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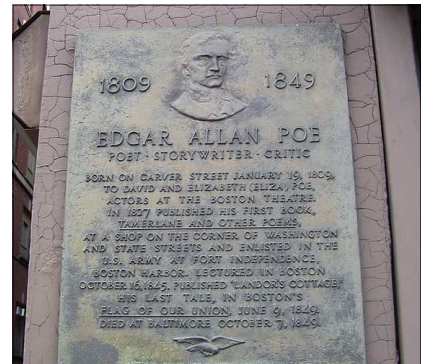
FALL QUARTER

DECEMBER 2009

EDGAR ALLAN POE AS THE FOUNDING FATHER OF DETECTIVE FICTION

By Leslie D. Walton, Adjunct Professor, Liberal Arts

Edgar Allan Poe, who was born 200 years ago and died just 40 years later, remains as mysterious and diverse as his stories, poetry, and criticism. Probably best known for his dark, twisted tales of horror and his rhythmic poetry, he is notably admired as the father of *detective fiction* in America. Romanticism and the Gothic are fundamental aspects of Poe's tales of horror. These elements are still present, although more subtly, in his detective stories or *tales of ratiocination*, as Poe called them.



Invention of *Detective* as a Literary Character



Poe's dedication to the "unity of effect" is present in the narrative techniques and thematic content employed in his detective stories and it parallels the developmental processes described by Poe in "The Philosophy of Composition." Instead of relying on phobias and fears to generate an "effect" on the reader, Poe creates the detective genre by focusing on basic human nature—the fear of the unknown, curiosity, competition, and the inherent need for resolution. He develops the archetypal model for detective fiction in literature and the foundational conventions used to define the genre. Poe blends Romanticism, the Gothic, his critical work, literary philosophies, and his unique narrative style to manipulate these generic conventions to generate suspense and to awaken and sustain that suspense in the reader.

Poe invented the detective in literature and originated an enduring genre when he penned three short stories centering on his detective/protagonist C. Auguste Dupin: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Roget," and "The Purloined Letter." The stories serve as the launching pad of the detective fiction genre and the emergence of the serial detective. In his 1846 essay "The Philosophy of Composition," Poe explains his method in composing his most famous poem "The Raven." Many of the elements described, such as effect, tone, length, and impression, are transferrable to his composing process of the three Dupin tales. The middle installment of the series, "Marie Roget" is considered by many to be a failure because it is too long and too involved to hold the reader's attention and for its lack of closure. Poe might have predicted this eventuality by referring to his own essay where he stated:

Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *denouement* before any thing be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *denouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of

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consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention. (Qtd in Thompson 675)

The tedious discourse and the absence of a concise solution in “Marie Roget” make it incompatible to the other installments in the series; the author deviated from his own successful formula (Gruesser).

Dupin is Poe--and Poe is Dupin

In his letter to Phillip Pendleton Cooke in 1846, Poe outlines the methodology of his detective stories:

—that is all done for effect. These tales of ratiocination owe most of their popularity to being something in a new key. I do not mean to say that they are not ingenious—but people think them more ingenious than they are—on account of their method and *air* of method. In the “Murders in the Rue Morgue”, for instance, where is the ingenuity of unraveling a web which you yourself (the author) have woven for the express purpose of unraveling? The reader is made to confound the ingenuity of the supposititious Dupin with that of the writer of the story. (Qtd. in Thompson 684)

This declaration substantiates his oneness with his character Dupin and that the “method” is a new revised approach to fiction. He further explains that he “kept the book-unity always in mind—that is, each has been composed with reference to its effect as part of a *whole*. In this view, one of my chief aims has been the widest diversity of subject, thought, & especially *tone & manner of handling*” (qtd. in Thompson 684). Poe thoughtfully orchestrates his stories and his characters. Their effect is gradual, mysterious, and unified; it creates suspense, similar to methods of instilling fear in his tales of horror.

Poe’s conventions of detection became the prototype of the detective fiction genre. They are generically defined in five stages: (1) commentary, (2) crime, (3) evidence, (4) analysis, and (5) solution. The detective is the primary component that passes through these stages and makes detection possible. For Poe, it was the character Dupin, who was, like Poe, diverse and mysterious. In fact, Dupin represents the link to Poe’s tales of horror through the embodiment of Romantic and Gothic elements. Peter Thoms states that Poe “portrays Dupin as a reclusive figure from an ‘illustrious family’ who, ‘by a variety of untoward events, had been reduced to such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it, and he ceased to bestir himself in the world, or to care for the retrieval of his fortunes.’”



