ADVANCED READING

PASSAGE 1

In an unfinished but highly suggestive series of essays, the late Sarah Eisenstein has focused attention on the evolution of working women's values from the turn of the century to the First World War. Eisenstein argues that turn-of-the-century women neither wholly accepted nor rejected what she calls the dominant "ideology of domesticity," but rather took this and other available ideologies—feminism, socialism, trade unionism—and modified or adapted them in light of their own experiences and needs. In thus maintaining that wage-work helped to produce a new "consciousness" among women, Eisenstein to some extent challenges the recent, controversial proposal by Leslie Tentler that for women the work experience only served to reinforce the attractiveness of the dominant ideology. According to the Tentler, the degrading conditions under which many female wage earners worked made them view the family as a source of power and esteem available nowhere else in their social world. In contrast, Eisenstein's study insists that wage-work had other implications for women's identities and consciousness. Most importantly, her work aims to demonstrate that wage-work enabled women to become aware of themselves as a distinct social group capable of defining their collective circumstance. Eisenstein insists that as a group working-class women were not able to come to collective consciousness of their situation until they began entering the labor force, because domestic work tended to isolate them from one another.

Unfortunately, Eisenstein's unfinished study does not develop these ideas in sufficient depth or detail, offering tantalizing hints rather than an exhaustive analysis. Whatever Eisenstein's overall plan may have been, in its current form her study suffers from the limited nature of the sources she depended on. She uses the speeches and writings of reformers and labor organizers, who she acknowledges were far from representative, as the voice of the typical woman worker. And there is less than adequate attention given to the differing values of immigrant groups that made up a significant proportion of the population under investigation. While raising important questions, Eisenstein's essays do not provide definitive answer, and it remains for others to take up the challenges they offer.

PASSAGE 2

Neotropical coastal mangrove forests are usually "zonal," with certain mangrove species found predominantly in the seaward portion of the habitat and other mangrove species on the more landward portions of the coast. The earliest research on mangrove forests produced descriptions of species distribution from shore to land, without exploring the causes of the distributions.

The idea that zonation is caused by plant succession was first expressed by J. H. Davis in a study of Florida mangrove forests. According to Davis' scheme, the shoreline is being extended in a seaward direction because of the "land-building" role of mangroves, which, by trapping sediments over time, extend the shore. As a habitat gradually becomes more inland as the shore extends, the "land-building" species are replaced. This continuous process of accretion and succession would be interrupted only by hurricanes or storm flushings.

Recently the universal application of Davis' succession paradigm has been challenged. It appears that in areas where weak currents and weak tidal energies allow the accumulation of sediments, mangroves will follow land formation and accelerate the rate of soil accretion; succession will proceed according to Davis' scheme. But on stable coastlines, the distribution of mangrove species results in other patterns of zonation; "land building" does not occur.

To find a principle that explains the various distribution patterns, several researchers have looked to salinity and its effects on mangrove. While mangroves can develop in fresh water, they can also thrive in salinities as high as 2.5 times that of seawater. However, those mangrove species found in freshwater habitats do well only in the absence of competition, thus suggesting that salinity tolerance is a critical factor in competitive success among mangrove species. Research suggests that mangroves will normally dominate highly saline regions, although not because they require salt. Rather, they are metabolically efficient (and hence grow well) in portions of an environment whose high salinity excludes plants adapted to lower salinities. Tides create different degrees of salinity along a coastline. The characteristic mangrove species of each zone should exhibit a higher metabolic efficiency at that salinity than will any potential invader, including other species of mangrove.

PASSAGE 3

Modern manufacturers, who need reliable sources of materials and technologically advanced components to operate profitably, face an increasingly difficult choice between owning the producers of these items (a practice known as backward integration) and buying from independent producers. Manufacturers who integrate may reap short-term rewards, but they often restrict their future capacity for innovative product development.

Backward integration removes the need for some purchasing and marketing functions, centralizes overhead, and permits manufacturers to eliminate duplicated efforts in research and development. Where components are commodities (ferrous metals or petroleum, for example), backward integration almost certainly boosts profits. Nevertheless, because product innovation means adopting the most technologically advanced and cost-effective ways of making components, backward integration may entail a serious risk for a technologically active company—for example, a producer of sophisticated consumer electronics.

A company that decides to make rather than buy important parts can lock itself into an outdated technology. Independent suppliers may be unwilling to share innovations with assemblers with whom they are competing. Moreover, when an assembler sets out to master the technology of producing advanced components, the resulting demands on its resources may compromise its ability to assemble these components successfully into end products. Long-term contracts with suppliers can achieve many of the same cost benefits as backward integration without compromising a company's ability to innovate.

