threads together the allegorical message central to the film.

Returning to an earlier scene between Kroeber (Voight) and Henreitte (Archer) the film's allegorical theme of anthropological indifference is fashioned. Essentially, Henriette (Archer) informs Kroeber (Voight) that: "You're the only one who can understand," therefore it is implied that *Ishi* must not be treated as an artifact. The exchange follows:

Henreitte (Archer): "So tell me more about your Mr. *Ishi*. What will you do with him?"

Kroeber (Voight): "Legally I suppose, he'll be our ward."

Henreitte (Archer): "Surely there are other Indians who can look after him."

Kroeber (Voight): "No other *Yahi* darling, not a single one. And that's why he's such a prize."

Henreitte (Archer): "You make him sound like just another artifact for your museum."

Kroeber (Archer): "He's much more valuable than that I can assure you. I'm the only person who can understand him without me everything these people were their language, their stories, art, religion would be forgotten. I'm going to write a book."

Henreitte (Archer): "Alfred, I was just wandering maybe there are some things that ought to be forgotten. Things we aren't worthy to know."

Kroeber (Voight): "Well, you've just dispensed with the entire field of anthropology."

The question of our worthiness to know and the science of man response implicates an allegorical irony in anthropology such as I addressed earlier. The precepts of this anthropological indifference are further investigated in a post dinner discussion when Henreitte (Archer) confronts Kroeber (Voight) addressing her mortality.

Henreitte (Archer): "What do they mean the trail of the dead?"

Kroeber (Voight): "That's their view of the afterlife. The trail of the dead leads to the land of the ancestors. When you die you walk along the trail for a long way, until at last you come to your own lodge where your family is gathered around the fire pit waiting for you."

Henreitte (Archer): "Do you believe in that?"

Kroeber (Voight): "The trail of the dead?"

Henreitte (Archer): "Well not that, something, heaven I suppose?"

Kroeber (Voight): "Well, I don't think that our view of the afterlife is any more valid than theirs."

Henreitte (Archer): "I didn't ask you if it was valid, I ask if you believed it."

A cold but polite detachment characterizes Voight's performance when delivering this scene. In this manner, the idea of detached reason or scientific objectivity is artfully invoked. Kroeber's (Voight's) answer to his dying wife's haunting question of an afterlife exposes the Bosian detachment that accompanies his theories of cultural relativism. In juxtaposing "their land of the dead" with "our heaven," the scene serves to reveal the intrinsic problem posed with the "science of man" that is objectivity in indifference. The scene continues:

Henreitte (Archer): "He hasn't upset me, its you who can't stand to know the truth about things."

Kroeber (Voight): "The very point of my profession is to search for the truth, Henreitte."

Henreitte (Archer): "Yes, yes, yes, of course, the science of man and his works. You're afraid of him, I think."

Kroeber (Voight): "Afraid?"

Henreitte (Archer): "Yes to truly hear what he told you. You would rather plot him on a graph like your skirt lengths. One thing about facing death, I'm not afraid to let anything into my heart anymore."

Henreitte's (Archer's) challenge to the truth and objectivity of the science of man responds to the character of the Western scholarship when confronting the other, particularly non-Western cultures. Plot them out in reams of fact but stand clear of their inherent worldviews. Consequently, the scholar and his society hide from serious philosophical engagement of "otherness" and thereby re-affirm their status quo projections.

Forced to examine the meaning of her inherent ideals, the dying Henreitte challenges the shallowness of her husband's profession with its blind projective relativism.

Henreitte (Archer): "If I just knew that you would stand by me and that you wouldn't hide from me when I need you so desperately."

Following a long poignant pause, she continues her challenge.

"But you must remember, it is you who brought *Ishi* here and you can't hide from him. That man's soul is in your hands Alfred."