The Detective as a Romantic Hero

Dupin is Poe’s “Byronic Hero” whose character is flawed, possesses small integrity with superior intellect, lives in exile, and has a distaste and lack of respect for social institutions and its representatives. In both stories, Dupin prefers darkness which leads him to shutter the windows and use muted candle light during the day. He only ventures into the city at night. Dupin is a “scholarly recluse” with an elusive descent who lives in a gloomy, rotting mansion and “Literary historians point out that the inner logic of Gothicism demanded such a development, for all its fantasies of rotting houses and animate wall-hangings are mysteries, and Dupin is the hero the Gothic world needs to understand and oppose its evils” (Silverman 172). Dupin’s character is a material element that awakens suspense in the reader and his employment of Poe’s methods sustain the suspense until the final resolution is revealed.

Poe realized the importance of continuity between the narrative technique and thematic content. In his tales, he incorporated a process of ratiocination so that the reader would accompany the detective toward a solu-

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tion. Poe's unnamed, first-person narrator represents the reader. This technique puts the reader in the narrator's shoes; all discourse between the narrator and Dupin become personalized. After placing the reader within the story, Poe focuses on validating our position through commentary. It allows us to bond with Dupin and become "astonished" by his acumen—like the narrator.

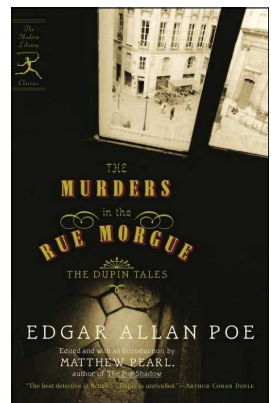
Educated Guess

The first demonstration of Dupin's peculiar talents are staged at the beginning of "The Rue Morgue" in order to build suspense through curiosity and awe in Dupin's "natural talents." After extended silence between them, Dupin responds to a question pondered on within the narrators mind to his astonishment, and

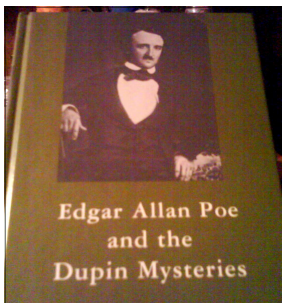
Dupin explains his method: not telepathy, but a display of what the narrator calls 'analytical power', consisting of intense observation and attention to detail, an apparently infallible understanding of the human psyche, and 'illimitable' education, and a rigorous application of deductive logic. (Woolf)

During the initial commentary stage of "Rue Morgue," the reader, via the narrator, is intrigued by Dupin's skill and intelligence; now the mystery begins to unfold.

The second stage—the announcement of the crime—is disclosed in the newspaper titled *Extraordinary Murders* with details of the murder and witness statements. After the announcement that a suspect was imprisoned, Dupin shows interest because of his knowledge of the man charged. He asks the Prefect for admittance to the crime scene. Dupin weighs the evidence and proceeds to "observe" the scene so that he may piece together the surface clues and delve beneath them for the answer to the riddle of the locked room murders. As Dupin sifts through the evidence, Poe offers a discourse dissecting each minute item. However, the narrator's vague understanding builds suspense as the reader processes the possibilities. Poe disorients the reader through the graduated use of words that instigate the feelings of vagueness, uncertainty, and fear. Then Dupin proceeds to soothe the distress through the analysis stage. An explanatory resolution is expressed through the astonished narrators grasping of the situation. (Kelly). Intellectual observer becomes active participant in the investigation when Dupin sets a trap for his suspect and he fails to inform the Prefect of his plans. The reader now is suspect of Dupin's real motive in solving this crime. After determining the truth, Dupin ensnares his suspected accomplice, confronts him with his analysis, excuses his involvement, and deems the entire incident an accident. However, the reader is left with the mystery of Dupin's true motive for getting involved—it seems more intrinsic and exploitive than generosity to aid his accused friend.



Poe and the Theory of Games



In "The Rue Morgue," Poe introduces elements of *game playing* and the science of *mathematics* in the initial commentary. The theory of games is used as an analogy to crime detection as Dupin embodies them by "throwing himself into the spirit of his opponent" to observe and properly analyze both internal and external modes of the situation. The narrator's games discourse foreshadows the inept approach by the authorities: "The Parisian police... there is no method in their proceedings, beyond the method of the moment" (Thompson 251). In other words, the police fail to observe the scene in its entirety, whereas Dupin is not limited in his scope of observation. His analytical thinking will deduce the events appropriately and lead him to a correct solution—like in a mathematical equation.

