San José Studies, Spring 1984

San José State University Foundation

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/sanjosestudies_80s

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/sanjosestudies_80s/14

This Journal is brought to you for free and open access by the San José Studies at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in San José Studies, 1980s by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.
ARTICLES

America's Rising Sun: The Humanities and Arts in the Framing of Constitutional Liberty
Thomas Wendel ........................................ 4

Knowledge, Compassion and Involvement
James M. Freeman ..................................... 15

Fanshen, Western Drama, And David Hare's Oeuvre
Bert Cardullo ........................................ 31

Our Lady Correspondent: The Achievement of Elizabeth Drew Stoddard
Sybil B. Weir ........................................... 73

Santa Clara County Voters' Attitudes on Land-Use
Lawrence G. Brewster ............................... 92

POETRY

James Sutherland-Smith
The Spectre of the Rose .............................. 43
The Age of Reason .................................... 44
Clouds Blown Away ................................... 45
Vienna Night .......................................... 46

FICTION

Overcome
Charles Clerc ......................................... 51
The Bill Casey Award

The Bill Casey Memorial Fund annually awards $100.00 to the author of the best article, story, or poem appearing in each volume of *San Jose Studies*. Friends and relatives of Bill Casey, a faculty member at San Jose State University from 1962 to 1966, established the fund at his death to encourage creative writing and scholarship. The recipient of each award is selected by the Committee of Trustees of *San Jose Studies*.

The Bill Casey Award in Letters for 1983

has been presented to

**David Citino**

for his poems

"Sister Mary Appassionata Lectures the Eighth Grade Boys and Girls on the Nature of Symmetry"

"Sister Mary Appassionata's Lecture to the Eighth Grade Girls and Boys: The Song of Bathsheba"

"Sister Mary Appassionata Lectures the Pre-Med Class"

"Mother Ann Lee Preaches to the Shakers from her Death Bed, Niskeyuna, New York, 1784"

The Committee of Trustees also awarded a one year subscription to *San Jose Studies* to the author of the best work (exclusive of the Bill Casey award) published in the categories of (1) poetry, (2) fiction, and (3) articles. The 1983 recipients of these awards are:

**Poetry**

Hank Lazer, whose poetry appeared in the Fall, 1983 issue.

**Fiction**


**Essay**

ARTICLES

America's Rising Sun:
The Humanities and Arts in the Framing of Constitutional Liberty

Thomas Wendel

*These remarks were delivered at a dinner, in San Jose, honoring William Bennett, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities. San Jose State hosted a conference on the Constitution, May 1-3, 1984, which was funded by NEH.
It is an honor to have been asked to be tonight's speaker on the occasion of the opening ceremonies marking the bicentennial of the Constitution. It seems not inappropriate, particularly considering that the National Endowment for the Humanities is sponsoring this excellent conference, that we turn to the status of the humanities and arts at the time of the writing and the ratification of the Constitution. I do realize that administratively the arts and humanities endowments are two separate entities. But we are dealing during this conference with a period less given than ours to the compartmentalization of knowledge. The founding generation's concept of education, rooted as it was in the classical tradition, encompassed the arts within the broad rubric of humanistic learning. In the words of historian Joseph Ellis, the eighteenth century viewed "a flourishing high culture as but one manifestation of social health. . . . Politics, the arts, economic development, and demography were not separate spheres of human activity but interlaced strands comprising the social fabric." Or as stated in the widely disseminated credo of Chairman Bennett,

I hold to the view that the humanities provide us with an indispensable framework for the civilized development of public policy. . . . They do so less by attacking current issues than by developing an intellectual, moral, and imaginative framework for thought and action.
Let us then test the NEH assertion that the humanities in the sense in which the eighteenth century would have understood the concept lend a broader vision to the shaping of intelligent responses in personal and public life—a vision surely informing Philadelphia's State House in the summer of 1787.

First, then, what was the status of the humanities and arts in America during the constitutional period. A review of American achievements through the turn of the 1790's reveals that as the United States attained political maturity as signified by the Constitution, so also in history, in drama, in music, in theater, in art, in poetry, the country was attaining a corresponding maturity. I think that this is an exceedingly striking fact, and one too often neglected. One wonders, indeed, if political maturatation is at all possible without a concomitant intellectual development.

The year 1787 alone was remarkable, not only for what was accomplished that hot summer in Philadelphia. First, this year saw the premier of Royal Tyler's drama, The Contrast, called by Kenneth Silverman in Cultural History of the American Revolution, "the first significant realistic comedy of American life." Tyler's play focuses on the archetypal country bumpkin who attends the theater and thinks when the curtain opens that he is looking in on real people sitting next door in their living room. Tyler wrote, says Silverman, "on the profound new assumption that there now existed a country substantial enough to withstand laughter."

Tyler's accomplishment was not isolated. Rather, it heralded the beginning of an American theatrical tradition. In 1788 there appeared William Dunlap's first successful play. Dunlap, the author of sixty-five plays during a forty-year career and founder of the National Academy of Design, emulated Tyler's comedic treatment of distinctively American types.

Tyler's The Contrast was premiered in April—only one month before the start of the Convention. Charles Wilson Peale opened his natural history museum, that "curious and immensely optimistic effort to weld [together] science, art, and patriotism," in Philadelphia during the sitting of the Convention. Washington and other members visited this remarkable collection. Ever the entrepreneur, Peale used one of these occasions to paint yet another portrait of the General.

More importantly, Joel Barlow published his epic poem, The Vision of Columbus (several years later to be republished as The Columbiad) one week before the May 25 opening of the Great Convention. (Though Congress had set May 14 for the opening, belated delegates delayed a quorum for eleven days.) Subscribers to this first American effort in the epic genre included Louis XVI, Lafayette and Washington. In Professor Silverman's critical opinion, The Vision . . . is "the most serious American poem of the eighteenth century."

The constitutional period was rich in cultural achievement. The year 1788 saw what has been called the first landscape painting by an
American. The American was the problematic artist Ralph Earl, who produced his landscapes after his release from jail—he had good lawyers including Alexander Hamilton for whom he did family portraits in payment of legal fees.

In 1789 appeared William Hill Brown's *Power of Sympathy*, the first American novel. It is written in epistolary form after Richardson, whom Brown emulated. Again, as in the case of Tyler, Brown's work stands at the threshold of an American novelistic tradition. Some of Brown's themes will be echoed from Melville to Faulkner. More immediately, Brown was followed by Hugh Henry Brackenridge, whose *Modern Chivalry*, published in 1792, marks the beginning—in the words of Russel Nye—of "an authentic American satiric tradition." More widely read was Susanah Rowson's Richardsonesque 1794 novel *Charlotte Temple*, whose eponymous heroine, like the ill-fated Pamela, stayed a mere two sentences ahead of her would-be seducer through several hundred pages of turgid prose. Charlotte was pursued, I should add, through some one-hundred nineteenth century editions.

Perhaps most fitting of all, 1787 saw the publication of the first American history textbook. Its publisher was the little known Scottish immigrant John McColloch. In the next year, Jedidiah Morse published his *American Geography*. And the years 1786 and 1788 saw the first two editions of the work of "the first major American poet," Philip Freneau, who incidentally was a College-of-New Jersey (later Princeton) classmate of Hugh Brackenridge and James Madison. Also in the amazing year of 1787 appeared the first American art songs—composed by the patriot Francis Hopkinson, dedicated to George Washington, and entitled "Seven Songs for the Harpsichord or Forte Piano." The *Philadelphia Gazette* hailed it as "the first work of its kind attempted in the United States."

Hopkinson's compositions—and his treatise on the harpsichord—indicate a rising musical culture in constitutional America. It was in 1789, for example, that Charles Albrecht of Philadelphia began his twenty-year career making the finest American pianos of the period. He would do much to correct the situation of that year when twenty-seven Boston families owned pianos—all made in London. Nor would the picture be complete without a reminder that it was in 1786 that John Jacob Astor started in business, selling pianofortes, spinets, violins, hauboys—and as his ad read, "every other article in the musical line." Fur and real estate were not in the musical line, but he seems to have found them more interesting.

For some people America's musical renaissance may have seemed a bit much. Virginia's Landon Carter complained that in Williamsburg there sounded from every house, "a constant tutting." His friend John Blair, a signer of the Constitution, was evidently one of the toot-ers. He frequently gathered at his home a compatible group of friends to make music using...
spinet, harpsichord, violin, and flute. Blair, of course, was one of the ornaments of Virginia society: he was a grand nephew of James Blair, who had founded and was first president of William and Mary College. Following his service in the Convention, the musical Blair served seven years as associate justice on the first supreme court.

What of the involvement in the humanities and arts of other signers of the Constitution? Let us begin with William Livingston, an unjustly neglected founding father. The literary historian Moses Coit Tyler sums him up as “a considerable student of books, a poet, an orator, an essayist, a satirist,” who carried against the English “a most vivacious literary warfare—bombarding them through the newspapers with intermittent showers of shot and shell in the form of arguments, anathemas, jokes, and jeers.” Livingston reached fame in America and England with his 1747 pastoral, “Philosophical Solitude, or the Choice of a Rural Life.” The work went through thirteen editions to 1790, though today his newspaper, the Independent Reflector, is considered his most important literary-political legacy.

While we are in the New York-New Jersey area (though Livingston was native to New York, he served as New Jersey’s first governor from 1776 until his death in 1790) let us take a look at signer Alexander Hamilton. We all know of his legal and financial talents, but we should also be aware that Hamilton was a weekend painter; he advised Martha Washington on her purchases of art. He collected copper and wood engravings including one by Durer. His large library, according to one of his biographers, “ranged from philosophy and history to novels. It included Pliny, Socrates, Cicero, Plutarch, Chesterfield, Montaigne, Stern, Diderot, Moliere, and Voltaire.” As late as 1794 he was studying French with a tutor, and he was an early patron of the New York Public Library. Admitting that he “always had a strong propensity to literary pursuits,” Hamilton as a young man actually tried his hand at poetry. What follows is a sample of his work.

Content we tend our flocks by day,  
When from the field we haste away  
And at the sun’s retiring ray  
Prepare for new delight.  
We fondly sport and fondly play  
And love away the night.

In order to spare you any further Hamiltonian poetics, let us now turn to the South, where according to the authority of historian Richard Beale Davis, who has spent a lifetime studying the subject, there was from 1720-1789 “as high a proportion of well-educated men as existed anywhere in the colonies—a creativity in belles lettres, and a dynamic and reasoned political expression springing from scores of sophisticated minds—”
making up “an intellectual golden age.” Such an assertion supports and explains the emergence of such men as Jefferson, Madison, Mason and the others, who, Davis insists, were not exceptions—but rather a culmination. “Without the sustained intellectual exercise of these mid-eighteenth century planters, merchants, and professional men,” Davis writes, “the colonies would not have been ready for the leadership they exercised nationally in the revolutionary era.”

In this connection, then, what of the father of the Constitution? James Madison, who according to Georgia delegate William Pierce “blends the profound politician with the scholar,” was a man wholly immersed in humanistic studies. His essay, “Of Ancient and Modern Confederacies,” shows intimate familiarity with Plutarch, Demosthenes, Polybius. The essay outlines the structure and history of the Lycian, Amphictyonic, Achaean Leagues; the Holy Roman Empire, the Swiss Confederacy and the United Provinces of the Netherlands. “The past,” Madison wrote, “should enlighten us on the future; knowledge of history is no more than anticipated experience. . . .” Madison, therefore, was a staunch supporter of the idea of a national university, both within the Convention and later as a member of the House of Representatives and as President. Such an institution, Madison informed Congress, would be

A nursery of enlightened preceptors, and a central resort of growth and genius from every part of their country—diffusing . . . those liberal sentiments, and those congenial manners which contribute cement to our union and strength to the great political fabric of which that is the foundation.

I should add here that James Madison is particularly singled out by Mr. Bennett in his statement to which I have already alluded. “Consider such great American leaders,” he writes,

as James Madison in the eighteenth century, Abraham Lincoln in the nineteenth and Martin Luther King, Jr. in our own time. They were not students of public policy, but of the humanities—of religion, literature, philosophy, history, and the classics. These men were steeped in a tradition of literature, political thought and religious metaphor. . . . In conformity to this tradition, Madison believed that ‘learned institutions ought to be favorite objects with every free people’ and that our ‘political institutions should be as favorable to the intellectual and moral improvement of man, as they are conformable to his individual and social rights.’

Signer Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina would have agreed. Schooled in England, Pinckney was a founding member of the
Board of Trustees of South Carolina College—later the University of South Carolina—and in 1786 he was named president of the Charleston Library Society. According to his biographer, Pinckney accepted the position not for prestige, but because “he loved books.” Pinckney was “convinced that a store of knowledge is useful to the entire community.” Of South Carolina’s other Pinckney, Charles, who at age twenty-four was the youngest delegate, William Pierce wrote that “government, law, history, and philosophy are his favorite studies, but he is intimately acquainted with every species of polite learning. . . .”

Let us leave the South for a moment and turn back up north to New England: to Connecticut, signer William Samuel Johnson’s home state. William was the son of the first president of King’s—later Columbia—College. A profound scholar and jurist, he was Connecticut’s London agent before the Revolution, after which he followed in his father’s footsteps becoming president of Columbia, 1787-1800.

Massachusetts was powerfully and eloquently represented by Rufus King—according to Pierce, “one of the luminaries of the present age,”—whose later career took him to New York. Here he was trustee of Columbia for eighteen years. He was a charter member of the Academy of Fine Arts and a founder of the New York Historical Society. King possessed nearly six-hundred works of history; he considered Gibbon among the immortals. Lewis Hallam of the theatrical Old American Company called King, “our gracious patron.” He is, said Hallam, “one of the most liberal minds of the western world.”

In this connection I trust you will not deny me one small anecdotal footnote. In 1800 King asked the young John Quincy Adams’s advice on European universities for his son. Adams showed himself a chip off the old block. “Göttingen is best,” he said,

but the wild and mischievous doctrines, religious and political, which have produced such pestilential effects in Europe, are said to flourish there with the rankest luxuriance.

At Göttingen, Adams continued,

most of the professors were Jacobins in political doctrines and at the utmost, deists in religion. They were disciples of a certain Professor Kant of Konisburg, who passes for a prodigy of metaphysical depth because he writes a jargon that no human being can understand.

It goes without saying that young King did not go to Göttingen, where he would be corrupted by such as the wild-eyed Professor Kant.

As for the middle states, I have already mentioned several of the signers from New York and New Jersey and should have mentioned the
learned John Dickinson of Delaware. But of the thirty-nine men who
signed the Constitution, eight of them came from the state of
Pennsylvania, a truly remarkable group including the two unrelated
Morrises, Robert and Gouverneur, Jared Ingersoll, Thomas Mifflin, and
the learned George Clymer, who was first president of the Academy of
Fine Arts, a vice-president of the American Philosophical Society, vice-
president of the Philadelphia Agricultural Society and a lifelong lover
and supporter of music. Leading the Pennsylvania delegation was, in
William Pierce’s words, “the greatest philosopher of the present age,”
Benjamin Franklin, whose last speech to the Convention was considered
the literary gem of the proceedings. Also there was James Wilson, who
like Madison would have given to Congress the delegated power of
erecting a national university. “To protect the labor of the intellect,” said
Wilson, “is the noblest prerogative of government.” The care of educa-
tion, Wilson continued, “was of particular importance in countries that
are free.” Although no such provision was entered, it is interesting to note
in passing that every president to Jackson asked Congress to establish
such a university, a project that from the beginning foundered on the
shoals of strict construction.

And finally what of the president of the Convention? Washington, as
one writer put it, was evidently willing to become the American
Maecenas. “Every effort of genius,” Washington wrote, “and all attempts
to improve useful knowledge ought to meet with encouragement in this
country.” His love of the theater is of course well-known; indeed, he
attended several performances of the Old American Company during
the long Convention summer. It was perfectly natural to Washington in
accepting the Convention’s chair to use a theatrical metaphor. As
reported in Madison’s notes,

George Washington was accordingly unanimously elected by
ballot and conducted to the chair by Mr. R. Morris and Mr.
Rutledge; from which in a very emphatic manner he thanked
the Convention for the honor they had conferred on him,
reminded them of the novelty of the scene of business in
which he was to act and claimed the indulgence of the house.

The scene was thereby set for one of the great debates of history, a
debate we can follow in Max Farrand’s four-volume Records of the Federal
Convention. Though much of this text is made-up of dry roll calls and
argumentation concerning a myriad of small details, a perusal of the
volumes is a richly rewarding experience. Interspersed throughout are
examples of the ripe wisdom, the wit, the profundity of these well-honed
minds.

“Experience,” John Dickinson informed the Convention, “must be our
only guide.” The members’ frequent allusions to historical precedence
indicate general agreement with this principle. Though Madison drew most tellingly on his vast knowledge of the history of past confederacies (at one point he "reviewed the Amphyction and Achaean Confederacies among the ancients, and the Helvetic, Germanic, Belgic among the moderns. . . "). He was not alone. Hamilton displayed almost equal erudition in drawing upon "the experience of ancient and modern confederacies" to prove the necessity of strong centralized power. James Wilson, in opposing Hamilton, pointed out that "in all extensive empires a subdivision of power is necessary. Persia, Turkey, and Rome, under its emperors, are examples in point. . . . Alfred the Great, that wise legislator, made this gradation. . . ." And in arguing for impeachment, Gouverneur Morris reminded the Convention that Charles II was bribed by Louis XIV, an impeachable offence. Our magistrate, Morris continued, is not "the king but the prime-minister. The people are king." Of course not all people were king. "If slavery be wrong," warned Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, "it is justified by the example of the world." Citing "Greece, Rome & other ancient states," Pinckney concluded that "in all ages one half of mankind have been slaves."

But if the members followed Dickinson's admonition regarding "experience," they also frequently fell back on philosophy and reason to buttress their positions. Hamilton's notes, in support of a strong executive, allude to Aristotle, Cicero, Montesquieu. Montesquieu, in fact, is frequently cited by various of the members. For Hamilton it was a self-evident truth that mankind "are vicious—their passions may be operated upon. . . . One great error," Hamilton reasoned, "is that we suppose mankind more honest than they are." For Gouverneur Morris on the other hand, "the love of fame is the great spring to noble and illustrious actions. Shut the civil road to glory," Morris warned his colleagues, "and the ambitious man may be compelled to seek it by the sword." At another time, on the question of the property qualification for office holding, Morris utilized both reason and experience: "Wealth tends to corrupt the mind and to nourish its love of power. . . . History proves this to be the spirit of the opulent." Franklin, according to Madison's notes, recalled from his own experience that "some of the greatest rogues he was ever acquainted with, were the richest rogues." Franklin would do nothing "that tended to debase the spirit of the common people."

Franklin, in fact, had the last word. According to Madison's notes, when the Constitution was finally drafted and, whilst the last members were signing it, Doct. Franklin looking towards the President's chair, at the back of which a rising sun happened to be painted, observed to a few members near him, that painters had found it difficult to distinguish in their art a rising from a setting sun. I have, said
he, often and often in the course of the session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue looked at that behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting: but now at length I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun.

In the light of American accomplishments in the humanities and arts in the period of the Constitution, we must think that in this famous remark Franklin had more in mind than "the more perfect union" hammered out by his and his colleagues' labors. Thirty years earlier, Franklin's fellow philomath Nathaniel Ames had written in his widely read New England Almanac for 1758 that,

The curious have observ'd that the progress of humane literature (like the sun) is from the East to the West; thus it has travelled thro' Asia and Europe, and now is at the eastern shore of America... So arts and sciences will change the face of nature in their tour from hence over the Appalachian Mountains to the western ocean.

Ames was here giving voice to a notion particularly popular in the latter half of the eighteenth century. It is an idea whose roots lie in ancient Greece and Rome and was echoed by historians during the Renaissance. It stimulated English colonization, and when it combined with the heady notion of republican virtue, it contributed to the rise of a distinctively American nationalism. When Franklin himself wrote that "the arts delight to travel westward," he was uttering what had then become a commonplace.

But it was Ames, who at the beginning of the revolutionary period gave the idea its most poetic expression. It is as if he were directly addressing us here tonight as we prepare to celebrate the bicentennial of the document that brought his vision to fruition:

O! Ye unborn inhabitants of America! Should this page escape its destin'd conflagration at the year's end—when your eyes behold the sun after he has rolled the seasons round for two or three centuries more, you will know that in anno domini 1758 we dream'd of your times.

America's rising sun was then the symbol not only of a new political system, but of a new civilization for which the Constitution laid a firm foundation as a means to the end of a richer and more humane society.
Knowledge, Compassion, and Involvement

James M. Freeman

INTRODUCTION

WHEN President Fullerton informed me that I had been selected to give this year’s address, I asked my wife Patricia what she thought might be a good title. I told her that I wanted to talk about my earlier work with Untouchables in India, as well as current activities, such as books on the Vietnamese and projects with the Lao Iu Mien people. Patricia replied, “How about, ‘Excess is never enough.’”

My father, Eugene Freeman, an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at SJSU, had just read an article I had done on the life of a Vietnamese Buddhist nun or ni su. He remembered that the ni su had discussed the importance of knowledge, compassion, and involvement as guiding principles in one’s life; he suggested that those words might be appropriate to my work too. I agree, as I hope this essay will reveal.

I plan to discuss three major projects with which I have been involved that I think reveal an evolutionary development. I began as an India specialist trained in traditional academic subjects. I have become a scholar who emphasizes community service as an integral part of his research. My focus in this talk is not on the content or conclusions of these studies, but on the research style they represent.

*A version of this essay was delivered as the President’s Annual Scholar’s Address, May 1984.
As a graduate student in Anthropology at Harvard in the late 1950s and early 1960s, I was taught that the aim of research was the development of an objective and universal social science. But when I went to India and lived in and did research in a Hindu temple village for three-and-a-half years, I found that my teachers had not adequately prepared me for the moral and human confrontations that I faced. Most of us were expected to deal with issues of modernization, such as whether the joint family was disintegrating, or religion was secularizing. But I found that these issues could not be separated from some basic concerns of human rights which my professors had largely ignored. They were not unaware of these issues; my generation was hardly the first to discover moral dilemmas. Indeed, my two mentors, Clyde Kluckhohn and Cora Du Bois, had written or spoken eloquently and frequently about moral issues. But, significantly, they tended to separate their personal moral concerns from their professional anthropological inquiries.

When I began to work with Untouchables in India, I found that this separation could not be maintained: issues of human rights were central to the subject I was studying: the concept of "Untouchable" was not morally neutral.

Untouchables are people stigmatized and despised from birth as the lowest persons in their society. Usually they are landless and desperately poor; often they go hungry. They are forced to do the most menial and the most disgusting jobs in their society: hard farm labor, carrying off dead animals, disposing of garbage and human excrement. They are subject to pervasive economic and sexual exploitation.