Creatively then death is used as a dramatic vehicle to compare beliefs -- non-Indian and Indian -- and the theme of anthropological indifference is metaphorically engaged. Archer's character Henreitte serves thus to allegorically convey the deeper quest for meaning which is often lost in the diffidence and detachment of scientific objectivity. In this manner, the entire profession of anthropology -- the science of man -- is dramatically put on trial. Following Henreitte's death the bereaved Kroeber turned to *Ishi* and his plans for a *Yahi* book to fill the void in his life. Effectively addressing this matter, the film presents a troubled Kroeber (Voight) pondering an offer to direct a museum project in New York. Noticing his emotional condition, Mrs. Gustafson remarks: "Professor are you all right?" Following an emotional moment, Kroeber (Voight) pulls himself together and with bravado comments:

"Now where's *Ishi*, he's supposed to have built me a house." Immediately afterwards finding *Ishi* (Greene) and Waterman (Blessing) on the campus grounds in a futile attempt to construct a traditional *Yahi* house, Kroeber (Voight) declares his desire to go to Deer Creek and map out the *Yahi* territory. In this exchange, Kroeber (Voight) declares: "I want this authentic. We'll go to *Wowunupo*. The *Yahi* are gone, they're dead, but if I can learn enough from *Ishi*, I can make them live again." Considering *Ishi's* feelings, Waterman (Blessing) protests and Kroeber (Voight) responds: "*Ishi* will you take us to *Wowunupo*, so that we can know the *Yahi* better? I'll write it all down so people can understand and remember." *Ishi* was at first very nervous about a return to Deer Creek and his homeland. There were the last rites of his family to consider. Kroeber's (Voight's) promise rings of a hollow immortality juxtaposed against these *Yahi* traditions and the film's engagement of this concern intensifies its allegorical theme of anthropological indifference.

Anthropologist struggle to explain traditional Native American religions and T. Kroeber's comments on *Ishi's* hunting practices are representative of this inadequacy of documenting worldview. She comments that "the California Indians... lived at ease with the supernatural and the mystical which were pervasive in all aspects of life." Subsequently she continues:

American Indian mythology which has it that people were animals before they were people, recognizes, in however literalistic a fashion, man's biological continuity with all animal life, a system of belief which precludes the taking of life except with respect for it in the taking

During the visit to Deer Creek, *Ishi* and Pope, the hunters, failed to get a deer on their first day. In reproof, *Ishi* ask, "Who smoked?" and imposed a two day ban on the use of tobacco. Acknowledging the practical dimension of the tobacco's odor, he also noted its sacred character. Two days following the smoking taboo, they got their deer affirming *Ishi's* point. Characteristic to this *Yahi* worldview is a philosophical premise that maximizes accord and reciprocal respect for all forms and forces of nature. Joseph Epes Brown has characterized this as a metaphysic of nature. Moreover, among Native American traditions, the manifold array of all natural forms and forces are understood as messengers or agents and ontologically expressed as spirits. These spirits or powers "express most directly the Ultimate Power, or essence of the Great Spirit." In a process-like philosophy, this Great Spirit or Great Mysterious is an all-inclusive concept that refers both to a Supreme Being and to the totality of all "spirits," powers, etc. in a dynamic sense of ever active becoming. Consequently all life is to be respected and given moral consideration. Manifesting this presence, *Ishi* took no aspect of hunting lightly.

With *Ishi* in solemn preparation for the hunt, the film conveys the deep moral values inherent to *Ishi's* religion. In a scene along Deer Creek, Pope (Stiers) grows impatient suggesting that there might be a shorter ritual while Kroeber (Voight) stands recording the facts in his notebook. When the deer is killed, Pope (Stiers) treats the deed as a trophy calling for scrapbook photos. *Ishi* (Greene), however, pours water into the dying deer's mouth while pronouncing a prayer for its soul. Accordingly, the dramatic ritual reverence for life characteristic of the *Yahi* worldview is given effective dramatic representation.

