

## Chapter Three *My Wanderjahr*

By the time I had completed the Preliminary Examinations, I was completely exhausted. The four year marathon from Freshman Year to my Master=s Degree had cost me more than I realized, and the loss of Susie, who had been the center of my emotional life since the age of fourteen, left me with no focus for the passionate feelings that welled up inside me. I was utterly incapable at that moment of launching on the writing of a doctoral dissertation, which was the natural next step in my education.

Miraculously, in the final months of my frantic cramming, I had been awarded a Sheldon Fellowship for the following year. The Sheldon Traveling Fellowships were an extraordinary Harvard institution that made it possible for impecunious young men like myself to take the modern day equivalent of the Grand Tour. Established in 1909 by the widow of Frederick Sheldon, Harvard Class of 1842, they provided \$2400 for one year of study and travel abroad. There were actually two sorts of Sheldons. Those awarded to graduating seniors literally specified that the holder was *not* to stay in any one place for more than the three months, and was *not* to enroll formally in any institution of higher learning. The awards to graduate students were rather more relaxed. One could settle down and study, but one was by no means required to do so. I had been awarded a graduate Sheldon, but very quickly, I turned it into an undergraduate Sheldon. I was off to see the world.

I sailed for Europe at the beginning of July on a large, old creaky ship that held eleven hundred students, most of them on summer vacations. Continuing a family tradition stretching back three generations, I began writing letters home even before the ship got to Southampton, and continued writing until three days before I sailed home thirteen months later. I wrote a total

of sixty-two times, and when my mother transformed my letters into typewritten sheets, to be circulated among my family, they filled well over 200 pages. I wrote travel descriptions, philosophical reflections, political analyses, and gossip. I anguished about my loneliness, my doubts about the career on which I had embarked, my fears of death, and my desperate desire to find a woman. Some of the letters are relatively brief; other run on for eight closely written pages or more.

In this chapter, I offer a selection from those pages, in the chronological order in which they were written. Nothing has been edited, revised, or cleaned up save for some typing errors that resulted from my appalling handwriting, and which I have checked against the originals. The voice is that of a twenty year old on his first adventure, eager, chatty, enthusiastic, callow, self-important, brooding, lonely, introspective, horny.

Here, then, instead of presenting myself as I recall myself now, looking back over the decades at the person I once was, I offer a glimpse of Robert Paul Wolff as he was fifty years ago, in his own words.

*July 8, 1954*

*Dear All,*

*This is the last full day of the boat trip, and I am taking some time now to write a report of it. We are due to dock at Southampton tomorrow at noon... On the first day ... I strolled to the rail, struck up an acquaintance with a fellow and discovered that he is a fellow Sheldon scholar. ... He is a typical A world traveller@, replete with travel hints, knowing glances, casual offerings of erudite technical knowledge, etcetera. He preys on young innocents such as I, hypnotizing them with the pseudo-lore of the sea. All this, of course, in a most harmless manner. Ah well, I suppose I shall one day be the same...*

*Impression B the A sea air@ is less salty aboard ship than at Jones Beach B there is almost no salt in*

*the air. I am afraid the encomium heaped on sea air is the product of preconceptions. The air is pleasant, and clean, but that is all. Perhaps people simply pause to observe the odor of fresh air when on board ship, but have not the time, otherwise...*

*We have two stowaways aboard ship! Apparently they boarded on the 30<sup>th</sup> to wish their ladies-fair fond goodby, and became sufficiently polluted to pass into unconsciousness; upon awakening, they found themselves en route to England!!! With 1100 persons aboard, however, they will scarcely be noticed!...*

*Well, dinner is over, and the Scilly Islands are passed. The lighthouse appeared first, and then a bank of reefs and islands **B** EUROPE **B** we dock tomorrow noon, but by early morning we shall be at Southampton. !! Till now, I have not believed that I would really get to Europe, but now that I am actually within British waters, I am beginning to realize that my dream of many months (and years) is a reality.*

*July 9, 1954*

*I am at Oxford, about to mail this, but before I do, I must tell you one small incident which nicely symbolizes Magdalen College. I just looked out the window of my very lovely rooms, and there on the back lawn, 50 yards away, I saw a group of small deer, running free. Such is Oxford!! **B** I met Ryle this morning, and will see more of him before I leave.*

*Grenoble July 18, 1954*

*I've met hordes of Britons here, and they almost always express dislike of the French. I can understand this; I don't particularly care for them myself. They are excessively polite, but not at all warm or friendly in the way the British are. I suspect I shall return with the same opinion as yours **B** that England is my favorite country*

*There are also many Swedish girls here, and they have the collective reputation of being extremely free with their affections **B** they all speak excellent English, and I may look into the question of the accuracy of the reputation. ... I am not going to classes -- they are hopeless, and the Mlle. who teaches my section is, it turns out, the worst of the lot. I have bought *l'homme révolté*, by Albert Camus (author of *The**

*Plague=) and I will simply plough through it, learning as I go along. I just can't face the prospect of homework and daily classes. ...I find, by the way, that my fears were justified. I am so excessively verbal that I get strong feelings of malaise and insecurity when in a city that literally doesn't talk my language..*

*July 26, 1954*

*... Pop, I am partially taking your advice B that is, I am altering my plans. Tomorrow morning, at 6:45 a.m. I hitch-hike out of here. My itinerary is Grenoble-Briancon-Turino-Genova-Pisa-Roma.... A girl is going with me as far as Pisa. Then I go on alone to Roma....*

*At the present moment, I am perched atop the Maison, while people stream toward the point at which the Tour de France will pass. This a bicycle race that starts at Amsterdam, goes all around France, from n.w. to w. to s.w. to s. to s.e. to e. to Paris. They do it in daily laps of 180-240 kilometers, and today, the 17<sup>th</sup> lap passes. They stop here and take off for Lyon tomorrow. After 16 days of grueling racing, the leader is about 3 2 minutes ahead of the second racer! ... Four hours later, after watching the tour de France arrive. I stood 2 hours in the hot sun, but it was fun to see them race in. The characters who came to watch the race were priceless B dozens of gendarmes, all shaking hands with each other and officiously doing nothing B three pretty girls working their wiles on the officials to obtain a special place (and of course, succeeding) B a policeman pulling a dog from the center of the road and being treated to a round of catcalls.*

*Roma July 31, 1954*

*Dear Folks,*

*Well, here I am in sunny Italy, sitting in the Casa della Studente on the Cita Universitaria. My journey from Grenoble to Rome was rather a fabulous one, so without further ado, I shall give as close an account as possible.*

*Monday, I left my hotel room, and brought my belongings to the room of my Scottish friend. There I packed my bag for the trip to Rome... That night, after the festivities attendant upon the Tour de France, I went to sleep.... At 6:30 a.m., Tuesday, I was in front waiting for Marinelle Pilgrim, the West Indian girl*

*with whom I journeyed as far as Pisa. She arrived at 7 a.m., and off we started, full of high spirits and a little sleepy.*

*Our first route was the Cour Jean James, leading out of Grenoble, south and then south-east, toward Briançon... With an initial burst of good fortune, we were picked up by a truck (the first of many) and were conveyed through the Isère valley some 20 k, or so to a small town where we had breakfast. A short walk carried us beyond the center of town, and in a shady spot by a row of venerable flats, we settled down to wait. As the wait was a longish one, during which time we saw France as it went by, rather than by going by it, B let me take a moment to describe my travelling companion.*

*Marinelle was born in Trinidad, but was raised in Britain. She is slight, about 5'4", with dark skin, features which reflect both her paternal and her maternal heredity, and long, very tightly wavy hair, done up in a bun in the back of her head B she is pleasant, intelligent, and with her good knowledge of French, and minimal command of Italian, was often the director and liaison officer of our little expedition.*

*C to continue on our way: the next ride was with a priest, and he dropped us off a bit further on, we were in the foothills of the French and Italian Alps. Another ride, after quite a wait, and we were standing in the blazing sun, 100 feet from the beginning of a prodigious rise, culminating, or so the signposts said, in the col de Lauteret, one of the highest passes of the French Alps. All about us rose the Alps B the barest glimmer of snow on the topmost peaks B green with an unusually heavy foliage, due to excessive rains, the low hills near us were themselves exciting, but before us lay the most famous mountain range of Europe, and perhaps of the world. The Alps B over which had crossed three millennia of travellers, invaders, traders, and migrants. There we waited in the beating sun.*

