

## RESEARCH REPORTS

*Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions*

### **"American Indians: The First of This Land."**

Russell Sage Foundation, 112 E. 64th St., New York, N.Y. 10021. 408 pp. \$49.95.

Author: *C. Matthew Snipp*

The 1980 census revealed two landmarks in the history of the North American Indians. For the first time in over two centuries, their population exceeded one million. It also revealed that American Indians, who just a decade earlier were the poorest group in the United States, had leaped ahead of America's blacks.

In 1969, reports Snipp, a sociologist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the Indian median family income was 96 percent of black median family income and only 59 percent of white income. A decade later, Indian family income (\$13,724) had risen to 66 percent of the white median (\$20,835); black income (\$12,598) was only 92 percent of the Indian median.

In 1969, poverty afflicted 33 percent of Indians, 30 percent of blacks, and nine percent of whites. During the next decade, the poverty rate dropped

to 24 percent among Indians, 27 percent among blacks, and seven percent among whites.

These surprising developments are not the main focus of Snipp's study, but he does offer some interesting speculations. He notes, for example, that part of the apparent increase in Indian well-being may be due to the popularity of the Native American movement during the 1970s, which persuaded more (relatively affluent) Americans of part-Indian ancestry to identify themselves as Indians. (The term Native American, he adds, has fallen out of favor because it is too inclusive; the term American Indian includes Aleuts and Eskimos but not Hawaiian Indians or other groups.)

Another source of gains was very likely the various social programs of the 1970s, including some designed specifically for Indians. And Indians rely very heavily on public-sector

employment—about 30 percent were employed by federal, state, and local (or tribal) government in 1980—which grew during the 1970s.

Two other black/Indian differences stand out.

Indians are much more likely to be employed as skilled workers, blacks as semi-skilled or unskilled laborers. Snipp says that this difference may stem from education programs for Indians—which, ironically, critics have accused of being too focused on vocational training.

Finally, 18 percent of all Indian families were headed by women in 1980, while 27 percent of black families were. Female-headed families are known to be quick tickets to poverty.

Indians continue to suffer many hardships, Snipp says, but their future "is in some ways brighter today than it has been for a very long time."

### **"Productivity and American Leadership: The Long View."**

MIT Press, 55 Hayward St., Cambridge, Mass. 02142. 395 pp. \$29.95.

Authors: *William J. Baumol, Sue Anne Batey Blackman, and Edward N. Wolff*

After listening to much contradictory advice from economists over the years, President Harry S. Truman plaintively asked if there were such a thing as a one-handed economist. Until recently, most economists were one-handed on at least one question: America's productivity "crisis." The lagging growth of U.S. productivity, they agreed, threatened to turn this country into an economic mediocrity.

But now there are two hands to the productivity question.

Baumol and Blackman, of Princeton, and New York University's Wolff contend that there is cause for concern but not alarm. Not only are recent productivity growth rates in line with historical trends stretching back over a century, but during that century the United States has never led the world in productivity growth.

Between 1870 and 1929, U.S. productivity grew at a two percent annual rate; it fell below one percent during the Great Depression, surged to four per-

cent during World War II, then fell back to two percent. Between 1979 and '84, it dropped to an anemic 1.3 percent. But that is just a statistical blip. The authors detect "no sign of any long-term decline." In fact, the 104-year trend suggests a slight *improvement*.

Manufacturing productivity is what everybody worries about most, and the news is the same: no long-term change. However, while the overall productivity growth rate fell between 1979 and '84,

the factory rate soared, reaching five percent in 1984.

The U.S. economy remains the world's most productive, but others are catching up. Indeed, note the authors, they have been for most of the 20th century. The authors believe that this is the result of a natural convergence caused by the diffusion of technology and other factors. Still, the United States appears to have held its own. Between 1965 and 1984,

for example, Japan's share of the world's technology-intensive exports spurted from 7 percent to some 20 percent, the combined British, West German, and French share fell from 35 to 29 percent, and the U.S. share declined by only two percentage points, to 25 percent.

