

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Other works by Cyril Welch

*The Sense of Language* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973)

*Emergence: Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Rimbaud* (State College: Bald Eagle Press, 1974). Co-authored with Liliane Welch

*Address: Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Butor* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1979) Co-authored with Liliane Welch

*The Art of Art Works* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1982)

*Linguistic Responsibility* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1988)

*Contemplative Logic* (Sackville: Atcost Press, 1999)

*Reading, Talking, Writing* (Sackville: Atcost Press, 2004)

*Logic Ancient and Modern* (Sackville: Atcost Press, 2006)

*Dante: Three Meditations* (Sackville: Atcost Press, 2007)

Cyril Welch

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*For the one  
who capped the other two*

Photo of Henry Bugbee courtesy of  
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## Preface

“Know thyself” — what might this injunction mean? Socrates may have interpreted this inscription at Delphi to recommend that I examine myself and others with a view to recalling the principles of our actions, thereby lending them a solidity and integrity they would otherwise lack, including a basis of our life together. Augustine may have interpreted it to incite me to review my life to discover past and present pretensions to self-sufficiency, and their inherent delusion, thereby opening myself to the reception of the power that enables and preserves me along with others. Bacon and Descartes, through Kant and Hegel and down to John Dewey and Sigmund Freud, may have interpreted the imperative to mean that I become conscious — aware both of circumstances in their details and of my own role, my battery of responses to them, so that I may better manage them, now in cooperation with others.

From my earliest years I often found myself on the sidelines. Others would merrily engage in a game of tag or dutifully perform the tasks assigned by an elder, while I stood by, observing rather than participating, wondering about it rather than just doing it. In a child this disposition seems unnatural, and leads parents and teachers to speak of moodiness or shyness or worse. In an adolescent it belongs to the first intimations of sexual attraction, as is evident at social dances. In an older man or woman it might be called pensive, careful, reserved — or frigid, alienated, uncooperative. Whatever its name, there is a seed of reflection in this disposition to redouble, one necessary for the philosophical art, and for thoughtful writing and reading, especially for intimate conversation. As I grew older and more focused, and as my peers became more preoccupied and less playful, my own disposition appeared less unnatural and more appropriate. Old age, with its inevitable withdrawal from strenuous work and play, decidedly invites such reconsideration of one’s life.

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Without any doubt, reflection deprives one of the immediacy essential to one's first life — the actual and even thoughtless contact with the ball, the passionate if mindless meeting of flesh with flesh; it also thwarts the learning of the arts — as, for example, learning to play a musical instrument, which requires a willingness to engage in many preparatory exercises without asking why, or learning to skate or ski, which requires a dogged participation to continue through seemingly endless painful and humiliating falls. On the sidelines, one asks for reasons, and reasons often distract and even enervate: already when just seven or eight years old I would infuriate the mother of a playmate when I sent him back to ask her why she would not permit him to embark on some adventure I had proposed; I already noticed the difference between myself and my playmates, who generally seemed willing to comply without asking for reasons why.

Perhaps only at an advanced age can one appreciate yet a fourth possible meaning for the Delphic imperative: to pull one's life together, into view, to detect a thread running through the labyrinth, a pattern encompassing the chaos, a unity preserving the multiplicity of formative events. An exercise in narrative, except now the story to be told presents the whole of all the stories one has been telling oneself and others, realigning them, even correcting them. A kind of confession, then, but not quite that of either Socrates, Augustine, or Kant.

Although many diverse experiences come back to me at various times, reminding me of how my life would have taken on much different directions and hues if chance had operated differently, three shaped its basic contours, contributing decisively to the development of my basic disposition toward reflection. First, there was the year in Switzerland, largely during my twelfth year. Then there was my prolonged encounter with the philosopher Henry Bugbee commencing just as I was turning twenty-one. And finally there was my chance meeting with Liliane, who became my life's companion, through health and sickness, starting in my twenty-third year. Each of the three ties in with the other two, and together they form a kind of whole.