Not without some measure of sensibility to nature, Pope (Stiers) comments to Kroeber (Voight): "Wouldn't it be nice if we could put him back. The way you'd release a trout in a stream. He would have all this." Kroeber (Voight) counters, "Its not enough Saxton. Not if there's no one to share it." Accordingly, *Ishi* had told young Saxton Pope, Jr. who accompanied the expedition that he meant not to sleep until he had searched the canyon. Departing among the shadows that first night, he returned just before dawn and commented to the young Pope: "It is good. None are lost. They found their way." The film enlarges this to engage the anthropological indifference allegory when Pope (Stiers) performs a storyteller's recitation by the campfire that serves to incite *Ishi* (Greene). Early the next morning *Ishi* (Greene) returns to camp awakening Kroeber (Voight). Following their walk from camp to *Ishi's* former home, Kroeber (Voight) excitedly prepares to enter the *Yahi* dwelling but *Ishi* (Greene) restrains him declaring: "No. *Ishi* house." He continues: "We lived here for five years... By the end there were only three of us -- my mother, my sister and myself." In this moment the film invokes a dramatic flash back to convey the murderous 49ers that cold bloodedly chased the little family killing *Ishi's* sister and mother. As the scene concludes, *Ishi* (Greene) with short fire-singed hair burns his dead. Accordingly the film extends young Pope's factual witness to *Ishi's* fears for the dead to a metaphorical visitation of man's inhumanity to man and *Ishi's* utter aloneness. Kroeber's (Voight's) anthropological indifference is subsequently confronted before *Ishi's* home in the film's defining and most poignant scene.

*Ishi* (Greene): "Put your hand on the Earth. Do you hear her breathing?"

Kroeber (Voight): "Yes."

*Ishi* (Greene): "Do you hear her singing?"

Kroeber (Voight): "I don't know, I think so."

*Ishi* (Greene): "What she say ... sing it."

Kroeber (Voight): "I can't."

*Ishi* (Greene): "Sing it."

Kroeber (Voight): (Pulling away and rising) "Ishi, I can't."

*Ishi* (Greene): "*Ishi* last *Yahi*."

Central to understanding the anthropological indifference allegory, this scene confronts Kroeber's (Voight's) intention to write a book and make the *Yahi* live again. Accordingly, it manifests the irony of Western Rationalism's treatment of Native life and nature. It further plays upon the guardian theme of Indians which Western governments imposed in conquest of Native America.

When *Ishi* returned to Mill Creek, he took the party to the village site of his childhood. In this place, he had grown to know *Yahi* life and its destruction. Recalling the dinner scene when *Ishi* (Greene) related his memories of his home at the bear's hiding place, the film appears to have taken liberties with a bear-killing incident. *Ishi* had once single-handedly killed a black bear that had charged him. In their little village, *Wowunupo*, the skin had kept them warm until a 1908 surveying party looted their home. With the 1914 Kroeber party, they happened upon the spot that *Ishi* had named *Wanoloku*, Bear's Claw Place where one of the claws was buried in commemoration of the dead. Calling the site the bear's hiding place, the film artfully implies an important mythological metaphor. Using his early childhood memory, *Ishi* (Greene) aligns himself with the sacred mountain -- *Waliua* (Mt. Lassen) -- and digs up the bear skull of his father's and uncle's kill. Unearthing the skull, he laments: "The bears are all gone from this country... and now the white man walks the land, but I dreamed once that Bear's Spirit returned. He came into our village ... and played with our children."

Whether the filmmakers intended it or not, this scene references a widespread mythological tradition characteristic to the tribes of central California and southern Oregon. Widespread among these tribes is the belief in powerful shamans called "Bear Doctors." Located in remote, rugged settings, the theme bear's hiding place is characteristic to these traditions. In these places, the bear doctors' power is renewed. Intrinsic to this bear mythology is a metaphor of seasonal cycle characteristic to the spring-summer/fall-winter activities of real bears. Moreover, when the bears go into hibernation the light and warmth of summer disappears, conversely with their emergence in the spring and sojourn into summer the earth becomes fruitful in bounty. Accordingly, the drama's reference to *Ishi's* dream of the bear spirit playing with the children is an allegorical metaphor conveying a return to the life before the *Salut*. While this was not possible given that *Ishi* was the last of his tribe, his visit to "Bear's Hiding Place" shared with us in this invokes a metaphor of hidden wisdom recovered. It is wisdom of place and ecological wholeness that stands in stark contrast with the film's allegorical theme of anthropological indifference.

