

# Humanities

## *Before the Machine—1970*

Transylvania, where the late Dr. Frankenstein lived and worked, is inhabited by sturdy peasants and honest shopkeepers who wear *lederhosen* and felt fedoras with little brushes tucked into the hatbands. Despite the soupy fog that clothes the misshapen branches of the hideous trees in this dismal mountain area 364 days a year, the natives are a generally sunny, happy lot—except when, inexplicably, a light shows in a high window of the abandoned castle on the crag. Then they cross themselves, down a *schnaps* and implore the protection of St. Irmgard. As the scene opens, wind and rain lash through the night at the tiny railroad station, where a train is just pulling in. Forewarned, the mayor and the town council huddle together under the station's dripping eaves as a single passenger alights. Yes, their worst fears are confirmed. Imperious in gesture, disdainful in mien, Savile Row from cape to cordovans, it is Basil Rathbone, son of Frankenstein, returned to the boonies for the key to the castle so he can look through dear old Dad's effects.

Thus late-late-show geography. Readers who came to maturity since the early 1930's, when the Balkans drew as many headlines as Cambodia does now, may be surprised to learn that there actually was a Transylvania. Formerly a province of considerable historic interest, the name now survives to denote the southern section of the Carpathian mountains, a range reaching down into northern Rumania from Czechoslovakia and Russia. And if the natives have no castles to unlock, no dread secrets to guard, they have some quiet tales to tell that the outside, technological world would do well to listen to.

That, at any rate, is the argument of Christopher Williams, instructor in industrial design at the Cleveland Institute of Art. Three years ago, he took his wife Charlotte and his pre-school son to Europe, bought a camper, and set out on a 15-month journey that took them from Morocco and Libya in Africa through eastern Europe to Lapland, the region above the Arctic Circle that includes the northernmost parts of Scandinavia and the northwest shoulder of Russia.

The Williamses' trek, obviously, was no routine tourist jaunt. They avoided the cities and the merely picturesque rural areas to seek out what Williams calls "indigenous designers"—blacksmiths, ship-build-

ers, farmers and householders who must design and build their dwellings and tools with the materials at hand and without the aid of modern machinery, either because their remoteness cuts them off from technology or they lack the means to obtain and use it. And what specifically interested Williams about these people was the ingenuity with which they managed to live *with* their environment rather than—as is the case in developed nations—triumphing *over* it.

Those of us who live in modern nations can very largely ignore our environment. We are no longer forced to adapt ourselves to terrain and climate, nor restricted to the materials that a grudging nature chooses to make available within 20 or 50 miles of our residences. Steel and glass shut out the rain, snow and wind; air conditioning and central heating allow us to dictate our own temperatures; electricity and fuel power machines—presses and drills, lathes and winches, tractors and jack-hammers—that enable us to seize from the earth what is not readily granted, and to bend to human designs the timber, stone, and metal which fight to preserve inanimate but nonetheless real personalities of their own.

Not so those who live in areas where the gospel of the machine has yet to be preached—even in 1970.

"The machine society is still not universal," wrote Williams in a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

"Another half of the world still lives outside its prejudices. They have concepts of form and function that have been developed in their own land. They are shepherds who design and build their own sheep-folds, fishermen who style their own boats, farmers who create their own tools for their own soil and blacksmiths who ally with them, villagers who make their own houses and put together their towns. Their life is clamped hard onto their environment and they must ride it through every capricious turn and fall. They must meter themselves and their work in sizes that nature can digest. They must build a religion on nature's whims. They must know her nuances, for their ways are not strong enough to do otherwise to survive."

This celebration of self-sufficient folk may sound like another ho-hum paean to the simple life, a prelude to a cocktail-party assertion by the advertising executive that, if he had it to do over again, he'd be a hardware clerk in Thompson's Junction and

really *live*.

Yet Williams advocates no return to the caves. He is a frank admirer of modern technology. But he thinks that, precisely because machines enable modern man to ignore the environmental restraints that pre-industrial man must respect, he is both damaging his environment and making extremely naive use of the technology at his disposal.

