

1956

Folk Recordings-Henry

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Recommended Citation

Henry, Shultz. "Folk Recordings-Henry." *New Mexico Quarterly* 26, 1 (1956). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol26/iss1/15>

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BRIEF REVIEWS

The Encyclopedia of Jazz, by Leonard Feather. New York: Horizon Press, 1955. \$10.

JAZZ MUSIC IS AN extremely volatile art, hard to catch and even harder to hold for purposes of static analysis. Essentially spontaneous and improvisatory, it cannot be separated from the artists who produce it. Even in the orchestrated "written" jazz of today, it is the musician and not the music that provides the essential jazz elements. From the same notation, the same written arrangement, the jazz musician and the non-jazz musician will produce identifiably different music. That difference lies in the jazz musician's legacy of special techniques and effects in rhythm, phrasing, and intonation developed and extended through some fifty years of jazz improvisation, and in the jazzman's intensely personal approach to the music he plays. Every jazz artist has an opportunity—indeed, a responsibility—to place the stamp of his own personality and musical expression on his art. There are no legitimate carbon copies in the field, only a progressive series of jazz originals. *The Encyclopedia of Jazz*, compiled and written by Leonard Feather, is the first full catalog of that series.

Not that this volume is the last word. Jazz is too dynamic and elusive to be hog-tied in encyclopedia form, and Feather—despite the book's title—knows his subject well enough not to try it. Louis Armstrong has put it more colorfully: "When it comes to telling stories about jazz and the men who have made it, Leonard Feather is my boy . . . he is one cat that really knows what's going on." While Feather's attractive reference work includes sections on the history and techniques of jazz, an annotated list of basic jazz recordings, a selected bibliography, and other related information, the bulk of his volume is a thorough dictionary of jazz biography. By collecting individual biographical (and musical) data about 1065 jazz personalities and supplementing these with 200 photographs of jazz musicians in their own settings, Feather's book surrounds and defines its subject more successfully than any previous single volume on jazz.

Among American publications in the field (Feather points out in his section titled "A Brief History of Jazz" that it was not until 1939

that any American publisher deemed this native art form worthy of a documentary book) the richest material has come in the form of jazz biography. Critical and historical surveys of jazz, whether they attempt technical analysis like Winthrop Sargeant's *Jazz: Hot and Hybrid*, sociological criticism like Sidney Finkelstein's *Jazz: A People's Music*, or interpretive history like Barry Ulanov's *A History of Jazz in America*, have contributed valuable opinion and documentation, but somehow they fail to evoke the soul of the art—and of the artist. The reader who wants to know jazz rather than to know about jazz must turn to the autobiographies of the performers—to Louis Armstrong's *Satchmo*, Wingy Manone's *Trumpet on the Swing*, Eddie Condon's *We Called It Music*, Hoagy Carmichael's *Stardust Road*, Mezz Mezzrow's *Really the Blues*, or perhaps best of all for the short course the anthology edited by Nat Hentoff and Nat Shapiro, *Hear Me Talkin' to Ya—the Story of Jazz by the Men Who Made It*. These entertaining and candid books reveal the distinctive point of view of jazzmen in their own rich idiom. They display their intense devotion to their art, their lack of inhibition, their pervading sense of the comic, their intuitive approach to things essential in life and in art, and their lack of self-conscious analysis except as it applies to self-expression through their music. Implicitly, they chronicle more surely than any academic study could the nature, the history, the sociology, and the spirit of jazz.

A good measure of the authenticity of spirit in Feather's *Encyclopedia of Jazz* is the continuity and rapport that carries from Duke Ellington's discursive reminiscing in the foreword to Feather's orderly essay on the history of jazz, his technical analysis of the music, and the thousand-odd biographical sketches.