Since 1950, the Constitution of India has outlawed discrimination against Untouchables, but in practice, widespread discrimination persists, especially in villages. In the past, the attempts at protest by Untouchables were few because of their justifiable fears of retaliatory object-lesson violence—being burned alive, having their eyes gouged out or their hands cut off, being raped, and having their houses levelled. The last occurred in the village in which I lived. In the past several years, the number of reported atrocities against Untouchables has increased to well over 10,000 a year.

While this was going on, most social scientists were writing forgettable tracts about status-emulation among Untouchables, or about how happy Untouchables were, and how they accepted the system of degradation that prevented them from improving their lives. There was an enormous literature on Untouchables, but the people themselves were largely lost in the abstractions of social scientists, which were, to use Herbert Bradley's words, like "the dance of an unearthly ballet of bloodless categories." I realized that in a population of over one hundred million
persons, despite all that had been written, there were virtually no personal accounts by Untouchables, expressing their views in their own words and in their own terms. There was absolutely nothing about the personal experiences of the vast majority of Untouchables who are illiterate.

I set about, therefore, to collect and publish a life-history of an illiterate Untouchable. Furthermore, the way I presented the case for Untouchables was deliberate. Although I was invited and did attend protest meetings of Untouchables, I did not lead Untouchables in protest. I realized that they would be subject to retaliation, particularly after I left. Furthermore, my protesting would not have changed basic relationships, especially the unequal distribution of power, land, other wealth, and opportunities, of which the Untouchables had none.

I thought that what would make a maximum impact was not my words, since I was an outsider, but those of an Untouchable himself. In preparing the book *Untouchable: An Indian Life History* (Stanford University Press, 1979) my aim was to convey one compelling theme: what invidious injustice can do to people, how it affects their outlook, and the cost, in psychological and social terms, of this injustice. I wrote the book neither for my scholarly peers, nor for a popular audience. Rather, I wrote it for posterity—so that, if we still do exist on this planet in the 21st century, people will have an authentic account of what it was like to be an Untouchable. In other words, this humanistic account was prepared in order to encourage the recognition and understanding of alternative perspectives on reality, and to articulate the plight of previously "invisible" people.

Nevertheless, my studies in India led me to recognize problems that I have never been able to resolve satisfactorily. What is the appropriate role of a researcher in a foreign country that has graciously allowed him to live and conduct studies within its borders? India is not my country. What justification do I have to interfere or intervene in its internal affairs? What was I to do when my Hindu friends and neighbors told me during a time of turmoil that they were preparing to go slaughter all of the Muslims in a neighboring village? Or that they planned to hold a witchcraft trial against an exorcist magician and that they had invited me to be one of the witchcraft judges?

You might wonder what did happen. The Hindus did not slaughter the Muslims, but they did hold that trial, and they did find the magician guilty of witchcraft. In the first case, had the Hindus begun to march on the Muslim village, I would have informed the police. That would have effectively ended my research in that Hindu community, but there are more important things in life than research. In the second case, I declined to be a judge at the witchcraft trial. In my own view, the exorcist was definitely guilty. Although not by witchcraft, he did disrupt a firewalking ceremony in which ten out of fifteen firewalkers were burned, and he did deserve his
fine of 1000 rupees. Nevertheless, had I agreed to be a judge, I can imagine the headlines that would have appeared: "American Anthropologist Convicts Exorcist in Witchcraft Trial."

My studies in India taught me two things. First, that we are part of the subject we study. In asking an Untouchable to tell me the story of his life, I was not observing a pre-existing social reality. The Untouchable had no idea what a life story was, and certainly would not have narrated one had I not prompted it. I found that I was involved in the creation of a whole new body of data that previously did not exist. Such a life story is the joint production of two or more persons with the right combination of personalities, interests, and biases, who happen to come together at the right time and place for creating the life story. By its very nature, a life history involves the creation of the very data that are analyzed. The Untouchable's life history came into being, not as an integral or historical part of the Untouchable's culture, but because an American outsider provoked and guided its creation. It is both American and Indian: it translates an Untouchable's life into American idiom.

The study of life histories thus compelled me to question our conventional ideas about objectivity in the social sciences. Historically, our concerns with objectivity led investigators to attempt to minimize observer error. The assumption was that a social science could exist without an observer. In fact, what developed was simply a convention, a social science in which all participating investigators agreed where the observer should stand. This convention encouraged a particular genre of reporting, in which the investigator tried to minimize his presence, and thus "disturb" the subject as little as possible. For years, descriptions of events in anthropology and other social sciences often occurred as if the investigator were an invisible cloud hovering over an event.

This convention of reporting can be likened to the conventions of theater, where spectators and actors agree to accept the fiction that the action on stage occurs in a room with three walls, with the fourth wall removed, so that the audience, separated from the stage, can look in. As recent developments in theater show, changing the space between audience and participants changes the relationships between them and opens new possibilities that hitherto had gone unnoticed. Similarly, in my work, I am attempting to change the conventions of reporting by recognizing that as an observer I am not a disturbance to my subject of study, but rather an integral part of it.

Some two decades ago, the mathematician Karl Menger noted that instead of seeking parsimonious, reductionistic, or the simplest possible explanations for events, we must recognize that sometimes such a procedure renders our studies inadequate, that what we may require is an expansion rather than a contraction of complexity. My enlarged perception of the relationship between observer and subject exemplifies Menger's general principle.
The second thing I learned followed from the first. Not only my actions, but the moral implications of my research are inseparable from the research itself. Research does not occur in a vacuum; it occurs in a social and cultural environment. Both researchers and human subjects of study have values which I see not as external interferences but as central aspects of any research.

I now realize that I am not against intervention as such, but rather against it when I have little or no control over the outcomes of my direct actions, as in the case of the Untouchables. I prefer a more focused intervention, in which I see a possibility of accomplishing what I set out to do. My second and third projects exemplify more focused intervention approaches. Put in another way, I find in myself an increasing commitment to do research that is socially significant or which provides some tangible benefits for the communities that are the subjects of study.

THE VIETNAMESE LIFE-HISTORIES PROJECT

During the year of 1980-1981, I explored possibilities, met people in the Indo-Chinese communities, and consulted with specialists in the resettlement and training organizations that served these refugees. My concern was to find activities that fit my skills, that did not duplicate the work of others, but which met compelling needs that others had overlooked.

During that year, I met Huu Nguyen of the Department of Social Services of Santa Clara County. Our backgrounds were different but complementary. We had three things in common: a commitment to community service; a systemic outlook; a willingness to take chances, to try projects that had never been tackled before.

By the end of 1981, I had developed a long-term plan for a tightly integrated multidisciplinary teaching and research program involving Indo-Chinese refugees that simultaneously met four of my major concerns: to use my expertise to benefit the urban community in which I live; to enhance the education of students by enabling them to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-life situations in the community outside the university; to develop research projects that contribute significantly to humanistic knowledge and to our understanding of the varieties of the human experience; and to design projects that not only provide tangible benefits to the persons who are the subjects of study, but also involve their active participation so that eventually they can take over and maintain the projects.

I also began my own long-term life-histories project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which has involved Vietnamese refugees from all over the United States. In the past nine years, over 600,000 refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea (or Cambodia) have sought and been granted refuge in America; well over
200,000, reside in California. Many of them live in residential clusters in a few cities and towns, which gives them high visibility. In Santa Clara County, there are over 50,000 refugees, of whom probably 30,000-40,000 are Vietnamese (including Chinese-Vietnamese). Because of unrecorded secondary migrations to this area, we have no accurate records on the numbers of refugees who live here—only relatively plausible guesses.

Notwithstanding their number and their distinctive customs and activities, I found much about refugees remains invisible. Despite our long involvement in Indochina, most Americans neither understood nor appreciated the life-styles, values, and traditions of Indochinese cultures. In spite of the publication of dozens of popular works on the Vietnam war by authors variously described as "grunts," generals, peaceniks, and warmongers, these books contained virtually no understanding of Vietnamese cultural patterns and character. The informed writings of Westerners who are Vietnam experts, such as David Marr, Douglas Pike, and Gerald Hickey, are notable exceptions, but they are not widely read.

For years, Vietnamese people in the Santa Clara Valley have complained to me that most reporting about them remains erroneous, misleading, and demeaning. They are upset by media reportage, emphasizing topics such as criminal gangs, which they consider negative and wholly unrepresentative of the overwhelming majority of the Vietnamese people.

Similarly, the Vietnamese are dismayed to find themselves primarily portrayed as welfare sponges or as persons who take jobs away from others. In fact, many are already hard-working, taxpaying U.S. citizens who have taken jobs that no one else will, who, because of their customs of thrift and cooperation, have saved where others have wasted. As a result they have been able to buy houses or start businesses where others have been unable to do so. Although they have initiative, a work ethic, and the innovativeness which Americans have traditionally admired, the Vietnamese find themselves criticized, insulted, demeaned, and drawn into conflicts with other political or ethnic groups who, without understanding them, feel threatened by their presence. Because of such complaints I designed a project in which, as in the Untouchable study, perspectives were reversed. I would prepare a book in which Vietnamese people could express themselves in their terms, about subjects they consider important and want other Americans to hear.

Prominent in the development of this project were four features: refugees were not informants to be questioned, but rather participants who are consulted and who retain powers of editorial discretion at all stages of the project; individuals receive copies of all of the narratives they contribute; all royalties from publication of these materials are to be donated in an appropriate way for the public benefit of the communities that participate in the project; finally, people from the communities them-
selves are to be trained to carry on the research—which documents life in Vietnam before and after Communist rule, flight from the Communists, and adjustments to America, from their points of view.

The project has elicited a tremendous response from the community. Information about the project has spread through word of mouth, by people who trust in me and are trusted by others. Because of this faith, we have received some truly extraordinary in-depth accounts of the traditions, memories, family histories, and problems of adjustment while these are still fresh in the minds of the people involved.

At this point, some twenty-six life histories have been completed or are in-progress. They include some 400 hours of taped interviews, and thousands of pages of text. The narrators, males and females, range in age from fifteen to seventy-eight; they come from North, Central, and South Vietnam; they are Buddhists, Catholics, and Cao-Dai-ists; urban as well as rural people, peasants and nobles. Some are illiterate or semiliterate; others are university professors; some fought with the Communists, some fought against them, and some fought on both sides at different times. The narrators include first-wave refugees who escaped when Saigon fell in 1975, but also many “Boat People,” who either suffered persecution at the hands of the Communists, or simply found Communist rule to be intolerable in its suppression of personal freedoms. Some persons have adjusted rather well to America; others have suffered greatly. Their views of their homeland, the Vietnam War, and America are diverse and often contradictory; they remind us not to make hasty judgements about what constitutes Vietnamese views. Consider the variety of materials:

A Buddhist monk describes how he poured gasoline on the Reverend Thich Quang Duc, the first monk to immolate himself in protest against the Diem Regime’s repressive policy towards Buddhists.

A Catholic villager describes how mobs of angry students twice destroyed his village in Central Vietnam after the assassination of President Diem. This villager, a poorly educated farmer who escaped with his family in 1981, describes why he is able to get along well with his American neighbors, and how, starting as a farm laborer, he was able to start a retail fish business. He says, “God created me as a hard-working man.”

A teen-age “boat person” describes his perilous twenty-day journey on the seas, drifting without fuel and with little or no food and water. On the fourth day of the journey, as his small boat neared an island, Vietnamese Communist soldiers fired at them from the shore and wounded him. He was witness to the massacre of another boatload of people who landed. Of 120 men, women, and children, the only survivors were thirteen young men who swam to the narrator’s boat or to another island, from which they were subsequently rescued.

A North Vietnamese villager describes his childhood games: cricket fighting, during recess at school; buffalo fighting, sponsored by competing villages; and playing Dinh Bồ Linh, a game named after a culture hero, in which two groups of boys pelt each other with balls of mud. In America, where he runs an automobile
repair shop, he describes how, because he was originally trusting, he was cheated many times by Americans. His wife, working on a factory assembly line, was snubbed by American workers. His business partner was beaten senseless with an iron bar by an irate driver who resented being asked to move his car so that it would not block the only entrance to their business. The narrator concludes, “Americans have no heart; they lack human-ness.”

A woman who was a college student in America when Saigon fell to the Communists relates a painful story of her depression, when she was cut off from her family in Vietnam for five years—without knowing whether they were dead or alive.

A fifty-year-old man describes how, without telling his family, he spent over a year preparing for their escape. Then one day he pushed them into a small boat and set off on the perilous 1500 kilometer trip to Manila navigating by the stars, with a toy compass. One hundred kilometers from Manila, they were rescued at the last moment as their boat was sinking in a great storm. “Better to die than to live under Communist rule,” he says.

Echoing the words of many refugees from many parts of Vietnam, a man describes the Viet Cong conquerors of 1975: “They appeared to be totally disorganized, in bad physical condition, unhealthy, feeble; most were very young—teenagers. They were polite, but more than ignorant: they were kho (naive idiots), overwhelmed by the material wealth of the South. How could we have lost to them? There must have been an international sell-out between the USSR and the USA.”

An elderly civil servant recalls his college days in a class taught by a French teacher who disliked Vietnamese people. Since she claimed she could not remember their names, she referred to them only by number. To show their passive resistance, contempt and resentment of her, students whose numbers were called would stand up and say, “That student number is absent today.” The French recruited this man at gunpoint to work for them. As a result, the Viet Minh ambushed and shot him at point-blank range; he survived. However, they kidnapped his first wife, who was never seen again, and killed and dismembered his second wife’s elder sister.

The second wife describes in vivid detail what peasant life was like in South Vietnamese villages in the early 20th century. She recalls the day her elder brother brought a phonograph to the village for the first time. People stood in her compound, astonished, and listened to the “singing machine.” They said, “It’s strange; where did you get that? How could this machine talk? Does it have a voice in it?”

An ex-prisoner of a Communist re-education camp recalls his enforced starvation. To eat rats or snakes caught in the forest constituted “stealing property from the state” and resulted in a reduction of already marginal rations. Another ex-prisoner remembers eating raw corn leaves, corncobs, and unripe peanuts soaked with DDT solution. He also remembers being forced to carry human excrement with his bare hands as a punishment to degrade him.

A businessman describes fighting for years in the resistance against the French, only to find out that the leader he admired and with whom he had shared eighteen months of imprisonment and torture, was a Communist. The narrator withdrew from the resistance; his leader subsequently became one of the highest officials in the present Communist government of Vietnam.
A North Vietnamese Buddhist nun describes the monastic life which she chose at the age of five. She has devoted her life to social services; in Vietnam she ran an orphanage; in America, she runs a pagoda in which she aims to preserve social, cultural, and religious traditions in an American setting, but she also tries to offer a wide variety of counseling services and therapy. With reference to the spiritual master who influenced her life, she says, with delicate modesty, that she was “no less than others.”

A man in his late fifties, of a noble family, describes how his family emphasized Buddhist and Confucian values such as dignity, filial piety, adherence to family tradition, paternalistic help of relatives, compassion, and service to society. It is this cultural significance which this man wishes to record as a legacy for succeeding generations. He sees his generation as a transitional one because it began to move away from strict adherence to Confucian ideals, and fought in the nationalistic movement against the French. In his school classes were people who subsequently gained important positions, some in the North, some in the South. Initially reluctant, those in the North were gradually transformed and pushed to embrace the cause of Communism. He says, “I know them, for I went to school with them. They were drawn by a sense of nationalism first—long before they became Viet Minh. They didn’t realize until it was too late to get out, that they were drinking a cocktail with a hidden punch.”

A lonely teen-age fisherman finds himself placed in an American high school several grades beyond what he had completed in Vietnam. He flounders, becomes discouraged. One day he is attacked and stabbed by five youths who, as they slash him, tell him to leave America. Later, he consoles himself by writing humorous poetry that expresses his daily frustrations. His topics include, “Sick of Math,” and “Girls Who Think They Are Too High and Mighty.” But most often, he writes of his island home, and of his loneliness and alienation in living in a strange land without his family. In “Island,” he writes:

One thousand years I am still here,
Storm, typhoon, I don’t care,
Year, month, I play with the waves,
With the people living a lovely life on the island.

In my view, these life histories are important for five reasons. By coming to understand and appreciate the varieties of perspectives and life styles represented by the narrators, by realizing how the Vietnamese view themselves, I hope we can avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

Many federally- and privately-funded service-provider agencies that purport to serve the immediate survival needs of refugees do so without adequately consulting refugees to determine how they view their needs. The result is an enormous waste of funds that duplicate unnecessary activities, provide services that refugees do not need, omit those that they do need, and often interfere with rather than help refugee adjustment.
There is widespread discontent and despair among refugees who find that service providers are often incapable of, or uninterested in, trying to grasp adjustment problems from refugee viewpoints. Life histories provide an opportunity for refugees to express such needs and concerns in their own terms, and present significantly different views of refugee conditions and experiences than those current in agency reports.

Further, the life histories provide documentation of Vietnamese traditions for family and community histories while people are still alive and memories still fresh.

These life histories may cause us to reassess our conventional understandings of the Vietnam War; at the very least, they provide extensive Vietnamese views of the war by ordinary people. We can begin to appreciate why many Vietnamese have been saying for years that the Vietnam conflict was far more complicated than Americans realized.

Finally, most Americans, including those in refugee-service agencies, emphasize how refugees might adjust to American life. These life histories suggest that Americans might benefit from inquiring how they might accommodate refugees into America. Specifically, we see a transformation of American urban physical environments, schools, and work sites as a consequence of the presence of Vietnamese and other Indo-Chinese Americans. We are in fact involved in a process of mutual adaptation.

Perhaps we should ask further what lessons Americans might learn from the Indochinese. Peoples such as the Vietnamese bring with them a long tradition of successful adaptations to adversity. The independence movement against the French was nurtured by stories of 1000 years of resistance to Chinese rule. Some of the adaptive patterns of the Vietnamese, particularly those stressing consensus, familial cooperation, and self-help could well be applied by Americans to improve their own situations.

No doubt, the survival strategies of the Vietnamese would require modification in the new environments of America, and as some Vietnamese observe, not all Vietnamese survival strategies are effective. Nevertheless, some of these strategies may be far more adaptive for the sort of complex world that is developing than are many long-established American patterns. The life-history studies can help in the critical evaluation of American and Vietnamese adaptive strategies, and the assessment of what we can learn from both.

Particularly worthy of investigation on the Vietnamese side are: familial support systems; multi-family cooperative economic systems; a socialization process that fosters strong individual initiative tempered by group responsibility; a holistic world view rather than a fragmented one; a systemic view of the person, not as an individual ego, but as related to a larger whole that links past, present, and future generations through
notions of social (familial) responsibility; a deeply embedded view of the naturalness of flexibility as a response to changing situations.

Given the speed of alteration of some Vietnamese patterns in America, we should be cautious in assessing the circumstances under which these patterns will remain viable. Nevertheless, in a rapidly changing world, with increasing awareness of the necessity of considering the long-term implications of our actions, increasing sensitivity to issues of social responsibility, increasing awareness of the limitations of unrestrained individualism in a complex world that requires growing cooperation, some of the adaptive strategies of the Vietnamese may come to be recognized not as unusual, but as indispensable for survival. The study of life histories provides a way of examining these vital issues.

THE TRIBAL LAO TRAINING PROJECT

Iu Mien people indicated an eagerness for the sort of a cooperative project the Indochinese service and research fostered; we designed and submitted a project proposal on their behalf which would provide them with federal funds for job placement and training. After consulting with Hmong and other Lao groups, we also included them in the proposal. For fiscal management of the project, we entered into a cooperative arrangement with the St. Vincent De Paul Society, a 150-year-old charitable organization, which had been providing a wide variety of services for the citizens of San Jose. Our project was awarded funding of $190,000 for sixteen months; this was later reduced to one year because the county was delayed in disbursing the funds.

What we did that other service organizations overlooked was to call attention to the special characteristics of the refugees we planned to serve. Many had no tradition of formal schooling and, in some cases, did not have a written language. They would have to learn how to learn in a school environment. Many of these people were adapted to mountain ecology subsistence patterns and life styles that were vastly different from those in an urban civilization. Furthermore, they left their home environments, not through choice, as do immigrants, but as refugees running for their lives. Never had so many persons coming from such a vastly different culture suddenly arrived in America.

These originally self-sufficient peoples had been put into a situation of double dependence—first for three years or more of enforced idleness in refugee detention camps, and later for several years on general assistance or welfare, which discouraged, not encouraged, employment. The effect of such dependence was to foster great conservatism and caution when these people explored new possibilities.
Because of their unfamiliarity with formal schooling, most Iu Mien, Hmong, and many rural Laotian people were unable to keep up with other refugees in English and job-training programs. Many were quickly weeded out or became discouraged and quit. A few persons who completed job training programs found that they still were not adequately prepared to find employment. In some cases, people held as many as eight training certificates, but still found themselves inadequately prepared for employment. A consequence was that a high percentage of Iu Mien, Hmong and rural Laotian people in the Santa Clara Valley remained unemployed.

Finally, the county agency through which the federal funds were to be transmitted had no idea how to reach these refugees and design an adequate program for them, while the refugees had no idea how to design a project and apply for funding. The application procedures were so complicated that many refugee groups, and others too, were unable to apply.

Because of these circumstances, the refugees asked Huu Nguyen and me to develop a program for them that would be specifically designed to account for their special educational needs and distinct cultural character, while also preparing them adequately for employment.

Our project, which began in March 1984, has numerous distinctive features. The professional staff are accountable both to the county and to the specific communities served. There is consultation with a Refugee Board of Representatives, made up of persons from each of the ethnic groups, who participate in all decision-making. Important decisions are in the hands of refugees whose people are the beneficiaries of the project. Consultation occurs in the hiring of personnel, especially teacher-aides, and in the recruitment of students to the program.

The Iu Mien, Hmong, and rural Laotian people were given the choice of having separate ESL (English as a Second Language) classes of twenty-five to thirty students each. Thus they could begin the process of formal education in a social environment comfortable for them. While they chose to mix their classes on the basis of level of advancement, they were in groups with many friends and relatives.

Each ethnic group has a salaried bilingual teacher-aide. According to the people, this is indispensable for trust to develop and communication and learning to occur; it also helps in the personalizing of the learning environment. Here we specifically take into consideration the needs and cultural characteristics of each of the groups. Teachers teach, but they also learn from the teacher-aides. The teacher-aides are more than classroom helpers. They also work as social adjustment trouble-shooters, who help students deal with various resettlement crises that might interfere with their attending class. When necessary, they recruit additional students for their classes.

Because many students started as illiterates, we phased in the classes
gradually. We began with English training—four hours a day in the mornings, five days a week, for six months. In this way, we hoped to encourage rather than discourage continued attendance. We expected to introduce job training only in the second six months, and to hold these classes three days a week, in the afternoons, for six months. This gradual phase-in was intended to acclimate students to the tasks and to workday schedules. As in the English classes, there were separate teacher-aides for each of the three ethnic groups, and there was also the option of having separate electronics assembly classes for individual ethnic groups. Vocational English classes (VESL) continued to meet in the mornings throughout the life of the project or until students were placed in jobs.