In 1915, Kroeber had a full sabbatical year ahead of him, but because of *Ishi*, he was hesitant to travel. Saxton Pope, his friend and doctor, was adamant that he should go for the full year. While the film presents this concern in a significantly different fashion, its effect is necessary to explore the anthropological indifference allegory. Clearly heightening the dramatic tension, Pope (Stiers) and Kroeber (Voight) confer at the Oroville depot immediately following the Deer Creek visit. Addressing Kroeber's (Voight's) presumed decision to go to New York, Pope (Stiers) cautions: "You're the chief. You're the one he's counting on." Kroeber (Voight) responds: "Counting on for what. I think I'm tired of this profession, Saxton."

*Ishi* had never had so much as a common cold in his life before coming to San Francisco; however, he suffered pneumonia during his first winter there. Using the manifestation of the growing frequency and intensity of these illnesses, the film depicts a Kroeber (Voight) and *Ishi* (Greene) outside Dr. Pope's office awaiting his assessment. In the exchange that follows the indifference allegory is significantly presented.

*Ishi* (Greene): "Cooly cut *Ishi* ."

Kroeber (Voight): "No, no surgery I'm sure. Just a little rest."

*Ishi* (Greene): "Afraid. Cooly place."

Kroeber (Voight): "What place is that?"

*Ishi* (Greene): "Place were Cooly cut *Salut*. Place with sleep nothing."

Kroeber (Voight): "You're angry with me. Why are you angry with me?"

*Ishi* (Greene): "Book."

Kroeber (Voight): (holding up notebook) "This."

*Ishi* (Greene): (gesturing to book) "You put *Ishi* here (gesturing to Kroeber's heart) not here."

Accordingly, the theme of anthropological indifference is formally exposed. Kroeber's (Voight's) confrontation of this indifference is conveyed in the New York museum social gathering scene where Mr. and Mrs. Whatley, generous benefactors of the institution, are rudely addressed. Although fictional these scenes convey the epiphany that overcame Kroeber in his determination not to write a book about *Ishi*. "He had lived too much of it, and too much of it was the stuff of human agony from whose immediacy he could not sufficiently distance himself."

Saying good-bye to *Ishi*, Kroeber left *Ishi* with Waterman where famed linguist Edward Sapir came to record the *Yahi* language. Kroeber travelled to the Southwest, New York and Europe before settling down in Washington for the last of his sabbatical. Just as *Ishi* (Greene) in the film requests him to "Send postcard," Kroeber wrote *Ishi* sending him pictures and souvenirs from wherever he was at the time.

Carrying the anthropological indifference allegory to resolution, the film powerfully displays Kroeber's (Voight's) concern for *Ishi*, his friend. In February 1916, Pope wrote Kroeber in Washington telling him that *Ishi* was seriously ill with rampant tuberculosis. Using a letter to reports *Ishi's* health, the film dramatically demonstrates Kroeber's (Voight's) confrontation of anthropological indifference with his admiration of a totem pole. Declaring to the curator "Whoever made this is more than just a wood carver," he is seen winning the battle with this conceptual problem. Accordingly, he manifests an uncharacteristic humanity supplied with awe for and intrinsic value of the Native world.

The film is most effective realizing the epiphany of its anthropological indifference allegory. Confronted with a drawer of stored skulls Kroeber (Voight) becomes morally aware realizing that his obligation to *Ishi* and *Ishi's* religious beliefs transcend the science of man. Rushing from the museum, he tells an assistant he must leave at once. Learning of *Ishi's* death, he thinks aloud: "God, I must stop it" and proceeds to send a telegram forbidding an autopsy adding, "Science can go to hell." Although the telegram arrived to late, these issues were significant in the real life drama. T. Kroeber writes: "There was a strong feeling at the hospital that there should be extensive examinations and autopsy, the brain preserved, and the skeleton kept. Kroeber was passionately determined that in his death *Ishi's* body should be handled according to *Yahi* custom and belief." Writing his colleague, he declared, "If there is any talk about the interests of science, say for me science can go to hell."

