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**Author**

Spickard, James V.

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**Standing Ground: Yurok Indian Spirituality, 1850–1990.** By Thomas Buckley. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. 325 pages. \$49.95 cloth; \$18.95 paper.

This book is immersed in dialogue. The author is a “white” anthropologist yet one who stands in a line of apprenticeship to various traditional spiritual leaders of the “Yurok” Indians of northwestern California; a small part of the dialogue is this heritage. A larger part is a dialogue with Alfred Kroeber, the best-known anthropological recorder of the Yurok past, who “while he didn’t know what things meant, at least got his facts right” (275; quoting a Native informant). Buckley adds meaning to those facts, contextualizing them and reshaping them without claiming to paint a finished picture of Yurok spirituality as a closed system. Not just a conversation with the dead, this dialogue is also aimed at current anthropologists, government administrators, and judiciary practitioners, all of whom wield power that can help or harm Native peoples—and all of whom have depended on Kroeber’s work. A third dialogue sets the present against history, as contemporary Yuroks, Karoks, Hupas, and other people of the region try to locate themselves in a world both like and unlike that of their ancestors. They do so, Buckley claims, by using spiritual tools that are steeped in dialogue as a way of world renewal. A final dialogue is with contemporary Natives; while Buckley does not pretend to tell them who they “really” are, he does tell them about some patterns that his vantage point lets him see.

The book opens with a long introduction in which Buckley locates his efforts and his approach. Well versed in anthropological postmodernism, he foregrounds the various discourses by which outsiders have grasped traditional Yurok life. The image of Indian life “going all to pieces” put forth by Kroeber and the other salvage anthropologists was one such discourse. Erik Erikson’s later psychoanalytically inclined tale of Yurok symbolic infantilism was another. So, too, is the near-contemporary pan-Indian image of oppressed people reclaiming their heritage. None of these discourses is completely false, Buckley claims, but each is a partial truth that misses much of Yurok reality. “The Yurok” exist in dialogue with such discourses; they must find themselves through dialogue with colonial bureaucrats and ethnologists, as well as with their neighbors and with their own ever-reinterpreted past. The recent revivals of jump-dances, deerskin dances, and other Native ceremonies in northwestern California—all part of this dialogic finding-process—loom large in Buckley’s work.

Buckley devotes three chapters to setting the context for his explorations. One charts Yurok history from white invasion to the present, briefly but usefully for those unfamiliar with the region. The second charts Buckley’s own line of spiritual apprenticeship, from Captain Spott (a wealthy and enterprising nineteenth-century leader at Requa village) to his adopted nephew Robert Spott (one of Kroeber’s informants and coauthors), to his adopted nephew Harry Roberts, a white boy whom he trained and initiated in the traditional way and who in turn adopted Buckley in the early 1970s. The third recounts various past Native authors’ descriptions of Yurok spiritual life, showing how each attempted to portray that life in terms that might communicate with outsiders of the time.

The next three chapters constitute Buckley's formal ethnographic portrait of traditional Yurok spiritual life. The first outlines the processes of physical, mental, and spiritual training that individuals undertake to align their being with their "spirit," "spark," or "purpose in life." Gleaned from elderly informants (as was Kroeber's material) during Buckley's fieldwork in the 1970s, the chapter describes the rigorous processes by which one develops the discipline that gains native honor. The second chapter distinguishes the various kinds of traditional spiritual practitioners. In dialogue with both Kroeber and his own informants, Buckley paints a rounded picture of these various Native "doctors," noting the connections between ascetic training, spiritual attainment, and wealth that shaped the traditional social order. The third chapter describes the long-running conflict with the US government over road building and logging in the high Siskiyou, a conflict in which Buckley was involved as a white interpreter of the Native religious importance of the area.