However, moving away from backward integration is not a complete solution either. Developing innovative technologies requires independent suppliers of components to invest huge sums in research and development. The resulting low profit margins on the sale of components threaten the long-term financial stability of these firms. Because the ability of end-product assemblers to respond to market opportunities depends heavily on suppliers of components, assemblers are often forced to integrate by purchasing the suppliers of components just to keep their suppliers in business.

PASSAGE 4

Homeostasis, an animal's maintenance of certain internal variables within an acceptable range, particularly in extreme physical environments, has long interested biologists. The desert rat and the camel in the most water-deprived environments, and marine vertebrates in an all-water environment, encounter the same regulatory problem: maintaining adequate internal fluid balance.

For desert rats and camels, the problem is conservation of water in an environment where standing water is nonexistent, temperature is high, and humidity is low. Despite these handicaps, desert rats are able to maintain the osmotic pressure of their blood, as well as their total body-water content, at approximately the same levels as other rats. One countermeasure is behavioral: these rats stay in burrows during the hot part of the day, thus avoiding loss of fluid through panting or sweating, which are regulatory mechanisms for maintaining internal body temperature by evaporative cooling. Also, desert rats' kidneys can excrete a urine having twice as high a salt content as sea water.

Camels, on the other hand, rely more on simple endurance. They cannot store water, and their reliance on an entirely unexceptional kidney results in a rate of water loss through renal function significantly higher than that of desert rats. As a result, camels must tolerate losses in body water of up to thirty percent of their body weight. Nevertheless, camels do rely on a special mechanism to keep water loss within a tolerable range: by seating and panting only when their body temperature exceeds that which would kill a human, they conserve internal water.

Marine vertebrates experience difficulty with their water balance because though there is no shortage of seawater to drink, they must drink a lot of it to maintain their internal fluid balance. But the excess salts from the seawater must be discharged somehow, and the kidneys of most marine vertebrates are unable to excrete a urine in which the salts are more concentrated than in seawater. Most of these animals have special salt-secreting organs outside the kidney that enable them to eliminate excess salt.

PASSAGE 5

In the seventeenth-century Florentine textile industry, women were employed primarily in low-paying, low-skill jobs. To explain this segregation of labor by gender, economists have relied on the useful theory of human capital. According to this theory, investment in human capital—the acquisition of difficult job-related skills—generally benefits individuals by making them eligible to engage in well-paid occupations. Women's role as child bearers, however, results in interruptions in their participation in the job market (as compared with men's) and thus reduces their opportunities to acquire training for highly skilled work. In addition, the human capital theory explains why there was a high concentration of women workers in certain low-skill jobs, such as weaving, but not in others, such as combing or carding, by positing that because of their primary responsibility in child rearing women took occupations that could be carried out in the home.

There were, however, differences in pay scales that cannot be explained by the human capital theory. For example, male construction workers were paid significantly higher wage than female taffeta weavers. The wage difference between these two low-skill occupations stems from the segregation of labor by gender: because a limited number of occupations were open to women, there was a large supply of workers in their fields, and this "overcrowding" resulted in women receiving lower wages and men receiving higher wages.

PASSAGE 6

The function of capital markets is to facilitate an exchange of funds among all participants, and yet in practice we find that certain participants are not on a par with others. Members of society have varying degrees of market strength in terms of information they bring to a transaction, as well as of purchasing power and creditworthiness, as defined by lenders.

For example, within minority communities, capital markets do not properly fulfill their functions; they do not provide access to the aggregate flow of funds in the United States. The financial system does not generate the credit or investment vehicles needed for underwriting economic development in minority areas. The problem underlying this dysfunction is found in a rationing mechanism affecting both the available alternatives for investment and the amount of financial resources. This creates a distributive mechanism penalizing members of minority groups because of their socioeconomic differences from others. The existing system expresses definite socially based investment preferences that result from the previous allocation of income and that influence the allocation of resources for the present and future. The system tends to increase the inequality of income distribution. And, in the United States economy, a greater inequality of income distribution leads to a greater concentration of capital in certain types of investment.

Most traditional financial-market analysis studies ignore financial markets' deficiencies in allocation because of analysts' inherent preferences for the simple model of perfect competition. Conventional financial analysis pays limited attention to issues of market structure and dynamics, relative costs of information, and problems of income distribution. Market participants are viewed as acting as entirely independent and homogeneous individuals with perfect foresight about capital-market behavior. Also, it is assumed that each individual in the community at large has the same access to the market and the same opportunity to transact and to express the preference appropriate to his or her individual interest. Moreover, it is assumed that transaction costs for various types of financial instruments (stocks, bonds, etc.) are equally known and equally divided among all community members.