The volume maintains a consistent and appropriate tone throughout, in spite of the fact that it is meant to satisfy laymen and specialists alike. Information is provided at every level of approach. In his technical analysis of jazz, for instance, Feather offers this elementary observation—so essential and basic that the jazz spokesman often neglects to point it out: "The concept of treating a song in terms of a chord sequence rather than basing improvisations on its melody has often proved hard for jazz novitiates to understand. 'Where's the melody?' they will cry, not realizing that the jazzman is neither playing the melody nor departing from it. He is merely using the harmonic bones of the tune, rather than the melodic flesh, as a point of

departure." Elsewhere in this same section can be found a discussion of the effects of rubato in jazz and a reproduction of an excerpt from a modern jazz orchestration scored by Pete Rugolo for twenty-one pieces.

The international significance of American jazz has long been neglected, but to the reader of Feather's book it is inescapable. His section on the history of jazz points often to the early appreciation of the art in Europe and the lag in serious attention given it at home. His biographies and photographs include musicians from all over the world. Feather, who came to New York in 1935 from London, where he was born, is personally aware of the high regard for American jazzmen in Europe, where our touring jazz units have been given enthusiastic reception for years. An encouraging corollary of this is the steady increase in the number and quality of foreign jazz musicians. England, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, Australia, and even Japan all have excellent jazz musicians whose background and training in the art have come almost exclusively from the recorded jazz of America. And they obviously understand what they have heard better than most Americans do. Literature on jazz has been flourishing abroad since the nineteen-twenties. In Feather's bibliography of periodicals dealing directly or indirectly with jazz today, five United States entries are listed as against fifteen published abroad.

The most important contribution of Feather's book, however, is its biographical dictionary. Here, although each is in miniature, are the stories of all the men—and women—who have created and are extending the world of jazz. Together they make a fascinating, readable compendium that provides much of the same insight and color one finds in the full-length autobiographies of jazzmen.

If anyone still needs notice that jazz is a full-blown art, distinctively American in its inception, character, and personality but world-wide in its appeal and recognition, *The Encyclopedia of Jazz* should settle the matter.

EDWARD LUEDERS

JAMES JOYCE AND THE COMMON READER, by William Powell Jones. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955. 168 pp.

JOYCE HOPED FOR an ideal reader—one preferably with an ideal insomnia. William Powell Jones' "common reader" is not such a person. On page 98, explaining why he will restrict himself to detailed analysis of merely three episodes of *Ulysses*, the author remarks that "there is a limit to what the common reader will bear." Acting on such an assumption, Jones strips Joyce's work to a series of skeleton plot summaries and thereby succeeds in addressing himself to no audience at all. Joyce himself, in spite of his desire for as many appreciative readers as possible, realized the impracticality of encouraging them to ascend the foothills of his literary mountains if they were not willing to attempt the steeper climb. "Please stop if you're a B.C. minding missy, please do. But should you prefer A.D. stepplease." Joyce knew that he could never appeal to the reader interested merely in plot. The hope of Mr. Jones to widen Joyce's circle of readers is commendable, but by his synopses he is not likely to accomplish his purpose.

If this book had been written before Levin, Budgen, Gilbert, Kain, Smith, and Duff issued their own studies, in the thirties and forties when the first faltering guides to Joyce's works were appearing, it would have served a useful purpose for all types of readers. Scholars anxious for a clue to the labyrinth would have been grateful for the enlightened plot summaries which, especially for *Ulysses*, the author provides. At the same time, laymen attracted by the notoriety of a "dirty" book would have been set straight: they would have dropped *Ulysses* in disappointment or gone beyond the limits set for the common reader by Mr. Jones to a real understanding of Joyce's accomplishment. Coming in the mid-fifties, however, when specialists no longer require such aid (and Mr. Jones very honestly points out this circumstance), the book must make its appeal to those who do not know Joyce and yet would like to.

In my experience, except for an occasional convert here and there in the mature world of affairs, Joyce's important works are of concern mainly to bright young college students and graduates eager to sample what has meant to them hitherto merely a controversial name. It is this group precisely which must be guided skillfully into the works of a brilliant, complex, and difficult author. Mr. Jones' book is, I think, not ideally suited to such an audience.

