

It was based on the simple truth, that people will look at *anything*, so long as it's done by a good-looking guy and a cute doll; that's what sells films like "Basic Instinct." Just about everything Balanchine taught was imprecise, fuzzy, and technically wrong; this he would justify by the "need for speed." For example, he didn't like it if you put the heel down when you land from a jump; this means the *next* step is not properly taken, so wearing down the Achilles tendon, displacing the metatarsal bones, and sending a shock through the entire leg. It is one of the reasons for the high "kill rate" among his dancers. Balanchine would weep a few crocodile tears at every early retirement, and then move on to the next Kleenex tissue. He liked the effect.

As for Balanchine's "musicality and variety of rhythm"—well, his favorite composer was his friend Igor Stravinsky. The man, lacking the skill to write contrapuntal music after Brahms, scribbled percussive, atonal noise-tracks, the basic feature of which, like pop and rock, is accompanied melody and jungle rhythm. This was one area where he could excel—by wandering off to play by himself. Unfortunately, the dancers cannot wander off and play by themselves. They need a pocket computer to correlate Stravinsky's crazy counts with Balanchine's weird gestures.

So, one would have wished for more controversy in *Bournonvilleana*, at least a hint of the kind of polemic raised by the director of the Paris Opera school, Claude Bessy, in an interview all the more interesting because out of character with what she herself teaches. Bessey told the Paris weekly *L'Express* in May 1986: "There is great risk in going from one school to the other. The body is forced to adopt contradictory positions, antagonistic efforts. There are far more accidents than ever before. . . . In the U.S.A., things have gone so far that after 10 years on stage, dancers are broken. They're thrown onto the trash, and others brought in. Within a few short years, at the New York City Ballet, the whole company had changed. I said: 'Where's Mr. X? Where's Miss Y?' And they told me—'Well, his knee cracked up three times,' or 'She's had an operation on her knee, or hip, or back.' Stop! Save the dancers! is all I have to say."

Hard on the proverbial heel of the Bournonville Festival, the Royal Theater is now, I am sorry to say, in the midst of a Balanchine Festival. Given the kind of injuries Balanchine dancers sustain, I pray that *Bournonvilleana* will not be chaise-longue reading for some of the Royal Ballet's best dancers as they sit out the season with their leg in plaster.

This said, the book makes a magnificent Christmas gift. The illustrations alone, chosen with great care, are worth the price. They include rare photographs from the earliest Bournonville productions in the 19th century, portraits of the great Danish dancers, old cityscapes, costume and setting sketches, and some really nasty caricatures of Bournonville from old newspapers. A note of caution: Order the hardcover edition. The softcover is poorly done up and will fall apart with the hard use we fanatics are bound to give it.

Malthusians' new beyond the limits

by Marjorie Mazel Hecht

Beyond the Limits: Confronting Global Collapse, Envisioning a Sustainable Future

by Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jørgen Randers

Chelsea Green, Post Mills, Vt., 1992
320 pages, hardbound \$19.95

In 1972, the Club of Rome popularized a little book, *Limits to Growth*, that established a protective coating of computer-modeling techno-gobbledygook around the Club's basic malthusian goal: population reduction. Now, 20 years later, the authors of *The Limits to Growth* have updated their techno-gobbledygook in a book titled *Beyond the Limits*.

The 1972 book gave the world about 100 years before collapse. The 1992 book gives the world a much shorter lifespan before resources, living standards, industrial production, and agriculture burst into uncontrollable collapse.

It was easy to defeat *The Limits to Growth* economists in debates during the 1970s; they and their doomsday analysis were incompetent to the point of being comical. Today their economics are still laughable; but the growth of the green movement has created a gullibility gap into which the *Beyond the Limits* economists fit too comfortably in 1992.

The Club of Rome's pessimistic message about how greedily growing industrial society destroys the Earth remains the same in both books. What's new in the 1992 book is 1) the authors' expression of "love" and concern for the "poor" of the Earth; and 2) the solution they devise to counter greedy growth: "sustainable development."

Euphemisms for genocide

These new items are geared especially to influence the developing-sector countries to go along with the malthusians' agenda as laid out at the June Earth Summit in Brazil: in brief, to cut living standards! (affluence pollutes) and cut population (people pollute). During May, the authors, economists Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, and Jørgen Randers, held a series of press conferences to promote this message.

