2004

Robert D. Kaplan: An Empire Wilderness Study Guide

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PART I: THE LAST REDOUBT OF THE NATION-STATE

CHAPTER ONE: FORT LEAVENWORTH

Review

Fort Leavenworth
Manifest Destiny
historical role of standing army
reasons for military's professional-caste elite
Morelock on the future of war
Frederick Jackson Turner and the frontier thesis
medievalization of the continent
print-capitalism vs. computer-driven world economy

PART II: THE NEW WILDERNESS

CHAPTER TWO: FORT LEAVENWORTH TO ST. LOUIS

Statistics

LARGEST AMERICAN CITIES (1950)

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<th>City</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
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<td>1,027,974</td>
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LARGEST AMERICAN CITIES (2000)
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<td>Austin</td>
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Review

population trends in the largest cities of 1950

CHAPTER THREE: THE AVERAGE AMERICAN CITY

Review

Chicago
evolution of American cities
Dennis Judd on American “individualism”
American worker’s work year
Gilded Age millionaires

St. Louis
origin of gated communities
Alexis de Tocqueville on material prosperity
black flight to the suburbs

CHAPTER FOUR: THE “AMERICAN BOTTOMS”

Review

Morris Hunt on the desolation of East St. Louis
importation of IT graduates from India

CHAPTER FIVE: OMAHA: PLUGGED IN

Review

Omaha and the Union Pacific
foreign policies pursued by heartland cities
maquiladora factories

maquiladora factories

CHAPTER SIX: AGAINST THE CURRENT

Note

“Sisyphean persistence” refers to the Myth of Sisyphus, who was condemned to having to roll a huge stone to the top of a mountain, only to have it roll down again.

Review
PART III: IN THE FUTURE NOW

CHAPTER SEVEN: LIKE TEHERAN AND SÃO PAULO

Review
California's population growth            homelessness in Santa Monica
Kotkin's urban confederacy movement       Zaheer Virji on race relations
Watts and South Central                   Great Mall of China
private security agencies                Gregory Rodriguez on Latinos

CHAPTER EIGHT: ONE OF THE WORLD’S BIGGEST ECONOMIES

Review
the average commute in Orange County     population density of Orange County
Dennis Macheski on immigration            Proposition 187
Fashion Island Mall                      Tocqueville on democracy and despotism
libertarianism                            the role played by the car
the locus of power

CHAPTER NINE: LOW-END COSMOPOLITANISM

Review
governing of the United States and Mexico

PART IV: THE AGENT OF HISTORY

CHAPTER TEN: HISTORY MOVES NORTH

Study Questions
1. Why don’t Mexicans go to the police for help? What is Xochimilco and how is it governed? How are property rights protected? What is a basic difference between the United States and Mexico? What does the author mean by saying that “history” is moving northward? (109-12)

2. How does the former top government minister characterize the political direction of Mexico? What are some of the realities of geographical Mexico? How does the middle class contribute to this balkanization? What are the characteristics of the “party despotism” of the dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)? What does it take to create enough jobs for the growing population? Describe Mexico’s erratic route to stability. (112-17)
3. Who cultivates the outdoor cannabis (hemp, marijuana) fields in the United States? What role does Sinoloa state play in drug smuggling? How do the profits of the cocaine traffic compare with Mexico’s large petroleum industry? Who dominates the local drug trade? (117-20)

Review

United States and Mexico: basic differences geographical Mexico and disunity
Mexico’s party despotism real unemployment and economic growth needs
Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) Sinoloa, petroleum, and drug smuggling

CHAPTER ELEVEN: IN SEARCH OF THE NONEXISTENT

Study Questions

1. What does the author mean by saying that the Spanish conquerors lacked the habit of process? What did Cabeza de Vaca and Coronado find in their “search for the nonexistent?” (121-23)

2. How is the Mexican ambivalence toward the Spanish conquerors manifested? How does this complicate and dilute the meaning of a state that ultimately grew from the Spanish conquest? (123-26)

3. Why significance does Kaplan find in the shrine for Jesús Malverde, “El Narcosantón?” How it “rebuke” the established aesthetics, such as “the newest poured concrete and tinted glass structures?” What is characteristic of these structures? What are the chief products of Sinoloa? What advantages do Mexican schoolchildren have over many inner city American? How important is the drug trade to the life of Mexico? To the United States? (126-30)

Review

teaching about Mexico’s past Cortez and Coronado
multibillion dollar narcotics trade

CHAPTER TWELVE: UPHEAVALS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Study Questions

1. What was different about the author’s bus ride to the northern border? What kind of instability is bred by success? What has been the social and economic impact of the maquiladoras? What is typical of the border area? What are some consequences of the relocation of over 2000 companies in this region? How does this relate to American consumers? What is Nogales like south of the “iron curtain?” In the absence of drugs and illegal immigrations, what might face the United States in the future? What makes Mexico “intractable?” How is the area becoming integrated? What factors account for the different responses of California and Texas to the Mexican challenge? What is significant about the role of Monterrey in the region? (131-37)

Review

maquiladoras and cheap labor relationship between American consumers and Third World workers responses of California and Texas to the Mexican challenge
CHAPTER THIRTEEN: ACROSS THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

Review

importance of maintenance

PART V: SEPARATE NATIONS

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE FIRST OASIS

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: INDIVIDUALISTS

Review

James Harrington

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: “OUR CULTURE IS GETTING REAL THIN”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: ARIZONA: A BALKAN MAP?

Review

Apache Papago
Hopi Navajo

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: HOPI SILENCES AND THE LAND OF AWE

Review

kachina dolls kivas
Kit Carson John C. Frémont

CHAPTER NINETEEN: VETERANS DAY

CHAPTER TWENTY: ON STAGE IN SANTA FE AND TAOS
adobe Mabel Dodge (Luhan)
Georgia O'Keefe D. H. Lawrence
Willa Cather Thomas Wolfe
Carl Jung

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: THE GREYHOUND UNDERCLASS

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: A DESERT CULTURE

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: THE DRY-LAND SEA

PART VI: THE NEW EMPIRE

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: IMPERIAL OUTPOST AND THE SMALL TOWN

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: THE NEW LOCALISM

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spring flooding and dams

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX: AN EMPIRE WILDERNESS?

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Abraham Lincoln on war and the land uniting the elite
Theodore Roosevelt environmentalists
Gentrification Thomas Jefferson
liberals and conservatives James Madison
CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: CANADA: THE WILD CARD

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national character

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT: VANCOUVER: TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY PATRIOTISM

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canadian identity 
I-5 Main Street 
Pacific Corridor Enterprise 
Cascadia 
tabula rasa

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE: TOWARD CATHAY

Review

Oregon Trail 
Willamette Valley 
high tech 
urban growth boundary 
redlining 
view corridors

VII: THE MEANING OF VICKSBURG

CHAPTER THIRTY: HISTORY IN THREE DIMENSIONS

Review

Walt Whitman 
how nations abide 
temporariness of American civilization