

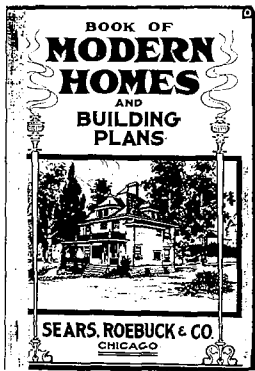
port the civil rights movement.

But black nationalists, whose day was heralded by the 1965 riots in Los Angeles' Watts district, rejected integration because it ignored blacks' real problem: poverty. In addition, empirical studies showed that for most whites, blatant inconsistencies in values posed no dilemma. They saw racism, writes Southern, as "an integral part of a stable and productive cultural order," and thus did not support social equality for blacks or affirmative action to achieve it.

Although Myrdal's "consensual liberalism" gave way to a "conflict model" of race relations during the 1960s, he remained sanguine—until the 1980s, when the slowing of civil rights gains and the persistence of black poverty tempered his optimism. At his death last May at age 89, he was reconsidering his views in a sequel, *An American Dilemma Revisited*.

Arts & Letters

THE COMFORTABLE HOUSE:
North American Suburban Architecture, 1890–1930
by Alan Gowans
M.I.T., 1986
246 pp. \$35



Focusing on the frankly derivative Roman temple, Spanish colonial mission, and Cotswold cottage styles shunned by the architectural establishment, art historian Gowans brings order to the crazy quilt of early 20th-century American housing.

Distinguishing the utilitarian family "homestead" from the "mansion" built for show, Gowans defines three basic house types.

One is the bungalow. Developed by the British in Bengal (hence the name), by 1910 it was thoroughly identified with California, sun, and fun. The bungalow had one story (or one and a half), a sweeping roof over a verandah, easy access between inner and outer spaces (via porches, open living and dining rooms, moveable screen walls), and no basement. A family might move up from a small "beginner's" bungalow to another basic house type: the two-story "foursquare" (featuring four equal-sized rooms per floor, a verandah, and a pyramidal roof) or the "homestead temple-house" (separate access to the upper floor, the columned look of a classical temple).

If house types of the time were few, house styles were many. In a mania for the picturesque, even simple homes from 1850 to 1880 were decked out with "a plethora of ornamental addi-

tions." But with the revival of Spanish, Dutch, French, and especially English colonial styles in the early 1900s (later in mass-produced houses), designers strove for "Academic correctness."

Between the wars, most Americans turned their backs on the modernist dictum that all ornament should be dispensed with, and insisted instead that their houses be spacious, well-proportioned, and tasteful. Suburbs mushroomed during the 1920s (which brought building techniques almost as standardized as those of the Detroit automakers), refuges from increasingly impersonal factories and office buildings. The middle-class American home had become, as President Warren Harding himself said, "the apex and the aim . . . of our whole social system."

**THE LIFE OF
LANGSTON HUGHES**
**Volume I: I, Too,
Sing America**
by Arnold Rampersad
Oxford, 1986
468 pp. \$22.95

James Langston Hughes sometimes felt like a parentless child. Shortly after his birth in 1902 in Joplin, Missouri, his father ran off to Mexico. His mother, an aspiring actress, left him in the care of his grandmother, who cradled him in the bullet-holed shawl of an abolitionist relative killed in John Brown's 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry.

Through his grandmother's tales, writes Rutgers English professor Rampersad, the future author of such verse collections as *The Weary Blues* (1926) and *One-Way Ticket* (1949), and of plays, novels, and children's books, was indoctrinated early "into a relationship with his family's past, into a relationship with history, so intimate as to be almost sensual."

At age 18, on a train bound for Mexico, Hughes penned "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," a poem whose blues rhythms and imagery shocked both black and white middle-class readers. His celebration of blackness brought him to prominence in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. But his wanderlust and antifascist commitment drove him to worlds beyond: to Africa in 1923, to Paris for the first time in 1924, to Cuba and Haiti in 1930-31, to Russia in 1932, and to Spain in 1937. He befriended and influenced a number of West Indians and Africans—among them Senegal's Leopold Senghor—who were developing a concept of "negritude," and who later led independence movements in their native countries.

Despite his fame, back in the States Hughes