

## ARTS &amp; LETTERS

former with a tiny radio microphone. The sound was broadcast live to a central recording unit.

Besides distinguishing individual sounds more clearly, the system allows for greater improvisation. Actors can interrupt each other—as people do in real life—and the director need not worry about the sight, or shadow, of cables and overhead microphones.

Altman's search for the perfect sound system led him to Ray Dolby, the Englishman who invented the Dolby noise-reduction system that takes the hiss out of stereo tapes, FM radios, and records, and allows for sharper high and low tones (like the ominous low rumbling of the mother ship in Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*).

Walter Murch, who created the beautifully intricate "sounds track" of George Lucas's film, *The Conversation*, believes that the technical potential of film sound has been reached—now it is up to the movie directors to exploit it. With a general upgrading of theater sound systems, Schreger concludes, "we may truly enter a period in film history that will someday be labeled the Second Coming of Sound."

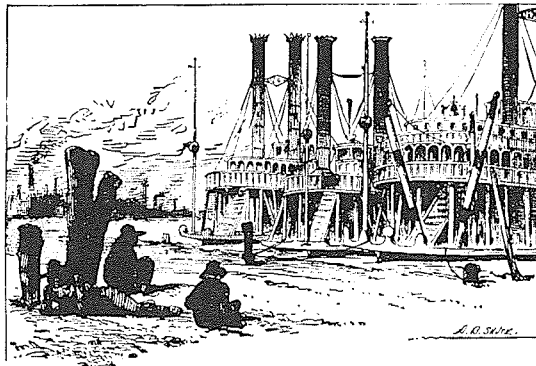
*A Fear of Sinking*

"Mark Twain: The Writer as Pilot" by  
Edgar J. Burde, in *PMLA* (Fall 1978), 62  
Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

In 1880, Samuel Clemens wrote that he would eagerly live his life over if he could be recognized as the "Celebrated Master Pilot of the Mississippi." In fact, says Burde, professor of English at the State University of New York (Plattsburgh), Clemens was both fascinated and terrified by the memory of his earlier life as a riverboat pilot. This conflict provides clues to his creative imagination as the writer, Mark Twain.

Clemens' sense of the personal freedom and power of a Mississippi pilot (a power which came from instinct and intuition) was matched by a fear that he lacked the moral and technical competence for the job, that he was too timid. Horace Bixby, the master pilot in Clemens' "Old Times on the Mississippi" articles published by the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1875, explains, "You only learn the shape of the river: and you learn it

To Mark Twain,  
the riverboat  
pilot was king—  
proud, fearless,  
talented, and  
independent.



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with such absolute certainty that you can always steer by the shape that's in your head, and never mind the one that's before your eyes."

Mark Twain's greatest work, writes Burde, was that which "drew upon intuitive memory rather than studied observations." There was a connection between writing and piloting—both require a special quality of memory—and Clemens dreaded the thought of failing as a writer and being forced to make his living again as a pilot. He was unable to sustain his imaginative identification with Horace Bixby (who disappears from the last three of the seven "Old Times" articles), and the series ended after seven, rather than the promised nine, articles.

Clemens finally returned to the river in 1882, hoping to collect enough material to fill out the "Old Times" articles to book length (*Life On the Mississippi*, 1883). He said he merely wanted to verify distances, but Clemens was really admitting, says Burde, "that his intuitive memory [had] failed him and he must return to direct observation—to the shape before his eyes."

## OTHER NATIONS

*Too Many People,  
Too Few Jobs*

"Indonesia: Testing Time for the 'New Order'" by Seth Lipsky and Raphael Pura, in *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1978), 428 East Preston St., Baltimore, Md. 21202.

Just ten years ago, Indonesia's President Suharto scrapped the chaotic "guided democracy" of his predecessor, Sukarno, and ended Indonesia's flirtation with China and the Soviet Union in favor of closer ties with Japan and the West. Now, as Suharto, 57, begins his third—and probably final—five-year term, his "New Order" faces severe tests, according to Lipsky and Pura, of the *Asian Wall Street Journal*.

Initially, Suharto brought a measure of political stability and economic progress. Prospects for rapid development, financed by oil revenues, looked good. Then came a worldwide recession in 1975. Pertamina, the mismanaged and overextended state oil company, foundered. Today, with oil no longer viewed as a "magic balm," Indonesia still faces tough, down-to-earth problems: too many people, not enough food and jobs.

Population growth is the biggest challenge, the authors report, but there has been minor progress. In eight years, the overall annual population growth rate has slipped from 2 percent to 1.8 percent. Heavy concentrations of people on Java and Bali remain a grave burden; the two islands, totaling slightly more than a third the area of Japan, may hold more than 110 million people in 20 years.

The food and job situation is even less encouraging. Indonesia has become the world's largest rice importer (\$700 million worth in 1977), while more than 40 percent of the rural labor force and 20 percent of