The Rue Morgue introduced three common detective motifs: the wrongly accused man, the crime in the sealed room, and the solution by unexpected means. Dupin solved the crime by reading the evidence better than

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the police, by noticing clues that they neglected, thus highlighting the importance of inference and observation. (Marling).

New Literary Form is Born

Through his creation of the detective story, Poe had defined a new genre. Its generic conventions included: (1) the eccentrically brilliant amateur sleuth; (2) the sidekick, first-person narrator, who serves and reports to the reader; (3) the announcement of simple clues; (4) the consistent ineptitude of the police; (5) the competition with an adversary law enforcement official who resents the detective's interference; and (6) the often simple but careful solution to the mystery using logic and intuition. Poe took these elements to another level in "The Purloined Letter" by shifting his focus from astute observation to solve a crime, to active participation in foiling the criminal and profiting from his efforts. The final Dupin story is considered to be the "best detective story and one of the greatest tales of detection ever written" (Gruesser). A seasoned Dupin no longer must compete with the inferior police; instead, he faces off with an intellectual genius who possesses equal analytical abilities to his own. Poe also creates a duality in both characters—poets and mathematicians—and successfully fuses these faculties to enable Dupin to solve the crime (Poquette).

In "The Purloined Letter," the crime is not murder but theft and blackmail. Poe's Dupin, and the Prefect of the Parisian Police exchanged pleasantries upon his visit. Dupin's usual biting commentary is buffered by the humorous reception by the Prefect. The narrator reminds us that the official is intellectually inferior: he "had a fashion of calling every thing 'odd' that was beyond his comprehension, and thus lived amid an absolute legion of 'oddities'" (Thompson 368). The identity of the thief is known and "the method of the theft was not less ingenious than bold," states the Prefect; he recounts his efforts to retrieve the letter but is baffled by the failure to secure it, especially given the fact that "he's a poet, which I take to be only one remove from a fool" (Thompson 371). After completing his report, Dupin has no other advice but to go back and perform another search to locate the letter, which the Prefect begrudgingly does. At this point, both the narrator and reader are in the dark. They place little importance on the events to date; however, the curiosity is aroused. Upon his returning visit, after the second thorough search, the Prefect declares his frustration and with Dupin's goading, states, "I am perfectly willing to take advice, and to pay for it" (Thompson 373). Dupin replies:

'In that case'...opening a drawer, and producing a check-book, 'you may as well fill me up a check for the amount mentioned. When you have signed it, I will hand you the letter.' I was astounded. The Prefect appeared absolutely thunderstricken. For some minutes he remained speechless and motionless, looking incredulously at my friend with open mouth, and eyes that seemed starting from their sockets; then apparently recovering himself in some measure, he seized a pen, and after several pauses and vacant stares, finally filled up and signed a check for fifty thousand francs, and handed it across the table to Dupin. The latter examined it carefully and deposited it in his pocket-book; then, unlocking an escritoire, took thence a letter and gave it to the Prefect. This functionary grasped it in a perfect agony of joy, opened it with a trembling hand, cast a rapid glance at its contents, and then, scrambling and struggling to the door, rushed at length unceremoniously from the room and from the house, without having uttered a syllable since Dupin had requested him to fill up the check. (Thompson 373-4)

Dupin then explains how he found the stolen letter through discourse with the astonished narrator—and readers.



Scene from "The Purloined Letter."

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Unlike Poe's tales of horror where the climax occurs and the story abruptly ends, the recounting of the events, moving back in time to revisit the action, enables Poe to sustain, and even build, the suspense. His genius in crafting the story is the parallel dimension where he places Dupin and his antagonist thief.

“Perhaps the mystery is a little too plain”

The humorous bantering that occurred during the initial visit by the Prefect foreshadows the facts of the case. Dupin's statements, “Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault,” “Perhaps the mystery is a little too plain,” and “A little too self-evident” is precisely that case in fact. Dupin discovers during a visit with his nemesis, that the letter is hiding in plain sight and after manipulating the circumstances, he creates a setting that almost parallels the original theft of the letter—only differing in the victim's knowledge of the theft. Once again, the reader, through narrator control, questions Dupin's motives for his involvement in the case. As in the “The Rue Morgue,” the premise is suggested that Dupin's involvement was to clear LeBon, a former acquaintance, and in “The Purloined Letter,” revenge for the previous wrongful treatment by Minister D is given as a motive.