For the leaders of developing countries—and for any

book is of credibility

human beings who believe in progress and envision the possibility of a better future for their children and grandchildren—this book should serve as a warning that the words “sustainable development” are just a euphemism for genocide. As much as the authors cry about poverty, berate the “growth-obsessed society of today,” and ecstatically describe the loving way that the “sustainable society” will meet our “unmet non-material needs,” the bottom line of their model is that poor old Mother Earth is being irreparably damaged and to stop the decline we must immediately reduce population and living standards.

As the editors of this magazine argued in the 1970s, and as is still the case, it is the rate of introduction of new technologies into the economy that increases productivity and thus increases the potential for greater population density at better living standards. This is historical fact, not some computerized hocus-pocus.

Unsustainable and biased

Beyond the Limits, like its 1972 predecessor, is simply not credible. Three economists have created a computer model called World3, originally commissioned at MIT by the Club of Rome, to give a technical framework for their rotten world view. No matter how many model runs the economists carry out to show the consequences of what they term our “addiction to growth,” the fact remains that the computer models only their own prejudices, not reality.

Beyond the Limits is so biased, in fact, that even the World Bank’s chief economist, Lawrence Summers, attacked it at the authors’ Washington press conference. The *Washington Post* reported April 14: “Within minutes after Donella Meadows’s presentation, Summers took the microphone to blast the new book, its premise and the authors’ methods.” The computer model “has no validity . . . [it] is only feeding back the authors’ prior views. The conclusions are built in,” Summers said.

For those who lived through the counterculture of the 1960s and watched it ooze into the environmentalism of the 1980s, *Beyond the Limits* will bring on a rush of recognition, especially Chapter 8, where the authors “take off their computer modeling hats and . . . reappear as plain human beings.” The chapter reeks of touchy-feely group-awareness sessions, the endless rhetoric of brains made soft by an over-

dose of counterculture.

“People don’t need enormous cars,” the authors tell us, “they need respect. They don’t need closets full of clothes; they need to feel attractive and they need excitement and variety and beauty. . . . A society that can admit and articulate its non-material needs and find non-material ways to satisfy them would require much lower material and energy throughputs and would provide much higher levels of human fulfillment.”

So, how do we achieve this sustainable society? By “visioning,” for example, “*what you really want*” not what someone has taught you to want; by “networking,” by “truth-telling,” and by “loving.” Of course, such processes can be moral and good—but not when they are built on a belief system of big lies.

The big lies are numerous: Growth is bad; development is good. The nonlinearity of the impact of advanced technologies on the economy is denied. Energy resources modeled for the future exclude nuclear and fusion; only so-called renewables like solar and wind—which could never power an industrial society—are modeled. Resources are defined as finite. Technologies like pesticides and fertilizers are defined simply as polluting.

The ozone lie

Perhaps most revealing is Chapter 5 on “The Ozone Story.” Here we are told that the model for a sustainable society is possible because “The human race has recently overshot, learned about, and backed off from one clear environmental limit—the destruction of the stratospheric ozone layer. . . . The world’s nations acknowledged that they had overrun a serious limit. Soberly, reluctantly, they agreed to give up a profitable and useful industrial product. They did it before there was any measurable economic, ecological, or human damage and before there was complete scientific certainty.”

The truth is that there not only is not “complete scientific certainty”; there is *no* scientific certainty whatsoever that the very small amounts of man-made chlorofluorocarbons are depleting the ozone layer. The so-called evidence is the product of a computer model, not reality. And like the rest of the environmentalist scare stories promoted by *Beyond the Limits*, the ozone scare was devised for the purpose of convincing people that they must cut back consumption, not because of any real threat, as some of the scientists involved have admitted.

With great delight, the authors describe how “the world can get along without CFCs.” Unmentioned in their euphoria is the plain fact that millions of people will die because the cheapest form of refrigeration—freon—has been banned, making the food supply less reliable, especially in the developing sector.

If these three economists and their supporters were not so dangerous to the health of the rest of us, their magical gobbledygook could be dismissed as a joke.