## SWITZERLAND



In late summer of 1950, still in Los Angeles, my parents and their three boys boarded the train to head eastward. At the station a friend of my parents gave each child a package containing four or five small wrapped trinkets, each to be unwrapped on the successive days of our trip back East — three days to Chicago, I vaguely recall, and then another day and night, on a winding track, to New York. As the woman had rightly foreseen, the experience proved to be a mixture of excitement and boredom — the ever-changing scenery, tight living quarters and elongated roaming space constantly accompanied by the clickety-clack, but then the long stretches of time between meals.

We spent a number of days in New York before boarding the ocean liner for Le Havre. Already during those few days something of the Old World became palpable. Until then I had roamed the streets of essentially suburban Los Angeles, first in the hills above Hollywood, where we lived in a rented house (the Iverine House, we called it), and then, from shortly before the end of the Pacific War (I remember the jubilation as I was sitting on our front lawn), in Westwood, at 10586 Ohio Avenue (as I was required to memorize). The fragrances had always been those of greenery tempered only slightly and occasionally by the exhaust of cars, trucks and busses (this was before the days of the suffocating smog we later experienced); now they were dominated by the to-me indefinable odor of the street — tar, bubblegum, popcorn, exhaust, even excrement. And the difference in the proportion of street-width and building-height: suburban Los Angeles seemed to emphasize the abundance of space, recalling the sprawling deserts and valleys nearby, whereas everything in urban New York seemed cramped. In the West, and not only in the city but then also in the various countrysides where I spent parts of each summer in Boy Scout, YMCA or private camps, I had had the run of the land.

Already in Hollywood we children easily penetrated into the brush land of the hills (as a five-year-old I was even party to a fire-building experiment, conducted by older boys, that evolved into a conflagration which nearly destroyed some outlying residences—my first experience of guilt by association, and the intimate glitter and clang of fire trucks); and in Westwood, near the commercial conglomeration called The Village, there were still cornfields along Wilshire Boulevard, and Sepulvada Boulevard led directly up into the hardly inhabited hills.

In 1950 the Empire State Building towered above all the rest, and impressed me accordingly. In retrospect, now, I can appreciate explicitly the impression: this building, standing in for all the others, looked solid, impermeable to intrusions from the outside, its windows pierced for convenience through the dominant concrete and stone—in contrast to subsequent skyscrapers consisting primarily of glass, as though to suggest transparency and strength beyond fear.

In retrospect, too, I can see that wandering the streets of New York introduced me to the possibility of living within a world entirely constructed by and for human affairs—so unlike the undefined contours of the suburban world in which I was raised, with the seemingly boundless Pacific Ocean always beckoning Westward and the Mojave Desert lurking to the North East, through which the family would regularly drive on fishing trips to Bishop. Until then human affairs had appeared as flimsy pendants to the earth, and this appearance had suited me fine.

Then we boarded the ocean liner, one of those huge ships named after some Queen of England. The crossing, I believe, lasted about a week.

On deck, those wide open spaces again extending in all directions at the turn of the head. Now chilling fog leaving the distance in mystery, now burning sun reflected off the ever-changing sea. As a child, I could roam freely throughout much of the ship, sliding under the barriers separating our own from the upper classes, discovering the variety of amusements, bingo among them (I could gamble!), and the swimming pools. And the afternoon teas, with the delightful pastries offsetting the bitter-tasting beverage. Where we children were lodged the

only window was a porthole, and the rumbling of the engines was much more pronounced than in the hallways and tearooms, and at the pool sides, of the upper classes.

