Book Reviews

Reviews

ILLUSIONS OF INNOCENCE: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875. By Richard T. Hughes, and C. Leonard Allen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. $29.95 cloth.

Recently American intellectuals have become increasingly concerned with the origins of American character and ideology. Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen in *Illusions of Innocence* have contributed significantly to this endeavor. Their contention is that the American past has been shaped by the logic (or illogic) of primitivism, or a return to the purity of the Biblical "first times" (xiii).

The authors argue that the conditions of American discovery and development gave credence to this notion of American exceptionalism. They believe that for many of those nurturing the early spiritual development of their nation this tendency led toward an ahistorical view of the past. According to Hughes and Allen, America and her people perceived themselves as born anew without the taint of their European ancestors. The authors also point out the contradictory actions of these early leaders. While declaring themselves and their brethren free of the past and its cultural and political assumptions, they found it necessary to constrain any opposition. Hughes and Allen use this contention to explain the paradoxical thought and behavior of characters as diverse as John Cotton, Alexander Campbell and Allen Bloom. Such thinkers avidly proclaimed their own rights to free thought, and with equal vehemence denied that prerogative to others.

Illusions of Innocence accomplishes two tasks particularly well. Hughes and Allen clearly illustrate the impact of American primitivism on our national development by drawing clear parallels between the quest for religious purity and the exceptionalism of American political and cultural assumptions. They also issue a stern warning concerning the blinding nature of these tendencies when they go unchecked.

Youngstown State University Martha I. Pallante

TOWARD A NEW SOCIETY: American Thought and Culture, 1800-1830. By Jean V. Matthews. Boston: Twayne. 1990. $26.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

Jean Matthews presents an intelligent survey of American culture in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, organized around currently favored academic interpretations and interests. The book's basic themes include the reinvigoration of religion, the growing stress on progress and racism, the shift from enlightened rationality to romantic intuition and angst and, most insistently, the decline of disinterested Republic virtue toward individualism, democracy and capitalism.

The books' virtues are many: good awareness of contemporary scholarship, clarity, briskness, and inclusiveness. It is good to be introduced, even briefly, to, say, the capitalist economic theories of southerners Jacob Cardozo and Daniel Raymond. The study also has some of the weaknesses endemic to this kind of survey. The format discourages much exploration beyond the surface of issues or texts, a problem especially clear here in the literary analyses.

Two themes lessens Matthews' general convincingness. She claims a basic divide occurred in this period between high and popular culture, with forms like drama pandering "to the most debased popular taste." The focal theme of Republican virtue more seriously weakens the argument at key points, with its odd notion that eighteenth-century figures were "disinterested," and in fact averse to personal pleasure and profit. Such faith in a golden age of perfect goodness neglects how self-serving Republican cliches often were, as was much of the theorizing about states' rights, agrarianism, and racism united thereto, ideas intended in large part to sanctify those determined to live freely indeed on others' total enslavement to their advantage.

There are, as one would expect, a few minor errors, such as assertions that Cooper was the first American to earn a living by writing, that Thomas Skidmore intended to distribute wealth equally at birth, or that sensational newspapers emerged in the 1820s. Still Matthews handles her subject with great care, including much in idea and data well worth pondering. This is a considerable achievement, especially for what has been commonly the era of most unsalutary neglect in United States' intellectual history.

University of Maryland-College Park David Grimsted

PUNCHLINES: The Violence of American Humor. By William Keough. New York: Paragon House, 1990. $19.95.

It should be no surprise that Professor Keough's book was published by a trade house rather than a scholarly press. Its breezy, extremely casual style is clearly intended for the general reader; further, an editor at a university press would have sent the manuscript for review to expert readers, who would have noticed several important flaws in the book. The central one is that Keough has not said here anything particularly new: American humor, if one selects his or her examples carefully, *is* violent, or at least has violent elements. But even in discussing the examples he has chosen, Keough seems to contradict his own thesis. He wants to see Huck Finn's ironic statement, "It is lovely to live on a raft," as somehow Mark Twain's gesture of peace toward the world rather than a statement of Huck's innocence; and when, in "Round Nine," as his chapters are so pugalisticly titled, he gets to Finley Peter Dunne's "Mr. Dooley," he has a difficult time proving that this influential humorist's columns did anything but *oppose* violence.