By contrast, Williams believes, while the methods of the "indigenous designers" are primitive, their use of materials is highly sophisticated. Consider:

- The Transylvania highlands are windy most of the year, but the character of the wind varies. During the hot summers, a cooling wind blows from Yugoslavia; during the winters, a damp wind comes down from the Russian forest to the north. The natives shingle their houses with a coarse-grained spruce that reacts to moisture—swelling with the wet north wind in winter to seal the houses tight, contracting during the summer to allow the cooling breezes to pass through the shingles and cool the living spaces.
- In parts of Sicily, one of the major impediments to plowing is the stickiness of the soil in spring. It builds up under the moldboard—the curved piece above the plow that shoves the rising earth back into a furrow—like slush under an automobile fender, forcing the tiller to stop frequently and scrape off the accumulated earth. So local tool-builders make the moldboards of lemon-wood, which exudes a natural oil that permits the implement to slide easily through the soil.
- Shipwrights in Egypt, lacking machinery to twist wood into any shape they desire, search along the Nile for a tree that has fallen but still lives by turning its trunk to hold the branches vertical. The shipwrights take advantage of the curvature of the trunk, laying it for their bow. "This gives them a very strong bow because, since the grain of the wood lies parallel to the structure, it has determined the shape."
- Householders in the Carpathian mountains, finding better things to do with heat than waste it up a chimney, roof their homes with a V-shaped thatch of straw that sometimes rises twice as high as the living space. The smoke from their fireplaces constantly seethes through the thatch, simultaneously curing meat stored in the attic, insulating the house against cold, and killing any bacteriological action in the straw—so that these quaint-looking roofs, straight out of a Walt Disney version of *Rumpelstiltskin*, can last up to 200 years.

What, if anything, is the lesson in all this for industrial Man?

All kinds of lessons. Respect for materials, for one. If you lack the machinery to bop a material on the head and make it do what you want it to do, you learn to listen to the material itself and heed what Williams calls its "*vernacular*."

"Look at this," he said, tapping in gentle despair on

the shiny surface of a Cleveland bar where he and an interviewer had repaired to investigate the vernacular of firewater. "Plastic. But it's made to resemble . . ." he traced the synthetic black grain against the brown background ". . . high-grade cherry. Look at this," he said, patting the armrest surrounding the bar. "Plastic. But made to look like leather.

"Now plastic has a vernacular of its own, an integrity. It's plastic, not wood or leather. Plastic has picked up a bad connotation because it's constantly used to imitate something else. Nobody ever questioned plastic when it was used for telephones, because telephones have always been made of plastic. But this use of plastic is especially a travesty when you consider that it's used to imitate something as warm and natural as wood.

"The vernacular of plastic is difficult to understand; I hope the next generation of industrial designers will sense it.

"Take sheet-metal. The vernacular of sheet-metal is simple, two-dimensional curves—not the complex, three-dimensional curves that you see in automobiles. The model-designers in Detroit work in clay, and they use the vernacular of clay. The trouble is, they translate their clay models into sheet, and they have huge presses that can stamp sheet into any shape they want—even though the stamping violates the vernacular of sheet and tortures it into unnatural forms.

"That's why a five-mile-an-hour bump costs you \$200, because the body-and-fender man has to use a torch to blend in all the torn metal that's forced to go where it doesn't want to go.

"I once saw some automobile models that had been designed by a team whose budget didn't permit presses. So they worked with sheet, not clay, and they developed some very free, flowing, provocative shapes."

Respect for the total economy of an environment is another lesson. "The indigenous designers are simple people working with simple materials," wrote Williams in an article some time ago, "but because mechanization has not given them the freedom to become dishonest and nature has limited their means, they use their material in an economic manner that we, having made the full circle, might consider surprisingly sophisticated."

Twentieth-century America might almost be considered the creation of specialists whom mechanization has freed to become dishonest. Urban developers put up 40-story buildings in the heart of an already-choked city because—being real-estate specialists or steel specialists or finance specialists—they don't have to worry about how all the people who work in that building will park their cars or otherwise arrive at and depart from the place of their employment. Suburban developers spread swimming pools, tennis-courts and single-level dwellings all over the landscape because—being merchants of the wide-open spaces—they don't have to worry about how a city mayor ten miles away will scare up the money to pay the police who will manage the traffic and guard

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## Grant Profiles

### *Saving a Language*

It has been remarked that German is the language to give orders in, Russian the language to swear in, and French the language to make love in. To the degree that any such characterization is accurate, it may be said that Yiddish—as the title of Leo Rosten's best-seller implies—is the language to express joy in.