Poe's narrative technique, however, leaves a sense of mistrust with the reader and Dupin's charm is somewhat tarnished by his overwhelming need to win, at all costs, any competition he sees fit to attempt. The reader must also question the reliability of the narrator. In “The Purloined Letter,” the narrator is kept in the dark until Dupin decides to share his achievement. The opposite is true in “The Rue Morgue” where Poe's narrator is invited to defer the hidden revelations of the mystery until the end.

The Reader is Invited to Play Along

His ingenious narrative structure, echoed by the thematic content of the stories, is instrumental in Poe's creation of the detective genre. Although mysteries involving minor detection existed before Poe's trilogy of Dupin tales, it is his endless interpretive vortex that separates him from his predecessors. Poe crafted and sketched his tales of ratiocination to allow his audience to make their own suppositions about the plot and the reliability of the narrators' voice. The detective is the only one who ever profits, legally, from a crime and Poe recognized that that would create competitive dynamic, which he expanded upon by placing the characters against each other and the reader against the narrator—and Poe. He also introduced the notion that the detective often must resort to the same actions as the pursued criminal, as artfully displayed in “The Purloined Letter.” Poe includes recursive action to blur boundaries and prolong the suspense until he is ready to disclose the resolution in a theatrical manner.

As outlined above, Poe defined the conventions inherent in detective fiction. In the Dupin trilogy, Poe employs three diverse plots: in “The Rue Morgue” it was an animal mystery or accident that we might call a “whatwuzit”; in “Marie Roget” it was a murder or accident that we might call a “whodunit”; and in “The Purloined Letter” it was a stolen letter that we might call a “whereisit” (Gruesser). In each of these tales, Dupin uses his analytical prowess to manipulate and solve each case (except for “Marie Roget”). His methods mirror that of a profiler. In fact, former FBI profiler John Douglas says it is possible that Dupin represents “histories first behavioral profiler” (qtd. in Thoms). It is demonstrated by his ability to step inside his opponent and decode his method of thought, thereby determining his actions as it relates to his crime. Peter Thoms best expresses the sustainment of suspense:

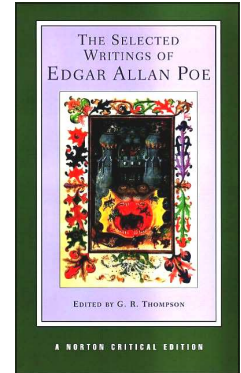
Reappearance and repetition are inherent in the very structure of detective fiction, as the investigator rewrites and, in explaining his case, retells the hidden story of the crime; consequently, to some extent, the detective necessarily reproduces the original anxiety, which is re-experienced by his audience. Indeed, in each of the stories, the tension between power and subjection is eventually channeled into the relationships between storyteller and audience: between Dupin and the companion-narrator, and the companion-narrator and the reader.

Poe awakens and sustains suspense in his detective tales by inviting us to play a game. After he baits us with his

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unique brand of commentary, we are hooked because our inherent curiosity and the need for security through resolution. There have been numerous variations of Poe's original detective conventions, but there will never be another Poe—the true detective, the real Dupin.

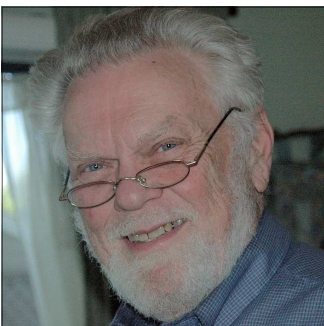


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WHEN THE BASIC DISTANCE TEACHING DEVICE WAS MY TEXTBOOK: A MEMOIR

By Dr. Darwin Sarnoff, Professor Emeritus, University of the Pacific



I became interested in *distance teaching* during the 1960s as a graduate student at Purdue. Computers were in their childhood. Distance teaching, as we know it today, was also in its infancy. The closest we came to a distance-teaching device was the textbook. I first

learned about distance teaching from Dr. Samuel N. Postlethwait who ran an experiment in which he put a tape recording in a carrel in the Purdue library along with plants and experiments that students were expected to

conduct. Although I did not use the term *distance learning* or distance teaching at the time, I discovered that he was doing the teaching in his office and laboratory and students were learning in the university library.

At the time, I recognized that math textbooks were a form of distance learning/teaching. Their authors asked me to perform a calculation and then gave me the answer at the back of the book. However, my experience with those textbooks was less than satisfactory. They required that I performed a calculation and then look at the back of the book. Flipping back and forth between the two sections was annoying. Even worse, there was no explanation of the correct answer to the problem and

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there was no explanation of the possible reasons for an incorrect answer.