It is impossible to discuss the value of Joyce's work without admitting the reader—even the common reader—to his symbolic content, his richness of allusion, and the complexity of his mosaic patterns. The author himself, in his preface, defines his common reader as "intelligent" and "willing to work in order to understand any piece of writing that is worth the effort." Surely, intelligence and deliberate application to a literary problem are capable of going beyond plot summaries to the rich core of an intricate work. Indeed, there is danger in suggesting to college students, for instance, that the importance of *Ulysses* or of *Finnegans Wake* or even of a story of *Dubliners* centers principally about the narrated events of each episode. Since there is a strong tendency on the part of students to report the "message" or the plot of a book as the meaning of that book, a guide which stresses page by page detailing of external action may too easily convince a student that there is no need to take a second look at elements more significant.

Mr. Jones makes it quite clear that there are deeper levels to Joyce's later works, and, as he has every right to do if he wishes, that he chooses not to discuss these levels in this book. But I think that, perhaps quite unintentionally, his offhand references to complex analyses of these literary depths are at best slighting and at worst contemptuous. The author, an intellectual and a scholar of note, seems to assume a posture of anti-intellectual camaraderie with his "common" reader in order to qualify as a regular guy and thus entice the timid to be like him and read Joyce. On page 108 he proposes to "*rescue* [*italics mine*] the reader of *Ulysses* from such elaborate exegesis" as the critic A. M. Klein provides. Other standard writers on Joyce he labels "dangerous" or "confusing." Constantly worried about how much his audience can "bear," he succeeds, it would seem to me, in convincing the lazy or inept reader that Joyce and the critics are at fault; and in alienating the alert and ambitious reader, chary of condescension. A writer may decide not to discuss symbolism, say, but he ought not to make fun of what he omits in order to appeal to readers who know little about the subject.

Perhaps the publisher is at fault for speaking of the book, on the jacket, as a "study of the complete works of James Joyce." Eight short and general pages on *Finnegans Wake* scarcely constitute a glance. Nor is it enough to offer as a complete analysis of "The Sisters" the not very helpful comment that it is "a boy's first experience

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with death." Even the common reader could not fail to be aware of this from a casual reading of the first page of the story. And since *A Portrait of the Artist* resembles scores of other modern novels of adolescence on its surface, there is a serious question whether the author should not have made available to his readers at least a digest of exegeses by such writers as C. G. Anderson, who try to explain the distinctiveness of Joyce's attempt.

Mr. Jones has many good things to say. His short account of Joyce's use of words and his analysis of the comic element in *Ulysses* are both enlightening. If there is a "common reader" of Joyce, and if he is able to keep his balance as he threads his way through this guide, he will pick up some useful information.

MARVIN MAGALANER

The Sorrows of Travel, by John Breon. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1955. 250 pp. \$3.50.

JOHN BREON, WHO TOOK his discharge in France following World War II, writes of those young Americans who stayed on after the war, or hastily beat their way to Paris afterwards, to be in on the artistic revival which they felt sure was immanent. They had thrilled to *The Sun Also Rises*, they studied Malcolm Cowley's *Exile's Return* as collateral reading in literature courses in college, and some of them — the more ambitious — had probably written term papers about *transition*. It comes as no surprise to learn that the ferment they expected turned out to be rather heavily watered *vin ordinaire*, but here at last is an eyewitness report on it. Mr. Breon is the man; he was there; he suffered.

Whatever the virtues of this first novel as art — and they are considerable — *The Sorrows of Travel* is important social history. Surely the author had no intention of presenting a representative group of Americans in Paris; yet, to an extent, they are that.

Chuck is a cripple who lost his leg in no romantic foray at the front but in a humiliating adolescent hot-rod accident at home. The kind of childhood that might have made possible his own self-recognition had been denied him; America had given the poverty-stricken boy nothing to cling to, but perhaps in Paris, in an artificial world lovingly constructed and maintained by his friend Paul, he could find his place in a reasonably satisfactory society.

