

Summary

BARBARA LEWICKA (University of Silesia, Katowice) / The Indiana Murals. A study of the work in sociological terms

The article aims to juxtapose the aspects of Thomas H. Benton's murals *A Social History of the State of Indiana*, known as *The Indiana Murals*, with the classic sociological monograph of *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* by Robert and Hellen Lynds. Benton's murals were created for the Chicago World Fair in 1933; the Lynds published their mid-1920 research report in 1929. Both works show the Midwest social world, recognized by those authors as exemplary of the entire United States. The classics constitute an important socio-historical testimony and a valuable source of knowledge – among others, about the 1920s. Moreover, they should be treated as a representation of the collective mentality characteristic of the period of their creation. In this analysis, the work of sociologists is a reference point for the rendition of Indiana's vision proposed by the artist. By indicating the similarities and differences between the positions of Benton and the Lynds, the past is reconstructed and the social nature of the "Long 1920s", with a focus on the Roaring Twenties, is discussed.