Yet, as if to guard against complacency, the authors warn that our historic rate of productivity growth will not be

enough to maintain U.S. economic leadership. Their estimates of trends through the year 2020 indicate that the United States will have to improve its postwar productivity growth rate from 2.3 percent to 3.1 percent. The authors believe that this can be achieved through tax and other policies designed to improve U.S. saving and investment. History, they say, "offers much ground for optimism."

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### "Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy."

Basic Books, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 274 pp. \$22.95.

Author: *George J. Borjas*

For more than a decade, the United States has been embroiled in a great debate about how to control illegal immigration. Hardly anybody seems to have given a second thought to *legal* immigration.

Except for Borjas, an economist at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He doubts that illegal immigration is as significant as most people think. (He puts the illegal population at three or four million rather than the commonly cited 10 million.) In any event, he argues, the problem is virtually beyond control. But we can and do regulate legal immigration—four million immigrants entered the country legally between 1981 and '87—and we do a very poor job of it.

"The skills of [legal] immigrants entering the United States have declined during the past few decades," writes Borjas. "More recent immigrant waves have relatively less schooling, lower earnings, lower labor-force participation rates, and higher poverty rates than earlier waves had."

In 1940, for example, the typical male immigrant arrived in the United States with one more year of schooling than the average American male. By 1970, the new immigrant had the same amount of schooling; by 1980, he had nearly one year less. In 1940, the average newly arrived male immigrant earned about \$5 per hour (in 1979 dollars), or 13 percent more than his American-born counterpart; by 1980, new immigrants were earning 17 percent *less* than their native counterparts. Today's immigrants do not deprive native-born Americans of jobs or lower their wages, but their poor performance compared to that of previous immigrants costs the U.S. economy billions of dollars annually.

Poverty is also now more common. Immigrants who arrived between 1965 and '69 had a poverty rate of 18 percent soon after arriving; those who came during the late 1970s had a poverty rate of 29 percent. And while the earnings of employed immigrants

will increase as they are assimilated into American society, so will the number of immigrant families on welfare.

Why has the character of America's immigrants changed so much? One reason, writes Borjas, is the improvement of economic conditions in the European nations that supplied most of the world's skilled immigrants in years past—and the decreasing premium paid for those skills in the U.S. economy. The second reason is the 1965 immigration reform, which made the reunification of the families of U.S. citizens and residents the top priority in allocating visas. As a result, only four percent of the 600,000 legal immigrants who came to the United States in 1987 were admitted on the basis of their skills.

Other countries, notably Canada and Australia, do give preference to such people, and thus have claimed a larger share of this shrinking pool of skilled immigrants. Our policies, Borjas suggests, should be more like theirs.

## COMMENTARY

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*We welcome timely letters from readers, especially those who wish to amplify or correct information published in the Quarterly and/or react to the views expressed in our essays. The writer's telephone number and address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some letters are received in response to the editors' requests for comment.*

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### *Megalopolis Politics*

Robert Fishman's analysis ["America's New City," *WQ*, Winter '90] raises two concerns.

The first involves the omission of the work of Jean Gottmann, the eminent French geographer whose *Megalopolis, The Urbanized Northeastern Seaboard of the United States* (1961) introduced a new concept into our urban etymology: "... a vast area. It encompasses many great cities... more the size of a nation than of a metropolis."

Gottmann's megalopolis stretched over portions of 10 contiguous states, situated on or near the Atlantic seaboard, plus the District of Columbia: It reached from southeastern New Hampshire to northeastern Virginia. The total population was approximately 37 million, and its size was nearly 54,000 square miles. Two of every five Americans resided within this elaborate network. Some of them lived in old, well-established cities (e.g., Hartford, Paterson, Wilmington). Others resided and often worked in what Professor Gottmann labeled as "prestige locations" (e.g., Princeton, New Jersey), a locale that Fishman correctly categorizes—nearly 30 years later—as one of his new cities.

My second concern involves the political economy of metropolitan America within which Fishman's new cities are situated. Gwinnett County, Georgia, some 30 miles northeast of Atlanta offers an example.

