

In summary, the essays reflect considerable effort and research in documenting the social, economic, and political transitions of Cincinnati from 1820 to 1970. The reader is well informed through the mental images of neighborhood development and historical events contained in these essays. The geographic or spatial impact of these forces on contemporary Cincinnati and the magnitude of the demographic and economic evolution in the "Queen City" during the industrial era are well documented in detailed footnotes.

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**Carol Trosset. *Welshness Performed: Welsh Concepts of Person and Society*. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993) x, 183 pp., \$35.00.**

Wales, ruled by native princes until the thirteenth-century and subsequently governed from London, contains a population of about three million, twenty percent of which speak an indigenous language.

On the surface, a scholarly book on the Welsh people's social values would seem of little interest to members of NAES. This is not the case, however, if one considers that there must be many cogent comparisons and contrasts between the Welsh and other minority groups in the United States and other countries.

The book deals primarily with speakers of the Welsh language who, for the most part, consider themselves to be "cymru glan"—purer Welsh than those who prefer to speak English—and who are a minority in their own land with a history of imposed rule. As a result, their self-view and their relationship to the majority parallels the situation of many people in other parts of the world.

This parallel may be clearer if one looks at some of the concepts of person and society proposed by Trosset, an American anthropologist, who prefers to call herself a sociologist, and who spent two years in Wales learning the language and doing research for her book.

Since most of the culturally involved Welsh speak English as well as Welsh, one big question is: Who do I speak which language to and under what circumstances? The Welsh tend to talk rather than act, tend to be emotional more often than rational, to have a strong sense of "hiraeth"—longing for the past—specifically in a time when the language flourished and the nation was self-ruled, and have a strong sense of enjoyment, particularly of music—most frequently in the form of hymns. Does this sound familiar?

Playing a large part in all this is an institution without definite parallel anywhere else in the world, perhaps, is the “*eisteddfod*,” a series of nation-wide competitions in singing, instrumental music, dancing, recitation, and the like which culminates in a week-long festival in August in which the local winners compete before huge crowds and are rated for their accomplishments—a sort of cultural midwestern state fair!

To begin with, the higher ups—judges and the like—in the *eisteddfod* share power with the English overlords, and thus the culturally involved Welsh have very ambivalent views of them. One finds in this book such judgments as “All Welsh are actors,” for almost all Welsh take part in the *eisteddfod* at some level or other. Although the purpose of competition is enjoyment, still winning isn’t everything. In addition, there seems to be a total split between an acceptance of the judgment of the experts and the feeling that one person’s judgment is as good as another’s, and thus that the judges are wrong, or perhaps even that nobody can get at the truth.

The *eisteddfod* aside, Trosset finds that one of the main characteristics of the Welsh is that they are overly modest about their abilities and seem firmly convinced that it is impossible to change things—strange views in an area where the future of the Welsh language, the possibility of additional political power for Wales itself, and the ever-present, seemingly, problems of unemployment, are hotly debated. In short, then, the Welsh seem to suffer under what Trosset calls a “martyrdom scenario.”

The book is quite clearly written and is otherwise of interest because of its author’s insistence that subjectivity in judgments on what groups of people think is not only acceptable but probably necessary—an opinion that seems strange, but also rather sensible, to this reviewer.

In the broadest sense, too, this book offers us a chance to examine our own attitudes toward ourselves and society and to ponder the degree to which ethnicity plays a significant part in them.

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**Patricia A. Turner. *I Heard It Through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-American Culture*. (Berkeley: California, 1994) xvi, 260pp.**

Patricia A. Turner, associate professor of African American and African Studies at the University of California at Davis, published *Ceramic Uncles & Celluloid Mammies: Black Images and Their Influence on Culture* earlier in 1994.