

## Student Cultures

**Campus Life.** Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present. HELEN LEFKOWITZ HOROWITZ. Knopf, New York, 1987. xviii, 330 pp., illus. \$24.95.

In *Campus Life*, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz attempts nothing less than a history of student cultures on American college campuses from colonial days to the present. This ambitious undertaking was spurred by a desire to understand the perplexing students of the 1980s—those overly serious, professionally oriented, grade-conscious, yet still oddly anintellectual young people who seem to predominate on college campuses today. Despite the radical transformations higher education has undergone over the past 200-odd years, Horowitz argues that student life has also been characterized by continuities—and that we have much to learn about the present by studying them.

One of Horowitz's most important contributions lies in her insistence that student cultures are not—and have never been—monolithic. From the start, students from different social backgrounds have attended different types of colleges with different goals in mind, and these differences have shaped the cultures they formed. Horowitz sets forth three "ideal types" of student cultures that have characterized life on American college campuses: the "college man," the "outsider," and the "rebel." The first was forged by the sons of the well-to-do in the college revolts of the late 18th and early 19th century. Protesting against the apparent irrelevance of the classical curriculum to their own lives and the interference of college authorities in their private affairs, these men opposed the lessons taught in official classes and organized as an alternative the "extracurriculum," to promote the development of characteristics that would be of use in their future lives. Studiousness was frowned upon and covert opposition to faculty demands was encouraged; "character," leadership, "style," and the competitive spirit—seen as the antithesis of what the faculty rewarded—were trumpeted instead. The "taming" of the extracurriculum (of which fraternities were the epitome) in the early 20th century, when colleges and universities moved to bring it under their purview, failed to quench completely their original spirit.

Not all students participated in those early revolts; those who stood by silently, or

actively sided with their teachers, became the core of Horowitz's second type of student culture: the "outsiders." Usually from much poorer backgrounds, these were the young men for whom the lessons and good opinion of the faculty had real meaning: those who were using their college experience as direct preparation for a career, usually teaching or the ministry. They included those who, by reason of background, religion, ethnicity, or ambition, did not fit in with or were not accepted by the "college men." Demeaned at first by the college men as successes in school but failures in life, the outsiders, Horowitz argues, began to turn the tables by the end of the 19th century as colleges evolved into universities, the curriculum modernized, and college education became more clearly linked to labor market outcomes; there are some weaknesses in this argument (especially concerning the relative success rates of students from different class backgrounds during the early part of the 20th century), but it is still intriguing.

The end of the 19th century also brings into existence Horowitz's third type of student culture—the "rebels." These young



"College cartoonists helped create an image of the worldly college man of the 1920s: *Corks and Curls*, 1924, University of Virginia" [From *Campus Life*; University of Virginia Library]

iconoclasts rejected both the flippant anti-intellectual stance of the college man and the instrumentality of the academic orientation of the outsiders; perhaps the only true "intellectuals" (by Horowitz's telling), they found their fulfillment both in the curriculum and in the intellectual, political, and artistic currents of the larger society. Ante-



"Students of the 1970s tried to balance academic seriousness with personal freedom: a University of Texas coed reads the Cliff Notes to *Crime and Punishment* in her carefully decorated room." [From *Campus Life*; Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin]

cedents of the 1960's student radicals, these early rebels strove to forge connections between their college experiences and the larger world outside, corresponding to the changing role of higher education in American life.

Horowitz recognizes that each campus had its own variations of these three cultures, and indeed that among different types of students they were played out in different ways. In a chapter entitled "College women and coeds," she discusses in some detail the "female" versions. Blacks and other minorities (except Jews, who came to be well represented at the types of institutions she focuses on) receive considerably less attention, nor are the special circumstances of junior colleges or commuter schools considered in much detail. There are some clear parallels to be drawn, though, as Howard London's analysis in *The Culture of a Community College* indicates with its discussion of the "oppositional" student culture at a two-year commuter school. Horowitz's analyses apply most directly to four-year residential liberal arts colleges, as she herself states in the preface; one might add to this the caveat that more prestigious schools receive greater coverage, and traditionally black institutions are hardly covered at all.

The ebb, flow, and interplay of these three cultures make fascinating reading. The clearest pictures that emerge from the analysis, however, are those from the 18th and 19th centuries. The period from 1900 to 1960 (approximately) is treated over several chapters, focusing on the three different cultures in turn, as though the period were of a single piece; the reader does not come away with much feeling for how the enormous changes that took place in higher education during this time were reflected (or not) in campus life. Even when specific events are considered (such as the GI Bill, whose impact on campus life Horowitz does discuss), movement of the narrative back and forth in time blurs the analysis of their impact.