A crucial element in recruiting women was to provide child-care services at the training site and also to provide bus passes. Confronted with bureaucratic constraints imposed by the county, our bus-pass and child-care services have not been as extensive as we had needed and requested; this initially affected recruitment of students. Nevertheless, within two weeks of our start-up, 75 of the 85 places available in our program had been filled, and three months later there was a waiting list of applicants.

The project coordinator and job-placement specialist is the key person in this project. This person provides refugees with intensive, personalized job-placement techniques, followed with information about placement and detailed evaluations of successes or failures of individual applicants.

The teacher-aides themselves are being trained as job-placement specialists, so that they will be able to provide this service for their own communities. Thus, we started the program, but refugees themselves are expected to take it over and maintain it for their benefit.

Finally, our project was designed so that each component was integrated into a larger whole, with the aim of finding employment for every refugee who completes our curriculum, thus reducing their dependency on public assistance, and providing for their economic self-sufficiency.

In summary, our project was planned to provide a transition to a completely refugee-run organization. We have developed an intensive, highly focused, and culturally sensitive project that invites the active participation of refugees, in both a cost-effective and a humane way, to develop their employability, in which the dignity of these people is maintained largely through their own self-help.

The Iu Mien, Hmong, and rural Laotian communities of Santa Clara County have responded magnificently to this challenge and opportunity. It was the dynamic leaders and teacher-aides of these communities who recruited students from their ethnic groups. These students have indicated their determination to be trained and succeed in becoming employed.
KNOWLEDGE, COMPASSION, AND INVOLVEMENT

What ties all three projects together is knowledge, compassion, and involvement. The Buddhist ni su, or nun, described knowledge, compassion, and involvement and their relationship in a simple but eloquent way.

We teach a three-word motto: Bi, Tri, Dung—Compassion (to others); knowledge (to determine needs); and involvement (acting courageously based on knowledge). If you have no compassion, you will not treat others well; without knowledge you are blind; but without involvement or action, your knowledge is useless. You cannot just sit.

The ni su and I probably would not agree completely on what we mean by these words, but I find that her remarks resonate for me. Knowledge is not simply the accumulation of information but rather the formulation of a perspective developed for a purpose, which enables a person to seize the moment, recognize the significance of questions when they emerge or of gaps in understanding when they occur, but above all, to recognize needs that must be met.

In the university, we speak often of knowledge; sometimes we focus on the extent or the limitations of our perceptions and cognitive capacities; sometimes on our abilities and the means we use to accomplish particular tasks, sometimes on our understanding of the nature and uses of particular entities.

But rarely do we talk of compassion as an indispensable component of our work. And yet, for those of us who work with people, what kind of work do we do if our work is not infused with compassion? We run the risk of treating people simply as objects, of cheating them, or of setting them up to enable others to harm or misuse them. In any research I do, I ask the question, "How would I like it if someone asked me to be a subject in this study?" If I wouldn’t like it, then why should I suppose that others would?

My concerns here go far beyond any government or university regulations involving informed consent. A project should provide some material, social, spiritual, or psychological benefit to those who are participants. People are not simply objects from whom a researcher extracts information, but persons who freely participate in various aspects of the project. I would hope that people would feel that their lives had been improved as a result of participation in the project.

If compassion is made part of a project, then the distinction between observer and subject becomes blurred. It has already been blurred by our recognition that in the case of life histories, we are not so much studying a
phenomenon as we are involved in its very creation. The same applies for activities such as the Tribal Laotian project. From both the epistemological and the moral angle, we are an inseparable part of the phenomenon we study. Such a recognition may help us to avoid the extremes of patronizing people or ripping them off. The key is to treat people with dignity.

What activates a project is knowledgeable, compassionate involvement. Without it, a project is lifeless, inert. As Charles Peirce has pointed out, unless knowledge makes a difference to people, it is meaningless. The design of the Tribal Laotian project is useless unless we do it. Involvement is not always safe; it often requires taking chances, whether they be social commitments, personal judgments, or the development of new perspectives.

Finally, knowledge, compassion, and involvement are not isolated entities but are linked to form a coherent whole. If one element is missing, the whole enterprise fails. This becomes clear in the life-history and the Tribal Lao Training projects. They could not function, or meet the needs of people in the ways they do, without the connection of all three components.

CONCLUSION

I would like to call attention to the unique, privileged situation in which we find ourselves at San Jose State University. Possibly nowhere else on this earth is there such a diversity of life styles and people in so compact an area. The range is from tribes of ex-slash and burn cultivators to entrepreneurial gene-splicers. Truly, the world has come to us. We have unparalleled opportunities to do many exciting things—whether it be starting up companies; exploring new directions in education and high technology; doing futures research; designing systems and management strategies that take into account the extraordinary cultural diversity of our valley; participating in ethnic and cultural revivals in art, music, theater, and literature; doing community histories; working in community service projects that meet the needs of particular ethnic groups or classes in our society—the list could go on almost indefinitely.

People from all over the world are coming to the Silicon Valley, some to make their fortunes, but others come to study us—our technologies as well as our people. We have become the new natives, ourselves the subjects of study.

San Jose State University has had a long history of responding to the needs of the diverse communities which make up the Santa Clara Valley. The distinctive strength and character of this institution is that it is truly a community university. At the same time, it finds itself, by virtue of its location, in the center of momentous high-technology developments that attract world attention, as do the emergent life styles, social patterns, and
world views that are associated with the new technology. Thus we have the opportunity to link research, the education of students, and significant community service in a variety of ways which can enhance the world in which we live.

NOTES

1 Chet Winton of the San Jose State Sociology Department first suggested that I do research with Indo-Chinese refugees. Another colleague, Bill Reckmeyer, Cybernetic Systems, helped me recognize that the systems approach provided a means of linking research with community involvement.

2 Since 1981, I have directed nearly forty students and community members in community service and research projects. Among these are ten Vietnamese, from all walks of life, undertaking activities as different as construction work and collecting life-histories. Non-Vietnamese participants have served a range of functions from crisis counselors to English instructors. Nancy Serigstad, Betsy Bower, and Jean Adams, students at San Jose State, have written Masters theses on the life-history of a Chinese-Vietnamese teenager, a Khmer-speaking Vietnam civil servant, and the Vietnamese Buddhist pagoda, respectively. Another graduate student, Carolyn Pena, founded the American-Indochinese Discussion Group which met weekly to provide contacts and practice with English speakers.

3 In 1983, Jim Feeder of the Union Art Gallery at San Jose State called my attention to the plight of some 360 refugees of the Laotian mountain tribe, the Iu Mien, living in San Jose. With Huu Nguyen of the Department of Social Services, I met with Chan Choy Sae Lee, leader of the tribe. He reported that his people were depressed and discouraged, because, although they wished to become financially independent, they were unable to benefit from the usual training programs. With help from the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors and Jim Dickey, a reporter from the San Jose Mercury News, attention was focused on the Iu Mien and federal monies earmarked for their use. Simultaneously, Huu Nguyen and I created a non-profit corporation, Indochinese Service and Research, Inc. This volunteer group addressed aspects of refugee adjustment overlooked by other agencies. Our primary aim was not to direct but rather to advise the people how to develop economic self-sufficiency. While we initially aided them in setting-up various projects, our ultimate goal was to have them control and run the activities.
Fanshen, Western Drama, and David Hare’s Oeuvre

Bert Cardullo

AN INTRODUCTION

There has been an interplay between the drama and socio-political conditions in England for the last twenty-five years. John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* was the beginning of a tremendous wave of theatrical activity that, after a lull, has resurged in a new generation of playwrights who are even more directly political than were their predecessors—Osborne, Arnold Wesker, and John Arden, among others. David Hare is one of the most talented of these younger writers, who include Howard Brenton, Stephen Poliakoff, Snoo Wilson, Heathcote Williams, and Barrie Keeffe.

Hare was born in Sussex in 1947, the son of a merchant seaman, and was educated at Cambridge. He achieved a reputation in England when *Slag* reached London in 1970, but he previously helped to form and worked with one of the most interesting of the early fringe or alternative groups, the Portable Theatre. His subsequent career has been similarly split between success in the commercial theatre, as with *Teeth ‘n' Smiles* at the Royal Court, and a search for new ways of working, as in his collaboration with the Joint Stock Theatre Group, which resulted in the innovative and challenging play about the continuing Chinese revolution, *Fanshen*.  

31
Hare has distinguished his political outlook from that of Marxist writers: he claims that he has recognized the real changes that have occurred in his country in the past thirty years, while the Marxist writer spends a great deal of time ignoring change that takes a form he does not like, rebuking societies for not behaving in the way that he expected them to.¹ Hare says of contemporary England:

> We are living through a great, groaning, yowling festival of change—but because this is England it is not always seen on the streets. In my view it is seen in the extraordinary intensity of people’s personal despair, and it is to that despair that as a historical writer I choose to address myself time and time again: in Teeth n’ Smiles, in Knuckle, in Plenty.²

In British critic Catherine Itzin’s words, “Instead of seeing a socialist silver lining in the clouds of change, Hare had, in his plays, assumed that some of the changes in society may have been for the worse, that changes for the apparent good may have been illusory or of less importance than they might have seemed in the heady moments of their happenings.”³

With Fanshen, Hare gave the English an example of a society in which positive changes had occurred and were continuing to take place. Marxists disapproved of Fanshen because the view it takes of the Chinese Revolution was not rosy enough, not committed enough. To them, its positiveness was diminished by its treatment of such questions as how does any democracy know that it is a good democracy, how do the led look after the leadership, how do the ruled rule the ruler?

**Fanshen and Western Drama**

David Hare has said that Fanshen (1976) “is a story of change and progress,”⁴ “of how the peasants of Long Bow built a new world.”⁵ Long Bow is intended to be representative of all the Chinese villages right after World War II that were attempting to “fanshen.” Hare writes that “literally [this word] means ‘to turn the body’ or ‘to turn over.’” To China’s hundreds of millions of landless and land-poor peasants it meant to stand up, to throw off the landlord yoke, to gain land, stock, implements and houses” (Preface to Fanshen, p. 13). “Fanshen” meant, in other words, to change one’s life for the better.

The play is about the destruction of feudalism in China and the gradual creation of the People’s Republic. But in a larger sense it is about the process of change itself, about how people’s thinking and behavior may be transformed, both leaders and the led. And in this respect it is different from traditional Western drama, where the emphasis in tragedy is on characters who cannot change or change too late, who suffer because who they are conflicts with what society is; in sentimental drama on
characters whose change is intended to show, not that man is truly changeable, but that he is only asserting the good nature he has had all along and from which he has been diverted; and in comedy on characters whose inability to change makes them objects of ridicule.

Traditional Western drama stresses psychology and fate: who you are tends to determine what you will do in a given situation; your unified and fixed personality is the primary object of interest. *Fanshen*, like the plays of Brecht—another writer strongly attracted to Chinese history—emphasizes sociology and self-determination: who you are is always in flux and is determined by interaction with the social situation in which you find yourself. Society and the individual are inseparable in *Fanshen*. Thus we cannot speak of main characters, but only of the people of Long Bow and their will to change their society, to change themselves. We cannot speak of the private lives of the villagers, but only of the way in which their individual actions affect the life of the village, the welfare of its public.

Since *Fanshen* rejects the notions of character psychology and fate, it is not dramatic in the conventional sense. David Hare contrasts the conventionally dramatic with what he views as its alternative in *Fanshen*:

There’s a comment of Len Deighton’s which interests me very much; he says ‘I have no interest in going to a debate—unless I know that the loser of that debate is going to be shot at the end. *That* is dramatic.’ I feel the exact opposite. I have no interest in who’s going to be shot at the end. I feel that the debate itself is what is interesting.6

In the conventionally dramatic play, the emphasis is on the outcome of events: on waiting for the debate to end, so that the loser will be shot. Brecht described this kind of theatre as one in which the spectator has his “eyes on the finish,” in which the plot is linear (“one scene makes another,” or each scene follows naturally out of the one that preceded it and cannot be understood except in the order in which it was written), and in which the spectator is called upon to feel, to share the experience of the characters.7 In Hare’s idea of the dramatic in *Fanshen*, and in Brecht’s conception of epic theatre, the emphasis is on the course of events: on the process of the debate, not its product; on how it is conducted, not on what its result will be. Brecht speaks of “narrative” in this theatre, not plot, and of “each scene [standing] for itself” (*Brecht on Theatre*, p. 37). That is, any scene taken out of sequence would still be intelligible, because it exists not to build tension, but to say something, to make a discrete political point. He speaks further of the spectator standing outside the action, studying it, using his reason.

Let us examine Act I, Section 3, Scene iii of *Fanshen* as a paradigm of Hare’s method. At the start of this scene, before the action actually begins,
Yu-lai says, “We have seized the wealth from fifteen families. Two hundred and eighty-six acres of land, twenty-six draft animals, four hundred sections of house. And behind the temple doors: everything they own” (p. 31) We are not shown the seizing of this wealth in detail—we get only one short scene before this (I,3.i.) in which we see the possessions of Ch’ung-Wang confiscated, and even here the emphasis is less on what is taken and what is done to the at first uncooperative landlord, than on the lengths to which he has gone over the years to hide his money and make himself appear less rich than he is. Yu-lai narrates the seizing of the wealth at the top of I,3.iii., as well as in I,3.ii. along with Man-hsi, Cheng-k’uan, and T’ien-ming. As the following excerpt shows, the four men cooperate to tell the story in I,3.ii. in keeping with the play’s focus on the people of Long Bow and their public actions rather than on a few main characters and their inner natures:

Cheng-k’uan.: That evening all the people went to Ching-ho’s courtyard to help take over his property. It was very cold. We built bonfires and the flames shot up towards the stars. It was very beautiful.

Yu-lai.: We dug up all his money, beating him, digging, finding more. By the time the sun was rising in the sky we had five hundred dollars. (p. 30)

Now a playwright in the conventionally dramatic theatre would place Ching-ho at the center of the action and would make the raid on his courtyard the climax, the moment of highest suspense. The unrepentant man would meet his tragic downfall at the hands of rabid revolutionaries, and the play would end. Ching-ho will have been the loser of Len Deighton’s debate. In Fanshen, he plays only a small part, disappearing after I,3.ii. The distribution, not the confiscation, of his and others’ wealth is important to the theme of the play—the gradual change effected in people’s lives by the destruction of the feudal system. Like Brecht, Hare includes slogans at the start of scenes, to be projected on a back wall or displayed on a placard to the side of the stage. The slogan for I,3.iii. is “Distribution of Fruits.” We are told immediately by it—it appears before Yu-lai announces that the wealth of 15 families has been seized—what will happen in the scene, so that we can concentrate on how it happens. Traditional suspense is thereby removed.

The point of I,3.iii. is that the peasants of Long Bow do not fight greedily for their share of the appropriated wealth. No one attempts through force to get a large share of the land, implements, and animals; no one tries to become a landlord himself. The peasants are changing; no longer dependent on landlords, they must depend on one another. Guided by the
village leaders, who themselves are advised by the Communist Party, they cooperate to distribute the goods as evenly as they are able to at this point. I say "at this point" because their change is part of a process, of the debate Hare speaks of. They do not become flawless Communists overnight—Hare's point is that there is no such thing, that the idea of a flawless Communist living happily ever after is as silly as that of a tragically flawed protagonist going blindly to his end. What is dramatic for the playwright is the struggle or tension, the debate, between Communist Party theory and the practice into which it is put by the people of Long Bow:

[In] China . . . the dialectic is actually seen to mean something in people's lives. In the play Fanshen it is dynamic. Political practice answers to political theory and yet modifies it; the party answers to the people and is modified by it. The fight is for political structures which answer people's needs; and people themselves are changed by living out theoretical ideas. (Lecture appended to Licking Hitler, p. 62)

In I,3.iii., for example, the village leaders appear to misinterpret Secretary Liu's statement in I,2.i. about landlords and laborers: "We have liberated a peach tree heavy with fruit. Who is to be allowed to pick the fruit? Those who have tended and watered the tree? Or those who have sat at the side of the orchard with folded arms?" (p. 25) The leaders deny the beggar woman Hsueh-chen her fair share of the confiscated goods on the grounds that she "did not speak at meetings, did not speak out [her] grievances at landlords" (p. 32). In their minds, she sat at the side of the orchard while they and other peasants tended and watered the tree. Approximately two years later, their understandable mistake is corrected. Little Li, a member of the work team sent to Long Bow to help supervise land reform, tells the village in I,7.i.:

Some . . . peasants have only partially fanshened or not fanshened at all. Now finally everyone must fanshen. . . . Land and goods are to be redistributed on one basis and one basis only: how much you have now and how many there are in your family. So no longer is it a question of what sort of person you are, of whether you are thought to have helped or hindered the movement. This time, those with merit will get some, those without merit will get some. (p. 47)

Hsueh-chen will receive what she needs to support herself and her daughter. By II,11.i., approximately six months after Little Li's address to the village, the remaining landlords in Long Bow will be getting what they require to survive, and those middle peasants (neither rich nor poor)
from whom goods were taken are to have them returned. The Communist Party realizes that it itself has made mistakes in establishing absolute equality of the peasantry as the criterion of "fanshen;" confiscating goods from middle peasants in order to achieve that equality and thereby "frightening and alienating many [of them], men who were never exploiters but who have always been allies, and should have been treated as such" (Fanshen, p. 80); and assuming that landlords had to be liquidated instead of reeducated and changed like everyone else. By observing their theories in practice and watching disenfranchised middle and rich peasants and landlords go over to the side of the enemy (the Kuomintang, in a civil war with the Communists), Party officials have learned that "equality cannot be established by decree" (Fanshen, p. 80). Secretary Ch'en declares:

Even if we could give everyone an equal share, how long would it last? The strong, the ruthless would soon climb to the top; the weak and the sick would sink to the bottom. Only in the future when all land and productive wealth is finally held in common and we produce in great abundance will equality be possible. So we have been judging fanshen by the wrong principles. . . . Land reform can have only one standard and it is not equality. It is the abolition of the feudal system. And that we have achieved. (p. 80)

David Hare has mirrored in Fanshen the Communist Party view that a People's Republic in which everyone is equal cannot be achieved by decree but only through an arduous process. He has not written on the one hand about the ideal Communist state, has not willed it into existence through his imagination. He has not written on the other hand about the failure of Communism, has not imagined a state where the absolute equality of its citizens has never been achieved and will never be. Hare has depicted the pursuit of the ideal Communist state, and at the end of Fanshen it is still in the process of being attained. The action stops in 1948, as work team members return to Long Bow and call a meeting to discuss correcting the Party's mistakes listed in the above paragraph.

HARE'S OEUVRE

If what is dramatic to David Hare about the Chinese Revolution is the struggle between theory and practice, what is dramatic to him about English society? How does Fanshen stand in relationship to his "British" full-length plays, and how did he come to write about the Chinese Revolution? He tells us why he was attracted to the idea of adapting William Hinton's Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village to the stage:

36
I think like everybody I was sick to death with writing about England—about writing about this decadent corner of the globe. The excitement of *Fanshen* was to write about a society and to cover a period of time in which one felt that people's lives were being materially and spiritually improved... [I] wanted to write a positive work using positive material.8

Hare did not write a positive work about Communist China in order to praise the Chinese at the expense of the English, or simply to escape the problems of England by writing about a different society. His aim, rather, was first to pose a question to his countrymen, through his very choice of subject matter:

To ask whether the criteria by which we have been brought up are right; whether what each of us experiences uniquely really is what makes us valuable; whether every man should really be his own cocktail; or whether our criteria could and should be collective, and if they were, whether we would be any happier. (Lecture appended to *Licking Hitler*, p. 69)

His second aim was “to explain to an audience who have no real experience of change what exactly that change might involve and how it can in practice be effected” (Preface to *Fanshen*, p. 8). This is the sense in which *Fanshen* is positive: it documents the process of change to an audience inured to stasis and despair; it does not glorify the product of that change. The play gives hope, it shows that change can be brought about and gives knowledge of the means by which to do it. Hare has no illusions, however, about causing an instant revolution in England: “Plays usually affect change through a slow attritional process... [And they] can only change people who want to be changed.”9

*Fanshen*, then, shows the English how their lives might be through the distancing lens of history, focused on a foreign society. Hare calls *Fanshen*, and all his plays, histories. The subject of them is change—its absence, the need for it, its possibility—and change can be shown only through the movement of history. Hare contrasts himself with writers who do not portray this movement:

If you don’t believe in change, then you can write about rooms [like Osborne and Pinter]. If you believe that what happens in rooms is important, then you don’t need to show history. If, like Beckett, you believe that life is cyclical, that the leaf grows and dies, and the cycle goes on, then of course you can work
with bare stages. But once you decide 'My subject is how things were, how things are, and how things might be,' then that's history, and you've got to show the sweep of things. (Summers interview, p. 14)

In plays like Slag (1970), The Great Exhibition (1972), and Knuckle (1974), Hare shows how things are in England. Slag, he says, is about the power of institutions: "In order to educate, we need institutions, but . . . an institution takes on a life of its own. The institution itself becomes more powerful than the ideas it supposedly exists to perpetuate" (Summers interview, p. 12). The Great Exhibition concerns the failure of British Parliamentary democracy, while Knuckle is about how it is "impossible to live within [the capitalistic] system without doing yourself moral damage" (Theatre Quarterly interview, p. 113). In plays such as Teeth 'n' Smiles (1975) and Plenty (1978), Hare shows how things were in England; he "tries to . . . explain to people how they have come to their present situation" (Summers interview, p. 13).

Teeth 'n' Smiles concerns the recent past, the sixties and that decade's belief in social change, as expressed through its music and its "liberated" attitude toward sex and drugs. The dramatist observes that "in [the play] an educational establishment [Cambridge] is being mocked [by a rock band that performs at its May Ball] because it exists to perpetuate a class system: an elite is being educated to certain ideas which will help them to perpetuate their elitism" (Summers interview, p. 12). Plenty is the most ambitious of Hare's "British" plays, in that it contains the themes of all the others as it follows Susan Traherne from the "high" of her wartime experience in France (1943) to the "low" of her life in the demoralized Britain of 1962. Plenty is about the power of the diplomatic corps, an English institution; the rebellion of Susan and the bohemian Alice against marriage and the conventional work world; the British government's lying to the people (particularly during the Suez crisis); and the cruelty of the class system as well as the dishonesty of capitalism.

Hare tells us that what he finds dramatic about English life is the struggle between the individual and society:

I write consistently about somebody who is in a state of moral dissent. . . . I take a figure who says, "This is not right. This should not be so", and I try to write about the cost of that way of life. I suppose that what the plays conclude—certainly Plenty does—is that not to be able to give your consent to a society will drive you mad, but, on the other hand, to consent will mean acquiescence in the most appalling lassitude. The
choice tends to be dramatized within the plays as isolation—sometimes madness—or the most ignominious absorption. (Summers interview, p. 15)

Susan Traherne in *Plenty* has a mental breakdown from which she never fully recovers. Maggie in *Teeth 'n' Smiles* is alcoholically self-destructive and "chooses to go to prison because it will give her an experience of suffering which is bound in her eyes to be more worthwhile than the life she could lead outside" (Lecture appended to *Licking Hitler*, p. 68). Saraffian, the manager of her band, has transcended his working-class origins only to become grotesquely absorbed with making money.

