San José Studies, February 1975

San José State University Foundation

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

"Yet another journal . . . ?"

In a world where unread magazines collect dust on coffee tables and uncountable publications overwhelm the scholar trying to catch up with his reading, the appearance of yet another journal might need a word of explanation. *San José Studies* hopes to move into the vacuum currently separating the popular magazines on the supermarket shelf from the academic journals in the scholar's study. We plan to publish articles which originate in the scholarly pursuit of knowledge but which appeal to every individual who possesses an interest in intellectual activities and ideas. Our projected audience therefore, is the educated and literate reader who enjoys fairly erudite discussions of topics and ideas in the broad areas of the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. In that respect, we intend *San José Studies* as a complement to the formal learning that goes on within the university classroom and as a factor in the "continuing education" of our readers.

Fortunately, San José State University enjoys a unique advantage which we hope will contribute to our success. Located in the center of what *Fortune* magazine has called "the densest concentration of innovative industry that exists anywhere in the world," we would like to exploit the intellectual ferment and imaginative energy that characterizes modern industry and technology. We invite members of the non-academic community to share their knowledge with us by submitting manuscripts about their discoveries and ideas. At the same time, we will inform the larger community about topics of current interest in the academic world.

If we are successful, the Editors of *SJS* can, regretfully, take only secondary credit. The idea for this journal originated with a group of scholars quite distinct from the editorial staff. Now known by the rather formidable name of "The Founding Committee of Trustees of *San José Studies*," these individuals not only conceived the idea of the journal, but converted the idea into a reality. Anyone familiar with the intricacies of decision-making in the academic world and the logistics involved in launching any publishing enterprise can only marvel at the rapid success achieved by the "Trustees." Their names do appear on the Credits Page, but since they have relinquished all editorial powers in concentrating on the financial and existential viability of *SJS*, they tend to remain in the background. The Editors, therefore, would like to credit the following individuals for this inaugural issue of *San José Studies*:

Howard Burman  
Hobert W. Burns  
Warren W. Faus  
John Galm  
W. Donald Head  
Dirk Wassenaar  
Robert H. Woodward

A.O.
The publication of this first issue of *San Jose Studies* was made possible by a $1,000.00 donation from the San Jose chapter of the Association of California State College and University Professors, a $1,000.00 donation from the San Jose State University Alumni Association, and several anonymous donations.

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of these contributors.

A large share of the future financial support for this journal will come from Patron and Benefactor subscribers. An acknowledgement of their support will appear in future issues of *San Jose Studies*. (Subscription information appears on page 109.)

D. Wassenaar
Managing Editor
Steinbeck Issue

The November 1975 issue of San José Studies will feature the life and career of John Steinbeck. The Editors will welcome manuscripts from all areas of Steinbeck research—including the literary, biographical, sociological, historical, ecological, and scientific.

Manuscripts should be sent to The Editor, San José Studies, San José State University, San Jose, California 95192 by May 15, 1975.

Bill Casey Award in Letters

The Bill Casey Memorial Fund will award $100.00 to the author of the best article, story, or poem appearing in each annual volume of San José Studies. Friends and relatives of Bill Casey, a faculty member at San José State University from 1962 to 1966, established the fund at his death to encourage creative writing and scholarship. The Founding Committee of Trustees of San José Studies will select the recipient of the award.
ARTICLES

WILLIAM JAMES & STANFORD UNIVERSITY 1898/1905

Frederick J. Down Scott

The research for this paper was supported by a San Jose State University Faculty Research Grant, which is gratefully acknowledged.
In 1893 William James wrote to his close friend George H. Howison, Professor of Philosophy, University of California at Berkeley: "I have longed for years to visit California and see you and your University, but the chance never comes." The chance did come five years later in 1898 when Howison invited him to Berkeley to repeat a series of lectures in the Summer School. The lectures were entitled "Talks to Teachers on Psychology." This visit to Berkeley from August 26 to September 5 was brief. But while in California James travelled across the Bay to visit the new university founded by Leland Stanford in 1891. There he became friends with its President, David Starr Jordan—a friendship that continued to develop after James's return to Harvard and ultimately resulted in his appointment as "Acting Professor of Philosophy" at Stanford University during 1906. Fortunately for us, the correspondence between these two scholars has been preserved in collections at the Stanford and Harvard libraries. These previously unpublished letters permit not only a glimpse into the personal life of America's preeminent philosopher, but also reveal various aspects of James's involvement in the current philosophic scene.

The record of the friendship begins with a short note to Jordan on August 28, 1898: "I have been hoping to have a look at your University and thank you for your kind invitation. I shall leave here on the 4th or 5th to spend a week at Monterey and will take Palo Alto en route."1 How he spent his time there and his impression have been preserved:

Hotel del Monte
Monterey, California
Sept. 6, 1898

Dear President Jordan,

In answering your question about Dr. [Edwin Diller] Starbuck yesterday, I fear I damned with faint praise. You remember I told you I had seen nothing of him for four years; and indeed I found him yesterday extraordinarily broadened and "evolved." I have seldom seen a man more changed for the better. I went to his introductory lecture this morning and have nothing but praise to give it. My sense of justice to him obliges me to write this.
I carry away a perfectly *tremenjas* impression of your University. Its perfections are only equalled by those of this hotel. California is indeed the land of wonders.

Pray give my grateful regards to Mrs. Jordan, and believe me most respectfully and truly yours,

*Wm James*

Starbuck was an assistant Professor of Education at Stanford from 1897 to 1904. Subsequently, while on sabbatical leave from Harvard, James wrote the "Preface" to Starbuck’s *Psychology of Religion*. A letter to Havelock Ellis, editor of Starbuck’s publishing company, indicates James’s indebtedness to this volume:

34 De Vere Gardens  
London W.  
Sept. 10, 1899

My dear Sir,

I have finally settled down at the above address, where I expect to stay probably until the middle of January. If there are any duplicate proofs of Starbuck’s volume available, I should be happy to receive them—not of course for the sake of contributing to their correction, but in order to help me with the promised Preface, and also in the execution of certain "Gifford Lectures" which are my present task.

Sincerely yours,  
*Wm James*

The newly established contact with Stanford University, and particularly with President Jordan, continued after James’s return to Cambridge:

Cambridge, Mass.  
Sept. 28, 1898

Dear President Jordan,

I got your note the morning I left Berkeley, announcing the sending of your volume of essays. I have not yet received the book, and venture to ask what address you sent it; for if either Howison or Mr. Webb received it, they would ere this have forwarded it to me, and I should be sorry to think of its having gone astray.

Yesterday I was surprised by that other kind enclosure from you. I have not had time yet to read more than half of its contents, but it manifests a side of your nature of which I knew nothing, and I must say that I am quite swept away by the extraordinary freshness and firmness of your touch in describing the aspects of nature. I will say more when I have read the collection through.

I am trying to start up in my son of seventeen [William] and his mother a conviction that he ought to go to Stanford for his freshman and sophomore year, but I find the superstition of Harvard in them so strong that I am not altogether sure of success, being the member of the family who has least authority.

Believe me, with best regards to Mrs. Jordan,  
Gratefully and truly yours,  
*Wm James*

The volume which went astray was Jordan’s *Footnotes to Evolution: A Series of Popular Addresses on the Evolution of Life*. The "kind enclosure" was *To Barbara, With Other Verses*. Barbara was Jordan’s daughter, born in 1891 scarcely a month after Stanford opened its doors to students. On October, 14, 1898 James had a few more words to say about the *Verses*:

Dear President,

Having read your poems all through, many of them aloud and several
times, I must thank you for the extreme delight they have given me.

I will use no adjectives, but they are bully—in the fullest sense of the term.

But is your muse only tempted by the domestic altar?—and the “privately printed” page? I hope you'll continue in a publicker way!

Very truly yours,

Wm James

The growing friendship between the two men caused Jordan to consult James about new appointments to the faculty of Stanford University. One of the most valuable points of this correspondence, it seems, is the knowledge we can gain of James's firm and broad grasp of the state of philosophy in America in this period of its rapid growth. In June, 1898, he wrote to Howison about several candidates who had applied to teach at Berkeley: “The competition is evidently going to be much sharper than heretofore, with so many graduate schools turning out men of the rough technical preparation. It makes the amateurishness of our student days seem very remote, and it will all build up a much higher level of American scholarship at the cost of many broken hearts amongst the hindmost whom the Devil alone will take.”

The following letter of March 6, 1899 is the first of many recommendations to Jordan about potential professors of philosophy for Stanford:

Dear President Jordan,

Professor [Frank] Thilly writes me that he is a candidate for your new Professorship in the history of philosophy. I don't know him but have the impression that he is a strong man. Several of his students here have spoken of him in altogether exceptional terms of sympathy and respect. His translation of Paulsen is a masterpiece of ability in that line. It reads like an English book. I understand that Thilly has been having a hard time at his own College [U. of Missouri] with the bigotry of the surrounding powers. Were I myself looking for someone to fill such a place, I should certainly consider his claims among the very first.

Truly yours,

Wm James

James had written the “Preface” to Thilly’s translation of Friedrich Paulsen’s Introduction to Philosophy in 1895. A letter to Thilly that year shows that James did not hesitate to use the “Preface” to express his own view on the merits of pluralism over monism:

95 Irving St.
Cambridge, Mass.
May 26, 1895

Dear Mr. Thilly,

I am glad you approve of my Preface (barring the word “hylozoism”) and thank you for calling me the “greatest philosopher of our country.” I trust you are willing to join me in saying “God help the country,” when scraps and fragments are its best. But what do you think of my colleague [Josiah] Royce, who is not scraps and fragments? . . .

As to hylozoism, I used the word undiscriminatingly and shall be delighted to write “monistic idealism” in its stead when it comes to printing the thing. I dare say that Paulsen himself, to whom I have sent the MS., will also suggest the alteration. Paulsen’s whole view of the relation between finite minds and the All-mind seems to me sadly deficient in distinctness. He hasn’t distinctly realized any of the difficulties of the problem, and after showing that all the ends in nature are partial and that the larger things come by “heterogony” etc.
immediately in the twinkling of a page passes over to an all inclusive mind. I think a good fight can still be made for pluralism, although monism is doubtless an unconquerable idol. Nevertheless Paulsen's is a beautiful book.

Yours most truly,
Wm James

With regard to Thilly's troubles at the University of Missouri James in a Nov. 24, 1897 letter to him had written: "You have my heartiest sympathy. Stand firm! If you should lose that place, you surely after a year could get a better one. Our country is pretty barbarous, there is no doubt about it; and we in Cambridge, in the midst of our freedom, don't sufficiently realize the fact."

But instead of hiring Thilly, Jordan decided to invite James himself to accept the Professorship. This invitation provoked the following letter:

Cambridge, Mass.
March 22, 1899

Dear President Jordan,

Your letter of the 14th has duly arrived and gave me both a flutter and a pang by the sentence asking "whether I could consider" such a place. Alas! no: but if I were 20 years younger, I dare say I might jump at it. I was so charmed by the mise en scène of your institution that I have been trying, ever since I came home, to make my wife consent to our sending my 17 year old boy there for his first 2—I have ended by knocking it down to his first one—college year. But it is no use: in this degenerate age heads of families have no authority, and she won't consent. I saw potentialities of patriotism in California that I have never known before. The relation of man to that wonderful nature there is so direct. She has been waiting for him all these years and there she stands responsive—the bride, and he the bridegroom. I can imagine a perfect passion! Here in the East the old strumpet has had so many generations of lovers and buried them in the sod, that it is quite another matter. But as far as I am concerned, "my gifts once given; must here abide." I am not strong in health, have light work, and am making it lighter by refusing outside lecturing henceforward, have a right to retire on a pension in 3 years, and write instead of teaching if I will, etc. etc. Your institution needs no ebbing-tide, or decaying-matter man; you ought to have an adult male with no ifs or buts, or allowances to be made on the score of old age, feebleness of health, excentricity, absentmindedness, or bad memory. You ought to have a first-rate man for that place! Of such there are 1. Royce; 2. [John] Dewey of Chicago; 3. [James Mark] Baldwin of Princeton. Any one of them might consider it. They are all about 40, with most of their work ahead and "international" reputations.

Of the second order of men, not geniuses or celebrities but experienced and able, there are no doubt a number to choose from. Thilly I imagine to be a good example of this class. [John Grier] Hibben of Princeton another. [H.N.] Gardiner of Smith a third. [William Romaine] Newbold of Pennsylvania a 4th and perhaps the best.

Then you have the young stars of whom [Charles M.] Bakewell and [Dickinson S.] Miller are probably the best specimens now in the field. There is a genius named [Edgar Arthur] Singer [Jr.] at the U. of Pennsylvania, but he is not magnetic personally, and under your conditions you need that. Miller is a very strong man, but for the total
effect of a man in that position in California, I judge Bakewell to be the best. J.R. Angell at Chicago is splendid, but perhaps you don’t want 2 such Angells.5 [George H.] Mead of Chicago is well thought of by Dewey, but I cannot judge of his present shape. He writes obscurely. [James Haydon] Tuffs, late of Chicago, is also well thought of and has written a good article. As a writer, Miller beats the field, in spite of the fact of his doing me foul injustice in a recent International Journal of Ethics.

Why don’t you try first for Royce? His children are delicate, asthmatic, etc. and this climate is very bad for them. I think he would be in duty bound to consider any proposition seriously. But I don’t know what our Harvard graduate school would be without him.

Thanking you heartily for your letter and the kind opinion it implies, I am faithfully yours,

Wm James

The matter of this vacancy was soon settled. Upon James’s next recommendation, Arthur O. Lovejoy was appointed as assistant professor of philosophy. He stayed on at Stanford till 1901. About him James wrote:

Newport, R.I.
April 20, 1899

Dear President Jordan,

Arthur O. Lovejoy, Berkeley University, who has been in our graduate school for 3 years past, and is now our “Walker Fellow” writes me from Paris that he hears of your intention to found a new instructorship in Ethics, and wishes to be recommended. I enclose the part of his letter which deals with his own qualifications. I endorse all he says, and say furthermore that he is a tip-top man in all respects, gentlemanly, as well as intellectually accomplished. We all look for a brilliant future from him.

I got your Philippine pamphlet, and read it with the heartiest admiration and adhesion. I thank you for quoting me!

Sincerely yours,
Wm James

Cambridge, Mass.
April 30, 1899

Dear President Jordan,

I have already written to you about Lovejoy, but perhaps you wish now to inquire more particularly about his fitness in “Philosophy” as distinguished from Ethics.

The fields run together so in these philosophic branches that one can develop in any direction from the common central problems, etc. I don’t see, if you wish a young man who has not been tried yet as a teacher, who could be more promising than Lovejoy. We should try him here without hesitation, if we needed a new instructor.

Truly yours,
Wm James

The friendship between James and Jordan was undoubtedly strengthened by their shared interest in the political issues relating to the American occupation of the Philippine Islands. As prominent and vocal members of the Anti-imperialist League, both James and Jordan protested the motives of the imperialists in the United States government. While James sent long letters to newspapers, Jordan wrote his Philippine Pamphlet and a book, Imperial Democracy: A Study of the Relations of Government by the People, Equality before the Law (N.Y.: Appleton and Co., 1899). In thanking Jordan for a
copy of his book James expressed his own view in rather strong terms:

Cambridge, Mass.
July 10, 1899

Dear President Jordan,

I thank you for Imperial Democracy. To you belongs the honour of having got out the first bound volume, the first thing that is permanent literature, on this idiotically blundering business. I hope it will have an effect. Opinion seems taking another turn. The Boston Herald which went violently over after the war began, has suddenly turned a somerset and is now very effectively making for McKinley's jugular vein. I trust the time may yet come when to throw him over may seem the only way of saving the republican party. I'm glad to be going abroad, on the whole, next Saturday. A nation that will puke up its own historic soul in five minutes, at a feather's touch, doesn't excite one's sympathy much when the re-swallowing operations begin. Goodbye!

"Yours for the truth" as the spiritualists say,

Wm James

On July 15th James left for Europe with his wife Alice and daughter Peggy to use his Sabbatical leave of absence from Harvard to prepare his Gifford Lectures and to take treatments for his heart trouble. His sickness caused a delay in giving the first series of lectures at the University of Edinburgh till May, 1901 and required an additional year of absence from teaching. After a winter at home he returned to present the second series of lectures in May, 1902. These lectures were published as The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature. There was no correspondence with Jordan during these years; not again, in fact, till the late summer of 1904, when Jordan extended to James another invitation to teach at Stanford. This invitation was in accordance with a special request of Mrs. Stanford, as Jordan was to recall later in his autobiography The Days of a Man (1922): "It was in accordance with a special request of Mrs. Stanford before her death that this eminent philosopher with a child's joyous attitude toward every new experience came to us." The sometimes complicated negotiations leading to James's acceptance of this invitation are recorded in a series of letters:

Chocorua, N.H.
Aug. 16, 1904

Dear President Jordan,

I have your second letter of August 8th. Before you invest in me, you ought to know the conditions.

My health has been so unreliable of late that I have reduced my work to a 'Serninary' last year (2 hours a week through the year) and next year expect to do only one half course (3 hours a week for the first half year) at Harvard. I get fagged out by April. I don't know the dates of your session. If I went to you, I should not like to do more teaching than 3 hours a week for four or at the outside five months—the earlier ones of your year.

I don't think I ought to 'stir' for less than 3000 dollars. You may well think that so little work for that amount will not be worth Leland Stanford's while.

I can make no promises now, for the negotiations may be delicate ones to effect. I have tried to resign from Harvard, but the President and Philosophical department were both unwilling, and the circumstances made it ungracious for me to persist. Of course at this date no pledges are in order from either you or me, but if, say by next January, you still think you will care to have me, and will write to me
to that effect, I will try to put things through.

Thanking you heartily for your goodwill towards me, I am ever sincerely yours,

Wm James

Stanford University
Aug. 22, 1904

Dear Dr. James,

I think your suggestion of three thousand dollars is a very modest one and if I can get the 3000, which at one time I considered certain, but which is now a little more shady but not impossible, I shall be glad to make the arrangement. If we agree with your modesty that 3000 is a large sum to invest in your lectures, you must remember this, that your presence on the campus and at our little gatherings would alone be worth twenty-five hundred to us and five hundred for the lectures is certainly a very modest figure. I will write you again after I find what we are able to do.

Might I note one interesting psychological phenomenon! I see in your letter that the institution is spoken of as Leland Stanford. Throughout the East the word 'Leland' is preserved in connection with the name, whereas in California the institution is always called 'Stanford,' nothing more or less, just as your institution is everywhere known as Harvard. What interests me is the division on geographical lines. Except when the institution is on dress-parade nobody in California thinks of using the word 'Leland.' In the East I never see or hear its omission. A somewhat parallel case, possibly, is the name of our city. It is all a man's life is worth to say "Frisco" anywhere this side of Sacramento, and no resident ever does so. But beyond the Sierras, "Frisco" goes.

I have some slight hope of visiting Harvard in September. If I do, I shall hope to meet you again.

Very truly yours,
David S. Jordan

Chocorua, N.H.
Sept. 1, 1904

Dear Dr. Jordan,

Your two letters are received, and I am glad that the second contradicts the first one. If you think my terms too modest, all you need do is to offer me more, and await with curiosity my reaction. You noted, I hope, how little instruction I could offer, three or four hours a week for four or, at the outside, five months. Whether I keep the lower or the upper limit will depend on my cerebral condition at the time. The fatigue of lecturing accumulates with me toward Spring, and I have had to decide on the regimen of not letting it supervene at all. I can do work and keep in condition, if I do it slowly enough.

A circumstance has occurred with which I ought to acquaint you. I have just been invited again by President [Benjamin Ide] Wheeler to teach 6 weeks in the Berkeley Summer School in 1905. Hitherto I have declined, but this year I feel like accepting, mainly because Dewey of Chicago & [F.C.S.] Schiller of Oxford are to be my colleagues, and we three are running a new system of Truth destined to prevail over all the false systems of the past and present, so that the possibility of 6 weeks of conference & cooperation with them tempts me very much.

Now I don't know on what footing of rivalry your two institutions may be as regards Eastern professors, or whether either of you would
think me less desireable for starring it at the other place in the same year. I have not answered the Berkeley call definitely yet. Am I at liberty to tell President Wheeler of my possibly going to you?

Sincerely yours,
Wm James

Stanford University
Sept. 7, 1904

Dear Professor James,

As soon as possible, I will let you know whether I am able to carry out the arrangement in question. I shall know positively as early as March, but I hope to find out considerably sooner.

I think that you would find it possible to do more work with less fatigue in this country, which is without extremes, than in the East, and I am sure that you would find appreciative audiences. I am not so much interested in the question of how much you do as I am that you should be able to do it and not wear yourself out in the effort.

So far as I am concerned, the possibility of your being with Dr. Wheeler through the summer does not make any difference whatever, excepting that the longer you are here in the State, the more your work will be appreciated. There is no rivalry between the two Universities that prevents one from rejoicing in the good luck of the other; so that this arrangement makes no difference whatever to us, and I do not think that the possibility of your coming here would affect the plans of President Wheeler in the slightest degree. Neither of us is desirous of bringing able men here simply as ‘stars’ or for any kind of advertising purpose. We want to help our students by contact with these men. With free tuition and both institutions overflowing, we are not excited about conditions that would increase attendance.

We have had a great deal of pleasure in meeting the professors who have visited Berkeley in the summer and they will take the same delight in any that we may add to our staff in the winter. It would certainly be a remarkable conjunction to have Dewey, Schiller and yourself all at Berkeley together.

You are, of course, at liberty to tell anyone that we are in correspondence in regard to these matters, and that, unless I am disappointed in securing the use of a certain fund, we shall make you the offer in question.

Very truly yours,
David S. Jordan

In a Sept. 16, 1904 post card to Jordan, James asked “about the date at which your year will begin in 1905.”

James definitely declined Wheeler’s offer for the Berkeley summer job in 1905 by writing to him in early October. This letter has been lost. However, an unpublished letter of James to Schiller indicates the various reasons. It had become clear that Schiller would not be able to accept the offer, so James lacked that inducement; the summer job, he understood, would be heavy work and he disliked teaching more and more; he would have an ample dose of California in the winter; and the pecuniary gain from the summer course would be negligible.

James also declined Jordan’s offer, but in a month’s time the negotiations were renewed. There was, however, a misunderstanding. As mentioned in his letter of August 16, 1904, James said he could teach half a year, preferring the Fall semester because he tired easily in the Spring semester. Jordan understood the offer to be for half time teaching for the whole year and,
therefore, raised the salary to five thousand dollars. Further, James could not be spared at Harvard for the Fall semester, 1905. Fortunately, this whole difficulty was graciously settled by Stanford University permitting James to take a leave of absence for the Fall semester and to begin teaching in January, 1906.

Cambridge, Mass.
Dec. 18, 1904

Dear President Jordan,

You doubtless remember our correspondence of last summer, relative to my giving a half-year course of lectures at Stanford in 1905-6. The question was left hanging neither of us being sure that he could meet the terms of the contract.

I write now, with considerable reluctance, to say that things have so shaped themselves this winter that I can foresee myself only in my old Cambridge niche next winter, and that you must dismiss me from your mind as a possibility. The conditions are rather complicated, and would not interest you in detail—but that is the decision they result in.

I shall be sorry if this causes you any disappointment, and still more so, if it obliges you already to take any backward steps.

If you are thinking of a permanent man in Philosophy, I don't know whether you know that Dickinson S. Miller, who has been teaching here for three years, after several at Bryn Mawr, is now loose. He had to be dropped by us last year on account of the financial contraction. He has an appointment at Columbia this year but I think it is only a stop-gap thing. He is one of the most accomplished writers and thinkers in the U.S. and a perfectly delightful personality—a great loss to us. My colleagues will agree in this.

Sincerely yours,
Wm James

Stanford University
Dec. 24, 1904

Dear Dr. James,

I am very sorry to hear that you cannot be with us next year, for I had about completed my end of the deal. I can with scarcely any question make it good for the year 1906–07, so that if it is absolutely impossible for you to come next year, you may consider the offer for the following year as made.

When we employ a permanent Professor of Philosophy, it is my hope to pay a large salary and to get as good a man as can be obtained anywhere. We are now almost through with our long-continued building operations. For nearly six years we have taken each year out of our income $500,000 for building and have run the University on the rest of it. A good many chairs have become vacant or been left vacant in this time and I have not been willing to fill any of them until we were ready to make our salary list for professors range from $4,000 to $5,000.

I have known something of Mr. Miller and will take his name into consideration. I think our Board, however, would prefer to begin the work with your services and that, perhaps, of some competent assistant Professor, and then take that time to look over possibilities in England and Germany as well as in America.

Very truly yours,
David S. Jordan
Cambridge, Mass.
Jan. 14, 1905

Dear President Jordan,

I have been conferring with our President about your invitation, and the result is that I am able to accept it under certain conditions. I will not trouble you with the history of the reasons of my hesitation but simply define what seem to be the present possibilities.

To begin with, I assume that the word "give," in the telegram which I enclose, is a mistake for "five"—you will correct me if I am wrong.

Secondly, I can't be spared from Harvard during the first half-year, so you must take me for the second half (my original proposition was to give you the first-half).

Third, I can only give three hours a week of instruction, the course being a general introduction to philosophy on what I call "radically empirical" principles. It will be a repetition of a course I am giving this year and expect to give next year here. I may say (though this should go no farther at present) that there is a possibility that I may be called to give this course at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1906—7, and that I expect to get it into book form and published in 1907. This is why I must stick to it, in spite of the fact that it may possibly fly a little over the heads of some of my younger hearers with you. I work so slowly and my powers are so slender that I can't afford to go off at right angles to this line of work. The course, as given this year, is more successful in awakening serious interest than any course I have ever given.

Fourth, there is a discrepancy in the calenders of our two institutions which might possibly have to be adjusted by my arriving a week or ten days late at Stanford, pruning off a fortnight here also. Will you kindly inform me of the latest date at which I might arrive at Stanford—also of the date when the summer vacation begins?

This seems a very small amount of service to offer for 5000 dollars. But if you can stand it, I can; and if you say so, I will regard the affair as settled—subject to interference "by the act of God or the public enemy."

My health, I am glad to say, is much tougher this year than it has been for five years past—seems getting back to the standard. I fell so in love with the looks of Stanford University when I was there in 1898 that I feel quite warm at the prospect of being part of it.

Sincerely yours,

Wm James

Some of the material treated in the above mentioned course was elaborated upon in a series of eight articles in the Journal of Philosophy, written between July 1904 and February 1905. These articles, along with others, were published after his death (August 26, 1910) under the title (already chosen by James) of Essays in Radical Empiricism and were intended to reflect his metaphysical system.

Jordan answered the above letter:

Stanford University
Jan. 20, 1905

Dear Dr. James,

Your very kind letter of January 14th is just at hand. As our Board of Trustees meets next Wednesday, which is only a few days ahead, you will kindly let my final answer rest until I have conferred with them. The word "give" in the telegram was intended for "five." It was the wish of the Board of Trustees to offer you $5000 for such work as you could give, without injury to yourself, as Acting Professor of
Philosophy for the year 1905–06. Their thought was that this would involve your presence for the entire year. I had overlooked or misunderstood your limiting the time to one-half year. I had in mind giving one-half of your time for the entire year. The discrepancies in the calendar could be readily adjusted. It is possible that we may change our calendar somewhat for the coming year, and with this possibility, I will not discuss that phase of the matter, except to say that we can adapt ourselves to conditions.

Expect to hear from me again by letter or by telegram in the course of a few days.

Very truly yours,
David S. Jordan

P.S. Referring to the files, I find that you had specified five (or possibly four) months as your limit as to time. I had forgotten this phase of the matter, for which I humbly ask your pardon. I shall lay the whole case before the Board.