*And now the first of two pieces of luck for which the tour de France was responsible. Not only had we left the tour in Grenoble, where it had ended the night before B we were travelling toward the finish line of Tuesday's lap as well B Briançon. The cyclists were to race over the Alps; and finish at Briançon in late afternoon. Late in the morning we were given a ride by a French family off to the col d'Izaard, to see the*

cyclists come over the hump -- we were to ride all the way to Briançon. We climbed into the back of the truck (a very sturdy affair with canopy supported by cross-beams of wood and iron -- I would estimate it as a 2-ton, or 1 2 ton pickup truck), and began the ascent. Up, and then up again, and still again up -- the meters rolled by as we climbed past valleys dotted with villages, past peaks which gave way always to higher peaks. The road twisted and turned in upon itself, as if attempting to postpone the agony of the climb -- we pushed on, gazing out the back of the truck at a panorama of arêtes and passes, forests and fields, villages and barren rock slides. Every turn of the road brought new heights in view, and then, without warning, so dramatically that it seemed part of a story, the truck swung about, and before us, rising in the sun, glittering with its garment of glaciers and fields of snow, was a peak so vast in conception, so monstrous in size, as to dwarf all about it. This was the Alps! Here was the inspiration of an hundred eulogies, the original from which a thousand penny postcards took their reflected bit of glory! As the road arched up and around, this behemoth passed out of view, but always it appeared again, ever larger and more glorious. About it there were grouped a bevy of lesser peaks, any one of which might well be the master of its own range **B** I do not know the name of the mountains I have tried, in vain, to describe. Perhaps it is not important. Perhaps it is. I do not really care **B** for me, it will ever be **A** the Alps **@ B** the symbol, if you will, of that great range of mountains that stretches through Austria, Italy, France and Switzerland.

And so, finally, we reached the col de Lauteret, high in the Alps, and stopped for an hour. The air was fresh and clean and cool, though the sun was hot. Behind us lay France and before us, past Briançon, was Italy. We continued on, descending as rapidly as we had climbed, till, a kilometer from Briançon, we left the family and again proceeded >a pied=, that most elemental form of travel, to which the infantry and the hitchhikers seem forever doomed.

This time, our walk was a long one, and we were forced to mount a steep hill, before arriving in the center of Briançon. It was now about 3 p.m., and the sun was a heavy burden on our backs. Hungry (we had eaten nothing after the café et criossants of our early breakfast) we paused at a restaurant situated directly

opposite the finish line of the Tour de France. We knew that no cars would leave Briancon until the tour had arrived, and so we settled down to a meal. It was expensive, I am afraid ( 531 francs **B** \$1.65), but we consumed huge portions of potatoes, bread, salad, veal and wine, thereby making the most of our extravagance. The meal finished, we watched the tour arrive, and then occurred our second stroke of good fortune. This time, we gave it a helping hand, however.

You may not know that it is possible to tell from a license plate of an Italian car the city from which it comes...Parked near the race, we saw several cars reading TO, the key letters of Torino, our next major port of call. I urged Marinelle to inquire of these cars (or rather, of their occupants) if they were going to Torino ... After one refusal, we were favored with success, and on we went to Italy...

At 7:30 we arrived at Torino... Marinelle had the name and address of a student house in Torino, at which we hoped to stop for the night. When we entered, we found it full, and our hopes began to dim. At that moment, a young fellow (who, it later turned out, was an M. D.), began a valiant effort to find us lodgings, the cheapest hotel in town cost 600 lira (Bear in mind that all which follows was the result of attempting to avoid paying as >much= as \$1 for a room!!! How quickly one=s standards alter!) Up strolled another student... He suggested that we go into the countryside to find a farmhouse at which we could stay. So we climbed into his tiny Fiat, and chugged out of town, several kilometers on the road to Genoa (our next goal). After several minutes the driver hopped out and ran to a house to inquire. **B** Here again, is one of those inimitable pauses in the life of the >auto-tow= traveller, and so I may use the few moments during which he was away to describe this fellow who had gone so far out of his way to help two itinerant students. He was tall, and large, with an open and pleasant face. Though now working in the leather goods business, importing from England, he had been a student at the University of Torino. By birth he is Yugoslav, and spent part of the war there. He speaks Italian and Jugoslavian, French and a little English, and understands German. **B** Ah, back he comes, but this time, no luck. So off we go, further into the country.

After one more try (no one home) we got a lead, and into a dirt road we turn. If we have understood

his explanation correctly .. we are on the estate of an Italian count! Sure enough.. We pull into the courtyard of a keeper=s cottage. - Here, Marinelle and I simultaneously remarked a small point in the actions of our driver, a point which highlighted the difference between Anglo-American and Italian customs. He got out of the car, walked past the woman who had come out to greet us, and went immediately to the man in the doorway **B** the man, as lord of the house, decided who stayed and who did not, so one quite obviously spoke to him. Later, he would give to the woman whatever instructions were necessary.

But enough of amateur comparative sociology **B** after much incomprehensible palaver (we later learned that the count was away, and the director did not feel that he had the right to offer us a bed), it was decided that Marinelle would stay in the director=s house, and I would stay elsewhere **B** I did not know where. The director and I left Marinelle, he leading the way with a flashlight, and I following with my luggage.

We entered a building and I was told to leave my luggage below. Ascending a flight of stairs, we arrived at a high-ceilinged hall, dark and barren. With an air of conspiracy, my host extracted a key from a drawer, and opened a nearby door. I looked through, seeing nothing but a black drop **B** into this drop he stepped, motioning me to hold the light, and I then saw a slim board stretched catty-corner to another ledge, which formed the doorstep of a door placed in the midst of the wall, 20 feet above the floor below. Here he made use of a key which he had also taken from the chest of drawers, and entered the mysterious room. **B** noise of motion, a light struck, the light vanishes, and back he comes **B** the door is locked, the board traversed, the first door locked, the keys returned, and new keys chosen. **B** We descend the stairs, turn a corner, and a key is taken from the top of a fuse-box. Another door swings open, and we enter a dirt-floor room, filled with rubble. From beneath a flagstone appears another key, we enter the room beyond, and the director places a ladder against a sheer wall, ascends it, and reaches another door, also suspended, as it were, in mid air. A final key is produced, up the ladder he goes **B** the door sticks, he descends for a hammer **B** up again, and into the chamber **B** finally, he emerges, triumphantly bearing **B** a mattress!! All this story-book chase of keys and



*ladders and boards and doors has been a search for a mattress. Back we go, B down the ladder, key under the flagstone, key on top of fuse box, a turn around the courtyard, up the stairs, and in to a room, covered with grain. Here is to be my bed of the night. The director gives me a box of matches, lights the candle affixed to the wall and, after a pantomime demonstration of how to blow out the light, leaves me to my slumbers. And so I lay down, to my first night in Italy.*

*August 6, 1954*

*My general impression of Rome is that it is hot, reasonably cheap, and not very interesting.... The fault undoubtedly lies with me, for I have discovered that one piece of 2000 year old stone looks frightfully like another. I also was unable to distinguish old Roman ruins from new World War II ruins, the result being a decline in interest in the former, rather than an increased interest in the later.... I saw the Coliseum, and am glad to have done so, but I must confess that what took me by surprise was its smallness, not its grandeur. I also saw the Roman Forum, but it will take a better imagination than mine to clothe those bits of rock with the men who ruled an empire....*

*The third memorable experience was an evening at the Opera... The performance was given in the Baths of Caracalla, ruins of old Roman baths B the stage between two stark pillars of stone, surrounded by other ruins. The opera was Aida, a fortunate choice, for it is full of spectacle.*

*We arrived early and bought bleacher seats (at 35 cents each). Then, climbing high in the stands (larger than Lewisohn Stadium), we settled down to await the first act. While we chatted, hawkers went through the stands selling soda-pop, pop-corn, and other goodies. Many families had brought the children, and we munched on sandwiches, provided by Ruth.*

*Finally, the opera started. I need say nothing about the music. B I consider it as unworthy of interest as the telephone book. Except for the saving grace of several marches and a good aria, it is not worth the trouble to play it. However, we were so far from the stage that it was only when the wind was right that we could hear, so we did not suffer overmuch....*

*The real enjoyment came from the spectacle. The cast sported several hundred extras (all of whom were on stage for the triumphal entry of Radames), a team of 4 horses drawing the carriage in which Radames enters, fireworks from the battlements and B hold on to your hats B a real live camel for the desert scene. (The damn thing saunters across the stage, led by an Arab, and then is neither seen nor heard from again. Just passing through, I guess. B It was a two-humper, by the way, and for a moment I couldn't tell whether it was an upright camel or a prone Wagnerian soprano.)*