Sarah in *Knuckle* is persecuted for her inability to remain silent about her father's corrupt business dealings and becomes a "lethal paranoid." Saraffian, the manager of her band, has transcended his working-class origins only to become grotesquely absorbed with making money.

Sarah in *Knuckle* is persecuted for her inability to remain silent about her father's corrupt business dealings and becomes a "lethal paranoid." Her brother Curly, like Saraffian, remains cynically devoted to making a fortune by running guns even though he knows the truth about the moral depravity of his father and of English society. Hammet in *The Great Exhibition*, a Hamlet-Lear figure who is a Labour M.P., retreats from politics and the world to the confines of his house: he is disillusioned with Parliamentary democracy, in despair about his marriage, indecisive about his future. Joanne, Elise, and Ann in *Slag* retire from the world to run a girls' school, where in British theatre historian Peter Ansorge's words they "try and fail to live out their liberation from the dominance of male society." Their failure and their delusion are best symbolized by Elise's hysterical pregnancy.

Ansorge thinks "[Hare's] tragic sense that the old England may well win out in the end, and of the potential waste of idealism involved, . . . marks [these 'British' plays] out from many of his contemporaries." The dramatist himself does not see them as destructive, negative, or pessimistic, as opposed to the constructive, positive, or optimistic *Fanshen*. He believes that, in "saying something about it being impossible to live within [the English] system without doing yourself moral damage," they are "almost obscenely constructive" (*Theatre Quarterly* interview, p. 113): they call out for change to anybody who cares about the future of the country, if they do not show how to bring it about. The "British" plays are conventionally dramatic in that they do not reject the notion of character psychology, of character as fate. But they are also dramatic in the way that *Fanshen* is, I think Hare would argue, because they stress the "debate" going on between a character and society, the character's dissent. And they emphasize less the outcome of events, the end of the "debate," than "the audience's own personal response to witnessing [the play]" ("After *Fanshen*," p. 304), "the interaction of what [it is] saying and what the audience is thinking." Hare has called these works "puzzles—the solution is up to the audience."
Defeatist or reassuring, the “British” plays are all flawed in a way that *Fanshen* is not: there is in them, writes British theatre commentator Ronald Hayman, an “awkward division of focus between rotting psyche and rotten society.”¹⁵ That is, to use *Plenty* as an example and to cite American drama critic Richard Gilman, “Hare never does decide what is the cause of Susan’s malaise. On one hand there are England, society, the meanness and absence of ideals; on the other is the protagonist’s psychological pathology.”¹⁶ The same can be said for Maggie, Hammet, the three women in *Slag*, and the absent Sarah in *Knuckle*: we never know to what extent they have caused their own problems, and to what extent those problems have been caused by the society they inhabit. If the “division of focus” is at its most awkward in *Plenty*, that is because, paradoxically, Susan Traherne is Hare’s best-drawn character.

This gets us even closer to the defect of these plays: in them “private behaviour [is] explained in terms of social, political, and economic pressures” (Hayman, p. 81). This method is always dangerous, because it presents characters interesting for themselves, intelligent and even strong, somehow at the mercy of forces in modern society that they can neither control nor comprehend. Hare is more successful with the method in *Slag* and *The Great Exhibition* (though both plays are marred by rhetorical excess and capricious dramaturgy), because they are closer to comedy, where characters serve dramatic structures more than their own psychology, where the playwright delineates the surface of society more than he plumbs the depths of personality.

*Fanshen*, of course, is not flawed in the way that the “British” plays are because it does not attempt to explore private behavior; it does not probe the interiors of its characters’ minds. It can be seen as artistically more successful than Hare’s other works because it explains the public behavior of its characters—conduct that has a bearing in some way on all the inhabitants of Long Bow—in terms of social, political, and economic pressures. This the play can do, because such pressures are public ones, and public pressures obviously do mold public behavior. The characters in *Slag*, *The Great Exhibition*, *Knuckle*, *Teeth ’n’ Smiles*, and *Plenty* suffer alone because they cannot change, and because who they are conflicts with what society is. Those in *Fanshen* prosper together because they can change, and because who they become determines what society is. The “British” plays show the English how they were and how they are; *Fanshen* shows them how they might be.
NOTES

5 David Hare, Author's Preface, Fanshen (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. 13. References to the play are hereafter cited by page number and included in parentheses in the body of my essay.
10 David Hare, Knuckle (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 3.
13 Hare quoted in Stages in the Revolution: Political Theatre in Britain since 1968, p. 332.
POETRY
The Spectre of the Rose

Once anything could be revived
Like a vampire with earthy wit.
Everyone had a hidden soul
Which glimmered; stem, leaf and flower
Or cheeped like a blind canary
Tugging a marvellous machine.
Impulses drew us like tame whales
Towing ships round Van Diemen’s land.

Now you fade from me like a silk
Left in the open air. You are
No more than soot and cold water.
Vampires have been impaled in books,
Canaries stifle in a cage
Deep underground where their singing
Can mean life and their quiet, death.
Whales are chased by candlemakers.

The miraculous has passed on
Becoming heresy or pain
And you have turned from me to gaze
Longingly at the visible;
Those diamonds from another
Chained round your wrist. Each has a flaw
Which I could easily remove
If only I recalled the art.

But listen. You can still learn from me
How to disinter the red rose.
Take salt from the ash of its hips.
Mix with distilled dew in a flask
Then seal with ground glass and borax.
Place it on horse manure exposed
To the sun then moon. Afterwards
The spectre will bloom in your palm.
The Age of Reason

Yesterday was not tender.
I rode through soft, wet ground
Before I reached enclosures
Of dry turf and unmortared walls;
A balance to gallop across
Of space and property, simpler
To fit in sensibility
Than distances between my touch
And whoever might be affected.

My horse snorted as he cantered
On the hidden Roman road.

I began a Rural Ride,
A Survey Of Ancient Custom
And Manners. I did not expect
To meet an innwife who would send
Her husband twenty miles
So she could put aside
Her pinafore and come to me
Hungering not for devotion
But the dispassionate man.

My horse was calm ambling
In the evening of the ride.

Yesterday I was required to make
No apologies, believing
That she knew she was impression
One woman or many, ripened
Or blighted by every second look.
She did not seem to think I was more
Than she appraised and if I were
She would not have me slake
More than appetite, hours.

My horse whinnied in the courtyard
Waiting to be stalled and fed.
Clouds Blown Away

Above the haggard cancer sipping
His half-pint against doctor's orders,

Above the hated grandmother
Incontinent in a downstairs room,

Above drunken boys leering over girls
Who squeal like rabbits killed by stoats,

Above quarries whose wet stone slumps
Like folds of muscle in a wrestler's back,

Above the motorways' slick blood
And grease adventure playgrounds,

Above the weekend return to nature,
Above planners baling suburbs like straw,

Above the fear of broken glass,
Above the fear of tenderness,

Clouds billow like tumours or drag
A weight of moisture slabbed like porous rock.

They ripen, threaten, withhold
Until the breeze breaks and they shred.

They are an imitation of the earth.
There are no clouds. There is no sky.
Vienna Night

Isabella grows more intimate.
She has drunk two glasses of champagne
And told him of her Dobermann,
Two years old, whose strong jaws protect herself

And a girlfriend who sometimes shares her bed.
Which should excite him. Any mention
Of an animal and more-than-bosom pal
Always quickens a gentleman by minutes.

She would have left for a cheaper club
Which allows customers to bargain,
Where a video and a disco beat
Spoil the craft of conversation,

Where she would have worked for half the price
Were it not for this English stranger
With his soft voice and careful tweed
Staring at the room's enormous lampshade,

Layers of red velvet on a frame
So it hangs like a wedding cake upside down.
It refines the light to a rosy glaze
On the bartop and other girls

Lolling comfortable as cushions
In magenta corners. They hardly speak
To one another as they slowly lift
A cigarette or glass of dry pink wine.
He has wandered through the glistening alleys
And by the weathered tramlines whose traffic
Grinds a thick percussion in early March’s
Gravure Vienna. He raised a camera

But didn’t snap the Opera squatting
Massively as an armed redoubt.
In the Mozart café he sipped Weinbrand
And counted this an almost wasted day

Until he bought plump Isabella with lips
Crimson as glacé cherries on a torte
And skin like cream poured across a spoon
To float in a cup of mocca coffee.

Her fingers move a modest distance
Beyond his knee. Fingertips gently grip
A cloth whose texture pleases her while her mouth
Opens on the skin above his collar.

He smells of shaving soap and shivers
When her lips whisper “Are you married?”
“No.” Fingertips work on. His eyelids droop.
“Would you like a special time with me?”

She admires his manners, his silk shirt
So elegant after that drinking house
Beside the Prater where she’d split a bottle
With Polish exiles too hard-up or fixed
On "politics" to pay. Reminded
She lifts her long hands from his lap
And strokes her vodka fat telling him
How she'd like a restaurant. He nuzzles

So she leads him from the bar's discreet rouge
Through a wooden door to where light glitters
On bathroom fittings and a plastic couch
On which she spreads a spotless cotton sheet.

As Isabella showers he undresses
Becoming cold and naked in a minute.
She's an apparition of pink and white
Pricked and masked by steam from needle jets.

He sits upon the couch between a draught
Sliding underneath the door and wet heat
Billowing until the towel rails.
Drops form upon their chilling metal.

Drying herself she comes to him and kneels
To revive him with her sweetmeat lips.
She slips a rubber on him efficiently
As she would a pair of kitchen gloves

Then rolls beneath him giggling "Let me show you
What I sometimes do with my Dobermann."
He grips and moves into her glowing
Midnight flesh and while she wriggles
Vienna growls inside his head summoning
A vision impersonal enough to check
Or augment the mean relief he's purchased.
He thinks of parapets brutal

As huge guard dogs crouched round palace fountains
Which are choked with melting ice. There pigeons flap
Untidily as stray blown litter.
He thinks of the muscled, yellow leopards

In Schöbrunn zoo whose cages have a finish
In Maria Theresa custard yellow
And of the blonde coiffure beneath his shoulders.
He gasps. The air conditioning sighs.

She kisses him before he leaves the bar,
Something she won't have time for next week
When a conference of democrats begins.
An Eastern European diplomat

Leans towards her blearily. She watches
The swirl, settling and dissoluton of flakes
Of snow that the swinging door lets in, briefly,
Before she turns to say "I am Isabella!"
Overcome

Charles Clerc

In his porkpie hat, sport coat, and tie, the tiny black boy looked like a miniature adult, yet he was only about five years old. Save for a change of shirt, he had worn the same outfit every day for more than two weeks. He sat in the chair against the wall, swinging one leg, eyes white to the left on his mother. She ignored the child and sat staring at a point above the left corner of Laxalt’s desk.

“Do you bring him to all your classes?” Laxalt asked.

“Can’t afford no babysitter,” she said.

“Well, I’ve never had a mother bring her child to a class of mine.”

The woman glanced at her son and around Laxalt’s office before settling once again at that focal point near his desk. “He mind,” she said.

“He don’t bother nobody. If’n he do I beat his butt.”

“He’s fine,” Laxalt said. “Now, let’s get down to business. You’re going to be a teacher, you said. At what level?”

“High school. I’m a aide right now.”

“Oh, where?”

“Lincoln. Miz Oates my supervise.”

“And what will you be teaching?”

“English.”

Laxalt put his elbows on the desk. His fingers formed a church steeple below his nose. “English?”

She stared back at him as if he were muddle-headed. He glanced down at the paper on his desk—her first. His worst fears were being confirmed.
“What year are you?”
“You’re a senior. ‘Bout to graduate. Only need this here course.”
“You’ve had English before.”
“At the JC. Got As twice.”
“You dropped your first course there. Why?”
Her nose crinkled. “How come you find that out?”
“I looked at your transcript. Who taught that first course?”
“I doan ‘member. Some woman. She didn’t learn us nothin. S’why I
gived up. Couldn’t understand nothin she say.”
“I see, so you took your Comp from?—”
“Mr. Hobart. Bes teacher in the whole school.”
“And you did a lot of writing for him?”
“Huh?” She looked sideways. “Orenthal, you be still. The man’s
talkin.”
He smiled at the boy twitching in the chair beside her. “Papers. Your
eEssays, themes. How did he grade them?”
She looked at him blankly. “Didn’t have to write nothin.”
“What did you do?”
“Seen movies.”
“You went to movies in a composition course?”
“He say we got to learn about movies, TV, talk about ‘em.”
“And he gave you A grades.”
“Never missed no class. I seen ever one of them pitchers.”
“Let me get this straight. You took a whole year of English and never
wrote anything. Did you study grammar, mechanics?”
“Doan get you. What English got to do wif mechanics?”
He sat back, silent for a moment, studying her. The sullenness of her
pout unnerved him. “I don’t suppose you did any writing in high
school?” The question hovered unanswered. His fingers joined to form
another church steeple. “So you want to be an English teacher. You’re
going into a high school to try to teach your students how to express
themselves correctly, lucidly.”
“Thas right, I’m gonna be a teacher. Ain’t nothin goin to stop me
neither.”
“But you don’t write well, to put it mildly. This paper is atrocious. Can
you teach English when you don’t know the fundamentals, when you
can’t even write a decent sentence.”
She clenched her jaw. “I don’t write no dirty sentence.”
“You misunderstand.”
She drew herself upright in her chair and spoke as she rose. “Well, I’m
goin to be a teacher and nobody, I mean nobody, ain’t goin to stop me.
Come on, Orenthal, we got to git to Lincoln.” She yanked the boy after her
and he shot out of the door like the tail of a kite.

That evening at dinner Frank told his wife about the black woman’s
determination to teach. "And can you imagine, she's a functional illiterate."

"Monte, Evi, come on you turkeys, settle down." Annie finished ladling soup and furrowed her brow at the children until they stopped their horseplay. "Do you think she'll teach?"

"Over my corpse she will."

"If she graduates and gets her credential, you can't stop her."

"She has to pass my course to meet the ed. requirement. She won't make it."

"You know already?"

"All you have to do is look at her paper."

"Maybe she'll get better."

"Not a chance, Annie. This girl missed the train, starting way back in grade school."

"So let's say she doesn't get by you—she'll just try somebody else in the department."

"I'll spread the word about her." Frank crumbled two crackers in his soup. "There's another problem. I think she's a touch loony."

"Oh dear," his wife said.

"Not bonkers outright, but on the edge. One thing, she's sure paranoid about me."

Monte wanted to know what paranoid meant.

Frank explained the word, then looked from his son to his daughter. "They're the ones who are going to suffer. What happens when they get to high school and know more than their teachers?"

"What are you going to do?"

"I'll start at the School of Education tomorrow. Somebody's got to do what has to be done."

Dean Thurston slid a piece of paper across his desk to Laxalt. "Bill Doobey sent it to me the other day—he's a principal over at Kennedy. We got an epidemic on our hands."

Laxalt read:

KENNEDY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Substitute Rating Form

Check Yes or No for each item below and comment where necessary. Return form to main office upon completion.

Rollbook

Yes

No
Seating Chart  
Yes  
No

Prepared Lessons  
Yes  
No

Cooperative students All

Uncooperative students J. Alvarez

Your comments

Good day. No problems.
* Wrote this to soon.

Any additional explanation

* I blue-slipped J. Alvarez Per. 2 he borrowed a pencil because I didn’t have change and at the end of the period I asked if he had finished the assignment and did he want his text book. He threw the pencil on my desk, I gave him his quarter and leaving my desk he called me a nigger! I then saw red and sent him to the principle.

Signature  
Raynette Harrell

Date  
2/2
"Oh God," Laxalt said.

Dean Thurston nodded. "Sad, huh? No, worse than sad. That sub took a credential here a couple of years ago. Any day now she'll find a full-time job. She's attractive, she's young, she's nice . . . and she's an absolute dumbbell." The Dean gazed out the window. "I've never seen such colors at this time of the year." He turned back to Laxalt and added with the trace of a smile. "You know what she teaches of course."

"Don't tell me. English."

"Bingo."

"How did she get that far?"

"It happens," the Dean sighed. "At least now we've got the state proficiency tests."

"But that's too late," Laxalt protested. "Why let them go on, then zap them when they're getting ready to teach?"

Again the Dean gazed out the window, upper teeth on his knuckles. "And what about the ones already teaching?—so far, we can't touch them."

"Well, Victorene Jenkins isn't going to be one of them."

"We'll have to put a check on her."

"Is that all? Can't I see somebody about her? She must have a supervisor or adviser over here."

Reddening, Dean Thurston flipped through a file. "T. Heebert Easter. I'll have my secretary arrange a conference for you."

At the door Laxalt turned. "What's the T. stand for?"

The Dean cocked an ear as if he hadn't understood.

"I'm always curious about first initials," Laxalt said. "You know, J. Alfred Prufrock. You said, T. Heebert Easter. I just wanted to know what the...." He let his voice trail away.

The Dean turned to another set of files. "Terdell. Why are you smiling?"

"No reason," Laxalt said.

T. Heebert Easter knew who he was and wanted everybody else to know. A black and white puptent sign on his desk bore his name above ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION. His degrees hung under glass in metallic gold frames on a side wall: B.A. Howard University, M.A. Arizona State University, Ed.D. Wayne State University. Laxalt had never seen him on the campus. Easter wore a three-piece glen plaid suit and a ruby stick pin in his tie. The triangular shape of his mocha colored face was accentuated by his gaunt cheeks and long fuzzy sideburns. Hair had receded along the two sides of the crown so that the remaining tuft resembled a peacock's. He kept standing, so Laxalt stood.
At Laxalt’s complaint about his charge, Easter asked for proof, and Laxalt thrust Victorene’s first paper at him.

Easter gave it a quick look. “I’ve seen worse. It’s not so bad.” He ran a hand over his peacock tuft of hair.

“No so bad? It’s awful.”

“There’s other things ‘sides writing.” Easter returned the paper. “You seen her in the classroom? The kids get along with her jus fine. She’s mature, experienced. We need teachers like her.”

“We don’t need any illiterates, and we don’t need a potential psycho either.”

“You in the psychologizing business too huh.” Easter looked him up and down. “Don’t s’pose her being black got anything to do with your getting up on your high horse.”

Laxalt felt his blood race. “I’d be upset about any student who’s this bad.”

“You don’t know anything about her.”

“I know all I need to know.”

“Hell you do. She used to be on hard drugs. You know what saved her?—an education. She was a heroin addict, and she went cold turkey, and that was three years ago. You got any idea what it’s like to get that haint off your back and keep it off?”

“I don’t see what—”

“No, you wouldn’t. She knows what it’s like for kids today. She knows the streets. She knows drugs, crime, prostitution, poverty, living on welfare, early pregnancy, incest—she knows more about real life than you’ll ever know, boy.”

Struggling to keep control of himself, Laxalt shoved Victorene’s paper into his briefcase. “Then let her be a counselor or something. She has no business in the classroom.”

“Classroom’s exactly where she’ll do the most good.”

“No, the most harm.”

Easter tilted his head. “How come you got it in for her? She give you some lip?”

“She didn’t do anything. She’s a terrible student, that’s all, and she’d be even worse as a teacher.”

“You think when you come to a university you won’t find as much as you do out there.” The drop in the abrasive volume of Easter’s voice caught Laxalt’s attention and made him turn at the door. Easter was stroking his peacock tuft of hair. “It’s no different,” he continued dispiritedly. “You find it anyway.”

Laxalt flushed and bit his lip. “We have to have standards.”

“Ya, lily white standards.”

Laxalt threw up his hands. “That’s not fair. Standards don’t have any color.”
Easter snorted as he walked around behind his desk. "They don't huh." He sat down, turned a folder, and began to read.

"Jesus," Laxalt said.

Easter did not look up.

As Laxalt left the School of Education building, his mind a-whirl, he denied to himself again and again that he was driven by any sense of personal vengeance or racial superiority. He did not hold anything against blacks. But he did, he did, and he knew it. He ran through a white litany of slurs against them. It's normal, it's natural to have such feelings, he told himself. The February sun was failing to warm his chilled bones. As brittle leaves blew across the path where he walked back to his office he muttered to himself, I'm not a bigot, I'm not, I'm not.

Second papers had come in from his Critical Approaches to Literature course, and Laxalt sat at his desk brooding over the first page of Victorene Jenkins' work. Two weeks before he had focused on the principles of historical and sociocultural criticism. Laxalt felt that his lectures on The Crucible were inspired. In the zeal of his newly declared war against prejudice, they became passionately motivated exhortations to avoid character assassination, systematized conformity, corporate hysteria. He had lifted all of his ideas from earlier critics but now considered them his own. He reassured himself that he was capable of judging Victorene fairly. And even if he were prejudiced in some slight way, it was not against color, he told himself, it was against stupidity, stupidity like this. Chin cupped in his hand, he reread the first part of Victorene's paper:

No one actually seen it but but him. That caused so much pain for so many innocent people.

I think that author Miller is really trying to show how vicious and underhanded means that Mc Carthyism depicted. It seems to that Miller displays Mc Carthyism on the same level as a woman's scorn, it is just as senseless. Abigail had been defeated, just has was Mc Carthy was conquered. In order to possible gain personal goals. Though the play was not truely the factual accounts.

Laxalt put his head in his hands. What could be done in a case like this? It extended beyond illiteracy. It reflected a condition that was hopeless. It belonged in his hopeless file. He went down the hall into the department's copier room and xeroxed the two pages before marking them. Back in his office he flipped through folders in a file, working backward from WRITING: SUPERIOR, WRITING: PLAGIARISM to WRITING: HOPELESS. He pulled out the folder, put Victorene's on top of the stack, and started to put it away. He stopped and, instead, returned to his desk and began leafing through the folder, filled with copies of papers he had
received and others that were accompanied by notes from friends teaching elsewhere in the state and around the country. The first was from Max Parsons at a four-year college in Utah. His memo began, "Here's a piece of one student's response from an in-class writing assignment:"

I think the worst book I have read has been the Great Gatsby and I don't know who wrought it (they ought to be shoot) and unless I was missing a few pages (and I was not) that should have told me at least what the book was about. It went completely over my head. The book made no sense at all whatsoever. It didn't tell you who was narrating what it was at least about and as far as I am concerned it didn't even have a plot which I could indentify with the book. I myself would be ashamed to put such a lousy piece of workmanship on the news stand. If author could have given the people some names and reasons why the people should even be in the book then maybe I could go back and read the book, but until the book is not rewritten I refuse even to look at the cover.

Laxalt chuckled at Max's parting shot: "I knew this critique would make your day. Pass on these comments to Fitzgerald; I'm sure he's worried about his readership in Utah. If he doesn't improve that book, they're sure to take it off the newstands here."

He flipped to a batch from Norm Gottlieb, teaching at a JC in northern California. Scrawled at the top: "This is what we get every day."