Paul, a composer of some talent, is the only one of the group who

works at his art as much as he talks about it, though not a little of Paul's creative ingenuity is directed to furnishing the room with flea-market *objets d'art* to amuse his friend. Livia, in love with the memories of love, is wealthy but hides the fact of her wealth as well as she can. She is nonetheless a major financial buttress of Chuck's and Paul's world. George, who vainly loves Livia, is a would-be writer but appreciates the comforts of a decent standard of living more, and consequently contents himself by translating third-rate detective novels. And Henry the Existentialist, bumbling both as a writer and a man; Eunice, more French than the French themselves, reducing all experience to entries in her card catalog; Albert, whose feline machinations keep the plot simmering; and an assortment of weird poetesses and sculpturesses. There they are, brought into focus by their life together in the moldering Hôtel Gallia, in a Paris where it is always night and the rain never stops falling.

The narrative thread of the novel has to do with the beautiful though sexually oblique friendship of Paul and Chuck, and the unsuccessful attempt of the whole group to restore Chuck to psychic wholeness by enabling him to overcome the handicap of his missing leg. If Chuck's amputation calls up memories of Jake Barnes' "peculiar wound," the consequences of the psychic cicatrix are somewhat different. Livia may manufacture pornographic cuff links for the titillation of tourists, but she is a perfect substitute mother for Chuck, and she and Paul together manage to provide a room on the top floor of the Hôtel Gallia that is a reasonably satisfactory surrogate womb. Chuck's rehabilitation is at least conceivable in an environment of wooden angels, bare-breasted harpies, and tall carved gryphons — furniture as much of the mind as of the room, for the articles are the sort that take on private meanings and acquire virtue by association. But all hope for his salvation is lost when Albert, an obscenely overt homosexual, descends upon this pleasantly whacky group and upsets the delicate personal relationships that have been so carefully poised, by insinuating that Chuck is an albatross to Paul's developing talent. In the end Chuck shoots himself, and, dragging his bleeding body all over Paris, surely takes longer to die than any hero outside Elizabethan drama.

We wonder why the story takes place in Paris at all. The people, the events, even the locale (a Parisian cafe is not so very different from a campus drugstore, if the novel is to be believed) could be duplicated

in Paul's home town, Randall's Falls, Illinois. Much of the purpose of the novel, however, is to demonstrate just that. These people are not a lost generation; they are a misplaced generation, misplaced more in time than in space. George tells Livia that their Paris is a "leftover version" of the twenties. They are "twenty-five years too late! Still hoping to flower once again in faded Dômes and empty Coupoles." While others of their generation are at home, purposefully climbing the rungs of advancement in anonymous corporations, living contentedly in their split-level houses, complacently buying life insurance, and happily unaware that they are a Beat Generation, these young Americans in Paris are learning the hard way that "there are no people on earth as provincial as the new expatriates; they never leave the provinces behind." They learn that

The protests are clichés; the literati, except for their clothes and haircuts, are indistinguishable from the live-wires at a church social. Whatever Paris may be, the final experience has become one of slow withdrawal from it — first to restaurants more and more like places back home, then to hotels perhaps distant but at least what hotels are supposed to be, and throughout all of it there is a continual reorganization of possessions until finally, with locked trunks standing beside them on the dock, it's all over — they are ready to go home. If there is any longer a story of Americans in Paris, it is a Midwest Story, an Ivy League Story or a Hollywood Story. There is no Paris Story any more.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Surely the melodramatic end of Chuck is false to the premise of the novel, however true it may be to the author's unarticulated desire that the Paris experience have real meaning, which his own clear understanding rejects. Now that he has written out his Sorrows of Werther, Mr. Breon can be expected to turn his impressive talent to subjects nearer home; and his wit, his grace, and his sympathy should produce memorable results.

CHARLES BOEWE

Modern Homesteaders. The Life of a Twentieth-Century Frontier Community, by Evon Z. Vogt. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1955. 232 pp. \$4.25.

MODERN HOMESTEADERS is a report on the Texas homesteader culture which coexists with four other cultural groups in a relatively small ecological area in western New Mexico. The other four cultural groups are Navaho, Pueblo Indian, Spanish-American, and Mormon. Each group has developed and continues to maintain its distinct value system. All five groups have been studied in a field study initiated in the summer of 1949 by the Laboratory of Social Relations of Harvard University. The project was financed by the Social Science Division of the Rockefeller Foundation.