The population has increased six-fold from 43,541 in 1960, to 285,000 in 1987, and experts predict there will be 485,000 residents by the year 2000. Since 1982, new jobs have been added at the rate of 6,000 per year, many of them in high technology. Corresponding problems include traffic congestion, crowded schools, inadequate sewage treatment plants, and overburdened local courts. Controversy ensues whenever questions arise about the county's environment or infrastructure. With 13 municipalities, not one—not Lawrenceville or Buford, nor the rapidly growing communities of Duluth, Lilburn, and Snellville—is the focal point of county public life.

Theoretically, the most promising resolution to such problems entails a metropolitan format of regional government. Administered by a multi-county agency, it would require extraordinary regulatory authority granted by the state legislature over land use, planning, development, cultural re-

sources, air quality, drinking water, waste management, human resources, and transportation.

Yet anyone familiar with the political history of cities and their suburbs recognizes the enormous obstacles involved in attaining the consent of the locally governed for visionary propositions. Residents of each community stalwartly guard their municipal autonomy from encroachment by neighboring suburbs or the central city, a legacy rooted in the events which culminated in the American Revolution.

The deeply ingrained opposition to metropolitan government, I believe, consigns residents of Fishman's new cities to encounter shocking consequences as they pursue the routines of their everyday lives.

*Prof. Michael H. Ebner  
Lake Forest College, Ill.*

### *Denizens of the New City*

I have read other articles and books in the same vein as Robert Fishman's. All are characterized by the claim that what Americans are doing to their landscape via the private automobile should be viewed as no disaster but rather as a great opportunity for mega-organization; the creation, that is, of a new order dwarfing any human scale, but just as fulfilling in human terms as previous orders.

I am profoundly unimpressed by all such arguments. It is fantastic to speak of a landscape built by random private acts of greed, and by flight from people of unfashionable races and creeds, even if potentially serving legitimate social ends—an aspect of the "New Cities" which might have won more than a single phrase in the article.

To discover the reality of "Technoburb," I suggest that readers try a simple experiment: Pretend you have sold your cars, vans, motorcycles, and 4 x 4s, and are now sallying forth into your "Non-place Urban Field" on foot. Not just around the block, mind you, but point-to-point toward some worthwhile destination, as, for instance, the nearest source of food. No need for expensive Himalayan treks, friends, nor Amazonian odysseys: The glass-and-trash-strewn, hideous, snarling, lethal terraces of your own "Outtown" will provide world-class adventure and rich memories for a brutal, nasty, and short lifetime.

No, I see denizens of the New City as essentially dissatisfied people subject to dangerous paranoias, who stave off their threatening demons only by driving, playing with adult toys, driving, watching television, and driving. I prefer not to be around when their descendants at last run out of land.

Richard M. Simms  
Emma Willard School  
Troy, N.Y.

### Characterizing Deconstruction

In the course of pinning down with the aid of caricature the proximites of deconstruction ["Will Deconstruction Be the Death of Literature?" *WQ*, Winter '90], the article also pins down many other terms that invite comment. But my "logological" characterization of us humans as "bodies that learn language" has shaped my caricature as a charge against our departments of literature which spontaneously feature words sans the body—being the reverse of the ingenious mime Marcel Marceau, all body and no words—the literature departments being all words and no body.

My caricature turns out to be a kind of post-Arnoldian "touchstone." The way to ask substantial questions about a work is to ask what it reveals as a *constitution*. About the habits of animals, we ask Darwinian questions: How are they so *constituted* that the mature members of a tribe cohabit and raise their young in sufficient numbers to survive? And we see the astounding developments in the Soviet empire when the terms *glasnost* and *perestroika* are applied to *constitutional* matters. The Latin *principium* and the Greek *arche* distinguish first temporally and first in principle. But Derrida does tricks with words by treating a first in principle as *constitutionally* first in time.

The article does well with anecdotes. I wish it had done more. The anecdote of the father and son is beautifully matched by the poem of *Sohrab and Rustum*, warriors who learn of their identity only when the son is dying of his wounds. And the anecdote of Wilde as "flamboyant" and "arrogant" makes me recall "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." A "teacherly" defense of deconstruction is treated in a recent volume, *Reclaiming Pedagogy: The Rhetoric of the Classroom*, (ed., Patricia Donahue and Ellen Quandahl, Southern Illinois Press).

