

## *Explorations in Sights and Sounds*

from the film *Giant* to *American Me*, and from Helen Hunt Jackson's novel *Ramona* to recent fiction by Cherríe Moraga, the volume is at times dazzling in its ability to engage institutions on many fronts and on many levels. Despite the wide-ranging resources cited in the text and in twenty-two pages of endnotes, and despite manifold, multilayered arguments, Gutiérrez-Jones never loses control of the work. Many readers will, indeed, be rethinking the borderlands between Chicanos and the law.

David Goldstein-Shirley  
University of California, Irvine

**Kenneth Robert Janken. *Rayford W. Logan and the Dilemma of the African-American Intellectual*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993) 319 pp., \$35.00.**

In this superb reconstruction of the life of Rayford W. Logan, Kenneth Robert Janken, an assistant professor of African American studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, draws on his protagonist's somewhat tormented life to document the veracity of John Hope Franklin's thesis that, "it was the American Negro scholar's dilemma to be obligated constantly to challenge the notion of black inferiority". Put another way, despite Logan's credentials—he held a Ph.D. from Harvard University in history; wrote twelve books, including the classic, *The Betrayal of the Negro*; edited several others, among them, *What the Negro Wants*; and penned hundreds of scholarly articles—his racial identity negated all of his assets. For a person who believed that he was different from most other African Americans, the snubs of the white establishment were extremely disconcerting. "Yet time and again," Janken reminds us, Logan "sought its [white academia's] approval."

Janken's easily accessible volume thoroughly documents Logan's contradictions and his strengths and weaknesses as he traces his life from its humble beginnings in Washington, D.C.. to Logan's Pan-Africanist stance in France in the 1920's; to his pioneering voter registration drives and citizenship schools in the South during the 1930s; to his activities in fighting racial discrimination in the United States' military in the 1940s; and finally to his embattled career as a history professor and administrator at Howard University from 1938 until his death in 1982. Those persons looking for an unblemished hero in Logan will find Janken's account disappointing.

Contemporary nationalists would be disturbed by the fact that Logan—to use Janken's words—"spent most of his life from adolescence on struggling to be accepted by the white world." In addition, "his regard for the West was so high that it was inconceivable to him that African

## *Number 15 (Summer 1995)*

Americans should desire to separate themselves from it." Furthermore, Logan "scorned [the term] 'black' because in his view it glorifies '*Negritude*' and disdains the European origins of Negroes".

Ironically, contemporary integrationists and assimilationists would also find Logan's views alien to their ideology, for Logan felt the civil rights movement "had no concept of the history of the struggle for racial equality and the progress made since the nadir." Thus, the movement appreciated neither the achievement of legal equality nor the importance of legal methods for achieving it. In short, according to Janken, Logan's "self-appointed role as movement gadfly was a balm for the wounds he suffered by being denied a permanent seat at the leadership summit".

Despite the brilliance of Janken's work, I have two reservations about this well-crafted biography. First, the volume is poorly copy edited. The editor made numerous comma splices; and he/she could not determine whether or not African American should have been hyphenated. Second, when Janken attempts to account for Logan's mental breakdown during his tenure as a United States serviceman during World War I, he becomes involved in simplistic and amateurish psychoanalysis, stating: "The cause of his [Logan's] outburst, while ostensibly a bombardment, was in fact the accumulation of racial insults and harassment Logan had to bear".

Nevertheless, Janken has provided us with a beautifully sensitive portrait of a second-tier African American intellectual and activist whose contributions to his times and our own had been previously ignored.

Vernon J. Williams, Jr.  
Purdue University

**Basil Johnston. *Ojibway Tales*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) 188 pp., \$9.00 paper.**

Moose Meat Point Indian Reserve is the home of about seven hundred Ojibway in Canada. Intended as "an amusing account of Indian-white man relationships," Basil Johnston's *Ojibway Tales* presents twenty-two true stories of mishaps and confusion resulting from Ojibway and white people's inexperience with or misunderstanding of each other's culture. Indeed many of the tales are quite amusing, poking gentle fun at Ojibway and white man alike, but often the humor is that of slapstick comedy—the foolishness of the characters is the reason we laugh *at* rather than *with* them. On the back cover, it is suggested that both Ojibway and the whites are "gently satirized," but often that which is here termed "gentle" actually becomes off-putting to the reader. The stories range in quality, some of the tales are only minimally humorous or entertaining,