While *Modern Homesteaders* deals primarily with the Texas homesteader culture, some comparisons have been made with the other cultures in the area. Subsequent publications on the Homesteaders and on the other cultures are intended to provide a more complete picture of the comparative values in the five cultural groups.

The author moved into Homestead (a fictitious name for the village center of the community studied) with his wife and three children in October 1949, stayed there until September 1950, and returned again in the summers of 1951 and 1952. During the period 1949 to 1954, numerous other field workers were engaged in research on the project. However, this report covers for the most part the full year in 1949-1950 during which the author lived in the community.

Homestead is a small pinto-bean farming community. The production of beef cattle is emphasized on some farms, but "the more typical pattern is a focus upon pinto beans, with some acreage devoted to corn and winter wheat, and with a milk-cow, a few hogs and a few chickens for home consumption only. The land which is not devoted to cultivation is either pasture for the livestock or woodland."

The community was founded in the early 1930's by families from the South Plains region of western Texas and Oklahoma. The original settlers were part of the vast westward migration from the South Plains during the period of national depression and drought conditions which prevailed during the early 1930's. Most of the migrants went to California, but some stopped in New Mexico to settle in a number of semi-arid farming communities in the northern and western parts of the state. Homestead is one of those communities, and one of the few to survive the vicissitudes of nature, the depression,

and the attraction of economic alternatives. During the two-year period from 1930 to 1932, eighty-one families arrived and filed upon homesteads. Since then, an average of three families per year have arrived and an average of five families have left each year so that in 1950 there were 61 families consisting of 232 individuals residing in the community.

Modern Homesteaders is the story of these people. They came to New Mexico, not merely because of the depression and the adverse agricultural conditions in the South Plains, but also because of the promise of an opportunity to establish permanent family-owned farms on which they could achieve an independence that had not been possible in the area from which they came. It is the story of how the hope of mastering nature and a boundless faith in the future have been motivating factors in the continuing attempts to maintain an agricultural economy that frequently is not profitable, and a way of life that appears to be doomed by the very values that prompted the settlement in the community in the first place.

The thesis of the book is that

a cluster of the crucial value-orientations had a positive effect on the settlement and early development of the community, but that the continued (and almost compulsive) adherence to aspects of these same value-orientations in the face of a changing environmental and economic situation is now contributing to the transformation of the community. In other words, the situation, in both its environmental and general economic aspects, has altered in recent years, but the value-orientations have not changed proportionately. Further, the values which were appropriate for the original settlement and early survival of the community are now inappropriate for its continuing development.

Value-orientations which Vogt finds as having been and still are being emphasized are individualism, hopeful mastery over nature, and living in the future. These value-orientations were a part of the cultural tradition of the South Plains region from which the Homesteaders had migrated and stimulated the kind of pioneering activity that led to the settlement and early development of the community. The tragedy is that these value-orientations have persisted in a new geographical and cultural setting and in spite of recent changes in the environmental and economic situation.

The cultural setting into which the Texas homesteader moved was one of diversity. The Homesteaders found themselves neighbors of Pueblo and Navaho Indians, Spanish-Americans, and Mormons.

Each group had values differing from those of the Homesteaders. Instead of values being transmitted, what happened was the development of attitudes of group superiority and inferiority on the part of the Homesteader toward the other cultural groups—attitudes of superiority toward the Indians and the Spanish-Americans and attitudes of inferiority toward the Mormons, the ranchers, and the world at large.

Not only did the value-orientations persist in a new cultural setting, but they have persisted in the face of drought and depletion of the soil from the wind erosion and such economic aspects as the rise to power of encroaching cattle ranchers, and the work opportunities outside the community. This changing environmental and economic situation is one which should have stimulated change in existing value-orientations, but instead the Homesteaders have clung to the old values which may have been logical at one time but which now are illogical. The conclusion that Vogt reaches is that

precisely because the Homesteaders in their firm attachment to their values do not take cognizance of the ecological and economic situation, the dreams of the community's founders will not be fulfilled and Homestead will never "become a city like Plainview, Texas." Instead of changing from a farming village into a metropolis as the founders envisioned (and as the younger generation still hopes), the community is in the process of becoming a settlement of widely scattered ranches. This process is likely to continue to the point where the community will be too small to support its service center of schools, churches, and stores. Indeed, there is the possibility that the community as such will disappear altogether as the ranchers continue to buy up the land, and eventually the "big ranchers" may graze cattle in the streets of Homestead—a frontier community which started out with such big dreams of its future.