Neither the landing at Le Havre nor the train ride through the countryside has left any image. Paris did: my second mega-city with a sense of center and out-reaching concentric circles, the towering constructions—monuments, this time, unlike the commercial buildings of New York: the Eiffel Tower, of course, but then also the Arch of Triumph and smaller monuments at nearly every intersection, some statue memorializing an unknown hero. And the odors: raised to believe that people relieved themselves out of public view, I was impressed by the *pissoirs* exposing the feet and calves of men contributing to the scent, and surprised by the habit of leading dogs out onto the sidewalks to relieve themselves. Here, no less than in Zurich, I learned the effect of irregular bathing: the smell of armpits and worse, which, my father explained, stemmed as much from the fermentation in the clothes as from its source in honest sweat.

We remained in Paris for several days, as we did again a year later on our return journey. My memories of the two sojourns meld with one another, and likewise blur into images of castles and cathedrals, museums and fortified towns in Germany as well as in France. From site to site my parents dragged not only me but also my two-year-old and my six-year-younger brother. Except for the occasional fortified towns, these places did not hold my attention at all, and the droning voices of tour guides merely accentuated my boredom. My parents did not have the rare talent that would have been necessary for drawing their Huckleberry Finns into the alien world of history. Yet the sites had a sublimated affect on me, evident only after my return to Southern California in the late summer of 1951. Whereas the other kids in the neighborhood had also heard stories about human affairs hundreds of years ago, and would continue to hear about them in classrooms during the next few years, the stories meant less to them than the bedtime tales of Hans Christian Anderson, or the tall tales we used to hear on the radio in brief installments just before supper, or the adventures of Tom Sawyer we would soon learn to read by ourselves. They were, one and all, insubstantial,

more or less amusing distractions from the places with which we were directly familiar, from the solid realities of football, baseball, and basketball, from swimming in the sea and camping in the woods, and from the irksome chores at home and school. But now I had actually been in some of these places, so that, for instance, stories of the French Revolution, as in Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*, had not only the meaning of interrelated events in time, but also the reference to an actual place, still stuffed with leftovers referring to those events, a place I had actually visited.

Not that I thought about this difference at the time. Indeed, some years later, sometime in my eighteenth year, during an interview for entrance into Pomona College, the Dean asked me why my scores on a standard test in historical subjects ranked me extremely low on the scale, whereas my scores on mathematical subjects ranked me extremely high. At the time I couldn't answer the question, but it has stayed on my mind ever since. Eventually, though, I did detect one reason for the discrepancy: recounted in schoolrooms, historical subjects seemed to ask of me only that I recite what others have said about what still others have done and suffered, whereas mathematical subjects definitely asked me to do something with what I was told. No doubt the difference depended somewhat on the teachers, since I do remember an organic chemistry class where I was asked merely to absorb formulas (with lots of C's and H's, as I now recall), and I was fortunate to have a couple history and a couple literature teachers who did challenge their students to think something through themselves. But until very late in my education, after becoming a teacher myself, historical studies, no matter how engaging the teacher, left me wondering what I could do with the material. And, in any case, the information dispensed had a very short shelf life in the pantry of my thoughts.

Against the background of those desultory months in the summer of 1950, came the shock of the Swiss boarding school. As my parents settled into an apartment in Zurich they dispatched me and my older brother to an "institute" perched on a hill above the town of Sankt Gallen. I arrived after classes had already begun, and therefore missed any orientation or initiation in the ways of the school that may have been offered.

I was lodged in a double room, with a rather effeminate British boy, whose mother visited him regularly, once even inviting me to accompany them to a *Konditorei* for afternoon tea and pastries. Someone conducted me to my first class, a geography hour it seemed, where a sergeant-like teacher immediately commanded each pupil to read aloud from a book with strange markings — German, apparently, and this in the old Gothic script. The boy sitting next to me on the long bench kindly placed his finger on the passage where I was to begin, and the teacher thundered as I remained silent. Evidently, I was not the only one left uninformed.