Kenneth Burke  
Andover, N.J.

### Arnold Today

I agree with Frank McConnell's idea that deconstruction is best viewed as part of the unfolding of

our own romantic/Arnoldian tradition and not as some frenchified invasion of the brain snatchers. I have more trouble with his tone, which suggests that this "necessary phase" is something vile that we must swallow while holding our noses.

Arnold envisioned the critic as an interested party, the priest-like purveyor of a humanizing orthodoxy based on "the best that has been thought and said." But the best that has been thought and said is not an infallible guide to the best that is being thought and said, nor are the ideas that suffice for today necessarily adequate tomorrow. So Arnold also argued that the critic ought to be disinterested, standing apart from the needs of the day in order to serve as the repository for (and even creator of) a whole range of possibilities whose very existence might never be suspected if immediate utility was to be a universal standard.

This ambiguity is apparent today in the tension between the professor-critic's roles as teacher and researcher, disseminator of a received monumental culture, and originator of knowledge about and within a present cultural situation constantly in flux. Experimentation is inherently risky: 80 percent of the experimental results in some hard sciences cannot be reproduced, and determining the best that is being thought and said, then adjusting our perceptions of the past accordingly, is an arduous enterprise that carries no guarantees.

Far from precipitating a "crisis," French deconstructionists have given us new tools with which to carry on this less well-developed, experimental aspect of Arnold's project. American deconstruction is an attempt to augment a native tradition that never claimed self-sufficiency, a tradition distinguished, rather, by its eclecticism. This is, after all, what humanists are supposed to do.

Jean-Pierre Mileur  
University of California, Riverside

### The Distant Dialogue

Why is the history of reading ["Toward A History of Reading," *WQ*, Autumn '89] so complex?

Writing creates distance between the originator of discourse and the recipient—a curious distance in which the originator, the writer, disappears. Print creates more distance, and satellite dishes still more. Distance sets a great stage for history: different states of mind and expectations in distanced author and reader, even different physical postures and other physical positions.

The text is an interrupted dialogue for a reader whom the writer must always have distanced and fictionalized to some degree. In the delayed, distanced resumption of dialogue that we style read-

ing, variations are limitless over the ages. Different eras and different cultures choose different things to read and read texts in different ways. Each reader who picks up a text can continue a dialogue in at least a slightly different direction. This is not to say that there cannot be false readings, for there can be, but only that there is no limit to the number of readings that are not false. Nor is it to say that we can make no sense of what reading is. We can and do. But the sense is immeasurably complicated. The history of what goes on in reading has no limit. Darnton has given us a fine initiation into how complex it can be. But the last word will never be said. Distance intervenes. What readers of a future age will make out of this present text of mine (if they should bother to read it) will reveal in it meanings which quite obviously are consciously intended by me but also meanings of which I am aware at best dimly, or meanings I may have hidden from myself but which are there to emerge in a later context.

Walter J. Ong  
*Univ. Prof. of Humanities Emeritus  
St. Louis University*

### *The Meaning of Reading*

Robert Darnton argues for a "juncture between literary theory and the history of books. The theory can reveal the range in potential responses to a text—that is to the rhetorical constraints that direct reading without determining it. The history can show what readings actually took place . . ."

It is my impression that, as far as literary theory is concerned, Darnton's proposal might have come too late: It implies certain general assumptions about the relationship between texts and sense-production through reading which are no longer generally shared. But the shift of interest which has taken place in literary theory over the past couple of years might bring it even closer to the philosophical questions which are behind some of the contemporary research in book history.

For as long as literary theorists were trying "to reveal the range in potential responses" to any given text, they took it for granted that there were no differences between the different readers' reactions to the elements which they encountered on each level of the constitution of a text (semantics, syntax, tropes, etc.), and that therefore the varieties of readings related to any single text (some thought exclusively to literary texts) were the result of an indeterminacy in the all-over construction of the text, which would materialize in textual "voids" and which each reading would transform into individual "concretizations."