The report is an attempt to understand the course of events in Homestead in terms of values, and both the presentation and theoretical treatment therefore are somewhat unique. On the whole, it is a refreshing change from the usual community analysis. Furthermore, the central theme has resulted in an integrated report. The reviewer also feels that the field work on the study is participant observation at its best.

The findings which Vogt reports should be of much interest and value to sociologists. Apart from the emphasis on value-orientation and the methodology and presentation, much sociological informa-

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tion is presented about a rural community in the early stages of its development. It would be interesting to know what place such values as Vogt discusses might have had in rural communities of an earlier period—both those that survived and those that did not.

SIGURD JOHANSEN

I AM ABOUT to do something completely unjust—review a book not only in terms of what it does, and does well, but also in terms of what it does not do and does not pretend to do. For this I beg Professor Vogt's pardon in advance. He has written a clean, lucid, and careful book, and it is not his fault if other people, including some people in his own field, have suggested uses for it that I do not think it can live up to.

The six-year study of five New Mexico cultural groups which was begun in 1949 under the direction of the Laboratory of Social Relations of Harvard University is one of the most elaborate of its kind ever undertaken. It has proposed to examine the value systems of Navaho, Pueblo, Spanish-American, Mormon, and transplanted-Texan communities existing close together in western New Mexico; the purpose has been to try to expose the roots of community and cultural difference where the environment is comparatively uniform and hence comparatively controlled. The dozens of scholars who have worked in the various communities over a period of years have traded information, methodologies, criticism, and insights from the beginning, and their collective work, keyed to a single theme, is certain to be a monument in cultural anthropology. *Modern Homesteaders* is one of the first studies to be published as a trade book.

It is a portrait of the settlement here called Homestead, a dry-farming community homesteaded in the 1930's by families from the Texas Panhandle. They came with a system of beliefs, prejudices, superstitions, acceptances, and assumptions derived from the experiences of many generations of frontiers. Professor Vogt's interest is less in where the existing value system came from than in what happened to it; that is to say, his bias is more sociological than historical. He is very clear on what has happened to the value system of these Texans: with only slight yielding to the pressure of new conditions, it has stayed what it was thirty years ago. The clusters of values and beliefs that Professor Vogt calls "value orientations" are not simply random by-products or "dependent variables," but lenses through which the members of a culture view their world. Far from being

products, values seem in Homestead to have been the shaping force of the community. Most historians and students of literature would have guessed this conclusion in advance, but it is pleasant to have the guess corroborated. This is what Vergil meant: *Inferritque deos in Latio*.

"Value orientations" imported from the Texas Panhandle have conditioned Homestead's methods of farming as well as the special forms of modernization and mechanization it developed. They have moulded family life, recreation, religious observances, racial and color prejudices, even the quality of the aspirations of Homestead's youth. The characteristic optimism in the face of repeated crop failure, the local boosterism that persists through gradual decay and gradual alteration of the economy from bean farms to large ranches, the superstitions with regard to water—all these will be very familiar to anyone who has read John Wesley Powell or Walter Webb, or observed how stubbornly wet-country institutions have tried to make their way in the arid West. Such a belated dry-farming frontier as this is a very fine laboratory in which to study the bull-headedness of human habits.

Modern Homesteaders should properly be reviewed by a sociologist or anthropologist, to whom the homesteaders' almost pathological individualism, "atomistic" social order, and faith in the future of man's ability to master it, will suggest considerations more profound and scientific than they suggest to me, a layman. My own reaction is so completely persuaded as to be uncritical; I believe this to be a very accurate and careful picture of the Homestead community and in particular of the value-orientations that select, regulate, and guide its life, and I have no complaint to make except the general and impersonal one against the semantically aseptic language that social scientists feel they must employ. But it is perhaps permissible, though obviously unjust to Professor Vogt, who nowhere makes the claim, to examine the suggestion I have heard from some other participants in the five-cultures study, that a community analysis of this sort ought to be a rich source book for a novelist.

