

mechanization of agriculture has further uprooted the South's rural whites, forcing many into the cities of both the North and South. By 1970, 30,000 Southern white migrants had settled in Detroit alone. Despite the rapid industrialization of Southern cities in the 1950s and '60s, white poverty has persisted. Only recently, notes Flynt, has industry begun to disperse into the countryside, "where needs are the greatest."

—James Lang ('78)

**THE SENSE OF ORDER:
A Study in the Psychology of
Decorative Art**
by E. H. Gombrich
Cornell, 1979
411 pp. \$38.50

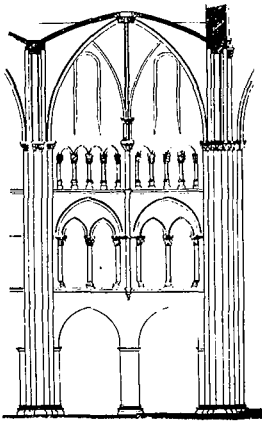


Illustration by W. Lubke, 1858.
From Gombrich: *The Sense of Order*.

Why do human beings cover the things that they value with elaborate patterns and then pay only marginal attention to these decorations? In this companion to *Art and Illusion* (1960)—which explored the psychology of pictorial representation—British art historian Gombrich locates the key to "unregarded art" in the basic human sense of order. Unable to give equal attention to all of our surroundings, we rapidly comprehend the regularities in an environment and focus instead on the irregularities. Repetitive scrolls, arabesques, and checkerboard designs keep the eye moving—more than a blank surface does. Thus, patterns on the walls of a Gothic cathedral highlight religious inscriptions and portraits that are unique and held to be meaningful. In general, the more sumptuous the decorative background for a work of art, the more remarkable the work is—partly because of its environment. An ornate setting, such as the frame around Raphael's painting, *Madonna della Sedia*, in the Pitti Palace, both defines a work of figurative art and dignifies it. This wide-ranging, eclectically illustrated book looks not only at picture frames but also at Persian carpets, Slovak folk hats, and Maori canoe paddles.

—Alan K. Henrikson ('79)