*Eventually, the bloody mess came to an end, and we departed for saner parts. I doubt whether I will ever see another performance of Aida quite like that one.*

*Aug. 9, 1954*

*Dear All,*

*I have finished a quart of milk at one gulp, and I now turn to the pen again to answer the host of letters which awaited me on my return from Monte Carlo...*

*Mother, about your comments concerning my ability to live an undirected life, from day to day. I find it sometimes disturbing... that the three forms of activity which are, for me, totally self-rewarding... are: social intercourse of any kind, formal or informal; some form of intellectual activity; listening to music. The last of these is, by far, the most important. At almost any time, I can stop and spend any number of hours listening to Bach or Handel or Vivaldi, etc. without wishing to stop, and without forcing myself to continue by telling myself that I am doing something that is worthy of merit (a thought which often occurs to me.) I shall be extremely happy to get back to Oxford, and begin work. I am afraid I am one of those who dream of leisure, but dislike it. If the pressure had been slightly less heavy at Harvard last year, it would have been fun. I am just a tense, hopped-up, inner-directed kid, I guess.*

*Edinburgh Aug. 25, 1954*

*In my last letter, I posed a problem, the answer to which I believe myself to possess. It is a problem which has been forced on my attention by the fact that again and again I have found myself bored by*

comfortable inaction (at home, as well as in Europe), and interested and entertained by very uncomfortable moments. The answer, quite simply, is that I seek change, alteration, panoply rather than monotony. What I desire, for the greater part of my waking life, is endless variation of my sensory experience. As long as this experience excludes severe pain (but even if it includes great discomfort) I am interested, happy, taken with life, and I avoid the impossible tedium of my own thoughts.

Even when I devote myself to thinking, less often than I ought, my mind's efficiency is improved by an external sensual variation... There seems to be a reflection of this trait of mine in my attitude toward art. I am unable to appreciate sculpture or painting, for I cannot stand before one work for more than thirty seconds. And yet, I can spend half a day motionless, listening to music, the very essence of which is alteration. Instead, music, as structured alteration, provides a perfect balance of rational comprehensibility and sensuous variability, and quite possibly it is these two aspects of music which explain its appeal to me.

August 29, 1954

Over the past weeks, I have had numerous small laughs at various little touches here **B** like the parenthetical directions at the bottom of >continued= stories, which read >please turn to page **B**> rather than >turn to page **B**>. And the falsies ad which spoke of the >simple and harmless deception**B**>, apparently addressing itself to a public which was still doubtful of the morality of the inflated bosom.

Speaking of inflated bosoms leads one to think of stuffed shirts, and of these, I am happy to say I have encountered few. The British have been almost uniformly polite and friendly, and much more helpful to the visitor than the French.

Continuing on past inflated bosoms and stuffed shirts one comes to swelled breasts, and here we find the Englishman at his most amusing. For the dearest and most privy conceit of the Englishman, the virtue transcending all others, which he will never cease to proclaim, is **B** that he never blows his own horn. One sees signs of it again and again, always coupled with the implicit suggestion that if he were prone to such boasting, he could go on for ours without returning to a previously named virtue.

September 12, 1954

*I think I shall contact Russell as soon as I return to Oxford. Time is getting short, and he may kick the bucket some day (as did Irwin Edman unexpectedly just a few weeks ago.)*

Oxford September 15, 1954

*I am finally getting around to writing to Bertrand Russell. I shall try to send it off today, and then it will be up to him. I hope I am not struck dumb by the great man. Anyway, you shall have a full report, if and when I get to see him.*

September 19, 1954

*As I mentioned above, I haven't been feeling very happy lately. I've been lonely here... and I was in Edinburgh, also. I had friends, but no one really close, and of course, no female companionship. I've found it impossible to study. Philosophy offers very little to me at this point. I feel aimless, literally B without purpose or goal. I'm tired of striving for academic honors, which are a very false kind of goal, and unsatisfactory after a while. But I don't see anything else to do. I think in terms of >getting away=, which is rather amusing, inasmuch as I am 3000 miles >away= as it is. The last thing in the world that I want is >enjoyment.= I have always fretted during idle periods, and this is no exception. The only trouble is that the work into which I used to throw myself no longer attracts me. And if it doesn't now, what will I do as a professor, when there are no prizes to be won, no grades being given? The only thing about the academic life which appeals to me now is the teaching part of it, which I look forward to eagerly...*

*I have long feared that my interest in work was inseparable from my striving for marks and prizes. But the terrible thing is that I am neither sufficiently free of this, nor sufficiently afflicted with it. I cannot enjoy my work when it is done for its own sake, but my self-consciousness is too great for me to work hard for (subconscious) neurotic reasons. I don't know what I shall do for the rest of the year. ... I am sick of travelling alone, which is not my idea of fun...*

*I don't mind being buffeted by my passions B I'd as soon be buffeted by them as by anything else*

*B* what I object to is, given the passions, being unable (at present) to satisfy them. If one must be a plaything of one's emotions, a little satisfaction now and then is the least nature can offer. I, of course, must needs desire more than mere physical enjoyment. I crave a union with a woman who can give, and receive from me, affection and love. And, as you doubtless know, this is slightly harder to find.

Despite my bantering tone, I am a bit disturbed, because I am fairly sure that this problem will remain with me... If I must immerse myself in any intellectual endeavor, I think it will be philosophy. The difficulty is that I have no goal in life; and ironically, my philosophical training enables me to see through any of the ordinary arguments that might be given.

September 25, 1954

*I AM GOING TO BUY A MOTORCYCLE.*

Before attempting to justify this rather extraordinary purchase, let me describe the machine I hope to buy:

Cubic capacity:	197 cc
Price, with accessories	\$350 (L. 125.0.0)
License, registration, and insurance	\$15.00 (approx)
Resale at present market, after 1 year	\$250 (approx)
Speed (cruising)	50 mph
Speed (maximum)	70 mph
Miles per gallon	85-95
Total load	2 passengers and some baggage (incl. Driver, or 1 driver and much baggage)
Repairs	\$20-25 every 15,000 miles <b>B</b> other, nil.

The bike I have in mind is second hand.... With it, I am completely mobile... I can take a long tour of Europe, and even the Near East, at low expense. Motorcycles are extremely common in England and on the Continent, and I won't in any way be considered an exhibitionist. ... Anyway, I have decided to do it.

On Weldon's advice, I have been reading *Émile*, by J. J. Rousseau. It is an odd, but interesting work, and one that might interest you, Pop (though I don't recommend it unless you have nothing else to do).

*It is a jumbled treatise on education, in the form of a description of the education of an ideal child, Émile. Much of it impassioned rhetoric (as, e.g. the long plea for breast-feeding and the abolition of the custom of swaddling). Rousseau shows a remarkable ability to identify with a child, adjusting his imagination to see through the senses of the child. Again and again he insists that education must build slowly on those experiences and concepts which the child can grasp from his immediate surroundings. He has a very Dewey-like sound when he argues that every lesson must be an activity, a creative problem which the child feels and cares about and will remember. He rejects rote, preferring ignorance to faulty and superficial knowledge. He insists on a teacher who is a model by which the child may judge himself B a tutor who anticipates needs, so that the infant will not acquire the habit of crying as a way of getting its desires. There is a wealth of acute observation and judgment in the book. But it is fascinating to see how inadequate are Rousseau=s theories, because of his failure to appreciate the existence and importance of subconscious motivation...*

*Sept. 25, 1954*

*I have received a reply from Russell. He asks me to ring him in Late October, to make a date (he will be very busy during the next three weeks.) I have had premonitions of that first telephonic contact with the great man. What shall I say?*

*AHello, Bertie? Bob here B let=s drop around to the Victoria Arms for a pint, and a bit of a chat.@*

*Or*

*AHello, Lord Russell. Sir? This is Mr. Robert Wolff, sir. B uh, I wrote to you about coming to see you, uh B you asked me to call, B uh@ (at this point either he rescues me, or I flee from the booth, never to return.)*

*It is even possible that I shall, at the sound of his voice, lose the use of my own, and greet him with several hoarse cries, and heavy breathing. I am not the slightest comforted by Thurber=s essay on the rules of*

*literary pilgrimages, which I have just finished. Thurber's general attitude is that you haven't any business bothering the chap anyway, so the best thing to do is go away and stay away. I begin to think he is right, but I cannot bear to sacrifice the chance to say, some cold winter's evening in Cambridge (Mass.) surrounded by undergraduates and lovely Radcliffe philosophy students: A Yes, an interesting problem, that. I asked Russell about it last time I saw him ...@*