Cambridge Mass.
Jan. 25, 1905

Dear President Jordan,

Your telegram announcing postponement of the meeting of the Board came last night in a tremendous snow storm. I thank you for your considerateness. If the Board concludes anything next Wednesday, I think you had better wire me, for there is a bare possibility of my going to Europe on Feb. 4th & if I do so, I should like to see this thing settled first.

I have just made an arrangement with Royce by which he lectures for me 3 weeks in January next year in return for an equal amount of lecturing by me for him in October. This enables me to begin punctually on Jan. 1st at Stanford, if I am to go.

Sincerely yours,
Wm James

Stanford University
Feb. 4, 1905

Dear Professor James,

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees held yesterday I was directed to offer you the Acting Professorship of Philosophy in the University, beginning the organization of the department, for the year 1905–06, at an honorarium or salary of $5000, it being understood that you will give the amount of work indicated in our recent correspondence. The Board made its offer originally supposing that you could accept for the entire year, but in view of the fact that the mistake was my own in overlooking the limitations made in your letter, it has decided to continue the offer, giving you leave of absence, if you wish it, for the first semester, the work of the second semester beginning about the 10th of January.

The salary fund for the coming year may not be adequate for the appointment of an instructor in the same department for the year, and yet it would obviously be desirable to do so, such an instructor to give work in the first semester preparatory to yours, and perhaps continuing to assist in the work of the second semester. It has therefore been suggested by the Board that I ask you for any suggestion that you may have to make in this direction and for the name of any one who might be temporarily or permanently available and worth to assist in your work, perhaps continuing it.
I may say that the manner in which this arrangement is brought about is not the one I originally had in mind. The funds of the University are abundantly adequate for the proper development of the department were it not that we are still under the pressure of building, putting up the entire plan of buildings while it can be done out of the income. We shall continue to feel this pressure more or less for the coming year and are under necessity of watching the corners a little more closely than we otherwise would.

I need not say that it will be a very great pleasure to us to have you with us, and I trust that your visit with us next year will prove one of the interesting episodes of your academic career.

Very truly yours,
David S. Jordan
Cambridge, Mass.
Feb. 13, 1905

Your letter, following upon your telegram, informs me, to my great pleasure, that I am appointed to Stanford as Acting Professor of Philosophy for 1905–6, at $5000, with leave of absence till January 1st (this letter says 10th—the former one said 1st—it can be 1st as well as 10th for me, now).

As with this I am accepting 2000 dollars more than I originally asked, I feel that I ought to say, to you at least, that it would not have been right for me to make this new engagement on the $3000 originally proposed. I hoped then to do no work in Cambridge, but to give you the 1st half year, renting my house here, and spending the rest of the year quietly in Southern California. As things now are, being unable to get leave of absence for the year, I expect to keep the house here going, which will involve much greater outlay, and to be doing what for me will be a much more strenuous year's work—partly in consideration of the larger bribe which your telegram offered.

I will write you in a day or two about the temporary colleague in Philosophy.

Sincerely yours,
Wm James
Stanford University
Feb. 20, 1905

We are very much gratified that you can accept the acting professorship and start our Department of Philosophy in a dignified fashion. We shall probably wish to select a full professor the succeeding year, and we have particularly in mind two of your own men, [Ralph Barton] Perry and [John Elof] Boedlin. I do not know whether we could get Dr. Perry or not, but the two seem to be, of the young men in this country of whom I have learned, the ones most promising for our work. Some time you might tell us what you think about them.

I had a very pleasant visit the other day with [your George Herbert] Palmer. I am sure that you will enjoy your visit at Stanford. We are getting things into fine shape for the future.

Very truly yours,
David S. Jordan

With regard to "temporary colleague," James wrote:
Dear President Jordan,

The best available man by far whom I know of for a second place is D.S. Miller—if he be available. He left us last spring after five years (or more?) of service, succeeding upon as many at Bryn Mawr, in consequence of our unfortunate deficit. President Eliot offered him 500 dollars for this year with half work, but as there was no secure advancement, he resigned & is now at Columbia in a 1000 dollar place, partly substitutional for permanent men, so there is no security for him there either. He is a unique man in many essential respects, original and critical both, extraordinarily clear, and with admirable literary power. I should rather work with him than with any one I know, for he is an English empiricist as I am, with enough differences to promote friendly discussion. Moreover, a perfect gentleman, down to his toenails. It is a curious anomaly of luck—due in part to the fact that for reasons of nervous health he has not been a man of quantity so much as of quality, hitherto—that he is not now in one of our leading professorships. I advise you to try for him, for I know of no one in the field who is comparable in experience, and who might detach himself and go to you on chance of futurity. If he falls through, I will make another nomination.

I suppose that you will ere long be publishing your courses for next year. Will you kindly send me your catalog for this year, so that I may see just what is being already done in cognate fields, psychology or logic, if there be any logic. I can then, after consulting with my possible colleague, send a definite description.

I mustn’t have an afternoon hour, having all my life lectured about noon, and finding it agrees much better.

Miller’s address is 312 South Tenth Street, Philadelphia. He is a U. of Pennsylvania man, then Clark, then Harvard and finally Ph.D. of Halle.

[unsigned]
of wives, thought me incompetent, and said "give me the daggers"—or rather the "pen"! So you are answered by her, quite in accordance with my wishes also.

I hope that I shall find myself in good condition when the time comes, and prove worthy of so fine an opportunity . . . .

Alice James's letter to Jordan of the same date is a bit more business-like and definitely from a woman's point of view:

Will you kindly engage some temporary quarters for us, i.e., for my husband and myself, until we can find a house? We should not wish to live in a hotel, least of all in a hotel far from the College.

Is there likelihood of finding a modest furnished house for the latter half of the year? Or lodgings with a light breakfast in one place and dinner at a refectory of any kind?

We should be thankful for any suggestion or advice. We are folk of simple tastes, but we love quiet and more privacy than one can command in a boarding house. Shall I find it difficult to get a cook? I am quite equal to our breakfasts and lunches, but the dinner would be beyond me.

We ate one year at a college table, comfortably enough, here in Cambridge. Do you have such things as College tables?

Thanking you for so friendly a thought of us, I am

Very truly yours,

Alice H. James

Actually Alice was unable to accompany her husband but arrived in San Francisco on Feb. 14th.

Final details concerned the hour of the day for teaching and the matter of a possible text book. Jordan had suggested an hour which caused James to remark on one of his personal habits:

Cambridge, Mass.
Oct. 9, 1905

Dear President,

I hate to reply to yours of Oct. 3rd just arrived (and apparently crossing a recent letter from my wife to you), by pleading the baby-act in the matter of hours, but the fact is that for 30 years or more I have uninterruptedly practiced the habit of taking a nap from two to three o'clock, and the thing has ploughed such grooves in my nervous system that I don't think it safe to interfere with it. At any rate I am non compon for lecturing purposes at about that hour.

Any morning hour whatever—so as to be done by one—will suit me perfectly, no matter how early. I am very sorry to compete with Professor Angell. Isn't there some way out?

Your allusion to a "very large class" reminds me to say that I do not know yet just what kind of work you would rather have me do: give a course of lectures intended to draw as large a number of hearers of different sorts as possible—with "tests," etc. subordinated; or give instruction with text book, written work, etc. to a smaller number of harder working students. I assumed the latter in the description of my course which I sent last winter, mentioning Paulsen's Introduction to Philosophy as a text book, but I stand ready to try the former; and possibly under the conditions it would be the wiser thing to do.

In any case I should now rather leave the question of text books open till I arrive on the ground. I don't know how soon your book-purveying organization sends its orders. It might be well to advise it not to order any copies of Paulsen till it hears from me again. I may
prefer a different book or books.
I think, on reflection, that we had better stop at the Vendome
[Hotel in San José] on arriving, and make our arrangements ourselves
after surveying the possibilities at Palo Alto.
Sincerely yours,
Wm James
A future issue of San Jose Studies will publish a detailed account of
James's stay at Stanford. The letters written to President Jordan while James
was in California record not only his impressions of the 1906 earthquake, but
also his growing interest in academic and economic matters affecting the
University.

Notes
1 All letters of William James to David Starr Jordan are published by permission of
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5 Frank Angell was Professor of Psychology at Stanford.
6 The letters of Jordan to James are published by permission of Ruth Jordan Gates
and Lee Knight Jordan, holders of the literary rights. Harvard College Library has given
permission to reproduce letters in its holdings. James did not keep all the
communications from Jordan.
American novelists and critics have long blamed the predominantly female reading audience for the prudery and gentility of the nineteenth century "realistic" novel. For example, William Dean Howells wrote of a fellow novelist, John William De Forest, that his "scornful bluntness in dealing with the disguises in which women's natures reveal themselves is perhaps at the root of that dislike . . . which in a nation of women readers has prevented [his novels] from ever winning a merited popularity." The most celebrated diatribe about women readers was issued in 1887 by the critic and novelist H.H. Boyesen, who wrote that the young girl reader is "the Iron Madonna who strangles in her fond embrace the American novelist; the Moloch upon whose altar he sacrifices, willingly or unwillingly, his chances of greatness." Later critics have interpreted this statement as a complaint that women readers emasculated American literature by refusing to buy novels which presented sexual women or which departed from the sentimental glorification of womanhood.

Research, however, suggests that it was the male writers and critics who insisted upon their heroine's sexual imbecility, who "feared to face the horrible things" realism "might uncover in the lives of the supposed 'pure' woman." It was, after all, Howells, who, in reviewing one of De Forest's novels, objected that De Forest was too enamoured of the dark, sexual woman he had created, and that he displayed "too much anxiety that the nature of her intrigue [i.e. affair] . . . shall not be misunderstood." It was, after all, Boyesen, who praised "the natural purity and innocence" of a woman's mind, extolled the ideal of domestic dependence for women, and exalted the women who displayed "self-sacrificing goodness of the heart." It is, after all, the great male realists—Henry James, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells—who are notorious for their sexual prudery. (For a long time, in the case of Twain and Howells, scholars blamed their wives for the sexual evasiveness of their novels, but this theory has now been discredited.)

The popularity of Gertrude Atherton's novels during the 1890's suggests we need to refine our notions about the attitudes of the reading public.

I am indebted to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities which funded the research for this article.
prolific writer, Atherton published nearly forty novels in her life-time, as well as five volumes of short stories, three collections of essays, a history of California, two books about San Francisco, a selection of Alexander Hamilton's letters, and numerous uncollected articles. Although it was not until the 1920's that Atherton's novels made the best-seller list, as early as 1892 the implications of her work were being discussed in a national magazine of the calibre of Lippincott's. Because Atherton changed publishers so often and because her papers were destroyed in the San Francisco earthquake, no accurate record of the sales of her earlier books exists. One can get some idea of her popularity, however, from the fact that in 1900, according to Publisher's Weekly, Senator North (not a particularly controversial novel) sold 25,000 copies while in 1902 her biography of Alexander Hamilton, The Conqueror, sold 70,000 copies. Patience Sparhawk and Her Times, first published in London in 1897, had gone through ten editions by 1903; The Californians, first published in 1898, was reissued in a new edition in 1908.7

Atherton correctly conceived of herself as leading the fight against the glorification of the domestic heroine. Howells, whom she repeatedly accused of "littleism," was her particular bête-noir. To Atherton, as to the writers of the 1920's, Howells and his followers represented a smug, bourgeois, Victorian outlook which, according to Atherton, made American literature "anaemic, . . . as correct as Sunday clothes and as innocuous as sterilized milk."8 The problem with contemporary writers, Atherton wrote in 1904, was that "They are all good family men, who eat well, rarely drink, are too dull to be bored with their own wives."9

Atherton's heroines contradicted the Victorian myths about female moral superiority and sexual imbecility. Her women were sensual, egotistical, and intellectually ambitious. And the public—although not the male critics—apparently loved them. In the late nineteenth century, only one other writer, a woman, Kate Chopin, was more radical than Atherton in her acceptance of the normality of female sexuality. Chopin's The Awakening (1899) is the first American novel explicitly dealing with a woman (or a man for that matter) becoming sexually aware.

Chopin's novel, after being excoriated by reviewers as immoral, indelicate, and poisonous, was a commercial failure; Atherton's novels were also
condemned by critics for their immorality, but they sold well. There are a number of reasons for this difference in public reception. Chopin presents sexual impulses as normal, and, moreover, as important to personal development as a human being’s spiritual aspirations. Atherton recognizes sexual impulses but presents them as base, belonging to a man’s or woman’s “lower” nature. Chopin allows her heroine to engage in an adulterous affair with a man she does not love, whereas Atherton carefully protects her heroines’ virtue. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Chopin rejects domestic bliss as the goal for all women; Atherton cannot conceive of any reward for her heroines other than finding the ideal man. In the 1890’s, readers accepted Atherton’s version of the “new woman” because she was careful to meet their sentimental expectations.

For the reviewers in the 1890’s, Atherton’s most outrageous heroine was the title figure of *Patience Sparhawk and Her Times*, a novel which Atherton wrote in 1894 but which no American publisher would touch until its critical success in England. When finally published here in 1897, it was banned in Atherton’s native San Francisco. Supremely beautiful and profoundly intelligent, Patience Sparhawk grows up in Monterey, poor, an outcast because of her drunken and promiscuous mother. To escape the fate of her mother, Patience must get out of Monterey, which, as Atherton presents it, stultifies. Its vitality drained by the Yankee invasion, the town’s inhabitants live on romantic memories of old California, on “stories of love and revenge and the great free play of the primitive passions, unpared by modern civilization.”

In a sequence of improbable events, Patience travels to New York, marries into a wealthy family, leaves her husband when she can no longer tolerate his stupidity and savage jealousy, becomes a successful journalist, is convicted (wrongly, of course) of murdering her husband, and is lifted off the electric chair by her defense lawyer who is also, luckily, her ideal man. Presumably, although Atherton does not show us, the two live happily ever after.

*Patience Sparhawk and Her Times* is a bad novel; Atherton was the Jacqueline Susann of her day. Nevertheless, Atherton was a pioneer in her explicit insistence on her heroine’s sexual impulses, going far beyond what previous writers had asserted about female sexuality—indeed going far beyond what many subsequent writers would assert. Theodore Dreiser is often cited as the writer who freed the American novel from the shackles of Victorian prudery. His early heroines, however, passively drift into affairs without any sexual impulses whatsoever, whereas Patience needs sexual satisfaction and responds erotically even to men she does not love. (Indeed the sole basis for Patience’s first marriage is sexual attraction.)

In Atherton’s life-time, some critics recognized her as a pioneer in her presentation of female sexuality. F.T. Cooper, for example, wrote in 1909 that “in her fearless treatment of problems of sex rests her best title to be considered an important factor in American fiction.” Twenty years later, Lionel Stevenson wrote “perhaps to her, more than to any other single person, may be attributed the spade-work which gradually began to eradicate some of the provincialism and prudery from the American reading public.” After her death, however, her contribution was forgotten.

It should be noted that in *Patience Sparhawk and Her Times* Atherton does not necessarily approve of female sexuality; she merely points out that women as well as men experience erotic desires:

Sometimes the devil which is an integral part of all strong natures—of woman’s as well as of man’s, and no matter what her creed—awoke and clamored. There were four or five men in the office whom she liked
well enough when absent, and in whom the lightning of her glance
would have changed friendship to passion. Why she resisted the
temptation which so fiercely assailed her at times, she never knew.
Conventions did not exist for her impatient mind. . . . It was only at
brief intervals that there came a sudden passionate desire—almost a
flash of prophetic insight—for the one man who must exist for her
among the millions of men. And this, if anything, took the place of
her lost ideals and conquered the primal impulses of her nature.(341)
The rhetoric of this passage is strongly Manichean. Sexual
impulses are associated with the devil, something to be resisted, animalistic. One can only
conclude that Atherton would have preferred human beings to have been
born without sexual instincts.
Ultimately, Patience Sparhawk and Her Times is simply an up-dated
version of the sentimental novel. Although Atherton has added a sexual
heroine and a bad marriage, although she has made the man the source of
morality and the means by which the woman can discipline her animal
impulses, the message is the same: woman’s fulfillment comes through
marriage and a family. “For whatever the so-called advanced woman may
preach, woman has in her the instinct of dependence on man, transmitted
through the ages, and a sexual horror of the arena”(239). The success of
Atherton’s novel suggests that women readers were perfectly willing to accept
female sexuality when it was presented in the context of the sentimental
formula.

Atherton’s life, as she presents it in Adventures of a Novelist (1932),
directly contradicts the sentimental glorification of husband and family
found in Patience Sparhawk and Her Times. If it had not been for the good
fortune that her husband died at an early age, she would never have been able
to follow her true vocation. Once widowed, Atherton never married again;
“love of freedom developed into a passion.”13 She used prospective husbands
not to father children but books: “I invariably discovered that an absorbing
interest in a new man afforded a mental stimulation which inspired a book;
and as soon as the book was ready to be born the man ceased to interest me;
having served his purpose he was tactfully or abruptly
discarded” (173).
In her autobiography, Atherton emphasizes her unconventionality as a
child and a young woman. Egocentric, spoiled, fitfully ambitious, revolted by
her beautiful but helpless mother (whose first words to her, after a year’s
separation, were “‘Do I look any older?’ ” 45), believing that the
“matrimonial condition was a succession of
bickerings” (23), the young
Gertrude Atherton climaxed her wish to be different by eloping at nineteen
with George Atherton, her mother’s fiancé. Not that she loved George, whom
“with all the stupid domestic tyranny of the male packed inside him and
exuding it from every pore” (255), she later used as a model for Patience’s
first husband. No, Atherton tells us, she eloped because it made her feel like
the heroine of a novel and because she wanted to escape the social isolation
of her grandfather’s farm in San José. Although Atherton claims that she
never thought about the effect of the elopement on her mother, one can
speculate that, jealous of her mother’s beauty and success in attracting men,
hurt by the fact that as a child her mother shipped her off to live with her
grandfather, Atherton found the perfect means of revenge—stealing her
mother’s much younger suitor. One can also speculate that Atherton was
delighted that the marriage enabled her to enter San Francisco society which
had previously excluded her because of the scandal of her mother’s divorce
and subsequent disastrous second marriage in the 1860’s. Indeed, through the
marriage, she could also revenge herself on that society by thwarting the
Athertons who had picked out for George "a nice domestic girl of their exclusive set, with a tidy little fortune" (52).

After her marriage, Atherton tells us, she continued to resist attempts to transform her into a conventional wife and mother: "the maternal instinct had been left out of me with other domestic virtues" (79). By and large she was bored—bored by her wealthy and socially exclusive in-laws, bored by Menlo Park, bored by her husband, bored during the rainy season on a ranch at what is now San Simeon. Atherton reports that her son died when he was six; "Otherwise life went on its monotonous way" (105). As boredom turned to hatred, Atherton took up writing despite the outrage of her in-laws: "Ladies in Spain do not write" (61). The providential death of her husband from a stomach hemorrhage enabled Atherton to escape to New York and devote herself exclusively to writing.

An autobiography, like a novel, is an imaginative product, projecting the writer’s sense of his essential self. For example, Margaret Deland, a writer born the same year as Atherton, structured her autobiography as a love story; the main emphasis of Golden Yesterdays is on her married life and not her career as a writer. Deland ends the autobiography with her husband’s death in 1915, even though she wrote it in the 1930’s. In contrast, Atherton, in 1932, structured her autobiography to emphasize her feminism, a rather cold and ruthless feminism, one might add. The young Gertrude Atherton presented in Adventures of a Novelist is as much an imaginative creation as any of Atherton’s fictional heroines. But the fictional heroines enabled her to fulfill her fantasies (and presumably the fantasies of her public) in a way that real life did not. She could be both the great belle (like her mother) and the intellectual woman; she could have power over most men, but be submissive to that one ideal man; she could be unconventional and, by virtue of her social position, force the San Francisco elite to applaud her unconventionality.

Helena Belmont, who first appears in A Whirl Asunder (1895), is such a fantasy creation. Helena is proud, intellectual, self-willed, beautiful, passionate, wealthy; she totally disregards society’s conventions, riding about the country dressed as a man, holding intellectual discussions with men late at night. Engaged eight or so times to men who “have lacked . . . soul” because American “men don’t have time for that,”14 Helena finally finds her ideal man, an Englishman with soul, who, unfortunately, is already engaged. Before Helena makes the fatal mistake (from the point of view of Atherton’s readers) of seducing him, he teaches her that he must honor his previous engagement because “Such traditions as honor and faith and pity for the weaker are in the bone and blood of the older civilization” (169).

The foil to Helena Belmont is Mary Gordon, the hero’s fiancée: “She satisfies the domestic instinct which is in every man—symbolizes home to him. She bears his children and gives him unfailing submission and help” (14). This was the woman that countless novelists had held out to American women as the ideal—the ideal Atherton wants her readers to reject. Although the popular success of Atherton’s novels suggests that during the 1890’s many American women were questioning the domestic ideal, one must note that in A Whirl Asunder she enables her readers to have it both ways; the novel allows its audience to identify with the glamorous unconventional heroine, while reaffirming the essentially sentimental belief that the claims of the good woman, the domestic woman, must be honored.

In A Whirl Asunder, Atherton announced to her readers that her heroine was a new woman with far “more beauty and brains and passion” (173) than the old domestic model. However, Atherton’s “new woman” is as much a
fantasy figure as the domestic paragon she is trying to destroy; both are
the imaginative creations of women who conceive of male–female relation-
ships as a power struggle. For the sentimental novelists, domestic virtue, moral
superiority, and sexual purity were means of gaining power over men; for
Atherton (as for Jacqueline Susann) women establish superiority through
their beauty and sexual allure. In essence, Atherton’s heroines are sex objects;
they remind us that sexual liberation is not necessarily the same as female,
or even human, liberation.

According to Atherton, Helena Belmont is a new type of woman because
“she was born in California, nurtured on its new savage traditions”(63). She
“has the genius of California in her . . . . That savage spirit, that instinct to
trample to a goal over anything or anybody, that intolerance of restraint
[that] still lingers in the very atmosphere, and is quick in the blood of many
of the present generation, although, strangely enough, it has given a distincter
individuality to the women than to the men”(61–62). Kevin Starr has argued
that the frontier conditions of California did, in fact, produce women who
thought of themselves as different, perhaps more “liberated” than others in
America, and that it was, therefore, appropriate for Atherton to use her
heroines as symbolic representations of the California experience.15 Starr
may well be right, but one must also note that it had long been conventional
in the American novel for the heroine to represent American possibilities. In
many nineteenth century novels, the heroine symbolizes the possibility that
the frontier could be transformed into an ordered and civilized pastoral
community. What is distinctive about Atherton’s heroines, what she shares
with writers we feel are “modern,” such as Dreiser or Fitzgerald, is that she no
longer has a sense of what Larzer Ziff calls “the Howellsian garden.”16

If Atherton used her heroines to represent the California experience, she
was nevertheless aware that there was more than one California experience. In
Los Cerritos (1890) her heroine is of mixed descent, Mexican and Spanish.
Carmelita Murietta has inherited her Mexican father’s revolutionary ardor and
her Spanish mother’s “instinct of civilization.”17 She is “Nature’s own child”
(46), like an animal (though with the instinct of chastity), impulsive, “never
born for clothes at all” (176). Atherton reveals a touch of racism in her
depiction of Carmelita, denying her intellectual capability because of her
Mexican heritage. In the novel, Atherton pictures the Mexicans either as
savage animals or as lazy primitives. Her subject is politically important,
dealing as it does with Mexicans forced off what they believe to be
government land by the discovery of an old Spanish land grant which is
subsequently sold to a San Francisco millionaire. But Atherton is only
slightly stirred by the plight of the starving Mexicans; her main interest is in
marrying off her savage, primitive heroine to the civilized San Francisco
millionaire.

Atherton based the novel on an actual event. She and her husband lived on
a ranch after the courts had declared that the land belonged to the Atherton
family and not to the government. In the novel, Atherton saves the Mexicans
from starvation by having her hero design a social experiment which will
enable them to stay on their farms. In real life, the Mexicans were simply
driven off their land with no thought given to their welfare except for “a belt
of calico and two red flannel petticoats” supplied by Atherton’s
mother-in-law and presented to “something like fifty half-naked women and
wholly naked children . . . as a protection against bitter weather and
compensation for all they had lost” (Adventures, 77).

Atherton’s most effective analysis of the California experience comes in
The Californians (1898), which is also her best novel. Atherton’s attitudes
towards California during the 1890's are summed up in a fable she recounts in the novel:

California is the Princess Royal of her country . . . and at her birth all the good fairies came and gave her of every gift in the stores of the immortals. Then a wicked fairy came and turned the skeleton in her beautiful body to gold; and, lo! the princess who had been fashioned to bless mankind carried, hidden from sight by her innocent and beneficent charms, a terrible curse. Men came to kiss, and stayed to tear away her flesh with their teeth. When her skeleton has been torn forth even to the uttermost rib, then the spell of the wicked fairy will be broken, and California will be the most gracious mother mankind has ever known. ¹⁸

The lust for gold has cursed many of the major characters in the novel. Don Roberto Yorba has decided to become "American" in order to avoid the fate of his compatriots who, unable to deal with Yankee shrewdness, have lost their lands and now live on memories (often drunken) of the Arcadian California past, hating its Yankee, money-grabbing present. Yorba, constantly fearing that his innate indolence will dominate him, becomes increasingly miserly, and, at the end of the novel, hangs himself with the American flag which he had flown from his houses. Hiram Polk, Yorba's Yankee friend and brother-in-law, sacrifices his chance for love to his own ambitions. Jack Belmont (the beauteous Helena's father) dies at an early age, killed by hard work and hard liquor. California's gold has wasted these men, twisted their lives so they have become only money-making machines. Their houses, situated on a San Francisco hill so they "don't see the ugly things below" (15), are repeatedly imaged as tombs, sarcophagi, whereas the "ugly" people below, belonging to all the races and nationalities found in San Francisco, at least have the vitality of what the aristocratic Atherton describes as elemental, crude passions.

In The Californians, as in her previous novels, Atherton uses her heroine as a means of analyzing the implications of the California heritage. Atherton repeatedly tells us that Magdalena Yorba is the "unfortunate result of coupled races" (8), her New England intellect battling with her inherited California indolence, her "scourging conscience" warring "with all the secretiveness, self-indulgence, and haughty intolerance of restraint which she had inherited with her father's blood" (144). Unlike Atherton's previous heroines, Magdalena does not appear to be the product of a wish-fulfilling fantasy. Atherton's conception of her heroine is firmly rooted in her knowledge of the patriarchal, restrictive rearing of the Spanish tradition as well as the shallow ambiance of San Francisco society. As a contemporary review of the novel noted, "Magdalena is not only credible but very real. It is something of a triumph in characterization that the reader should feel as strongly as he does her physical defects, her silence, awkwardness, inadequacy and pride and yet have his sympathy keenly engaged in her behalf."¹⁹

Magdalena's most convincing characteristic is her Spanish pride. Dowdy, ill-at-ease socially, Magdalena remembers

that she was a Yorba, and drew herself up in lonely pride. It was a privilege for these girls to be intimate with her . . . . In her inordinate pride of birth, in her intimate knowledge of the fact that she was the daughter of a California grandee who still possessed the three hundred thousand acres granted his fathers by the Spanish crown, she in all honesty believed no one of these friends of her youth to be her equal, although she never betrayed herself by so much as a lifting of the eyebrow. (124)
Atherton uses Magdaléna to expose the San Francisco upper class, the vapid belles, the dreary Menlo summers, the sordid love affairs of its millionaires, even the futility of the old California pride. In order to survive, Magdaléna must reconcile her mixed heritage, reject her paternalistic Catholic rearing, learn about the existence of prostitution and poverty, and accept a self that is neither beautiful, graceful, nor talented. Atherton is a feminist to the extent that she sympathetically presents Magdaléna’s struggle to become a woman independent of her society’s conventional expectations. However, Atherton evidently cannot conceive of any other reward for her heroine than being finally (and implausibly) reunited with the ideal man, a man who is attracted to Magdaléna because he alone will possess the secret of her soul.