Although the distance learning is the most commonly used term to describe the learning teaching process, I prefer the term distance teaching over distance learning because distance teaching describes what I am doing rather than what the student is doing. It may be that the student is merely going through the activities rather than learning something from the activities.

At the time that I was in graduate school, during the 1960s, B.F. Skinner (1904–1990) had just recently proposed that learning should take place in small steps with immediate feedback. This is exactly what the math textbooks were doing. Although Skinner's theories were disregarded at the time, modern software and practice use his ideas.

Distance teaching differs from classroom teaching in several ways. In classroom, the instructor receives immediate feedback. For one, he can see blank stares on the part of the students. In addition, in the classroom situation, students can raise their hands to interrupt lectures and ask specific questions.

With classroom teaching, the student learns at his or her own pace and with the exception of conference-based teaching, his or her own convenience. With distance teaching, I create learning materials and activities at my own convenience as if I were writing a book.

During my long teaching career at UOP, around 1985, I experimented with both *computer-based distance teaching* and *conference-based teaching*. I developed an HTML program for a course called *Health Care Delivery Systems: Forces Affecting the Demand for and Supply of Products and Services*. The course consisted of the following topic areas: The Hospital Services Industry, the Health Insurance Industry, Retail Drug Industry, the Pharmaceutical Industry, the Physicians Services Industry, and Governmental Involvement in Health Care. Government Involvement was divided into the subsections covering over-all government involvement, which included a discussion of the Food and Drug Administration, Medicare and Medicaid.

In creating the computer program, I attempted to emulate a textbook as much as possible by giving the student an opportunity to access the topics in random order. In addition, he or she could read the discussion before taking any test or take a pretest before reading the discus-

sion. The program also gave the student an opportunity to take a post-test after reading the discussion, or, if the student wished, to return to the topic and sub-topic sections without doing any of the above. It also allowed the student to return to the start of the program directly from any topic or sub-topic.

I also built several restrictions into the program. Once the student entered a discussion or test section, the only exit from the section was to exit the program entirely. Although exit points could have been programmed into the various sections, I felt that including them would have made navigating the program needlessly complex. Additionally, I attempted to imitate a programmed learning environment by creating two types of questions, multiple-choice / true-false and essay / short answer.

When I programmed the objective questions, it gave the student a response to his or her choice as soon as he chose the response and explained my rationale for the keyed answers and the distracters. I also wanted to prevent students from going to the next question until he or she had either selected the keyed choice failed to select the keyed

choice in a reasonable number of tries rather than just punching buttons until the computer let him or her go on to the next question.

This is how I achieved my objectives. In the case of *true-false questions*, if the student made the wrong or worse choice I explained why the answer was not right and allowed to continue with the next question, if there were more questions in the test. When there were no more questions in the test, I sent the student elsewhere in the unit. In the case of *multiple-choice questions*, if there were two distracters for the keyed choice and the student failed to identify the keyed choice on the first try, the student was given one additional opportunity to select the keyed choice, before being given the keyed answer or sent elsewhere in the unit. If there were four or more potential answers to a question, and the student failed to identify the keyed choice on his or her first or second try, the student was given the keyed or correct choice and then allowed to continue with the questions (if there were more questions) or sent elsewhere in the unit.

Every choice keyed or otherwise, was accompanied with my understanding of that choice.

Creating tests in which the student was expected to write a *short essay* or give a *short answer* was more difficult. The format I recommended to students, and the

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A teaching machine, designed by B.F. Skinner, to automate the task of programmed instruction.

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format of my keyed answers was based on the method used the State of California for its *California Basic Educational Test (CBEST)* examination. As students did not turn anything in to me, I have no idea what they did. They could have just thought through the answer to the question or write the question out on paper.

In keeping with my philosophy of *immediate feedback*, I gave the students an answer to the question and explained my answer. My explanation was highly structured. In the first paragraph of the keyed answer, I restated the question and gave a very brief answer. In the second and subsequent paragraphs, the brief answer was expanded, and in the final paragraph, the question and answers were summarized.

I also experimented with *conference call-based teaching*. In this experiment, my students and I interacted by typing questions and answers on computer keyboards just as people do in chat rooms. I believed that it was realistic for my students. In the real world, once they are in professional practice, the students will have an opportunity to consult (chat with) other professionals, when they have issues or questions, in organized chat rooms. The conference call would be the most frequently used format. In addition, I felt that conferees, whether student or professional, would save their discussion on their computers and locating topics would be quicker and easier than saving a discussion in audio format. Retrieving audio data is time consuming, as audio-records have to be scanned by listening to discussions that are not relevant to the immediate need of the listener. Computers, on the other hand, can locate specific information quickly. All the conferee has to do is type a search word or phrase and tell the computer to find it.