*Sept. 29, 1954*

*I am now the proud, if somewhat bemused, possessor of a motorcycle. It is a small motorcycle, an unpretentious motorcycle, a two-stroke motorcycle but (to complete the phrase in the cliched manner) it is a motorcycle....By the way, despite the fact that I drove a motorcycle yesterday for the first time in my life, I have a license! My U. S. auto license gives me a one year license for a cycle as well as a car.*

*Oct. 4, 1954*

*Your letter and telegram have disturbed me very much, particularly as they both arrived after I had purchased the motorcycle. I think your fears are based on a very false idea of what motorcycling is, and I would like to set you straight.... in England, a motorcycle is a common form of transportation. Many families ride in cycles with sidecars; men take their wives to parties and the theater on them, workers ride to the factory on motorcycles and motorbikes.... I hope you will calm your fears and look at this realistically. If you persist in your attitude, I will sell it again.... It will mean canceling my plans for a tour of the continent, and my little excursions into the English countryside (which will now be covered with rain anyway), but I don't like lying to you, and I can't very well keep you in a state of perpetual terror. But please ask yourself how much of this fear is due to my being so far away, and how much is due to my riding the motorcycle.*

*12 October 1954*

*I have hesitated a bit before writing this letter because something has come up which I was uneasy about telling you. I find it impossible to write to you or speak with you when some important event has occurred which I have not told you; hence the hesitation. However, I'll tell you what it is, and leave you to*

groan and worry **B** there=s not much else I can do.

*A week ago I wrote a long letter to Susie, mostly descriptive of my various travels (I can already hear the moans, and the muttered >not that again.=) Yesterday I received an answer. I=ll give it to you straight. She and her husband have already talked to a lawyer about divorce **B** they have decided to try once more, but Sue says if things do not improve by January (as I rather suspect they won=t) then she will go to Fla. to get a divorce. Furthermore, she made it clear that she is still very closely tied to me emotionally (I had indicated the same to her in my letter). Well, there it is. Now let=s have no outbursts, no transatlantic phone calls, etc.*

*The problem for me is twofold. (1) how do I really feel about her? And (2) If I decide that I love her, or at least think I do, what ought I do about it? All of this is complicated by several facts: (a) My feelings about Susie, like my feelings about any girl, are closely linked with my compulsive fears of inadequacy **B** my fear that I will not be able to find a wife.... Am I more strongly influenced by the ... inadequacy fears when thinking of Susie than when thinking of some other girl? This, you can see, is the crucial issue.... But there are other problems... Can I risk subjecting her to the misery of two unsuccessful marriages? I could survive it, but could she? That is a terribly crucial problem....*

*What should I do? At present, I have decided on the following: I shall correspond with Sue as a friend, saying no more about how I feel, and trying to keep out of my words any hint of my feelings. I will do this until she resolves her marriage problem one way or the other. If they make a go of it, then of course I just drop out of the picture. If they break up, however, then I can plan my actions at that time. The 8 months before I return home should act as an effective buffer, stopping either of us from doing anything prematurely.*

*I am sorry to have to tax you with this problem. I know how you felt about the relationship, and how relieved you were that it had finally come to an end. Now, the whole thing seems in danger of starting anew. I must confess that my attitude, more and more, is that one only lives once, and that to throw away the possibility of happiness because of inertia, or convention, is silly. If I am hurt **B** well, life is not infinite in importance or extent, and as I said... reasonably varied alteration seems more important to me than >happy*



moments. =

October 23, 1954

*I read Jane Eyre last Monday, and it raised some difficult problems in my mind.... Is a life more valuable lived according to a set of principles of action... even if the happiness of oneself and others is sacrificed to those principles? I purposely do not specify what I mean by >valuable=, since to give the criteria of value would, of course, answer the problem. At first glance, the answer seems to be no. At second glance it is obviously >to some extent, yes. = Principles give a structure and purpose to life which makes it richer and more valuable, even if less pleasant. Who among us seriously desires the Polynesian idyll, with all its carefree, tensionless ease (although one could argue that the invasions of anthropologists constitute a great drawback to the Polynesian way of life. Can you imagine anything less pleasant than Margaret Mead peering over your shoulder every time you had intercourse or moved your ceremonial bowels?) It is a difficult problem, and Bronte makes it no easier by manipulating fate so that Jane Eyre can have the fruits of virtue and eat them too....*

*I am going up to London next Monday for several days.... I have to ring up Russell, to make the appointment. I plan to see Patience at the Savoy, done by the D=Oyly Carte. I may also take in the Old Vic. The gallery costs 2 bob. Can you imagine the most authoritative Shakespeare in the World for twenty-eight cents?*

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I did see Russell, in early November, but I was so depressed by the meeting that I could not bring myself to write about it. The closest I came was a brief remark at the beginning of a letter dated 7 November 1954: AI=ve seen Russell, and will write a long letter about it later. It was rather disappointing, as could be expected, but with a little thought I think I can turn it into an interesting letter. @ Here is what happened.

I was invited to Russell's home in Surrey, south of London for tea, and on the appointed day, I drove down, parked, and walked around the block until precisely the appointed hour. I rang the bell and was admitted by his fifth wife to a modest cottage with a small front hall and a center stairway leading up to the second floor. There at the head of the stairs, looking somewhat like a plucked chicken, exactly as in his pictures, was The Third Earl Russell himself. In 1954, Russell was eighty-two, but despite my concern that he might expire before I could take tea with him, he actually lived for another sixteen years.

He invited me up to his study and poured some tea. Almost immediately, I realized that the interview was doomed to be a disaster. Some background is necessary to explain what went wrong. In the Harvard Philosophy Department in those days there was an odd, reclusive logician named Henry M. Sheffer. In 1913, Sheffer had shown that all of the truth functions **B** and, or, not, if then, if and only if **B** could be reduced to a single binary function. It was an important discovery that earned Sheffer considerable fame. Then the unpublished papers of the great American pragmatist, Charles Sanders Peirce, were opened to view, and it was discovered that Peirce had scooped Sheffer by some years in the discovery. Sheffer never got over the disappointment. As the years went on he became more and more fearful that his logical work would be stolen by others. He took to recording it on little file cards in a secret code and refused to allow anyone not actually enrolled in his courses to attend his lectures. Even on the occasion of his last lecture at Harvard, which, according to departmental tradition, should have been attended by the entire department as an expression of respect, Sheffer refused to allow his colleagues into the room, shouting **A**Get out! Get out!@

Russell knew of Sheffer, of course, and it became clear as soon as the tea was poured that I was there as a logic student to give him an account of Sheffer's latest theories. Unfortunately,

though I had taken every logic course and seminar that Quine and Wang offered, I had never signed up for Relational Logic, which Sheffer taught each year. As soon as I confessed this, the light went out of Russell=s eyes, and my heart sank.

AWhat are you interested in?@ he asked politely.

AWell sir,@ I replied, AI was interested in mathematical logic, but now I am interested in Kant=s ethics.@

AOh,@ he said, pursing his lips, AYou prefer fiction, do you?@

I had about enough moxie left in me for one comeback, and since I had read his *History of Western Philosophy*, I knew that he had written about Kant.

AWell, sir,@ I stuttered, AY-y-you studied K-K-Kant yourself, d-d-did you not?@

Looking off into a distance that was forever closed to me, he said musingly, AWell, I have not read Kant seriously since 1897.@

My mind will not permit me to recall the remainder of the interview, and it was some time after I returned home that I could bring myself to talk about it. But it had one salutary effect. It cured me, for the rest of my life, of any desire to meet famous authors.