The popular success of Gertrude Atherton’s novels during the 1890’s suggests that the largely female reading audience was ready to accept heroines who did not conform to the Victorian assumptions about the nature of women—as long as the sentimental expectations about the ideal man were fulfilled. Atherton was a pioneer in her treatment of female sexuality and in her presentation of heroines who were actively seeking an identity based on their own needs and capabilities rather than on the attributes their society ascribed to women. Atherton could not, however, escape the convention of “They lived happily ever after.” By 1932 she could present herself in her autobiography as a thoroughgoing feminist, contemptuous of home and family. But in many of the novels she published during the 1890’s her feminism was limited by her extolling home and family as the one goal for her heroines.

Notes
1 Heroines of Fiction (New York, 1901), II, 153.
2 Literary and Social Silhouettes (New York, 1894), p. 49.
4 Rev. of Miss Ravenel’s Conversion from Secession to Loyalty, Atl. Mo., 20 (July 1867), 122.
5 A Daughter of the Philistines (Boston, 1883), p. 24.
6 Literary and Social Silhouettes, p. 31.
7 Some of the information for this paragraph was supplied by Carolyn Forrey, “Gertrude Atherton and the New Woman,” Diss. Yale 1971, p. 59.
8 “Why is American Literature Bourgeois?,” NAR, 178 (May 1904), 773, 778.
9 Ibid., 780.
10 Patience Sparhawk and Her Times, 10th ed. (New York, 1903), pp. 16–17. All further references to this work will appear in the text.
11 “Gertrude Atherton,” Bookman, 30, 358.
12 “Atherton vs. Grundy: The Forty Years War,” Bookman, 69 (July 1929), 470.
13 Adventures of a Novelist (New York, 1932), p. 173. All further references to this work will appear in the text.
14 A Whirl Asunder (New York, 1895), p. 89. All further references to this work will appear in the text.
17 Los Cerritos: A Romance of the Modern Time (1890; rpt. New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1968), p. 46. All further references to this work will appear in the text.
18 The Californians (New York, 1898), p. 171. All further references to this work will appear in the text.
19 Rev. of The Californians, Critic, 33 (Nov. 1898), 395.
Author's Note: The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library at West Branch, Iowa, was opened to qualified researchers in March, 1966. Much of what follows is based on material in nine file boxes of papers relating to President Hoover's press conferences. These records were not so systematically kept as those of Presidents to come, but there are at least partial transcripts of 200 conferences.

The aid of the American Association of University Women in support of this research is acknowledged with deep gratitude.
As Secretary of Commerce under both Harding and Coolidge, Herbert Hoover was more accessible to the press than any other leading figure in either administration. Paul Y. Anderson, Washington correspondent for The St. Louis Post Dispatch, said that among newsmen Hoover "enjoyed a higher reputation... than any man who was ever to enter the White House. Long before the death of Harding it became the custom of a group of correspondents, including some of the ablest in the business, to gather several afternoons each week in Hoover's office." Anderson wrote that Hoover always spoke in confidence but was "the best 'grapevine' in Washington" and that "gradually... an impression pervaded the Washington press corps... that Hoover knew more about the affairs of the government and the actual condition of the country and the world than any man in the administration." ("Hoover and the Press," The Nation, October 14, 1931.) Hoover's high rating among important Washington newsmen dated back to the Wilson administration. For example, he had been going to the exclusive dinners of the Gridiron Club, an association of the capital's journalistic elite, for nearly twenty years before he became President.

Yet before he left the Presidency, Hoover's standing with the Washington press corps had deteriorated so drastically that, according to Anderson, some reporters believed he had done favors for editors to induce them to transfer antagonistic correspondents out of Washington. The President was accused not only of deliberately misleading the press but also of giving out false information. Among his actual "sins" were refusing to let most impromptu conference remarks be quoted, ignoring some conference questions, and putting off others until their subject matter was out of the headlines. The terms "managed news" or "credibility gap" were not used, but press disenchantment with President Hoover was vented in expressions of hostility and betrayal like those heard decades later during parts of the Kennedy and virtually all of the Johnson and Nixon administrations.

Why did President Hoover persist in ways that offended and alienated the press, especially when its support became more and more important to him? His answer, in the form of an assertion, was that he had no choice if he was to try to govern effectively. A more complete (and accurate) explanation,
however, lies in understanding the relationship between the President and the press, which frequently becomes so venomous that it poisons public discourse. Comparisons with the experience of other Presidents, notably Nixon, will not only alter the common view of Hoover as simply a Presidential wash-out but will also clarify the nature and effectiveness of the press conference as an institution.

President Hoover’s conference history can be traced by examining five features useful in analyzing the conference and its development in any administration: (1) Size, or the number of persons attending the conference; (2) Openness, or the custom of allowing conference access to all accredited correspondents; (3) Regularity, including the intervals at which conferences are held and the advance notice given when scheduling a conference; (4) Formality, or the existence of rules and the rigidity of their enforcement; and (5) Attribution, the extent to which a President may be quoted directly in public. Each of these features impinges on and affects the others. For example, “attribution” is an aspect of “formality,” but it must be treated separately to emphasize the importance of the rules governing direct quotation in generating Hoover’s bad press.

Size. About 200 reporters turned out for President Hoover’s first conference soon after his inauguration, causing him to remark, “It seems that the whole press of the United States has given me the honor of a call this morning.” This was an exceptional turnout, however; and, unless there was a rumor among the press corps that the President was about to make some startling announcement, his conferences were faithfully attended mainly by a dozen or so White House “regulars”—those whose assignment was to “cover” the White House. Since Hoover took great care with any material that might be quoted and his conferences produced less “hard” news than the press corps preferred, some reporters began to boycott the conferences on this account, lowering the attendance.

While numbers were not recorded, the impression given by on-the-scene observers is that only unusual conferences drew more than 25. Thus the constant presidential problem of establishing rapport with Washington correspondents was not caused by the large size of the group as would be the case with Presidents to come. (Estimates indicate that about 150 reporters crowded into F.D. Roosevelt’s office and between 200 and 250 into Harry S. Truman’s until he was forced to move the conference out of the White House into the Executive office building. In recent years, only impromptu conferences or those held away from Washington draw fewer than several hundred persons.)

Openness. All accredited correspondents were free to come to President Hoover’s conferences. Ample notice was given, so that non-attendance by the bulk of the corps was strictly of their own choosing. Then, as now, no public criticism was directed at reporters who did not bother to attend the conferences, contrary to the custom of taking Presidents to public task for not scheduling conferences. President Hoover’s long career in Washington had built him a number of close associations among the reporters; and he continued to see those people privately after he entered the White House. Occasionally their exchanges formed the basis for articles, and this made other reporters churlish; they expressed the view that Presidents should confine their press contacts to the conference. But President Hoover’s practice in this regard came as no surprise. For he had early indicated an intention to use the conference to air matters of general interest and to see reporters singly or in smaller groups on subjects of narrower concern. At his first conference he said: “I wish to be of such service as I can in these
conferences, and beyond this in matters of special character that are not of general interest I would be glad to see any of you from time to time."

Among his press confidants, Mark Sullivan, columnist and popular historian, was perhaps the closest. But others who met with the President outside the conference included Frank Kent of The Baltimore Sun, Richard V. Oulahan of The New York Times, Roy Roberts of The Kansas City Star, and Roy Vernon of The Chicago Daily News. Some of these men had known Hoover since the days when he had been the food administrator for Wilson.

Once in a while Hoover invited several of his special friends from the press corps to join him at his Virginia retreat on the Rapidan River. Instead of accepting this as the prerogative of any person to choose leisure-time companions, some excluded reporters who insisted on equal access to the President attacked Hoover and charged him with violating historical precedent by singling out a few for special attention. In fact, however, up to this time only Wilson and Coolidge had confined most of their press contacts to the conference itself.

Regularity. The records show that Hoover held 79 conferences during his first year as President and 87 in his second. Thus he came close to equaling Coolidge's twice-a-week schedule and raised expectations that this pattern would continue throughout his term. Hoover alternated the times between noon and 4 p.m., giving both morning and afternoon newspapers an even chance to be first with the news. In his third year, although never officially changing the schedule, he cancelled more conferences than before. His total of 69 in 1931 brought his average close to one a week. This schedule was his unofficial practice until after the 1932 national conventions and presidential election. After his conference of June 24, 1932, he held only six more that year—two each in July, August, and September. There are no records of a Hoover conference in the two months after he lost the election. Although he held six conferences in 1933 before surrendering the Presidency to Franklin D. Roosevelt in March, the four in January were for "background" only, which in those days meant that the President could not be indicated as the source for news stories based on the conference.

The belief has gained currency that President Hoover somehow failed in his duty toward the press and the public by not holding as many conferences as he should have. James E. Pollard, for example, writes in The Presidents and the Press: "During his final months in the White House, the relations between Mr. Hoover and the press deteriorated steadily. Toward the end of that period, in fact, they ceased altogether . . . . Between June 1 and mid-September, 1932, the President met the correspondents only eight times." But the figures cited do not accord with the records at the Hoover library which contain at least partial transcripts for nine conferences from June 17 to September 13, 1932, and for the six conferences in 1933. The discrepancy can perhaps be explained by the fact that until the Hoover library opened in March, 1966, the best documentation of the actual number of Hoover's conferences was in The State Papers, edited by William Starr Myers. But these volumes give only the formal statements made at conferences, and since some conferences took place without formal statements, their number indicates fewer conferences than were actually held.

How one establishes an optimum conference figure for Presidents is a puzzlement. Perhaps the most that can be said with certainty is that the preference of the press should not be decisive, for reporters might well argue for daily access. But obviously, it is wrong to charge that President Hoover saw too little of the press in conference. Comparison with other Presidents has always furnished one sensible standard by which to judge the record of
any given President. Using that standard, Hoover's conference average appears low only when compared with the records of Coolidge and Franklin Roosevelt; his quantitative record is better over-all than that of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, or Nixon. President Hoover, however, was unwise to have committed himself at the outset to a twice-a-week schedule; for if he cancelled, it then required justification. Such cancellations also made more obvious than necessary the fact that meeting with the press is not always a top priority with Presidents. When the press imbues itself with the poetic notion that it is the best guardian of the people's interest, careless logic may lead to the conclusion that the President is slighting the people themselves by calling off a scheduled conference. It is not hard to find analogies like the following which appeared in a lead editorial by The New York Times and referred to reporters at press conferences: "They are more than ever a fourth estate, a third branch of the legislature, a court of not quite last resort, a group of customers in a corner drugstore or, more grandly, the people of the United States." (April 29, 1955).

Formality. The press corps interpreted President Hoover's comments at their first conference as indicating that future meetings would be less constrained than Coolidge's and therefore more in tune with their wishes. The new President said: "I wish . . . your co-operation on further development of these conferences . . . By degrees a means has been found for a more intimate relationship, and I have an impression that we might develop it even further in those directions which would assist the press and assist the President . . . . I am anxious to clear up the twilight zone as far as we can between authoritative and quotable material on the one hand, and such material as I am able to give from time to time for purely background purposes on the other . . . ." He asked the president of the White House Correspondents' Association to "make up a committee of the heads of the bureaus and services to discuss the matter with me on some early occasion as to how we can further amplify these relations."

But it soon became clear to the reporters that the President was not going to loosen the formal structure of the conference and, indeed, would impose new conditions. At his second conference, he told reporters that he did not want "to be put in the attitude of constant pronunciamentos on public questions" and requested that before quoting directly his prepared answers to some queries, "you will quote this little opening: 'In reply to a question from representatives of the press the President stated today. . . .'" The next conference revealed greater cause for unease among those newsmen who resented what they thought was telling them how to do their jobs. At this session, President Hoover discussed the results of a meeting with the committee of correspondents. The principal outcome of the meeting was a change in the rule on written questions, which had started in the Harding administration. The President said that the group had agreed that any questions on subjects that were not of a "spot" news nature should be submitted at least 24 hours in advance. He asked that any questions submitted after that deadline be "as far as possible confined to matters which have arisen on the crest of the day's events." On March 12, 1929, he said that the reason for requesting submission of questions a full day ahead of time was that "it gives me an opportunity for a considered answer, and will enable me to give you more information, because, as in the case today, I have just had a moment to go across the questions, and some of them I am quite willing to reply to, but would like to give them more thought . . . ."

The transcripts of Hoover's conferences frequently show, however, that he permitted some oral questioning, as well. During a conference held on March
20, 1931, aboard the *U.S.S. Arizona*, seven questions were asked, all of them spontaneous; for the President had begun the conference by saying, "You can ask verbal questions this time if you wish to."

Many reporters, then as now, had the idea that they would get more information if they could take the President by surprise. The more time he had for reflection, their reasoning ran, the less he was likely to tell them. This conflict of aims between the President and the press became more pronounced as economic conditions in the nation called for great circumspection when Hoover spoke for publication.

The usual format for the Hoover conferences was threefold: First came replies to questions on which he was willing to be quoted in print, replies commonly in the form of prepared statements. Second, there was a more informal disposal of other questions, generally on a "not for quotation" basis. Depending on the subject, President Hoover might permit himself to be cited indirectly as the source of replies or he might put his answers into the "background" category. Third, a few spontaneous questions—usually clearing up some previous point or asking about the President's travel plans—would be entertained.

Judging from his comments at various conferences throughout his term, President Hoover never did convince the correspondents that they would learn more by regularly submitting all but the most timely questions 24 hours in advance. Consequently, numerous sessions were short-lived, beginning with the President's statement that he had no questions before him. On August 21, 1931, he took note of previous, unproductive conferences by saying, "I have some questions this time, so we have some inspiration."

In their turn, reporters found cause to be disgruntled by the new management of the written question rule. At times, when President Hoover remarked on the paucity of questions, the reporters, in checking later among themselves, discovered that a dozen or more queries had been handed in. The President's press aide, George Akerson, had been screening the questions and withholding from presidential view those that he thought not worthy of Hoover's time. To the correspondents, this smacked of prior restraint, the worst kind of censorship. They resented what they viewed as the intrusion of a supernumerary into their business of holding the President to account. But even when Akerson retreated to a less active role, the President himself chose to put some questions off to future conferences or to ignore them altogether, especially as the Depression got worse. After the mid-term elections on November 7, 1930, the following statement records one entire conference: "I have a number of inquiries from you gentlemen upon contentious questions but the job for the country to concentrate on now is further measures of cooperation for economic recovery. And that is the only suggestion I have for you on this occasion." In the summer of 1931 three questions submitted by the International News Service’s White House reporter asking whether the President might call a special session of Congress to deal with unemployment were ignored: whether the questions had been screened or the President deliberately ignored them is unclear.

The Hoover papers contain a selection of "Questions Propounded by the Press, 1929–1932." The format varied from carefully typed inquiries on newspaper letterhead to torn scraps of paper with a few haphazardly typewritten phrases. An example transcribed below complete with typographical errors was a direct query to President Hoover on July 9, 1929, by a reporter for *The New York Times*, who typed on a half sheet of copy paper: "Is it the President’s impression that the tariff bill will be reported to the Senate with many of the heavy schedules imposed in the House bill on
necearies greatly reduced?"

Attribution. At his first conference, President Hoover said that previous understandings governing reporters' use of Coolidge's conference remarks would stay in effect. By the time of his fourth conference, he had met with a committee of correspondents and was able to announce:

The press arrangements have been more or less crystallized down to three categories of questions.

The first category—those that I will endeavor to answer for you for quotation, or in some cases ... secure for you a complete answer from the responsible official, which can be used. And I will endeavor to cover as many of the important public questions as possible.

The second category—questions which are on matters of secondary interest on which the President does not like to be scattered all over the newspapers in discussing minor and secondary questions; and in the replies to these the view of your committee and myself was that they could be attributed as from the White House or the administration, but I think you will agree with me that it is not desirable for me to comment on everything in the world, and that if I were put in that position I would have to be somewhat reticent, whereas under that sort of a heading I will be able to give you as much material as possible.

The third category—purely background questions that are more or less factual on things on which you don't want any authority attributed, and you don't have to use it if you don't want it.

As time went on, President Hoover sought to establish a fourth category, which he usually referred to as "purely background" or "talking in private," meaning that such material could not be used in news stories. Before the World Disarmament Conference, for instance, he spoke this way at a press session: "The matter I would like to talk to you about today is absolutely as background and not for publication at all, but I want for you to understand the problem which is coming along a little later—nothing for quotation or even for publication about it, but simply to have you forearmed." Reporters liked this category least of all, for they felt that it unduly fettered them in writing speculative pieces on forthcoming events.

President Hoover's description of the "first category" led some reporters to think that he would be more permissive than his predecessors about direct quotation of extemporaneous remarks. They had long been able to quote in the first person such prepared conference statements as Coolidge's "I do not choose to run." But they thought that Hoover was going to grant this privilege for spontaneous utterances on "important public questions" perhaps nearly as often as for formal statements. "Alas," wrote Anderson, "... direct quotations promptly degenerated into mimeographed handouts of insignificant content."

President Hoover in his turn also had reasons for saying, "Alas." For some reporters tried to ease some of the "background" information into stories where they could at least cite the White House as the source, thus making clear to knowledgeable readers that the President himself had spoken. During negotiations with England on naval arms reduction, Hoover thought that he had been too clearly identifiable as the authority for some information given to the conference as background, and in an effort to stop that practice, he told the reporters they might force him to reveal less of what was going on. At his conference of September 13, 1929, he said:

Now, when we first undertook to revise our press relations here we divided our discussions into two or three categories, one of which was purely background material. I would be prepared to discuss with you
now the background on the negotiations that have proceeded in the
matter of naval agreement, but my understanding at that time was that
background material was not quotable or was not attributable, but it
was simply for your information so that you may be guided rightly in
making up your own discussions.

I felt some limitations because there seems to have been some
misunderstanding as to whether or not it could be attributed to the
White House or high officials or something. . . . If you wish to use it it
is on your own authority. You have no occasion to use it if you do not
want to. It is not propaganda. It is merely a question of trying to keep
you on the right track as to what is going on. I recognize your ability to
represent the fact as you see it here in Washington. But I have a
responsibility in these matters, and I do not wish that such information
by some comma or sentence be distorted and produce difficulties for us
in our negotiations. If that can be our understanding on this occasion I
will go to some extent into this discussion as it exists today.

Three years later, at his September 29, 1931, conference, President Hoover
was still making the same point: “I think we need a re-understanding of what
background consists of—it is the desire on my part to help the correspondents
with the facts about various things on which I do not desire to be quoted.
There seems to be a little departure from that idea. If the correspondents do
not think it worth while it is not a matter with which I am greatly
concerned.”

But it is a matter of concern if a President stops sharing inside information
with reporters. In such an event, they will look for information elsewhere and
perhaps come up with distorted views to pass on to the public. No President
can help being concerned when day after day the public press carries
erroneous, distorted, or incomplete accounts of matters of state. But what
can Presidents do about the situation? The Johnson and Nixon experiences,
as well as Hoover's, show that, while the withholding of information is an
ultimate sanction that Presidents have in disciplining what they regard as an
unruly press, it is not a sanction they will find beneficial in the long run. If
not concern for public understanding, at least personal pride usually compels
Presidents to share confidences that will help set the record straight. But
Hoover maintained that if the reporters continued to identify him as the
source for background briefing, he would cut down on what he told them, at
least in the conference setting. Newsmen, meanwhile, moving toward a
professional ethic of objectivity, found it distasteful to have to say that they
had authored a policy interpretation that had, in fact, come from the
President.

President Hoover had seen this conflict as the chief conference problem
within a month after taking office. At a Gridiron Club speech he told the
newsmen: “it is upon the matter of authority for news from the White House
that the difficulty of relations between the President and the twice-weekly
press conferences seem largely to revolve.” And “the matter of authority for
news from the White House”—the problem of when and in what way the
press should quote the President—proved a constant difficulty in Hoover's
encounters with the press, worsening as the Depression deepened and his
popular support fell away. The contrasting tones of Hoover's off-the-record
remarks at Gridiron Club dinners two years apart attest to the growing
intensity of the problem. Shortly after inauguration, he spoke in jocular
fashion:

I learn more each day as to the relations of the Presidential office to
the press. It appears to expect me to perform two separate duties,
which occasionally in some degree seem to conflict. One duty is to help
the people of the United States to get along.... That is, not to start
anything that will occasion conflict and dissension. The other duty,
which is almost every day borne in powerfully upon me, is that I should
provide the press with exciting news of something exciting about to
happen.... The ideal solution, of course would be to excite the press
without exciting the country, but every day brings proof to me that the
newspapers are designed to be read.

But by 1931, his Gridiron Club comments were tinged with acrimony:

Let me say... that the conduct of public business, both domestic
and foreign, nine times out of ten is a matter of delicate negotiation, of
long and patient endeavor to bring about the meeting of many minds.
One critical essential in all such negotiations is to avoid the rock of
announced positions and the inflation of public controversy by
which measures affecting men and nations may be wrecked before a
common understanding may be reached through the long and tedious
process of give and take. But naturally the correspondents, under
pressure to discover every step of such processes and to envisage every
difference of opinion in those terms of combat, to satisfy the village
gossips, would require to have minute-by-minute access to the most
confidential conversation (for both morning and evening editions) and
to have mimeographed copies of all foreign dispatches. Not always
having these facilities given to them they must satisfy the managing
editor somehow at least by a column damning the Government for
secrecy.

The press appeared to see his reticence as stemming from a combination of
the fear of exposure and the desire to avoid outside interference. These may
have been partial motives, but Hoover’s own comments show something
deeper operating. Fundamentally at issue was whether the President or the
press could best define the public interest with respect to how much
information should be made available and at what time. This issue is always at
the root of conference-centered disputes between Presidents and the press.
But Hoover’s case offers the severest instance of that clash seen in American
history until the domestic war of the Johnson and Nixon administrations.
Hoover’s experience helps put those furiously hostile relations in perspective,
if only to post a “caution” sign that doing battle with the press does not
automatically make a President the public’s enemy.

After the stock market failed (seven months after Hoover took office)
relations between Hoover and the press went quickly downhill. The President
kept calling for restraint from reporters and kept insisting that the decisions
on what should appear in print were better made by him than by the press.
He tried to convince the newsmen of their responsibility to write about the
healthy aspects of economy—or at least not to dwell on the malignancies. To
President Hoover, the Depression was like war in its threat to the well-being
of the nation. Reporters may grumble, but they usually permit some
curtailments in time of war. But the reporters rejected the war analogy and
considered the request for restraint to be improper during peacetime.

President Hoover believed that loss of public confidence was the chief
cause of the financial crisis and the Depression that followed. The
cooperation of the news media was essential if that confidence was to be
regained and maintained. Time and again, the transcripts show him appealing
for help in restoring the nation’s faith in its economic system and trying to
explain that much of what he said should not be reported, for fear of
exacerbating public anxiety. When, for example, he wanted to brief reporters
on the possibility of merging the ailing railroads, he said: "I would like to talk to you for a moment about the railway situation—but not for publication or for any use. . . . It might be interpreted as being rather pessimistic in a time of sensitive public mind . . . ." At the October 9, 1931, conference, he asked reporters if they would—without citing him as the source—try to inform the public that a credit crisis was unavoidable for the farmers when "unreasoning withdrawal of deposits" left the banks no money to lend.

Kent Cooper, former executive director of the Associated Press, revealed in his autobiography in 1959 that Hoover had in January, 1933, asked him to keep reports of speeches of "alarmist Congressmen" off the wires in the interest of keeping open "four thousand banks that tragically are faced with closing at any hour—even today." Cooper wrote with some pride that he had rejected the President's request.

On February 5, 1932, President Hoover discussed on a "purely background" basis the problem of hoarding money and urged that the newsmen help the man in the street realize the need for circulation of money, saying, "It is a real educational problem and lies largely with the press." Hoover also endeavored to convince reporters that the bleak side of the news was being overly stressed while healthful signs were going unnoticed. On October 21, 1930, he said: "There is one thing I would like to suggest to you just privately, and that is that all these things can be very much exaggerated. Exaggeration of them does not help the general situation of the country." He then went on to say that the figure of three and a half million unemployed workers constantly being quoted did not add the qualifier that one million of these were "seasonal" and not related to the Depression. He noted, too, that it was being said that three and a half million families were without breadwinners but that the true situation was not so grim because, statistically, one and three-fourths breadwinners existed for each American family. A year later, the President was still distressed that unqualifiedly stark stories contributed to public panic. On September 11, 1931, he said: "I have a subject I would like to talk to you about in purely a personal way. . . . You all realize that the public mind is disturbed and some of that disturbance relates to possible over-exaggeration of the unemployment situation and what is likely to happen during the winter. . . . I am not talking for publication at all. . . ." He then spoke about the estimate that the country had 30 million destitute persons and asked the reporters to take note of the fact that the sick and the destitute should be differentiated from those who were unemployed. He continued:

Certainly we will have a serious problem, and it will require a great deal of resolution and courage and generosity to solve it, but the envisaging of the problem in the light of large numbers is very seriously disturbing the public mind, . . . creating a great deal of fear, and one result of that is the tightening of people's belts who have resources . . . and thereby decreasing employment again. . . . When you have an opportunity or it comes to you to interpret the facts as a matter of objective action in a contribution to the settling of the public mind, I would hope that you would make these distinctions. . . . So that I just make that suggestion to you in the work you do that it is in the national interest that we should keep the public mind properly advised and keep the people steady in the boat. We have enough problems without these exaggerating ones on our shoulders.

An exchange at the conference of October 6, 1931, is worth quoting at some length because it shows how the President tried to suggest to reporters that they would better serve the public by delaying their coverage of a
meeting at the White House that evening. The meeting of House and Senate leaders was to develop a program to combat the Depression. He began:

Now, I would like to talk with you a little confidentially—perhaps even more confidentially than background—on a difficulty that confronts the President of the United States. ... In the endeavor to bring various groups into coordinated action it is necessary that I shall have conferences with these groups. ... It is your natural business, and I admire you for it, to endeavor to find out anything you can find out. That is the proper function of newspaper correspondents. ....

I think you will realize as citizens, however, that the disclosure of discussions, programs, and ideas that are put forward when they are in their formative stage and when they must be hammered out on the anvil of debate with many groups, may lead to oppositions which are wholly unnecessary and increase the difficulties of the times. I am asking you to suppress nothing. I ask you to go and find out everything you can. But I think you will bear with me if I don't discuss these matters with you ... it would not be fair to the American people that I should start cross-currents that are bound to rise from partial programs.

Press: Mr. President, cannot you after tonight's conference give us some rather definite statement? It is coming out piecemeal if you don't. You are going to have people there—a great many groups—they will tell things and in fact be all mixed up. The condition of the financial men of the country is such now that all these rumors will have a very bad effect.

The President: I would like to make an arrangement, but I don't think it is possible. I don't think that I ought even to suggest it to you, because there are persons who think I am endeavoring to suppress the news. ... I am wondering whether or not I could make an arrangement with you that you will forebear any of this incidental comment that may come out of this conference. It is impossible to have a group of men who don't some of them wish to convey impressions, and, as you say, it mixes the situation very badly and makes it very difficult for me. I don't put that up to you otherwise than as a thought of mine that would be helpful in this very difficult situation if you were prepared to just leave this generally alone and forebear any attempt to pry into what may take place tonight and allow me until tomorrow that I may have at least a few hours to formulate the conference into a program ... [At this point, Hoover noted that the meeting would not end until about midnight.]

Press: Of course, Mr. President, I don't have a morning paper. But no individual newspaper can do that. You cannot effect an agreement among newspaper men on that.

The President: That is why I started off with the premise that such a thing is impossible. I am giving you my feeling and what I think would be in the interest of the American people. I leave it to you and ask for no promises ... you are absolutely free to do whatever you please.