Conference call-based teaching can be somewhat more convenient than classroom-based teaching for students who live in the proximity of the school and significantly more convenient for all other students. Conference call-based teaching, like classroom teaching, has the advantage of two-way communication. It permits instantaneous feedback to both the teacher and students.

My experimentation confirmed that conference call-based teaching had the advantage of providing the students with anonymity. They were being given screen names with which to react to, and with the instructor and other students, with only minimal likelihood that they would be intimidated or embarrassed when they asked questions.

My results in conference call-based teaching were not as satisfactory as I had hoped. I observed that students failed to show up for sessions and would fre-

quently request being assigned to another session to compensate for the missed session. With a class size of ten students per session, a class of 80 students, and three one-hour sessions per week, I had a total of 24 sessions per week to attend. I found this to be a burden.

In addition to the number of students and the number of sessions, the experiment failed because of the technology of the mid-1980s: all the communication was performed over unstable phone lines; students and I were constantly being kicked off in an irregular pattern and had to spend time reconnecting. My feeling is that if we were to rerun the experiment with high speed, stable connections, smaller groups, and more instructors, the results of the experiment would have been quite different.

I also believe the results were unsatisfactory because my students knew I was conducting an experiment and that participation in the class was ungraded; it did not contain the California Board of Pharmacy testing material. I also felt that only those students who did not plan to be executives responsible for a chain of pharmacies or association presidents would see the relevance of a course in Health Care Administration.

At the start of the experiment, I anticipated that being anonymous would encourage students to participate to a much greater extent than it did. I observed that the shy students did not participate as frequently or as forcefully as outgoing ones, and that the students used their real names rather than made-up names.



Dr. Sarnoff currently works for Humphreys College Library and Learning Center. He earned his bachelor of science degree at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and his master and Ph.D. degrees at Purdue University. He retired from UOP after 35 years as Professor of Pharmacy Administration. In the 1980s, Dr. Sarnoff experimented with the first online courses at the School of Pharmacy.

BOOKS I LIKE (PART II)

By Rowena M. Walker

Generations of her students are well aware of her interest in good literature. Several years ago, Professor Rowena Walker even developed a new course, "Biographies: Great Figures in the Humanities," which requires proactive reading of various current and historic sources. In her lectures on history, philosophy, religions, arts, law, and politics, she frequently shares her fresh reading experiences. A few quarters ago, Professor Walker made a Learning Center presentation titled "What to Read and Why at College." Its participants received the list of her favorite books. Below is its second part.

Introduction to Part II

You may look at the list in this part and find the books a little stuffy. I do hope not! As you can imagine, I use books for pleasure but also to enhance my lectures. Reading, of course, is one of the best parts of teacher preparation. Here goes, stuffy or not!



T. S. REID **The United States of Europe**

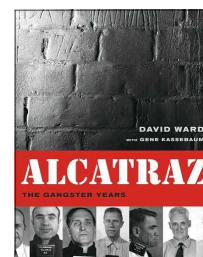
This interesting book has helped me look at things in the world a little differently. In the International Relations class that I teach once a year, I have tended to look at Europe—especially Western Europe—as our most important allies, a Europe made up of separate, sovereign countries. But the author of this book seems convinced that the European Union is continuing to become stronger as a united force more than it has ever been, and that Europe’s future—through this union—is sounder politically, socially, and economically than we realize. He cautions us to think about what that means for our own future.

ADAM NICHOLSON **God’s Secretaries**

Here is a fascinating book about the scholars who gave us the King James version of the Holy Bible. It tells of the 17th century’s English king’s interest in giving the world a new version—hoping partly to settle some of the religious controversies of the time—and then the gathering together of the individuals whom he thought could do the job. Parts of the book were not as smooth sailing as other parts, but I stuck with it and was rewarded.

DAVID WARD **Alcatraz**

I really think you all would like this one. It’s a new book written by a sociologist who made a thorough study of Alcatraz—how the inmates were treated, who they were, what their crimes were, and how many of them committed more crimes after they were released. (The recidivism rate was amazingly low.) It’s so interesting!



H. W. BRANDS **The Age of Gold**

If you are interested in the Gold Rush, this is the book for you, although there have been several others written over the years. Brands is an historian—not just of California. Maybe that’s the reason why he did a pretty good job of writing about the real significance of the Gold Rush for California and for the United States in general. He isn’t just a story teller; he has added to California’s history by examining some of the newer social and racial problems that earlier historians did not consider quite as much. In other words, I believe it’s a more modern study of the Gold Rush.