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*Nov. 18, 1954*

*The plans for the trip are proceeding apace. The number of documents is enormous, and terribly complex, but the auto club takes care of all of it. We are beginning to get some winter weather. The fog is completely unbelievable. On several occasions I have had to creep along in second gear driving with my eye on the curb in order to find the road....Pop, I am afraid I can=t tell you that I will drive at 35. That is just ridiculous....My motorcycle is built to cruise at 45, averaging, on fair roads, about 35 mph. If I did 35, I would never get anywhere.*

3 Dec. 1954

*Well, I am finally on my way.... My costume includes a head to foot vulcanized-rubber motorcycling suit, rubber boots, a helmet, and gauntlets. I look like a storm-trooper, though my motorcycle is about 1/3 the storm trooper=s size. Anyway, Rome, here I come!*

*Saturday, December 4, 1954 Oxford **B** London **B** Rochester -- Canterbury -- Deal **B** 143 miles. Stayed at the Black Horse Hotel ... My room was comfortable, and, to my surprise and vast amusement, I discovered a hot water bottle in my bed when I slid between the supposedly cold sheets. It was a welcome surprise, however.*

*Sunday, December 5, 1954 Deal -- Dover -- Dover ferry to Boulogne. Boulogne **B** Abbeville **B** Amiens **B** Grandvilliers. 103 miles driving.... I stopped at the Chateau de Montreuil to change some money and ran into 4 chaps from the boat, having lunch. The meal was expensive (1500 frs. Total). But a gourmet=s delight. Soup, hors d=oeuvres varies, perfect trout, steak, cheese, apple tart, and coffee. All this before a roaring log fire, in a pleasant French setting. A few dollars are a reasonable price for such a welcome to a new land.*

*Monday, December 6, 1954 Grandvilliers **B** Beauvais **B** Paris **B** Versailles **B** Chartres. 130 miles **B** stayed at the Hotel St. Pierre.... As I rushed along the route, blasted by wind and chilled even through my protection, I thought a bit on the strange relationship between myself and the innumerable towns past which I sped.*

*To me, a little village meant a brief mention on the signposts, a disregarded warning to slow to 50 kilometres per hour, a few houses, and then another stretch of straight, wide highway. Often, as I passed the meagre scattering of buildings... I thought scornfully, >Is this what they would have me slow down to pass?= And yet, in these little hamlets, with their beret-topped workmen, and staring housewives, were the homes...of persons whose lives were as real as mine, as rich in their way as mine, and often more important by far than mine. Should I then pass them by with no more than a brief relaxation of the throttle?... Finally, Chartres drew near, and as I topped a rise, the dual spires of the renowned cathedral sprang from the earth, dwarfing all else around it. For several miles it hung in view...*

*I have decided to re-open this journal briefly, in order to include a small event which just happened.*

*I went out for a stroll through the crooked, ancient streets of this district of Chartres, before retiring. It was just chilly enough to produce that physical malaise we often mistake for thought. I crossed and recrossed the little >Pont Mallaud= which bridges a river even older than itself, and by various aimless perambulations had come around to another bridge. The houses abut directly on the water, space being at a premium in a city which has seen so many centuries of >housing projects. = ...*

*From a window nearby I heard a shout of laughter. A moment later a curtain was drawn back, and a hand opened a casement. It reached out, emptied a bowl into the river with a splash, and quickly released the window, its owner eager to return to the convivial gathering within. Here, in this tiny unnoticed act, on a dark street of a little town, I felt that I had been thrown a line, tying me to the people within. One reads so often in novels of events like this **B** >atmosphere, = it is called. And yet, to experience it is to know for a moment what the novelist tries so hard to conjure for his audience.*

*Just a woman emptying a bowl into a river. Of such as these are the true pleasures of travel compounded. And now to bed. Tomorrow, Tours.*

*Tuesday, December 7, 1954 Chartres **B** Chateaudun **B** Fontaine **B** Tours. 92 miles. Stayed at Hotel de la Dalve.*

*Wednesday, December 8, 1954*

*Today was a day one not only does not expect, but also scarcely knows how to handle.... I arose early again, leaving Tours by 8:15 a.m. Again it rained, and again the wind beat upon my face and body. After about a half hour, I realized that my motorcycle lacked power. It accelerated well in first and second gear, but in high it barely managed to maintain 30 mph on the level road....*

*I was in a state of despair. The trouble seemed to repeat itself. Anxiously, I turned back, and made a startling discovery. The same ground that had been so painfully covered, was effortlessly recovered!! ... the truth became clear. The wind...presented a formidable obstacle to my motorcycle!! The large flat surface of the windscreen was an ideal >sail= which in this case functioned as an anchor.... In desperation, I decided to*

remove the screen. By the side of the road, clutching my gloves and tools from the disruption of the gale, I unscrewed the supports and removed the shield. But where to put it? ... I removed my knapsack. With my pants belt and coat belt I strapped the screen to my back, fitting it to cover the pack and extend only downwards. It worked! The screen offered no greater obstacle than my own (unavoidable) body... As the wind howled and the rain descended in biblical profusion, I sallied forth once more... like the lost souls of Jean Cocteau = s Purgatory ... bearing glass in a leather frame....

I rushed through the afternoon, wet beyond notice, numb to cold and prick of droplets... until, with a cough and splutters, the engine stops... the gas tank was empty.... With 5 litres of >essence et huile melangé =, I took to the road.... For 45 k I was happy as a nightingale in a hurricane until, farting and spitting and making much stench, my little motor backfired to a stop.... Where was I? Opposite the front door of one of the ubiquitous >Hotels de France = which dot the countryside.... I pushed the bike into the garage and subsided for the night.

The cause of the trouble? Why, the one obvious difficulty left **B** the spark plug.... I cleaned and replaced it, and after a final check, mounted the stairs to my room ... And so ends a day which shall appear in my little journal merely as:

Wed. Dec. 8, 1954. Tours **B** Chatellerault **B** Poitiers **B** Ruffec. 116 miles. Stayed at Hotel de France.

December 9, 1954 Ruffec **B** Angouleme **B** Perigueux: 86 miles

December 10, 1954 Perigueux **B** Belve **B** Villefranche de Perigord **B** Cahors **B** Rodez: 171 miles

My plans were to make the quick run to Cahors, eighty miles away. As I rode through Perigord, I suddenly had an impulse to cease the rushing that had characterized the trip until then. There was the frost of a bitter night still shining on the grass and trees, but the sun, quickly rising in the East, cast a warming touch on the air and road. I slowed my motorcycle to a leisurely 30 miles per hour, and proceeded to cruise along the winding old road. As I rode, I passed signs pointing the way to Bergerac, the birthplace of the legendary Cyrano. All about me were names I had read in dry Anthropology books, in plays, in the small smattering of

*Geography I had appropriated in grammar school.*

*It was a day, pop, on which I very much wished you could have accompanied me. This has not always been true during my trip, of course. One does not go slumming in Piccadilly with one's father, nor would I impose on you during my excursions into Philosophy. But on this bright morning in the fields and hills of France, I felt we could have walked slowly along the road chatting, listening to the birds (which you, but not I, might have been able to identify), simply enjoying nature in the way that we have, on those few occasions, in the hills of the Catskills or the Berkshires.*

*December 11, 1954 Rodez **B** Millau **B** Lodeve **B** Montpellier: 120 miles*

*This certainly was the most exciting day of driving during the entire trip. It began, early on a frost-bitten morning, with a skidding upending, five miles outside of Rodez. The frost on the road was deceptively slippery, and my fall, which produced only a slightly twisted leg, bent the left foot support so that I had to ride with my foot slightly elevated. Rather scared by this little fall, I rode slowly through the early morning mist... I could not understand the bitter cold that pierced my gloves and boots, and turned the mist on my gauntlets into crystals of ice. After stopping to warm myself over a cup of coffee, I climbed out of a little valley, and as I passed the edge of the town nestled in the pit of the hollow, I caught a glimpse of a sign which did much to explain the temperature. I was 685 meters above sea level. Practically 2200 feet!...*

*As I drove, I also looked for the beginning of the descent... I knew that Montpellier, my destination, was close to sea level. Where, then, would I begin to lose altitude? Each hill seemed the last, until, as I topped it, another appeared. Despite the hopes of avoiding the fog, I finally entered it, and dipped low into a valley at whose bottom lay the city of Millau. Millau was totally clothed in fog. Its inhabitants were unaware that >outside= the sun was shining brightly **B** for them it was a cold and greyish winter day.*

*I stopped only long enough to warm my knees, and then began the climb out of Millau...Several miles from Lodeve, I entered a long, deep canyon, whose sides plummeted sharply to a river below, which wound its way through the crevice that it had cut during the millennia of its existence. It was, like so many old rivers,*

lying in the bed which it had made.... Occasional turns in the road, which enabled me to look back at the heights from which I had come, revealed to me a magnificent panorama. Before me, Lodeve, at the end of a descent of nearly a third of a mile. Behind, the cold and windy plateau on which I had driven all morning. The air became warmer as I reached the end of the gorge, and when I left Lodeve, I discovered a flat, straight, warm road which spoke in its every lineament of the nearby Mediterranean.

December 13, 1954 Montpellier **B** Arles **B** Aix en Provence: 96 miles

December 14, 1954 Aix **B** Cannes **B** Nice: 126 miles

Well, what the hell can you say about the Riviera? The weather was beautiful, naturally, It says so in the constitution.... The motorcycle continued to give trouble.... It developed one trouble, by the way, which aroused deep-seated hereditary fears in my not so subconscious. You must realize that all of the insides of a motorcycle are outside. You are sitting on the motor. Hence, a backfire is not merely a loud noise, but an explosion between your legs! After several of these I swore that I would be goddamned if any lousy machine was going to blow my balls off.