But it is also a language to express pain in, for it conveys the struggle of the Ashkenaz Jews with one Pharaoh after another since they left Palestine and established their first European communities along the banks of the Rhine, in the 11th and 12th centuries. It is a language to revere God in, as Hebrew is, but also a language to quarrel with God in, as Hebrew is not: how can You call us Your Chosen People, when You let so many bad things happen to us? It is, above all, a peculiarly intimate language, a trait suggested in the Yiddish word for itself: *mame-loshn*, sometimes translated as *mother-tongue*, is more accurately translated *mama-tongue*.

Yiddish is basically German, with large borrowings from Hebrew (including the written characters) and Slavic languages. Developed as a vernacular by the illiterate, it was despised by educated, successful Jews, who mastered the languages of their adopted nations and urged others to abandon this "corrupt German dialect."

Yet Yiddish served the needs of millions of blue-collar Jews, from farmers to thieves. It was a living language, open to adaptation, one that coped with a tragi-comic *now* instead of looking only to a sacred past. As the centuries went on, legends and prayers were written in it, children were taught it, scholars and merchants worked with it. Expressions emerged to reflect the troubled progress of a harried pilgrimage: the Yiddish phrase "a man with an earring" means a man to steer clear of, and derives from the fact that many Cossacks—regular persecutors of Jews—wore a single earring. Yiddish finally came to project a people and to convey a genuine literature that is now a thousand years old.

That literature is threatened today, owing to the destruction of so many Jewish archives during World War II and the tendency of modern Jews to continue to regard Yiddish as dead or embarrassing. Trained lexicographers are rare in any language, but especially in Yiddish, since most of the scholars for whom Yiddish was a mother-tongue were murdered by the Nazis. The survivors are, in the main, elderly

men; if their knowledge is to be ransomed from permanent silence, it must be soon.

Since 1952, a few Jewish scholars have been racing the clock, corresponding with hundreds of volunteers around the world to obtain, classify, define, and find illustrative uses of every Yiddish word used by any Jewish community since the mid-14th century. The first volume of a projected ten-volume Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language appeared in 1962, the second in 1967. As enthusiasm for the GDYL picked up, director Nathan Susskind of the Institute for Yiddish Lexicology at the City College of New York was able to add staff. Dr. Susskind expects to have the third volume out this year and to increase the pace thereafter "if we get extra outside support."

The National Endowment for the Humanities has joined the organizations supplying that "outside support," in the belief that the GDYL will one day be indispensable in giving scholars and laymen access to a part of European history that is inseparable from the evolution of Western culture as a whole. In addition, owing to the identity of this rich bubbling language with the troubled but resilient people who spoke it, the GDYL promises to be a "folk-encyclopedia," a work of literature—a dictionary, as a Gentile scholar phrased it, in which one can "look up the meaning of a word and find the vital meaning of a world."

### *Soft Glow in Georgia*

Like most novice teachers, Eliot Wigginton found it difficult to interest his students in the subject he had been hired to teach. For his 150 Appalachian high-schoolers in Rabun Gap, Georgia, English was "as remote, meaningless, and useless as a course in the decoration of subway platforms."

Unlike most novices, however, Wigginton found a way to give his subject both pertinence and interest. The elders of the mountainous area around Rabun Gap had always made their own soap, dishes, blankets, log cabins, wagons, toys, and whisky; had faith-healed, planted by the signs of the zodiac, and slaughtered by the stage of the moon. They had, in short, been self-sufficient.

Yet questions to his classes proved to Wigginton that "they knew almost *nothing* of the way their grandparents had made it in a very hostile world." Moreover, they didn't feel any need to know; with American teen-agers everywhere, the youngsters of

Rabun Gap share the televised wisdom of a technological society where everyone does his own, specialized, interdependent thing and buys the rest. The rugged savvy of the mountains was no longer passed to the young. "The oral transmission of culture stopped with this generation."

Wigginton put his kids on the track of that culture. With jeep, tape-recorders and cameras, they scouted the hills—and found an initially skeptical, finally delighted bunch of senior citizens who opened up and told their stories: Aunt Arie, on life in general and the cooking of hogs' heads in particular; Les Waldrop, on a lifetime of distinguished coon-hunting; Harley Thomas, in his seventies, who hadn't handled an ax in years but showed a student-interviewer how to cut a dovetail notch that holds a log cabin together; and an unnamed lady who had been swindled out of much of her hand-made furniture by an antique dealer who "can pray a good prayer . . . you never heard such a prayer come out'a nobody in your life as come out'a that man."