That exchange illustrates both the impasse at which President Hoover and the press had arrived and the nature of their dispute. He made an appeal to patriotism over professionalism when he noted that correspondents are pledged to dig out what they can but that as citizens they have a higher responsibility. To the press, however, professionalism and patriotism are as one; finding out and making known all the news automatically enhances the public good.

The estrangement of Hoover and the press intensified outside the
conference as well as within it. In August, 1931, The New York World-Telegram learned that Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt had written President Hoover about the St. Lawrence seaway; the editors were angered when the White House would not comment or even acknowledge the letter’s arrival. After this episode, Editor and Publisher, a weekly magazine for journalists, said: “Steadily, almost stealthily, there is growing up in Washington to plague the correspondents and to confound newspaper editors and readers ‘back home’ a wall of official silence on public questions, of evasion, misrepresentation, and sad to say in some cases of downright lying by public officials.”

In the fall of 1931, a meeting between President Hoover and the financial editor of a wire service resulted in a story purporting to give the President’s views on the economic outlook. Complaints that Hoover should not have given an “exclusive” story were countered by White House adviser Theodore Joslin, who said that the White House understanding had been that nothing would be published about the meeting. Joslin also took this occasion to ask the reporters to check with him before writing articles that bore on the Depression. The immediate reaction to this suggestion was a charge of censorship. Petitions were circulated among members of the National Press Club, opposing “every effort of officialdom to abridge the rights of newspapers and of the public to know in detail what their government is doing.”

In a 1931 Gridiron Club speech, President Hoover seemed ready to concede that his hosts would never accept what he had been trying to tell them about problems of governing during a crisis. In referring to a newsmen’s skit on White House censorship preceding his speech, he said: “That is a thorny subject, as old as the Government and involving the theory that the principal job of Presidents is to make news for both morning and afternoon editions each day, and particularly that it shall have a mixed flavor of human-interest story and a dog fight that will please the village gossips. A revered President, long since dead, once told me that there was no solution to this relation of the White House to the press: that there never would be a President who could satisfy the press until he was twenty years dead.”

And, indeed, President Hoover was never able to convince the press of the merits of his position. The press corps again raised the cry of censorship when his aids asked that news of the financial crisis be checked with them before being submitted for publication. Anderson, for instance, termed this “an astonishing request” and found it a source of cynical amusement that the President publicly spoke calming words about the Depression while at the same time telling the reporters in confidence how grave the situation was. At the conference of October 25, 1929, shortly after the crash, the President began by saying: “All the questions I have today—or most of them—are on the business situation.” He then authorized direct quotation of this statement: “The fundamental business of the country . . . is on a very sound and prosperous basis.” Such a statement at that moment might seem worthy only of a horse laugh, until one recognizes that at a time of extreme national danger a President’s public pronouncements cannot always jibe with his private views.

It reveals a sadly inadequate understanding of the complexities of statemanship to accuse a President of being “two-faced” or guilty of “double-speak” whenever he is found to say in public something other than what he has said in private conversations. Yet such accusations have become commonplace. During Hoover’s administration, the press view of how this form of government is supposed to operate was incompatible with the
President's view that some acts of informing the public do more harm than temporary ignorance. The root of the problem lies in a basic disagreement between most Presidents and the preponderance of the press about the true character of American government. The tendency of the press is to regard our government as ideally a plebiscitary democracy, while most Presidents—like most of the founders—consider its strength to lie in its representative character, in the fact that it is constituted as a democratic republic, not as a direct democracy. Hence, the press saw Hoover's position on the release of information as leading to simple authoritarianism and, therefore, requiring simple resistance. Hoover, on the other hand, thought that keeping some information "in house" was vital to the public interest and not a violation of constitutional principle.

One of the least noted but nonetheless gravest effects of the Nixon debacle concerns this very point. The press has tended to treat its crucial part in exposing the Nixon maladministration as a triumph for the notion that total information should be the constant practice in government. Far less stress has been given to the more important point that Nixon abused and betrayed the representative institutions. As a result, an erroneous lesson may be drawn from the misdeeds of the seventies: that the press is superior to and more necessary than the formal government—a lesson that can be true only when, as in plebiscitary democracy, the people make the daily decisions and thus must immediately have, via the press, the information they need to make up their minds. The bad "fit" between the public and private utterances of Nixon and company is certainly insupportable and inexcusable. But the lesson of the painful events of Watergate is not that it is always and everywhere evil in representative democracy when government officials talk or act publicly in ways that do not precisely coincide with what is happening in private. The conduct of war and the negotiation of treaties are two major governmental tasks that cannot be done well if everything that is discussed is immediately made available for the press to make decisions about publication.

The mapping of strategies against economic crisis is another governmental realm where the claims of the people's right-to-know-now may have to take second place to their right to a stable, healthy, and just polity. Some years after leaving office, Hoover wrote: "In those times of deepening depression I was crippled . . . from enlisting both Congressional and public support because fully to reveal the dangers that we were fighting off would have heightened the dangers themselves by the fanning of fear. With our weak banking system, such a full revelation might have stimulated public apprehension to the point of panic. Also, unless the President remains cheerful and optimistic he becomes a depressant. Congress and the press do not labor under such handicaps." But if—like much of the press—one takes one's bearing from the notion that the people have a preemptory right to instantaneous information, then the problem that Hoover posed must appear spurious, or a cloak for ineptitude, or worse. These days, for reasons that everyone understands, the tendency is to regard a statement like Hoover's as merely a self-serving facade to hide behind and not as a realistic comment on the exigencies of being President. The record of Herbert Hoover counsels a moderation of that tendency. At the very least, the record surely shows that neither Presidents nor the press have all the answers.
BUT THEY DON'T
EAT ROSES
O.K.
5:30 in the morning,
sleepless, so
out, out into the dawn’s early
shaking my knees
to loose the wreckers of the joint.
On a back fence bush,
game,
hanging in there,
sullied heiress of a better air than this morning breathes—
the last rose of summer.
About a spitsworth of dew greases the unkempt grass.
I look down,
and what to my wondering
but one thousand
count them—one thousand—
snails
heading straight from a thousand different points
within a pie-arc sector,
converging
on that poor son-of-a-bitching rose
and those honchos are really hauling leather—
straining from every eyestalk,
thundering from every slimey hoof,
shells hunched in the wind,
in the homestretch,
pounding, pounding—
The Hun, The Hun.
Oh intenseness,
Oh fierceness,
Oh will.
There’s will here.
I have not felt will here before.
Go, Lovely Rose.
Move your crimson ass.
Oh rose, rosey rose, rose—
you’ve had it.
Last roundup, last roundup, last roundup.
P.S.

Yesterday
out into the garden
again—early
again—the snails
though this time not in concert.
Each was doing a day’s job
plugging at its 8 hours
a self-delighting bourgeois.
Several were crossing
my path to the garage
to punch in on the bougainvillaea,
so I crunched
each one
beneath the exact center of the ball of my foot.
The pop of each employee
(company men all)
of the Universal Demolition Co.
was, you may say,—satisfactory.
I cannot remember ever having done anything like that before.

On my way back—
another, bigger, fatter.
My foot—
that forestaller of the scourge of green things
that knight errant of roses
that ender of the enders of beautiful endings—
I swung from where it would have landed
but half missed
catching just the tail and camper.
Its forebody
that hand outstretched
shrunk fast, so fast
to a limp fist.
It sucked itself together—
long creature shot in the stomach—
it all seemed to fall.
How flat on the ground could it fall?
But it seemed to fall—
even its eyestalks falling, falling.
I/ stunned/ walked into the house/ sickened/ miserable/
not wanting to go back out and look
not wanting to see
my own pediwork.
For half an hour,
I clow to this misery
trying not to wonder
about the nerve ends of snails,
cursing myself for a fool
a sentimental one—again.
Finally,
back out
and without looking at it carefully
crushed it carefully.

I know I am being foolish.
My mind tells me
this snail deserves no more thought
than a weed I’d pull without thought
or the uppity grass I mow
when the neighbors drive me to it—
that I have saved for another day
whatever its snailishness
would have eaten to remain snail.
I view with equanimity
the hundreds of snail shells
ornamenting the crystal salt poison
glazing my wife’s garden—
yet now I rise and curse
in the old sense
the poem that allowed me to swing my step to that snail
the poem whose funnishness made me blind to another creature.

How darkly are removed my growing doubts
about the power of art
to change one’s vision.

Nils Peterson
POOLSIDE MEDITATION
A just reflection of the married state,
Two balls, pale pink and green, float and mate
In the blue placid pool where clouds and sun
Reflect time's passing. Vagrant breezes run
The colored spheres erratic to and fro;
But they do think their feelings make them go.
The green now touches pink which slides
demure some inch away before the tides
Of need, or say remorse, return his sweet
To her lord's side. He haughty to retreat
From her embrace recoils: orotund green
He slowly wheels as dancing, rippling sheen
Bears him in his reflection fast apart.
The pink must after glide with all her heart
Until they quickly kiss in mutual trust
Ere casual zephyr shall between them thrust.
Or else becalmed upon the mirrored blue
The twain for minutes joined are one, not two.
But in the tiled circumference of their lives,
Whether of love or ire, air fickle strives
First to unite and then to separate
The nuptial pair in their too human state.
As stately men-of-war prepare to try
The other's strength between the sea and sky,
And both with careful glass assess foe's arms
Amidst the cry and tumult of alarms,
Then crowd on canvas to maneuver quick
And catch opponent by a sudden trick
Of wind, next broadside turning seek to close
And grapple intimately with their foes,
So these two colored balls on wavelets play
The game of war and love their livelong day.
Inflated by the self-same airs that fling
Them close or far, as puppets on a string
Each dances to a breath it thinks to will
And chooses for the moment joy or ill.
Now off again before a moment's breeze,
Now sudden pairing as they float at ease,
They live in freedom never to rehearse
Each moment's moves a moment may reverse.
Pink and green are coupled in a shade,
But in their watery world they never made
The eddies fate a space between these two,
Retreat, advance across their sun bright blue.
Never too far apart, the solemn pair
Thread their finite world of fluid air,
And as their all too human counterparts,
Live at the whimsy of their windy hearts.

Clinton Williams
In Peter Beagle's first novel, *A Fine and Private Place*, Jonathan Rebeck, the hero, has lived surreptitiously in a New York cemetery for nineteen years, aided by a talking raven who steals food for him from local stores. Rebeck would rather be dead, like the ghosts he talks with until they forget and fade from life. The kind and sociable Rebeck has become a reluctant teacher of the newly dead; he tells the ghosts Michael and Laura: "You'll drowse ... In time sleep won't mean anything to you ... it won't really matter." But Michael, a suicide who values life now that his is over, rejects the somnolent peace of Rebeck's art of dying, and he tells Laura to fight back—as he does—to remember the feeling of being alive: "Caring about things is much more important to the dead because it's all they have to keep them conscious. Without it they fade, dwindle, thin to the texture of a whisper. The same thing happens to people, but nobody notices
IN THE FANTASY
OF
PETER S. BEAGLE

it because their bodies act as masks. The dead have no masks."

These passages illustrate Beagle’s concern with the problems of human existence that give his fantasy worlds force and coherence, but they do not fully convey the comic, inventive and richly particular texture of his writing. Nor do they fully reveal the ironic nature of Beagle’s fantasy, which involves the reader’s consciousness of space and time, of the real and the imaginary in fiction. Both A Fine and Private Place (published in 1960, the year Beagle turned twenty-one) and The Last Unicorn (1968) have talking animals as characters. But the animals are not merely delights of fantasy; they are the fantasist’s technique for exploring the nature of reality in the modern world. The raven who brings Rebeck food, for instance, is a testy and tough-talking pragmatist, whose contempt for illusion is modified only by his need to preserve dignity. After grudgingly delivering Rebeck a whole baloney, he says,
"There are people . . . who give and people who take . . . Ravens don’t feel right without somebody to bring things to . . . . You think we brought Elijah food because we like him? He was a dirty old man with a beard."

In the first chapter of The Last Unicorn, the Unicorn leaves her forest of eternal spring to search for others like herself: she meets a butterfly, who says, “I am a roving gambler. How do you do?” From this zany acquaintance she gets the first help in her quest. The butterfly’s disjointed conversation flutters with snatches of poetry, popular songs, and commercial slogans: “The sweet and bitter fool will presently appear. Christ, that my love were in my arms, and I in my bed again . . . . You can find your people if you are brave . . . . Let nothing you dismay, but don’t be half-safe.”

The raven and the butterfly are both traditional talking animals of fantasy and eccentrics like many of the helpers met by the heroes of folktales. But they simultaneously undercut the fiction, for their language in part refers not to the internal world of the story, but to some real context outside of it. The raven functions throughout A Fine and Private Place as a link between the cemetery and the “real” New York surrounding it; he also shows the limits of the fantasy in action, for he constantly opposes to the wishes and dreams of the other characters the indifference of the outside world. His last words in the story are to Rebeck, who is trying to avoid a difficult commitment: “Don’t come sniffing around me, friend. I don’t make decisions. I’m a bird.”

The butterfly has a smaller but essential part at the beginning of The Last Unicorn. While providing a clue in the fairy-tale mystery of the vanished unicorns, his jumbled quotations refer to places and times outside the fantasy context and jar the reader into a complex participation in the fiction. This magical messenger, who says good-by by announcing politely, "I must take the A train," shifts us from the medieval fairy-tale world into our own memories and experiences. This anachronism not only creates irony and humour in the fantasy but tends to blur the distinction between the “reality” of everyday experience and the “illusion” of a story.

“What is reality?” I had written this absurd and important question while making notes before my conversation with Peter Beagle; when at one point I showed it to him, he said “O my God” in a soft voice of dismay (later he would say, “I have very little didact in me”). But he continued,

... the thing that interests me most is the line between fantasy and realism, because they’re both so arbitrary. The books I like always seem to shimmer back and forth between one and the other. And many books that are presented as realistic novels I find utterly fantastic, and a lot of books that are listed as fantasy seem very normal to me . . . .

Perhaps in an attempt to comprehend the line dividing them, Peter Beagle has moved back and forth between fantasy and realism as his writing has proceeded. After A Fine and Private Place—which he described as “a fantasy in a realistic setting”—he wrote I See By My Outfit (1964), a factual and wryly comic personal narrative of a trip from New York to California by motor scooter. He had previously published “Come Lady Death” in The Atlantic Monthly (1963), an exquisitely realized fantasy-parable set in eighteenth-century London. From 1964 to 1968 while working on his best-known book, the fairy-tale novel The Last Unicorn, Beagle was the chief book reviewer of Holiday. At the same time he was writing articles for other magazines, among them several frank and loving essays on family life and animals, as well as “Cockfight,” a realistic and sympathetic account of this sport and its fans in northern California. In 1967, when Unicorn was two-thirds finished, he and photographer Michael Bry began traveling, taking pictures and writing The California Feeling: A Personal View (1969), a series
of essay-narratives with many beautiful and revealing photographs of the
state's different regions and lifestyles. Since 1969 Beagle has written
television and film scripts (including The Dove, a British film directed by
Gregory Peck), Lila the Werewolf, a gothic fantasy novella set in modern New
York, and a new novel, completed last summer and awaiting publication.
This variety of work has caused Beagle to feel uncomfortable at times
about being classified as a writer of fantasy. I asked him about the
domination of contemporary fiction by realism—"the great tradition" of
critic F.R. Leavis:

Well, that's where it was going in 1960 when I started publishing. It's
always impressed me that I got reviewed as a serious
novelist . . . . Because in 1960 when literature was so much in the grip of
Leavis and Hemingway, I could so easily have been thrown into the
back of the book with forty science fiction novelists that get reviewed
about once a month by somebody who doesn't like science fiction. And
the thing I like about 1974 is that all kinds of strange stuff is coming
out that is not necessarily catagorizable as pulp fiction or science
fiction . . . . I don't know where literature is going anymore . . . but I am
a lot more interested in the possibilities and the options for a young
writer than I was in 1960. I just wrote fantasies because that was the
way I thought, but I never expected to have even as much success as
I've had. Fantasy writers didn't.

Although the critical categories seem to be breaking down, critics still make
comparisons; Granville Hicks, writing about The Last Unicorn in Saturday
Review, said Peter Beagle "stands squarely and triumphantly on his own feet"
in the realm of fantasy, but Hicks also made the inevitable comparison to
J.R.R. Tolkien and Lewis Carroll, a comparison reiterated on the back cover
of the Dutch translation of The Last Unicorn. Later we were talking about
the writers he felt close to. Beagle admires the Irish fantasist James Stephens
and, especially, Joyce Cary. He continued:

. . . Tolkien is not an influence of mine in fantasy, but I know he's
there.

Question: Do you like Peake? [Mervyn Peake, British writer and
artist, author of the fantasy-epic The Gormenghast Trilogy.]

Beagle: I like Peake a lot . . . . I'm probably closer to Peake than
Tolkien . . . .

Once in a while you really know when someone is working your side
of the street . . . . It's like reading the novelist Bulgakov. I read The
Master and Margarita and there was this shiver of recognition. We're not
doing the same thing; he's crazier than I am . . . .

When I first read reviews of The Magus—I respect John Fowles a lot,
and I got a very unhappy feeling, damn it . . . he's in my territory and
he has a very good mind and he's probably doing it very well. And I
read The Magus and, no, that's not it. He blew it . . . . I didn't know
whether I was relieved or unhappy . . . . Robert Nathan said in a
letter . . . . that he really had managed to call up the old gods, and then
he backed off and explained them as rabbits out of a hat, and you can't
do that.

Beagle regrets that Robert Nathan no longer receives the recognition he
had in the early 1940's when Portrait of Jenny was translated into eight
languages and made into a movie. Between 1919 and 1967 Nathan was, he
said, "one of my great influences when I was in high school and
college . . . . So when I started writing A Fine and Private Place I was taking off
almost directly from Nathan's work." In The California Feeling he wrote. "I
have learned important things from him—or at least started to learn them... such things as leanness and control... Other writers have learned the same things from Hemingway or from Chekhov.”

Another thing Beagle learned from Nathan—or more likely shared with him—was a way of perceiving, so that to him, “Certain things that seem unlikely or unnatural to other people seem very natural... and other things that seem very normal and daily for most people seem incredibly strange and fictional.” Beagle especially admires in Robert Nathan the older writer’s ability to “wander around in time.”

He’s the only man I know of really who could effortlessly have a man on an airplane forced down in the Jordanian desert and have him aided... by a girl who may or may not be Merlin’s Nimue, or she may be just a nice hippie girl he met at Stonehenge playing the guitar.

This concern with time, both as a dimension of human action and culture and as a fictitious dimension to be explored flexibly in the consciousness of his characters and the awareness of the reader, is a central fact in Peter Beagle’s fantasy. It reflects his awareness of himself:

I was very conscious of time slips because having always felt—in a very vague kind of way—not out of any one particular time, just out of sync, out of place. I'm learning to live with it, actually to make a career out of it.

Peter Beagle’s sense of temporal dislocation has been sharpened by his living in and writing about California. At the beginning of The California Feeling he wrote:

A lot of the time, I don’t even like the place. I don’t like the politics, and I don’t like the values behind the politics, and I don’t like what’s being done to the sky and the land and the water; and what I really don’t like is that sense of having gotten here almost too late... This is the California feeling, and... Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Joaquin Murietta, and John Muir undoubtedly suffered from it too... But I came here from New York City, where you grow up knowing that there never was a golden time, that there was nothing to be too late for.

Beagle’s portrait of his adopted state—like Michael Bry’s fine photographs—alternates between the past and the present: Gold Rush towns, the Monterey Jazz Festival, the Russian Fort Ross, Berkeley’s student movements, the high Sierra, Caesar Chavez at Delano. This California feeling is a sense of beauty and of loss, of better yesterdays, just-missed possibilities, the end of the Frontier. The sad chapter on Los Angeles and Disneyland shows the end of the American dream in the banality of future shock.

But Beagle likes much of what is here, old and new. The California Feeling is the best portrait of California in the Sixties I expect to see. Giving a wealth of information on the many regions he visits, he talks to contemporary people against a past becoming legend. He sees compassionately and simultaneously the old lumberjacks and the new consciousness of the counter-culture, the Esalin Institute and Hearst Castle. Beagle here is something like one of his characters, whom he called “a collector of lost things.” He has an unlikely sympathy for the baron of San Simeon, with his huge and miscellaneous collection of European art, because he “really tried... to incorporate it all into his own life.” If we are too late for legend, there is still much worth keeping, like the seacoast north of Santa Cruz, a region pictured in a recent book for which Beagle wrote the introduction.

Legend is the common ground of fantasy writers of the present and mythmakers and poets of the past. Since the eighteenth century most writers
in the "great tradition" of modern fiction have given up their claim in this older territory and have sought universal patterns in the structure of ordinary experience. The worlds of modern legendary fantasy have definite environments with their own history; C.S. Lewis calls his children's series the Chronicles of Narnia, and Tolkien's world parallels a mythical Middle-Earth to the prehistoric age of giants. Peake's rambling and ritualized castle has existed for seventy-seven generations. Such fantasy worlds usually have uniform natural laws and formal ethical and social structures—a code of fairyland that is essentially conservative and similar to the rules of Christian chivalry and courtly love which dominate the legendary fantasy of medieval romance. These closed worlds of legendary fantasy may be remote, but they also reflect the era of their creation: as several reviewers have observed, Tolkien's Hobbits are legendary fantasy versions of the conservative and rural British middle and working classes. They succeed in their exploits by muddling through with rather dull and virtuous perserverance, like the characters of John Buchan, who prosaically emerge from the same Edwardian ethos. The Oz books of L. Frank Baum were long suspect partly because he purposely ignored traditional legends and created a middle American agrarian fantasy utopia ruled by P.T. Barnum. Legendary fantasy is a once-upon-a-time folktale elaborated geographically and historically; it shades into saga and historical romance. In modern versions it often projects into the future perfect of science fiction or the past horrific of the gothic novel.

The complex sense of time in modern fiction may well have its origin in the gothic, in which a modern consciousness responds to terror out of the past, the return of the dead. Time shifts in most science fiction or fantasy are mere devices for arriving at another fictive world, like the convention of the dream vision. Only a few modern writers, such as Mark Twain and Virginia Woolf, use time in the structure of their fiction satirically or thematically. Peter Beagle's manipulation of time in fantasy goes beyond technique and becomes the means for defining states of human consciousness, will, and value. As his writing has matured, the idea of time has become increasingly important and has been used with increasing flexibility as he developed his ironic and sadly comic view of human character and fate. A Fine and Private Place presents a modern analog to a traditional folk tale theme, where the hero is suspended out of time, like Odysseus or Rip Van Winkle. Jonathan Rebeck voluntarily enters the cemetery where time stands still; like the ghosts, he is fading from life, rejecting involvement: "I don't want to be loved; it's a burden on me." Beagle's resolution complements his ironic and wistfully comic treatment of the theme; Rebeck is retrieved into the world of living time by the stout and warm-hearted widow Gertrude Klapper, the very opposite of the coy mistress implied by his title. The ghost of her husband helps Rebeck make up his mind: "You are a living man and you have deceived yourself. For a man there is no choice between worlds. There never was."

In The Last Unicorn the theme of time is pervasive, and it underlies a fantasy narration of rapid action and detailed characters. The setting is vaguely late medieval, and the story has a indefinite legendary framework: "I was deliberately taking the classic fairy tale structure, the classic fairy tale characters," Beagle told me, "and trying to do something else with them. I was saddling myself and aiding myself both with all the proper forms." But we see the "proper forms" of the traditional quest plot from many points of view at once, not only in the ironic inversions and multiple time-references within the story, but in the shifting of the reader's consciousness during fairy tale event, twentieth-century dialogue, ironic parody, and ingeniously
relevant literary anachronisms. The Unicorn, an ingenue goddess whom most humans take to be a white mare, escapes from Mommy Fortuna's seedy Midnight Carnival—a traveling circus of sadly real animals, mythological monsters, and one true harpy. With Schmendrick, a schlemeil Mandrake who has been flunked out as a sorcerer's apprentice and cursed by his master with eternal youth, the Unicorn seeks King Haggard and the mysterious Red Bull, who holds the other unicorns captive in a wasteland where time stands still.

Schmendrick ("last of the red hot swamis") is captured by the scruffy brigand Captain Cully, whose band is a pathetic parody of Robin Hood's. Cully fabricates limping ballads of his exploits and hopes they will be collected by Professor Child (a real nineteenth-century ballad scholar). Schmendrick is forced to entertain the bandits, but his skills are comically inaccurate and trivial, disappointing his audience and himself. But at a crucial moment of frustrated anger he gives himself up to the magic and unknowingly calls up the real Robin Hood and his Merry Men, who silently and powerfully cross the clearing. The magician presents to the ragged company the images of their deepest desires. Their wild yearning is the distance between their fallen state and their ideal possibilities. This episode presents at once the real and the imaginary—the fictional present, the legendary past, the reader's memory, and true and false magic.

Here as elsewhere in Beagle's writing, the characters remain true to the story, but they are intelligent and self-conscious, and their speech constantly threatens the fictional framework. At a moment of decision in The Last Unicorn, when the Unicorn wants to keep her mortal human form and give up the quest, her lover Prince Lir says: "No . . . . the true secret of a hero lies in knowing the order of things . . . . The happy ending cannot come in the middle of the story." And near the end of the book, when the now King Lir rides homeward, Schmendrick says, "Great heroes need great sorrows and burdens, or half their greatness goes unnoticed. It is all part of the fairy tale."

Lila the Werewolf (1974), Peter Beagle's most recent story, is not a fairy tale at all, but a low-key novella set in New York with a deceptively straightforward opening:

Lila Braun had been living with Farrell for three weeks before he found out she was a werewolf. They had met at a party when the moon was a few nights past the full . . . . Girls sometimes happened to Farrell like that.

Lila's psychobiological atavism is as inexorable as the moon: "First day, cramps; the second day, this. My introduction to womanhood." Lila "made a handsome wolf: tall and broad-chested . . . . her coat was dark brown, showing red in the proper light." She kills only zoo animals and dogs, and is being treated by a psychiatrist. Farrell, "whose true gift was for acceptance," tells his friend Ben,

If I break up with her now, she'll think I'm doing it because she's a werewolf. It's awkward, it feels nasty and middle class . . . . I don't want to mess up anyone's analysis. That's a sin against God.

But Farrell's complacency is shaken, and the story's naturalistic style (which reflects a viewpoint close to Farrell's) gives way to almost dream-like impressionism at the end in a nightmare chase all over Manhattan: Lila—pursued by Farrell, a loving dog-pack, her possessive mother, and a crazed Lithuanian building superintendent shooting silver bullets—barely escapes.

Lila comes close to uniting the realistic and fantastic tendencies in Peter Beagle's writing: in it, unknown but natural forces produce monstrosities of appearance or action, the inevitable intrusions of everyday life. But
everything can be either accepted or ignored—as Farrell says, “Who wants to know what people turn into?” Lila’s transformations of shape and time, her monthly reversions to a bloody past, are only more spectacular than Farrell’s springtime changes of girl friends and his repetitive and inauthentic behavior towards them: “It’s the same old mistake, except this time the girl’s hangup is different. I’m doing it again.” The uninvolved hero is stuck in time as much as Lila is, and his acceptance of her monstrosity is a reflection of his own; his self-awareness brings the world of fantasy closer to our own.

In one sense *Lila the Werewolf* is a study for Beagle’s forthcoming novel, in which Farrell and Ben are major characters about ten years older. I asked him about the book, and he began with his character:

Wierd things happen to Farrell . . . . In this particular case he gets involved with a group of people who spend a great deal of their time reenacting the Middle Ages . . . . They are based on existing groups. And they make their own weapons, their own armour . . . . They have a hierarchy . . . . a king chosen by armed combat. I saw a group like this, knew a few people in it, and began wondering what would happen if this got out of hand . . . . Farrell, in this incarnation, is a lute player . . . .

