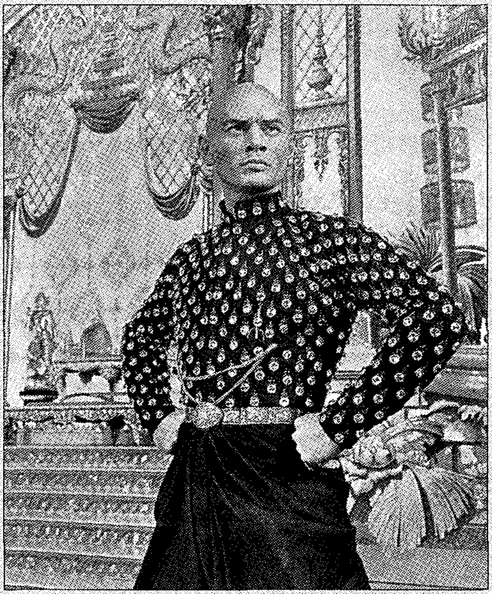
The Great White Way to War

Why were we in Vietnam? In *Theatre Journal* (Oct. 1994), Bruce A. McConachie, a professor of theater and speech at the College of William and Mary, offers a truly dramatic answer.



In his book American Foreign Policy *[1974], Henry Kissinger drew a sharp distinction between Western and Third World views of reality. . . . Without the aid of Western advisers, believed Kissinger, the people of Southeast Asia could not understand their lives and their place in the world. He and [Richard] Rodgers and [Oscar] Hammerstein [II] assumed that the West had a monopoly on knowing reality.*

Building on this assumption, these makers of musicals and of U.S. foreign policy centered their symbolic actions upon metaphors of containment. The nucleus of a group of related metaphors, images of containment circulated in many arenas of American culture during the Cold War. Drawing on the new historicism of Stephen Greenblatt as modified by the cognitive psychology of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, I hope to demonstrate that the popularity of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "oriental" musicals, The King and I, South Pacific, *and* The Flower Drum Song, *helped to establish a legitimate basis for the American war against the people of Southeast Asia in the 1960s. As historian James William Gibson suggests, the "deep structural logic" of our culture and society—even including such seemingly innocuous practices as Broadway musicals—helped to draw us into Vietnam.*

Tailhook Revisited

"Tailhook: What Happened, Why & What's to Be Learned" by W. Hays Parks, in *Proceedings* (Sept. 1994), U.S. Naval Institute, 2062 Generals Highway, Annapolis, Md. 21401.

In October 1991, when U.S. Navy leaders learned that news of the Tailhook debauchery was about to break, they immediately tried to send a strong message: sexual harassment would not be tolerated. In their rush to judgment, contends Parks, a retired marine colonel, they actually sent a very different message—one that ironically helped to ensure that those guilty of criminal wrongdoing at the 1991 Tailhook convention would ultimately go unpunished and that there would be no serious study of the larger question of male attitudes toward women in the navy.

Then-Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III and other naval leaders received reports about the "unprofessional" behavior at the Las Vegas convention well before the public did. Even before the four-day conclave in September 1991 ended, Lieutenant Paula Coughlin, an admiral's aide and naval aviator, reported that she had been physically assaulted in the now-notorious "gauntlet" set up in the hotel's third-floor hallway. Yet a month went by before an official investigation of her allegation was ordered.

Nor did a strongly worded October letter sent to aviation commanders by Captain Frederic G.

Ludwig, Jr., president of the Tailhook Association, prompt Garrett to take public action. In his letter, Ludwig told of some "distressing" incidents at the convention and denounced "the rampant unprofessionalism of a few." Only after the press obtained that letter did Garrett express "absolute outrage" at the Tailhook events. But he portrayed Ludwig's letter as a self-indictment by the Tailhook Association rather than the expression of outrage at the misconduct that it was. Garrett cut off all navy support for the quasi-official group and removed a rear admiral from his command for not immediately forwarding Coughlin's complaint.

Instead, Parks contends, Garrett and other naval leaders should have squarely faced the larger question of whether the Tailhook incidents, including many that were not in violation of the law, were symptomatic of a bigger problem involving attitudes toward women. The Tailhook incidents, he says, should have been "a 'wake-up call' for naval leaders who, up to this point, had paid only lip service to the problem of sexual harassment." An investigation of Tailhook was needed, Parks says, but a blue-ribbon panel should have been named to carry out an impartial inquiry of the larger question.

The public actions that Garrett and other navy leaders took were seen by many as an expedient attempt to shift the blame for any sexual harassment away from the naval leadership and onto the Tailhook Association and, by implication, male aviators generally. Out of more than 4,000 people who attended the convention, Parks points out, eight to 12 are believed to have committed criminal assaults, and 20 commissioned officers (both male and female) apparently were guilty of indecent exposure.

The implication of collective guilt made male junior officers reluctant to cooperate with investigators, Parks says. Many female officers who did not regard themselves as victims also proved uncooperative. The inquiries (seven were ultimately launched) were also hampered by memories fogged by alcohol and a trail grown cold as a result of the navy's late start. In the end, although scores of naval officers, including some flag officers, received nonjudicial punishments or less severe administrative rebukes, no one was convicted by court-martial for criminal conduct at Tailhook '91.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Success Secrets of Korean Entrepreneurs

"An Analysis of Korean Immigrant-Owned Small Business Start-ups with Comparisons to African-American- and Nonminority-Owned Firms" by Timothy Bates, in *Urban Affairs Review* (Dec. 1994), Public Policy Research Center, University of Missouri—St. Louis, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, Mo. 63121-4499.

What accounts for the remarkable success that South Korean immigrants have had as proprietors of food stores and other small businesses in the inner city? And why have local African-Americans not done as well? The usual answer is that the Koreans have a stronger network of family and friends to call on for help in getting their businesses started and keeping them running. That is only part of the story, contends Bates, an economist at Wayne State University. He found some surprises in census data on 893 Korean-owned and 3,803 black-owned small businesses that were formed between 1979 and 1987.

Seven out of 10 Koreans borrowed money to get their businesses going, compared with four out of 10 African-Americans. The Koreans who borrowed were indeed twice as likely as the blacks to turn to family members for loans and also to look to friends. Forty-one percent borrowed from family, 25 percent from friends. A 1990 study found that between 11 and 30 percent of the Korean-owned garment manufacturers in Los Angeles obtained loans from rotating-credit associations (whose