

eyeball confrontation forced both sides to recognize the special destructiveness of nuclear weapons. Defense planners in the Kennedy administration began to think in terms of nuclear balance—each country's arsenal existing to deter the use of the other's. Under conditions of "mutual assured destruction" (MAD), it was said, marginal strategic superiority holds little significance. This perception, Mandelbaum posits, led to the 1963 limited nuclear test ban treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union and to the beginning of Strategic Arms Limitations Talks in 1969. The 30-year coexistence "of the age-old 'anarchic' international system with the terrifying fruits of modern science" has been the "achievement, and unquestionably the purpose, of nuclear strategy and nuclear diplomacy."

—*Dusko Doder* ('77)

**DIXIE'S FORGOTTEN  
PEOPLE: The South's  
Poor Whites**

by J. Wayne Flynt  
Ind. Univ., 1979  
206 pp. \$12.95

King Cotton, slavery, and the fashionable society of the great plantations dominate our image of the Old South. But in the isolated southern Appalachians and the Ozarks, in Georgia's farmed-out clay hills, and in the pine-barrens of Alabama and east Mississippi, poor, landed whites eked out a separate, hardscrabble existence. Primarily of Scotch-Irish descent, the South's "hillbillies, crackers, and clay-eaters" kept alive ancient ballads, Celtic dance tunes, the hammer dulcimer. The craftsmen among them recycled what well-to-do neighbors discarded; colorful patchwork quilts, for example, were sewn from scraps of old cloth. Low cotton prices during the 1880s and '90s forced many small farmers into tenancy and sharecropping. By 1930, half of all Southern farms were operated by tenants; nearly two-thirds of these 1.8 million tenant families were white. The New Deal brought little relief. As Flynt, an Auburn University historian, notes, "courthouse gangs" of planters, industrialists, and merchants dominated county politics and controlled the local administration of state welfare programs. Since the 1930s, the

mechanization of agriculture has further uprooted the South's rural whites, forcing many into the cities of both the North and South. By 1970, 30,000 Southern white migrants had settled in Detroit alone. Despite the rapid industrialization of Southern cities in the 1950s and '60s, white poverty has persisted. Only recently, notes Flynt, has industry begun to disperse into the countryside, "where needs are the greatest."

—James Lang ('78)

**THE SENSE OF ORDER:  
A Study in the Psychology of  
Decorative Art**  
by E. H. Gombrich  
Cornell, 1979  
411 pp. \$38.50

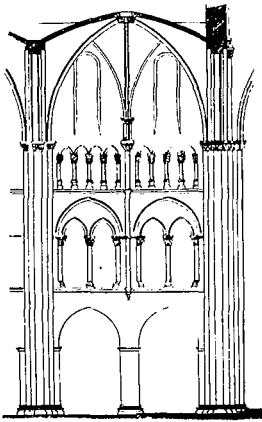


Illustration by W. Lubke, 1858.  
From Gombrich: *The Sense of Order*.

Why do human beings cover the things that they value with elaborate patterns and then pay only marginal attention to these decorations? In this companion to *Art and Illusion* (1960)—which explored the psychology of pictorial representation—British art historian Gombrich locates the key to "unregarded art" in the basic human sense of order. Unable to give equal attention to all of our surroundings, we rapidly comprehend the regularities in an environment and focus instead on the irregularities. Repetitive scrolls, arabesques, and checkerboard designs keep the eye moving—more than a blank surface does. Thus, patterns on the walls of a Gothic cathedral highlight religious inscriptions and portraits that are unique and held to be meaningful. In general, the more sumptuous the decorative background for a work of art, the more remarkable the work is—partly because of its environment. An ornate setting, such as the frame around Raphael's painting, *Madonna della Sedia*, in the Pitti Palace, both defines a work of figurative art and dignifies it. This wide-ranging, eclectically illustrated book looks not only at picture frames but also at Persian carpets, Slovak folk hats, and Maori canoe paddles.

—Alan K. Henrikson ('79)