

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

June 12, 1978

JOSHUA LEDERBERG
JOSEPH D. GRANT PROFESSOR
OF GENETICS

Dr. Sara Ann Gerling
Dept. of Psychobiology
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92717

Dear Sara:

Thank you for your narrative letter of May 30, which is exactly what I asked of you. You give a very good account of yourself, as you also do in personal interviews, and I certainly hope that your career plans work out as you now formulate them. I am also convinced that Harvard is not the place for what you plan to do.

Your letter struck just the right balance between realistic self examination and self flagellation. Certainly your intention to pull back from being so diffuse is very well considered. One has to be a bit optimistic that going into still another field will enable you to set aside your former interests and simplify your life.

I think a lot of people would quarrel with you fairly strenuously, and I would more gently, about the human "irrelevance" of your animal studies. I would have exactly the opposite expectation about their final impact but that is a decision you have to make for yourself. If you meant that you would like your day to day work to bring you into more direct contact with people and with human situations that would be a less controversial and readily understandable motive. In fact, I had an impression rather like that from our conversation.

Again I was very pleased to get your letter and I make these remarks mainly with the aim of giving you some pointers that may be helpful to you in how you present yourself in personal interviews.

If there is anybody else besides Pat Jacobs you would like me to write to, please just let me know.

Good luck.

Yours sincerely,

JL/ge1