If the reader is looking for what women might have contributed to the tradition that Keough outlines, he need only consult the index to discover that women's humor occupies the author's attention from pages 198 to 202. They did not, in Keough's view, have the courage to stand up to men (or anything else) until the 1920s. This ignores, of course, such figures as the feminist humorist Marietta Holley, who in the 1870s had her female narrator Samantha Allen threaten a certain sort of violence against her chauvinist husband, Josiah, if he did not start to recognize her rights to vote and so forth. Nor does Keough dwell at any length on the racial and ethnic prejudices that have caused so much of American humor to embody violent elements.

In short, this is one more book which, precisely because it has a trade publisher, will reach many unaware readers, conveying a partial and ultimately stereotypical view of the culture we live in. It certainly adds little to the growing literature on humor as a cultural phenomenon.

Vanderbilt University Nancy A. Walker

BELOVED COMMUNITY: The Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, & Lewis Mumford. By Casey Nelson Blake. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1990. $34.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

Blake wants to rescue the four men he has analyzed from what he sees as the current dominant interpretive paradigm. That paradigm defines them as part of a therapeutic culture that supposedly replaced the Victorian culture of character at the end of the nineteenth century. For Blake the therapeutic model makes it impossible to see this group of men as providing us with a usable past. He believes, however, that they do provide such a past because they are part of an important adversary tradition that offers us a viable alternative to the values of the marketplace. Looking at their cultural and autobiographical writings in relationship to their political views, he analyzes their views on self, culture and society and finds that they shared a coherent and powerful vision of self-realization through participation in a democratic culture.

In dramatizing the way in which Bourne, Brooks, Frank and Mumford each rejected the marketplace values of their fathers, Blake has not made use of recent scholarship on the debates about masculine identity that were taking place at least as early as the 1820s in Anglo-American middle-class culture. *Manhood and the American Renaissance* by David Leverenz (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989) suggests that the male artists in the generation before the Civil War were self-consciously rejecting a marketplace model of manhood. Blake sees the "Beloved Community" of Bourne, Brooks, Frank and Mumford as a viable alternative to marketplace liberalism and to socialism. But by rejecting the relevance of nationalism for an understanding of his group, Blake has cut himself off from analyses of bourgeois nationalism, such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1983), which argue that visions of a fraternal beloved community characterize all of the imagined nations that appeared in the nineteenth century. Only further studies of this group can tell us whether their beloved community is usable to our present and future multicultural society.

University of Minnesota David W. Noble

EDUCATION FOR STRUGGLE: The American Labor Colleges of the 1920s and 1930s. By Richard J. Altenbaugh. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1990. $39.95.

This comparative study of Work Peoples' College in Duluth, Minnesota, Brookwood Labor College in Katonah, New York, and Commonwealth College near Mena, Arkansas, covers much of the history of workers' education during the 1920s and 1930s. Seeking to counter the "bourgeois hegemony" (5) fostered by formal educational systems, the three labor colleges developed alternative programs to prepare independent-minded, class-conscious leaders for a labor movement that would reorganize society along socialist lines.

Richard J. Altenbaugh provides a thoroughly researched description of the curriculum and learning environment at the colleges. They rejected traditional capitalist "banking" pedagogy, where teachers merely deposited data into passive students. The emphasis instead was on involving students as active participants, encouraging cooperation inside and outside the classroom, and maintaining praxis, or an education that offered "handwork" as well as "headwork" to working-class leaders (165). The ideological and institutional independence of the labor colleges was ironically the source of their downfall, Altenbaugh observes, as the school became casualties of organized labor's desire for control over workers' education, internecine battles among leftists, internal feuds, and attacks from employers, politicians and reactionary groups.

Altenbaugh's insightful work grapples with two difficult, if not insoluble issues. First, he explores further than other studies in the field the process of radical education, but the actual impact on students remains unclear. Second, he cannot fully answer the larger question of the schools' concrete contributions to the labor movement and the vision of a new social order. Like the labor colleges themselves, he may not have given sufficient weight to the importance of culture in reshaping society. Such provocative questions, however, make this book worthwhile reading.