The youngsters transcribed the mountaineers' recorded reminiscences and detailed, step-by-step instructions, raised \$400 from local merchants, and—in March, 1967—put out their first, 600-copy run of *Foxfire*.

While Wigginton has obtained NEH grants to buy such supplies as film and sound tape, the magazine is in other respects self-supporting. Its current circulation of 4,000 poses no threat to *Life* or *New Yorker*, but *Foxfire* has caused quite a stir in the world beyond Rabun Gap; it now has paying subscribers in all 50 states and in 16 foreign countries, and has earned enthusiastic comment from *Saturday Review*, *New Republic*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and 40 other publications. After seeing the first issue, the Smithsonian, the University of Georgia, and the State University of New York at Buffalo requested copies of all the tape-recordings that compose the magazine's raw material. And last August, Wigginton signed a contract with Doubleday for a book based on *Foxfire*.

Perhaps most important, the process of obtaining material, editing it, seeing it through the press, and distributing it has given Rabun Gap's students a new interest in their academic work. Of the 12 seniors who composed *Foxfire's* first editorial board, 11 went on to college. High schools in four Georgia and North Carolina communities hope to establish similar publications, and three Rabun Gap students recently spent a week in New York, helping Puerto Rican students at a Lower East Side high school found a new journal called *The Fourth Street i*. Now, with the help of a former Vista volunteer whose salary will be paid by NEH, Wigginton's students are planning to guide a group of American Indian students starting a magazine to salvage *their* grandparents' knowledge and ways.

The name of the magazine comes from a passage in *Huckleberry Finn*: ". . . Tom said we got to have *some* light to dig by, and a lantern makes too much,

and might get us into trouble; what we must have was a lot of them rotten chunks that's called fox-fire, and just makes a soft kind of a glow when you lay them in a dark place."

*Foxfire* comes out four times a year. You can get a soft kind of a glow by sending four dollars to the magazine at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, Rabun Gap, Georgia, 30568.

## *The Cowboy as Truth*

The good-natured hero has tried to avoid trouble. He has ignored insult, swallowed provocation, abided the growing contempt of the townspeople—but no longer. Gary Cooper bites off one last toothpick. More in sorrow than in anger, Alan Ladd as Shane and Glenn Ford as any of a number of shy homesteaders with a secret past go to the trunk hidden in the barn, dig underneath the seed catalogues, and pull out the burlap-wrapped gunbelt they'd vowed never to wear again.

The clock ticks. The sun is hot and high, the dirt street empty. Grace Kelly, Jean Arthur, Yvonne de Carlo, and Miss Kitty wait fearfully behind the curtains in the upstairs room over Delmonico's while Frankie Laine, an improbable Greek chorus of one, wails out the motivation underlying the impending conflict: "For I must face a man who hates me/Or lie a coward/A craven coward/Or lie a coward in my grave." And in the dark, long saloon, alone at a back table, pulling a black glove snug over just one hand, The Man waits. He looks like Jack Palance—but we all know he's really Satan.

The world may end with a whimper some day, but Hollywood knows it must end with a bang tonight if the formula is to keep bringing 'em back for more. So did hundreds of pulp-writers who churned out the spare sagas of a West that never existed: Zane Grey, Owen Wister, Clarence Mulford and their modern-day successors who continue to reduce the complex, ancient confrontation of good and evil to one violent death in the afternoon.

Most of it was blarney, of course. Mulford, who converted a fictitious cowpoke named Bill Cassidy into a legend by giving him a limp and calling him Hopalong, didn't visit the West until 17 years after he had begun writing about it—from Brooklyn. The early cattletowns were indeed violent, but the shoot-outs were mainly economic, alcoholic, or cathartic in nature; rarely did morality get into the act.

But blarney or not, according to Professor Philip Durham of UCLA's English department, this simplistic view of a colorful part of our history has powerfully influenced American attitudes toward law, violence, morality, love, patriotism, and even physical and mental illness. "Not only do millions of Americans see themselves as the personification of the cowboy myth-hero," writes Durham after years of research, correspondence, and interviews, "but throughout Europe and much of the world, the American is thought



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the cars of commuters who make their livings in the city but export the proceeds back to Hummingbird Vale. And flowing into both kinds of community is an endless train of consumer goods clad in plastic, glass, aluminum foil and corrugated paper which no designer has to figure out how to get rid of.