Not only has empirical evidence questioned the hypothesis of uniformity in the reader-reactions to textual elements, we are also beginning to speculate that the general attitude of "giving meaning" to phenomena (of "reading the world") might have had—and might in the future have—historical limits. Do TV viewers really "give meanings" to the flow of images to which they are exposed? Are the paintings of Altamira a symptom of a process by which the world was deciphered? Such questions appear to be far from having any convincing answer, as soon as we recognize that we do not have a metahistorically valid notion of "meaning" and of "the production of meaning," notions which are not just descriptions of *historically specific* attitudes of man to his environment. In order to come "closer to understanding how he made sense of Life" (Darnton, p. 102), it might be necessary to see that "making sense" is not the only possible way of human life, or, in other words, that "making sense" can mean very different attitudes toward the world, some of which might not be covered by the metaphor of "reading the world" which we still use as synonymous to "sense-making."

The first—and seemingly very difficult—step toward such a theory, would be to ask how meaning is generated and what we could think of as the "absence of meaning"—instead of always starting out with the assumption of a world in which meanings are already given and in which the human capacity to generate and to manipulate meaning is granted.

*Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht  
Prof. of Comparative Literature  
Stanford University*

### *Constitutionally Speaking*

I want to comment on a statement made by Bernard Lewis ["State and Society Under Islam," *WQ*, Autumn '89]: "Few nations, other than France and the United States, accepted a formal constitutional separation of religion and the state."

There are only two phrases in the Constitution which have any bearing at all on the subject of religion. One, in the last clause of Article VI, which states that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States," simply means that anyone, no matter what his religious beliefs or disbeliefs, can hold public office. It was written to protect religious liberty, not to limit it.

The other religious reference in the Constitution is found in the opening clause of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." In other words, Congress shall

not set up any official state Church.

This is absolutely all that is said about religion. Neither the phrase nor the idea of "separation of church and state" (read Lewis's "religion and state") appear in our Constitution.

Also, there is nothing in our national history, customs, or tradition that justifies it. Quite the contrary. The president takes his oath of office with his hand on the Holy Bible. Oaths are sworn in court in the name of God Almighty. Sessions of Congress and state legislatures are opened with prayer. A day in November is annually proclaimed as one of Thanksgiving to God. Our coinage acknowledges God. Our churches and religious institutions are exempt from paying taxes.

The practice of the Muslim states may vary. But the United States makes no constitutional separation of the state from religion or its embodiment in Churches.

*Perry Laukhuff  
Amherst, Va.*

### *Moving Away from Modernity*

If current fundamentalism is to hold sway in the Islamic World, Muslims will not only preserve their backwardness but will also fail to see the link between fundamental epistemology of modern science and the idea of human rights. The basic idea of the European Enlightenment is that man is capable of knowing and that this human capability would enhance his ability to organize his social life autonomously and to dominate nature to satisfy his needs. The fundamental epistemology of science and the idea of human rights are equally and inextricably related to this framework of a man-centered world, which is in continuity with the Greek legacy that also once affected Islam.

The declaration of human rights by the French National Assembly of the first republic created after the French Revolution is the political materialization of this epistemology, which runs counter to the belief that Islamic revelation is the ultimate source of knowledge. If fundamentalist Muslims were to succeed in the "dewesternization of knowledge" aimed at establishing their "epistemology of Islam" then they will not only technoscientifically be left behind, but also will fail to institutionally establish human rights. I share Bernard Lewis's hope for a "civil society" in the contemporary "Muslim World," but I fail to see any indications of a development in this direction.

*Prof. Bassam Tibi  
Center for International Relations  
Georgia Augusta Univ., Göttingen, F.D.R.*

### *Put to the Test*

When I first read your review of "50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save The Earth," ["Research Reports," *WQ*, Winter '90] I didn't think much of it. The article said a household can waste 20,000 gallons of water annually. I said okay. The article also said a person can waste 10 to 15 gallons of water while letting the tap run during toothbrushing. I said okay.

After I had read the rest of the issue a bothersome little twinge started in the back of my head. Fifteen gallons? I had to experiment. So I went to my bathroom (upstairs, standard faucet, no modifications) with my trusty stopwatch and a gallon container and proceeded to make science history.

