

SOCIETY

Since Freud knew English well, why did he not protest the English translations of his work? "Perhaps his low esteem for the materialism of American society," Bettelheim suggests, "had something to do with his indifference."

The Myth of the 'New South'

"The Ever-Vanishing South" by Charles P. Roland, in *The Journal of Southern History* (Feb. 1982), % Bennett H. Wall, Dept. of History, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga. 30602.

Since World War II, the Old Confederacy has undergone striking changes: In place of agricultural poverty, it has seen growth in industry and prosperity; in place of Democratic solidity, there have been Republican sweeps; in place of Jim Crow, there have been integration and black political power.

But, notes Roland, a University of Kentucky historian, Northerners and Southerners alike have been proclaiming the birth of a "new" South and writing epitaphs for an "old" one since shortly after the Civil War. And still the region remains a place apart—even in those aspects that recently have undergone the most change.

The new prosperity is real, but so is the South's persistent lag behind the rest of the country in wealth and income per capita. The South's economy is still a "colonial" one; major stockholders in the big corporations there are generally outsiders. In politics, the "liberal" Southern Congressmen of the early 1970s have become the conservative "Boll Weevils" of the early '80s. As for black political power, spectacular gains have been made, yet black office-seekers running outside black areas are usually defeated. And desegregated schools have often been, in effect, resegregated; Atlanta's public schools, once hailed for orderly desegregation, are now 90 percent black, thanks to "white flight."

The South has also held to its distinctive "Bible Belt" religion. Surveys show that Southerners are more likely than others to believe that "religion holds the answers to the great problems of the world." The Southern Baptist Convention, with over 12 million members, is the largest U.S. Protestant denomination.

Southern writers are set apart by their concern with "family, history, race, religion, and a sense of place." No one could say of a Southern writer what historian C. Vann Woodward said of Hemingway—that in his fiction a "hero with a grandfather is inconceivable." Finally, avoided by 19th- and early 20th-century European immigrants, the South is still more homogeneous than the rest of America.

Still, the gap between the South and the rest of the country has been narrowing. Thanks to Vietnam, Watergate, and other blows to innocence, all Americans have acquired some of the South's understanding of "the imperfectibility of man." And, too, the old "Southern-ness" is being steadily diluted by migration into and out of the region. Observes Georgia author Flannery O'Connor: Southerners "are being forced out, not only of our many sins but of our few virtues."