December 16, 1954 Nice **B** Border **B** Genova **B** Rapallo: 154 miles

December 17, 1954 Rapallo **B** La Spezia **B** Pisa **B** Livorno **B** ? 161 miles

With the 161 miles down the coast of Italy, on the way to Rome, I entered the home stretch. My motorcycle continued to splutter, but I had become immune to fear or concern....

This day, however, was one of private and special excitement. For, if you will turn back to the long account, written earlier this year, of my hitchhiking trip to Rome, you will realize that I was retracing exactly my steps during the latter part of that journey. In the letter, you will find mention of such little spots along the road as the corner where we waited for hours (and past which a large American car with N. Y. license plates callously rolled); the signpost outside Livorno, reading Rome 313, under which I stood in the growing dark of evening. The field nearby in which I lay down to sleep, the all-night coffee-shop whose truck-driver patrons so coldly denied my requests for rides; and, farther on, the public fountain at which, on a clear warm



summer=s morning, I washed away the weary night that had preceded it. Still further, the little house, in front of which I had serenaded two children in a language they did not know. All these and other places passed before my eyes as I hurried down the road to Rome.

December 16, 1954 ? B Grosseto B Rome: 160 miles

And finally, Rome.... I had traveled 1658 miles through weather that had frozen, flooded, wind-blown and, occasionally, warmed me. There had been moments of despair and annoyance, and a few of great happiness. I had learned a bit about the French, a good deal more about my motorcycle, and, as is always the case after one of these adventures of mine, perhaps a little bit more about myself. I arrived at the ancient walls of Rome, drove past the vaulting basilica Pancrazio, and after a momentary consultation of my map, pulled up to the American Academy. To my astonishment, and relief, I had in fact made it. I was in Rome.

December 26, 1954

It is now midway between Christmas and my Birthday, and I find myself rather disaffected with Europe. To be quite frank, if I could think of some way to do it without making huge and complicated explanations to millions of people, I=d pick up and come home....I find myself beginning to suspect that I have not yet made my peace with the world. The last four and a half years have gone by quickly, and with an orientation and structure, for the most part. The relationship with Susie, and the break which ended it, were painful experiences in part, but the year after the break was devoted to study toward the preliminary exams, and the success that crowned my efforts made the year seem fruitful. Now, with half a year of idleness and continued uneasiness about my plans and attitudes, I find myself without the conviction that I am directed toward the right ends, or comfortable with the world....

December 29

My birthday has come and passed, and I am now twenty-one. I suppose I might have predicted this. Anyway, it doesn=t come as a particular surprise to me. I imagine I shall now go on to be twenty-two.

Jan. 3, 1955

*On New Year=s Eve, instead of going to the party here...I went to a quiet little affair held in one of the oldest sections of Rome...At midnight, when the bells ring and the whistles toot, windows fly open, and pedestrians make a dash for the protecting cover of hallways or doors. The inhabitants of the buildings then proceed to hurl out of the windows bottles, old and broken crockery, pans that are no longer serviceable, and finally, the old year=s broom. With this symbolic clean sweep, the windows are closed and the New Year is officially welcomed.*

*Sure enough, at the midnight hour, the crockery began to fly, along with dozens of firecrackers which explode resoundingly in the high, narrow streets. We, on the fifth floor, hurled several empty wine bottles and a glass or two into the street, finding in this activity all of the innocent enjoyment that men everywhere have found ever since the fortuitous invention of glass.*

*One of the most amusing sights of the little chariveree was the stern and business-like aspect of an old Italian woman, whose window could be seen from where we stood. She seemed to make it clear that this was no matter for the frivolous or irresponsible, and it was with unsmiling face that she heaved the broom into the street below....*

*I=ve been reading Deutscher=s political biography of Stalin; I must confess that I cannot suppress the sympathetic feelings for Stalin-Koba-Djugashvili which arise in me. It took one hell of a lot of guts to spend 20 years as he did, working in the underground for the revolution which might never occur. Despite the fact that Lenin appears closer to the type of person I know, I feel less sympathy for him.*

*January 17*

*Little by little, a few pages at a time, I=ve been reading through Deutscher=s political biography of Stalin... The revolutionists gave their entire lives to their work, and spent twenty years before first succeeding. Even after the defeat of 1905, Stalin does not seem to have hesitated for a moment in his devotion to the cause. To a person like myself who day-dreams of great successes and brilliant achievements, this is a terribly important lesson to learn.*

January 23

*I have just read a quotation from Kafka which has struck me very forcefully. The line runs:*

*It is enough that the arrows fit exactly the wounds they have made.*

*I can think of no more tragic statement! God, what a man must have felt to make such a demand of the universe! And what fate more cruel than to be denied even that last consolation!*

Feb. 1, 1955

*I am now reading H. O. Taylor's **A**The Medieval Mind<sup>Q</sup>, as well as an average of one mystery per day. Again I realize the amusing fact my reasons for reading the Taylor are quite different from those which one professes. I am reading it (1) in order to feel that I am engaged in approved intellectual endeavor and not simply wasting my time (2) in order to be able to say that I have read it, and (3) in order to gather some facts which will be useful and impressive in letters, conversations, etc. **B** these are also my reasons for reading Deutscher's book,*

*It all seems so damned pointless. What in God's name does it matter whether I read philosophy or detective stories? The >intellectual= life seems harder and harder to justify, except by the introduction of extra-intellectual elements, such as teaching.*

*And most amusing of all is that when I become despondent in this manner, and decide to shoot the works, live it up, and say to hell with it all, the result is a 50 cent movie, a \$2 meal, and (no lower can man sink) a rich piece of pastry for dessert. The mediocrity of my vices depresses me more than the absence of virtues. I don't even like to get drunk!*

Feb. 12, 1955

*Tomorrow I leave for Geneva, to see Liesje and start some wandering.*

February 18, 1955

*Here I am in snowy Geneva, the land of the tourist.... My voyage here, was as usual, a saga. One of the beneficial results was a discovery: how to write a short story. The trick is to attempt a business*

*transaction of any sort with an Italian. After the entire affair is over, merely record in chronological order everything that occurs.*

*Briefly (I have already told this to Susie in a letter and therefore don't want to go all through it again) I started to wheel my motorcycle to the station, in order to consign it to the care of the baggage car. The first mile was downhill (off the Gianiculum), and quite simple, except for the fact that I stopped to take the carburetor apart in one last vain attempt to fix the blasted thing and just as I got the three dozen bolts and nuts and air filters and gas filters and other assorted doohinkuses on the ground, spread out and ready for cleaning, it started to pour....*

*At the bottom of the hill I began to push. The physical effort expended over several blocks aroused in my mind the image of a truck, transporting the thing, with me riding alongside, and I stopped at a gas pump to make inquiries. My Italian is minimal, but a liberal use of gestures conveyed my meaning. As the attendant made an attempt to fix the motorcycle (I couldn't construct a sufficiently fluent sentence to tell him that I had tried) a cop strolled over to see what was up.*

*Now, in Rome, whenever three people and a motorcycle congregate, and especially when one of them is a cop, every able-bodied man in sight comes over to see what is up. Within four minutes, I was surrounded by a curious and totally non-committal crowd of large, small, dark, light, well- and ill-dressed Italians. As I repeated my request, they nodded sagely (though not offering assistance of any sort), and the attendant screwed back the spark-plug and prepared to have at the carburetor. I sensed, in one of those rare flashes of saving intuition, that this little scene could develop into a three-act play, complete with intermissions for coffee, and with no further word, I seized my machine and wheeled off in the direction of the station.*

*Some two hundred yards later, having emerged from conversations with three taxi drivers and a store owner, my problem still unsolved, I was offered assistance (for a mere 1000 lire) by a quick-minded promoter type who had overheard my exchange with the storekeeper (the owner of a, as it turned out, unavailable truck).*

*Several phone calls (he had no truck, of course, but hoped to procure one and take his cut) produced no*

positive results, and as I once more trudged toward the station, he made a snap offer: 500 lire and his flunky would push it for me. I agreed, and walked off at a brisk clip behind a small chap who assiduously pushed the motorcycle.