Performances by Greene, Voight and Stiers are particularly good. Contributing much Native subtlety to the role of *Ishi*, Greene's portrayal is excellent. His mannerisms, locution, and soft tone capture the sense of the isolated sole surviving Indian confronted with a strange new world. Voight is very good portraying the stiff, sometimes diffident Kroeber. In life, Kroeber had a harshness that sometimes lead him to inappropriately point out other people's shortcomings. Voight masters Kroeber, giving life to his sensitive humanistic side which annoyed his teacher -- Boas -- while remaining true to Western ideals of a demanding scholar trying to maintain his "civilized" air. Stiers gives Pope warmth and enthusiasm that at times lifts the film above tragic drama.

Acknowledging "the passionate wish of all Indians to be *home* when death comes," the film metaphorically implies this perspective when the dying *Ishi* (Greene) rejects Waterman's (Blessing's) offer of pipe water while calling for sweet water. Despairing, Waterman (Blessing) responds: "Spring water, oh *Ishi*, I'll get you spring water. Just like water from Wagonupa." Dying on March 16, 1916, it was too late for Kroeber to return and comfort his friend. Upon receiving the letter announcing *Ishi's* death, Kroeber glanced at his calendar noting:

It was six days since the burial. Ishi had once explained to him that it took the spirit, released by the funeral flames, five risings and settings of Sun to travel west down the Trail of the Dead to the Land of the Yahi ancestors: Ishi would already have traveled that trail; he was indeed gone from Kroeber's world.

And while he may not have been inclined to sing for *Ishi* as the film presents, Kroeber appeared markedly transformed by his contact with *Ishi*. On Kroeber's religion, Theodora Kroeber, his second wife, quoted his professed beliefs: "I began without belief in God... hence my 'fatalism,' hence, too, my implicit monism, with nature as the sole basis for understanding life." Yet his *Handbook of California Indians* manifests an "understanding on the deeply mystic and dream-directed religions" of the Natives. Kroeber, as the film implies, confronted his anthropological indifference accepting the realities of myth in the Native worldview. Metaphorically then, Kroeber (Voight) accurately sits in *Ishi's* (Greene's) room holding the death masks singing: "Ein na e po, ya ha he ein a po..." for his departed friend the last *Yahi*. Concluding with a vision of *Ishi's* (Greene's) haunting departure, the response "I heard your singing" appropriately holds the viewer spellbound in a final contemplation of this remarkable story.

<sup>1</sup> For a general discussion of this problem, see Stanley Diamond. *In Search of the Primitive: A Critique of Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> These perspectives concerning unilinear cultural evolution are addressed in Paul Bohannan and Mark Glazer. *High Points in Anthropology*, 2nd edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988; and in Adam Kuper. *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

<sup>3</sup> Franz Boas, "Methods of Anthropology" in Bohannan and Glazer, *High Points in Anthropology*, pp. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Bohannan and Glazer, *High Points in Anthropology*, p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Theodora Kroeber. *Alfred Kroeber: A Personal Configuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970: p. 51.

<sup>7</sup> See Julian H. Steward. *Alfred Kroeber*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973: p. vii; and T. Kroeber, *Alfred Kroeber*, p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> Steward, *Alfred Kroeber*, pp. vii, vi.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp. 25-26.

<sup>10</sup> *Ishi The Last Yahi: A Documentary History*. Edited by Robert F. Heizer and Theodora Kroeber. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979: pp. 1-2; also T. Kroeber. *Alfred Kroeber*, 1970: p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> T. Kroeber, *Alfred Kroeber*, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup> *Last Yahi*, Heizer and T. Kroeber, pp. 2-3; T. Kroeber, *Alfred Kroeber*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>13</sup> T. Kroeber, *Alfred Kroeber*, p. 82.

<sup>14</sup> Theodora Kroeber. *Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961: pp. 43, 45.

<sup>15</sup> J. Goldsborough Bruff, *Gold Rush*, ed. by Georgia Willis Read and Ruth Gaines (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 339, 342. Cited in Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis F. Byington. "The Donner Party," *Overland Monthly: Out West Magazine*, May 1931: 136 which briefly recounts the gruesome details of cannibalism among these early Anglo-Californian invaders who incidentally had been supplied by Indians with "bread made of acorns, all the food the Indians had" before committing the monstrous deeds of cannibalism.

<sup>17</sup> H. H. Sauber, "Hi Good and the 'Mill Creeks' (1859)," *Overland Monthly*, vol. 30 (1897), pp. 122-127.

