

pher, a member of a profession not  
merican public. He is interested in the  
the human landscape—in this book,  
s where, and why? Who lives how,  
re and ended up living there, and,  
of sociology, history, anthropology,  
ology, economics, and politics, since  
the way people live. But the social  
ures of *place*: the neighborhood or  
vince as something to be examined  
on like John Western, the lines on a  
ditions of plunder, schemes, sleights-  
quiescences, victories and defeats,  
of various principalities and powers  
like those lines no abstract exercise in  
n and women and children, so very  
hard, concrete reality.

s Cape Town is, of course, the matter  
sly, thoughtfully, and worriedly. The  
but he is also a person of compassion  
s a living nightmare when he sees one.  
n brutality, greed, and selfishness. He  
fering and pain, to the spectacle of  
ousing, inadequate sanitation, and job-  
ile a minority does right well for itself,  
whelming military power. His reaction,  
self-righteousness. This is a book about  
or who understands—with the ancient  
*War and Peace*, with the George Eliot of  
kner of the American South, and with  
frica—that history is not made in dark,  
ded by Satan and a few of his mortal  
bly complex affair. John Western under-  
t, and unpredictable circumstance play  
le's, and continents's history (hence, the  
or irony and ambiguity among those who  
ties work).

for many Americans to turn the present-

over there. They were born into this mess, and so were we!" He was pointing at some white people, parents and their children, sitting on a park bench in Johannesburg; he was also showing an exceptional capability, a willingness to take a long, wry, and broad-minded view of how things work in a given history. Not that the youth lacked moral or political indignation; he was no servile product of a repressive regime, handing to the white master sweet pieties in exchange for a pat on the head and a stick of candy. He was a tough survivor of Soweto's riots letting an American sympathizer know that pity can be cheap and empathy meaningless to someone who has to ready himself for a long, tough fight *and* that his is a fight (so I have heard from many such "children") not by any means confined to the Republic of South Africa. I wanted to hand that "child" a few sympathetic words, but he had no use for the wordy self-justifications or the sly self-exaltations of my kind.

I rather think that "boy" would have enjoyed a bit more the line of inquiry and argument pursued in the following pages—straight-forward, unapologetic, clearheaded, and morally alert, yet unsentimental. When the reader has finished this book, he/she will understand how South Africa's outcasts live, at least those part of one important city: Cape Town. Cape Town's coloureds are accidents of history, no doubt! One can only hope and pray that there is time enough for those who probably will never read this book—South Africa's impoverished, politically disenfranchised, ever so vulnerable "coloured" and "black" people, and its whites—to come to their collective senses, lest one awful, murderous series of confrontations furnish us with yet another example of the cursed nature of life so many men and women simply must take for granted, it seems, "world without end." Meanwhile, we have a factual sermon of sorts, a study done by a man who writes like an experienced and astute essayist and thinks in the tradition of wise and original-minded social inquiry. His is no small or common gift; it is one to be acknowledged with gratitude. We ought to read the following pages attentively and celebrate them among our colleagues and friends as an encouraging sign for the intellectual life of a profession, of a community of readers—though not, alas, a sign that the question under discussion will soon be academic.

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