Certainly the raw materials are the same for either the student of cultures or the writer of fiction. Man may be spelled in many alphabets, but he is always the proper study of mankind. A novelist from outside, deliberately setting out to use the community of Homestead in a book, would have to obtain his information in the same ways

that the anthropologist did, and he could probably benefit a good deal by utilizing a little of the anthropologist's method and system. People in all their activities, in work, play, affection, conflict, crisis, are their mutual concern. They would draw the same conclusions from the unfinished town gymnasium, begun in a flurry of unaccustomed cooperation and rapidly abandoned as the old folkways asserted themselves. The life-plans of hopeful high school students who do not know how sadly they are trapped can be relevant and even touching in either context, the stiff-legged antagonism toward Indians and "Mexicans" are the stuff of fictional conflict as they are of sociological analysis.

Yet I do not think that any good writer of fiction is going to sit down with Professor Vogt's good book to get background for a novel about New Mexican bean farmers. To think that anyone is going to is to reveal the belief that fiction is only dressed-up sociology or psychology, a more palatable but less reliable form of individual and community portraiture, and that it can be prepared for with notebooks and tape recorders.

If anyone is going to write fiction about Homestead it will be someone who grew up there. Reading *Modern Homesteaders* might be an immensely illuminating experience to such a person, already steeped in the community life; it might broaden his horizons more than any book he could lay hands on, because of the things it can tell him about what he already knows in other terms. But it is those other, deeper, more emotionally meaningful terms that will serve him as novelist. It will do him only good to understand his home town more thoroughly than anyone else in it does, but he must still remain "culture-bound" to a degree. The inherited value system of a Homestead may seem to him perverse, obtuse, and disastrous, but its capacity to betray itself and its believers ought to break his heart or make him laugh or set him on a furious crusade.

All this is to say that novels stem from *commitment* of a kind that no good social study can afford. A good social scientist will make you understand a town, but a good novelist will make you remember one. His job is *presentation* in the fullest sense, and it is actually more valuable to him to be emotionally tuned to his material than it is to understand it fully. Emotion is the solvent that makes all the diverse elements in a novel one, and makes it, therefore, like life. To pretend, as some of the students of culture seem to, that a controlled

and methodical analysis is the same thing as a passionate recreation is the equivalent of saying that one might fall in love with an anatomical chart.

All this is manifestly unfair to Mr. Vogt's book, which makes none of these attempts to confuse science with art. I think it is good science, and I think it might be useful and instructive to many people, whether laymen, social scientists, politicians, planners, agricultural agents, teachers, or even writers, if it is read only as what it is.

WALLACE STEGNER

FOLK RECORDINGS

THE FOLLOWING recent recordings of folk music are here grouped together insofar as possible according to the land of origin; but, owing to the propensity of folk songs to wander from one land to another, such groupings cannot really be hard and fast. All recordings are ten-inch LP's unless otherwise specified. The engineering of all recordings may be assumed to be first class by current standards unless otherwise excepted. Performances in most cases are by that ubiquitous phenomenon of our time, the "folk-singer," unless it is noted that certain recordings were actually made *in situ* by "the folk" for some enthusiast with a tape recorder. It is not meant by the foregoing to sneer at the folk-singer, who — radio or night-club artist though he (more frequently she) may be — nevertheless in the majority of the recordings listed below will be found to sing with simplicity and taste, and without whom, in any event, we should very likely have no recordings at all of the wonderful music they are responsible for bringing us.

The Life of Christ as told through Afroamerican Folksong (Negro "spirituals"), arranged and sung by Roland Hayes (tenor) with Reginald Boardman (piano). [Vanguard VRS-462, 12-inch. Notes and complete texts.] This cycle consists of about a dozen Negro spirituals arranged, with connecting interludes, to depict the life of Christ from