The deer and the fish lives completely different well as there shape and size. The fish has to live in water. As where the deer on the country side. The fish has gill to help breath. The deer has a nose in which they breath. The food they eat are not the same. The fish eat bugs and smaller fish. The deer eats different kinds of plant life. The size of a fish comes in different sizes. From as little as a minow and as big a a whale. The deer stands about for or five tall. The mail deer will grow a set of horns where the fish won't. The fish has a wet slippery serfish where as the deer has a coat of fear. Both or nice to hunt and fish.

He flipped through a few others, reading a sentence here, a sentence there: "Refugees are clustering into this country by the thousands. Speaking no english and understanding no english. Taking job from employed minority that have been here going through think and thin, in order to get that low paying good job. In which will be deprise from them, because of this scared to revolt against there dictatorship regimes I
stress to you that know one, should be aloud to work in this country with
united state citizenship" . . . "The cartoon character Bugs Bunney has the
nack of getting in trouble when he has to. A lot of times. I wish I was bugs
because I would like to get out of trouble more often to. Bugs Bunney has
the power that most people would like to have" . . . "Helan portrays a
woman that hates Chines because of the war and hates living there" . . . "I
just finished bathing my baby when I put her clothes on, she was 10
months old at the time."

Hands behind his head, he stared at his book lined wall. Language
incompetence had become a disease. It wasn't just in need of cosmetic
repair, fixing the occasional laugh-producing faux pas of a student: gorilla
for guerrilla or granite for granted, crucifiction for crucifixion or jeans for genes.
To the contrary, it was nationwide, infesting government, the military,
business, and, worst of all, education. He glanced at a note to the side of
his desk, kept there for the past month to feed his pain. It was a memo to
the staff from one of the department secretaries. He had scrawled across
the top: JESUS, CAN YOU IMAGINE, A COLLEGE-EDUCATED,
EXPERIENCED, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT SECRETARY! It read:

After Registration Dennis Yerblans stated, that these who
had come to sign in out be allowed in first, I have the original
sign in sheets. When you find notes in your box that someone
has been added, that means that I have checked the original
sheet and have found that there is room. If you have any
questions tommorow when classes begin-if students tell you
they have been registered in-please have them check with me
before allowing them into class if you have more than one
who wants in, as we have waiting lists for several classes.

Laxalt was by now leaning so far backwards in his chair that it nearly
tipped over. He expelled his breath and closed the folder decisively.
Annie would tell him he was being a terrible snob. She was good at
reminding him to guard against the snobbism inherent in his role of
advantage. Of course students made silly stupid mistakes. English
professors loved to chortle over them. But surely these gaffes were trivial.
She had a point. Life consisted of far more important matters. The great
sprawling country of which he was so proud was not built by people who
fussed over the niceties of language. After all, he had grown up on the
broken accent, the mangled sentences of his own grandfather. What did it
matter whether HAIR-us was preferred over Ha-RASS to a Scandahoo
tian who worked with his hands for sixty years? But making cabinets
was far different from working with young minds in a school, as Victorene Jenkins would be doing.

"I've got to talk to her," he muttered. "This charade can't go on."
“Let your boy sit outside so we can concentrate,” Laxalt said. “I’ve got
some art books over there he can look at.”

“He be fine where he is.”

Laxalt sighed. “Did you bring the paper I marked?”

“Ain’t no grade on it.”

“I couldn’t grade it—I want it redone.” In the long run rewriting
wouldn’t do her any good and he knew it. He couldn’t bring himself to tell
her what he was thinking. He wanted to appear fair, although his mind
was still made up that she would fail his course. He went on: “If I had
graded it, it would have been a flat F. You don’t want an F on the paper, do
you?”

She looked at him, her face impassive, and said nothing. This time,
instead of filling in, he waited for a response from her. She took out the
silence on her son by telling him to shut up. “Hold on now,” Laxalt said.
“He wasn’t doing anything.” Laxalt felt his voice rising. “I want you to talk
to me. Don’t keep using him as an excuse.” He tried to ignore her pout.
They glared at one another until she dropped her eyes. “Victorene, are
you sure you—” Laxalt lowered his voice. “I still don’t understand why
you chose English. There are other things you could do."

She shifted in her seat. “You tryin to tell me I can’t be no teacher?”

“Explain to me what’s so important about teaching.” He waited. “I said,
explain to me what’s so important about teaching.” He waited. “Well.”

“’S a good job. I likes chirren.”

“Is that all?”

“I likes talkin ‘bout things in books. Makes me feel like I’m doin some
real good.”

“What things?”

“Same’s you talk ‘bout.”

“Oh, you can do that, huh. Tell me what you’d say.” He sat back waiting.
She stared at the point near his desk that she always fixed upon when in
his office. He slid his chair over to it. She twisted her head away. He
smirked as he slid back behind his desk. “I think we better change the
subject, don’t you?” A long minute passed as he sought something to talk
about. “You must have been influenced by some good teachers when you
were young. Role models. Who were they?” He waited. “Did you have
any?”

“One. Mrs. Jefferson.”

“Why was she so good?”

“She talked lots. Kidderd around. Wasn’t nothin she wouldn’t talk
about. Used to talk to her ‘bout—‘bout girl stuff. Didn’t have no mother to
talk to—she out sleepin ‘round, my dad in jail.”

“Oh, what for?”

She scowled at him.

“It’s all right, you don’t have to tell me.”
"Killed two men who was cheatin him at cards."
"Good heavens."
"Don't make no never mind. Ain't seen him in seven years."
"You had this Mrs. Jefferson for English?"
"Yup. Two years in a row."
"She didn't teach you anything. Victorene. You may have liked her and admired her, but you didn't learn one damn thing from her."
"Did too. Got As from her. Got As from Mr. Hobart too. You won't even give me no grade."
"Grades don't matter that much. What counts is whether you can handle the language. And I'm afraid you can't—you're way behind where you should be."
"Ain't either. I be catching up. I'm goin to do real good in this course."

Laxalt pinched his eyes with thumb and forefinger, then shook his head. "You need to back up and start remedial English." He took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. "You're going to have a tough time getting through my course. You may not make it." Why was he still unable to tell her directly that she was going to fail?

Panic swept over her face anyway. "I got to have this course. You goin to stop me from graduating. You can't do that."

"Yes I can. Both of your papers have been—I can fail you on writing alone. I'll know definitely next week after your first exam."

She fought against the fear that crinkled her forehead and glazed her eyes. "I'm goin to do good in that exam. Real good."

Her score turned out to be 65, a D+, by no means the abysmal failure he had expected. Her essays, though miserably written, were not without some ideas, and she did better than he thought she would in the objective section and in identification and discussion of quotations. He could have made some adjustment in the exam to lower her grade, yet he was afraid to do it. He wanted an outright failure of the exam as evidence to show the School of Education that her case was hopeless. The object would be to deny her the possibility of going any farther in pursuit of a credential. Now he wasn't sure what to do. If only her status were as clear-cut as it was for her friend Naomi Gaines. He had run into Naomi that afternoon in the hall and asked her to stop by his office.

Her appearance made him smile with pleasure, although her flat nose, large jaw, protruding eyes, corn-rowed hair hardly made her an attractive woman. He liked her looks for a particular reason. Once in a while as a hobby he restored old pieces of furniture. She put him in mind of fine wood. Her skin was as flawless as highly polished black walnut. Her large strong teeth gave her a dazzling smile—and she smiled often. She sat straight backed opposite him, looking him square in the eye, perfectly at ease.

"Naomi, I called you in because I want your help. You're an honor
student and you’ll go on to become a very good teacher. How do you feel about blacks who aren’t as good as you, who can’t write, who don’t speak well? Do you think they should become teachers?”

“You’re talking about Victorene.”

Laxalt colored. “Yes and no. I say no because I’m concerned with a bigger problem. It goes beyond one person—you know that.”

“Yes sir, I do.” She grew pensive. “I don’t know how to answer.”

“Try, please. I want to know how you truly feel.”

“You talked one day in class about the head-heart conflict. I’m torn in the same way. Intellectually I get mad at folks like Victorene or Rufer Jones or Willie Spitz on the football team. They don’t try in academics. Sometimes I also think they’re plain dumb. Then my heart jumps up and says, whoa, hold it right there. Look at the families they came from, the rotten schooling they got, all the disadvantages they had. Sure, they’re at fault, but only partially. That’s why I’m so torn.” She gave him a sideways look. “I’m not being fair—I said Victorene didn’t try, but she’s studying harder’n I’ve ever seen her study for your class.”

“You’ve been helping her, haven’t you? You helped her with the exam.”

“We studied together. That’s okay, isn’t it?”

“Of course. Some of the best learning of all goes on when students help each other.”

“Doctor Laxalt, I—” Naomi hesitated. “She knows you don’t like her.”

“I don’t dislike her.”

“The class is very important to her. She says her whole life depends on this class.”

“No need for her to be so dramatic.” He swiveled in his chair. “Let me put a harder question to you. Would you let someone like Victorene teach your own children? Would you want her to teach them English?”

“Oh my.”

“Come on.”

“Well, the part of me that’s her friend, the part of me that makes us blacks together, they make me say, yes, put her in the classroom. The part of me that’s a teacher says, no way.”

Laxalt came around his desk and bent to Naomi. He wanted to give her a hug. Instead he took her hand. “Thanks for being honest.” He straightened. “Been a long day. Let me walk you out.”

On the way home Frank stopped at a discount liquor mart to buy some wine, the emblem of a secret language between him and his wife, signal of a private time later that night. He made sure as he went by the check stands to leaf through latest copies of Penthouse and Oui. Not that he needed to be inspired—he was horny enough. He rationalized away his guilty pleasure by masking it as curiosity. He peered down at Hustler, wanting to rip off the plastic seal—but he never had.
It was all right to let images of vaginas and breasts fill his head, he told himself. His marriage was secure and comfortable. He and Annie had a good relationship, if he overlooked her tendency to mother him. Except at times of passion, they rarely spoke of love. They enjoyed each other's company and got along well. They loved their children dearly. Their marriage suffered little from the weight of stored grievances or anxieties. They were neither brown baggers nor disaster seekers. Having discovered that they did not qualify for those terms and others like them, they had set aside the advice book on marriage from which they had learned them, and it had not been taken from its shelf for nine years. A wave of good feeling passed through Frank: he was a good husband and a good father.

It fought against another feeling. He had bought the wine for quite a different reason: to assuage guilt. For the past week or so, as he put the final touches on a paper to be delivered at a conference in Los Angeles, he was obsessed with thoughts of a former student of his: Courtney Raines. Courtney Raines, who had taken four classes from him. Courtney Raines: his favorite student over eleven years of teaching, the only one who had ever got to him. He had seen her develop from a big-eyed quiet frosh to a cool, self-assured senior, and a stunning one at that: shoulder-length wheat hair, long slender legs, full breasts. He had never laid a hand on her, each year congratulating himself for not doing it when desperately he wanted to.

He knew that a few of his colleagues had seduced some of their students, males and females. All such liaisons he considered unprofessional, beneath him. He had made up his mind—or so he told himself years before—that he would always remain professional, and that meant no harassment, no innuendoes, no pressures, no forced intimacies. And yet Courtney Raines had got to him. Although he sensed that she wanted him, he continued to refrain from so much as touching her. Professionalism, he told himself. Down deep he knew what really prevented him from doing what he wanted to do, and professionalism had nothing to do with it. It was fear. Fear of rejection. Fear of embarrassment. Fear of fear.

So she had graduated and gone off to southern California to work in an advertising agency. His star, his budding poet, his neophyte literary critic, whom he wanted to go on for M.A. and Ph.D. and come back and teach alongside him, was now pushing bras or booze or whatever hucksterism had compelled her to sell herself to. How many boyfriends did she have? Or had she married? He didn’t know. Since her departure he had longed to write her, to phone her, but he did nothing. Professionalism, he told himself. And yet often in his dreams they made love in the most erotic ways. His fantasies of a life with her magnified or receded, depending upon his mood and circumstances.

He bought the wine for a third reason, juxtaposed against his guilt: an
exuberant overpowering feeling of machismo. That afternoon from his office, heart pounding, throat dry, he had called Courtney Raines to tell her that he would be in Los Angeles for a three-day conference—could he see her while he was there? She would be thrilled at the prospect. That was her very word: thrilled.

When his wife kissed him at the airport upon his return, Frank drew back in pain. His upper lip was puffed where Courtney had bit him. “What is it?” his wife said, “what happened?” Averting his eyes, he replied, “Cold sore.”

The class was arguing over Henry James. Having completed work on formalism, Laxalt had assigned the short novel *The Turn of the Screw* as an introduction to psychological criticism. He had summarized Edmund Wilson’s psychoanalytical reading of the governess and now had opened up the discussion with the old chestnut: which way to interpret, as a literal ghost story or as an imaginative projection of the psyche of a frustrated spinster?

The Compulsives dominated at the beginning as they always did. Slaughter started by arguing for the acceptance of a literal ghost story and cited Coleridge’s remark on the temporary suspension of disbelief as supporting evidence. “If you accept the ghost of Hamlet’s father, then you accept the presence of Quint and Miss Jessel. It has to be a ghost story.” He sat back, arms folded, absolutely certain of his position.

Hauptmann leaped in. “Besides, James himself referred to it as his *amusette, a piece of ingenuity*—it was about ‘demon spirits,’ if not ghosts *per se.*” Hauptmann waved his intelligence around like pendants in the vanguard of a marching band. When he went on to argue that James didn’t intend the work to be taken seriously, Laxalt saw an opportunity to explain the intentional fallacy. But Hauptmann persisted over the beginning of his definition. These were the times when Laxalt wondered about helping Hauptmann get into graduate school. He was a likely prospect, if only he weren’t so arrogant. “There’s no way you can read the Preface and his letters and conclude it’s anything else but a story about ghosts,” Hauptmann said flatly. “Okay, now let me get back to intentional fallacy,” Laxalt said. When he was finished he looked back to Hauptmann. “So you see, Kurt, it’s quite possible to have an interpretation different from what the writer may have expressed or intended. Robert Frost said one time that a poet is entitled to whatever may be found in his poem. He’s right, you know. You can’t make up stuff; you have to be able to support an interpretation within the context of the work itself, but various interpretations are possible. Do you see?” Hauptmann gave a slight nod, but the pugilistic thrust of his chin said, Who else to trust but the writer—after all, he wrote it.
Fey’s dulcet voice came from near the window. “I support what you first suggested, Dr. Laxalt: everything exists in the governess’s head. Why else would you assign the story under ‘Psychological Criticism’?” After laughter of the class subsided, she listed her reasons. They showed that she had read Wilson and others supporting him. She had marked a half-dozen citations in the text to support her ideas. Hauptmann and Slaughter counter-argued. An Occasional slipped in a remark, and then another. Laxalt always liked this time of class discussion when the Compulsives lost their stranglehold and the Occasionals took over. He always hoped to hear from the Mutes, but only rarely did they ever break out of their self-protective shells. He kept himself quiet and enjoyed the give-and-take among the students. The argument ricocheted for another ten or fifteen minutes: pro ghost story, pro repressed spinster. Laxalt grew heady over his superior teaching abilities. He had every reason to be proud, he assured himself, for here was professionalism at its best. To his delight, a Mute spoke up. Laxalt was gentle with her, even though her reasoning about Mrs. Grose was faulty. After all, with such encouragement, the Mute might become an Occasional. The students went on arguing.

Laxalt’s gaze roamed the class. It alighted on Victorene, who sat near the door, for once without her son beside her. When Laxalt saw her body shift on her buttocks he knew she was going to blurt out something. She was an Occasional, but rather than ever raise her hand in a discussion she merely began talking, sometimes over another voice. Her opinions—often non sequiturs—were rendered with a fierce glare upon the instructor. At a slight lull, she began:

“You was talkin yestiday ‘bout the lil girl, you know, the other day, puttin a stick in the little hole. You know, this piece of wood like a boat, screwing it in. Phall—sumpin, whatever, you know, you was sayin like it was, I mean, having sex, you know. Well, it ain’t got nothing to do with sex. It’s like she’s stabbin the gubness right in the heart. It’s like voodoo, you know, like she’s stickin pins in her to kill her.”

A titter came from one side of the room, then another, and Laxalt saw eyeballs rolling. A silence settled over the class. How cruel they are, he thought, the way they put her down. He wanted to spring to her defense, but what could he say to support such an asinine interpretation.

“Well, we’re all entitled to our opinions,” he said, “but, remember, you have to be able to provide support within the context of the work. There’s no evidence in the story to support this reading, Victorene.”

“’Smy interprashun,” Victorene said, “You say different interprashuns is, you know, you can have different interprashuns.”

“Yes, I did say so, but that doesn’t mean you can interpret in some fanciful way. What you’re doing is symbol hunting,” Laxalt enumerated its dangers. She wasn’t understanding a word he said. When he turned to her once more, she repeated, “Well, ’smy interprashun.”
Laxalt tried to get a discussion going again, to no avail. Class debate was delicately buoyant—the exchange between him and the black woman had deflated it. For the remaining few minutes of the class, Laxalt had to return to his lecture notes.

As Frank stood outside by the entryway flowerboxes, letting a fine spray play over the azelia, the sacroccoa, the marigolds in between, down to the lobelia, portulaca, celosia, his thoughts were on Victorene. She had failed in her third straight paper and a recent quiz, and kept on making a fool of herself in class. She continued to drag along her son wherever she went. He wore the same sport coat, same hat, same trousers, same tie—only his shirt seemed different once in a while. And the child wore the same wide-eyed look he had the first day he appeared in class alongside his mother. Kite Tailing and Other Irrational Acts. The Easter break was coming, and Frank needed to make a decision about the woman.

He knew what his colleagues would do. Feed her to the lions. 37 to 2. The thumbs-uppers were a couple of softies in the writing program, notorious as easy graders, especially of minority students. Brainwashed by the liberalism of an earlier generation, they had grown old believing that special privileges must be accorded the disadvantaged. The rest had leaped up on the ramparts of higher standards, determined now to stem the rising tide of mediocrity.

If it were so easy for thirty-seven others to turn thumbs down, then why not him? Why couldn't he finish her off and stop being so preoccupied with her? He liked to think that while he was strong and forthright he was also more sensitive and humane than his colleagues. Why, it was simply not in his nature to be hardhearted. Think of the obstacles Victorene had had to overcome. One couldn't expect a foreign student to achieve mastery of a new language. Victorene was in a similar boat—standard English was alien to her. But there was the rub: she was going to teach it. What would his neighbors do, he wondered, were they faced by the prospect of having Victorene teach their children?

The hardest on her would probably be the Arbuthnots, the only blacks on the block. Frank glanced catty-corner across the street at their brick-front frame house. When Arbuthnot had bought the house three years before (at a price fifteen thousand dollars more than it was worth), some neighbors were incensed. One early morning when Frank got up to run, he saw a cross on the Arbuthnots’ lawn. It was made of crudely nailed pieces of 2 x 4, strewn under it matches and bits of charred paper, obviously the work of children. Frank was outraged and deliberated whether to remove the cross. He was afraid that if he went near it he would be seen as the perpetrator. But he steeled himself, strode over onto the lawn, snatched up the cross, and threw it in his car. On the way to the park he tossed it in a dumpster that sat in front of a house undergoing repair. He was deeply ashamed of his neighbors.
Although he could not pinpoint the guilty, he guessed that a couple of the Gridley boys were responsible. They lived two houses over on the corner behind motorcycles and cars parked on dead-dry grass. Their crude, big-breasted mother thrived on trivial hard feelings that gave her meaningless life meaning. A divorcée, she had taken in a lover the age of her oldest son. Along with another two girls in the family, the place crawled with dogs and cats. It was a lively bastion of seediness and pot and rock: nigger-hating, spic-hating, kike-hating, intellect-hating, hating whatever it didn’t understand, which was most everything. So Frank knew well how Victorene would fare at their hands: they didn’t care if she was a lousy potential teacher; they’d lynch her for being black.

Directly across the street, shades always drawn behind barred windows, lived a retired couple, one a diabetic, the other with an ulcerated leg. Whenever either managed to emerge outside, released temporarily from the Cyclopean eye of a front-room TV, it was to bemoan what was happening to the neighborhood: their fear of transient families and blacks and chicanos and Vietnamese; alarm at the increase in muggings, vandalism, wife beatings, rapes, household robberies; bafflement that their beloved old city was corroding as insidiously as rust. Then, following resigned sigh, back to join life’s partner in the inner sanctum of their illnesses, their soap operas, their game shows. They had no children to suffer—Victorene meant nothing to them as long as she stayed out of their neighborhood.

But next door children would suffer, and opposition could be counted on from Sarah Picardy, who had once been a high-stepping drum majorette for minority causes. Unable to find a job teaching, she had gone to work for the Department of Public Assistance at a branch office in a black ghetto. After six years there she had turned into a cynical, hardened bigot. Surrounded daily by black smells and black cries and black hate, she could not bear the utter dependence of her clients on the welfare system while at the same time they seethed with anger against it. Her loud voice piercing through walls from next door reflected her frustration: she dumped on her husband as she herself was dumped on day after day by the poor and the greedy. She took pains in relating to Frank their venom: “You honky, when I gwine git my money, mine, mine, what due me” . . . “How you ’spect me to feed my fambly, when this here wht we got, right chere, foatee cents, and ain but the middle of the month” . . . “That mothahfuckah done split, and you sits here and tells me I cain’t get no more bread. Shit, shit on him, and shit on you you mothahfuckin white bitch.” Because she could never talk back to her clients, her only recourse (aside from quitting, which she would never consider in view of her high salary) was to store up her bitterness for release at home. In that household Victorene wouldn’t stand a chance except maybe with Larry, Larry the carpet layer, Larry the linoleum layer, Larry the lady layer, who had
turned into a chaser because he couldn’t stand being dumped on all the time.

Frank turned to water the other side. How would Victorene fare to starboard? Worse than to port because Lucky Doler could hate more. He was a specialist in dumping on his wife Sue and their two boys, born thirteen years apart, the latter conceived out of desperation to hold together an already shaky marriage. Lucky worked for a contractor who specialized in custom-made homes built for an elite clientele in exclusive northerly sites perched on hills or poised over the Winding River. So, unlike Sarah facing the poor, Lucky dealt with the highest rung of the economic ladder: corporate executives and wheelerdealer businessmen, incorporated MDs and dentists. Day after day he was dumped on by them and by their wives: “The light switch was supposed to be bronze, not brass, and what’s it doing there when it was supposed to be an inch this way” . . . “You see that flaw in the dormer casement—replace it, now” . . . “No flunky is going to con me. What do you think we’re paying a half-million for—junk. I want it fixed now, and that means now.” So he came home and dumped on his wife. And she dumped on the seventeen-year-old who took it out on the little kid who gave it to the dog. As the voices rose on both sides, Frank went into the house and poured himself a drink.