What shocked me wasn't the experience of being away from home in a private school. Already in California I had attended the Barton School for Boys, in Topanga Canyon above Malibu, where pupils gathered in very small classes during the morning hours and were given a pack lunch and told to wander the hills until study-hour before supper; we would return home every second weekend. And both before and after that year I had attended a private day-school in Hollywood, the Progressive School it was called, which required that Mrs. Johnson pick me up each morning, along with a few others, in her station wagon; and each Friday afternoon she took me to her Lazy-J Ranch somewhere in San Fernando Valley, delivering me back home only on Monday afternoon. And at summer camps I spent weeks at a time in unfamiliar surroundings — usually in the mountains but once on Catalina Island, where I learned to skindive. By age ten I was quite used to being away from home and parents.

Unruly I must have been from very early on, as a report from the *Institut auf dem Rosenberg* described me at age eleven. Already in kindergarten, when we were still living in the Iverine house, my behavior (of which I have no recollection) led the teacher to ask my parents to remove me. My mother later said that the school also objected to my ingrained habit of pausing to inspect the garbage cans as I was walking home; I do recall being fascinated by all the containers, bottles and cans, there for the taking, even if a bit smelly. Then, too, my sojourn in first grade in the public school across from the house on Ohio Avenue was of short duration: my father had taught me to write long-hand over a number of evenings on our dining-

room table, and when the teacher introduced her pupils to writing in block letters I apparently persisted in writing the way I had already been taught. My insubordination in this matter must have carried over into graver crimes, since my parents once again removed me and placed me in a tiny private school on the beach in Malibu, where I also took riding lessons, English style (later, at the Lazy-J Ranch, I rode Western, of course); I recall being mounted on a horse the size of an elephant and pulling on the reins to prevent it from drinking from the surf through which we were riding. In later years my parents still expressed indignation at the teacher's insistence, in the school across the street, on conformity downwards. Until our return from Europe in the fall of 1951 I never again attended a public school but was rather shifted in and out of the Progressive School, with the Barton School between.

All the private institutions I had previously attended allowed me to learn according to my own disposition, and at my own speed—and not only crafts of the mind but also crafts of the hand. Summer schools consisted largely of learning hands-on activities. In Topanga Canyon I also learned to milk cows (the Frenchman who came to class to get us to sing *Frère Jacques* would teach us, if we wished, to squeeze the tit properly, and develop a rhythm that included squirting a stream toward the expectant cat sitting nearby), to catch polliwogs in a cool creek, to manufacture a corncob pipe and crunch dried wine leaves for tobacco. I do not recall learning any crafts at the Progressive School, but there I worked through the primers at double speed and skipped a grade.

Many decades later, on the sidewalks of New York City near the Metropolitan Museum, I saw very young children, satchels in hand or elegant packs on their backs, evidently on their way to or from private schools, some accompanied by nannies, the girls in uniform pinafores and the boys in tiny suits and ties, all with shiny shoes and well coiffed hair. The future captains of post-industrial enterprise, I imagined, educated at considerable expense to their parents, I'm told. Such children would learn to confine their unruly behavior to off-hours—to live double lives, one profitably public and another self-indulgently private, essentially conformist in both work and play. Although I now envy the accomplishments such an

education must bring these young children, I myself could never have adapted either to the rigor or to the duality. As I would learn upon our return to Los Angeles in the fall of 1951, public schools inculcated sheer conformism—inevitably so, given the large numbers of pupils and the low expectations of parents. I was fortunate to have been raised initially where tuition for private schools remained relatively affordable and the schools adopted a theory of education emphasizing individual development of both mind and body.

