



Target form



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

"relatively autonomous," says Gardner, but they sometimes interact "seamlessly." A preoccupation with pattern binds mathematical and musical intelligence; Mozart, Gardner notes, "even composed music according to the roll of dice." Gardner's definition of intelligence may strike some as too lax. Particularly debatable (and certainly difficult to quantify) is what he calls "personal" intelligence, marked by insight into self and society. No less vague is "bodily-kinesthetic" intelligence, of the sort that Norman Mailer once lyrically attributed to boxer Muhammad Ali. Whatever the book's soft spots, it establishes that intelligence can never again be reduced to what Gardner calls "a group of raw computational capacities."

PAPERBOUNDS

RISK AND CULTURE: An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers. By Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky. Univ. of Calif., 1983. 221 pp. \$6.95

Why do some people perceive some dangers, such as the threat of industrial pollution or of radiation leakage, as more terrible and imminent than other dangers? According to Douglas, a Northwestern University anthropologist, and Wildavsky, a Berkeley political scientist, the reasons are never strictly objective or scientific. Indeed, write the authors, contemporary scientific "techniques for finding new dangers have run ahead of our

ability to discriminate among them." The assessment of risk is unavoidably a "social process," with strong political and moral dimensions. Focusing on contemporary America, the authors identify the chronic conflict between those who endorse the values of the "center"—faith in institutions and large organizations, support for unlimited economic growth, acceptance of certain economic and social inequalities—and those on the "border" who reject such values. The latter, including many but not all environmental and antinuclear groups, resemble such earlier religious sectarians as the 16th-century German Anabaptists in their moralizing zeal, their Manichean sense of good and evil, and their scorn for

anything that "represents social distinction, the division of labor, the making of wealth. . ." Not surprisingly, the modern sectarians view as most threatening those risks associated with or produced by Big Business. A modern society needs both supporters and critics of its major institutions, the authors conclude, but they are wary of the growing power of the "border" in recent decades. The unrestrained quest for a hazard-free environment may lead, for instance, to critical, even life-threatening, shortages of energy and to even larger state organizations charged with securing and maintaining the perfect, prophylactic society.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG DOCTOR. By Richard Selzer. Touchstone, 1983. 205 pp. \$5.95

A practicing general surgeon in New Haven and a member of the Yale Medical School faculty, Selzer writes here, as in his three previous books, with almost priestly reverence for the healing arts of medicine. The 23 essays, most anecdotal, mingle practical advice (about comfortable surgical footwear, the ideal size and lighting of an operating room) with musings of a more esoteric, even mystical, nature: "When the incision is made, the surgeon . . . shrinks to accommodate the dimensions of this unexplored place." Selzer has no patience with notions of surgery as a depersonalized procedure. Just before an operation, he writes, a patient "feels himself to be alone in a green and clanking place where there are no windows and he cannot see the sky. Let him look into your eyes for whatever distance and space he can find there." Throughout these essays, Selzer reminds his readers that no amount of technology can replace the physician's touch as the supreme medical instrument.



ROMAN WOMEN: Their History and Habits. By J.P.V.D. Balsdon. Barnes & Noble, 1983. 351 pp. \$6.95

In 1962, Balsdon, an Oxford classicist, advanced the frontiers of Roman social history with his authoritative survey of more than 1,000 years (753 B.C.—A.D. 337) of women's life in the ancient state. That this reissue shows signs of age makes it, in a way, more interesting. Dated, for example, is Balsdon's fascination with dress, coiffure, and the ways of *noble* women, such as Brutus's wife Porcia and Nero's mother Agrippina. Today's historians of women, by contrast, are likely to devote more attention to such matters as education, work, and contraception. When he wrote his book, Balsdon relied more than he now might on literary and historical sources—all written by men. He is aware of the pitfalls: "Always, be it noticed, in the ancient sources, it was the wife who was in danger of getting on her husband's nerves. You might think there were no irritating husbands." By his own admission, well-born Roman women "distinguished . . . by their high moral integrity . . . were perhaps just a little dull." Less virtuous women—such as Messalina, who publicly married a lover while her husband, Emperor Claudius, was away on imperial business—tend to reinvigorate Balsdon's curiosity.