And it has something to do with a hunger for old things. Farrell was a collector of lost things, doomed buildings, extinct species of animals . . . . The lute . . . . has been his attempt at finding his way back . . . . He gets . . . . into this league and becomes their minstrel.

The story, as it came out in our conversation, is a complex one, with conflicts within the league, murders of its members, and a series of notable characters: a fifteen-year-old witch who tries to control time, a teacher of medieval martial arts with an apocalyptic vision of personal violence, a goddess more powerful than the witch, and Farrell’s girl friend Julie. While the league attempts to live back in the Middle Ages, identities from the past begin to inhabit Farrell’s and Ben’s bodies: Farrell begins to have the memories and dreams of a *Provençal* knight minstrel, and Ben becomes a ninth-century Viking. Time is only a state of consciousness, a context that might happen to any of us. The falconer of the league tells Farrell about it, Beagle told me, like this:

‘I flip the falcon off my wrist and . . . . she goes from my wrist, which is the real world, into her own world with the air and the sky . . . . It could be 100,000 years ago . . . . where it’s still very dark and scary under the trees and . . . . civilization hasn’t happened yet.’ And he tries to explain to Farrell how close past, present, and future are.

Farrell and Ben help each other get straightened out in time at the end of the book, which is what happens to most people in Beagle’s fiction. In previous stories, a character’s spiritual nature was often revealed by his fantasy form or change: the transparency of ghosts, the brightness of the Unicorn’s horn, and Lila’s transformations indicate states of the psyche. The boyish and fumbling Schmendrick, for instance, is transformed into a “lean and lordly” magus after his mystic experience of compassion. Just as important are the changes in time: the unicorn’s experience in mortality as a beautiful girl made her a sadder, wiser, and more powerful goddess on her return to the artifice of eternity. Jonathan Rebeck, Schmendrick, and Haggard’s wasteland are all suspended in time until they are brought back into natural history.

Being somehow disoriented in time is the usual situation for most major characters at the beginning of Beagle’s stories: they are not where they should be (or not when they should be); they seem alone, lost, powerless, or defeated. Rebeck, the ghosts, Mrs. Klapper, Schmendrick, Molly Grue, the
Unicorn, Prince Lir, Lila, Farrell—all undervalue themselves, all are better than they seem. They are eirons, like the clever or virtuous heroes of traditional comedy who win at the end. When they realize their true nature, they are in tune with their proper time and have their proper shape.

Beagle's novels generally have happy endings in which the internal discrepancies are resolved. But the self-consciousness of his characters about their fictional roles and the anachronism of the frequent references outside the story maintain the ironies, at once isolating the fantasy world and drawing the reader closer to it. "We are in a fairy tale and must go where it goes"; "Robin and Marian are real, and we are the legend"; "The universe lies to our senses, and they lie to us, and how can we be anything but liars?" By such speeches the characters stimulate and echo our doubts about reality. The synchronicity of times and the simultaneity of the fabulous, the fictionally real, and our own actual memories keep us shimmering between scepticism and belief, comedy and compassion. We become aware of our imaginative possibilities.

The way to reconcile these ambiguities is magic. Within fantasy, the miracle worker transcends himself by hazarding everything: "Real magic can never be made by offering up someone else's liver," the Unicorn tells Mommy Fortuna. "You must tear out your own, and not expect to get it back."

The magician is impelled, as Beagle put it, by "a kind of hunger that casts out fear." Such hunger works for the writer, too:

The nearest thing I have ever seen to magic, to witchcraft, is exactly that. And I've practiced it in the sense that I wanted more than anything to be a writer, and I didn't really care what I had to sacrifice in order to get that. As it happens I remained reasonably sane and turned out to have more of a capacity for real life than I expected.

In the real working life of a writer, this creative power is related to craft, but goes beyond it: "language makes a good deal of my stories happen," he said, "which is why I can't plan too well." And the readiness is all, he explained:

... on a good day you tap into something very strange ... There were a couple of scenes in the new novel ... that I "heard" while I was doing something like washing the dishes ... I didn't know who was in them or who was talking but I heard the voices. Harold Pinter talks like that and ... now I've come to believe him ...

Much of what I do is craft ... But every so often I just have to fall back on something that can be called ... the unconscious, the universal, whatever, and that ... I call the swamp. And it just belches out characters I've never met, things that never happened to me ... I've come to accept it and even to call on it on occasion.

"Much of what I do is craft." Beyond the swamp is Beagle's love of language, style, music, and structure. Much of the fantasy-interest and the irony in *The Last Unicorn* comes from its epigrammatic dialogue, songs, allusions, and prophecies, and the cross-references among them—the same aspects which gave the fairy tale its depth and solidity. Although Beagle said he did not plan well, *Unicorn* proves the contrary with its deftly arranged and interconnected incidents and its characters related to each other within a family of destiny. His stories exemplify his statement to me that good writing looks like Joe DiMaggio's effortless catch of a fly ball that someone else couldn't even get to.

Craft and the swamp, discipline and magic—Peter Beagle rightly sees himself as a traditional storyteller, "a descendant of Scheherazade ... a long line of people who made up stories in the bazaar." For the singer of tales, the mythic figures and the fantasy magic—like the Muse who called it forth—are
ways of describing the forces that transform human life. Within Beagle's fantasy worlds, the key to magic and to power over time and space is a quality of will: the ghosts' love beyond death, the Unicorn's willingness to risk all, Schmendrick's boundless compassion. But this "hunger that casts out fear" must be put in tune with time; will must result in timely and appropriate action.

The negative of magic is "the wanting of nothingness," the "willessness" Beagle found in the characters of John Barth, whose books he reviewed some years ago. The cemetery hermit Rebeck, the fading ghosts, and Farrell in different ways share this non-involvement, a paralysis of the will. The bored and weary King Haggard's "greed without desire" is an extreme form of what Beagle called the "life-denying or life-avoiding thing." These figures are all suspended in time in their stories, cast out of their own history.

The magic of self-realization and harmony with the tempo and myth of one's life has its costs even in fantasy. Beagle's stories often end for his characters in a sad and comic blend of triumph and regret, and for the reader in an ironic recognition of the evanescence of fantasy and the complexity of his own imaginative responses. Beagle's fantasy speaks to the modern reader aware of relativity, the vast unconsciousness within and without, the renaissance of myth, the community of man and environment, the irony of history. Marianne Moore said poetry gives us imaginary gardens with real toads in them. Peter Beagle gives us imaginary times and places with real characters who reflect ourselves. And some of us are unicorns.
FICTION
Ronald wore only short pants and the hairs on his stomach grazed the top of his silver buckle. The quiet of his bare feet on the stone stairs prevented Elizabeth from hearing him. He paused, ringed hand holding the metal railing. “Hello there,” he called. But his voice was covered by a bus roaring in a blue cloud five feet outside the window. Mexican buses don’t have mufflers. And Elizabeth had chosen to rent a house on the bus run.

The morning was already hot, though out the barred window he could see clouds scudding, preparing again for rain. Across the street a truck stopped, stacked with five gallon amber bottles. “Agua, Agua,” the driver called, cupping his lips with tiny brown hands.

Elizabeth sat near the door in a wicker chair. A newspaper lay open on her lap, glasses on a chain hung crookedly over her dirty shirt. Her hair, iron grey, was cropped close; her skin was florid and loose. She stank. Not from that distance, of course, but to be near her was to suffocate. She smelled like rotting turnips.

He cleared his throat loudly, and then with hand sliding the railing, Ronald began moving down the stairs. Elizabeth seemed to be trying to focus on him and pushed her glasses up on her nose with index finger. “Sleep well?” she sighed, burping slightly, hand flying toward her mouth.

Another bus hurled and groaned itself over the pitted street. The room shook. Some of the pits in the street were large as a body, and deep as that, as though someone had lain there and burnt his way through in the sun. That was the way Ronald felt: flattened, dissolving into asphalt and brick, an impediment, when all was said and done. And an uninvited guest.

“I’ve had a little trouble with Lola again.” Ronald went to lean one shoulder against a bar on the window. He yawned and noticed for the hundredth time the unrelieved wall of peeling stucco that sealed off any further view across the street. The wall was topped by broken glass. It was beginning to rain, and the glint from the glass was faint. “I had to ask that maid of yours to stop throwing her bucket around on the steps and singing. I yelled at her nicely. It was six in the morning, by God.”

Ronald heard Elizabeth rising and then shuffling away from him. Her ankles would be swollen already, shaking, like jowls, over the tops of her shoes.
“I like to hear Lola sing,” Elizabeth said. “I dote on it.”

Ronald shifted his eyes from the window. Elizabeth was staring at him. Not at his face, but his hair. His hair was black and curly. When she looked at Ronald’s hair, both of them knew it reminded her of her sons. Her sons had thick, curly hair. It didn’t matter which one she might be thinking about, dead, as they were, from wars.

“Of course you like Lola’s singing. Lola’s Mexican.” Ronald tried to smile. “Everything Mexican is good. Isn’t it, Elizabeth?”

Since the scandal of the ice cubes, the first night of Ronald’s arrival, the maid, Lola, had ignored and intimidated him in petty ways. Probably she never would have met his eyes directly even if there hadn’t been the ice cubes Ronald dumped into the sink that first night complaining, “How do you know the servants used pure water, Elizabeth? You don’t watch, you don’t care.” He’d always felt that some day something he ate or drank might do him in.

Lola had heard the suspicion in his voice and slumped in an angered stupor against the wall next to the refrigerator. Elizabeth flurried to help Ronald empty the first ice tray and then, suddenly dismayed, left him to put her arm around Lola’s waist. Mistress and servant kissed. Ronald hadn’t understood yet that Lola was more to Elizabeth than a mere servant. Elizabeth, very tall, beefy, held the feisty, tiny maid in close toward her side. It was as though Elizabeth too felt that Americans were gross, an outcrop of misshapen slate on any landscape. And when Ronald turned, unexpectedly, while knocking the last ice cube tray against the iron tub, he shivered at the hate he thought he caught in both their eyes. That was a month ago.

Now Elizabeth was rummaging about an unpainted wood table covered with cans, open turpentine and drying paints. The colors she always painted with were ochres and browns so the filming oil splotches on the paper that covered the table, and on the wood where the paper had torn, looked like crusting crap.

“Going to market,” she talked to herself. “My purse. Here it is.” She burped and stood, a straw handbag dangling from her left hand down by her knees which boned out from her cut-off jeans. “Want to come, Ronny?” She was not looking at him.

“Is Lola . . . .” he started to ask, but he was stopped short by the entrance of Lola into the living room miraculously transformed from her role as peon to a facsimile of a lady of means. Gold and cut-glass pendants hung demurely from her ears. Her shoes were white pumps marred by very few wrinkles from which her slender ankles rose smoothly into slim legs. Ronald could envision the two women strolling the market that was swamped at this rainy time of the year, Lola’s movements slow and graceful, her voice subdued for the occasion; Elizabeth would be splashing through water, bloated ankles and veined legs splotted with mud and blood from freshly slaughtered animals.

“I think I’ll make me some breakfast,” Ronald changed in mid sentence. “Is Pedro out?” Because Pedro was Lola’s young lover, Ronald dreaded him, though the sheepish smile Pedro flashed from under his wide-brimmed hat whenever they passed each other seemed friendly enough. Lola and Elizabeth were grinned at each other. Without excusing himself, since he was no longer present when they were both together, Ronald strode toward the kitchen. He heard the front door slam, rattling in its frame; it would be Lola, of course, who slammed it so hard. Or did he only think she slammed it hard? He winced.

In the kitchen, he began to boil some eggs, and after he lit the stove, he looked for the sweet rolls he’d bought the day before. Gone. Some crumbs
from sweet rolls littered the servant's table. The servants were locusts, devastating all the land could produce... and yet it was in fact their land, not his. So, who cared! Were it not for Elizabeth's money, he'd not be in that house, nor would they. They were, all of them, hirelings.

He sat down at the servant's table, nicely painted orange, with its four blue chairs, and picked at the scattered crumbs of his rolls, placing them gingerly on his tongue with the pad of his third finger.

Thunder rumbled from some distant place far out in the ocean. The ocean, only a block away, must be beaten by the rain into a pitting metal, grey and dim. Well, it was the world that was belittling him; God knows, it had never been his aim to belittle the world. His paintings had not sold despite a critic's rave calling his canvases 'songs of violet skies'; he'd been fired from jobs both important and menial for reasons he could not grasp; and with discomfort he recalled several women who adored him fanatically—but only for a while. Sometimes he thought he should have stuck his head in an oven. He wondered, in fact, if he hadn't come to Mexico to die.

The eggs began to boil. He heard the soft clack as they rolled against each other. Two little chickens, kept by the servants in a carton on the back stairs, filled the house with cheeping.

Just the night before, under the curving marble stairway where there were three chairs and a black, badly scraped coffee table, he'd sensed a kind of death coming a step closer. A naked light bulb that hung from the enormously high ceiling had shone like a phosphorescent spider on a thread. There was no other furniture in the living room except Elizabeth's work table. Elizabeth always maintained, "Possessions are worth nothing. They bind you to yourself." Since the death of her husband, she'd become so rich she coveted the appearance of poverty.

Ronald and Elizabeth had just finished eating giant crabs, sucking noisily on the brittle legs.

"There's no meat in these," Ronald said. He had held a blue leg to his eye, turning it on Elizabeth like a telescope. "I can see you. And I've not eaten this one yet."

Elizabeth poured herself a tequila, neat. Evenings she drank openly. The tequila bottle was stationed on the floor. After pouring, her head disappeared beyond the pile of dismembered crabs as she replaced the bottle. "Ugh," she said. Her head struggled upwards. "You've got to suck the life right out of them. Here, let me show you."

Elizabeth reached for a crab from the mainly uneaten pile on Ronald's plate. She snapped at a pincher, her front teeth crackling the shell. The white belly with its segmented legs hung from her mouth as her eyes closed in exquisite pleasure. "New ways...," she coughed up a bit of shell into her hand, the crab hanging in the air, legs pressed into ghostly motion by the squeeze of her fingers. "Ronald's got to learn new ways."

"Why?"

"You don't like Mexico. You don't like me."

"You are Mexico, I suppose?"

"Yes." Elizabeth rubbed one hand on her thigh; with the other she dropped the crab onto her paper plate. "I'll be a citizen soon, you know. The people here are so alive, human. Not bigoted and full of hate."

"Now wait a minute! In one of the books on your own shelf I've read how the Spaniards treated the Indians abominably. And you've always said they didn't. You just don't want to admit you're another white oppressor, Elizabeth!"
Elizabeth sipped her drink, laid the ankle of one white-socked leg upon the knee of the other. "Lo siento, senor. You read the wrong damn book!" Her eyes circled suddenly in their sockets, the pupils settling a little too high, dangerously strained. "The servants are perfectly happy. Lola is happy. Listen!"

Lola was belting out a crass 'Corazon' from the kitchen in a nasal voice. "You listen!" Ronald leaned forward, gripping his thighs. "I'd not trust Lola. No. Not at all."

"I can't imagine why not." Elizabeth yawned audibly. Then she slid the glasses that had been hanging around her neck onto the middle of her nose. She looked over the half moons and cried, "It's you who can't trust anyone! Not me or Pedro or Lola . . . ."

"You hired just Lola, didn't you? And now her sister is going to move in and Pedro already has. They're going to drown you."

Elizabeth stared at him strangely. "You're here too, Ronny." Without taking her eyes from him she shouted, "Lola! Lola?" in a long shriek of a voice.

Lola's little daughter Mimi ran out from the kitchen to the table. She was tiny and beautiful . . . a butterfly. She did not have to reach down to pick up the paper plates she was to clear. She pulled the mounds of shells in toward her face. A haired pincher, red and saw-toothed, slipped to the floor.

Elizabeth's hand moved to clasp, with thumb and index finger, at her own throat as though she meant to throttle, not herself, but the lovely little Mimi! Mimi darted off, one plate wobbling on her head like a hat. She did not return for the pincher.

"As I was saying . . . ." Ronald carefully resumed the conversation. Elizabeth looked startled. "What?"

"You even think your San Diego broker is no good and won't pay his fee. But your Mexican lawyer lost your entire file, including your will and . . . ."

The fingers of Elizabeth's left hand remained triangled against her throat; with her right hand she rubbed a drink glass along her lower lip. The word 'will' hung suspended over their heads like the light bulb, naked, phosphorescent. 'Will,' for Ronald, meant hope. Elizabeth's death meant, for him, hope, luck. Well, wasn't that it?

Elizabeth slipped her leg from where it had balanced on the other knee; she let that leg pound harshly onto the floor. Her lips trembled over her teeth. Her right hand, the one holding the drink, lunged at the table. "Telephonos! That's a real stock," she shouted. "Fourteen per cent! Whooppee!"

She slammed the glass sideways against the table, her lips springing wider apart, tongue lolling out one corner. The glass was breaking, shiny bits of it and tequila splashed on to the wall. She moaned happily from far back in her throat.

Ronald watched the tequila seep down the wall toward the molding. The picture Elizabeth had been painting for a year leaned dangerously near: a six-foot strip of burlap crowded by a Mexican woman wearing an ochre mask of a face with the x-rayed bones of a dead child in her stomach. Elizabeth was going to cut a hole in the burlap, where the stomach was, and recede the skeleton child. "Or pop the pecker out," she confided at times.

Elizabeth was bellowing with an almost mysterious inner force, "And no GAWDdamn anything in HAMerica pays fourteen percent. I say to my broker, you GAWDdamn . . . ."

Ronald kept staring at the painting. It was impossible not to hate it. Yet the little white bones in the middle of the brown and ochre mulch . . . Ronald
felt like that: wombed, dead. And would the pecker get pushed in to rot, or thrust out to dry on the wire umbilical?

Elizabeth was quieting. He could hear her sucking at air with a phlegmed throat. When he dared look at her again, she was sliding shining tequila off her bare knee and upper thigh with the back of her hand, fingers raised and bent. Finally, she looked up at him. Her grey eyes appeared to have gone colorless. "Help me, Ronny!"

She poured another drink into the paper cup she’d used for coffee. “I've done so much for you. Like getting you into that gallery, for instance. Sometimes, I can’t believe it myself, how much I’ve done. And sometimes I need . . . .” Her voice faded off.

Ronald’s knees began to shake, uncontrollably.

“I think . . . .” Elizabeth picked up her cup and began shuffling toward the stairs. Her ankles cheeked over her leather soled huaraches. The huaraches squeeked. “Come with me. I want to show you something.”

Elizabeth leaned on the railing of the first step, one foot up. Her stomach rested like a beach ball above her jeans, under the paint-stained man’s shirt.

“Well?” Elizabeth cocked her head to one side and smiled. He thought he heard her saying ‘will’ again. And yet he knew she hadn’t. Was the first fore-taste of real hope to drive him out of his wits? Ronald shook his head as though he had water in his ears.

Elizabeth was pulling herself up the stairs, burping. Ronald poured himself a drink in a paper cup. How strange, to be offered luck, to be offered life at last just when he was certain life was what he didn’t want!

He had found Elizabeth in his bedroom. His bedroom joined the servant’s room. There was a small roof of flat cement surrounded by a wall of spiked, broken glass. The servant’s barred window faced Ronald’s barred window across the short expanse. Was Elizabeth’s will stashed somewhere in his room?

Elizabeth had her pants off and was undoing her shirt. The tails of the shirt dragged over her buttocks and parted slightly at the front revealing the fine light hairs of her pubic ruff. “Dance!” she bellowed from the mysterious source of energy she seemed always to be able to tap at will. She was pulling the shirt from her shoulders, letting it drop from extended arm onto the floor. Her thighs began to shake, the wall of each leg quivering against the other.

She leaned over to pick up the drink she’d placed on the floor; she sipped, farting loudly. Ronald backed against the wall, pressing against an air conditioner that didn’t work.

“ForCHRIST’S sake, gentle Ronny, be free and be, and BE!”

Leaving her drink on the floor, Elizabeth straightened up, her hard, huge, white stomach staring at him from out its shadowed pupil of a navel. She stumbled toward him, her feet pointing in toward each other. Her breasts went thwack, thwack against her ribs. “You love me, yes, yes?” Thwack, thwack . . . and she leaned against him, arms over his shoulders, her grey eyes even with his. “Or ain’t you alive enough to fuck,” she crooned, yanking awkwardly at his belt buckle, her eyes cold, belligerent. “The trouble with you is,” whispering now, “you’re a ‘done to,’ and not a ‘doer.’”

With her free hand she pulled open his shirt, her teeth fastening to one hair-woven nipple, hanging on there, like a suckling seal.

Thinking about last night froze Ronald in his sense of feeling helpless, manipulated. He went to take the pot with the eggs off the stove. That damned Lola. Crab legs and crumbs! They were trying to starve him out. And where would Lola have HIDDEN the salt?

She’d seen all of it, of course. Lola and her lover, Pedro, and maybe even
that little butterfly of a Mimi hanging on their bars, gawking. They were on a
par now, he and the servants, seeking the same end of the same rainbow. But
had they observed that his eyes were shut?

Ronald cracked open the eggs. They were the size of marbles. He emptied
the soft eggs with his tongue, lifting them, unsalted, directly from their shells
with the tip of his head. Like a ferret.

He was finishing his second cup of coffee when Lola entered the kitchen,
fresh from the market. She was weighted by sacks and a delicate wire cage
with tiny eggs inside. Her hair and forehead streamed from the rain. She
paused a moment and scowled darkly. Christ, how Lola wanted to get rid of
him. In that instant he pictured her wrapped in Elizabeth’s awkward arms,
meowing, choking on remembrances of her Aztec-Catholic, tight little bat of a
Jesus that he knew clung bleeding to one corner of her room. Was she
learning to like it, huh, huh? with Elizabeth’s third, paint-grimed finger
toing her button? “Everybody loves me, baby,” Elizabeth always said.
“Because I’m alive enough to know no damn boundary is for real!” And it
was true that everyone seemed to love her; everyone, that is, except Ronald.

Elizabeth arrived and pushed gigantically past Lola, a whole stalk of
bananas yellow on her shoulder. Pedro followed, topped as always by his
off-white cowboy hat, carrying the car keys. They jingled importantly down
by the thigh of his baggy trousers. “I know,” Elizabeth had admitted, “Pedro
takes the car when I’m not here. Well, what can one do?” Luck meant, then,
for Pedro and Lola, not just to wait for the proceeds from a will; what they
could get right now served them also. Ronald searched the shadows of Pedro’s
eyes for some sign of a narrowing of the lids that would expose him now as
an adversary. Pedro tipped the brim of his hat, smiled blandly and said,
“Buenas dias, senor.”

“Thought you were going out.” Elizabeth heaved a heavy sigh, slipping the
bananas from her shoulder.

Ronald turned to stare at her. She was palming water from her forehead;
her hair, too, hung wet. “Where would I go?” he asked carefully. “Thought it
was still raining.”

“Oh, the sun will be out soon.” Elizabeth said something in Spanish to
Lola, to which Lola answered sullenly, leaning over the sink. “Yes. Lola has
predicted el sol. Why not go swimming?”

Ronald turned on Elizabeth angrily. “And why don’t you buy an
umbrella? You look ridiculous, like you’d been slogged in a mud
puddle.” He looked her up and down, scathingly. And yet he knew he would go to the
beach where she was sending him. It was, all of it, going to be a fulfillment
and a necessity.

Elizabeth turned her back to him while pouring a paper cup full of coffee
she clandestinely laced with tequila. “I don’t understand what’s wrong with
you, Ronny,” she muttered under her breath. Pedro stood smiling, clacking
the keys. Pedro glanced at Ronald, cold and hard, for one instant. Pedro’s
skin must be gold and smooth, so unlike Ronald’s own that was haired like a
tarantula’s, though Pedro never exposed any more than his hands and part of
his face most of which was shaded, always, by that cowboy hat.

From around the corner of the door, which led through a court way
beyond which the servants had their room, Ronald noticed two little chickens
poke their heads, tilting their black-eyed heads and cheeping as they scurried
into the kitchen, little Mimi laughing behind them. “Here they come again,”
Ronald said.

Elizabeth gasped. One of the chicks had a broken leg and popped like a
spring, its one good leg thrusting it up and down as though propelled by a
pogo stick. The chicks were always together, cheeping and pecking at the floor. The daily release of the chicks by Mimi was the one thing the servants did that enraged Elizabeth. She had done all she could to prevent it. Ronald wondered if Elizabeth were not responsible for the maiming of the chick's leg.

The chicks rushed under the table legs, their bills jabbing at scattered crumbs. Mimi clapped her hands and shrieked; Pedro remained smiling; Lola did not turn around from where she was washing vegetables in the sink. With tap water! Elizabeth's face was flushing red. The pink veins on the bridge of her nose widened. "Oh . . .," she almost moaned. "God damn," she whispered, whispering, pointing at the chicks.

Mimi, cooing at the chicks, darted butterfly swift under Ronald's legs. So that was it: the servants were testing Elizabeth. By releasing the chicks they were going to see if she was in their control. They were going to make certain that she was aware of her role in the sacrifice of the chick's leg. Elizabeth took a long gulp of her coffee, the paper cup tipping even with her forehead as she went after the last drop. Ronald noticed one thigh, stretched taut and damp, fatly protrude from the table . . . he thought he could see the muscles in it jump. But she did nothing!

"You're all waiting for me to go to the beach?" Ronald asked while thinking, there to wait for Pedro to follow, to haunt me down the grey sand, knife thrust in his belt!

"Well, why not?" Elizabeth's eyes were shut, the lids fluttering against each other. It was as though she'd already washed her hands of him!

Everyone disliked Ronny because he disliked them, was it that simple? He stared, mesmerized, at the chicks that were racing along the wall. When Elizabeth put down her cup and raised both arms to lace her fingers behind her head, he shook himself awake enough to notice the white hairs licking her arm pits. He smelled the deep, profound, woman's musk. He could see himself pacing the beach, waiting on the shore, while out from the dunes, cactus studded, Pedro would appear as a spot in the distance, the sun catching the off-white of his hat. His knife would not yet be visible, his hand gripping the handle appearing only as a lump, but his hand would be sweating around the handle, as his teeth scraped against each other . . . it will be Pedro's chance, the dismemberment and removal of Ronny, Pedro's only hope for power. Lola will be waiting beyond that dune, cowled in a dark rebozo, her fingers pulling one side of it across her face from the blowing sand. Waiting too. Mexico was waiting, more the whore than even Ronald. It all made him want to laugh. He did laugh, loud and boisterously. "Ha, ha!"

His laugh made Lola turn around. Pedro stopped smiling. Elizabeth said, "Go on to the playa, Ronny. Have yourself a good run and swim. You get bored in the house, I know." Her pale eyelashes intermeshed.

He thought he noticed Pedro's hand tightening about the keys at the word "playa." So, Ronald had lost. Again. One of the chicks ran to jab its sharp beak between his toes. But because he wanted to lose? It was not, after all, that Ronald didn't suspect his lack of luck was causeless . . . but how can you like a world that, for instance, jousts with power and marshals chickens to prove it has won over you? He said, "I'm noticing, Elizabeth, that you don't try to keep the chickens out of the house anymore." His voice sounded like a foghorn. Elizabeth waved a hand rapidly in front of her lips as though fanning herself. Or was it that Elizabeth was the real artist, adjusting herself to humanness no matter how disturbing, while he was the frail fake, painting only 'songs of violet skies'?

"Oh, well!" He relaxed, stood up and smiled. Almost in relief. He was glad
he sided with all losers. The sun was coming out, spreading gold beyond the barred kitchen windows. He looked down on Mimi, playing joyously with her chicks that had decided the whole thing. She was lovely, that little Mimi. And now, someday, because of him, she might be rich. He'd have liked to watch her grow cold and finally cruel and strong, amoral and questless.