Ball State University John M. Glen

THE AGE OF DOUBT: American Thought and Culture During the 1940s. By William S. Graebner. Boston: Twayne. 1991. $26.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

As part of the Twayne series on American Thought and Culture *The Age of Doubt* offers a refreshing overview of the 1940s. In accepting this assignment, William Graebner confronted a problem that exceeded the normal pitfalls of critical studies cued to the arbitrary, artificial division of a single decade. The 1940s splits into two halves that have little connection to each other. From 1940-45, the war was uppermost in everyone's mind, while 1945-50 brought readjustment and the emergence of the cold war. Not only were the conditions of these periods different, but so too were the thinking, concerns and dominant values—so much so that Graebner could be said to have confronted two cultures. This problem was complicated by the difficult question of whether these two halves should receive equal attention.

Graebner has responded to this challenge with a wise decision *not* to allow chronology to dictate the course of his discussion. Rather each chapter is cued to themes that allow him to pass freely across the wall of 1945. Their titles—the "Culture of Contingency," "Culture of the Whole" and "Turning Inward"—suggest the bases covered. However the overall orientation—signaled by the books title *The Age of Doubt*—gravitates toward the period following the war—in large measure because its tolerance for doubt gave it greater variety and more complexity. The enormous range of material that Graebner draws into

his discussion makes clear that he has made a concerted effort to break away from the high road traditionally taken by cultural studies of this sort. Graebner covers important political and intellectual developments, but he tries to search out examples that are somewhat less familiar and draws heavily upon popular culture. His discussion strives—and sometimes strains—to show that movies, comic books, popular music and best sellers can tell us as much about the culture as more respectable texts like *The American Dilemma* and *The Vital Center*. Though one might quibble with some of Graebner's readings and generalizations, he or she will undoubtedly admire the scope and intelligence of the whole. *The Age of Doubt* is a well-informed, thought provoking overview of the culture of the 1940s.

University of Delaware Thomas H. Pauly

THE VOICE OF AMERICA: Propaganda and Democracy, 1941-1945. By Holly Cowan Shulman. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990. $37.50 cloth, $12.95 paper.

It is hard to recall in this age of instant world-wide satellite communication that in 1941 the United States was so poorly prepared for world conflict that it owned neither a short-wave radio transmitter nor a broadcast station for the newly created Voice of America. Even more amazing is that there was virtually no understanding among high ranking policy makers that a coordinated propaganda effort could pay enormous dividends in winning the war.

The VOA was the brainchild of playwright, FDR speech-writer and propagandist Robert E. Sherwood, who joined the William "Wild Bill" Donovan's Office of the Coordinator of Information in 1941. Donovan advocated a propaganda strategy that would beam information and disinformation to enemy territory to foment insurrection, promote opposition and confuse and demoralize enemy troops and the civilian population. Sherwood argued for a policy that would send news, promote America as a democratic lighthouse and provide uncolored information to enemy and conquered territories. When FDR consolidated all pre-war information agencies under the umbrella of the Office of War Information and appointed journalist Elmer Davis as Director, Sherwood's "strategy of truth" prevailed.

Sherwood brought writer/director/producer John Houseman to VOA to create agitprop radio docu/drama programs that aggressively defined America as the "last bastion" for democracy and portrayed French workers as "hostages" and encouraged French resistance to Nazi Rule. Staffed with a large contingent of foreign emigres, VOA broadcast America's message in a variety of foreign languages. The aggressive policy of VOA programs, combined with their "foreign staff" soon brought OWI/VOA into open conflict with Department of State officials who favored a more cautious policy toward Vichy France. When VOA openly blasted French Admiral Jean Darlan in North Africa [with whom General Eisenhower cooperated] and labeled the Italian monarch Victor Emmanuel III "the moronic little king," State accused VOA of making, not broadcasting, American policy. With VOA under attack on the home front, Houseman retreated to Hollywood and VOA broadcasts resembled straight newscasts more than the antiprop favored by Houseman.

Shulman's strength is detailing the internal battles that raged during the war between VOA, State, War and Congress over who controlled the right to determine what propaganda messages would be broadcast. VOA lost. It never did capture French or European listeners (most listened to the BBC), and the constant bickering between agencies drove the creative staff assembled at the beginning of the war from VOA.

The weakness of the book, in my opinion, is twofold. Shulman rarely questions or analyzes the messages VOA broadcast. Was America really a "bastion of democracy?" The book is also disappointing in its failure to recreate VOA programs. Shulman gives bits and pieces of programs here and there but not sustained reconstruction or analysis of them. While Shulman claims the French desk was vitally important, that operation is ignored throughout much of the book. The result is that one leaves the book understanding the difficulties VOA faced organizationally but with little understanding or feel for what went out over the airwaves from New York to France and beyond. This is unfortunate because the nature of the programming, the images created and the messages sent are at least as instructive as the internal bickering of federal bureaucrats.