Indigenous designers, on the other hand, have to respect the inner laws of a non-specialist, closed social system, because both producers and consumers share the same home town. The confusion, the mess, the waste of land and materials and power that subtract from the life of one subtract from the life of all.

But the final and perhaps most important lesson for Williams is one that, as a teacher of industrial designers, he hopes to pass on to his students.

"I would like them to recognize that they have a social role in addition to a technical role. I want them to understand the materials they use as well as the significance of what they do. I hope they will realize, as they design the prototype of something or other, that their single design will be turned into thousands and millions of things just like it.

"People whose work will affect other people should have a social conscience."

Williams has already drawn upon his 15-month trip to produce articles, speeches, and a course for industrial design students that will become part of the Cleveland Institute's curriculum next fall. In the hope of extending his findings and conclusions beyond his own classes, he obtained from NEH a Younger Humanist Summer Stipend that enabled him to devote last summer to a book. Williams has completed the first draft; Mrs. Williams, married to a fellow with a keen eye for the economy of his own environment, not only took most of the 250 photos that will accompany the text, but is now typing the manuscript.

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of as cowboy." A psychiatrist has found many Freudian symbols commonly used in analysis in the cowboy's costume, gun, and horse; a theologian has wished that sin would take visible form as the bad guy so it could be dropped in the dust at sundown, and a Swedish critic saw *High Noon* as "the clearest statement of America's foreign policy." Not only literary critics but historians, MD's and economists have noted the importance of the popular Western in American thinking and tried to relate it to their separate disciplines.

Durham and a colleague have already translated their investigations into books, articles, lectures and exhibits. They have developed a course in American Popular Literature that attracts about 300 students each semester, and their *Adventures of the Negro Cowboys* has gone into a second printing.

Now they hope to synthesize the views of other scholars from other disciplines, bringing a comprehensive perspective to the relation between popular Western literature and the contemporary American's view of himself. Such a synthesis is important, Durham believes, because in a democracy it is the majority who determine a nation's course. "The masses read and are influenced by popular literature, not *belles lettres*. The country's heroes—mythical to be sure—come from popular literature.

"The investigators are convinced that in order for the people of the United States to understand themselves, they must understand their mythic past as well as their historic past. The mythic past may be even more important than the historical past, for what people believe happened is their truth."



TWO TELEVISION PROGRAMS produced with Endowment support are scheduled for broadcast over the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in early June: On June 7 at 9:00 p.m. "... and the meek shall inherit the earth," a program on the history and culture of the Menominee tribe of Wisconsin, will be shown. Three days later on June 10 at 8:30 p.m. the National Education Television Playhouse Biography series will feature "The Wright Brothers (Orville and Wilbur)" with brothers Stacey and James Keach portraying the two flight pioneers.

On June 24, a film about the Cherokee Indians, also supported by the Endowment and broadcast last year as "Trail of Tears," will be rerun as "NET Playhouse Biography: John Ross." The film, which deals with the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia to Oklahoma in the 1830's, features Western singer Johnny Cash in the lead role.

(Note: Local broadcast times may vary; viewers should check with their local educational stations for the specific dates and times the above programs will be presented in their area.)



## A Reading List on Man and his Environments

This is the second reading list in the Endowment sponsored series "Good Reading in the Humanities." The first, on the American Revolution, appeared in the last issue of Humanities. Comments on the series are invited.

The reading list on *Man and His Environments* appearing below was developed by a panel consisting of James L. Aldrich (panel chairman), the Conservation Foundation; Fred J. Clifton, Baltimore Model Cities Program; Henry David, Division of Behavioral Sciences, National Academy of Sciences; Madison E. Judson, Public Broadcasting Environment Center; John P. Milton, The Conservation Foundation; William E. Stafford, Consultant in Poetry, Library of Congress.

### The Subject

Environmental quality is emerging as a major concern for individuals and a growing issue for society. Though new in its intensity, this concern has a long history in man's understanding of his relationship with his surroundings. Threatened by increasing population and demands of a technological society, the environment is coming to be regarded not as raw material to be indiscriminately mined and molded to man's desires but rather as a fragile sustainer of life—a life in which man moves with his fellow creatures and all the elements in an attitude of mutual support.

