

# HARBINGERS



This is the first appearance of the "Harbingers" section. A harbinger is a forerunner presaging or signaling the approach of an event. All readers of the Manoa Journal are invited to submit full reviews, as well as book notes, for possible inclusion in "Harbingers." In doing so, please provide the complete facts of publication and indicate the likely audience or audiences for the book you are reviewing.

## INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Donald R. Browne. *Electronic Media and Indigenous Peoples: A Voice of Our Own?* 1st edition. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1996. 301 pages. Glossary, "Note on Sources," endnotes, bibliography, index.

In the concluding paragraph of his final chapter ("Past, Present, and Future"), Browne writes, "The future for indigenous electronic media, then, looks cautiously bright. Put another way, the media have matured to the point where they will lose their foothold only if indigenous peoples themselves neglect or abuse them. That does not mean that majority culture support--financial, moral, or political--is no longer needed" (page 243)--V.K.P.

## RELIGION

Wayne Teasdale and George Cairns. (eds.). *The Community of Religions: Voices and Images of the Parliament of the World's Religions*. New York: Continuum, 1996.

The contributions deal very heavily with the futures of religions, leading off with a very important speech by Gerald O. Barney (which I regularly distribute to my Political Science 171 class for discussion), and then two other sections, one titled "Models for the Future" and the other "Visions for the Future." Reviewed in *Future Survey* (January 1997), *The Community of Religions* is a valuable resource--Jim Dator.

## ADJUSTING TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Jerry N. Luftman. (ed.) 1996. *Competing in the Information Age: Strategic Alignment in Practice*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. xviii, 414 pp. With "Preface," bio- data on co-authors, endnotes, figures, glossary, appendixes, index. ISBN 0-19-509016-0.

"The Strategic Alignment Model.....identifies four key elements--business strategy, information technology strategy, business infrastructure, and information technology infrastructure that need to be managed in tandem to derive full value from the investment in information technology. It provides a systematic way of planning a successful business strategy with the necessary information systems to support it" (p. v.)."

In their "Introduction," the editors write, "Too often,.....[c]ompanies raced to have state-of-the art systems without considering their impact on the rest of the business" (p. 3). That claim, in a sense, is the real starting point for this edited collection of a dozen chapters and two appendixes. Immediately after reading Chapter 1 of the Strategic Alignment Model, those new to the subject might well immediately proceed to reading James B. Thomas and Rocki-Lee Dewitt's "Appendix A: Strategic Alignment Research and Practice: A Review and Research Agenda" (pp. 385-403) --V.K.P.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FUTURES

Ravi Batra. *The Great American Deception: What Politicians Won't Tell You About Our Economy and Your Future*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1996. x, 278 pages. Figures, endnotes, appendix, index. ISBN 0-471-16556-5 (cloth).

The following notes give some of the flavor of a new book, rather than an exhaustive analysis and critique. A very quick look at Ravi Batra's latest advocacy of economic policies suggests that it is more present-oriented than the title may suggest to some readers

Batra, currently residing in Dallas, Texas, and author of six other books on international trade and finance, is concerned with the "shrinking paychecks and downsizing," as well as "persistent trade deficits." In his view, these and other forces have kept the world in the clutches of a "quiet depression" since 1990" (page 238).

Batra seems favorable to Patrick Buchanan, Richard Gephardt and Ross Perot. Batra's view of Newt Gingrich is somewhat different. (Pat Choate's name is conspicuously absent from the index and endnotes--perhaps because Batra has also written a separate book with recommendations for improving Japan's economic policies!) Indeed, Batra has recommendations for the economic policies of a large number of countries on the planet.

Occasionally, one detects a soft spot in Batra's heart for the policies of the post-World War II Democratic Party. And in his view, Leftwing and Rightwing opponents of NAFTA have already been vindicated. That is, both the party of FDR and Truman, as well as NAFTA opponents, were correctly promoted the welfare of the employed and unemployed working and middle classes.