University of Missouri-Kansas City Gregory D. Black

MAKING A MIDDLE LANDSCAPE. By Peter G. Rowe. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. 1991. $39.95.

Rowe, professor of architecture and urban design at Harvard, presents a richly documented interdisciplinary study of the transformation in the physical character of American suburban and exurban development since 1920. More simple arrangements of land, buildings and infrastructure on the urban periphery of the earlier wave of suburbanization changed into "regional urban morphologies" after 1956 with the building of the interstate highway system. Further, in the last two decades, they evolved into "complex multiuse centers and heterogeneous living environments." Now, the stereotypical image of the suburb, "a vestige" from an earlier era, "no longer applies." From initial "decentralization and deconcentration of population and land use" there followed the "reconcentration and specialization" of the contemporary metropolitan landscape where it is increasingly difficult to differentiate urban from suburban.

Rowe probes underlying "mythic themes, root metaphors, and attitudes," trying "to describe and dissect the symbolic landscape" as a composite of cultural artifacts. Because of changing attitudes, socioeconomics, and technologies constantly shaping the evolution of landscape form, Rowe questions whether suburbia has been or is "monolith or diverse social entity," "wasteful fragmentation or pure democracy," "private commodity or public good," "monotonous conformity or individual comfort," "placelessness or place." From initial "monotony and conformity," suburbia has become part of the present "metropolitan spatial synthesis," with increasing pluralism and mixed uses, a phenomenon that Rowe considers positive and distinctly American.

The built environment is never static, constantly evolving through a dialectic that resulted when a mentality of "technological optimism, technocratic style of management, and reliance on the world of facts . . . engaged with complementary attitudes of individual self-reliance, traditional small-town values, and dwelling close to nature" to "form a critical and progressive ideology." Tendencies "toward conservatism, nostalgia, and sentimentality" are curbed by "the modern technical temperament's drive toward productivity and new development." Rowe argues for poetics and a sort of historicism as antidotes to a modernism that "estranges us from the past," as ways to recreate or reinvent a civic sensibility, monumentality, and urbanism where it has been largely absent, with the exception of a few designs for "new towns" (290-91).

Rowe draws widely upon cultural history, tapping sources from the Hudson River and Ash Can Schools of painting, from Emerson to Frederick Winslow Taylor as well as from generations of developers and designers. He finds commonalities in suburbs like

Framingham near Boston and Sharpstown in Houston, despite dramatic regional, topographical, and historical differences. The book is richly illustrated, particularly with architectural drawings, plans and photographs. Rowe seeks to define "an appropriate poetic" or aesthetic principles for contemporary suburbia that makes this book a resource for architects, landscape architects and urban planners as well as of great interest to all in American culture studies and urban history.

Emerson College Blanche Linden-Ward

NEW GROUND: Western American Narrative and the Literary Canon. By A. Carl Bredahl, Jr. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1989. $29.95.

In *New Ground*, Carl Bredahl examines the image of the wilderness in the full range of American literature from Purchas and Bradford to the films of John Huston and Sam Peckinpah. Bredahl contends that the traditional canon, with its emphasis on enclosure and the dangers—both physical and psychological—of wilderness space, causes us to overlook works that do not conform to these assumptions. Bredahl points out the similarities in the generic treatment of landscape and the emphasis on enclosure by New England, Southern, feminist and other nontraditional writers and then differentiates their approach with that of Western writers who accept space that cannot be enclosed.

This emphasis on "surface," Bredahl asserts, is not simply naive, but a recognition of the value of landscape for physical and spiritual sustenance (30). He uses the term "divided narrative" to describe works by Mary Austin, Sherwood Anderson, Hamlin Garland, William Falkner and Sara Orne Jewett, authors who reform old structures and assumptions to accommodate a world where characters reject confinement (the traditional safety of enclosure) and instead use language to express and develop the life within (66). In his discussion of Hemingway, A. B. Guthrie, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Harvey Fergusson, Wright Morris and Ivan Doig, Bredahl shows how these authors attempt to articulate the struggle "to put into motion the surfaces that might otherwise overwhelm" (146).

