Book Reviews

Forecast

The Emerging Japanese Superstate. Challenge and Response. HERMAN KAHN. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970. xiv, 276 pp., illus. $7.95.

The Japanese Challenge. ROBERT GUILLAIN. Translated from the French edition (Paris, 1969) by Patrick O'Brian. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1970. 352 pp. $8.50.

Is "futurology" a science? On the basis of the book written by Herman Kahn, a self-described "professional futurologist," I think not. It is possible that Kahn's futurological wager will prove to be correct, but if so it will be because he made a lucky guess, not because he knows what he is talking about. Kahn and his Hudson Institute associates are deeply impressed by the growth of the Japanese economy over the last 15 years, and they believe that it is likely to continue to grow at close to the present rate (12.6 percent increase in real GNP during fiscal year 1969) for the next two to three decades. On the basis of that projection, they conclude that Japan will become something called a "superstate" during the 1990's—a configuration that is never adequately described but that presumably means a nation-state capable of having a commanding influence on the course of international events because of its great economic and therefore, potentially, military power.

The chief interest in such a prediction lies not in its assertion but in its demonstration: What are the facts, trends, extrapolations, and projections that make the prediction believable? Here, I submit, Kahn is not only in trouble, he is putting on an inexcusably bad act. Described on the dust jacket as "one of the foremost authorities on Japan," Kahn himself states: "I should also note that at Hudson Institute we have no serious experts on Japan as members of the staff—no one at the moment, for example, except for various consultants, who even reads Japanese" (p. xi). In fact, this book seems to have been inspired by Kahn's two visits to Japan, during which he gave lectures at Kyoto Sangyo University (which he apparently does not know is more of a Japanese Rand Corporation than a university), and where he had several meetings with members of one segment of the Japanese Establishment, who are understandably quite pleased that Kahn went home and wrote down what they told him without his doing any further checking. (The book has, of course, been instantly translated and published in Japan.) Regrettably, this book is the 1970's social science equivalent of the 1950's Los Angeles and San Francisco Zen books: Americans now write about the "Japanese Economic Miracle" (Kahn's chapters 3 and 4) in the same way they used to write about achieving *satori* (Buddhist spiritual enlightenment) on the Hollywood Freeway.

Kahn makes lots of little errors: the Dodge Plan currency reform was made in 1949, not 1951—that is, before the Korean War began, which makes a difference (p. 79); Japan's alleged "greater moderation, care, and even love of the environment" (p. 23) is laughable in view of the fact that the country acknowledges it has the worst environmental pollution problem of any industrialized nation; his statement that there have been no fatalities in Japan's student riots, except for Miss Kamba in 1960, is inaccurate; and his assertion that "the Japanese have a hinterland in Non-Communist Pacific Asia of possibly 200 to 300 million people, many of whom they will simply incorporate, by one device or another, into their economic superstate even while not moving them geographically" (p. 96) reveals that he is ignorant of both the history and the current nature of East and South Asian politics. Neither China, nor India, nor Indonesia, nor Japan is large enough (in any sense) to dominate its neighbors, but each is too large not to entertain secret (or not so secret) thoughts about trying to achieve a dominant position. Some East Asian nations are beginning to show slight glimmers of understanding of this fact of life.

Kahn's real problems, however, are not with factual errors. They lie rather with matters of tone: old-fashioned American racism, intellectual arrogance ("I am much more concerned . . . that the anti-nuclear sentiment in Japan is so precarious that the influence of a foreign commentator [Kahn] may upset the balance" [p. 10]), and a belief that glibness can compensate for slipshod analysis ("In discussing these possibilities I do not wish to imply that there will necessarily be clarity or real unity and consensus on any or all of these issues. However, neither would I like to preclude that possibility" [p. 8]).

Slipshod analysis is particularly evident in his heavy reliance on Ruth Benedict's 25-year-old treatise *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, which he calls "perhaps the best book" in the entire field. In the postwar period, two schools of thought have emerged concerning the values and social structure of modern Japanese society. One, composed primarily of domestic Japanese social critics, stresses the bureaucratization of the modern Japanese state and alleges the existence of a ruling stratum in Japan, which either cajoles or forces the population to do what this elite wants it to do. The other school, beginning with Ruth Benedict and today composed primarily of domestic idealists and foreign, chiefly American, historians and sociologists, stresses that peculiar and highly specific Japanese values—above all those inherited from the feudal tradition—predispose the Japanese people to do what their leaders tell them to do. Obviously, both schools of thought are partly correct, and the best interpretations of Japanese society, foreign or domestic, incorporate both. See, for example, Chie Nakane's *Japanese Society* (University of California Press, 1970), which is an English translation of her *Tate-shakai no ningen-kankei* (Personal Relations in a Vertical Society, Kōdansha, Tokyo, 1967).