Ronald knelt to where Mimi curled herself around a leg of the table. The child was holding one straining chick, rubbing its head gently along the side of her throat. The chick had one wing loose and kept scraping the wing with a small whisper of sound along the knuckles of the hand that held it. Mimi's eyes, large, lovely and black, stared back at him sensuously, secretly. The world would be hers now, to abuse and mortify. Ronald slowly moved his hand, fingers extended, toward her cheek. He let the tip of his fingers trail along the softness of the skin and then sink, suspended, into the feathers of the chick. If it was the engineering of his own death that was to loan him the luxurient feel of life in his hand, even for a moment... then so be it, and Amen.

He stood again, legs shaking, but with his thumbs thrust into his belt. He stared curiously at Lola, who seemed, for once to be actually acknowledging him, and then at Pedro, who he thought looked a bit ashen. "Si," Ronald announced, in Spanish so there would be no mistake. "Playa ahora."

Behind him, resting hugely on an iron stand, was an amber bottle of agua. He tipped some water into a plastic glass. Lola crouched at the sound, a long bean pod protruding from between her teeth.

Glass still in his hand, Ronald walked toward the door, raising the glass slowly to his lips. Passing closely by Pedro, he put one hand on the man's shoulder, fingers pressing in on the small bones. "Bueno Pedro," he said. And he wanted to whisper, 'I agree to it now. For you. For all of you. I can give you this at least.' The glass clunked against Ronald's teeth. He was wondering if for every murderer there was not a murderee who sought his own destruction because the world could never be right for him.

"Bueno? Bueno... what? Why say that to Pedro?" Elizabeth shrieked from the table. She was rising to her feet, the chair scraping loudly.

But Ronald was stalking out the kitchen and toward the front door and the beach beyond. His now bold and determined, thin and haired legs walked him away from her. There was nothing he had to say to Elizabeth anymore.
HALF a century before Mark Twain ironically heralded the new age of mass tourism in *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), the French Romanticists had ironically heralded the new fashion of travel literature. Twain's fellow passengers deliberately went abroad in search of history; the French Romanticists had little choice, for foreign cultures and contemporary history thrust themselves upon them. They were the unwilling beneficiaries of three traumatic events: the French Revolution, the twenty-three years of warfare that took French soldiers (like Stendhal) across the length and breadth of Europe and even to Egypt, Syria, and Santo Domingo, and the emigration of counterrevolutionaries and political exiles to exotic cultures like those of America and Romanticist Germany.

The inevitable shock that took place when sensitive but uprooted observers were thrust into novel and strange cultures gave an almost dramatic edge to travel literature. Before the Romantic Age, French contact with non-Latin cultures had influenced the literary imagination only in effects like local color and in *genres* like imaginary voyages, where decoratively exotic lands became launching areas for satirical attacks on the sacrosanct tradition of the West. From Chateaubriand in the 1790's to Flaubert in the 1860's, the Romantic writers were compelled to transform radically the structure, texture, and diction of French letters in order to accommodate their
imagination to the reality of new worlds beyond Antiquity, Christianity, and Western Europe.

No wonder, then, that nearly all the major French Romanticists undertook a pilgrimage to these new worlds. They recorded the reality they beheld in memoirs, journals, letters, and travel reports and they transmuted it in lyrical poems, novels, symphonic poems, and the visual arts. Lamartine voyaged to Greece and the Near East; Stendhal found a second home in Italy; Balzac visited his mistress in Russian Poland; Michelet amused on man’s destiny in the Coliseum; Berlioz studied in Rome and conducted his symphonic works in Central and Eastern Europe; George Sand took lovers with her to Venice and Majorca; Flaubert made his Grand Tour of the Near East; Hugo described and made sketches of the Rhineland and the Low Countries; Gérard de Nerval forged a new religious vision out of his journey to the Orient; Delacroix found in Morocco the subject matter and colors for his paintings; Gautier earned a living out of foreign reportage. As with major artists, so with lesser writers: Fromentin, Custine, Gobineau, and Caillie pursued the unusual, the concrete, the particular, and the variegated in such faraway places as Algeria, Russia, Persia, and Tombouctou.

If the Romanticists’ wanderings were to a degree forced upon them by historical circumstances, these wanderings also contributed to a growing conviction that there was more to this world than had been taught in traditional classes of philosophie. Hence the “Romantic quest,” so often described as mere wanderlust, was in fact a search for models of a new Europe to be rebuilt after twenty-five years of war and revolution and half a century of industrial change. That the resultant encounters with foreign cultures frequently led to disappointments, frustrations, discomforts, and misunderstandings should come as no surprise to us who travel abroad with far better preparation, better accommodations, and better conveyances in a world where innkeepers must abide the judgment of dozens of guidebooks. It is to the credit of the Romanticists that they refused to minimize the cultural differences that give travel its raison d’être as well as its occasions for abrasive reactions and splenetic explosions.

It is this latter attitude that we wish to illustrate in the following five selections (translated by us), which are part of a forthcoming anthology on French travel literature during the Romantic Age. Readers will note that the complaints of these French Romanticists have a familiar ring. The problems of prices, accommodation, petty officials, uncomfortable conveyances—every modern traveler knows these difficulties. The American tourist who, when driving through the green, rolling countryside of Devonshire, expressed the hope that none of the natives would roll it up and try to cook it was an articulate exponent of an element in all but the most admiring tourist which objects to the persistent selfhood of other cultures.

Nor is his wit exceptional. We often identify the displeased traveler with the lout, the bumpkin, the philistine. But any scholar or writer who has heard the vituperations of his colleagues against the countries they have visited knows that it is often the intellectual who seems the most provincial. This may result, paradoxically, from his studious habits, for these often cause him to develop images of other countries, favorable or unfavorable, that a visit is bound to challenge. A thinker on the way to Europe or the Orient for the first time is a thesis, at least half-formed, on its way to refutation. Often the thinker resents the refuters.

The five travelers we have chosen to represent—Gérard de Nerval, George Sand, Hector Berlioz, the Marquis de Custine, and Louis Veuillot—were all thinkers: perceptive, widely read, articulate, and annoyed.
Gerard de Nerval (1808-1855), Symbolist and Surrealist poet before his time, inaugurated his literary career with a translation of the first part of *Faust* which Goethe thought superior to the original. From Romantic Germany, Nerval moved to the Near East in 1842-1844. The record of his trip, *Voyage en Orient*, is a curious amalgam of mystical disquisitions on the ancient cults of Isis, Mithra, and the Sun, ironic reports on polygamy, and sundry tips on saving expenses.

*Europe on One Franc a Day*

Ever since I had left Bischofsheim [in southwest Germany] I had been obstinately accompanied by a tall character with a haversack on his back who seemed very determined to regulate his steps according to mine. Despite the void in my pockets, my external appearance seemed neat enough to suggest that I was travelling on foot only because my carriage had broken down, or because, living in some castle, I was meandering in the vicinity in search of plants or minerals, lost, perhaps. My companion of the road, a Frenchman, began his conversation by broaching these various suppositions.

"Sir," I said to him to banish any hope of a purse or wallet, "I am an artist, travelling for my instruction, and I will confess to you that I have only twenty kreuzers with which to get to Baden tonight. If I can find an inn that will give me a supper for that price, that would give me legs to get there."

"What, sir, in Baden—tonight? But it will be tomorrow morning; you can't possibly walk all night long."

"Of course, I would prefer to sleep in a good bed; but I have always noticed that even in the most wretched inns sleeping costs twice as much as I have in my possession. In that case, I certainly have to walk until I get there."

"I," he said to me, "I will be sleeping at Schoendorf, two hours from here. Why don't you sleep there? You can do the rest of the trip tomorrow."

"But I'm telling you that I have only twenty kreuzers!"

"Well, sir, with that one can dine, sleep, and breakfast; I'll certainly not spend more than that!"

I asked him to explain his system, since I had never encountered such places, even though I had slept in truly horrible inns, especially in Italy. He then informed me of a matter I had already suspected, namely, that there were everywhere two very distinct prices, one for travelers in carriages, and the other for travelers on foot.

"For example," he said, "I am going to Constantinople, and I have taken with me only fifty francs, all that I need to make this entire trip."

This disclosure so astonished me that I had him account for all his expenses in detail; it was evident that he would not get there by the Danube steamboat.

"How much do you spend a day?" I asked him.

"At most, twenty French sous a day. I have already told you the cost of staying at an inn; the balance is for fishing worms and a nice

*It is impossible to give accurate equivalents in modern currencies of 19th century sums. But it should be remembered that at no time did the franc (equivalent to 20 French sous or 30 German kreuzers) equal or surpass the dollar in real value.
He assured me that he had already made the trip from Strasbourg to Vienna for sixteen francs. The most expensive inns were in the countries bordering France. In Bavaria a bed costs only three kreuzers (two sous). In Austria and Hungary, you can no longer find any beds; you sleep on straw, in the hall of the inn; there you only have to pay for supper and dinner, which cost only half as much as elsewhere. Once the Hungarian frontier is crossed, hospitality begins. Starting at Semlin, the postal leagues are called camel leagues; for a few sous a day, you can climb on these animals and ride in quite a noble style, but this is more fatiguing than walking.

The good man's profession was to work in cardboard factories; I don't know what drove him to go to Istanbul to practice his trade. All he told me was that he was bored in France. Many of our workers have been encouraged by the conquest of Algeria [in 1830 and after] to learn more about the Orient; but Constantinople is reached overland, and to get to Algiers, one has to pay the passage. Hence those having good legs prefer the latter [sic] journey.

I let my companion off at Schoendorf, and I continued to walk. As I was walking, however, night came on and it soon began to drizzle. For fear it might get heavier, and despite all the courage I could muster (I had not anticipated this inconvenience), I resolved to stop at the first village and claim for myself the price-list of laborers, students, and other hikers.

I finally reached a very mediocre-looking inn, whose hall was already crowded with travelers of the same type as the one I had met. Some were at supper, others were playing cards. As soon as possible I mingled with them. I attempted free and easy manners, and I asked for supper at the same time that one of them did.

"Do you want us to kill a chicken?" the host asked me.

"No, I want the same thing as the boy over here, soup and a piece of roast."

"What kind of wine would the gentleman like?"

"A pot of beer, like all these gentlemen."

"Will the gentleman sleep here?"

"Yes, like everybody else, put me wherever you like."

I was served, in fact, the same supper as the person opposite me, except that the host went out to find a tablecloth and silverware and had the table all around me covered with hors-d'oeuvre, which I prudently did not touch.

This brilliant service seemed ominous, and I immediately saw that the gentleman showed through the hiker; this was at once flattering and disquieting. My frock-coat had nothing marvellous about it, indeed, several of the young men there were wearing ones just as clean; my fine shirt had possibly betrayed me. I am certain that these people took me for a prince in a comic opera, who later on would reveal himself, show his decorations, and overwhelm them with favors. Otherwise, I had no good explanation of the ceremonies being performed for my going to bed. It all began with their bringing me slippers in the very hall of the inn; then the mistress of the house, with a torch, and the master, with the slippers (which I had refused to put on in front of everybody) accompanied me along a winding stairway (which these people seemed to be ashamed of) to a room, the handsomest in the house, which was at once the nuptial chamber and the children's room. They had hastily
removed these unhappy tots, dragged their beds into the corridor, and gathered into that room, thus cleared, the entire wealth of the family: two mirrors, Easter candles, a mug, an engraving of Napoleon, a little wax Jesus decorated with tinsel under glass, flower pots, a workdesk, and a red shawl to decorate the bed.

Observing all this bustle, I resolutely made up my mind, confided myself to God and Fate, and slept very soundly in this bed which, for all these splendors, was very hard and not very clean.

The next day I asked for my bill, not daring to eat breakfast. They brought me a bill, neatly itemized, whose total was two florins (about two francs and fifty centimes). The host was very surprised when I pulled out my purse, or rather, my twenty kreuzers. I refused to argue, and offered them to the waiter if he would accompany me as far as Baden. There, thanks to my luggage, the host of the Soleil had gained enough confidence in me to discharge my debt. And eight days later, having lived in grand style in this good man's house—always on the credit of that same luggage—I finally received from Frankfurt all the money from the bill of exchange, this time by packwagon and in handsome gold Fredericks pasted to a card with wax. This seemed to me to be far more valuable than the commercial paper which had at first been directed to me, and my host was of the same opinion.

George Sand (1804-1876), granddaughter of the Maréchal de Saxe, one of the 354 acknowledged illegitimate children of Augustus the Strong of Poland and Saxony, was notorious in her lifetime as a Utopian Socialist and an outspoken Feminist. As a writer she is best known today for the autobiographical novel Lélia and a number of idyllic novels set in the countryside of her childhood. She visited Venice with the poet Alfred de Musset in 1833-1834 and Majorca with Frederic Chopin in 1838-1839. The selection below anticipates in tone Mark Twain's The Innocents Abroad: a debunking of rosy expectations and a reminder to the would-be-tourist that the absence of material comfort in picturesque places is a necessary component of their charm.

No Furnished Apartments in Majorca

It was impossible to find a single habitable apartment in town. An apartment in Palma consists of four wholly bare walls, without any doors or windows. Window-panes are not used in most middle class houses, and in order to obtain this indispensable amenity for the winter, it is necessary to have the window-frames made. Whenever a tenant moves (and hardly anybody does), he takes with him the windows, the locks, and even the door-hinges. His successor's first job is to have them replaced, unless he has a taste for open-air existence—a taste quite widespread in Palma. Now, it takes at least six months to have not only the doors and windows made, but also the beds, the table, the chairs, everything in short, no matter how simple and how primitive the furnishings are. There are very few workers there; they take their sweet time and they lack tools and materials. The Majorcan always has a ready excuse for not hurrying. Life is so long! One must be French, that is, extravagant and frantic, to want to have something done immediately. And since you have already waited six months, why can't you wait another six months? And if you don't like this country, why stay here? Are you a necessity here? We were doing all right before you came here. You think you're going to turn everything upside down? Well, certainly not! Let me tell you, others can talk as much as
they like, we Majorcans do as we please.

But, isn’t there anything to rent?—To rent? What’s that? To rent furniture? Is there a surplus for you to be able to rent some?—But isn’t there anything for sale?—For sale? But they would have to be in a finished state. Besides, who has time to finish them before they are ordered? If you want them, have some brought over from France, since you have everything in that country.—But to have things brought over from France, we’ll have to wait at least six months and pay the duty. Tell me, if one has committed the folly of coming here, is leaving the only way to correct it?—This is what I advise you, or else be patient, very patient; *mucha calma*, that’s Majorcan wisdom.

We were going to take this advice when we were unluckily favored, undoubtedly with the best of intentions, with a country house for rent. It was a villa of a rich *bourgeois* who, for a price that was fair for us but rather high for that country (about 100 francs a month), left us his house. It was furnished like all the other country villas.

It is only since the 1950’s that Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) has come into his own, not only as a superb writer, but as a composer worthy to be ranked among the very greatest. This greatness, however, was not appreciated by his contemporaries in France and he was compelled, not only to earn a living as a music reviewer, but also to publicize his music by conducting it before more receptive audiences in Germany, Austria, England, and Russia. Historical-minded like all his contemporaries, he could not help thinking, as the following excerpt shows, of the suffering undergone by soldiers in Napoleon’s retreat from Russia. And realist that he was, no amount of sugarcoating could conceal the fact that a sleigh ride is no pleasure trip when undertaken over a distance of 450 miles.

*A Painful Sleigh Ride*

After having spent a few hours at rest at Tilsit, furnished with instructions by Mr. Nernst, and warmed up by several glasses of an excellent curacao that he kept offering me, I undertook the most painful part of the trip. A postal carriage took me as far as the Russian frontier, at Tauroga; there I had to lock myself in an iron sleigh which I was not to leave until St. Petersburg, and in which, for four rough days and as many horrible nights, I was to experience torments whose existence I had not even suspected.

In fact, in this hermetically-sealed metallic box, where snowdust nonetheless manages to get in and whiten one’s face, one is violently shaken at every instant, like pellets in a bottle in the process of being cleaned. Hence many contusions to the head and limbs, caused by the shocks inflicted every minute by the walls of the sleigh. In addition, one suffers from nausea and a malaise that, for its similarity to seasickness, I can safely call *snowsickness*.

In our temperate zone, it is generally believed that Russian sleighs, pulled by swift horses, glide on the snow as they would on the ice of a lake; consequently, we conjure up pleasant visions of this manner of travelling. Well, here is the truth on this matter; when one has the good fortune to come across a level stretch, covered with snow that is either new or trodden evenly in all places, the sleigh, in effect, moves in a swift and perfectly horizontal manner. But not more than two places are like that. The greatest part of it, turned topsy-turvy and hollowed out into little transverse valleys by peasants’ wagons which, during the
period aptly called hauling, haul a considerable amount of wood, resembles a stormy sea whose waves have been solidified by the cold. The spaces separating these snow-waves form what are in fact deep ditches, where the sleigh first rises painfully to the crest of the wave, then falls down suddenly, with an abruptness and noise capable of dislocating one's brains, especially during the night when, yielding momentarily to sleep, one no longer expects to receive these horrible jolts. If the waves are more even and less lofty, then the sleigh can proceed along them in a regular manner, rising and falling like a boat on sea-waves. Whence the heartaches and even the vomitings I have spoken of. Not to mention the cold which, in the middle of the night, despite the piles of furs, coats, fur-lined cloaks one is covered with, and the hay filling the sleigh, gradually becomes intolerable. One's whole body then feels pricked as if by a thousand needles, and one trembles for fear of dying of cold almost as much as of the cold itself.

When the shining sun on certain days allowed me to take in at one glance this bleak and dazzling desert, I could not help thinking of the too-famous retreat of our poor army, scattered and bleeding. I thought I saw our wretched soldiers without clothing, without shoes, without bread, without whisky, without moral or physical strength, most of them wounded, dragging themselves during the day like ghosts, stretched at night without shelter, like corpses, on the horrible snow, and all during a cold even more terrible than the one frightening me. And I asked myself how even one of them was able to resist such horrible sufferings and to come out alive from this frozen hell... Man must be awfully hard to kill.

I then laughed at the stupidity of famished crows following my sleigh with a numbed wing, who from time to time alighted on the road to stuff themselves with horse droppings, then lay down on their bellies, warming as well as they could their half-frozen feet; when without effort and within a few hours of flight in the southern direction, they could have found a mild climate, fertile fields, and plentiful fodder. Is the fatherland really so dear to the true crows' hearts? If, that is, as our soldiers used to say, one can call that a fatherland.

The success of de Tocqueville's Democracy in America (1835-1839) led the Marquis de Custine (1790-1857) to study Russia as his compatriot had studied the United States. In 1839 he embarked upon his trip to Russia, a staunch monarchist and Russophile; he returned after three months a decided anti-absolutist and a vehement Russophobe. Ironically, the very tyranny Custine had deplored in Russia was tightened as a consequence of his La Russie en 1839 and precautions were doubled to insure that foreign ideas were stopped at the border. As might be expected, short excerpts of this book along with Gustave Doré's illustrations for it were published in Life magazine at the height of the Cold War in March 1951.

First Arrival in Russia

July 11, 1839.

The steamship from Kronstadt dropped anchor before a granite dock in St. Petersburg. The English dock facing the customs house is a short distance from the famous public square where you can see the statue of Peter the Great high up on a rock. Once anchored, one remains there for a long time; you will see why.
I would like to spare you the details of the new persecutions I was subjected to, under the generic name of simple formalities, by the police and their faithful associate, the customs. Yet it is my duty to give you some idea of the difficulties awaiting the foreigner at the maritime frontier of Russia; (it is said that entering Russia by land is easier).

Every year, for a period of three days, the sun is unbearably hot in St. Petersburg; I arrived on one of those days yesterday. Early in the morning they deposited us on the deck of our building, and the others—that is, the foreigners, not the Russians. There we were directly exposed to the strong heat and to the direct rays of the morning sun. It was eight o'clock and it had been daylight since one A.M. When we talk about thirty degrees Réaumur [i.e., 86 degrees Fahrenheit], remember that this temperature is more uncomfortable in the Northern than in the so-called warmer climates, because the air here is heavy and fog-bound.

We had to appear before a new court that, like the one at Kronstadt, had assembled in the large room of our building. The same questions were addressed to me with the same civility, and my answers were translated with the same formality.

“Why did you come to Russia?”
“To see the country.”
“This is not a reason for travelling.” (Don’t you admire the humility of the objection?)
“I have no other reason.”
“What do you plan to see in St. Petersburg?”
“Anybody who will allow me to become acquainted with him.”
“How long do you expect to stay in Russia?”
“I have no idea.”
“Give us an approximate time.”
“Several months.”
“Are you on an official diplomatic mission?”
“No.”
“A secret one?”
“No.”
“For a scientific purpose?”
“No.”
“Have you ever been sent by your government to observe the social and political state of the country?”
“No.”
“By a business firm?”
“No.”
“You are then travelling on your own and out of pure curiosity?”
“Yes.”
“Why did you come to Russia?”
“I do not know, etc., etc., etc.”
“Do you have any letters of recommendation for some persons in this country?”

I had been warned about the inadvisability of being too frank in answering this question; I only mentioned my banker.

Upon leaving this session of the criminal court, I saw several of my accomplices pass ahead of me; they were given a difficult time over some irregularities discovered in their passports. The bloodhounds of the Russian police have a keen sense of smell, and depending upon the
person they are dealing with, they are either difficult or easy with passports. It appeared to me that they did not treat the travelers with the same degree of equality. An Italian businessman passing ahead of me, upon leaving the ship, was pitilessly searched—I was almost going to say searched till he bled to the bone. They even made him open a small pocket-wallet; they looked inside the clothing he had on his body. If the same thing had been done to me, I said to myself, they would have had good reason to be suspicious of me.

My pockets were filled with letters of recommendation, and though some had been given to me in Paris by the Russian ambassador himself and others by persons just as well known, they were sealed—a fact that had led me to fear leaving them in my writing desk. I therefore buttoned my coat when I saw the policemen approaching. They let me pass without searching me; but when I had to unpack all the trunks before the customs-clerk, these new enemies most minutely went over my belongings, especially my books. These were all, without exception, confiscated, but always with extraordinary politeness; yet they took no account of my protests. They also took away from me two pairs of travelling pistols and an old portable pendulum. I vainly tried to understand and have explained to me why this object was subject to confiscation. Everything would be returned to me, I was assured, but not without much trouble and many negotiations. I thus repeat with Russian noblemen that Russia is the country of useless formalities.

For the more than twenty-four hours that I have been in Russia, I still have not been able to take anything away from the customs, and to crown my misfortunes, my carriage, which had been dispatched from Kronstadt to St. Petersburg a day earlier than I had been promised, was addressed, not to me, but to a Russian prince. (Whenever the slightest mistake about a name is made in Russia, you are bound to come across a prince.) Right now I would have to take the necessary steps and give endless explanations before I can prove the error committed by the customs men, for the prince of my carriage is not here. Thanks to this mixup and to this piece of bad luck, I am perhaps forced for a long time to do without everything I left in that carriage.

Between nine and ten o’clock I saw myself released from the clutches of the customs and I was able to enter St. Petersburg, thanks to the attentions of a German traveler whom I met, by chance, on the dock. If he is a spy, he is at least obliging; he spoke Russian and French; he was kind enough to take the responsibility of getting me a drosky [i.e., a low, four-wheeled, open carriage], while with a hand-cart he himself helped my valet take to Coulon, the innkeeper, the small part of the luggage that had just been returned to me. I had enjoined my servant not to express the least sign of displeasure.

The last travel selection is by Louis Veuillot (1813-1883), a superb pamphleteer in defense of Papal power and Catholicism against nationalistic French clerics and secular positivism. In an age of widening trust in material progress and bourgeois comfort, Veuillot inveighed against all “modernisms,” including the newfangled mania for travelling. The “ugly Englishman” caricatured below was depicted as the prototype of all travelers in the heyday of British might: it was Veuillot’s fine touch to make him counter the cliche about the broadening effects of travelling with a number of clichés of his own.
Why Travel at All?

Whether you cover the whole earth or travel a few hundred leagues only, you will discover that there are quite a few Englishmen in this world, and you may well wonder why they ever left their country. You meet them everywhere, and everywhere you seem to see the same persons, wrapped in the same coats, speaking the same gibberish, filling hotel registers with the same complaints about cooking, wine, and beds, and showing the same haste to come and go. There was a flock of them on a steamship. The one who accosted me complained that we were hardly moving. Yet, on both sides of us, beautiful views were passing by as rapidly as the wind. I learned from this Englishman that he had covered Europe, part of Africa, and half of Asia in the space of a few months. Was it a wager, I asked him, that made him roam the world like this? He answered that he was travelling for his pleasure and instruction, but that the pleasure was rather small, considering the bad state of the roads, the inconvenience of passports, the boredom of quarantines, and the cooking ignorance of the whole world. And as far as his instruction was concerned here is an approximate summary of what he answered, in two hours, to my questions about the political, intellectual, commercial, and moral state of the countries he had visited.

The Spaniards have been kept in ignorance by the monks; I amused myself in Rome on Easter Day by standing with my hat on in St. Peter’s Square while the Pope was blessing the kneeling crowds; there are rather nice coffee shops in Florence; very bad cigars are sold in Naples; in Palermo you see beggars with only a shirt on their back; there are not as many dogs in Constantinople as I’ve been told; I ate excellent little cakes called futirs in Cairo, but those were the only decent things there; Damascus is a funny city; I drank champagne in Lebanon; the Russians speak very good French; the coaches in Berlin aren’t very fast; I had my summer trousers cleaned in Vienna, but they were starched, which is quite a bother; French coaches are harnessed to very shabby-looking horses; Frenchmen don’t know how to build highways; what delighted me most in Paris were the ballroom-dances at Musard, etc., etc.” He also named our best writer and our greatest statesman, and confided to me, by way of conclusion, that Frenchmen are a cheerful lot, but somewhat too superficial. I asked him to tell me whether his travels were over and what he intended to do next. “I’m going,” he answered me, “to take advantage of my eight or ten months left to me to study America, and then I shall run for Parliament.”

The above excerpts are not fully representative of French Romanticist travel writing, most of which was intended to open and inform minds, not to close them. In this respect many French Romanticists carried on the work of Montesquieu, Diderot, and other figures of the Enlightenment, albeit through voyages less imaginary than those we associate with the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the effect of the Romanticists’ substitution of very real foreigners for the idealized exotics so characteristic of their enlightened predecessors inevitably led to the abrasive experiences described above. They are to be considered, therefore, as indicative of an aspect of Romanticism too often ignored—its fidelity to concrete experience.
SOME NOTES ON THE
PROBLEM OF HAMLET
Josephine Chandler

It seems to me that there is something wrong with most if not all of the efforts to explain Hamlet's part in *Hamlet* and that the fault lies in the fact that those who have tried to explain it fall into the error which Hamlet attributes to himself—the error of "thinking too precisely on the event." That is, instead of asking themselves how they actually feel as they see or read the play and what impression they get of Hamlet and of his tragedy, too many critics cerebrate in the atmosphere of their studies, an atmosphere far removed from and very different from the atmosphere of the theater for which Shakespeare wrote the play. A sound interpretation of the drama must give full value to the impression which Hamlet, the central character, makes upon the intelligent and perceptive spectator or reader of the play. As C.S. Lewis reminds us, after all, our feelings are sometimes wiser than our criticism in cold blood.

Of course this is not to say that one understands Hamlet when he leaves the theater the first night or even when he closes the book after the first reading. It means that one should, while thinking in the study, constantly refer to his immediate intuitive impressions while experiencing the tragedy. As Professor Dover Wilson points out in *What Happens in Hamlet*, Shakespeare wrote with the audience—not the reader, and certainly not the scholar—in mind, and depended much upon the limitations of the spectator's memories.