Batra's Chapter 12 is focused on "A Plan for American and Global Prosperity" (pages 201-238). Batra opposes "monopolistic free trade," proposing, instead, "competitive protectionism," that is, "a combination of high tariffs and robust antitrust or antimonopoly measures" (pages 218-219) as a solution. In Batra's view and if defined exactly as he has, this has worked successfully for every country that has tried it. While the historical precedents for his prescription may well be challenged, one might also ask the following question: To the extent that "competitive protectionism" actually achieved its ostensible ends in the past, does that actually suggest that, if implemented, it will continue to do so in the future?

To be highly speculative and for those intimately familiar with important turn-of-the-century debates among influential European Leftists, some overtones of Batra's book may even resonate with Karl Kautsky's notions of peaceful imperialism. Batra underrates the dangers of war.

Those who are increasingly convinced of the underlying shakiness of the world capitalist economy will find reinforcing data and arguments in *The Great American Deception*. For futurists and whether or not one likes Batra's political bedfellows keeps, the value of a book like Batra's may lie in its subliminal message, namely, that things ain't as healthy as they seem on the surface. That, in turn, may be taken as a caution against blithely projecting trends fifteen or twenty years into the future--V.K.P.

Daniel Yergin and Thane Gustafson. 1995. *Russia 2010 : And What it Means for the World*, The CERA Report [Cambridge Energy Research Associates]. Updated and revised edition. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. xviii, 327 pp. Includes bibliographical references and index

Daniel Yergin and Thane Gustafson completed this updated version of an earlier study in association with CERA (Cambridge Energy Research Associates). Considering the co-authors' apparently intended "mass" or educated-layperson audience, the book's virtue is that it concentrates on scenarios rather than prognostication. The following points emerge from the first two and final two chapters.

While the co-authors acknowledge other alternative futures, they clearly believe that some kind of Russian capitalism is, by far and away, the most likely endstate. They develop at least two scenarios unfolding onto that endstate. If one takes this structuring of the exercise at face value, then there emerges what they might classify as a dystopic scenario and endstate and a eutopic one--ultranationalist and peaceful-capitalist. Social scientists who have read both Lenin's *Imperialism* (1904) and his then-unpublished *Notebooks on Imperialism* will recognize that Yergin and Thane's alternative pathways conform, albeit wearing new clothes to the contours of the classic turn-of-the-century Lenin-Kautsky debate.

Conceptual clarity sometimes takes a beating at the hands of the co-authors engagingly fluid writing style. For example, Daniel Yergin and Thane Gustafson utilize the notion "Russian capitalism" too elastically in referring to what they consider the most likely endstate. Little is gained by acting (writing) as if there were universal agreement on all aspects of what is meant by "capitalism." Indeed, communists, Greens, social democrats, mainstream liberals, free marketing neoconservatives, and libertarians all have their own definitions of capitalism, each of which, unsurprisingly, suits a specific political agenda. Yergin and Gustafson's exercise would have been conceptually tighter if they had explicitly distinguished not only between two pathways but two endstates as well. This is an example of heuristically stimulating elements that one must first tease out before appreciating--V.K.P.

Michael B. Arthur and Denise M. Rousseau (eds.). 1996. *The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. xi, 394 pages. Preface; list of contributors' affiliations; figures; chapter endnotes and references; index. ISBN 0-19-510014-X.

This book may be of interest to faculty mentors giving career advice to undergraduate and graduate students. Interestingly, the terms "college," "university" and "tenure," however, are not entries in the index to *The Boundaryless Career*. Almost all the two-dozen-plus contributors are university professors or researchers--V.K.P.

## SIGHT UNSEEN

Peter F. Drucker. (ed.) 1996. *The Leader of the Future: New, Visions, Strategies, and Practices for the Next Era*. The Drucker Foundation Future Series. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers. 1996.

The editor's track record suggests that this book is worth checking out--V.K.P.

David Hudson. *Rewired*. MacMillan, 1997.

The author's "Digital Dark Ages?" essay in *Honolulu Weekly*, 18-24 December 1996, suggests his book will be a lively if controversial polemic against "cyber-libertarians," the "right wing libertarian techno-elite" and, especially, *Wired* magazine and its founder Louis Rossetto--V.K.P.