This new respect for the natural world is leading individuals to question not only the role government should play in regulating societal use of natural resources but also the traditional values and life styles of most Americans. Thus, changes in our attitude toward the physical environment may well suggest profound changes in attitudes towards the social environment and towards our fellowmen.

Here is a list of ten books chosen to interweave ideas exploring the potential joy of man in his world. The selections just touch the wealth of materials available and are intended to lead to further thought and exploration. More questions come from the seeking, and the book list opens outward.

### Good Reading

THE MACHINE IN THE GARDEN: TECHNOLOGY AND THE PASTORAL IDEAL IN AMERICA. Leo Marx, *New York: Oxford University Press. 1964. 365 pp.*

This is a good literary history that explores the American attitude toward the natural world as it is treated in literature and art. It highlights a basic conflict of values in American culture that we must comprehend if we are to achieve individual and collective environments of desirable quality. It also nicely complements some of the themes in other books on this list. The last two lines of the book help show why it is listed here:

... we require new symbols of possibility, and although the creation of this symbol is in some measure the responsibility of artists, it is in greater measure the responsibility of society. The machine's sudden entrance into the garden presents a problem that ultimately belongs not to art but to politics.

THE AMERICAN ENVIRONMENT: READINGS IN THE HISTORY OF CONSERVATION. Roderick Nash. *Reading: Addison-Wesley. 1968. 222 pp. Available in paperback.*

An engaging collection of 36 readings selected from materials published from 1832 to 1967, this work provides an historical perspective on the development of American conservation and helps to illustrate the distinctions between a concept of man in his environment as opposed to a concept of man against the environment. Particularly noteworthy is the shift from an emphasis on wildlife and wilderness preservation to the questions focusing on man and the quality of life in all settings. A useful annotated bibliography is included.

THE MEASURE OF MAN. Joseph Wood Krutch. 1954. *New York: Grosset and Dunlap. 261 pp. Available in paperback.*

Like vintage wine this warmly written exploration of the unique, unquantifiable qualities of man seems even better now than when it was first published 17 years ago. The author believes that we glorify the measurable at the expense of the humanistic or immeasurable elements of mankind. The reader will gain insights into the problems of a society that quests after environmental quality with balances, yardsticks, and conventional estimates of the 'good life.'

AMERICA'S CHANGING ENVIRONMENT. Edited by Roger Revelle and Hans H. Landsberg. *Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1970. 298 pp. Available in paperback.*

A collection of papers which comprehensively and excitingly challenges the traditional approach to problem solving and technology. This collection views man in nature yet avoids the trap of using technology as the villain. Developed around such subjects as Ecology as an Ethical Science, Economics and Politics, The Humane City, and Playgrounds for People, the book probes the causes, dimensions and possible resolutions of environmental distortions.

PERCEPTION AND CHANGE: PROJECTIONS FOR SURVIVAL. John R. Platt. *Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 1970. 178 pp.*

John Platt, a humanist and a scientist, has in this book created a status report on what has happened and what is happening in relation to his conception of man's need to "see" and then to "shape" what he sees. Man's need for choice is recognized and reinforced through the author's presentation of more



alternatives than one person could follow in a lifetime. His discussions of the collective responsibilities for decision making and the need for a mobilization of scientists are particularly provocative.

**ENVIRONMENT: A CHALLENGE TO MODERN SOCIETY.** Lynton Keith Caldwell. *New York: Natural History Press. 1970. 251 pp.*

The complex unity of the social and physical environment is examined here in terms of the new patterns of individual behavior and social action that are needed if man is to deal with increasing environmental problems. The author contends that the political and emotional climate are conducive to positive governmental action, both in shaping the human environment and in controlling man's attitudes toward the environment.

**SCIENCE, CONFLICT AND SOCIETY: READINGS FROM SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.** Introductions by Garrett Hardin. *San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company. 1969. 366 pp. Available in paperback.*

The major burden of this book is a description of man's dilemmas and of his tenacity. The papers, letters and reviews presented here are essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the ecology of man and his environments. These 47 selections cover five major sections: Scientists and Society, The Roots of Social Behavior, Population and Heterogeneity, What Price Progress?, and War: The Anguish of Renunciation.

**THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE.** Don Fabun. *Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1970. 190 pp. Available in paperback.*

This book comprises six essays dealing with the forces of technological and cultural change that are affecting our worlds. Don Fabun does not believe in providing a single answer to a single question. Instead he prefers to develop fields of questions.

The material is engagingly and handsomely presented and can be read all at once or in bits chosen almost at random. It abounds in marginal quotes (from Omar Khayyam, Adam Smith, Sherlock Holmes, and T. S. Eliot, among others) which can also lead the reader to still other sources for understanding his overall question: "what if some of the things that could happen actually do happen?"

**THE MYTH OF THE MACHINE: THE PENTAGON OF POWER.** Lewis Mumford. *New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1970. 435 pp.*

Reading this last book in Lewis Mumford's series on technology and society is like taking part in an erudite discussion which is both gentle and exciting. It affirms man's ability to direct rather than be directed by the environments he lives in. It invites us to sense our own capacity for growth and our capacity to reverse developments which adversely affect our individual and group lives. Mumford believes in technology as a formative part of human culture, but he also believes in William James' perception that the

human person has always been the "starting point of new efforts." The extensive bibliography should encourage further individual exploration.

**LIVING ON THE EARTH.** Alicia Bay Laurel. *Berkeley: Bookworks. 1970. 193 pp. Available in paperback.*

Catalogs used to be called wish books and were just that: wish books for material things. Now there is a new family of wish books. They are wish books of life styles. Some are literally catalogues, some are collections of poetry, some are diaries and 'you-can-see-it-now' reports. This book is an outstanding member of that new family. It serves as a how-to-do-it book for city and country dweller alike (at least vicariously). It is in a notebook/sketchbook format—and it's fun to read.

A sense of joy and excitement about life runs all the way through the book. Its positive affirmation of life for man in and of nature may not be as meaningful for men in groups, let alone in urban gatherings, but that remains for the reader to interpret.

### *Suggestions for Discussion*

1. William James once remarked that those who are concerned with making the world more healthy had best start with themselves, and Voltaire, before him, had suggested in *Candide* that individuals should tend their own garden. Would our environment improve if most people followed this advice?
2. How might man's struggle to overcome nature or to separate himself from it be interpreted either as a fear of losing his identity or as a fear of discovering his own natural limitations?
3. America has been characterized as a matrix of real and potential alternatives, offering fulfillment of each man's aspirations. Could the growing public environmental concern result in a reduction of these alternatives? Is the concern only anguish over the loss of a dream of "what might have been or could be?"
4. How can the demand for increased governmental regulation of actions affecting the environment be reconciled with traditional American values, such as the desire for continued material progress and an ever higher standard of living? the desire to increase the share of disadvantaged groups in the "good things" of life? the fear of increasing bureaucratization and government interference in individual decision-making?
5. To what extent were the "good old days" of environmental purity a myth not justified by the facts? How have these myths been used politically, commercially, personally? Could present environmental philosophies represent a folklore of the future?
6. If, as it is claimed, technology has produced our present environmental problems, why do we believe that it can solve them?
7. Are there ways in which you can, at one time, be a creator, user, consumer and improver of environments?

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## NEH Notes

PRESIDENT NIXON has requested increased funding for each of the two endowments comprising the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities. According to the fiscal 1972 budget presented to the Congress in January the National Endowment for the Humanities would receive \$26.5 million in regular funds plus \$3.5 million to match private gifts. (For fiscal 1971 the Endowment received slightly over \$11 million in regular funds plus \$2.5 million in matching funds.)

APPLICATION DEADLINE for NEH Senior Fellowships (for use during the 1972-73 academic year) is June 21. Information and application forms may be obtained from: Division of Fellowships and Stipends, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES at its February meeting reviewed 1,967 applications for Endowment support and recommended 501 for grants amounting to \$12.1 million in either outright or gift and matching funds.

SOON AFTER the announcement that copies of the *Civilisation* film series were available for student and public showings by colleges and universities, institutions booked up the films through the 1970-71 and most of the 1971-72 school year. Summer 1971 booking dates are still open. For information, write Extension Services, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565. (Acquisition and distribution of the series is being made possible by matching NEH and Xerox Corporation funds.)

THE FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT of the Endowment, covering fiscal year 1970, is now available for 50 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