When he came back outside to put away the hose, he saw George Arbuthnot out watering his plants and waved at him. At first, George did not see him. He was scowling upward at the wing of a new thirty-unit stucco apartment building that leered into his bedrooms. He and his wife, a lovely mulatto, had fought hard against its construction. They remonstrated against the city council and the city planning commission, without success. But the petition drive they spearheaded led to a rezoning that prevented the encroachment of additional apartment projects in the neighborhood. Meantime they could do nothing about this monstrosity. The bottles and cans littering its parking lot disgusted them. Its squealing tires worried them everytime their three small children played outside. Its cacophonous music ruined their sleep. And George personally held in scorn every black who moved into it.

How would he feel when his children grew older and were greeted by Victorene in a classroom? Frank crossed the street, and, after explaining, put the question to him directly. Arbuthnot tilted his large nostriled nose backward and laughed. “You’re asking me, would you have your kid operated on by a surgeon who can’t cut?”

“But we need minority teachers.”

“Sure we do, same as CPAs, bankers, engineers, you name it. But lots of black folks got the idea they don’t need to work hard to get where they’re going. They just want to be there, whether they’re trained or not. Well, I don’t buy it. I worked my ass off to be a CPA. I expect others to do the same. Your girl wants the easy way, without paying any price.”

“She may be willing to pay the price—she has a fixation about teaching.
I'm just afraid she hasn't got what it takes."

"That's why you're in the position you're in. It's your job to keep out the duds. If she's not qualified she's not qualified, period."

"But she's black, and I don't want to hurt her."

Arbuthnot gave him a long look. "The way you didn't want to hurt me."

"I don't know what you mean."

George watched the spray shooting in a rainbow arch across his curb strip. "The cross you took off my lawn a couple years ago. Yes, I saw you."

"Why didn't you ever say anything?"

"Never any need to, until now. One way, it was good of you to do it—not so good in another. We had to learn ourselves to cope with the prejudice around here."

"Hasn't it dissipated by now?"

"Sure, some."

By the time Frank reached the middle of the street between Arbuthnot's home and his own, he had made a decision.

Victorene stood before Laxalt's desk, shaking. "Why for you do me this?" Her fury had turned her lips gray.

"What?" He knew exactly what she meant.

"You know what I say, you call the man—Dean what's-his-name, you talk to people over in the school. You tell 'em I's no good, I can't be no teacher, what for you do that?"

"Sit down, please. Have your boy wait out there."

"He go where I goes."

"No, I won't talk to you this way. Let him wait outside."

"Now you tryin to bust up me and my Thal."

"I'm not trying to do any such—" When she grabbed the boy's hand and started out the door, he raised his voice. "Stop it. Get back in here."

She turned. Her eyes were crazed. She pushed the boy toward the corner of the room where he cowered, hands behind him. For a moment Laxalt feared that she might have a knife or a razor on her. "You fuck me over," she said, teeth clenched, bending toward Laxalt over his desk. "You show that Dean all my stuff. Make me look real bad. They has a meeting. He tell me I can't be in their program no more."

She straightened and let out a great shrieking moan.

"Calm down," Laxalt said. He waited for her to regain her composure. Her son had put his hands over his face and was watching her through his opened fingers. "This isn't the end of world," Laxalt continued. "You can do other things. Maybe you can learn how to be a counselor. From what Easter tells me you'd be good at it."
"Don't want to do nothin else but teach."

"Don't you understand, you can't. The deprived leading the deprived—you'd only hurt them more. For another thing, you'd never be able to pass the CBEST. I know the criteria, I know why you'd fail. Your writing is disorganized, it lacks focus, you don't know how to develop ideas, your writing is confused and contradictory, and, my god, you make countless mistakes in grammar and mechanics and spelling."

"What you tellin me about that CBEST for? That ain't for a time. The semester ain't even up. You didn't give me no chance to finish the course."

"You were going to fail anyway. I was only trying to spare you. I have to fail you, I have no choice."

"You spittin on me. You spittin on me cause I'm black. Black and poor."

"Victorene, please." From his angle below her, he could see the taut cords on either side of her neck.

"You think I'm dumb, but I ain't."

Laxalt closed his eyes and then looked up at her again. A sheen came into her eyes, glistening brightly, but the face below was shattered.

"You got no call to do me bad. I never done nothin to you, never, nothin."

She spun and ran from the office, leaving her wide-eyed boy behind. Laxalt and the boy looked at each other wordlessly. Then, hands in his pockets, head down, the boy shuffled out to try to find his mother.

Over the Easter break Courtney flew up for a weekend in San Francisco. She took a suite at the Hyatt Regency on the Embarcadaro. Frank had to make up an elaborate excuse to his wife about the necessity for going off to conduct research in Berkeley. The weekend cost him six hundred dollars. He didn't know how he could get away with it. He felt himself slipping into a quagmire.

"Dr. Easter from the School of Ed is here," the secretary said on the inter-office phone. "Can he see you?"

"Sure," Laxalt said. He stared out the office window. The campus was in glorious full color. A couple more weeks and the semester would be over. So would his triumph over the adversity of a semester with clinkers like Victorene Jenkins and her ilk. Good riddance, he told himself.

Easter bristled into the office. "I hope you're satisfied with what you done."

Laxalt stared at him.

"Well, don'tchu want to know?"

"You'll tell me, whether I want you to or not."

"Victorene Jenkins, she's dead."

"No. How?"

"OD."
“Oh God. When?”
“Easter day. Had enough heroin in her to kill a team of horses.”
“How awful. And the boy?”
Easter ran his fingers through his tuft of hair. “What boy?”
“Her boy. Is he okay?”
“Don’t know nothing about a boy. What you trying to do?—throw off your blame on something else. You killed that woman, sure’s I’m standing here.”

When Easter had finally stopped sputtering and left, Laxalt’s thoughts turned more to the son than to the dead woman. The poor little surviving child. No mother, father who knows?—a bum, a criminal, a heroin addict. What would happen to the boy? Poor tyke. But he could be saved—the solution was clear. How noble. The child could be adopted. Why yes, how kind. We’ll raise him. Everybody would say of Laxalt, now there’s a decent, generous human being, took in that poor little colored kid, a homeless waif, right into his own home, gave him the best of everything, made him what he was to become: a doctor, a senator, a professor.

Five minutes later, Frank’s heart was not so open. What about the effects of a new child in the house, and a black one at that? How would he be accepted by his own children? What if the kid turned out to be rotten?

By the time he had put to himself a dozen more of these questions, his altruism began to fade. By the next morning, without ever speaking to his wife, he had talked himself out of the idea, having dredged up every possible objection. The gesture was, he decided finally, impossible. He had no idea what would happen to the boy.

He became very occupied for a few months with his own children.

“How was school?”
“Okay.”
“Like your new teachers?”
“Yeah, I guess so.”
“You don’t seem so sure.”
“They’re okay, ’cept for one. In social studies.” Evi peered up at her father. “He’s a black man.”
“That’s nice. Who is he?”
“Mr. Willson. Two is. He goes, ‘And don’t you let me see no one l.’”
“Says, says, for the millionth time. Not goes. What else did he say?”
“He goes, ‘Children, I’m gonna learn you good.’ Daddy, it’s teach, I know it’s teach.”

71
ARTICLES
Our Lady Correspondent:
The Achievement of
Elizabeth Drew Stoddard

Sybil B. Weir

"This being my first essay to establish myself in the columns of your paper as one of 'our own,' I debate in my mind how to appear most effectively, whether to present myself as a genuine original or adopt some great example in style. . . . On the whole I conclude not to attempt the ornate at present, but to send you letters containing facts and opinions."

With these words, on October 8, 1854, Elizabeth Drew Stoddard began her first "letter" as a regular correspondent for the Daily Alta California, San Francisco's oldest daily newspaper. For over three years, Stoddard wrote a remarkable series of columns reporting on the cultural activities in New York City. Stoddard's column provided San Francisco with its only regular reports of the cultural scene in the East. There were, no doubt, many San Franciscans who were introduced to Thoreau and Whitman by reading Stoddard.

*I would like to thank the SJSU Media Services staff and the reviewers for San Jose Studies for their assistance.
Who was Elizabeth Drew Stoddard, "Our Lady Correspondent," as the *Alta*’s readers affectionately knew her? Stoddard, née Elizabeth Drew Barstow, was a New Englander who had grown up in a fishing village on Buzzard’s Bay. Sometime in 1851 or 1852, she married Richard Henry Stoddard, an aspiring poet. Always on the edge of poverty, the couple became a permanent part of the literary scene in New York.

Elizabeth Stoddard, like her husband, aspired to a career as a writer, and published poetry, sketches, and short stories for fifty years. During the 1860’s, she published three novels: *The Morgesons* (1862), *Two Men* (1865), and *Temple House* (1867). Apparently, Stoddard’s novels seemed too bizarre, even perverse, for the readers of her day, and their sales were disappointingly small. After Stoddard’s death, her literary achievement was quickly forgotten; today, the work of rediscovery and re-evaluation is just beginning.

Stoddard’s achievement in the *Alta* columns merits recognition. She was, in fact, the first woman to become a regular correspondent for an out-of-town newspaper. More remarkably, many of her columns can be read with as much pleasure today as when she wrote them. The New York of the 1850’s becomes alive to us, bustling with energy, with fall droughts and dreary winters, street vendors and literary personages, opera stars and business failures, corrupt politicians and rich wife-beaters, Parisian fashions and amorous suicides. Stoddard herself becomes alive to us, her strong-minded judgments on what constitutes literary achievement, her self-mockery about being poor and being a poor housekeeper, her satirical attitude toward America’s most cherished values, her ties to the bleak New England coast where she grew up and which shaped her imagination.

All the available evidence suggests that Stoddard’s column was popular in San Francisco. The fact that the column survived for almost four years, despite numerous changes in the ownership and the editorial staff of the *Alta*, indicates that the management of the newspaper thought her column helped sell papers. After a year, her column was moved from the back pages of the newspaper to the front page of the Sunday edition, where it appeared every two weeks. She was no longer just "A Lady Correspondent" but "Our Lady Correspondent" (emphasis added).

Another sign of Stoddard’s celebrity was being deemed a subject worthy of caricature by Squibob, the alias of George H. Derby, a popular San Francisco humorist. As Stoddard told her *Alta* readers, "Squibob . . . has . . . honored me with a series of drawings in his sketch-book. Your correspondent is represented with a squalling baby, a shirtless husband, and shoes down at the heel. O, Squibob! where is your originality? Strong-minded women are always caricatured in this way. Shoes down at
the heel began with Aspasia, and shirtless husbands came in when the
Roman toga went out” (7 July 1865).

The witty and self-ironic tone that Stoddard exhibits in this passage
offers us one clue to her popularity as a columnist. In addition, although
Stoddard’s readers may never have known her actual name, knowing her
only as “Our Lady Correspondent” or E.D.B., the closing signature of her
column, they did have a vivid sense of her life in New York. Unlike the
other “letters” in the Alta, which are dry and stilted reports of the political
and economic news, Stoddard’s letters are just that—letters from a good
friend, a potpourri of the latest literary gossip, satiric accounts of local and
national politics, her reaction to the weather, to the Crimean War, to the
hagiography of George Washington, to recipes in Mrs. Horace Mann’s
cookbook.

Stoddard presents herself as one of us, an ordinary human being, a
wife, a mother, struggling to make it in New York, poor, above all poor: “I
want money enough to forget money” (8 June 1856). To be poor in New
York meant making your own bonnet and then telling your California
readers exactly how you trimmed it. To be poor in New York meant
having to move constantly, “to go from one disagreeable place to
another” (19 March 1855), and telling your California readers exactly
how you felt:

I am moved; ... I see no longer the bright and happy sun. No
medium is rose-colored. Soap suds cover the windows,
bubbles all .... A continual washing is going on of every thing
that should not be washed, but I cannot discern through the
fog what is right, and what is wrong.

It is cold weather. The parlor stove is trying to sun itself on
the back piazza. The carpets are in the cellar; favorable for
them, for they won’t get frostbitten .... I give only a faint
outline of my distress. That my last bonnet crowns a broom
handle, and my only silk dress serves as a wrapper for the
astral lamp, is nothing. Our precious books are the pavement
on which we walk. Sundry bookcases have toppled down;
Longfellow’s poems are in the dust-pan; Moore has sunk into
my jar of peaches. The “Universal Biography” has sneaked
under the sofa. What then can be expected of me amid this
domestic chaos? (9 June 1855)

A brief period of financial stability meant being able to move from a
boardinghouse to an apartment: “I am established in the dignity of
housekeeping .... I have scalded myself but once .... My little boy sits in
a bamboo chair at the family board, and divides his mashed potato
between his mouth and the floor with generous impartiality. In a few
words you have the tout-ensemble of the family. It is a romantic picture
and it is a bore. I sympathize with Mrs. Jellyby. Her eyes were fixed on Africa and her letter envelopes dropped in the gravy; mine are fixed on California [on the necessity of having to write a column], and I forget to buy anything to eat” (21 June 1857).

Today, as in the 1850’s, we appreciate Stoddard’s ability to mock herself, to laugh instead of cry. We also appreciate the serious issue Stoddard addresses: the impossibility of combining both domestic duties and serious writing. During a time when women writers glorified, at least in print, women as domestic angels, Stoddard’s open disavowal of that role is refreshing. When Stoddard began to write her novels in the 1860’s, she hoped they would bring in enough money to free her from domestic drudgery; thus, she told her husband in 1861 that “I am never going to do any more housework if I can help it, I am an AUTHOR.” Alas, Stoddard’s dream never came true; the couple never achieved enough financial stability to enable her to devote herself exclusively to writing. The poverty she describes in the *Alta* is the poverty she endured throughout her life.

In the 1850’s, Stoddard was still young and could refract her own struggles through a lens of irony. And what matters in the *Alta* columns is the lens through which Stoddard refracts the facts she recounts. It is her wit which engages us still, though the subject may be as ephemeral as the weather. Of late winter, she writes, “the city wears a most nasty appearance: hillocks of ice, fine brown muck and deceitful puddles are the basis of the streets. Everything is dull. Suicide is a lively idea—a murder refreshing; incendiarism a necessary amusement in such days as these, the consumptive stage of old winter” (19 March 1855). Of a hot September: “In the city we are dust-bound . . . . The leaves of the trees are curled up in quiet contempt, the vegetables look meagre, and the fruit has an air of premature age” (7 October 1854). Again: “our March winds and rainless skies have made the weather intolerable; dust we are, and dust we eat” (9 May 1855).

She takes her readers on rambles around the city or, as she tells us, at least to those points of interest that a woman is permitted to visit. Stoddard is an acute observer, recreating the scene for her readers through sensuous descriptions:

> The edges of Fulton Market are blooming with daisies, roses, and verbenas; behind them rises a row of stalwart market women, imperturbable, indifferent, and brassy. The ancient and fish-like smell which pervades the premises does not quite overpower the sweet odors of these simple flowers, as much out of place there as a baby would be in the forecastle of a whaleship. . . . I am in sight of stalls, where boiled eggs and doughnuts rest in pyramids, defying dust and digestion. (12 July 1857)
Stoddard is always alert to the incongruous in human affairs. As she takes her readers on a tour to Greenwood, the city of the dead, the cemetery takes on a carnival atmosphere as we see children hawking hard candy at the gate, ladies in deep mourning chomping down on these “green cannon balls” while laying flowers on a grave, “refreshment rooms, their ham and coffee in juxtaposition with marble monuments and gravestones” (19 November 1854).

There is also gossip and scandal. We learn that Singer, the inventor of the sewing machine, has made money enough “to move from the Fourth Avenue, where he had humble apartments, and where he was addicted to the habit of kicking his wife, into the Fifth, where of course such habits are unknown” (5 April 1857). We read that one leading magazine “is conducted by a buccaneer style, being mainly compiled [i.e., stolen] from English sources” and that “The Knickerbocker is rather distinguished for not paying its contributors” (3 December 1854). We are told that Herman Melville is the anonymous author of “Bonito [sic] Cereno” in the latest issue of Putnam’s Magazine (4 November 1855), and that “Washington Irving . . . spoils the dignity of his face by wearing a youthful wig, arranged after the manner of his picture, painted years ago” (4 November 1855). Miss Lynch’s literary “evenings have lost much of their original brilliancy. Saturday evening the ‘clebs’ [sic] were to all appearance stupid, slow folks. I talked with myself, and thought I saw a vast growth of intellect” (8 January 1855).

Not only did Stoddard gossip about her adventures as a rather arrogant friend might, but she also satisfied her readers by telling them how the East viewed Californians. The California widow and the Returning Californian often figure in her columns; the latter becomes, according to her, an index to the progress of California: “The first returned Californian wore a long beard for a week after his arrival; he displayed knobs of virgin gold in his shirt and on his watch chain and fingers . . . . Now the knobs have disappeared; the biggest diamonds, the most enamelled of all watches, and the finest of seal rings are worn instead” (17 December 1854).

Then, as now, apparently, Californians appeared to Easterners as a race apart, more spontaneous, less concerned about conventionalities than Easterners. Indeed, after going to California, “Men that lived a jog-trot life, were members of the church, sober husbands and decent fathers, are heard of no more forever by their wives” (8 June 1856). Californians spend money without any of the restraints which characterize Easterners. When Stoddard hears that a California banker has commissioned Tiffany’s to create an immense silver service reproducing “two hundred different scenes of the chequered life of California,” she fantasizes that “His beef steaks will be kept hot by a grisly bear, his potatoes upheld by a
pickaxe and his buttered toast lie crisp under the shade of the California stag" (5 May 1855).

Even today Stoddard's style is unmistakeable, her "letters" were written by the acerbic, self-mocking and observant sister we left home in New York. In a time of ornate sentimental rhetoric, Stoddard wrote short sentences and used vernacular diction. Her images are often unexpected; for example, she dismisses a collection of letters by writing that one would "no more think of going back to them than you would to a squeezed lemon" (3 August 1855). Her ideal of style becomes clear in her book reviews. She applauds Napoleon's idea that "someone should be employed to expunge all superfluous phrases and words in books, in order to make them concise and energetic" (10 January 1858). She asserts that "we tire of three hundred pages of immense adjectives" (19 March 1855) and criticizes the poetry of a close friend for its "excessive rhetoric" (3 December 1854). She faults Browning, whose genius she recognized, for his "grandiloquent obscurity" (22 October 1854). In contrast to these writers stands Thackeray whose prose is as "clear as crystal" (10 January 1858). At her best, Stoddard's columns do achieve her ideal of style; her prose is concise, energetic, and witty.

Ultimately, however, it is neither Stoddard's witty gossip nor her satirical observations nor even the fact that her prose is still immensely readable which account for the vitality of her columns. We read the columns today because of Stoddard's skeptical judgments about the writers and the issues of her day. We delight in what her contemporaries called her "strong-mindedness."

Thus, in a time when many women were engaging in temperance agitation, Stoddard doubted "whether law can keep a man sober" any more than "purity can be legislated into men by the imprisonment of lewd women." Morality was relative, not absolute: "The man of one appetite hates another with a different one. The cannibal eyes you with suspicion and disgust because you refuse the baby stew or warrior soup he offers you. The vegetarian will tell you that the Crimean war is owing to the consumption of frogs and beefsteaks by the French and English. So it goes" (19 May 1855).

At a time when many Americans were embracing the idea that God intended this country for a special destiny, Stoddard was iconoclastic. Reviewing a painting depicting the Last Judgment, she writes, "I was astonished to see Washington occupying the central point of the picture . . . . This bit of Native Americanism is unworthy an artist. At the last judgment Washington will appear as an erring man, I dare say; but if some prominent person was needed in the picture, where was Dante, Luther, Milton, Shakespeare, or some other large-ideal man? I looked about the picture for the American flag, and up into heaven's dome for 'E pluribus unum'" (19 November 1854). So much for manifest destiny, so
much for the idea that America would be the locus of God’s last judgment.

Most remarkably, during a time when women were defined as innately pious and when women writers passionately affirmed evangelical religion, Stoddard became an agnostic. Nor was she hesitant to pass on to her readers her skeptical attitude:

A friend writes me that my letters are his Sunday morning reading. Alas! should I not reproach myself because there is no echo of the church going bell in them; that I have never cried aloud to the wicked San Franciscans—‘Repent! Repent?’ But, sinner that I am, I confess to secular habits entirely. When I was young, I was fed on the strong dish of New England polemics [i.e., Puritanism] . . . . When I go to church, I read the sermon from the congregation; that from the pulpit is a tiresome reiteration, or a mistaken assertion. Mrs. Wardentry Covel preaches to me with her rouged cheeks and her Brussels lace. (20 January 1855)

For a woman raised as a New England Puritan, the confession “to secular habits entirely” is astounding. There were, to be sure, other New England women who revolted against the angry, vengeful Calvinist God. Their most talented representative was Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose sentimental Christianity sought to substitute a loving, merciful Christ for the Puritan God. Stowe’s lifelong battle to make Christianity emphasize the feminine virtues of love and mercy is evidence of the hold the Calvinist God had on her imagination. Stoddard, in contrast, was simply indifferent to the claims of all institutionalized sects or religions.

Although Stoddard was an iconoclast and displayed a moral relativism not unlike Melville’s, she was hesitant to endorse the movement for women’s rights. Feminists, she told her *Alta* readers in a column written only six years after the Seneca Falls convention formally inaugurated that movement in this country, are “those females professedly strong-minded, whose rights are hydra-headed and argus-eyed” (22 October 1854). Her report on the marriage of one of those feminists, Lucy Stone, is wonderful in its satire while revealing Stoddard’s almost wilful refusal to understand the principles involved in a marriage contract which attempted to guarantee legal identity to Stone:

By the way Miss Lucy Stone has recently married a Mr. Blackwell; brother of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, and Miss Blackwell, the translator of George Sand’s “Jacques,” homely and honorable women all.

Miss Lucy Stone and Mr. Blackwell made a public protest
against marriage, and took sundry precautions, one against
the other, by contract beforehand. . . .

I think a miserable egotism was at the bottom of the whole
affair, a desire to gain notoriety. Or was the habit of virtue
more powerful than their adopted beliefs? They have proved
neither high-souled to each other, nor courageous before the
world. . . .

But long life to Mr. Blackwell. I wear a portrait of Miss Lucy
Stone on my imagination. I saw her first at a rail-way depot;
she was conversing with a number of colored gentlemen.
Dirty white woolen stockings characterized her feet, and a
shabby straw bonnet her head. Mousseline de laine pantalettes
were an obvious part of her costume; she wielded an
immense cotton umbrella; either that or Miss Lucy had a
damp, mouldy smell. She was accompanied by a tall delicate
woman with a razor-like mouth, who owned a husband that
appeared to be utterly extinguished; but he paid the fare, and
had just strength enough to carry the carpet bag. (19 June
1855)

Stoddard’s position on the Stone/Blackwell marriage is frustrating
because she was acutely aware of the consequences of confining women
to the domestic sphere. She knew that “Marriage, to a woman, is the
laying up of a treasure in the future. . . . whereas Marriage to a man is the
immediate possession of a paradise, and when he is marched out of Eden,
he straightway goes to planting and digging, and forgets all about it” (10
January 1958). She applauded Rosa Bonheur, the French artist, for her
artistic achievement in the face of the barriers faced by aspiring women:
“Rosa Bonheur, a remarkable woman and a remarkable artist. I like to
chronicle the success of a woman. If there be any so valiant as to trench on
the domain appropriated by men to themselves, I hasten to do them
honor. And I say—O courageous woman! What you have done for song,
or art, under the disadvantage of crying, teething babies, the contemptu­
tuous silence of your husband, the incredulity of all your male acquaint­
ances, shows that a parity of circumstances would bring about a parity of
intellects, between you and our good lords and patrons” (18 November
1855).