Although Bredahl seems reluctant to pin down his concepts with specific definitions, his theories can easily be deducted from his discussion. Students of American literature who follow the debate over the canon, students of American culture concerned with the nature of our response to space and students of American history interested in our experience and response to the American wilderness should know Bredahl's *New Ground*.

Wichita State University Diane Dufva Quantic

THE FEMININE AND FAULKNER: Reading (Beyond) Sexual Difference. By Minrose C. Gwin. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press. 1990. $24.50.

Unlike her earlier book, *Black and White Women of the South: The Peculiar Sisterhood in American Literature* (1985), which considers the intersection of race, gender and region, Gwin's *The Feminine and Faulkner* relies heavily on feminist, deconstructionist and psychoanalytic theories. Her Gwin defines the feminine as a disruptive force that questions and challenges patriarchal culture. In her view Faulkner creates women as subjects not objects. If one listens to the "bisexual spaces" within and between Faulkner's novels, one can hear the women's voices that refused to be silenced. Bisexual spaces are created out of the tension between "Faulkner's male creative consciousness and his subversive feminine voice." While Gwin persuasively writes about Caddy Compson's reemerging voice in the face of males who try to silence her, she is less convincing in her

discussion of Rosa Coldfield's "voice of the hysteric" and Charlotte Rittenmeyer and the merging of "flooding and femininity" in *The Wild Palms*.

Michigan State University Jean Mullin Yonke

THE 60s EXPERIENCE: Hard Lessons About Modern America. By Edward P. Morgan. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 1991. $34.95.

In this well written, thoughtful and predictable work, Edward Morgan writes about the 1960s as many who participated in the "movement" would like to remember it. A 60s activist himself, Morgan explains that he wrote the book to remind his generation and to inform today's young people that the movement's "democratic vision is as compelling today as it was then" (xi).

Morgan's focus is "on major movements that contributed distinctly to the theoretical democratic vision of the Sixties" (xii). Based on a modest familiarity with secondary sources, Morgan writes analytically rich, if empirically impoverished overviews of the Civil Rights Movement and the turn toward Black Power, the New Left, aspects of the anti-war movement, and a highly reified thing he calls the counterculture. In part three, he gives a quick summary of political movements he believes (inaccurately, in my opinion) stemmed from movements of the Sixties and then explores "lessons and legacies of the Sixties."

Morgan is not much interested in giving a new and compelling history of what people in the 1960s did. No archival research or oral histories went into this book: the chronology and protagonists are the same ones you might have seen in a 1970 publication. Morgan wants to explain and to gently criticize what a few leaders of various high profile movement organizations like SDS and SNCC believed in and dreamed about doing.

With verve and insight, he explores how these activists in the 1960s attempted to develop a movement that could combine "prefigurative and instrumental politics." Movement activists' attempts to meld these often contradictory elements together fascinate Morgan as they did Wini Breines in *Community and Organization in the New Left* (1989) and James Miller in *"Democracy is in the Streets"* (1987) before him, both of whom he properly cites. Morgan does a fine job explaining what these elements meant to activists and suggests how difficult it was to create a workable community while struggling toward radical social change.

Morgan is a sophisticated writer. His tough, unapologetic critique of contemporary American capitalism gives his accounts of the 1960s an edge that kept me thinking alongside him, whether in agreement or disagreement. Still, despite Morgan's clear writing and provocative commentary, I'm not quite sure what to make of his work. Students will find the book dry, nowhere near as engaging as Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987) or as rich as Allen Matusow's *The Unraveling of America* (1984). Historians of the period will find it unengaged with current scholarship. He tells us little that is new or original. Then again, I am perhaps overly familiar with writings on the period. Many thoughtful readers will find *The 60s Experience* a lucid, even compelling account of the ideas that inspired movement activists in the 1960s.

Barnard College David Farber

THE BLACK STUDENT PROTEST MOVEMENT AT RUTGERS. By Richard P. McCormick. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 1990. $8.95 paper.

The passage of approximately twenty years since the outbreak of student unrest on the nation's campuses provides an opportunity to transcend episodic chronicling and detailed, but frequently parochial, perspectives of participants and observers. With few exceptions, recent treatment of campus unrest tend to relegate the black student movement to the sidelines where racial conflict serves, at best, as a point of transition between the Civil Rights Movement and the emergence of the New Left.

