

for anyone who understands Christian Science terminology, is increased by the fact that Wright included it as the last part of the section entitled "Designing Unitey Temple." Though all of this amounts to strong presumptive evidence of "ideological significance," Eaton did not explore the matter. He conceded that (p. 218) "Avery's interest in religion may have been for him the slightly offbeat characteristic which he shared with so many of the other Wright clients," but Eaton's tendency to dismiss the beliefs of clients may be seen in his captious description of Mrs. Prentiss Coonley (p. 166), "her recreation was gardening, not Christian Science."

It is necessary to point out that, even when Professor Eaton is at his weakest as in his analysis of the Coonleys, he sheds far more light than most earlier works on the subject. Grant Manson's highly respected biography, *Frank Lloyd Wright to 1910* (1958), devotes 10 pages to the Avery Coonley house. Yet he claimed that the Coonleys (p. 187) "determined to find the most progressive architect in practice, and, having made their requirements plain, to interfere thenceforth in no way whatever with the creative processes which they had set in motion." *Two Chicago Architects* has serious faults and limitations, but it applies an architectural history methodology of great promise in furthering American Studies.

University of Hawaii

J. Meredith Neil

## history as retrospective anthropology

RED, WHITE & BLUE. By John William Ward. Oxford University Press. 1969. \$7.50.

This book is a collection of seventeen essays written during the 1960's dealing with a wide variety of topics. The sub-title, *Men, Books, and Ideas in American Culture*, indicates the content of the book. The value of the essays for students of American society varies greatly. The author decided (for valid historical reasons) not to revise any of the essays; in many cases this works out well, in some cases it does not. The essay on James Gould Cozzens, for example, is out of date. Republishing the essays in their original form also leads to annoying repetitions. For example, two chapters conclude with the same quotation from Schumpeter; this same quotation is used again in a third chapter. The essays on freedom and individualism also tend to be repetitious and are not particularly informative.

The opening essay, however, is worth the price of the book. In it Ward explains both the concepts and the methodology of what he chooses to call cultural history. In his introduction he says that his own preference is for the "descriptive and the concrete, rather than the abstract and the conceptual," and he begins his discussion with an analysis of the role of the cultural historian. He argues that an understanding of the concept of culture is fruitful for the writing of history. History, he contends, "is the study of the actions of men in the past," but "the proper subject of the historian is not the fact of an action . . . but the processes of thought which go on in the mind of the actor which are disclosed in, and establish the meaning of, that action."

Ward takes an organic position on the nature of society and argues that without society man is not a human animal, "he is simply animal."

The conscience of the individual comes from the group; it is the group and not the association of individuals with consciousness that is paramount in Ward's view. The individual apprehends and understands his own experience through the criteria which he derives from his own society; to quote Ward "we see, think, and react by means of socially inherited norms." He quotes with approval H. Stuart Hughes statement that an historian is a "retrospective cultural anthropologist." This means, of course, that he is totally opposed to the view of society that was espoused by the subjects of his famous book on Jacksonian Democracy, the notion that the atomistic individual (apart from society and apart from inherited traditions) is the central fact in the nature of the universe.

In the introduction he also shows that both Jackson and Emerson, diverse as they might have been in other respects, shared the same assumptions about the nature of American culture. In other words, Ward espouses the concept of a climate of opinion shared by the majority of people in a given time and place. As he puts it, "we discover a common assumption about the central value of American culture: the assertion of the worth of the totally liberated, self-sufficient, atomistic, single individual."

Ward believes that the "subject of history is always and finally what it means to be a human being;" and he concludes that the concept of culture "may even remind all of us of the need for general order in our divided culture." Although Ward's essays do not always support the theory which he espouses, the general direction of his thought clearly is a guide for all of those who are engaged in the study of American culture and American society.

RWS

## **oral history: a pioneering study**

THE SAGA OF COE RIDGE: A STUDY IN ORAL HISTORY. By William Lynwood Montell. The University of Tennessee Press. 1970. \$8.95.

For the study of the culture of a people, of their way of life, their world-view and values, written sources are generally either inadequate or non-existent. Oral history, often condemned by historians as unreliable, must be a major tool.

To test the usefulness of oral tradition, William Lynwood Montell attempted to reconstruct the history of a "legendary" colony of Blacks in southern Kentucky. After interviewing some seventeen former members of the colony and twenty-two Whites who lived in the area, he collated the testimonies into "archetypes," more complete and reliable stories than were known by any one informant. Out of these archetypes the history of the Coe colony emerged.

Just after the Civil War, a group of ex-slaves took possession of an isolated wooded ridge near the Cumberland River. The colony persisted for almost a hundred years, until the late 1950's. Its members lived from the produce of their gardens, from logging and rafting on the river and later from making and bottlegging moonshine. There was antagonism between the colony and some of the Whites of the region. The Blacks gave as good as they received, and through the years a number of people on both sides were killed. Accounts of these deaths and the circumstances surrounding them dominate this "archetypal" folk history. The