nalists been so wrong about the Gulf War? DeAtkine offers no definitive answer. But he says that the field is highly politicized. The specialists tend "to justify every inanity, every brutality, every outrage" by invoking cultural relativism. Many have a "distinctly anti-Western ideological agenda." They are obsessed with the Arab-Israeli dispute. And "area studies" enclaves in universities very often fail to breed detached, critical judgment.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

A New Business Ethics?

"What's the Matter with Business Ethics?" by Andrew Stark, in *Harvard Business Review* (May–June 1993), Boston, Mass. 02163.

Business ethics is hot in academia: More than 500 courses in the subject are taught at American business schools and there are three scholarly journals and more than 25 textbooks in the field. But this academic boom is largely irrelevant to most business managers, contends Stark, of the University of Toronto's Center for Corporate Social Performance and Ethics. It is not that managers are against business ethics, he says, but rather that too many business ethicists have occupied "a rarefied moral high ground," far removed from most managers' daily concerns.

For decades, enlightened self-interest was the rule recommended by advocates of corporate social responsibility. Ethical behavior might prove costly over the short term, they maintained, but it would pay off in the long run. During the 1970s, however, when business ethics emerged as a full-fledged academic discipline, this perspective came under attack. Ethical behavior, the new ethicists maintained, is not always in a company's best interests, however enlightened. Indeed, they insisted, self-interested acts *cannot* by their very nature be ethical. Mixed motives were given no moral credit. Business ethicists, Stark observes, developed "a kind of moral absolutism." In a recent essay, for example, University of Kansas ethicist Richard T. DeGeorge declared: "If in some instance it turns out that what is ethical leads to a company's demise, so be it." Such glib advice is of little practical help.

"Any business ethics worthy of the name should be an ethics of practice," Stark asserts. "But this means that business ethicists must get their hands dirty and seriously consider the costs that sometimes attend 'doing the right thing.' They must help managers do the arduous conceptual balancing required in difficult cases where every alternative has both moral and financial costs."

Recently, Stark notes, some business ethicists have begun to do just that. In *Ethics and Excellence* (1992), Robert C. Solomon "goes back to Aristotle's conception of 'virtue' to devise an ethics of practical value to managers.... Throughout his book, Solomon discusses toughness (and other morally complex managerial virtues such as courage, fairness, sensitivity, persistence, honesty, and gracefulness) in the context of real-world situations such as plant closings and contract negotiations."

The new thinkers take the fact that ethics and interests can conflict as a beginning, not an end. "The really creative part of business ethics," ethicist Joanne B. Ciulla writes, "is discovering ways to do what is morally right and socially responsible without ruining your career and company."

The Futility Factor

"It's *Not* the Economy, Stupid!" by Charles R. Morris, in *The Atlantic* (July 1993), 745 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

The economy dominated the 1992 presidential contest: George Bush was accused of having mismanaged it, Bill Clinton promised to do better. But there was one big problem with the debate, contends Morris, a principal in a technology consulting firm. Presidents, he asserts, are not really able to "manage" the economy.

The "economy," Morris observes, is not a