In *The Black Student Protest Movement at Rutgers*, Richard P. McCormick begins to fill the void by reconstructing the outbreak of racial tensions on three Rutgers campuses—Camden, Newark and New Brunswick (Rutgers College for men, Douglass College for women). McCormick uses administrative records, archival material and interviews with former activists to develop an intricate chronology of events, beginning with the August 1963 arrest of a Rutgers alumnus participating in the SNCC-led voter registration drive in Georgia. The arrest not only galvanized campus interest in civil rights, it also sparked an institutional resolve to "do something" about the "problem of the disadvantaged" (13).

McCormick is successful at outlining the dynamics of institutional attempts to make Rutgers more accessible to minority students, the limited financial resources of a public institution, the escalating demands of black students for Rutgers to "do more," and the political/legislative attempts to mediate the competing demands of the public, Rutgers and black students over academic policy and resource allocation. After a brief summary of racial conflicts at Rutgers that followed the climactic demonstrations and building occupations of 1969, McCormick concludes by observing that, although Rutgers has produced several thousand black undergraduate and graduate students since 1969, in many ways "the conditions that confront black schoolchildren, especially in urban areas, are even worse than those that inspired the 1969 protests" (108).

Although an interesting work, McCormick's reluctance to move from narration to analysis limits his achievement. *Black Student Protest* follows a pattern already established in contemporaneous monographs and memoirs about unrest at San Francisco State, Berkeley and Columbia. The focus on the seductive aspects of confrontation obscures more than it enlightens. Overlooked is consideration of why certain demands and proposed programs gained currency as opposed to others, why certain ideas and postures elicited favorable or hostile responses. At what point did good intentions on all sides deteriorate into competing and conflicting constituencies of interest? At what point did "not far enough" become "gone too far" relative to black student activist demands on predominantly white campuses?

Current discussions of institutional diversity and curricular multiculturalism represent updated versions of the concerns that spawned black student unrest two decades earlier. By opting not to engage fundamental issues of race, power and legitimacy in American higher education, McCormick misses the chance to make a more original contribution to the literature on this topic.

Boston College Karen K. Miller

STORIES, COMMUNITY, AND PLACE: Narratives from Middle America. By Barbara Johnstone. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1990. $22.50.

Linguist Barbara Johnstone is a refreshing exception to the generality that academicians write only for others within their disciplines. Storytelling is her subject, and she demonstrates how this universal cultural trait possesses specific personal, social and regional variations. Her discussion is suggestive rather than exhaustive, but it makes an important and underutilized approach to culture study accessible to sociologists, geographers and others interested in the interplay between society and place.

The book is based on 68 personal experience stories collected in Fort Wayne, Indiana, between 1981 and 1985. Johnstone uses them first to demonstrate the conventional elements of story structure. Separate chapters then treat modifications to this pattern. One addresses how narratives are personalized, another how gender and status norms are expressed. Two others, on the role of place, constitute the book's core. Fort Wayne people insert more place-specific information into their stories than is needed to set the scene. Johnstone thinks the explanation lies in the important role played by stories in the establishment of local behavioral norms. Place detail makes stories more verifiable to their audience and thereby renders their implications for behavior more acceptable. Moreover, "geography talk" can demonstrate rootedness, she says, a sign that one belongs to a community. Johnstone believes that places and stories are closely connected. Her message is clear and important, and her book can serve as a primer for those who want to pursue the work beyond Fort Wayne.

University of Kansas James R. Shortridge

THE REASONING VOTER: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns. By Samuel L. Popkin. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1991. $19.95.

The notion of the irrational or incompetent voter has become ingrained in the mind of many students of elections since the earliest voting studies. Many studies describe an electorate that is unfamiliar with political facts and inconsistent in the use of these facts. Although the idea of an irrational public may have rationalized high reelection rates, low turnout and superficial campaigns, such explanations did little to contribute to a meaningful understanding of voting. Popkin is more optimistic. He returns to the analogy of the voter as investor and describes citizens as using "low-information rationality" (or "gut" reasoning) in their choice of presidents. Far from irrational, voters are demonstrating rationality in their attempts to gather, connect and use the costly and imperfect information of the political world. By drawing upon and expanding the contributions of early voting studies, the work of Anthony Downs and cognitive psychology, Popkin attempts to show that while voters possess little information, the process through which they choose candidates is rational.

