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*The Living and the Dead: A Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans.*  
"Yankee City Series," Vol. 5. By W. Lloyd Warner. New Haven,  
Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1959. Pp. xii + 528. \$7.50.

This is the fifth and last volume in the "Yankee City Series," a group of sociological studies by W. Lloyd Warner and collaborators that were begun in 1941; it is probably the most tantalizing volume for philosophers. Throughout this series the techniques and reflective approaches developed by anthropologists for remote and primitive societies are turned on ourselves. The result in the present volume is a work which is extremely rich for an American sociological study, sparse in statistics—although there are a few charts—but rewarding in insights.

Contemporary discussions of the symbol and symbolization take place in an area where philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and language studies actively meet, and where the lines of demarcation between these subjects become very thin. The structure of this book is venturesome and masterful, carrying the reader—not without appropriate effort on his part—from the particularity of "Biggy Muldoon—a Political Hero," the first chapter of the book, to a last chapter, highly abstract and generalized, on "The Structure of Non-Rational Thought." Any adequate theoretical treatment of symbols must rest on observant and meditative familiarity with the complex facts of concrete symbolic usage—and this demands much more than the ability to wedge an occasional example into a doctrinaire discussion. Professor Warner has succeeded admirably in spanning the distance between the concrete and the abstract poles, and in doing so has brought home the fact that human activities which are ordinarily not interpreted as symbolic in cast but rather as cold, down-to-earth, matter-of-fact, businesslike, calculating, and "hard-boiled," are often performed for reasons which are highly, if not primarily, symbolic.

The author's choice of political activity as a point of departure in his consideration of symbolism is canny and effective. For in a democracy, perhaps more than in any other form of society, politics, from party convention to campaign personalities, is an elaborate traffic in symbols.

From the politics of the typical Yankee City which he is analyzing, Warner moves to a consideration of its ritualization of the past, the items in its past history which it likes to recall in its civic pageants and the ones it likes to leave out, and then on to the symbolic life of associations and the symbolic relations of the living and the dead. Here Memorial Day ceremonies and activities centering around cemeteries, together with Abraham Lincoln's curiously sacral role (the people unified in war and death) are the objects of fascinating and circumstantial study. The treat-

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ment of sacred symbol systems in the next part of the book becomes more abstract, although references to concrete items in Yankee City behavior continue with fair frequency. The Protestant cult of the masculine and abstract, and its antipathy to the feminine, chthonic, or sexual in religious symbolism, is taken up in great detail; and the Catholic attitude, which incorporates both femininity and sublimated sexual symbolism into religious service, is treated even more fully.

The section on marriage and on its correlative, consecrated virginity, relies much more on Catholic belief, teaching, and behavior, than on Protestant, for the good reason that in Protestantism generally these things have much less symbolic resonance. Here the treatment of the Church and the individual soul as the bride of Christ, of the mystical marriage in the investiture of religious, of the dual role of the priest (as individual, feminine with the rest of the Church, the Bride of Christ; as an *alter Christus*, masculine), and of Mary, the Virgin Mother, is exceptionally well done. The study of the symbolic structure of the sacred year, of the liturgy in general (Dietrich von Hildebrand is among the interpreters drawn on here), and of the Sacrifice of the Mass in particular, is sensitive and profound. Writing as a sociologist, Warner makes a great many points of intense interest to theologians. All the symbolic items—Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish as well—he treats, moreover, not as separate, isolated phenomena but as integral to the Yankee City psyche, for this book is cut from the whole American cloth.

Concerning Warner's contrast between "oral Protestantism and visual Catholicism" one might suggest that, while Protestantism does typically emphasize the oral to the virtual exclusion of the visual, Catholicism is not so much purely visual as visual-and-oral, at least in principle. Its characteristic is interaction of the oral with the material visible world. The Catholic sacraments without exception have a "form" which is oral (or in the case of matrimony virtually oral), plus "matter" which is for the most part visible and tangible.

The section of this book most immediately interesting to philosophers is doubtless the last, concerned with what Warner calls "symbolic life." Here the crucial point that symbols cannot be interpreted by studying individuals in isolation is documented and reinforced in a great many ways. It is difficult to see how one person alone, outside a social context (if such a person can ever be imagined), could even devise a symbol and hence how he could think at all or come to a reflective knowledge of his own existence. From this point of view, the study of human cognition itself involves the study of sociology; and works such as Warner's, like those of anthropologists such as Malinowski and of linguists such as Sapir or Whorf, constitute philosophical source books.