The phrase “a parity of circumstances” suggests that Stoddard under­
stood that a woman’s intellectual development was being limited by
nineteenth-century assumptions about the nature and proper sphere of
women; that Stoddard understood the consequences for ambitious
women of the belief that the home was the woman’s only sphere.
Nevertheless, Stoddard never seems to have explored the ramifications
of this arbitrary and culturally imposed restriction either in her columns
in the Alta or, later, in her novels. Her report to her San Francisco readers
on the marriage contract between Stone and Blackwell betrays her conventionality in this regard.

Similarly, Stoddard’s account of a Woman’s Rights Convention, although more sympathetic than her account of the Stone-Blackwell marriage, nevertheless ends with Stoddard’s assent to the conventional shibboleths that women’s “purpose lies in the heart” and that women’s “physical phases . . . . are obstacles in a competition with men.” Her report is a powerful one, combining acute observation, acerbic wit and a remarkably intelligent analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the intellectual style of the participants:

I attended the Woman’s Rights Convention, which came off at the Tabernacle on the 25th and 26th. All the conventional formulas were used, to my amusement; there was more formula than convention. . . . Mrs. Mary Davis began in a high, squealy, nasal voice, at the beginning of the world, and brought woman down on the torrent of her discourse from Eve to herself; praising her as the Saviour of man, and calling her the Beautiful and Purifier of the Universe. . . . After skirmishing up and down the ages, packing in geographical, atmospheric, and floral similes, she dropped suddenly on the core of her subject. Here she became worth the listening. . . . She talked with a daring tact. Women, she said, were the victims of a legalized prostitution. Forced by the lust of men into false and inharmonious relations with themselves, compelled to wear the painful honors of maternity, and to bring half-made wretches into the world, sapped in health and strength, their lives loathingly bitter and burdensome. Therefore, she argued the right of self-possession on the part of wives and ended her discourse. . . . Your correspondent, despite a hideous tendency to laugh at strong-mindedism, which she traces to the unfortunate influence of her male friends, takes an humble place in the ranks of Women’s Rights and Women’s Shall Haves, especially in the latter. (11 January 1857)

And so, Stoddard enlisted herself in the Women’s Rights Movement after all. But primarily, she was a woman who aspired to a career as a serious writer. As such, she was looking for models of literary achievement, for a tradition within which to find her own talent and define her own form. It is not surprising then, that Stoddard’s Alta columns are filled with her pronouncements on the writers of her day; for the most part, her judgments are intelligent and valid. It must have been Stoddard who introduced the recently published Walden to San Franciscans, in her very first column:
If my limits would allow, the Book I would most like to expatiate upon, would be Thoreau's "Walden or Life in the Woods," published by Ticknor & Fields, Boston. It is the result of a two or three years' sojourn in the woods and it is a most minute history of Thoreau's external life and internal specula­tion. It is the latest effervescence of that peculiar school, at the head of which stands Ralph Waldo Emerson. Of Walden, Emerson says, that Thoreau has cornered nature in it. Several years ago Thoreau sought the freedom of the woods, and built him a little house with his two hands, on the margin of Walden Pond, near Concord, Mass. There he contemplated on 'cornered' nature, and hoed beans, determined as he said to know them. Notwithstanding an apparent contempt for utility, he seems a sharp accountant, and not a little interest is attached to his bills of expenses, they are so ludicrously small . . . . His ideas of beauty are positive but limited. The world of art is beyond his vision. Individualism is the altar at which he worships . . . . I recommend it as a study to all fops, male and female. (7 October 1854)

Although Stoddard does not fully understand what Thoreau was about, she did "notice" Walden, as few of her contemporaries did, and "noticed" it with interest.

Stoddard also "noticed" Whitman, commenting in 1856 on the second edition of Leaves of Grass:

It is the experience of a thoughtful, talented, licentious man. What he knew he wrote and he knew a great deal that may be called immensely nasty. Emerson wrote a letter to Whitman about his book which he printed—showing no lack of vanity by doing so. You may see Walt Whitman any day in Broadway, with a redflannel shirt and black trowsers, a singular hat and stiff beard. He is a printer. I do not believe he will write anymore. He has put the whole of himself in 'Leaves of Grass' . . . . (9 November 1856)

Stoddard, like many of her contemporaries, was put off by Whitman's sexual explicitness, yet her comments are more generous to his talent than were many others.

During the years that Stoddard wrote her column, there was a great ferment among American writers and literati as they proclaimed the imminent arrival of the American work that would rival the epics of Greece and Rome. Stoddard delighted in satirizing various claimants to the throne of the American Bard:
A great deal has been prophesied for the American Epic; that some poet should arise and sing his country's songs. We have a long poem from Buchanan Read—'The New Pastoral.' It is more than an Epic, it is Epicac! . . . he has . . . done this here 'New Pastoral,' which is utterly unreadable. A friend at my elbow is now involved in the seventeenth book. He informs me that he has obtained no clue to the story as yet, but there are news of George Washington in it, Fourth of July, Methodist Camp Meetings, and sundry out of doors matters. (19 March 1855)

Although Stoddard lacked the vision to see that the "epic" had already been written—by Melville in *Moby Dick* (1851) and, indeed, by the talented and licentious Whitman—her pronouncements on her contemporaries generally have withstood the test of time. She considered Poe a "man of great original and peculiar genius," accepting the judgment that his writing was great despite his "moral excesses" (19 March 1855). She was reserved about Longfellow despite his immense reputation. "Longfellow," according to Stoddard, "is more pleasant than profound; he dresses his thoughts in elegant costume; paints them on ivory. The atmosphere of his poems is better than the poems themselves" (26 January 1856). And she ranked Hawthorne "alone here in America" as a storyteller (8 January 1855).

Stoddard's pronouncements on European writers are equally acute. Browning, she asserted, "has more genius than Tennyson, but a great deal less art" (20 January 1856). Thackeray was for her the most important British male novelist, probably because of his satirical mode:

I have read the opening chapters of "The Virginians," Thackeray's new novel. I recognized his splendid diction. His prose is as clear as crystal. He writes English as it should be written. He is always master of his subject. Thackeray is the novelist of the country. (10 January 1858)

And she accused the best-selling Bulwer-Lytton of plagiarism, writing that his latest novel "is 'Tristram Shandy' without its sharp coarseness and its good English. Bulwer is the most impudent plagiarist of the century . . . . By the way he opens in *Harper's Weekly* a new story, 'What will he do with it,' and a very common-place opening too" (26 July 1857).

Almost every column of Stoddard's assesses new books or recounts literary news. Stoddard's reviews not only provided San Francisco with some standard against which to measure its literary activity but also facilitated her search for appropriate models. But Stoddard's search for literary progenitors was complicated by the fact that she was a woman. To
whom could she look? She was writing at a time when even the male tradition in American literature was only beginning to flower. The masterpieces of American romanticism were originally published shortly before or during the very years Stoddard was writing her column: *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850, *Moby Dick* in 1851, *Walden* in 1854, *Leaves of Grass* in 1855. Of these, only two were novels and only Hawthorne would provide for Stoddard the lesson of the master; Melville's whaling and South Sea adventure tales were too far removed from any experience Stoddard, as a woman, could write about.

To put it another way, the problem of tradition was even more complicated for Stoddard than for American male writers (and for them it was complicated enough as Emerson's "American Scholar" address and James' essay on Hawthorne suggest). She aspired to be a writer but she was also a woman. Where was she to find a tradition within which or against which to define herself? There was a tradition of female writing in America during these years, the tradition of the sentimental novel, a tradition which emphasized tears, piety, and the moral superiority of women, a tradition which rewarded acceptance of conventional morality with material success. More often than not, the heroine's reward for keeping her virginity, for passively enduring poverty and injustice, for weeping copiously and uttering the most obvious moral sentiments was to marry a rich and handsome young man.

Stoddard, however, emphatically rejected the sentimental tradition as false to the realities and complexities of human experience. Already in her first "letter" to the *Alta*, Stoddard's position is clear. "I debate in mind . . . whether to adopt some great example in style: such as the pugilism of Fanny Fern, the pathetics of Minnie Myrtle, or the abandon of Cassie Cauliflower" (8 October 1854). Fanny Fern and Minnie Myrtle were the noms-de-plume of successful sentimental writers; the flowery names suggest the emotional bathos these women specialized in writing and in evoking in their readers. Stoddard presumably invented the name Cassie Cauliflower to satirize the tradition.

When Stoddard wrote in another column about seven Minnie Myrtles waiting in the wings, she was exaggerating only slightly. There were already two published Minnie Myrtles in the 1850's; Stoddard would have been amused to know that a third Minnie Myrtle came to San Francisco in 1863 as the bride of Joaquin Miller, who later deserted Minnie with a couplet printed in an Oregon newspaper:

> And when I should have said Farewell,  
> I only murmured, "this is hell!"

One wonders what caustic treatment Stoddard would have given this affair.

Stoddard's contempt for the sentimental writers of her day is one of the
most constant themes of the literary notices appearing in her column. Often, Stoddard used wit to attack the sentimental school whose authors preached that "goodly young ladies have nothing to do but to be their brothers' keepers" (19 June 1855). The immensely successful bestseller called "Wide, Wide World" was an exceedingly narrow book, notwithstanding its title (8 January 1855). Of the novelist who turned out bestseller after bestseller, Stoddard quipped, "We have had The Deserted Wife, from Mrs. Southworth, and now we have The Discarded Daughter. We may soon expect from her lachrymose pen, The Banished Brother and The Frenzied Father" (17 February 1856). Even Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose Uncle Tom's Cabin was the masterpiece of the genre, became the barb of Stoddard's cruel wit.

.... the authoress of "Uncle Tom" has lately reissued a volume of early sketches, "The Mayflower." Plutarch, or some other "literary cove," tells us of an old lady whose son took a prize at the Olympic games. In the heat of her motherly rejoicing, she advised her son to die while he was a victor, lest he should try to win some future prize and fail. So with Mrs. Stowe. I wouldn't really advise her to die, (for she mightn't be quite prepared, notwithstanding her husband is a minister,) but I would advise her to rest on the laurels of "Uncle Tom." (19 June 1855)

In another column, Stoddard pinpointed the formula of the sentimental school: "The lady writers are blossoming on the fields of literature.... You ask yourself in reading each one, if you have not read it before. Most of the heroines are obliged to keep school, not but what they might be rich, but some family cloud rises, and they feel called upon to leave the paternal roof, and walk through thorny paths, when, if they had staid at home, they might ride in a comfortable chaise. It all comes right though about the fourth hundredth page. I should also say that most of the young ladies have a 'wealth of dark tresses,' but they don't seem to pay expenses" (7 October 1855). Stoddard rejected the characterization of the stock sentimental heroines:

Why will writers, especially female writers, make their heroines so indifferent to good eating, so careless about taking cold, and so impervious to all the creature comforts? The absence of these treats compose their women, with an eternal preaching about self-denial, moral self-denial. Is goodness, then, incompatible with the enjoyment of the senses? In reading such books I am reminded of what I have thought my mission was: a crusade against Duty—not the duty that is
revealed to every man and woman of us by the circumstances of daily life, but that which is cut and fashioned for us by minds totally ignorant of our idiosyncrasies and necessities. (3 August 1856)

In fact she rejected the definition of women as moral beings with no animal instincts:

I am glad of this opportunity to speak of the excessive prudery of American women . . . Women seem to be on the alert for something improper in conversation or manners; feeling it to be their mission to shrink, and blush, or to keep in arms, in case anybody should venture into some sin against convention. I have been vexed at the obscure style of talking which our women practice . . . They emasculate the Saxon language in order to attain what they call 'a refined phraseology.' I must confess that I am something of a horror to such persons, for I knock down my ideas with substantial English. (21 September 1856)

Stoddard's charge against the sentimental writers was much deeper than a concern with the formulaic content of their fiction. Like Hawthorne who complained about the damned mob of scribbling women, like some twentieth century scholars such as Ann Douglass in *The Feminization of American Culture,* Stoddard charged that the sentimental writers accustomed readers to trashy fiction; "our truly excellent female writers have been jostled aside. They are not 'fast' enough . . . We have some fine books that belong to the objective school of writing. But no one book has been written by a woman of erudition; no metaphysical tale, novel or poem, no story that holds in analysis the passions of the human heart." This despite the fact that "eight out of ten books that have been published in the last year in New York have been written by women. We have their reasons for publishing in the preface. This one has a 'spontaneous up gushing' that must be spoken. Another has a 'mission,' although her book does not explain it. Another has no reason, except that she was 'willed to publish.' The real reason is, an insane egotism or a desire to make money" (22 October 1854).

According to Stoddard's analysis, the sentimental writers were allowed to flourish because the male critics did not take them seriously enough to bother with them: "All the women in this country can follow out their fancies, so far as book-making is concerned. No criticism assails them. Men are polite to the woman, and contemptuous to the intellect. They do not allow woman to enter their intellectual arena to do battle with them" (22 October 1854). This automatic belittling of women
writers led Stoddard to echo Margaret Fuller's outcry "Let it not be said... 'She has a masculine mind.'" Thus, when pondering the implications of her title as "Our Lady Correspondent," she writes, "My sex is not betrayed, I trust on the 'Learned Pig' or 'five-legged Calf' principle? I do not feel especially complimented when some Pudgers [another columnist] rises up and exposes the vanity that belongs to men, by saying that I am an 'hombre' in my style of writing. Intellect has no sex" (30 March 1856). Here we have the classic dilemma of the class "woman writer"; such a label automatically suggests a class different from that of the governing male standards, perhaps even a sport class such as a five-legged calf. And if one wants to praise a member of this class, the compliment is that she thinks like a man. Let us all remember, that "Intellect has no sex."

To whom could Stoddard look for literary models? Stoddard herself supplied the answer when she wrote in her second column for the Alta, "We have no Elizabeth Browning, Brontës, George Sand or Miss Bremer" (22 October 1854). In looking to Europe for models of achievement by women writers, Stoddard was part of the trans-Atlantic network, first described by Ellen Moers in Literary Women, of women writers who not only admired each other's work but who also gained sustenance from the very fact of each other's achievement. Thus, George Sand, who wore men's clothing, who was the mistress of Chopin among others and who wrote novels featuring passionate, intelligent women, was a heroine and literary model not only for Stoddard but also for other serious women writers in America, particularly Harriet Beecher Stowe and Margaret Fuller. Stoddard hoped that the Parisian gossip that Sand was going into religious retirement was in error; "We have no surplus women of her genius and passion that we can spare the intellectual revelations of one who has dared to live her own way" (22 October 1854).

Elizabeth Barret-Browning was another model to whom American woman writers looked, Emily Dickinson as well as Elizabeth Stoddard. Stoddard was judicious in her estimate of Barret-Browning:

I have the sheets of Mrs. Browning's new poem 'Aurora Leigh.' It is a novel in blank verse, and a great poem with great faults. Mrs. Browning is an exceptional woman, and it may be heretical to find fault with her. She is more a learned woman than an artist, and has more genius than talent. I cannot but think that her mind has been much influenced by her husband, Robert Browning, who, while he takes the rank among poets, is remarkable for grandiloquent obscurity. Some passages in 'Aurora Leigh' are absurd; and there are many pages that might as well have been left out. But with what consummate beauty her love stories are told, and how splendid and vivid are her descriptions, where circumstance
and nature harmonize. . . . She has written her book according to her own rules of art, and as such we accept it, and call the writer a great and glorious woman. (11 January 1857)

Above all, it was the example of the Brontës that moved Stoddard. She wrote in the *Alta* that Charlotte Brontë "was a little, frail body, sensitive, perhaps morbid, yet possessing more moral strength than the government and gunpowder heroes of the day" (2 June 1855). Although *Wuthering Heights* "made more impression upon me than any book I ever read," Stoddard found Jane Eyre "a daring and masculine work" (2 June 1855). One can speculate that Stoddard uses the adjective "masculine" precisely because Brontë does not employ the sentimental formulas which so outraged Stoddard.

Stoddard's own novels show her indebtedness to the tradition of the Brontës, the gothic tradition in Anglo-American literature. Her novels reject the values and the prose style of the sentimental writers. In the novels as in the columns, her best prose is concise, stripped of excessive rhetoric and superfluous adjectives. In her novels, the family is not a sanctuary, as the sentimental writers asserted, but a collection of eccentric, isolated family members. Indeed, when Thomas Higginson first met Emily Dickinson, he was struck by the resemblance between the Dickinson family and the families in Stoddard's novels. Stoddard's New England, as one reviewer noted, is "A country of uncurbed desire, of hereditary taints, of families divided against themselves, of violence, of excess." In her novels, Stoddard's most striking departure from the sentimental norms is her emphasis on the sensuous responses of men and women, on their passionall natures and their drive to achieve self-realization. Stoddard's novels are set in the New England of her youth, a New England dominated by the bleakness of the seacoast and the bleakness of a rigid religion and a rigidly stratified social scene. It is a New England dominated by the sea, an amoral force, deaf and unpitying to human aspirations. It is the New England Stoddard drew for her *Alta* readers in the following column, worth quoting extensively because the writing represents Stoddard at her best—observant, ironic, transcendental, satiric.

I too am a pilgrim and a sojourner, but not a fashionable one; for I have come, with a small trunk and no bank-boxes, into a little village, where the foot of traveller sometimes strays but never stays. . . . Some few make small attempts at farming. Verdant beds of cabbage grace the landscape, and rows of corn alternate with rows of rock. . . .

But to come to the truth and beauty of my surroundings. Here rolls the everlasting sea. On the day of my birth its voice
was uplifted; on the day of my death, its song will be the same. The sandy soil of the village graveyard hides generations of my race. The old slate stones, level with their mounds, and covered with moss, the upright marble slabs with their names freshly cut have neither age nor date to the deaf and sightless sea. But unpitying as it is, I am drawn to it by a resistless fascination. . . .

On my journey thitherward, I passed through New Bedford. As this town is the birth-place of many commercially famous Californians, I give it a passing notice. New Bedford is distinguished for ready-made trowsers; long lines of them swing through the streets, from some kind of fixture in shop doorways, suggesting very unpleasant ideas of hanging, and of drowned sailors. The inhabitants live in large, square boxes, painted dun color; these boxes are ornamented with strange devices, that appear to be glued on wherever there is a plain space. This order of architecture took its rise in whale oil. . . .

The last great work of the city is a graded road round Clark's Point, making a beautiful drive, and opening a fine sea view. The condition of the poor is greatly ameliorated by the construction of this road. Every day they can have their taste gratified by seeing fast horses and easy wagons whirl along in noble emulation of each other! The literary miasma in the atmosphere of New Bedford is never powerful enough to agitate the brains of its natives. Their libraries are composed of ledgers, and for light reading they have the Whalmen's Shipping List. There are no poets, orators or artists. The times are represented by two papers: the New Bedford Mercury, which is somewhat paralytic from its intense respectability, but a good journal nevertheless, and the Evening Standard, which is devoted to a minute diffusion of local news. The style of the latter is this: "We stop the press to announce that a fishing boat arrived fifteen minutes ten seconds ago, with three bushels of tautog, caught by Cpt. Ichabod Nye. Our readers may anticipate an epicurean repast." "Mr. H______ presented us yesterday with a pumpkin weighing eighteen pounds. Mr. H______ is an intelligent farmer, from Dartmouth." (24 October 1855)

When Stoddard looked back on her stint with the Alta, she wrote,

This engagement proved useful in two ways: teaching me to write prose and the earning of money. Every month I received a check of twenty-four dollars, which possessed many imaginative possibilities which were never realized. At any rate, I
was the first female wage-earner that I had known, and it gave me a curious sense of independence.  

The twenty-four dollars, of course, had to be used for the necessities of life so the couple could survive in New York. But the value of that monthly check in giving Stoddard a “curious sense of independence” was inestimable, a confirmation that Stoddard might realize her ambitions to become a serious writer in a mode quite different from her husband’s. Indeed, one wonders whether it was that “curious sense of independence” which led Stoddard to sign the columns with the initials E.D.B., the initials of her maiden name.  

As Stoddard looked back, she also stressed that her three year stint for the *Alta* taught her to write prose. Tragically, as I have noted, the novels for which Stoddard was serving her apprenticeship never gained the renown which they deserved. Nevertheless, Stoddard’s columns for the *Alta* served her in a number of ways: she developed a prose style that was sparse, precise, and sensuous; she became adept in controlling the tone of her prose, often ranging from satire to lyric evocation; she learned to observe and report on the particulars of life, conveying both the objective reality and her subjective response. The *Alta* apprenticeship also paid Stoddard for assessing prevailing literary fashions, reviewing the contemporary literary scene, and delineating for herself a literary tradition within which she could develop her own talent. The name of Elizabeth Stoddard, then, must be added to the names of those who served an apprenticeship by writing for San Francisco newspapers and magazines in the 1850’s. Her name must be added to the list of those who contributed to the literary flowering of San Francisco; no doubt, her witty and sardonic “letters” from New York helped in the transformation of the city from a village to a cultural rival of Boston. But, most importantly, Stoddard’s columns in the *Alta* taught her the craft of writing prose and helped her in her search for a viable literary form.
NOTES

1 Elizabeth Stoddard, “Letter from a Lady Correspondent,” San Francisco Daily Alta California, 7 October 1854. All further citations of Stoddard’s columns will appear in the text.


3 Richard Foster, “Introduction” to The Morgesons (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1971), compares Stoddard’s fictional vision with D.H. Lawrence’s. Lawrence Buell and Sandra Zagarell in their introduction to The Morgesons (University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming, July 1984) assert that Stoddard has “next to Melville and Hawthorne, the most strikingly original voice in the mid-nineteenth century American novel.”

4 Matlack, p. 127.

5 Matlack, p. 130 and passim, is the source for my account of Stoddard’s popularity in San Francisco.

6 Matlack, p. 207.


10 Matlack, p. 185a.

11 Matlack, p. 470.

12 Mary Moss, “The Novels of Elizabeth Stoddard,” Bookman, XVI, 260-263.

13 Elizabeth Stoddard, “Literary Folk as They Came and Went with Ourselves,” Saturday Evening Post (June 30, 1900), 1223.

14 Matlack, p. 128, suggests that Stoddard used the initials of her maiden name because her columns were her way of maintaining close contact with her brother, who was in California during the 1850’s.
THE pro-growth attitude in metropolitan America in the 1950s and 60s eventually gave way to a no-growth or controlled-growth attitude in the 1970s. This was certainly true for the County of Santa Clara, California. The public, and with every election more of their representatives, began to say that growth at any cost was unacceptable. Yet, as we might expect with any radical swing of the pendulum, new questions and dilemmas accompanied the decision to limit growth.