Meinolf Dierkes, Ute Hoffman, and Lutz Marz. 1996. *Visions of Technology: Social Institutional Factors Shaping the Development of New Technologies*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 140 pp. ISBN 0-31216053-1. \$59.95 cloth.

"By tracing and questioning the paths of technological progress from their inception to their final results and offshoots," according to the publisher, "this book makes a valuable contribution to understanding the internal processes of technology generation. In the past much time and energy has been devoted to research technology, society, and the effects that technology has had upon society, yet little notice has been given to the very important issue of society's effects upon technology.....It is increasingly important to realize the effects that people and their visions have upon the genesis of technology and thereby on the world around them"--V.K.P.

Douglas Kiel and Euel W. Elliot (editors). 1995. *Chaos Theory in the Social Sciences: Foundations and Applications*. 370 pp. 81 line illustrations, 14 tables. cloth ISBN 0-472-10638-4.

"The contributors to the book," according to the publisher, "show that no single technique can be used to diagnose and describe all chaotic processes and identify the strengths and limitations of a variety of approaches." Contributors include Brian J.L. Berry, Thad Brown, Kenyon B. DeGreene, Dimitrios Dendrinis, Euel Elliott, David Harvey, L. Ted Jaditz, Douglas Kiel, Heja Kim, Michael McBurnett, Michael Reed, Diana Richards, J. Barkley Rosser, Jr., and Alvin M. Saperstein.

Chaos theory has been used and abused. Thus, one wonders what kinds of discussions some of the contributors to *Chaos Theory and the Social Sciences* may have in the aftermath of New York University Professor of Physics Alan Sokal's ironic joke played on the editors of *Social Text* earlier in 1996. Dr. Sokal, hardly a postmodernist, submitted a nonsensically ironic article to *Social Text*. In that article, Sokal later tells us, deliberately wrote gibberish about the history and practice of (mainly) late nineteenth-century and twentieth-century physical science while slavishly interweaving quotes from Derrida, Lacan and the editors of *Social Text* with references to chaos theory. After *Social Text* published Sokal's article, he couldn't resist revealing his subterfuge to the print and cybernetic realms. For those who are intrigued, the cybernetic Expanded Academic Index contains at least a dozen reference to Sokal's caper--V.K.P.

Neva Goodwin. (ed.). 1996. *As if the Future Mattered: Translating Social and Economic Theory into Human Behavior*. "Evolving Values for a Capitalist World" series. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 400 pages. ISBN 0-472-10640-6 (cloth).

"Concern for the future, the issue," the publisher tells us, lies at the core of this book, has been displayed by human beings throughout history--but it is more important today than ever to inquire what can be done, through changes in institutional arrangements and/or fashions of thought and perception, to support the future-regarding tendencies in human societies." Among the twelve co-authors are Michael Porter, Robert McNamara and Zbigniew Bochniarz. The latter is described as a leading architect of "green plans" in East Central Europe since the fall of the Berlin Wall." "Other contributors," according to the publisher, "include a lawyer, sociologist, political scientist, businessman-turned-foundation-director, and three economists."

The editor is Co-Director and Co-Founder of the Global Development and Environment Institute, Tufts University--V.K.P.

Cary Fowler. *Unnatural Selection: Technology, Politics, and Plant Evolution*. International Studies in Global Change series, volume 6. Yverdon, Switzerland/Langhorne, Pennsylvania: Gordon and Breach, 1994. xxiv, 317 pp. ISBN 2-88124-640-0 (cloth); ISBN 2-88124-639-7 (paperback ).

"This is," according to the publisher, "the first full-length study to focus entirely on the historical development of the control and ownership of living materials."

"Moving from a detailed consideration of property rights in the United States, Cary Fowler explores current efforts to create globally applicable mechanisms. As struggles continue over the previous resources to sustain life, it is increasingly important to understand the dynamics of the choices being made and to become more knowledgeable actors in the shaping of these choices."

"Selected contents," as highlighted by the publisher, include the following: "Distribution, development and early forms of control of biological materials and the commercialization of U.S. agriculture; U.S. Congress and the Courts; The construction of intellectual property rights for plants; Defining property rights in international arenas; and new issues and actors, unsettled conflicts"--V.K.P.

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