The book's final chapters, which focus on the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, raise the perhaps inevitable difficulties of maintaining a historian's distanced objectivity when analyzing situations in which one is (or was) a participant. While Horowitz is frank about her own feelings and involvement in the issues being contended during this time, many readers will no doubt question her telling and interpretation of the events.

It is also in these final chapters that one feels most strongly the absence of an overriding analytical frame for this study. Though Horowitz attends to the roles played by social class, gender, ethnicity, religion, power relations, the economy, and even the psychology of adolescents in influ-

encing the development of these cultures, she does so in a relatively unsystematic way. Narrative is consistently favored over analysis, and few links are explicitly drawn between the forces that motivated the early students to form their cultures and those that animate students today; the discussion in this portion of the book is thus bereft of what could be much of its power, and our historically informed insight into the "New Outsiders," Horowitz's term for those perplexing students of the 1980's, is thereby limited.

The scope of this work is, in the end, both its weakness and its strength. In the spanning of so many years and so much change, potentially important details are sacrificed. The sources that are used change with time—the early students are largely allowed to speak for themselves, via correspondence, autobiography, novels, and official college publications, whereas the 20th-century students are interpreted for us in surveys and interviews conducted by psychologists, sociologists, and others who are often also their teachers. Can one really control for the biases that such differences may introduce? Further, the sheer diversity and change that occur over this time raise serious questions as to the utility of comparing student cultures across this range.

Horowitz straightforwardly acknowledges these problems. Yet she asserts that what can be gained by this task is worth the risks entailed, and upon reflection I agree. This is a useful book that provides an abundance of "raw data" for the musings of professors who want to come to a better understanding of students of any era; indeed, anyone who deals with students can benefit from a thoughtful, but critical, reading of *Campus Life*.

KATHERINE MCCLELLAND  
Department of Sociology,  
Franklin and Marshall College  
Lancaster, PA 17604-3003

## Tried and True Prokaryotes

***Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella typhimurium*.** Cellular and Molecular Biology. FREDERICK C. NEIDHARDT, JOHN L. INGRAHAM, K. BROOKS LOW, BORIS MAGASANIK, MOSELIO SCHAECHTER, and H. EDWIN UMBARGER, Eds. American Society for Microbiology, Washington, DC, 1987. 2 vols. xxvi, 1654 pp., illus., + index. \$85; paper, \$75. To members, \$61; paper, \$51.

This excellent two-volume work is probably the most ambitious and comprehensive survey of the life and times of an organism ever undertaken, comprising the accumulated knowledge of *Escherichia coli*, arguably

the most important organism in the history of biological research, with treatment of *Salmonella typhimurium* as well. To read these volumes carefully is to come away thoroughly versed in most of the essentials of gene regulation, intermediary metabolism, macromolecular structure and function, and cell physiology. The pervading theme of the books is the interplay of genetics, biochemistry, and physiology in building up a detailed description of bacteria. Most of the authors discuss the genetic background and history of the particular subset of *E. coli* functions they are addressing, as well as describing the biochemical characteristics of the gene products. Readers who are relatively unfamiliar with the mass of detail accruing from work with *E. coli* will be well rewarded by a browse through these volumes as a means of becoming acquainted with the most complete paradigm available for the study of any organism.

The two volumes are divided into six parts and 104 chapters. Part 1 describes molecular architecture and assembly of cell components. It begins at the most basic chemical level, with the composition of *E. coli* in terms of masses and numbers of various common macromolecules as well as soluble components such as amino acids, nucleotides, lipids, and so forth. A further nine chapters describe structural aspects of the cell envelope, nucleoid, and ribosomes. The intention, presumably, is to set the general descriptive framework of the organism whose details we are to discover in subsequent sections.

Part 2 is the longest in the books. Headed Metabolism and General Physiology, it is divided into four sections and 42 chapters. Here is truly everything you wanted to know about intermediary metabolism, biosynthesis of small molecule building blocks, formation and processing of polymers, and the utilization of energy for cell activities. Most of the chapters are exhaustive, some stopping just short of satiety. Their quality is variable; some concentrate on biochemical details to the detriment of genetic aspects, some make excellent use of tables that relate genetic to biochemical information, and some lay out chemical pathways and models of regulation more clearly than others. I found the chapters by Maloney ("Energized membrane"), Reitzer and Magasanik ("Ammonia assimilation and amino acid biosynthesis"), and Neuhaard and Nygaard ("Purines and pyrimidines") to be outstanding examples of organization and clarity.

The third section of part 2 contains ten chapters describing the heart of macromolecular synthesis in bacteria: DNA replication, protein synthesis, DNA and RNA processing and modification systems, lipo-