Professor Wilson, however, goes further than I would go. He maintains that it is as futile as it is unnecessary to try to "understand" Hamlet, to try to describe his state of mind in terms of modern psychology, because Hamlet is "not a character in history but a character in a play, a part, if the most important part, of an artistic masterpiece." It does not matter, he says, if from the point of view of analytic psychology Hamlet is a "monster of inconsistency" as long as he remains convincingly lifelike to the spectators in the theater. Shakespeare's task, he says, "was not to produce a being psychologically explicable or consistent, but one who would evoke the affection, the wonder, and the tears of his audience, and would yet be accepted as entirely human."

I agree that *Hamlet* might be a satisfactory masterpiece even if Hamlet were not psychologically consistent. But Professor Wilson goes further. He
maintains that Hamlet is "a supreme illusion of a great and mysterious character" created by "technical devices," that his character, "like the appearance of his successive impersonators on the stage, is a matter of 'make-up.'" I do not agree. Shakespeare created in Hamlet a human being whose character and behavior can be explained in psychological terms without doing violence to our feelings about him as we see or read the play.

Unfortunately, many of the interpretations by scholars and commentators do more or less violence to those feelings. Professor Wagenknecht maintains, for example, that Hamlet is wholly admirable, that he is without a flaw, that he is the perfect Renaissance gentleman: "he is simply profoundly aware of the magnitude of his task and conducts himself accordingly." I take this to mean that Hamlet does precisely what he ought to do. On this assumption, his procrastination has been variously rationalized: (1) he postpones the killing of Claudius only to be sure that the Ghost is the authentic spirit of his father and not an evil spirit seeking to destroy his soul; (2) as a Christian, he quite rightly rejects the ethic of private blood revenge; and (3) he suffers from a conflict between his intellectual acceptance of the revenge ethic and his unconscious emotional rejection of it. If any of these "explanations" were sound, the play would have a very different effect upon us. It would not be tragic. Hamlet would be merely the helpless victim of circumstances, and we would feel little more than horror.

Furthermore, the assumption that Hamlet does what he ought to do does violence to the text and to the feelings of the spectator. The spectator is clearly made to feel that Hamlet's duty is to carry out the command of his father's ghost and that Hamlet himself never really doubts that he is blameworthy for not killing Claudius since he has "cause, and will, and strength, and means." He alternately castigates himself and makes up excuses for not doing it. For example, when he explains that he must not kill his uncle at prayers (the first good opportunity he has had) because he would thus send the murderer's soul to heaven, the spectator feels that Hamlet is madly reaching for a plausible excuse for his inaction. One also feels that Hamlet is glad that he has an excuse for not acting and that if this one had not occurred to him he would have found another. (There is, of course, nice irony in the fact that, as the spectator knows, his uncle's prayers are not sincere.) The spectator's feeling about the contrived delay is confirmed in a few moments when the Ghost appears to whet Hamlet's "almost blunted purpose."

The pathological explanation of Hamlet's behavior—that Hamlet is a victim of manic-depression, is "mad" in the clinical sense of the word—also violates the spectator's feeling. It is true that Hamlet alternates between fits of extraordinary elation and energy during which he acts violently and fits of depression during which he can only brood, and that, unfortunately, the latter fits come upon him exactly at those moments when it is most incumbent upon him to act. But one does not feel that Hamlet is an irresponsible madman. Indeed, the play would not be tragic for one who did feel so. When Hamlet tells Laertes in the last act that "madness" was to blame for his behavior to Laertes, he is only saying that he did not act deliberately—that he was carried away by passion. He does not mean that he was "insane" or that he does not take responsibility for his action.

Similarly, the theory adopted by Sir Laurence Olivier and others that Hamlet is "the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind," requires little effort and few words to refute. The spectator feels that Hamlet made up his mind once and for all immediately after his interview with the Ghost and, as I have said, almost constantly castigates himself from that time on because
Finally, the spectator does not feel, as some would have it, that Hamlet's failure to kill Claudius is due to his philosophical cast of mind. Hamlet's own suggestion that he has the habit of "thinking too precisely on the event" and of allowing "the native hue of resolution" to be "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" cannot be taken at face value. Hamlet is here trying, and trying vainly, to understand why he does not act. In fact, Hamlet performs a number of acts during the course of the play. He carefully and deliberately plans the play scene "to catch the conscience of the king." He kills Polonius. He arranges the murder of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He fights with Laertes at Ophelia's grave. Indeed, even if we grant that a philosophical cast of mind is an aspect of Hamlet's character, there is no evidence that he is weak of will or that he habitually procrastinates when action is called for. This theory not only degrades Hamlet and makes him unfit to be a tragic figure, it strikes the perceptive spectator as at best a far too simple view of Hamlet's character and behavior.

What then is the feeling about Hamlet of the normal intelligent spectator of the play whose reactions have not been unduly influenced by reading the various interpreters or by "thinking too precisely on the event"? Surely he feels that Hamlet is a superior man but that he is also a human being and, as such, not without limitations and not immune to evil influences in his environment.

When Hamlet first appears, he is deeply depressed, even weary of life, wishing "that the Everlasting had not fixed/ His canon 'gainst self-slaughter." He has found the world "stale, flat, and unprofitable." And in this first soliloquy he reveals the reason for his depression. It is not his father's death. He mentions that almost incidentally. It is his mother's hasty and incestuous marriage. "Frailty, thy name is woman," he cries. Here he reveals the first of the moral shocks which create his tragic situation. Then his encounter with his father's ghost gives him two new moral shocks. He learns that his father was murdered by his uncle/stepfather and that his mother is guilty of adultery. His immediate reaction is an eager positive response to the Ghost's request that he avenge his father's murder. And to the Ghost's charge, "Hamlet, Remember me," he vows that this commandment

all alone shall live

Within the book and volume of my brain. Yet for some reason he is unable to keep that commandment "all alone" in his mind and to carry out what he has vowed to do. He procrastinates, castigates himself cruelly for his procrastination, and seeks excuses for it—excuses which have to be plausible to satisfy so intelligent a man but which, nevertheless, do not satisfy him long. He is right when he tells Horatio that he is "passion's slave," but the passion to which he is a slave is not the passion for revenge, though that dominates his conscious mind; it is a passion which leads him to torture Ophelia, the innocent girl whom he loves, and to accost and threaten his mother with obscene terms.

Finally, almost by accident, his passion does cause him to perform the task which the Ghost has set him, but only after Hamlet himself has received a mortal wound and others, both guilty and innocent, have died. Then, with his last breath he asks his friend Horatio to tell his story so that the world will not have a worse opinion of him than he deserves.

Without understanding why Hamlet has acted as he has, the spectator feels that his story is tragic because fine and admirable as Hamlet is—perhaps because he is so fine and admirable—he has failed to rise to the occasion to which he has been called. Yes, in some way his very greatness has told against
him. Had he been Laertes, a fine young man whom Hamlet admires, he would have performed his duty without hesitation. And yet the spectator feels that Laertes is not worth a quarter of Hamlet.

So, at the end of the play, the spectator leaves the theater oppressed by a spectacle of life's mysterious cruelty and puzzled by his mixed feelings about Hamlet whose story has deeply moved him.

What is the explanation of those mixed feelings? It lies in the fact that Hamlet's tragic fault paradoxically and ironically grows out of a virtue, his ability to perceive and to react emotionally to a specific evil not in isolation but within a larger frame of reference. Unlike Laertes, he does not see his father's murder as an isolated event which can be dealt with simply. He is deeply aware of it as only one manifestation of the deep-seated, pervasive corruption in the environment of Denmark. When confronted by the revelation of his father's ghost, he does not say, "A horrible deed has been done; O cursed spite, that ever I was born to avenge it." Instead, significantly, he cries out,

The time is out of joint; O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right.
He takes upon himself a much larger task than revenge.
And so the burden which threatens to break his back and which does paralyze his arm is not the duty to kill his uncle, to perform a single violent act. That he could have done, though it would have been distasteful to him. It is the need to cleanse the moral environment of Denmark, a task compared to which the cleansing of the Augean stables was merely an unpleasant chore.

But—and this is important—of this task, of this duty, Hamlet is not really conscious. He continues to assume consciously that his duty is the relatively simple one of avenging his father's murder. And therefore he does not understand why he does not proceed without delay to perform it. The fact is that he cannot really fix his mind upon it. The Ghost was right to urge him to "Remember me," for Hamlet is prone to forget him. The larger duty of cleansing Denmark's moral environment has usurped almost every crevice of his mind. If the memorandum to avenge his father's murder manages from time to time to force itself upon his attention, it refuses to stay there. What does stay almost constantly in the forefront of his mind is his mother's defection, for him the most oppressive manifestation of the out-of-jointness of the time. And there is nothing constructive that he can do about that. So the consciousness of it fester in his mind, taking the form of misogyny and sex-nausea. It leads him to torture Ophelia and later his mother in behavior and language which belie his essential nature, and it prevents him from doing what he might and should do.

Now Hamlet's inability to kill his uncle, to carry out his acknowledged duty, is not a virtue, and the spectator does not feel it to be so. True, it springs from a virtue, Hamlet's ability to see things in perspective, to see the larger view. But insofar as the large view renders one incapable of seeing the short view and of doing what he can and should do now, it is not an unmixed moral asset. Certainly the spectator assumes with Hamlet that the killing of Claudius is a good thing in itself and that it is Hamlet's duty to kill him. Therefore Hamlet is blameworthy for his failure to do it.

And so the spectator's feelings about Hamlet are justly mixed. Hamlet is not a moral weakling, but neither is he faultless. And he is not a madman but a responsible human being. His tragedy lies in the fact that because he is revolted by the evil forces in his environment, he is infected and dragged down by them. He is not to be excused for his failure to avenge his father's murder, for his murder of Polonius, for his treatment of Ophelia, or for the
deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. And yet *somehow* he retains his moral grandeur to the end, despite his defeat and his partial responsibility for it.
THE USE OF AMPHETAMINES IN HYPERKINESIS: POSSIBLE BRAIN MECHANISMS

Leon C. Dorosz, Jr.

A dozen years ago the term "hyperkinetic," meaning in its simplest sense "overactivity," was virtually unknown. Now doctors and school authorities commonly use the word in medical diagnosis of as many as eight or nine per cent of all elementary school children in the United States. As many as a million of these children may be using, under prescription, amphetamine-type stimulants such as Dexedrine and Ritalin. Since the use of amphetamines by adults almost invariably induces psychic and motor activation, it seems paradoxical that these drugs should, in effect, tranquilize hyperkinetic children. Some researchers believe that diet can control the symptoms of hyperkinesis as effectively as drugs, suggesting that the use of potentially dangerous stimulants is unnecessary. Such a finding, however, would also suggest a biochemical basis for the behavioral disorder. More skeptical persons, both lay and professional, have suggested that hyperkinesis is a disorder invented by persons in authority to control behavior that they dislike.

My research assumption, based both on direct experience in schools and on the literature, is that there does exist a complex pattern of symptoms coherent enough to be called a syndrome. I further assume that this hyperkinetic syndrome probably reflects an underlying biochemical disorder of the brain. I am fully aware of the problems in defining and diagnosing hyperkinesis and of the abuses, often unwitting but occasionally almost criminal, on the part of school authorities, parents, and pediatricians in attempting to thwart genuine precocity or creative individuality through medication. However, I will not focus on these issues in this article. Instead, I will concentrate on how amphetamines may act in the brain to alter the symptoms of hyperkinesis. I will also review some of the research efforts of our laboratory at San Jose State University to trace the mechanism of drug action in the brain.

Derived, in part, from the keystone work of Wender, my working hypothesis about amphetamine action in hyperkinesis, which I will specify in more precise detail later, is that some pathways between two portions of the brain, the reticular formation and the cerebral cortex, develop improperly in the hyperkinetic child. These pathways, between the back of the brain and the cortex, convey the value-level (i.e., whether or not they should be given
attention) of incoming stimuli. When this value judgment is poorly conveyed, the cortex is continually distracted by every incoming bit of sensory information, and so attention cannot be focused. Because he lacks this attention-focusing ability, the child is perceived as restless, intractable to teaching, unconcerned, and rude—the full-blown hyperkinetic syndrome. As children mature, the symptoms of hyperkinesis often change or even disappear, a result, in my working hypothesis, of the maturation of reticulo-cortical pathways. Amphetamines would presumably have the effect of stimulating this brain-communication in hyperkinetic children, allowing the cortex to deal with screened stimuli and thus to focus attention.

Our test subjects in examining this hypothesis were rats, obviously not complex enough animals to be directly analogous to human beings. Hyperkinesis and brain function in human beings have been, nonetheless, the ultimate concern of our research. In the area of brain physiology, as a matter of fact, rats are good subjects because they are neuroanatomically and neurochemically similar enough to man, especially in phylogenetically older brain regions such as the reticular formation, to offer us hope of elucidating some of the molecular mechanisms of amphetamine action. Before returning to the experiments we conducted and the evidence we have gathered, I would like to present a preliminary review of two matters: diagnosis of hyperkinesis, and the chemical organization and functioning of the brain as we now understand it.

**Diagnosis of Hyperkinesis**

Hyperkinesis is a disorder of children, sometimes outgrown as they grow older. It is a loose term, defined by the relative severity of the symptoms involved: restlessness, hyperactivity, limited concentration span, difficulties in dealing with peers, school performance below apparent potential, and lack of concern for, and responsiveness to, either punishment or reward. Parents have often reported difficulties with children later diagnosed as hyperkinetic almost from the time of birth. They describe their children as hard to hold, unusually fretful, wakeful, and incessantly moving; but they wait for the child to “outgrow” the difficulties. Meanwhile, increasingly severe stresses develop within the family concerning the handling of the “difficult” child.

Because no medical or psychological help is sought for so long—usually not until the child’s sixth to ninth years—it is virtually impossible to distinguish behavioral problems with a possible organic basis from those which are really disturbances in learning or in emotional adjustment within a disordered family. There is a statistically unexpected clustering of cases within family lines and a higher frequency of the disorder among males. But there is no conclusive biological evidence to associate hyperkinesis uniquely with genetic history, sex, family environment, or natal or pre-natal trauma.

Neurologically, the hyperkinetic youngster may show “soft” (vaguely suggestive but not diagnostic) signs of nervous system damage. Many workers agree that the presence of “hard,” or definitively diagnostic, signs of brain damage should rule out a diagnosis of hyperkinesis, that the distinction between the classic hyperkinetic syndrome and clear “brain damage” is dichotomous and qualitative, with hyperkinesis most probably a maturational defect. However, the terms “minimal brain damage” and “minimal brain dysfunction” (reflecting, in their vagueness, less about the persons so diagnosed than about our working ignorance of normal or pathological brain mechanisms) have often been applied to the hyperkinetic child.

Our ignorance in this area has led to a kind of tautology of diagnosis, practical though it may be, in some cases. By circular reasoning, the
A hyperkinetic child is the child who responds to the medication usually prescribed for hyperkinetic children. If he does not respond to the stimulants, something else is wrong, and he is not, by definition of medication, hyperkinetic. To seek more precise evidence of how such medication may affect brain activity, some understanding of the way the brain functions is necessary.

**Brain Organization**

Communication among the forty billion or so nerve cells, or neurons, of the brain occurs by the release of very small quantities of chemicals (called "neurotransmitters") at junction points, or synapses, between neurons. Each neuron receives impulses through the thousands of such contacts which brain neurons have from both nearby and distant nerve cells. The various transmitters excite or inhibit the neuron onto which they are released; if sufficiently excited, a neuron "fires," following which its communication line, its axon, transmits an electrical signal which, when it reaches synaptic contact points, will cause the release of an excitatory or inhibitory transmitter chemical onto the next neuron or neurons in line.

Many drugs, including virtually all the psychologically active tranquilizers, anti-depressants, etc., are thought to act by altering chemical events at synapses. Drugs may retard or facilitate either the production or release of a transmitter, mimic the action of a transmitter, prolong the action of a transmitter by interfering with its degradation, or, often, act by a combination of these and other chemical mechanisms. Amphetamines are thought to act in part by prolonging and facilitating, and in part by imitating, the action of a group of neurotransmitters referred to as monoamines or biogenic amines, including especially nor-epinephrine (NE), dopamine (DA) and serotonin. Neurons which employ monoamines as transmitters are widespread throughout the nervous system. In boosting the activity of such diverse neurons, amphetamines have a variety of effects, including such seemingly unrelated phenomena as appetite suppression, blood pressure stimulation, temperature depression and increased intellectual alertness.

Important monoamine-using pathways project from a deep brain region known as the reticular formation anteriorly into the hypothalamus (a center for appetite and temperature control, among other things), the limbic system (involved in motivation and emotional behavior), and the cerebral cortex (the outer, "thinking," brain in which is concentrated a large fraction of the neurons in the body). Reticulo-cortical pathways involving monoamine neurons are known to be involved in modulating levels of alertness and awareness, and to be important in the direction and focusing of attention.

**Possible Role of Amphetamines in Hyperkinesis**

When ideally effective, amphetamine-like stimulants alleviate restlessness and hyperactivity in the hyperkinetic child. This effect has often been termed "paradoxical" in light of the more widely known stimulant nature of amphetamines. However, in successfully treated children the diminished motor activity may well be secondary to an increase in attention-focusing ability. One of the major reasons for the hyperactivity of hyperkinesis seems to be elevated distractibility; the hyperkinetic child would like to attend to one stimulus, but his brain is not able effectively to "filter out" the host of extraneous stimuli which are constantly impinging on the sensory systems. In other words, every incoming stimulus is assigned approximately equal value by the sensory nervous system, and so attention cannot be focused for more than a few seconds.
The role of the reticular formation in serving as an alerting and a “gating” or “screening” system for sensory input to the cerebral cortex has been firmly established. It is apparently at the level of the reticular formation that the “value level” of incoming sensory information is established and the decision is made as to what to pass on to higher cortical levels. This gating also determines the degree of intensity of the transmission. While specific neurons and pathways in this complex, high-order function have not yet been identified, it is certain that some of the neurons involved are ones which employ monoamines, especially NE, as transmitters.

The working hypothesis for my experimentation can now be stated in more technical and precise terms. In the hyperkinetic child, the reticulo-cortical pathways which convey the value-level of incoming sensory stimuli develop improperly because of a defect in the enzymatic systems responsible for synthesizing, packaging, releasing, and/or metabolizing monoamine transmitters, especially NE. Amphetamine administration could relieve the syndrome through one of its known actions, namely, facilitating and imitating the effectiveness of whatever monoamines are produced in the malfunctioning reticular neurons. With a proper value background from the now—properly—functioning reticular neurons, the cortex would be enabled to focus on one stimulus for prolonged time periods, and the distractibility and accompanying restlessness and hyperactivity would be relieved.

Thus, the so-called paradoxical effects of amphetamines in the hyperkinetic child would not be strange at all; the amphetamines would act in their usual fashion to stimulate a monoamine system. Only in this case the drugs are acting on an immature or defective system to stimulate it to proper functioning, thus conveying a certain quieting, focusing capacity to cortical attentions. The flight-of-ideas observed in the normal child or adult on amphetamine medication would then simply represent malfunction of the value assignment system caused by boosting an already normally acting reticular formation so that it assigns overly intense values to extraneous stimuli. That amphetamines are not paradoxical in their effects on hyperkinetic children is further evidenced by the kinds of nervous system side-effects which most often accompany treatment—insomnia and lack of appetite—two quite expected amphetamine-induced symptoms. Apparently the monoamine-using neurons in these sleep and appetite control circuits do not suffer the same biochemical defect as some of the reticulo-cortical circuits, certainly a very possible state of affairs given the tremendously variable maturational rates of different regions and systems of the brain.

One additional symptom of hyperkinesis often relieved by amphetamine medication is the child’s lack of responsiveness to reward and punishment. Whether this change is secondary to the increase in attending facility, or is a primary change in function of the limbic system—an important motivational region of the brain—is not at all clear. What is clear, however, is that monoamine pathways are importantly involved in the interplay between reticular formation and limbic system, so that an hypothesis very similar to that developed for reticulo-cortical interactions could well apply to the change in the child’s responsiveness to external motivators—rewards and punishments.

VALIDATING THE MODEL

Verification, rejection, or, more likely, substantial modification of the model presented will follow extensive work, in many laboratories, in brain anatomy, physiology, and chemistry. Investigators with ever-finer tools are
tracing with precision nerve pathways among brain loci; fluorescent marker techniques permit the identification of transmitters used; radioactive labeling makes it possible to find where in the brain drugs or their metabolites lodge and, presumably, act. These and other techniques are slowly providing the secure anatomical and chemical background with which the findings of the more behaviorally-oriented investigators must ultimately agree. This movement of behavioral and chemical/anatomical research toward agreement involves a continual process of checking and counter-checking, behavioral phenomena providing clues for molecular searches, chemical and anatomical findings offering new hopes for understanding and treatment.

In this context, our laboratory has worked somewhere in the midrange, but nearer the molecular than the behavioral extreme. As I pointed out above, our experimental animal has been the rat. Our research tool, the recording of electrical activity from the brain, is neither directly anatomical nor directly chemical, but is clearly dependent upon, and contributory to, knowledge of both. It is important to note also that, since there has been no animal behavioral pathology comparable to hyperkinesis, virtually all animal research involving amphetamines, including ours, has been done in normal animals; the hope, of course, is that the understanding of drug action in the normal brain will provide a clue to action in the abnormal brain, and hence a clue to the underlying pathology, with the attendant hope of ever more effective treatment and even prevention.

**Evoked Potentials as Research Tools**

Excited neurons transmit along their axons, their "communication wires," electrical signals which cause the release of a neurotransmitter at the axonal endings, the synaptic contact points. The transmitter thus released causes small excitatory or inhibitory electrical changes on the recipient neurons. These small changes in electrical potential, called post-synaptic potentials because they arise in the neuron on the after, or receiving, side of the synapse, can easily be recorded. Such recordings may provide information about the nature of the transmitter involved (excitatory or inhibitory), about the distribution of a particular axon or group of axons (potential changes recorded locally or over wide areas), or about the time course of information spread in the nervous system. Such small potential changes are occurring continually, even in sleep, because at any instant many of the brain's billions of neurons are firing; such changes constitute the basis for the recording of "brain waves," or electroencephalography (EEG), recently popularized by the advent of devices to facilitate the production of alpha waves, one particular class of brain electrical activity.

By simultaneously exciting groups of axons one can evoke somewhat more intense post-synaptic potential changes in particular brain regions. Thus a flash of light is followed by particular patterns of electrical activity in all those brain regions which receive information from axons which leave the eye and which are excited by the light flash. In this manner we have learned much about the destinations within the brain of information about stimuli arising in the various sensory pathways—sound, heat, touch, etc. In experimental animals, the electrodes to record these evoked potentials are often located deep within the brain, but even working with human subjects much information can be gleaned, especially about activity in the cerebral cortex, from electrodes placed on the scalp.

The power of the evoked potential as a tool lies in its ability to provide knowledge about the informational pathways within the brain even in the face of a lack of knowledge regarding the fine anatomical pathways involved.
Such knowledge about informational pathways is extremely important because there is apparently tremendous redundancy within the nervous system, many parallel pathways simultaneously processing virtually the same information, with ultimate interpretation by the brain on a probabilistic rather than a deterministic basis. Thus, the hope of unravelling exact neuron-by-neuron pathways unique for particular bits of information is probably vain, especially for any information more complex than a simple touch, sound, or light flash.

One final, important feature of the evoked potential as a tool for studying brain information processing is that the investigator, to gain maximum definition of the actual information being traced, must define precisely the stimulus used to set up the original axon activity. For sensory systems, a light flash or a tone may be so controlled. When tracing information between various brain regions, however, it is usually necessary to activate groups of axons by direct electrical stimulation; the activity thus generated within the axons is normal, as are the post synapt ic potentials generated at those axons' synaptic contact points, even though the original initiating stimulus was not a truly physiologic one.

The Trans-callosal Response

Our procedure in studying the effects of amphetamines has been to choose an end-point in drug action, and then to attempt to work backwards in unravelling the details of that end-point effect. Specifically, amphetamines are thought to act in hyperkinesis by permitting focusing of attention by the cerebral cortex. By assessing the action of amphetamines on a fairly well understood information-transfer system within the cortex, it ought to be possible to begin to pinpoint both the mechanism and the locus of action of the amphetamines. Since our hypothesis is that amphetamine effects on cortical function are mediated through reticulo-cortical pathways, we hope, in projected research to be discussed later, to localize and define such pathways.

The specific cortical information-processing system chosen was the trans-callosal response. As is generally known, the cerebral cortex consists of two distinct hemispheres, a left and a right. Homologous regions in the two hemispheres are connected by a large bundle of axons known as the corpus callosum. Recent work with both animals and humans in which the corpus callosum has been severed has indicated that the two hemispheres may, especially in man, be functionally quite distinct, though anatomically virtual mirror-images. Thus, in corpus-callosum sectioned persons, two distinct beings, a verbal analytical and a non-verbal intuitive, may exist simultaneously and with no awareness of one another. Yet, in the intact brain, the two hemispheres are in instant and continuous communication and act in a totally coordinate fashion through the information passing across the corpus callosum. Hence the importance of this system.

When signals are experimentally generated in the axons of the corpus callosum by direct electrical stimulation, a post-synaptic potential is generated in the region of the cerebral cortex to which those axons are distributed. This potential is known as the trans-callosal response, and represents the reception of callosal information (axon signals) by the cortex. It is this response which has been studied in our laboratory in rats under varying drug and age conditions.

In our initial experiments, the trans-callosal response (TCR) was recorded in two age groups of rats, one post-weaning but quite immature sexually, about three weeks of age, and a second about eight weeks. The first group
might be considered roughly analogous to the six or seven year olds in whom hyperkinesis is often first diagnosed, while the second group, just sexually mature, may be analogous to the human adolescent. The latter group was chosen because stimulant medication in hyperkinesis may often be eliminated when the child reaches adolescence. We were interested in any differential responsiveness to amphetamines in the TCR over this maturational period in the normal animal.

Each animal served as its own control in the experiments, meaning that the TCR was recorded under both drug and non-drug conditions in the same subject. Because of the relatively high inter-subject variability in electrophysiological measures, this design provided maximum sensitivity. All of the potentials evoked were monitored on an oscilloscope during experimental sessions and stored on magnetic tape for subsequent detailed analysis. (An exact description of surgical and recording techniques, and of drug conditions, is available from the author, and will be reported in an appropriate journal.)

Experimental Results

Results of the first experiment were surprising. The TCR, the potential evoked by stimulation of the axons of the corpus callosum, is a fairly clear-cut two-phase response, similar in all animals studied, which is complete within 100 milliseconds or less following delivery of the initiating stimulus pulse. It had been expected that one effect of moderate amphetamine doses might be an increase in the intensity, the amplitude, of the response—a boost in the effectiveness, or the “value level” of an incoming stimulus. Such amplitude changes in the TCR had been noted previously in other contexts as a result of other drugs, and even as a result of environmental enrichment during rearing of rats. Small amplitude differences were noted, and will be followed in our next series of experiments, the rationale behind which will be explained below.

Fortunately, because we wanted to extract as much data as possible from our animals, one of the recording conditions employed involved looking at longer time periods than the first 100 milliseconds after stimulation—the time during which the primary TCR is completed. Following the lead of an earlier investigator, we had previously noted the existence of a “late” aspect of the TCR, a potential change occurring some 400 to 700 milliseconds after stimulation. This late response has never been studied in detail, partly because such a slow response, in any evoked potential, is extremely difficult to interpret. Late responses occur not as the result of the initial volley of axon signals generated by the stimulus pulse, but as the result of axon signals arriving in the recording area from other parts of the brain—signals, in other words, arriving by indirect routes, from unknown brain areas activated by the initial stimulus pulse. Even from oscilloscopic monitoring during our experiments, two things were apparent: 1) in the older animals, moderate doses of amphetamine produced a clear increase in the amplitude of the late phase of the TCR, and, 2) in the younger animals, the late phase was either very small or absent under both control and drug conditions. Here then was an unexpected but welcome surprise: an aspect of an important cortical information-processing system which was both age-dependent and drug-dependent.

