

during the 1950s, the ills it was supposed to cure (urban congestion, economic inequality, and even war) persisted. But if aviation is no longer the popular hope of the future, echoes of the gospel reverberate in the recent enthusiasm for "ultralights"—lightweight aircraft that fly over 100 miles for every gallon of fuel—and in the visionaries' dream of colonies in outer space.

**FIELD DAYS:**  
**Journal of an**  
**Itinerant Biologist**  
 by Roger B. Swain  
 Scribner's, 1983  
 217 pp. \$12.95

Swain's approach in these 23 essays is to light upon a commonplace item—avocados, flypaper, hamburgers—and then to trace its connections with the larger biological world. Throughout, Swain tempers his affection for nature with an unsentimental regard for facts. Acknowledging the allure of evergreens in wintry landscapes, he proceeds to explain that their slow rate of photosynthesis means longevity (but not immortality) for pine needles and other hibernating hangers-on. Swain, science editor of *Horticulture* magazine, can be amusing, pointing out, for instance, how easy it is to lure farm guests to work *if* the work involves heavy machinery such as tractors or chain saws. He demonstrates how felling large trees for firewood rather than lumber results in net energy and income losses for many communities. Swain writes shrewdly about fickle human nature and the ways in which it sometimes threatens a fragile ecosystem.

**FRAMES OF MIND:**  
**The Theory of**  
**Multiple Intelligences**  
 by Howard Gardner  
 Basic, 1983  
 412 pp. \$23.50

Psychologists have sought for decades to dispel the idea that intelligence is a single, measurable trait, like height or eye color. Gardner, a Harvard psychologist, attempts to finish the job, carefully documenting his theory that the human mind accommodates at least six different "intelligences." These distinct endowments—linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and personal—are most obvious in geniuses or *idiots savants*. All types of intelligence are



Target form



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

"relatively autonomous," says Gardner, but they sometimes interact "seamlessly." A preoccupation with pattern binds mathematical and musical intelligence; Mozart, Gardner notes, "even composed music according to the roll of dice." Gardner's definition of intelligence may strike some as too lax. Particularly debatable (and certainly difficult to quantify) is what he calls "personal" intelligence, marked by insight into self and society. No less vague is "bodily-kinesthetic" intelligence, of the sort that Norman Mailer once lyrically attributed to boxer Muhammad Ali. Whatever the book's soft spots, it establishes that intelligence can never again be reduced to what Gardner calls "a group of raw computational capacities."

## PAPERBOUNDS

**RISK AND CULTURE: An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers.** By Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky. Univ. of Calif., 1983. 221 pp. \$6.95

Why do some people perceive some dangers, such as the threat of industrial pollution or of radiation leakage, as more terrible and imminent than other dangers? According to Douglas, a Northwestern University anthropologist, and Wildavsky, a Berkeley political scientist, the reasons are never strictly objective or scientific. Indeed, write the authors, contemporary scientific "techniques for finding new dangers have run ahead of our

ability to discriminate among them." The assessment of risk is unavoidably a "social process," with strong political and moral dimensions. Focusing on contemporary America, the authors identify the chronic conflict between those who endorse the values of the "center"—faith in institutions and large organizations, support for unlimited economic growth, acceptance of certain economic and social inequalities—and those on the "border" who reject such values. The latter, including many but not all environmental and antinuclear groups, resemble such earlier religious sectarians as the 16th-century German Anabaptists in their moralizing zeal, their Manichean sense of good and evil, and their scorn for