Ironically, the first two of these chapters carry the most traditionally ethnographic voices of the entire work. Though Buckley notes that "I have no assurance . . . that what I've come up with is any more than what an elder once told me . . . was . . . 'a pretty good way to explain it to white men'" (90), and despite his efforts to let his informants speak, it is sometimes hard to tell where transmission leaves off and interpretation begins. For, just as did Kroeber, Buckley apparently cannot resist finding the system behind his informants' utterances. In constant dialogue with Kroeber's portrayal of the Yurok as self-oriented anarchists, he tries to show the multilayered centrality of spiritual attainment at the heart of Yurok social life. Individual spirituality and social organization "do not form separate compartments" (169). One is left with the impression that had Kroeber understood this, his work would not have gone so far astray.

The last five chapters do contain overt interpretation. They involve such things as the spiritual meaning of "wealth" (which Kroeber missed with his view of the Yurok as primitive capitalists); how festivals "fix the world"; melancholy as spiritual insight rather than psychological disease; the role of the Indian Shaker Church as a "holding action" to maintain Indian identity; and the restored jump dance as a healing dialogue that, Buckley says, both symbolizes and actualizes Yurok conversations about identity—past and future.

All of these chapters are well executed; all are worthwhile reading. It helps if one has at least a passing acquaintance with the work of the various salvage anthropologists—Kroeber, Gifford, Waterman, and others—as one then knows the interlocutor to whom Buckley self-consciously speaks. Admirably, Buckley does not set up Kroeber as a straw man—as a "wrong" to his own "right." But one catches the nuances of the dialogue better if one is familiar with the other side.

In fact, the book self-consciously presents an interpretation of historical Yurok spirituality, one that is oddly like Kroeber's notion of traditional Yurok culture. Kroeber, Buckley says, tried to see behind the "pitiful history of little events" (267; quoting Kroeber) to the broader cultural patterns that formed, for him, the Yuroks' closed cultural system. Buckley combines a rereading of existing literature (both Indian and white) with his own fieldwork experiences

and his deep reading of contemporary ethnographic theory to posit that “Yurok culture” was never a closed system; instead, it was always an open dialogue by which Indians of several neighboring groups tried to come to terms with who they were and what was “right”—and therewith renewing their world. In other words, “What is going on in the constant debates over what is and what is not appropriate to the dances is not a historical aberration encountered in a culture ‘going all to pieces,’ as Kroeber had it; it is central to the process of world renewal and always has been” (273). What Kroeber saw as cultural interruption and collapse, Buckley reinterprets as cultural continuity and health. And Buckley claims that both views are true.

In an admirable sense—and with words that he does not use—Buckley is proposing a theology of Yurok sociospiritual life, not just of the past but of the present moving forward. He sees the Yurok now, as always, trying to use spiritual tools to heal the world. This is not a once-and-for-all occupation; it always has and always will involve both inner and outer struggle. Like all people, they fail at this, sometimes because of the acts of outsiders, sometimes because of their own greed and dissension. But their effort to restore a sense of integrity to themselves and their surroundings is a part of that world healing.

To put this another way: Buckley takes Yurok spirituality seriously, as an authentic way to conceptualize human experience. Unlike much traditional ethnography, his book does not make the Yurok strange to us. He helps us see with native eyes, while also (perhaps) helping those eyes see themselves a little more clearly.

*James V. Spickard*

University of Redlands and Fielding Graduate Institute

**Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival.** Edited by Kim Anderson and Benita Lawrence. Toronto: Sumach Press, 2003. 284 pages. \$26.95 (Canadian) paper.

This is a hard book to review. In *Strong Women Stories* essays and case studies on gender issues in Canadian Native communities are combined with first-person writing so achingly intimate that any criticism feels like a personal attack on the writer. The collection presents the thoughts and feelings of contemporary Native women in their search for individual, family, and community healing and health. The anthology is organized into three stages of a journey toward those healthy communities. The first stage, “Coming Home,” looks at different ways in which women can be separated from and then reconnected with their communities: the brutal and divisive effect of government policy, the challenge of mixed cultural heritage and identity, or the choice of educational and career opportunities far from home. The five stories in part 1, including some beautifully written passages, are woven together compellingly by the editors and constitute the strongest section of the book. The following two sections, “Asking Questions” and “Rebuilding Our Communities,” are less successful as “subanthologies.” Part 2 addresses the question “What happens