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**RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT**


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(and the timber, minerals, and petroleum they contain) has sharply increased in recent years while managing them is a drain on the treasury. Since the 1920s, for example, the 505 million acres administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service have appreciated 22-fold, and are now worth some \$500 billion.

Clawson notes that the 200-year history of federal land use policy has been one of constant change. Until the early 19th century, the focus was on acquisition. A period of disposal through homesteading (which continued until 1934), sales, and land grants for colleges and railroads followed. Beginning with the creation of the first National Forests (then called "forest reserves") in 1891, the emphasis shifted to "reservation." Then came an era of simple management. By the late 1960s, growing pressures from business, environmentalists, and recreation seekers made federal land everybody's business.

Among the new directions under consideration today are land sales ("privatization"), turning over large tracts of public lands to mixed public-private management companies, or greatly expanding Washington's practice of leasing out land (up to 25 percent of it would find takers). Clawson dismisses the western "Sagebrush Rebellion" demand that land be given to the states. They have, he says, "a proven record of failure" as stewards of natural resources.

One way to help resolve today's land-use disputes among competing interests, Clawson suggests, is to grant long-term "pullback" leases for certain tracts. A lumber company, for example, would receive a lease, but conservationists (or anybody else) would have the right to claim up to a third of the land on the same terms.

The United States has evolved a sophisticated mix of public and private uses of its land. Public land can be privately used; most private land is publicly regulated. Today's challenge, says Clawson, is to find a better mix to satisfy business, environmentalists, and the public.

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**ARTS & LETTERS**


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*John Cheever*  
*As Novelist*

"Cheever's Failed Paradise: The Short-Story Stylist as Novelist" by Adam Gussow, in *The Literary Review* (Fall 1983), Fairleigh Dickinson University, 285 Madison Ave., Madison, N.J. 07940.

The short stories of John Cheever (1912-82) are among the best of our time. Yet in spite of his literary gifts, argues Gussow, a Columbia University critic, Cheever was never able to write a truly successful novel.

Cheever was born into an old New England family that was down on its luck, and into an age whose values were torn apart by World War I. His sense of family contributed to the strong moral tone and nostalgic idealism that mark his work, while the influence of the "Lost Genera-

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tion" writers of the 1920s (particularly F. Scott Fitzgerald) gave his style a tinge of irony.

The landscape of "Cheever Country" is a suburban America populated by what we would today call the "preppie class." Cheever views his subjects with sympathy but detachment, engendered by his personal demons—a stormy marriage, alcoholism, and, later in life, growing homosexual proclivities.

With the exception of his first two (and best) novels, *The Wapshot Chronicle* (1957) and *The Wapshot Scandal* (1964), Cheever's books were attempts to exorcise those troubles and find redemption, argues Gussow. Both *Bullet Park* (1969) and *Falconer* (1977) worked poorly because Cheever, ever the short-story writer, had to rely on unlikely twists of plot to sustain his longer fiction. And the final line of *Falconer*—"Rejoice, he thought, rejoice"—suggests by its lack of conviction that Cheever's demons were still with him.

Ironically, Cheever's last novel, *Oh What A Paradise It Seems* (1982) is his worst—he writes about "abstractions" rather than concrete people and places, Gussow contends—but it also suggests a greater tranquility. Water, an ambiguous symbol (of purity, of alcoholism) in Cheever's stories, appears again. In the short story, "The Swimmer," for example, the alcoholic protagonist spends a day compulsively swimming in all of the pools in his neighborhood, stopping for a drink at each. But *Oh What A Paradise It Seems* opens with the main character skating effortlessly on the surface of a pond whose clearness, in Cheever's words, "seemed to have scoured his consciousness of the belief that his own lewdness was a profound contamination."

### Getting Rich in American Fiction

"'Consider the Lilies of the Field': The Inheritance Theme in American Literature" by Jules Zanger, in *The Antioch Review* (Fall 1983), P.O. Box 148, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387.

Stories of self-reliant heroes succeeding through hard work pervaded early American literature. But despite the continuing influence of the Protestant work ethic in America, the nation's fiction has increasingly reflected the lure of shortcuts on the road to riches.

Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, writes Zanger, an English professor at the University of Southern Illinois, American writers became fascinated with the impact of *inherited* wealth on individuals. Henry James, in both *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and *Wings of a Dove* (1902), focuses on women whose lives are changed by inheritances. In Mark Twain's *The Gilded Age*, Colonel Sellers waits "vainly for the great legacy that will transform [his] life." Inheritances also figure prominently in novels by William Dean Howells, Sherwood Anderson, and William Faulkner.

Zanger links the popularity of the inheritance theme to changes in American society at the end of the 19th century. The "realities of the corporate industrial state" were replacing the idyll of rural America. Thrift,