These findings could prove to be quite important. The initial phase of the TCR, the first 100 milliseconds, represents the reception of incoming information by the cerebral cortex. Subsequent activity, including what I have called the “late” phase of the TCR, reflects the processing of the
information associated with or conveyed by that initial signal. Processing involves several types of information:

1. impulses generated in the receptive cortical area, by which that cortex communicates to other brain regions just what information has been received;
2. changes in the receptive sensitivity of neurons in the receiving area in preparation for the handling of further input;
3. impulses arriving via axons from brain areas other than the corpus callosum, areas also activated by the initial stimulus and subsequently informing the receptive cortex of their activation.

Unscrambling the components contributory to late activity of evoked potentials is a complex and tedious task, one not yet fully successful for any evoked potential.

That amphetamines might affect the processing as well as the simple reception of information should, on reflection, not be too surprising a finding. Psychoses induced by excessive amphetamine intake are characterized by illusions and delusions, disorders of cognitive association and interpretation rather than simple receptive disorders. Perhaps even, from the model presented earlier, we will find that an important role of the reticular formation in its assignment of value weights to incoming stimuli lies in the way it biases the cortical neurons, not for their reception, but for their processing, or interpretation, of incoming signals.

At this point in our work, we ran a second experiment, the final results of which are as yet incomplete, but which appear so far to confirm the initial findings. We recorded TCRs under control and drug conditions in a series of animals of varying ages, every few days from three weeks through eight weeks, in order to find out several things. First, we wanted to know at what age the late phase of the TCR first appears, in the hope of correlating that appearance with what the literature tells us about the maturation of other features of the brain, especially chemical ones. Secondly, we wanted to know what effect amphetamines have upon the late response of the TCR at the age when it first appears. We had thought that amphetamines might even induce the presence of the late response at an age when it would otherwise be absent; our initial observations, though, have not shown this to be the case.

Our tentative conclusions, then, are that in immature rats, amphetamines may affect only the reception of incoming information by the cerebral cortex. In mature rats where the late aspect of the TCR was observed, however, it would appear that the processing of information is also affected, perhaps imitating the effects of amphetamines on cognitive processes in adult human beings. These findings may relate to the effect of amphetamines on children with hyperkinetic symptoms resulting from minimal brain dysfunction, but at this point in our knowledge we can only note the similarity.

Amphetamines may also affect another sort of late, or interpretive, neuro-electric activity in human beings. When a rapid succession of sensory stimuli, say light flashes, are presented to subjects who are awake, the successive potentials evoked in visual regions of the brain may vary according to the subjects. In some subjects ("augmenters") they increase in amplitude, and in other subjects ("reducers") they decrease in amplitude. These phenomena have, in some contexts, tentatively, very tentatively, been associated with "extroversion" (more and more brain excitation from repetitive environmental input) and "introversion" (less and less brain excitation, a "closing off" or a focusing, in the face of repeated sensory input). It has been reported that children who are classed as good amphetamine responders in hyperkinesis are augmenters when not on
medication and reducers when on, while poor amphetamine responders augment while on medication. These findings add weight to the model of amphetamine action as a “focuser” in truly hyperkinetic children, and a cognitive stimulant—inducing a “flight-of-ideas”—in non-hyperkinetic children.

**Current Research**

Through our current data analyses we will isolate a particular age group of rat subjects which looks most promising for further research. Our efforts will then be directed at finding out how, or even if, the reticular formation is involved in the observed effects on cortical information processing. The rationale and techniques to be used are as follows.

If amphetamines do influence cortical information handling through their action in boosting the effectiveness of reticulo-cortical pathways, then it might be possible to mimic the action of the drug on the cortex by artificially driving the reticular pathways by electrical stimulation. In the first experiments, the usual TCR will be recorded. Then, in the same animal, stimulating electrodes will be placed in the reticular formation. The TCR will again be recorded while the reticular neurons are stimulated. We will explore various stimulation points throughout the reticular formation in an attempt to find one which produces a change in the TCR similar to the change seen when amphetamines are administered. Passage of larger electrical currents through the stimulating electrodes will leave small metal deposits which, when the brain is later removed and examined microscopically, will accept dyes by which we will be able to determine the precise location in which the stimulating electrodes were effective. Future electrode placement will be guided by these determinations.

Complicating the search somewhat is the fact that we will have to employ several patterns of electrical stimulation at each of the reticular points. One of the intriguing questions of neurophysiological research is how one should artificially initiate neuron activity so as best to imitate normal physiological patterns. We know that firing frequency codes—how often in a given time, up to 1000 times per second, a neuron fires—are important in conveying information among neurons. We do not yet know what pattern of stimulation might be appropriate in the reticulo-cortical systems we are investigating.

If we are able to find a reticular locus, the excitation of which mimics the effects of amphetamines on cortical information processing, then we shall perhaps have opened an important door in understanding the action of amphetamines in both the normal and the pathological brain. Other projected designs for future research, always dependent of course on the data generated, involve electrophysiological studies in animals to which amphetamines have been administered chronically rather than in one or two doses. Many physicians give at least a week’s “trial run” on amphetamines in order to give the medication time to take effect. What such delayed action would imply for the underlying neurochemistry is most unclear, since amphetamine and its known metabolites are usually maximally effective within a few hours, and are rapidly cleared from the body. We also plan to extend our work from the anesthetized to the awake and freely moving animal.

**CONCLUSIONS**

I have discussed the problem of hyperkinesis from the point of view of one who wants to explain behavioral phenomena which follow the medical
administration of amphetamines in selected children. While convinced that such phenomena do occur, that amphetamines do have a quieting effect on some children, I also entertain serious questions regarding the ultimate intellectual or emotional value derived from the medication. Beyond the context of hyperkinesis, though, the use and abuse of stimulants is a matter of serious concern in our society. We understand far too little about the mechanism of action of such drugs, about the possible long-term side effects, about mechanisms of addiction and dependency. I have chosen the particular model of hyperkinesis as an important vehicle for entering the broader realm of the study of amphetamine action in any brain. The model offers some challenging testable hypotheses through which we are attempting to expand our understanding of drug action. Accustomed as we as a society are to turn to what is largely trial-and-error pharmaceutical treatment for the solution of personal difficulties as well as the treatment of our more definable diseases, too many of us, I think, look for the quick answer, and so fail to realize the difficulties encountered in trying to understand fully the action of even one particular drug. Additionally, I have tried to convey the basis for the usefulness of an extremely important, but not widely understood, neurophysiological tool, the evoked potential. As a descriptive device for the study of populations of neurons, rather than of single cells, the evoked potential permits us to draw inferences about the brain's handling of relatively high-order information, yet is closely enough related to the activities of single cells that we hope to glean important neurochemical and neurophysiological information from its use.

We realize, as any investigators do, the tenuous and probably transient importance of our own research conclusions. Whatever significance this paper may achieve lies, I believe, in extending our grasp of the serious concerns of the struggle for the understanding of drug actions and the use of electrical potentials in unravelling the intricacies of brain functions.

NOTES
2 Interestingly, some physicians now recommend the use of a morning cup of coffee for the hyperkinetic child; caffeine affects the nervous system much like amphetamine, though more mildly.
3 The research reported in this paper was conducted under the auspices of the San Jose State University program in Instructional Research, within which I was fortunate enough to hold a University Fellowship during the 1973–74 academic year. I wish to express my appreciation to Academic Vice-President Hobert Burns, to Dean Lester Lange of the School of Science, and to my Chairman in the Department of Biological Sciences, Joseph Young, for their encouragement and cooperation. I thank Will Reed and Shirley Turnbull for technical assistance. I would also like to acknowledge with thanks the editorial assistance of John Galm of the SJSU English Department, who helped considerably in organizing the overall presentation and in clarifying difficult passages.
THE BLACK PRESS
& POPULISM
1890/1896
Edmund L. Drago

In April 20, 1877 President Rutherford B. Hayes ordered the withdrawal of the 22 officers and 271 enlisted men stationed in New Orleans and, thereby, signaled the end of Reconstruction. As the war-torn nation sought peace, liberals joined conservatives in the condemnation of post war radicalism. Radical Republicans like United States Senator Carl Schurz abandoned Reconstruction for Social Darwinism, while the liberal New York Nation reported the troop withdrawal from New Orleans as "removing from the South the last trace of the bitter conflict which . . . left behind it the legacy of a political curse that only now, after twelve added years of fraud, misgovernment, violence, and anarchy, has spent its force . . . . We may look forward to an era of intelligent and calm discussion of the great political problems which call for settlement by orderly and legal means, and of a national habit so fixed and peaceful that we shall be able to look back upon the distracted politics of the country since the close of the war as no better than those of 'kites and crows.' "1 Confiscated lands given to the freedmen were returned to the Confederate planters. In short, the country chose to relinquish Radical Reconstruction efforts which had attempted to guarantee Southern blacks real political and economic freedom.

White America's abandonment adversely affected the emergence of a politically powerful black elite which was responsive to the needs of black America. The federal occupation of the South had encouraged the growth of a black elite composed of politicians, preachers, and newspaper editors. On the state level these blacks helped rewrite the undemocratic state constitutions of the South. On the federal level, those elected to Congress, like U.S. Senators Hiram R. Revels and Blanche Bruce of Mississippi, supported the Freedmen's Bureau and other legislation beneficial to the freedmen.

With the restoration of the "Bourbons," the Southern white opponents of Reconstruction, this black elite became virtually powerless. Moreover, as exemplified by the Black Press, it ceased to reflect the needs and aspirations of the nation's several million blacks. This Black Press began with the appearance of numerous black newspapers across the country during the 1880's and 1890's. The four leading ones—The Cleveland Gazette, The Washington Bee, The Savannah Tribune, and The New York Age were in the
big cities. However, smaller presses existed throughout the rural areas of the country. In Kansas, for instance, *National Baptist World, The People's Friend,* and *The Kansas Headlight* were published in Wichita, *The Historic Times* in Lawrence, and *Southern Argus* in Fort Scott and Baxter Springs. This Black Press lauded the ideals and values of white middle class America. It encouraged black women to use skin lighteners and black intellectuals to adopt the values of white America.

Consequently, radical changes in race relations and attitudes had to come from the poor, uneducated, and illiterate segment of black society. On December 13, 1890 the small black farmers of the South and West attempted such a revolution at Ocala, Florida, where they met with their white counterparts to organize the Populist party. But the response of the Black Press to this agrarian revolt indicated that it never seriously considered Populism a valid alternative to the established two party political system in helping black Americans. At best it viewed the movement as a possible device to divide the Democratic party and thus strengthen the Republican party.

But more important, the Black Press saw Populism as a subversive threat to American ideals. The black editor was *petit bourgeois*—largely because he had a personal stake in the existing political structure. In fact, the editors of the four major black newspapers were either Republican politicians or appointees of that party. Thomas Fortune of *The New York Age* had been appointed by the Republicans as Special Inspector of Customs in Delaware. Editor H.C. Smith of *The Cleveland Gazette* was elected to the Ohio Legislature as a Republican. J.H. Deveau, editor of *The Savannah Tribune,* became collector of customs in Georgia during the Harrison Administration, while William C. Chase of *The Washington Bee* worked in both the office of the Recorder of the Deeds and the War Department.² The very existence of the black newspaper was often dependent on Republican campaign money. The influential *Washington Bee* candidly admitted as much: "There are some colored editors in this country who are of the opinion that the National Republican committee will have funds enough to pay them a stipulated salary to circulate campaign literature" (September 10, 1892). Support of the Populists, a direct challenge to the political status-quo, simply jeopardized what few political plums the black middle class received. As a result, the Black Press and its editors equated race progress with the Republican party. *The New York Age* declared "while First a Race Organ, THE AGE Supports the Principles of the National Republican Party and Labors for Their Practical Application" (November 23, 1889). *The Cleveland Gazette* told its readers it "is a race advocate first and a Republican journal next" (October 18, 1890). Similarly, *The Washington Bee* reasoned that any "attack on the republican party is an attack on the rights of the Negro" (May 3, 1890). *The Savannah Tribune* was published "to battle for the real interests of the Negro race . . . and the success of the grand old Republican party of the United States" (December 5, 1891).

The Horatio Alger success story, moreover, was a meaningful concept to the black editor. Like one of Alger's heroes, the editor was a product of America's growing urbanization. Situated in surroundings like New York, Cleveland, and Savannah, black editors were often unable to understand the increasing problems of the black farmers of the South and West. In the city, they had attained heights heretofore unknown to most rural blacks and tended to see racial progress in terms of individual improvement and self help. Like Booker T. Washington, they could be justly termed black Carnegies who prescribed the old virtues of hard work, thrift, and frugality for all the ills afflicting the race.

Moral panaceas, however, offered little consolation to the poor black
cotton farmers of the nation. Overproduction had led to a drop in the price of cotton from 29 cents per pound in 1870 to 7 cents in 1894. By the late 1880's and early 1890's the distressed black farmers of the South and West had formed local agrarian alliances and cooperatives in an effort to combat slumping prices. Such activity did not escape the notice of a Black Press that lionized any successful black enterprise as a vehicle for racial uplift. The Savannah Tribune on September 7, 1889 proudly announced that a local Colored Farmers' Alliance would “open a general merchandizing store.” This was “a step in the right direction, and should be followed by our people all over the state.” The Tribune clearly considered such enterprises non-political, describing the South Carolina Colored Alliance as “a strictly non-political organization” designed to help black farmers “educate themselves and [their] children, and improve themselves in agricultural pursuits” (May 11, 1889).

Northern black newspapers likewise reported the progress of the alliances. Thomas Fortune's New York Age on February 1, 1890 recognized that black farmers were “heartily” joining the alliances: “In one Congressional district of that State [Georgia] 123 lodges are reported with a few cooperative stores in running order.” The pages of H.C. Smith's Cleveland Gazette regularly contained references to the successes of newly formed black alliances. On July 18, 1891, the Gazette noted, for example, that the “colored Farmers' Alliance of South Carolina contemplates establishing a bank in Charleston with a capital of $100,000.”

Several months before the historic meeting at Ocala, Florida, it was becoming apparent that the black alliances were turning political. The New York Age concluded that the Farmers' Alliance was “going into politics with a vengeance” and was “sweeping the mossback Democratic party off its heels, and in the West it is beginning to make the Republican party tremble in its strongholds.” The Age quickly recognized that the movement was threatening its middle class Republican principles and branded the alliance as “a dangerous organization ... offensively Socialistic in most of its demands.” It pleaded with blacks everywhere “to be cautious of committing themselves to the support of the Farmers' Alliance and its revolutionary purposes and aims” (August 2, 1890).

By December, 1890 the issue was no longer in doubt. The union of white and black alliances had been effected, and a political program was adopted at Ocala, Florida. The convention elected a fifteen member executive board (five of whom were black) and urged that “equal facilities, educational, commercial and political be demanded for colored and white Alliancemen alike, competency considered, and that a free ballot and a fair count be insisted upon for colored and white alike by every true Allianceman in America.”

While the Black Press generally praised the remarkable declaration, it cautiously noted the limitations of the alliance. The Cleveland Gazette found the pronouncement “certainly encouraging” (December 27, 1890). Though The New York Age wondered if “we are treading upon the heels of the political millenium,” it was less than wholehearted in its praise of the alliance: “As to the platform of the Farmers’ Alliance, that is, from our point of view, an entirely different thing” (December 13, 1890). According to the Age it was “at variance with our theory of government and calculated to create infinite confusion if not disaster to our system of administration.” The reality of a radical union alarmed the black bourgeois of The New York Age. Even if the Alliance could “break up the color line in the South,” this was not “by any means a sufficient reason for its continued existence” (March 14, 1891).
The Black Press hoped that as the Populists gained strength they would divide and destroy the Democratic party. The staunchly Republican Savannah Tribune on April 16, 1892 cried "BRAVO! Third Party go right ahead and cut a terrible path in the Democratic ranks." It welcomed the Georgia Congressional candidacy of national Populist leader Tom Watson in 1892 as a means of defeating the hated Bourbons. The paper urged that Republicans be nominated in all Georgia Congressional districts except Tom Watson's tenth district. A Republican nomination there would result in the "election of a Democratic candidate, and the crushing out of the spirit of revolt against the iron rule of Bourbon Democracy" (February 13, and June 4, 1892). The Georgia newspaper endorsed the Populist leader as the lesser of two evils: "While we are hardly in favor of the principle he represents yet his party in its platform protests against lynching while the party of his opponent says not a word about it" (October 29, 1892).

On July 12, 1890 The New York Age advocated a policy similar to the Tribune's and agreed with black Populists in South Carolina who supported Populist Ben Tillman's efforts to take over the Democratic party: "The significance," surmised the paper, "is discoverable in the fact that the Afro-Americans of South Carolina would support OLD NICK, if there was a prospect that by doing so they could defeat, or assist in defeating the outrageous combination of scamps that now dominate the affairs of the State." One month later the Age termed Tillman's victory "a great day in South Carolina for progressive politics when the Democratic party goes to smash, however vile the party is which takes its place" (August 23, 1890).

Not all black newspapers saw the Populists merely as a means of dividing the Democratic party. Several envisioned a fusion between the Populists and Republicans. The Cleveland Gazette praised the "fusionists" of North Carolina who adjourned the Legislature in honor of Frederick Douglass's death (March 2, 1895). Moreover, The Savannah Tribune, as late as October 5, 1892 speculated that "Should the pops unite with all the forces opposed to the democratic rule there is a reasonable chance to overthrow the democratic party." But the Populists shattered all such designs for fusion. "Tom Watson the pop's leader," complained the Tribune, "says he would rather lose an arm than fuse" (October 24, 1896).

Although the Black Press entertained faint hopes from 1890 to 1896 that the Populists might split the Democratic party, it was predominantly hostile to the agrarian reformers. The Northern press considered the Populists crypto-Democrats whose existence threatened the hegemony of the party of Lincoln. According to the correspondent of The New York Age, the Farmers' Alliances were "virtually instruments of industrial slavery to the Afro-American labor of the South" (January 11, 1890). The Cleveland Gazette warned blacks that the alliances were "really democratic auxiliaries" (March 28, 1891). The same newspaper, moreover, rejoiced in Tom Watson's defeat in 1892: "WHO IS TOM WATSON? Why, he was the people's party candidate down in Georgia for Congress. He was swamped. The democrats carried the day... We are not at all sorry" (October 15, 1892). The Washington Bee, the most partisan weekly of the day, reminded Populists in 1892 that their "own leaders admit that a vote for them necessarily operates as an aid to Cleveland" (November 5, 1892).

Hostility towards the Populists was even more intense in the Georgia and Kansas newspapers. The Savannah Tribune endorsed a Democratic candidate for governor who had once accused the Populists of threatening to bring about the black domination of Georgia. "The populists," charged the Tribune, "are greater enemies to the republicans and colored organization"
than any other organization. The democrats are manly and make a square and open fight on our party. The populists are an insidious enemy, whispering kind words in the dark as it were and cutting our throats in daylight” (September 19, 1896 and February 13, 1892). The Historic Times of Lawrence, Kansas, argued that there “is not a man on the People’s ticket that the Negro can conscientiously vote for . . . [The] Alliance and the Democratic parties are the standing enemies of progress, equality and intelligence” (October 3, 1891). In an article “The Alliance Tottering” a Times writer dismissed the Populist program as utopian and dangerous: “Oh, yes, they would build a mill at Washington with a spout long enough to reach every farmer in the land and with crank and jubilation proceed to fill troughs of the needy. This is beautiful but it is dangerous—yes a very visionary dream that has slept in the soft repose of the Orienti Nihilisti. Industry, honesty and liberty are the inveterate laws of every true American patriot” (October 17, 1896).

In a similar attack on Populist programs, the Southern Argus of Fort Scott, Kansas, claimed that the sub-treasury scheme “has proved itself to be an eating cancer in the abdominal regions of the Alliance platform, which if cut out will cause the death of the patient” (September 17, 1891). One week later the Argus asked “Aren’t those Negroes who are going off with the Alliance party cutting off their noses to spite their faces?” The same Kansas newspaper gloated over the defeat of a black Populist candidate for state auditor who had allegedly accepted an appointment as a spittoon cleaner in the Legislature after his defeat: “Brother Foster you remember that the publisher of this paper told you . . . that your party would treat you thus. Why, Foster, there are bootblacks on the streets of Topeka who would have refused the position. They worked you all during the campaign on promises and have paid you off in cigar stumps and saliva” (January 14, 1892). The People’s Friend of Witchita shared the same sentiments and caustically informed its readers in 1894 that the Populists “despitefully hate the [N]egro that they cannot use. The Republicans are the fairest party of the three” (July 13, 1894).

Perhaps the most blistering attack on the black Populists may be found in the black National Baptist World of Wichita, Kansas. It is especially significant because the writer equated the existing political structure with Christianity and the agrarian radicals with the devil. In a three column letter to the Editor on September 14, 1894, Reverend T.J. Jordan asked how blacks could shun the Republican party which “for thirty-five years has stood up [against] . . . disfranchising us in the southern states.” The distraught preacher was convinced that such blacks were being led astray by the Populists who promised them everything “like the devil did when he took Christ up on the mountain and showed him all the kingdoms and glories of the world, and told him if he would fall down and worship him [the Devil] would give him all these, when in fact the devil had nothing to give.” Jordan denounced black Populists as “false prophets . . . going around in sheep’s clothing . . . getting as many of you away from your allegiance to your first love [Republican party].” The minister prayed “that no negro in this country will be led astray and cast his political lot with a party [Populists] . . . allied with a party [Democrats] that has always been the enemy of the colored man.”

Only one black newspaper thoroughly challenged the existing political and economic structure of the country by wholeheartedly endorsing the Populists. The single remaining copy of the short-lived Populist Kansas Headlight is noteworthy and unique because it appealed to class solidarity
rather than race: "The people's independent party is the antimonopoly party. The old parties are the legislative tools of the monopolies" (September 14, 1894). In fact, it is difficult to differentiate between the Headlight and typical white Populist campaign literature.

By 1896 the Black Press was unanimous in its condemnation of the Populists. The "popocratic" Bryan was anathema to all black newspapers who promptly endorsed William A. McKinley for President. The Savannah Tribune supported the Republican ticket, remarking that "Jaw [Bryan] has never succeeded in winning the Presidential chair" (July 18, 1896). The Washington Bee, dismissing Tom Watson as "a troublesome individual," assured its readers that McKinley would "make a safe, sound President upon whom black and white may rely for an old time, rock-ribbed, dyed in the wool Republican administration" (October 31, 1896 and August 17, 1895). In May 1894, The Cleveland Gazette was already urging McKinley's candidacy. It went great lengths in defending Governor McKinley's failure to act when local racists lynched a black: "Ohio is not like ... some of the southern states that have laws and customs which enable their Governor to go into counties and interfere with county rule ... that power ... is not lodged with Ohio's executive." In the Gazette's opinion, "the Afro-American of this and every other state in the union has no warmer, truer, or better friend among the best minds of the United States than Gov. McKinley" (May 19, 1894).

In the last analysis, then, the Black Press remained loyal to the Republican party. The Historic Times most succinctly and accurately reflected its frame of mind: "All organizations outside the republican party, like tributaries of the Mississippi River, lead into the Democratic party" (October 17, 1891). Petit bourgeois in outlook, it felt threatened by the Populists' attack on America's economic and political system. Its response raises several significant questions about black leadership. The frequent hostility of the Black Press toward Populism suggested that the radical movement was somewhat successful in fostering a genuine grass roots revolt among thousands of black Americans. Indeed, fully one third of the Populist leadership at Ocala, Florida, was black, yet most histories of America do not adequately discuss their activities. No doubt the Populist leaders were as representative of the black masses as the black editors and newspapers.

Other serious issues concerning the nature of black leadership must be considered. Black editors were intellectuals, precisely the group most needed to give intellectual foundation to a social revolution. Yet none of them acknowledged that, since most blacks were poor, a successful struggle for equality necessarily had to take on a class nature. Perhaps the blacks' drive for equality was, and still is, crippled because white America is liberal enough to accept middle class oriented black leaders into its ranks, while destroying or ignoring all those unconventional black leaders who truly represent the class aspirations of most blacks. Sharing the dominant middle class values of the white man, these middle class black leaders were, and perhaps still are, unable to discern any alternative outside the political and economic status-quo. This was undeniably the case with the Black Press in the 1890's. Because of its petit bourgeois outlook, it did not provide the intellectual leadership necessary to bring about a true revolution in race relations.
NOTES

1 The Nation, New York, XXIV (1877), 241.
4 The Cleveland Gazette, December 27, 1890.
Was it Igor Stravinsky again?

Elsie W. Strother
Notes on Contributors

Josephine Chandler, Professor Emeritus of English, received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in 1935 and taught at San José State University from 1936–65. She spends her time in retirement studying art history and puzzling over literary problems.

Leon C. Dorosz's career includes periods as a psychological intern at the Maryland State Penitentiary and as a school psychologist in Champaign, Illinois and Hayward, California. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, he joined the Biological Sciences faculty at San José State University.

Edmund L. Drago, a lecturer in history at San José State University and a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Berkeley, has previously published an article on Sherman's march through Georgia in The Georgia Historical Quarterly.

Robert C. Gordon, Professor of English (and not at all splenetic), received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1952. With publications about Scottish and English literature too numerous to list, he points proudly to his amateur status as photographer and musician.

Charles B. Paul, unsplenetic translator and dedicated gourmet, emigrated from Western Europe to the United States in 1946. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, he joined the Humanities faculty of San Jose State University, where he is now an Associate Professor.

Nils Peterson, who began his career as a radial drill press operator (drilling fire hydrants, not snails), is currently an Associate Professor of English at San Jose State University teaching creative writing and Shakespeare. His stories have been published in Fantasy and Science Fiction and his poetry in numerous journals ranging from the Midwest Quarterly to Satire Newsletter.

Fauneil J. Rinn, Professor of Political Science, began her career as a reporter on the Watertown Daily Times in New York. Her M.S. in journalism from Columbia University, her Ph.D. in political science from the University of Chicago, and her job as Associate Dean of the School of Social Sciences encourage her to contemplate the significance of a bad press.

Frederick J. Down Scott, Professor of Philosophy, received his Ph.D. from Georgetown University. Before joining the San José State faculty, he taught at Scranton University, Loyola College of Baltimore, and Sacramento State College. Since his publications totaled seventeen at last count, the editors of SJS choose not to list them.
Robert Burdette Sweet has published more than twenty short stories in addition to his poetry, drama, and literary criticism. His nationwide recognition includes a listing in Martha Foley's volume of *Best American Short Stories*, an award in 1967 from the Drama Club of Evanston, Illinois for the "Best Original Play," and a third place award in 1969 from the American Academy of Poets. An Associate Professor of English at San José State University, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Denver.

David Van Becker, the media specialist of San José State University's English Department, edits the Radio BIT project. In 1962 he supervised an elementary composition program series on KQED-TV under a Ford Foundation Grant, and in 1962–64 he developed an instructional TV course in Remedial English at San José State University.

Sybil Weir, Associate Professor of English, has enjoyed a checkered career as secretary, personnel trainee at Gilchrist's Department Store, and vocational counselor at UC, Berkeley. After receiving her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, she settled down to study women writers and women characters in the American novel from 1860 to 1920—assisted by a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities from 1973 to 1974.

Clinton Williams, Professor Emeritus of English and Humanities, retired in June 1974 after twenty-nine years of teaching at San José State University. His newly discovered leisure permits him to sit by his California pool meditating in heroic couplets about modern life.
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