My faucet at full blast took 40 seconds to spit out a gallon of water. That's 600 seconds for 15 gallons, or 10 minutes. An informal survey at work the next day didn't turn up anyone who brushes their teeth for 10 minutes, let alone while running the faucet full blast. Presumably, letting it run at half speed means a toothbrushing interval of 20 minutes. (Personally, I turn the faucet off between wetting the brush and rinsing. Call me socially responsible.)

So I started on the other figures in the article. I read "a household can save up to 20,000 gallons of water each year by getting a grip on its faucets." Using a four-person-per-household average, that's 13.7 gallons of water per day *per person*. Using my faucet above, that's about nine minutes of full-out, water-down-the-drain kind of waste every day. (36 minutes a day for the whole house.)

The article then goes on to say that "adding one passenger to every commuter car in the nation could daily save 600 million gallons of gasoline . . ." Sorry, but the only way to save gas and reduce emissions is to get cars off the road, not add passengers to all the cars on the road.

Sloppy use of statistics doesn't do anything for anybody. I think Earthworks Press should work on its editing.

*Christopher J. Benyo  
Herndon, Va.*

### *Corrections*

The date of the Roosevelt family photograph that appeared on p. 10 of the Winter '90 *WQ*, was mislabeled as 1874 by the Bettmann Archive. According to our calculations it was probably closer to 1904 or 1905.

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# Cries for Democracy

Writings and Speeches  
from the 1989 Chinese  
Democracy Movement

*Edited by Han Minzhu*

Preface by Yan Jiaqi

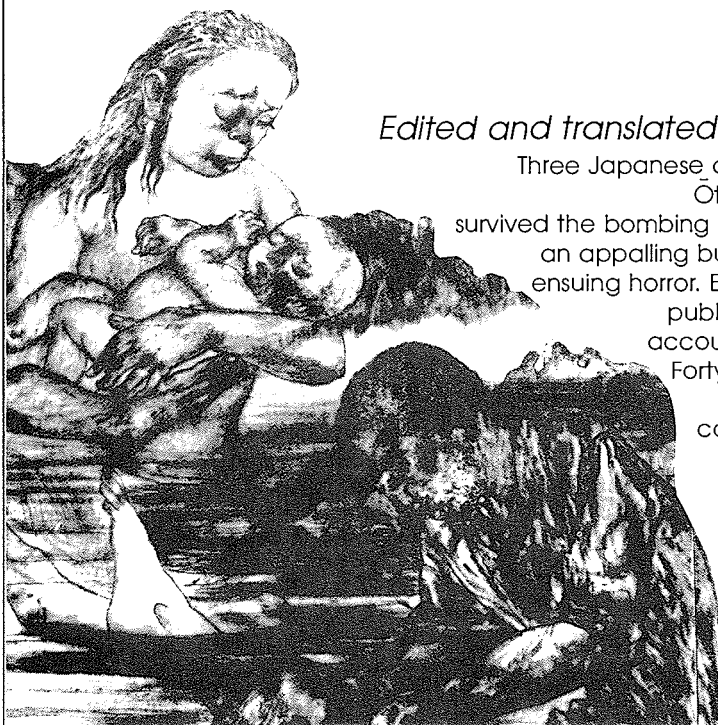
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*Illustrations from the Hiroshima Murals of Maruki Iri and Maruki Toshi.*

# Hiroshima

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*Edited and translated by Richard H. Minear*

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like garbage.*



The bottle may be empty, yet it's anything but trash. In fact, this empty bottle is actually full of potential. Thanks to recycling.

Over 20% of all plastic soft drink containers are already being recycled into additional consumer and indus-

trial products and the demand for recycled plastic is growing.

At DuPont, we're making sure this growth continues. Together with Waste Management Inc., we're pioneering the country's largest and most comprehensive plastic recycling program.

With recycling, we believe that plastic will be increasingly appreciated for filling valuable human needs instead of valuable land.

At DuPont, we make the things that make a difference.

*Better things for better living.*