CLIFFORD STOLL **High-tech Heretic**

Okay. Listen to this! Here is a real computer science guru, employee in the big time, Silicon Valley. He has also taught many college classes on computer stuff, and he believes that we are making a mistake putting computers in schools for our kids when they need to learn so much else. He argues that good schools will not be any better with taking time on the computers, and that bad schools will not get better by having the kids on the computers. I have never read an author whom I agreed with

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more than Mr. Stoll! Somehow, people must be worried that our kids are going to go out in the world and not know how to operate computers, if we don't teach them now. What about me? I didn't even have a telephone growing up, and I now teach online classes at my age. I am surely not bragging, just observing that anyone can learn to use computers. We don't have to worry that the youngsters are going to grow up handicapped if we don't have them use computers in school.

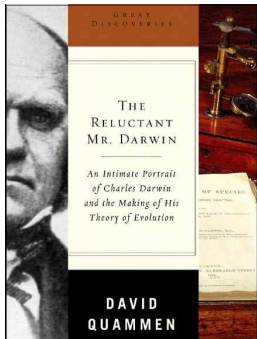
CECIL WOODHAM-SMITH **The Great Hunger**

Of all the books on this particular list that had the most effect on me, it's this book about the Irish potato famine of the mid-1800s. I sincerely encourage everyone to read it. It tells the lives of a people (in Ireland) whose dependence on potatoes—either as a farm crop or their sole source of food—were suddenly faced with fields and fields of rotten potatoes and with starvation. The English, the landlords of many of the Irish farmers, did almost nothing to help. Over one million people died of starvation, and over one million left Ireland and settled in the United States.

CHARLES DARWIN **The Journey of the Beagle, The Origin of Species**

I have only read parts of the first book, but almost all of the second. Honestly, his writing is not difficult to read. And reading Darwin is the respectful thing to do if we are going to talk about him so much and claim to be authorities on what he said. He changed everything we had believed prior to the 1850s. He's important.

DAVID QUAMMEN **The Reluctant Mr. Darwin**



Yes, I have always been fascinated with Charles Darwin, but not for religious reasons. After reading The Origin of Species, I am convinced that much of the concern over Darwin's ideas would be appeased if people would read his own writings in order to better understand his approach to animal and human evolution and natural selection. The Quammen book is easy to read and helps explain much about Darwin's personality and the problems he faced when his ideas were made known. Even his earliest writing, The Journey of the Beagle, is so interesting because it tells about his years of collecting and studying plants and animals that led to his new idea that we now call "evolution." One can speculate or question his approach and his conclusion, but it still provides thoughtful reading.

JON MEACHAM **American Gospel**

I like this author's histories. He is the current editor of Newsweek magazine. (I wish I liked his magazine as well!) But Jon Meacham has written other books that I have liked, and this one is especially good. It talks about the basic religious nature of the American people and our culture. He traces our religious heritage from the beginning, our insistence that God appears on money, on buildings, and in meetings, etc. He simply talks about what is. He happens to be a churchgoer, I think, but that doesn't enter into the discussion about the undercurrent of a religious feeling that we have had—more, perhaps, than any other country. It's excellent history.

DAVID McCULLOCH **John Adams**

It seems as though I am always exclaiming that this is my favorite or that is my favorite, and so you have to take me with a grain of salt. However, David McCulloch is certainly near or at the top of my list. I couldn't put down this book. And that's true with others of his that I have read. He wrote books about the building of the Panama Canal and the Brooklyn Bridge—both which had stories that we would never have heard about. Anyway, McCulloch decided to write about Adams because after doing the initial research, he began to realize that Adams has been terribly underrated—with Thomas Jefferson usually winning all the popularity laurels. With this book, McCulloch was good to his word—he tells about an amazing Founding Father. You just must read it!

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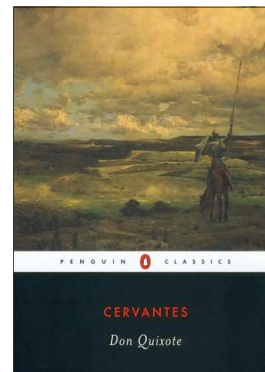
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JOHN GRISHAM **The Appeal**

Even though I am not particularly a John Grisham fan, I am recommending this book because it was suggested by two San Joaquin Country Superior Court judges, Linda Lofthus and Barbara Kronlund, who came to speak at Humphreys College this year. They said the book illustrates some practices of the judiciary that we should be aware of and be careful of. I truly enjoyed their lecture—they should write a book. I did read the Grisham book, and I saw what they meant. It was a little startling. See for yourself.