While Popkin describes a process that can be termed rational, the efficacy of this voting process is not clear. While the book establishes low information rationality as a plausible mode of voting behavior, it is not entirely clear that it is any more desirable than the "irrational" voter model attacked by Popkin. Low-information rationality demands very little of the voter, and while it may be the process that many Americans use to pick their candidates, it is not clear how they could know much less about the political world. Popkin seems content to let voters extrapolate future behavior from perceived candidate

characteristics, but readers may feel uneasy with voters extrapolating so much from so little.

Popkin draws together literature ranging from Aristotle to cognitive psychology to support his perspective. Just as impressive as the breadth of literature drawn upon, is Popkin's ability to present it at a level that is understandable to scholars and casual readers alike. This, combined with his straight-forward analysis, makes *The Reasoning Voter* accessible to the average citizen, while the insights offered should be profound enough to motivate additional debate and research by scholars.

Popkin acknowledges that this book cannot test every proposition and instead sets out to construct a theoretical basis for a re-evaluation of the American voter. Many readers will not find this book convincing, but they will surely find its central arguments provocative. While Popkin's conclusions may be too kind to voters, this book should help to shift the debate to a more productive ground and should inspire a new line of research that does not dismiss the behavior of voters.

University of Kansas Ken Collier

INDIAN COUNTRY, L.A.: Maintaining Ethnic Community in a Complex Society. By Joan Weibel-Orlando. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 1991. $34.95 cloth.

More than half of American Indians live in cities (53 percent of nearly 1.5 million in 1980), and Los Angeles is home to one of the largest Native American communities in the United States (with estimates ranging from 50,000 to 100,000 in 1980). *Indian Country, L.A.* is a major contribution to the urban anthropology of this relatively unstudied ethnic terrain. The book is based on the author's two decade-long interaction with a wide variety of Los Angeles Native American organizations and individuals. What Weibel-Orlando has found contradicts established patterns of urban ethnicity. There are no Indian neighborhoods in Los Angeles, and there is much cultural, linguistic, political and religious diversity—more than 150 tribes were represented in her 1986 survey. Thus, the volume's central puzzle is: How is it possible for there to be a Los Angeles American Indian community in the face of a widely geographically dispersed population marked by great cultural heterogeneity?

The answer to this question provides the organizational structure for the volume's quest for community. Following an historical and demographic discussion of the Los Angeles American Indian population (Section I) and a conceptual discussion of community (Section II), the book's sections reveal Weibel-Orlando's analysis of community creation and maintenance: ethnic institutions (Section III), ethnic events (Section IV), and ethnic roles (Section V). The book concludes with a detailed study of the community's response to the 1986 demise of Los Angeles' oldest and largest American Indian organization: Indian Centers, Inc.

Indian Country, L.A. paints a postmodern portrait of the Los Angeles American Indian community: participation is voluntary and can be exercised or not with impunity, cultural forms and structures are adapted and syncretic, membership is enacted through formal unofficial and official organizations, the community is embedded in the larger institutions of the city, county, state and federal governments. As Weibel-Orlando summarizes: "the decentralized, dispersed, heterogeneous, and self-fabricating character of the Los Angeles Indian community mirrors the postmodern metropolis that is its matrix" (55).

This volume's strengths are many. There is an informative overview of L.A.'s Native American organizational landscape and three excellent chapters on major community institutions: the Saturday night powwow, Fifth Sunday Sings, and the Los Angeles City-County Native American Indian Commission. Equally interesting are three chapters containing the life histories of central figures in each of these institutional worlds. The section on the collapse of the 50-year-old community pillar, Indian Centers, Inc., did not entirely fulfill its promise to serve as an "epistemological window" into the processes of community construction. However, Weibel-Orlando's analysis of ICI's closure firmly placed the organization and its fate in the larger political-economic context of the 1980s, and revealed the dangers to publicly-funded organizations whose foundations and leadership strategies inevitably rest on the shifting sands of political culture. This glimpse into more macro issues and processes does not characterize the rest of the book. While the volume does not claim to be a political-economy of urban Indian life, the complete absence of any discussion of employment or the economics of daily life presented an oddly skewed view of a community known to face much economic hardship and whose cultural patterns of communal coping are only hinted at. Those are minor shortcomings in an excellent book for specialists as well as students and scholars interested in community and ethnicity.

University of Kansas Joane Nagel