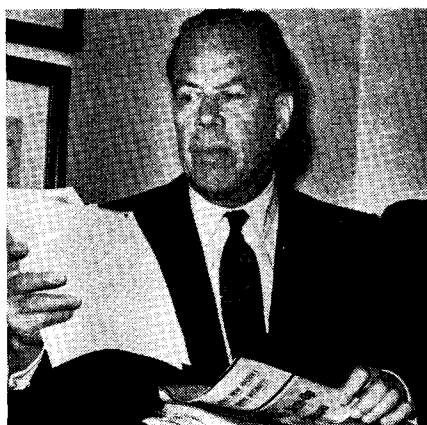


val officer, Kuchel was a state assemblyman from Orange County at the age of twenty-six, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee at thirty, the youngest man ever to hold that key position. He was first appointed to the Senate by Governor Warren to fill a vacancy in 1953. The following year he was elected to the office, and in 1962 he carried all of California's fifty-eight counties and ran up a majority of more than 700,000 votes.

Although the Senator contends that the polls show him maintaining his popularity, he admits, "There is room for improvement in Kuchel as a politician." It is certainly a legitimate worry to his adherents whether a state that has so recently elected such an avowed conservative as Reagan can, so soon after-



—Wide World.

Kuchel—"some to whom I am anathema."

ward, return to the Senate a Republican of Kuchel's middle-roading position.

5. Samuel Yorty: *Maverick Angel*

AT THE MOMENT nothing would be more likely to persuade Sam Yorty to stand for a third term as Mayor of Los Angeles than the announcement that Otis Chandler, publisher of the Los Angeles Times, had decided to enter the race. The Times, which in its time has both backed and opposed Yorty—and has lately nipped him about the ankles—is not a popular subject at the Mayor's press conference in the tall, white city hall not far from the newspaper's offices. "Otis could bring his pal Bobby Kennedy here and I'd welcome that," he was saying not long ago. "I did not know they were so palsy-walsy, shooting the rapids together, and Bobby being a house guest. That supplies a missing link."

In addition to his vendetta with Chandler and the Times, Yorty thinks less than kindly thoughts about Bobby Kennedy, who, with Abraham Ribicoff, severely criticized Yorty at a Senate subcommittee hearing investigating big-city problems. Yorty, who holds favor with

President Johnson and has even been suggested as his next running mate, thought he was being caught in a cross-fire between Kennedy and the President, and said so at a press conference. Other observers, perhaps less charitable or more realistic, remembered that, though a Democrat, Yorty in 1960 endorsed Richard Nixon over John Kennedy. Yorty felt that Nixon would have had California's best interests at heart, and he supports that theory today by recalling that Kennedy placed some of NASA's contracts in Boston and contributed to the new NASA eminence in Houston.

"We are always having our defense contracts challenged by people who want them passed out on a dole basis rather than on competitive bidding," Yorty points out. "It's a more important matter to the economy of California than any other state in the union." While he may have favored electing a California President, Yorty's pro-Nixon stand in 1960 came only after Johnson lost the nomination to Jack Kennedy. Yorty had been a strong Johnson booster, a fidelity that derived from his warm friendship for Sam Rayburn which had flowered during Yorty's term in the Congress.

An avowed maverick who warms to political scrimmage, Yorty has been both a state legislator and a Washington Congressman. In one role or another he has supported such diverse legislation as the establishment of a state un-American activities committee and an investigation and an attempt to exclude alien Japanese fishermen from California waters before Pearl Harbor. Just before the war he ran for the Senate on a platform that called for immediate intervention in the war against Hitler. Called a warmonger, he was beaten by Hiram Johnson, the incumbent. In the war Yorty became an intelligence officer in the Pacific, and the photograph of him in Groucho Marx

moustache standing behind MacArthur the day the Japanese surrendered aboard the *Missouri* remains a prized memento in his office.

After he had won a seat in the House, he abandoned it to race against Republican moderate Thomas Kuchel for the Senate. It was the year Goodwin J. Knight swept in on a Republican landslide, and Yorty was 200,000 votes short of his opponent. When he beat Norris Poulson, the Harold Lloyd-looking incumbent who almost sent Khrushchev home in a fury during the Soviet Chairman's American tour, Yorty became the first Democratic mayor the city had seen for forty years.

Conscious of his TV image, Yorty has shaved off his moustache, looking, with his high cheekbones and handsome rugged face, like a Marlboro man who has come in from the mesquite and been tamed in city ways. Short, well-groomed, and perfectly tailored, he roams the world widely, coming home to dote on all the Rotarian-like trappings of meeting and greeting which his office entails. In a bizarre city of an often bizarre state, it perhaps is not unusual that the Mayor should have his own TV program. It is aired weekly over KHJ, a local station owned by RKO. His million viewers tune in each week to see His Honor interviewing Phyllis Diller, Cassius Clay, John Wayne, or Danny Thomas—all of whom have appeared on the show. There probably has been nothing like it since Fiorello LaGuardia read the comics over the New York radio.

Next year the Senate seat which Yorty lost to Kuchel becomes open again. It has been said that Kuchel may have to battle Max Rafferty, a right-wing educator who is supported by William Penn Patrick, a cosmetic manufacturer himself nominated for Vice President on the Patriotic Party ticket. The nominee for Patriotic Party President is George Wallace.