Kahn, on the other hand, argues that most Americans accept the tenets of the first school—which is demonstrably untrue with regard to American writing on Japan—and he opts for the second. In so doing he is insensitive to the logical difficulties of beginning a study of social phenomena with a blanket assertion about values rather than making them a residual or final variable. Assertions concerning values, like Freudian psychology, can be used

to explain (away) anything. For example, Kahn argues, "It is the basic thesis of this book that the Japanese differ from Americans and Europeans in many important ways" (p. 17). In other words, Japan has enterprise unions, consensus politics, and intense corporate loyalty because that's just the way the Japanese are. An equally serious fault in his discussion of Japanese values is that, although all Japanese adults (and Kahn himself) distinguish between Japanese who were socialized before the end of World War II and those who came of age only in the postwar world, his reliance on Benedict's book, which was published in 1946, compromises his assertions about the present generation.

Japan is America's leading ally in the Pacific, a nation half the size of the United States in terms of population and more significant economically than most European nations combined. The fact that a book as spurious as this and at the same time as highly influential as it is likely to be could be published in America in 1970 strikes me as ominous for the immediate future of Japanese-American relations, regardless of what happens two or three decades from now. Why is it that so many opinion-leading Americans, after two or three short junkets to Japan, go gaga over the country in one way or another? Compare, for example, Jane Jacobs's praise a few years ago of Tokyo's mixed industrial-residential areas (a transitional phenomenon, now almost entirely disappeared), or David Riesman's overly simple conclusion that the Japanese were a nation of pacifists. The distinguished critic Katō Shūichi may have a part of the explanation when he argues that Japanese themselves are today almost completely international in their architecture, music, sculpture, and even painting but that they remain extraordinarily isolated in terms of language and literature. As a consequence, the foreigner who comes to Japan with no knowledge of Japan's formidable language can be easily misled by the genuine international accessibility of Japan's economy and material culture, even though he is, in fact, crippled by his inability to engage in active verbal communication, or even to read signs and a newspaper. Kahn believes that the Japanese will soon have more success in teaching their countrymen English than they have had in the past; I believe that the United States should be doing more than it is at the present time to teach some of its citizens to read Japanese—particularly journalists and commentators on Japanese-American relations.

Understanding Japan and its future is too important to be left in the hands of "professional futurologists." Anyone who wishes to read a competent, honest, up-to-date book on Japan today, written by an experienced journalist and with laymen as the intended readers, would do well to turn to Robert Guillain's *The Japanese Challenge.* Guillain has been the permanent correspondent of *Le Monde* in Tokyo since the 1930's, and his latest book, which is comprehensive and documented and has a good bibliography, is an English translation of his *Japon, Troisième Grand* (Paris, 1969).

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Quality and Equality

Free-Access Higher Education. WARREN W. WILLINGHAM. College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1970. x, 242 pp., illus. $6.50.

The literature of higher education has addressed itself more and more of late to the conflicting demands of egalitarianism and meritocracy. Is it possible, for example, to provide for the open enrollment of New Yorkers in their City University while preserving the impressive quality of that academic environment? Or is academic quality in higher education finally of less importance to society as a whole than absolute equality of opportunity for, essentially, all members of that society? Is it realistic to think that we can work toward both equal opportunity *and* high quality throughout higher education?

Warren Willingham's study is a persuasive argument for increased emphasis on the egalitarian over the meritocratic—if, indeed, a choice must be made. The findings, drawn from a near-monumental effort in demographic and institutional research, are directed primarily to those who must determine the extent of the nation's commitment to the further development of educational resources. Members of state legislatures, of governing and coordinating bodies for public higher education, and of state and federal educational agencies should consider this work required reading. It includes a full and accurate portrayal of current provisions, state by state, for "free-access" higher education. More important, it issues a challenge to increase not only the availability of higher education but also its relevance and utility for the nation's youth.

The reportorial component of the study, utilizing most of the empirical data assembled, provides a measurement of progress toward the Eisenhower Commission goal (1960) of developing "two year colleges within commuting distance of most high school graduates." Willingham's measure takes in those colleges (whether two- or four-year institutions) that offer "free access"—that is, are essentially nonselective in admission standards and low in cost for commuting students. Nationwide, 789 colleges meet these requirements—a distressingly small percentage of the 2596 colleges examined in the study. When demographic data are added to institutional, the picture becomes even more dismal. Only two-fifths of the current population of prospective students reside within a 45-minute commuting distance of a free-access college. The picture is far worse in the major metropolitan areas; in 23 of the nation's 29 largest cities, there exists what Willingham calls a "major deficit" in accessibility of higher education.

This analysis of educational resources and demographic characteristics is designed to show how well (in a quantitative sense) the nation's colleges and universities serve a diverse and growing population. In spite of the rapid growth of free-access community colleges during the '60's, Willingham's answer is "not very well." Part of the problem is that new two-year colleges (the Carnegie Commission's recommendation calls for an additional 500 by 1976) are not always free-access and are often not located in major population centers. Perhaps Willingham is too insistent on proximity (it "attracts marginal students"), but there is no doubt that many potential students will take advantage of educational opportunity only if it is close at hand. A larger part of the problem, with these students and others, is that educational opportunity has not been "made real"—that is, it has not seemed directly relevant to individual and societal needs.

It is here that the emphasis swings from an essentially quantitative consideration of the amount and nature of free-access higher education to a substantive and qualitative critique of academic programming within the current educational establishment. A "much larger task," writes Willingham, than simply to provide free-access colleges