At the station, I felt that I had been remiss in permitting someone else to do a bit of physical labor that I could as easily have done, and assuaged my conscience by adding 200 lire to the agreed price. Thus emboldened by what could only be interpreted as complete insanity, the little man tried to con me out of 40 lire for the two phone calls. So tired was I, and so unversed in the ways of the Italian mind, that I almost gave him the money. In time, I caught myself, told him to go to hell, and proceeded to give my motorcycle unto the luggage room authorities. (Let us pass lightly over this complicated procedure. The only point of importance for the remainder of our tale is that I quite definitely made them understand that the cycle was traveling on my ticket, and was to accompany me to Geneva.)

Pan quickly (as they say in the movies) to the Italian border. It is noon, I have endured a night on the train, succored by two litres of Frascati wine and myriad nuts, rolls, hams, and so forth. We descend for customs, and I produce my carnet to be stamped. After a puzzled few minutes, the inspector tells me no motorcycle has arrived, and that ... they cannot sign me through customs until such time as it does. What can I do? Wait for the two pm train from Milan, which should be carrying the cycle.

I boarded the train to retrieve my luggage, I got off at the next station, I got on a train going the other way, I got off at the border station, I called Liesje, I passed my cycle through customs, I climbed back on the train to Geneva, and at 7:04, I finally arrived. (The recital is so painful that I can barely spill it out in one compound sentence.)...

February 22, 1954

Life here is pleasant. Geneva is a very small town (150,000 - 175,000) and when I drop into one of the local bars ... I meet one or more people I know. I have found one chap with whom to sing madrigals and rounds, and with Liesje, we can handle three part things.

February 28, 1955

*I want to see Berlin... so I may do the following: Hitch-hike and train to Berlin tomorrow. Spend two weeks there, go to Paris to see Mike Jorin for a week and a half... then go on to London. I haven't any idea where you can contact me in Germany, but if I do go through with this... I'll be in Paris in the latter part of March.*

*[Postcard B No Date]*

*Hail!! Es geht ganz gut hier!!! Will send long letter when I get the time B I have been taken in tow by a German student of English B am staying at house of mother of student I met in London B Am off now to see High Commissioner Conant. Also will see professors, students, the East sector of Berlin, etc. Much activity B Write to Am. Express in Paris. That's my next stop. B The view is Kurfürstendamm, Berlin=s Broadway. Love to all.*

16 March, 1955

*I am now firmly ensconced in the Armenian House... of the Cité Universitaire of the Sorbonne... I begin my report on Berlin.... Germany probably holds more relics, both cultural and geographical, of especial significance to me, than any other European country, including England.... My two greatest loves in the intellectual sphere are philosophy and music B in each is Germany far and away the greatest modern nation. And it is precisely the German philosophers and composers who have impressed me the most....*

*My first impressions of Berlin were contradictions of much that I had heard. Having read that West Berlin was built up and cleaned up far more than the Eastern sector, I was surprised to discover block after block of rubble, gutted buildings, and empty lots.... Empty lots in the middle of a great city? Square blocks of level ground only several hundred yards from the largest street in the city? Surely there had once been something here! And then the answer, terrible and simple, stood out at me. This was the result of the extensive clean-up of Berlin B empty lots, rather than fragmentary walls and rubble. In each of these clean areas had stood a group of buildings, destroyed by Allied bombing....*

*And yet, amidst the devastation and regeneration, some signs remain. Where, but in Germany, and perhaps only in Berlin, could an itinerant student of philosophy arrive, during a stroll, at the corner of Kantstrasse and Leibnizstrasse?*

*All is not a monument to dead heroes, however. Berlin has its Clayallee (after General Lucius D. Clay), its Truman House, and, so help me God, a subway station whose name, translated literally into English, is AUncle Tom=s Cabin@ ....*

*I think I must now introduce some of the persons I met in Berlin, for my visit to that city, more than to any other European metropolis which I have seen, was a series of meetings with students, professors, and ordinary citizens of Berlin.*

*First... responsible not only for my physical comfort but also for the other contacts is Frau Arfert, mother of Henning Arfert whom I met in the London School of Economics. He suggested that I look up his mother if I came to Berlin, and for the first time, I accepted such an offer. Frau Arfert generously permitted me to live (free) in Henning=s room. Thus, on my second day I was comfortably placed in an apartment in Friedenau, in the South-Eastern part of the American sector. I saw little of Frau Arfert, for she wisely called the FreiUniversität which in turn called the German student who acted as my guide during the next ten days, Harry Mietusch.*

*Harry is an interesting person, as well as one of the main characters in this little story B a student of American and English literature, he speaks English with an accent that is almost indistinguishable from that of an American.... he worked as a bartender in the officers= club of the Army base during most of two years.*

*I am still unsure as to Harry=s real nature. He apparently knows everyone, and was superbly successful in getting me interviews with official personages B and yet, I often felt that he was using me (and my success in getting interviews) as a means of magnifying his own importance. He managed, for example, to talk his way into my meeting with Commissioner Conant.... Harry and his parents, I learned, lived originally in the Eastern Sector of the city;... they decided to move into West Berlin, losing their furniture and other*

*belongings in the process..*

*I shall briefly recount my meetings...*

*(1) Mr. And Mrs. Mietusch and their friends:*

*This was one of those story-book meetings; people of different countries, trying to bridge the chasm between them, to form some sort of rapport of knowledge and attitude **B** it was, in a way, one of the best events of the visit.*

*I had gone to Harry=s house for a casual chat, and his parents were entertaining some friends (also moved from the Eastern Sector). We all sat down to a bite to eat, and for six hours remained there while, Harry translating, I asked and answered questions about Germany and America.*

*...one question, repeated several times, stands out in my mind, for I came to feel that it expressed one of the root-attitudes of the West-Berliners. The Mietusch=s friend (an insurance salesman like himself **B** they were quite envious of the American habit of buying life insurance early) asked the question first: Could Berliners count on the American People to support Berlin, to stay by her, to understand that she was engaged in a fight against communism that required aid? Did the American people feel that they, and America, were part of the Western alliance, committed to it?*

*Again and again, he and other Berliners came back to this fear of isolation. Physically surrounded by Soviet troops, face to face daily with its own communist half, West Berlin seems to fear that it will be forgotten, abandoned **C***

*What did I answer? I said that the **A**American People@ could not be counted on because they do not know and do not care what is happening in Europe. But that the politicians, diplomats, policy makers of both parties were committed, and would not abandon Germany. I tried also to explain to them that America had commitments in Asia, the Near East, and South America which made it impossible for her to think of herself simply as a member of a West-European alliance.*

*And so it went, from late afternoon into the evening **B** despite the multitude of Americans in Berlin,*



they had met almost none, and I felt like they were tremendously eager to draw me out, simply to see what I was like. It was probably as close as any experience could come to the brochure-ideal of >an interchange of ideas between Americans and others. =

(5) *Wölfgang Mühlen* **B** a student at the university, recently returned, by an amnesty, from an East German labor camp, in which he spent 4 years. *Wolf* flaunts this servitude much like a band of honor (he appeared to think that it was the sort of thing Americans wanted to hear, for he mentioned it in the second sentence after saying >angenehm. =) but in long discussions with him, I found him an interesting and pleasant person. It was with *Wölf* that I went to see Prof. Dr. *Weishedel*, Prof. Of Philosophy at the *Frei Universität*.

(6) *Prof. Weishedel*:

One afternoon, shepherded by *Wolf*, I visited *Weishedel*=s for tea and a long, 2 2 hour chat. It turned into perhaps the most successful of my many >interviews. = *Weishedel* and I are concerned with the same problem, and in a field as broad as Philosophy, this is rare indeed. With his assistant, a young woman, translating, we ranged over a number of topics. We discovered a mutual acquaintance in *Jakob Taubes*, now lecturer in Philosophy at Harvard, with whom *Weishedel* is corresponding.....

*Wolf* was delighted by the casual air of the chat **B** he assured me it was not always so **B** Professors, while not Gods, received a deference usually reserved for those of semi-divine origins. Indeed, even between students, there is a degree of formality (use of last names, etc), the absence of which, in my brief relationship with *Wolf*, delighted him.... *Harry* told me several times that Young Germans tried to achieve this freedom, but still found themselves bound by deep in-growths of traditional formality and rigidity.

(8) *Dr. Conant*

This, of course, was a bit of a coup. *Conant* was in Berlin for only a few days **B** through the director of the *Ernst-R-Gesellschaft*, I obtained permission to see *Dr. Conant* for a few minutes at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 9. I presented myself as a *Sheldon Fellow* (one of the few times during my trip that I have made direct use of my position **B** otherwise I could as well have been an imposter).