MIGUEL CERVANTES **Don Quixote**

I thought for sure that I put this book on Part I of my list, but I didn't. You have heard all your lives that you must read it, or at least you have heard references to it even in the popular media. Well, there's a reason. It just may be on everyone's list as one of the best books ever written. You might look at it and feel that you just can't last with a book that long. If you can't, read some of it anyway. First, look for a guide on the background, who the two main characters are, and what they're about. Then, open it up to any chapter and read some of it here and there. You may find that you're reading it for longer periods of time. You'll be glad you did.



JEAN EDWARD SMITH **John Marshall**

This book is in a tie for first place with me on my “biography” list—tie with John Adams. John Marshall was not the first Chief Justice of the United States, but he was probably the most important one. His tenure on the court was from 1801 to 1831. Of course, I have been interested in his role in the judiciary—he was responsible for marking the path it would take more than any other individual—but I have found his character, his goodness and his morality, to say nothing of his intelligence, to make me so proud when I think of him as a “Founder.” This is a book I read parts of over and over.

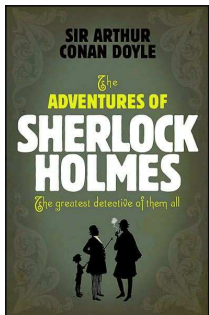
RICHARD HENRY DANA **Two Years Before the Mast**

I am sure Mr. Dana would be surprised to see his book being called a classic, which it surely is. It is an honest account of the life of sailors aboard ships in the early 1800s—the days when the ocean was alive with trading vessels. Honestly, it's wonderful reading for anyone, especially those of us who live in California. It tells of his going in and out of the ports along the California coast, from Monterey to San Diego. His observations are almost poetic. It occurred to me the other day that I should pick it up and read it again.

DAVID NASAW **Andrew Carnegie**

I suspect there aren't many out there who haven't heard of Andrew Carnegie, one of the richest men in the 19th century who came to America from Scotland and made his fortune producing steel. He eventually sold his Carnegie Steel Company for millions of dollars so that he could devote his time to philanthropy. He believed that every rich man who made a fortune should eventually give it all away for the good of others. He was as good as his word, and at one time most of the libraries in the cities of America had his name over their doors, as he used his money to get them established. The only reason his name is missing on some today is that they have been remodeled and modernized.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**



Guess whom I've been “hooked” on lately! I can't believe this hasn't happened to me sooner, considering Sherlock Holmes was a favorite of my father's. But, better late than never. I am absolutely intrigued with the ingenuity of the plots of these stories. Right now, I am in the middle of “The Hound of the Baskervilles.” I can't wait to go home to see how it turns out.

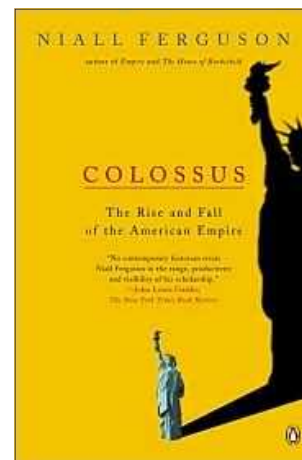
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DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN **A Team of Rivals**

There have been more books written about Abraham Lincoln than any other president of the United States, but this has to be one of the best. I say that because Ms. Goodwin celebrates his “genius” in a little different way. This book is about the cabinet that Lincoln selected during his presidency—a cabinet that was made up of friends and former political enemies, or rivals, I should say. His decision to appoint those whom he knew had opposed him was based on his realization that some of those individuals were, in fact, among the most knowledgeable and intelligent men in government, and he needed their wisdom. In other words, his seriousness about the state of the country at that time was more important than any personal hurt or opposition that he had endured. I certainly admired him even more after reading this book.

NIALL FERGUSON **Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire**

Niall Ferguson is a British (Scottish, actually) historian who has had a particular interest in the United States and our leadership in the world. He has generally believed, I gather, that the world needs a leader, and for the most part, he thinks the United States has served that role well. However, he worries a little about our continued effectiveness. He questions our financial stability and the willingness of the American people to continue the role. I was struck by his concern that we don’t really know very much about the rest of the world—something I have been worried about too, when I have realized that sometimes our schooling makes us less aware than we used to be of the rest of the world. I gathered that he wouldn’t agree with Mr. Reid, the first author on this list, who has faith in the strength of Europe, while Mr. Ferguson does not.



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