Yorty weighs all that and wonders. He made a halfhearted try for governor last year, entering the primaries against Brown and polling a million votes to Brown's 1,300,000 without even leaving the city overnight. Even Sacramento, with its relative nearness to his comfortable hilltop house (once owned by Mickey Rooney) in the San Fernando Valley, doesn't seem to have much more attraction than Washington. Yorty has lived in both.

"It all depends so much on what happens next year," he says. "From a personal standpoint I question the idea of going back to Washington. I like it much better in Los Angeles. Besides, in Washington I would be one of a hundred U.S. Senators, and a freshman at that." The warmth of Southern California was still working its wonders, even for the Mayor of Los Angeles.



—Wide World.

Yorty—"It all depends on next year."

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The hippie aberration, which anyone with a sense of history has to see as a newer, younger variety of romantic bohemianism, is only one response—an overpublicized one—to California's extreme permissiveness. It is common for immigrants to try to mold themselves to the new conditions, with a desperate yearning to be in, to belong. But when the new condition is as unstable as a dust devil or a strobe-light happening, then many immigrants are going to be thrown back on the conventional and the known. The more experimental and permissive the moral, artistic, political, and social Left, the more the Right backs up in its ruts, high-centering itself on attitudes hallowed by the example of Ulysses S. Grant and Mrs. Grundy.

The man in the middle may be tempted to cry a curse on both their houses, for both extremes hinder the growth of a tradition that might stabilize the society and foster a sense of community in its swollen cities and its creeping slurbs. (William Wilson thinks of them as crabgrass; I have always thought of them as a sort of impetigo.) Having welcomed unlimited growth, the state has the most acute growth problems anywhere. Some Californians have begun to look on growth not as a good but as an active evil, ruinous for people and land.

Like other civilizations that have set out to build a future, California will eventually discover that it has created a past. When it does become aware of its past, which it will not do until its growth is drastically slowed, then it will also find that it has at least a rudimentary tradition, linking it to much that in its brash youth it rejected. Awareness of a tradition is an automatic brake on permissiveness—and restriction and limitation are as basic to civilization as energy and daring.

It will be tragic if social order and stability are imposed by the Raffertys, the Reagans, and the lockjaw Right of Orange County. It could be equally unfortunate if the Gary Snyders succeed in their aim of leaving not one value of the old order standing. In the experimental society everything is permitted, but not everything works. When that discovery is made, the society has tempered innovationism with tradition, even convention.

Meantime, California is a state in which it is at times almost intolerable to live. I know people who are moving out rather than rear their children there. Yet other places, by comparison, seem lesser, smaller, duller, less promising, less exciting. For this is indeed where the future will be made—is already being made, with all the noise, smog, greed, energy, frequent wrong-headedness, and occasional greatness of spirit that are so American and so quintessentially Californian.

—WALLACE STEGNER.

California: The Experimental Society

EDITOR'S NOTE: Wallace Stegner, who contributes the editorial for this special issue, is the well known novelist and professor of creative writing at Stanford.

“**A**PUTTY CULTURE,” as Neil Morgan calls it in this California issue of *SR*, is Innovationville, not Traditionburg. Its motto, “Why not?”—a question that one of Arthur Koestler's heroines asks herself while wearily submitting to rape—applies even in her sense; but in California the question is more often hopeful or exhilarated than weary. Why not? It might work.

In this experimental society nothing, as William Wilson remarks in his perceptive essay on California art, is forbidden; by the same token, nothing is formed. If the history of America is the history of an established culture painfully adapting itself to a new environment, and being constantly checked, confused, challenged, or overcome by new immigrations, then the history of California is American history in *extremis*.

Like the rest of America, California is unformed, innovative, ahistorical, hedonistic, acquisitive, and energetic—only more so. Its version of the Good Life, its sports, pleasures, and comforts, are increasingly copied by the envious elsewhere. It creates an art and literature as nervous, permissive, and superficial as itself. It has its own intensified version of the Brain Drain, borrowing both ideas and the men who generate them.

It borrows from everywhere—in nothing is it so American. And in one of its more recent borrowings it fulfills a con-

tinental promise. It is the last leg of the journey of Europe toward Asia.

A hundred years ago the geopolitical Manifest Destinarian William Gilpin cried exultantly, “Asia is found and become our neighbor!” Neighbor indeed. It has been our enemy three times within a single generation, and it is also our guru, under the California bo tree. Asian influence is no longer confined to an occasional swami such as Sri Pravananda or Krishna Murthi. Now whole blocks of Hippierville devoutly read the Tibetan Book of the Dead, Alan Watts interprets Zen to the willing, the poets Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder walk each his version of the Left Hand Path, there is a Zen house of contemplation in the Santa Lucia Mountains near Tassajara Hot Springs. One of my recent students is a monk there—an immigrant Californian from Ithaca, New York.

Distaste for Puritan and industrial society is nearly universal among American youth. In California it is closer to hatred—and it does not matter much whether the extremists are Activist or Hippie, New Left or Far Out. The important fact is that California was an early hotbed for both, and remains so. The thousands of teen-aged runaways flocking to San Francisco in the summer of 1967 are a testimonial to that continued attraction, as well as a demonstration of how sadly social the ills of an antisociety can become. Haight-Ashbury has every ghetto ill—poverty, malnutrition, illegitimacy, drug addiction, suicide, mental disorder, and venereal disease, which youth has made into California's No. 1 public health problem.