



ANTHONY TROLLOPE

disappearance of that limited world, no subsequent novelist has attempted a political *roman fleuve* on the scale of Trollope's. It is Trollope's realized picture of social life resonating with political significance that has ensured that those studying Victorian politics do so in part through his eyes.

FORESTS: *The Shadow of Civilization.* By Robert Pogue Harrison. Chicago. 288 pp. \$24.95

The word *forest* derives from the Latin for outside, and in literature the forest is usually an alien place where customary distinctions lose force. Under cover of the woods, "Rosalind appears as boy, the virtuous knight degenerates into a wild man, the straight line forms a circle, the ordinary gives way to the fabulous." Harrison, a professor of comparative literature at Stanford, takes such examples from medieval romance and Shakespeare—as well as others from classical mythology, the Grimm Brothers, and Thoreau's *Walden*—to fashion a history of the forest in the Western imagination.

The Gamekeeper of Waltham Forest, the appropriately named John Manwood, expressed the premodern attitude toward the forest in his treatise of 1592: Forests were sanctuaries, ruled by their own sacred laws (thus allowing out-

laws like Hereward, Fulk Fitzwarin, and Robin Hood to be honest men and heroes there). Two centuries later, the modern idea of the forest was conceived when the Warden of the Park of Versailles, Monsieur Le Roy, gave it a quantitative definition in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*. Instead of a sacred domain ruled by gods and spirits, the woods were defined as simply so many acres of certain kinds of trees. The use of such places should be determined, Le Roy wrote, not by a religious or otherworldly ethic but only by *l'utilité publique*, the public interest. Today even the most sentimental ecologists speak this language and justify preserving forests by arguing for their social usefulness.

Yet despite using Le Roy's language, contemporaries are hardly filled with sanguine Enlightenment rationality as they watch the remaining great forests being cut down. Harrison takes stock of contemporary anguish, arguing that it is a peculiar anxiety that cannot be entirely explained by the loss of nature or wildlife habitat alone. "Forests mark the provincial edge of Western civilization, in the literal as well as the imaginative domain," he writes. "Underlying the ecological concern is perhaps a much deeper apprehension about the disappearance of boundaries . . . Without such outside domain, there is no inside in which to dwell."

Contemporary Affairs

THE COMMUNISTS: *The Story of Power and Lost Illusions, 1948–1991.* By Adam B. Ulam. Scribners. 528 pp. \$27.50

Why did communism—a survivor of military defeats, famine, and unprecedented bureaucratic incompetence—finally fall with hardly a shot fired in its defense? Ulam, director of the Harvard Russian Research Center, would have us remember Lord Keynes's dictum that it is ultimately ideas that count. The ideology of communism, Ulam argues, was almost untested before 1950. The revolutionary faith of Lenin and his compatriots quickly succumbed, under Stalin, to a cult of personality, "partly military, partly religious." Stalin's regime survived by brutal dictatorial means that made the ideology nearly irrelevant. (The only foreign communists who successfully rebuffed Stalin