The unpleasant by-products of rapid and, for the most part, ill-planned growth in the decades following World War II caused people to ask what urban growth would add to the quality of their lives. They questioned the way relatively unconstrained, piecemeal urbanization was changing their communities and were rebelling against the traditional processes of government and the marketplace which, they believed, had inadequately guided development in the past. Politicians, with the support of citizens groups, were measuring new development proposals in terms of their environmental impact—by what new housing or business would generate in additional traffic, pollution of air and water, erosion, and scenic disturbance.
But we soon learned that it was not enough to think only of how this unique and limited resource (land) was maintained. We also had to think about the equally important issues of adequate housing for low and moderate income families, employment, and fair compensation for landowners that may suffer a loss of property values as a result of no-growth or controlled-growth policies.

Along with the changed mood had come what Bosselman and Callies called a land-use revolution.

This country is in the midst of a revolution in the way we regulate the use of our land. . . . The tools of the new revolution are new laws taking a wide variety of forms but each sharing a common theme—the need to provide some degree of state or regional participation in the major decisions that affect the use of our increasingly limited supply of land.  

If, as Bosselman and Callies suggest, a land-use revolution took place in the 1970s, then we might ask: What has come of the revolution in the 1980s? Has it, for example, permanently changed people's attitudes concerning how and when land should be developed? If so, presumably political decision-makers will continue to move cautiously when planning for land-use. Or has the most recent recession, with its record unemployment and reduced housing starts, caused people to swing back to a position of pro-growth at any cost? Identifying where the public is, is particularly important to political actors. After all, the general public is an essential part of the political equation that also includes the economic and political pressures of special interests. This paper, although limited in scope to the voters of Santa Clara County, is an effort to provide some measure of the public's side of the political equation as applied to the issue of land-use.

THE SETTING

Santa Clara County's 1.3 million people constitute one-fourth of the San Francisco Bay Area's total population. The county is a major employment center for the region, providing one-quarter of all jobs in the Bay Area. Northern Santa Clara County is extensively urbanized, with thirteen of the county's fifteen cities and more than 90% of the county's residents. The southern area of the county remains predominantly rural.

For the past thirty years the county has had one of the fastest growth rates in the country. From a population of 250,000 in 1950, the county's population has grown to more than 1.2 million in 1980. Since 1975, an average of 40,000 jobs have been created yearly. Northern Santa Clara County, once predominantly rural, has developed into a vast urban metropolis.
County planners view the 1980s as a decade of major challenges that will affect the quality of life in the county for years to come. A study by the county planning department, for example, predicts that unless the rate of industrial development is slowed, life in Santa Clara County by 1990 will be much more uncomfortable than it is today. The study concludes that industrial expansion is the prime factor driving our rapid population growth and urban development which, in turn, generates the transportation, housing, and environmental problems we all now face.

Rapid employment growth has created or contributed to many of the county's most serious problems. The county's employment growth has been occurring at a pace much faster than the rate of new housing construction, for example. The rate of new jobs has also been outstripping the ability of local governments and the state to expand the capacity of local freeways, expressways, and arterial streets. Consequently, major traffic jams are a daily occurrence in many parts of North County. These traffic problems have been further exacerbated by the concentration of new job growth in the northwestern portion of the county, while most of the new housing construction has been in the relatively less expensive southern and eastern parts of San Jose, many miles away from new jobs. Furthermore, local government's ability to provide basic services (e.g., sewage treatment facilities) has been stretched to capacity. But just how severe are the problems of transportation and housing projected to be if growth continues unabated in the valley?

Transportation: If growth continues at the rate of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the potential increase in traffic volume will present a major transportation challenge to the county. Many of the county's freeways, expressways, and arterial streets are already being used at or beyond their capacities. By 1990, if industrial and residential growth trends continue, the volume of rush hour traffic will increase by 40%. The consequences could be severe: the average commute trip would increase more than 50%, from 23 to 36 minutes; more traffic would spill over to neighborhood streets; levels of air pollution would rise steadily, and noise levels near freeways and other major roadways would become excessive.

Housing: Another serious challenge already facing the county is the shortage of affordable housing. The existing housing supply combined with the rapid rate of employment growth has created a serious shortage. Between April 1975 and April 1979, approximately 156,000 new jobs were created, while only 46,000 new housing units were constructed. During the 1970s housing prices were rising much faster than average family income, leaving a large segment of the population unable to afford to purchase a home. From 1971 to 1979, the median new home price rose 244%, while median household income rose only 69%.

The housing shortage is aggravated by the imbalance of jobs to housing in subareas of the county. The northwest sub-area is the primary job
producer while the central and east sub-areas are the housing suppliers. The poor distribution of jobs and housing has resulted in major transportation problems, air pollution, and fiscal inequities. San Jose and the south county cities of Morgan Hill and Gilroy contain most of the vacant land, but there are limitations in their ability to make up the deficit in housing for the north county cities. The present tax structure, which benefits the north county cities that have a large industrial base, is not supportive of the services and facilities which would be necessary to accommodate a large amount of residential development in the south.

Even though the projections for housing, transportation, and environmental quality do not look good if the growth trends continue, there is, nevertheless, considerable pressure by special interests for industrial development and for housing to accommodate the influx of new workers. But what does the public know and think about these issues? Which public policies do they want to see followed? These are some of the questions we will attempt to answer.

METHODOLOGY

A survey of registered voters in Santa Clara County was conducted by this researcher and his graduate students in a seminar in administrative research methods in November, 1982. A primary sample of 400 registered voters, along with a back-up sample of equal numbers, was randomly selected by the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters. A comparison of the demographic variables—sex, age, income, education, occupation, and years lived in the county—with 1982 data provided by the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, showed our sample, with less than one percent error, to represent the characteristics of the registered voters in Santa Clara County. While the sample is restricted only to registered voters, it is important for political actors to remember that it is the voter who ultimately passes judgment on their decisions—including their land-use policies.

A cover letter and the questionnaire were mailed to those in the primary sample. The letter explained the purpose of the study and asked each respondent to complete the questionnaire. They were told that in a few days a graduate student from San Jose State University would call and ask them to read their responses over the phone. In the event the student was unable to reach the respondent after three attempts, or the person refused to answer the questionnaire, then s/he was to phone the first person in their back-up sample. The students were carefully trained to read the questions and record the responses in a manner that would minimize bias. This approach resulted in an exceptionally high response rate of 89 percent—or a total sample of 355.

We did not control for respondents' geographic location, although we recommend that future research include location as a variable. For
## TABLE 1

HOW REGISTERED VOTERS HOPE AND EXPECT UNDEVELOPED LAND WILL BE USED IN THE NEAR FUTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOPE</th>
<th>EXPECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number of Respondents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Create Jobs and Housing</td>
<td>36 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Create Jobs and Housing</td>
<td>194 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But With Careful Planning For Open Space</td>
<td>173 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Be Left More or Less</td>
<td>121 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped, At Least in the Near Future</td>
<td>90  29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>4 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>355 100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Questions asked were: "If you had a choice, how would you hope the undeveloped land in Santa Clara County would be used in the future? (For example, Coyote Valley or the Hillsides.)"

"How do you expect undeveloped land in Santa Clara County to be used in the future? (For example, Coyote Valley or the Hillsides.)"

—Percentages Rounded to Nearest Whole Number.
example, it would be interesting to know if hillside residents hold different attitudes on land-use policies than valley residents. Are there, for example, differences in the attitudes of south valley people compared with north valley citizens? Or between eastside and westside residents? These are important questions that cannot be answered in this paper.

FINDINGS

This study was conducted at a time when Silicon Valley (Santa Clara County) was experiencing the worst recession, unemployment, and housing shortage since World War II. We were particularly interested in knowing, therefore, whether registered voters preferred growth in industry and housing, even at the expense of open space—including developing large tracts of farmlands in south county.

A series of questions specifically designed to yield this information showed, among other things, that a majority of the voters want either controlled and well-planned growth or “no growth in the near future.” For example, when asked directly: “If you had a choice, how would you hope the undeveloped land in Santa Clara County would be used in the future?”—55 per cent responded “to create jobs and housing but with careful planning for open space.” Another 34 per cent said they would have it “left more or less undeveloped, at least in the near future.” Only 10 per cent said “to create jobs and housing” without mention of open space or planning. (see Table 1)

When asked earlier in the questionnaire how they expected undeveloped lands to be used in the near future, more than 25 per cent said “to create jobs and housing,” or more than double the number who hoped the land would be used in this fashion. Some 43 per cent expected it to be used “to create jobs and housing, but with careful planning for open space.” (see Table 1) It seems the voter was somewhat skeptical about whether political decision makers could implement a policy of no, or very limited, growth in the undeveloped areas of the county—particularly among the farmlands of south county.

When the data were controlled we control for the socio-economic level of the respondents (defined here by levels of education and income), findings revealed significant differences between the high, medium, and low groups only in the extreme policy choices when asked how they would hope undeveloped land would be used in the near future. (see Table 2) For example, 18 per cent of the low socio-economic group selected “to create jobs and housing” as compared with only 8 per cent and 7 per cent of the medium and high socio-economic groups respectively. However, when given the choice to leave the land more or less undeveloped for the near future, a significantly greater percentage of the medium (45 per cent) and high (32 per cent) level groups chose this alternative than did the low socio-economic group (17 per cent).
TABLE 2
HOW REGISTERED VOTERS HOPE AND EXPECT UNDEVELOPED LAND WILL BE USED IN THE NEAR FUTURE—CONTROLLED BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOPE**</th>
<th></th>
<th>EXPECT**</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Resp.</td>
<td>Number of Resp.</td>
<td>Number of Resp.</td>
<td>Number of Resp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Create Jobs &amp; Housing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Create Jobs &amp; Housing, But With Careful Planning For Open Space</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Be Left More or Less Undeveloped, At Least In The Near Future</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>LOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Levels of income and education are used to create a socio-economic scale of high, medium and low. High is defined as: an income of $50,000+ and an education of "some graduate work or a graduate degree; medium is defined as an income of between $20,000-49,000 and an education of "some college work" or a college graduate; low is defined as an income between $0-19,999 and an education of "some high school or high school graduate." The sample divides into the three socio-economic levels as follows: High = 33% (117); Medium = 42% (150); Low = 25% (88).

---

—Percentages Rounded to Nearest Whole Number.
Not too surprisingly, these findings suggest that those in the medium and high socio-economic levels can better afford to support the preservation of undeveloped land, or to argue for careful planning when allowing for growth than can those in the low socio-economic group. On the other hand, 61 per cent of those in the “low” group support new jobs and housing with careful planning.

When the respondents are asked how they expect undeveloped land to be used, there is no significant difference among the three socio-economic groups. However, a significantly greater percentage of those in both the high and medium socio-economic level expect the land to be used for housing and jobs without careful planning (25 per cent and 19 per cent respectively) than “hoped” (7 per cent and 8 per cent respectively).

When asked if farmlands (e.g., Coyote Valley or the Hillsides) should be protected even if it means limiting the number of jobs available in the county, 64 per cent answered yes. Seventy-eight per cent of the respondents said yes when asked a similarly worded question, in which housing was substituted for jobs. (see Table 3) On the other hand, when asked the general question: “Urban growth is good because it means more jobs and housing,” the response was more evenly divided. Less than a majority, 44 per cent, agreed with the statement, and 39 per cent disagreed. The remaining 17 per cent expressed no opinion. Nearly the same response was given to the question: “Cities should encourage more factories and businesses to move into their area.”

**TABLE 3**

<p>| SHOULD FARM LANDS BE PROTECTED EVEN IF JOBS OR HOUSING WILL BE LIMITED? |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOBS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>HOUSING</th>
<th>NUMBER OF Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Percentages Rounded to Nearest Whole Number.
### TABLE 4
THE DESIRE FOR INNER-CITY DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities should offer rewards to businesses to move into downtown areas</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future growth should take place in existing urban centers</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewing downtown urban centers is important to well planned growth</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities should try to maintain services (fire, police, roads) before allowing more growth</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.
Apparently those voters willing to have more industry and housing move into the area want them to be concentrated in existing urban, or downtown, areas. For example, when asked if cities should offer rewards to businesses to move into downtown areas, 56 per cent agreed, while only 27 per cent disagreed. (see Table 4) A similar question asked if growth should take place in existing urban centers and showed even stronger support for "inner" rather than "outer" development—with 68 per cent supporting growth in urban centers. Further evidence of this position is the fact that 88 per cent of the respondents agreed with the statement: "Renewing downtown urban centers is important to well planned growth."

Finally, perhaps the strongest reaction against the type of uncontrolled growth experienced during the 1950s and 60s is seen in the 91 per cent of the voters who said that cities should try to maintain services (fire, police, roads) before allowing more growth. When we controlled for the respondent's socio-economic status in each of these questions, no significant differences between the "high", "medium" and "low" groups were found.

A second issue facing the voters of Santa Clara County, and one that is certainly related to the problem of housing and jobs, is the proposed development of farmlands in South County—particularly Coyote Valley. We were interested in knowing, therefore, if voters were willing to protect farmlands even if it means limiting housing and jobs in the county. We have already said that 78 per cent were willing to sacrifice additional housing to protect the farmlands, and 64 per cent were willing to save the farmlands even if it limits the number of available jobs. (see Table 3) We also learned that 75 per cent said that farmlands should be the last to be developed. (see Table 5) Nearly the same number of voters, 73 per cent, said that farmlands should be protected even if it means less tax money for cities and the county. (see Table 6) Once again, we found, when controlling for the respondent's socio-economic status, that the attitudes of registered voters on the issue of farmlands in South County cut across social class lines.

It seems also that the voters' interest in farmlands has less to do with potential crop production than with preserving open space. For, when asked if farmlands should be protected only if they are making money, 71 per cent said no and 16 per cent answered yes. However, it is less clear whether voters were willing to have government (and therefore the taxpayer) fairly compensate farmers who are unable to sell their lands for development, even when their farms are no longer profitable. For example, there was no consensus on how government should control growth in the undeveloped areas. (see Table 7) It does appear, however, that few of the registered voters were willing to have taxpayers pick up the tab either through tax credits (only 11 per cent favored this approach) or through government purchase of the lands (again only 11 per cent supported this method).
TABLE 5

FARM LANDS SHOULD BE THE LAST DEVELOPED?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>354</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

TABLE 6

FARM LANDS SHOULD BE PROTECTED EVEN IF IT MEANS LESS TAX MONEY FOR CITIES/COUNTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>352</strong></td>
<td><strong>99</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

TABLE 7

TYPE OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF LAND-USE MOST FAVORED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Restrictions</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying the Land by Government</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Breaks</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>355</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.
There are significant differences in the responses of the three socio-economic groups to the question of how government can best control land use. (see Table 8) For example, a substantially greater number of the high and medium level respondents favor zoning restrictions (33 per cent and 41 per cent respectively) than do those in the lower socio-economic group (10 per cent). In fact, it is the medium level group that most favors this approach to government control of land-use.

The most dramatic difference between the three socio-economic groups is found when we combine the Don't Know's and the No Responses. The data clearly show that the lower socio-economic respondents were much less willing or able to express an opinion about how government should control land-use (83 per cent) than are either the higher or medium socio-economic level registered voters (29 per cent and 39 per cent respectively).

The lack of consensus among the respondents in our sample may indicate an unwillingness to pay the cost of preserving open space or simply a layperson's understandable confusion over the "best way" to proceed. Certainly the latter may be true for the 47 per cent (see Table 7) who "did not know" or refused to answer the question. The unavoidable conclusion remains, however, that a substantial percentage of registered voters favored protecting farmlands, preserving open space, and concentrating growth in the downtown and urban centers—even at the expense of housing, jobs, and additional tax dollars.

Additional support for this conclusion is found, for example, in the fact that more than 80 per cent agreed with the statement "buying parklands is important so that future generations will have enough space." (see Table 9) Furthermore, when asked whether government should get involved in questions of land development, 68 per cent said yes, while 23 per cent responded in the negative. And, when the question of money was raised, a somewhat smaller majority, but still a majority, agreed that government should buy parklands. (see Table 10)
### TABLE 8

**TYPE OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF LAND-USE MOST FAVORED—CONTROLLED BY RESPONDENT'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th></th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th></th>
<th>LOW</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning restrictions</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying the land by government</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax breaks</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>223</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Levels of income and education are used to create a socio-economic scale of high, medium and low. High is defined as: an income of $50,000+ and an education of “some graduate work” or a graduate degree; medium is defined as an income of between $20,000–49,000 and an education of “some college work” or a college graduate; low is defined as an income between $0–19,999 and an education of “some high school” or high school graduate. The sample divides into the three socio-economic levels as follows: high = 33% (117); medium = 42% (150); low = 25% (88).

—Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.
### TABLE 9

**BUYING PARKLANDS IS IMPORTANT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.

### TABLE 10

**IT IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT’S JOB TO BUY PARKLANDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

—Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.
Despite the most severe recession in this country since the Great Depression, public sentiment for controlling growth, preserving open space, and maintaining neighborhood services is alive and well in Santa Clara County. But it should be noted that the voters are not doctrinaire in framing their approach to specific land-use issues. The majority does not want either laissez-faire development or a ban on development.

What we found instead was a willingness to see additional growth, but with careful planning for open space when building in the undeveloped areas of the county; and encouragement by cities for downtown (or "inner" urban) development. We found significant differences in attitudes along socio-economic lines only in terms of how the respondents hope and expect undeveloped land to be used and in the type of government control most favored. Furthermore, we found no significant relationship between, on one hand, sex, age, years lived in county, and home-ownership, and, on the other, the respondents' attitudes on land-use policies. Apparently the issue of land-use cuts across traditional socio-economic and demographic lines.

The significant findings can be summarized as follows:

— More than two-thirds of the respondents said that farmlands should be preserved even when trade-offs involved limiting jobs, housing, or tax dollars;

— More than two-thirds said that future growth should take place in existing urban centers, while 62 per cent agreed that cities should acquire undeveloped lands as open space;

— More than 90 per cent said that cities should provide services adequately before allowing more growth;

— More than half of the county voters favored well planned and balanced approaches to non-urban areas, with the remainder divided between open development and complete preservation of such areas;

— And more than 80 per cent of the sample of county voters said that it is important to purchase parklands for open space. In addition, only 28 per cent said that current economic conditions should prevent parkland purchase at this time.

It appears that political decision-makers in Santa Clara County, and perhaps elsewhere, should move cautiously when setting land-use policies in the near future. In the heat of battle over specific land-use issues, the public's views are sometimes forgotten; but for elected officials who wish to retain their posts that could be a serious mistake: Almost nine in ten voters surveyed said they believe public pressure can influence politicians. And in the end, of course, it will.
NOTES


4 Ibid, p. 3.

5 Ibid, p. 4.

6 Ibid, p. 5.

7 Funding for this study was provided by the Committee for Green Foothills and the Sierra Club’s Loma Prieta Chapter.

8 In order to control for sex, age, years lived in county, and homeownership, we asked the following:

- Are you 1. Male? 2. Female?
- What is your age?
- How long have you lived in Santa Clara County?
  1. Less than 1 year
  2. 1 to 3 years
  3. 4 to 6 years
  4. 11 or more years
  6. all my life
- Are you:
  1. Buying or own your home?
  2. Renting your home?
  3. Renting your apartment/condominium?
  4. Buying/own your condominium?
  5. Buying/own your mobile home?
  6. Renting your mobile home?
Notes on Contributors

Lawrence G. Brewster, Associate Professor of Political Science at San José State, previously taught at Southern Illinois University and at the California State University, Fullerton. The author of *The Public Agenda* (St. Martin’s, 1984) and several journal articles, he earned both the MPA and the Ph.D. from the University of Southern California.

Bert Cardullo, who studied film and drama criticism with Stanley Kauffmann and Richard Gilman, is the Dramaturg and an Instructor in Film at Yale University. Holding degrees from the University of Florida and Tulane, Cardullo’s essays have appeared in numerous critical journals.

Charles Clerc won the Spanos Award for Distinguished Teaching at the University of the Pacific (1980), where he is Professor of English and department chairman. The author of many articles, stories, and a play, his most recent book is *Approaches to Gravity’s Rainbow* (1983).
James M. Freeman, Professor of Anthropology at San Jose State, earned his undergraduate degree at Northwestern and both of his graduate degrees from Harvard. Author of numerous scholarly works, Freeman's best known publication is Untouchable: An Indian Life History, which was selected Outstanding Academic Book of 1979 by Choice Magazine.

James Sutherland-Smith, an English teacher in Great Britain has published two collections of poetry: A Singer from Sabiya and Naming of the Arrow. His poems have been included in various anthologies, and he has won several British prizes for poetry.

Sybil B. Weir, whose publications include articles on Gertrude Atherton, Dreiser, and C. F. Woolson, is Professor of English and American Studies and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs at San Jose State. Holding the Ed.M. from Harvard and the Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, she has been employed as a secretary, counselor, Women's Studies Coordinator, and Chair of the Home Economics Department at San José.

Thomas Wendel, Professor of History and American Studies at San Jose State, earned the BA at Yale and the MA and Ph.D. at the University of Washington. In addition to articles in many scholarly journals, Wendel has published books on Benjamin Franklin and Tom Paine's Common Sense.
Acknowledgments

The publication of *San Jose Studies* is possible only through the support of its guarantor, benefactor, and patron subscribers. The Trustees and Staff of *SJS* would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following supporters.

**GUARANTORS**

Association of California State University Professors, San Jose State University Chapter
Hobert W. and Patricia Burns
Spartan Shops, Inc.

**BENEFACTORS**

Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Arends
Stanley and Gail Fullerton
Jay D. Pinson
Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Williams

**PATRONS**

Gene Bernardini
Ralph C. Bohn
John R. Brazil
Naomi Clark
Kathleen Cohen
Whitaker T. Deininger
Lucius R. Eastman, Jr.
John A. Galm
Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Gordon
Ted C. and Caryl Hinckley
Elsie Leach
Men's Athletics, San Jose State University
Arlene Okerlund
Robert Pepper
Rose Tseng
United Professors of California
Gerald Wheeler

In addition, a number of anonymous donations have been received.
San Jose Studies is published three times per year in Winter, Spring and Fall. Subscription prices are:

- $12.00 per year for individuals ($14.00 for foreign subscriptions)
- $18.00 per year for institutions ($20.00 for foreign subscriptions)
- $5.00 for single copies

Patron subscriptions are available for $50.00 per year. Benefactors may subscribe for $100.00. Guarantor subscriptions are $250.00 annually. Credit is given in the journal to patrons, benefactors, and guarantors unless otherwise requested.

Individuals are requested to send payment with the order.

Please make check payable to the SAN JOSE STUDIES and mail to:

Emi Nobuhiro, Business Assistant
San Jose Studies
San Jose State University, San Jose, CA 95192

Applicable taxes are included in the subscription prices.