Conant arrived, a bit late, from a formal banquet, wearing pinstripes and morning coat. We chatted in what I believe is known as a >desultory= fashion. He expressed great consternation at the Soviet habit of proclaiming its elections >free=. It was not so much the iniquity of the electoral system as the flagrant misuse of the term that disturbed him. He recounted an incident that occurred at a recent diplomatic meeting: Conant collected some evidence of rigged ballots in East Germany and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the conference, he and Dulles >threw it in Molotov=s face.= Conant had feared that Molotov would pass it off by denying the authenticity of the evidence, but to his horror, the Soviet foreign minister admitted the validity of the patently rigged ballots, and acclaimed them as >just the way we ought to do it.=

(10) Jazz musicians of the Eierschaler (>Eggshell=) B Harry and I went, on the first Saturday night in Berlin, to a little club devoted to Dixie-land Jazz. After a wait in line, we entered a dark, closely packed cellar. The first thing one noticed was the music B solid, classical dixieland, with drums, piano, clarinet, bass, and trombone. It was good, and the place really rocked. At the tables were dozens upon dozens of young boys and girls B as my eye swept the tabletops, I was horrified to discover covneys of coca-cola bottles B the dancers were doing varying modes of American jitterbugging, and when the singer stepped to the microphone, he contorted his voice into a hoarse imitation of Louis Armstrong, and shouted out the English lyrics....

30 March, 1955

Eh bien B I won=t write a long essay on Paris. Suffice it to say it has all the things people say it has B Eiffel Tower, arc de Triomphe, pigalle, les Halles.... It also has millions of student-types who don=t study. I have met another dozen or so Harvard men here (we all agree that Harvard is empty B there can=t be anyone left)....

Paris is discouraging. There is so much open love making (this is really true. Every street, subway, or bus has a couple necking), there are so many beautiful women, and I just aint in it.

April 11, 1955

... Incidentally, you may be interested to know that I have not had word from Susie in almost two months. In

the last letter, she said she was getting a separation from Gordon... I have since written her a letter from Geneva, and postcards from Berlin and Paris. With no reply at all. I am worried, but can see nothing to do, so I shall simply not think about it, if possible. If I ever pass thru Chicago I'll look her up.

18 April 1955

Well, here I am in England.....I've decided to tackle the Critique of Pure Reason again, during my 2 month stay in London. Tomorrow I'll go up to Oxford to get my baggage **B** then I'll settled down here and try to work,

2 May, 1955

Well, here it is May, and time passes.... By the way, Marshall Cohen [first Barbara=s friend from Encampment, then mine at Harvard **B** a former Sheldon in Philosophy) just got a Junior Fellowship. Hao Wang, Bert Dreben, Noam Chomsky, Stan Cavell, and Marshall Cohen **B** all Junior Fellows in Philosophy, and all the favorite students of Quine and White **B**and I've decided that Quine and White are for the birds!!! Oh well, such is life. I'm just not willing to do what is necessary to get one...

9 May, 1955

I've moved again. My address is now 83 Ladbroke Grove, London W. 11.... The motorcycle is finally and totally OFF MY HANDS. I sold it, unrepaired, for £50 (\$140)..

I've found a girl, and (this, naturally, is private) she has agreed to be my Amistress@ until I leave for the States. She found me this flat, which is two blocks from her home (she is an L. S. E. student), and it looks as if the Aseven lean years@ are over. Wonder of wonders, she actually appreciates and understands the long, intricate, introspective soliloquies of which I am enamored. It is such a relief to have someone to whom I can say all the things I've been thinking and feeling this year!! And that that someone should understand them as well!!! **B** Please keep this strictly between us. I would consider it an insult to her (although not an actual injury to her reputation) if this were told to other people. I'm sure you can understand. **B** all I can say is: why at the very end of my trip?... Her name, by the way, is Shirley, and she is

*Jewish.*

16 May 1955

... *Life is better than it has been at any time this year. Shirley is a totally natural woman, despite an overlay of verbal inhibitions. I don't think there is a square inch of her that is not covered with more than its share of sensitive nerve-endings!!! Because of the clear, explicit, and definite nature of our arrangement, I am experiencing for the first time an affair free of all tension, anxiety, fear, or insecurity. We see each other every day, although she cannot come up to the flat every day. It is so nice to have all the pleasure of such a relationship with none of the unhappiness!! B I have toyed with the idea of staying on a while longer... No beard. Shirley would throw a fit! By the way, in case you are wondering B the typical English girl, like the typical American College Girl, leads men on without any intention of sleeping with them. Shirley is an exception....*

*I am afraid you will not live long enough to see me A completely educated, happily married, and at peace with my soul. @ For I shall die without completing my education, and on the day that I am at peace with my soul, I shall know that I have become an evil man. I pray that I never think myself either. As for the happy marriage, I trust you will see that in the 20 or more years to come.*

24 May, 1955

... *It is about time I told you a bit about the flat. I share it with Ian Fulton, a tall, cheerful Scotsman studying at L. S. E. His woman is Sylvia (English), and Suliman Al-Kazi, a Pakistani studying at the Polytechnic Institute. His woman is Susie (Israeli). Thus we are a Christian, a Moslem, and a Jew, each non-practicing. Other people who wander in and out of the flat, occasionally staying the night, are Adrian (West Indian girl), Tom (Canadian, her boyfriend) and of course, Shirley (who unfortunately cannot stay the night, but spends many afternoons here). It is all totally careless, madcap, licentious, and great fun. I spend most of my time shopping, washing, ironing, cooking, reading, and fornicating. What a delightful burden are the fleshly desires! Shortly, I shall work again, however.*

*Shirley is an absolute wonder. Pop, she would make such total hash of Freud!! This girl combines an almost impossible ignorance concerning sexual matters with a freedom from inhibition that an analyst would pay \$5000 for!! For example, because of the English schooling system, which separates students at 11 years old into Science and Arts, she knows nothing about sperm, eggs, how fertilization occurs, what happens during pregnancy, etc. She had no idea of contraception at all (the one boy B in Italy B with whom she had intercourse hadn't bothered to explain it). She was totally unaware of the meaning of such words as Aorganism@ and Amasturbation@ (she had never tried it!), she was only vaguely aware that people get excited, tense, anxious or etc. about sex (she said she hadn't really believed this in Freud when she read it) and she assumed that the jokes about frigid Englishwomen referred only to the first night!!!!*

*Yet, despite all this, she is the most uninhibited woman I have ever met. She says she finds sex pure fun; but during the year between her Italian affair and me, she didn't have any sexual relations because she hadn't found anyone she liked enough. B Pop, honest, you might find a woman like her in some nice, simple primitive tribe, but in 20<sup>th</sup> century England?? I can't figure it. I would give one hell of a lot of money to learn how to bring up my daughter so that she would feel this way.*

*29 May, 1955*

*...My life continues to be languorous. I had a slight attack of conscience, resulting in the consumption of Isaac Deutscher@s latest book, and two things by Freud. I find the latter interesting, though Freud himself irritates me. Despite the opposition which confronted his theories, I feel his constantly belligerent tone to be excessive, particularly in a scientific work. Instead of anticipating a congeries of objections from his readers, and snapping peevishly that they are not entitled to reject his theories until they have spent as much time as he in their study (an obvious impossibility B one does not devote a lifetime to hard work to the testing of a completely disinterested curiosity), Freud might better have devoted his lectures (given in 1915-17) to detailed and well-butressed exposition. The latter of the two works (a summary of his view, written in 1940) is notably free, for the most part, of the earlier defensive attitude (Freud=s rather stiff explanation in his*

*Interpretation of Dreams*, of his reasons for not revealing all of the interpretation of his own dreams, is also quite amusing).

23 June, 1955

... Well, the day of departure approaches. Don't take my extended stay as a rejection of you, Ma. I did it because I had finally found something for which I had long been looking. I might add that the affair with Shirley has cured me of all longing for Susie (by showing me that a woman other than Susie can want me). I consider this by no means an unimportant result of my year abroad. It marks a new and more mature phase in my relationships with other people.

1 July, 1955

...I am planning ... to room next year with Charlie Parsons (Harvard Summa, Henry Fellow to Cambridge, brilliant student, son of Prof. Talcott Parsons). Charlie will be doing philos. at Harvard and I shall try to find a small flat for the two of us.

18 July, 1955

The great day approaches, arrangements are completed **B** in three days, I sail for Montreal. Then, nine days later, my long trip will be over...I shall bid farewell to London and Shirley this Thursday. This will be my last letter... I shall be interested to re-read my earlier letters. There are at least several which are worth saving, I think.