<sup>18</sup> T. Kroeber, *Ishi*, p. 61.

<sup>19</sup> A. Thankful Carson, *Captured by the Mill Creek Indians* (Chico, CA, 1915) in Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, pp. 25-32.

<sup>20</sup> R. A. Anderson, *Fighting the Mill Creeks: Being a Personal Account of Campaigns Against Indians of the Northern Sierras* (Chico, CA: Chico Record Press, 1909) in Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, pp. 32-60; cf. Slim Moak, *The Last of the Mill Creeks and Early Life in Northern California* (Chico, CA 1923, pp. 11-14, 18-27, 30-34 in Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, pp. 60-72 for further details of these Anglo-Californian depredations against the *Yahi*.

<sup>21</sup> Anderson, *Fighting the Mill Creeks*, in Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, pp. 59-60.

- <sup>22</sup> Jeremiah Curtin, *Creation Myths of Primitive America* (Boston, 1898), pp. 517-520 in Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, pp. 72-73.
- <sup>23</sup> Concerning this racist ideology, see Roy Harvey Pearce. *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (1954). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- <sup>24</sup> T. T. Waterman, "The Last Wild Tribe of California (1915)," *Popular Science Monthly*, March 1915, pp. 233-244 in Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, p. 126.
- <sup>25</sup> T. Kroeber, *Ishi*, pp. 218-19.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Saxton T. Pope. "Characteristics of Ishi (1920)" in Heizer & T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, pp. 231-32.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ishi in Two Worlds*. A film by Richard Tompkins. Lowie Museum of Anthropology [documentary], Berkeley: University of California, n.d.
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- <sup>30</sup> T. Kroeber, *Ishi*, p. 226; and T. Kroeber, *Kroeber*, p. 81.
- <sup>31</sup> T. Kroeber, *Ishi*, pp. 211-12.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 194.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 206.
- <sup>34</sup> Wallace, Grant. "Ishi, the Last Aboriginal Savage in America, Finds Enchantment in a Vaudeville Show," *San Francisco Sunday Call*, October 8, 1911. In Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, p. 108.
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- <sup>36</sup> Mary Ashe Miller, "Indian Enigma is Study for Scientists," in Heizer and T. Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, p. 100.
- <sup>37</sup> T. Kroeber, *Ishi*, pp. 222-23.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 222.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 223.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid, pp. 224-25.
- <sup>41</sup> T. Kroeber, *Kroeber*, p. 83.
- <sup>42</sup> T. Kroeber, "Introduction" in Heizer and Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, p. 4.
- <sup>43</sup> R. A. Anderson, "Fighting the Mill Creeks (1857-1865)" in Heizer and Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, p. 41.
- <sup>44</sup> "Tribe's Dirge Chanted by Savage," *San Francisco Examiner*, August 31, 1911 in Heizer and Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, pp. 96-97.
- <sup>45</sup> Steward, *Kroeber*, pp. 10-11.
- <sup>46</sup> T. Kroeber, *Kroeber*, p. 84.
- <sup>47</sup> T. Kroeber, *Ishi*, pp. 23, 188-89.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid, pp. 211-12.
- <sup>49</sup> Joseph Epes Brown, *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*. New York: Crossroad Press, 1982: 60. 70.
- <sup>50</sup> T. Kroeber, "Introduction" in Heizer and Kroeber, *Last Yahi*, p. 4.
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- <sup>52</sup> Ibid, pp. 214-15.
- <sup>53</sup> S. A. Barrett, "Pomo Bear Doctors," *American Archaeology and Ethnology*, v. 12 (July 11, 1917) no. 11: 443-465. See also David Rockwell, *Giving Voice to Bear: North American Indian Myths, Rituals, and Images of the Bear*. Niwot, CO.: Roberts, Rinehart pub., 1991.
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- <sup>55</sup> T. Kroeber, *Kroeber*, pp. 92-3.
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- <sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 92.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> Steward, *Kroeber*, p. 21.
- <sup>61</sup> T. Kroeber, *Ishi*, p. 233.
- <sup>62</sup> T. Kroeber, *Kroeber*, p. 92.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 232.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 233.