Not that I was pampered prior to that fateful fall of 1950. Neither parents nor teachers had ever hovered over me the way the mother of my roommate hovered over him. On the contrary, they tended to remain rather aloof, if not cold. Some of this reflected the cowboy spirit of education, the conviction that a young boy grew up well by learning to handle circumstances in the rough and by himself—as in “wilderness training,” where, I have been told, older adolescents must spend a number of days in the middle of nowhere, equipped with the minimum of accessories. In my final year at the Barton School (disbanded in 1948, when the Bartons moved to England where they could enjoy an inheritance that could not be exported), I lodged in a dormitory headed by an ex-sailor who ran it like a ship. One collective punishment for the twenty or so inmates consisted of our having to spend the afternoon lugging stones from one end of the yard to the other (and when we set up a relay-line our sailor intervened to require that each lug his stone the entire way). And individual punishment usually consisted of requiring the guilty child to box with a more proficient one, with all the others witnessing the humiliation (however, it did not take long before I developed such extensive experience that I had to serve as the more proficient one—to my embarrassment, since I had no sadistic inclinations whatsoever). However, such punishments were intended to make hardy individuals of us, perhaps to channel our wilder impulses but not to eradicate them to render us simply submissive to authority.

The Institute in Sankt Gallen taught me what “culture shock” means: a clash between habits of response that otherwise remain unthematic, so deeply embedded within each culture that we are hardly aware of them as presumptions until

they conflict with one another, and even then remaining obscure, so that each side views the other as deficient rather than only different. More precisely: a clash between *expected* responses —of what others expect of me and what I expect of them. So long as I remained a tourist the clash could remain merely irritating, even amusing. I was used to peanut-butter sandwiches, ketchup on the dining table, hamburgers with all the trimmings, pasteurized and homogenized milk, Levis trousers. I was not used to authoritarian discipline, peers bowing their heads and clicking their heels to salute their elders (as recorded also in Robert Walser's *Jacob von Gunten*), or even homework (the private schools I attended required none, unlike the public schools my friends attended). But the clash went deeper than these differences would suggest. There was a difference in spirit.

My younger brother, born in 1945, stayed in Zurich with our parents, and apparently integrated himself immediately with the other children of his pre-school age, learning to speak the local German dialect and — so my father later said — occasionally having to serve as an interpreter for my parents. My older brother, well into puberty and gregarious by nature, quickly found English-speaking comrades at the Institute and had no inclination to include me in his gang.

I recall my father sitting at the head table in the dining hall of the school, along with a handful of chief administrators. Afterwards, he remarked on a difference he must have experienced already in the early 1930s, when he was living in Munich writing his Ph.D. dissertation for the Philosophy Department at the University of Southern California: the others at the table tucked their napkins under the collars, thereby protecting their garments and also placing the cloth within easy reach of their soiled fingers. Very practical, he said, although I believe he left his napkin on his lap. I have no other recollection of either of my parents visiting the school —either this one or the subsequent one I attended.

Scanty indeed are the memories I have of actual classes. Unlike in all the other schools I had attended, pupils here moved from room to room while the teachers stayed put on their several thrones. There was that ill-fated class in geography, conducted entirely in German, complete with Gothic

script; on the report card, the teacher commented that I attended only as a listener (that is, not at all). Also there was one in Natural Science I see recorded, where the teacher remarked that I had not yet obtained sufficient German to learn anything (I suspect I never attended this one either, at least not after the first hour). There was a class in gymnastics, where again the instructor addressed us in German: my only memory is of a hefty slap in the face when, all the other children standing military-fashion in a single row facing him, I somehow did not comply; the instructor recorded that I performed very clumsily on the few occasions I decided to attend, and had seriously poor posture. There were classes each trimester in arithmetic, I vaguely recall, one conducted by an American and another perhaps by a Scotsman; both testified that I could do the work while emphasizing my untidiness. There was an English class with a German teacher whom I remember to be somewhat empathetic: "Cyril is keen to learn," she first wrote in November, "in his written work his spelling is good but his style is somewhat poor"; then in March she wrote that, "Cyril's work is most unsatisfactory. This is due not to lack of comprehension but to his general attitude, which is extremely slack and careless. He is not prepared to make the slightest effort and therefore does not achieve any good results." And there are a number of other courses recorded on the mid-term reports: German, History, Drawing, Woodshop (why don't I have any recollection of this?), and Geometry (as a listener, and with the same teacher as for Geography, German, Drawing, and Woodshop, I now see: a certain Herr Fritz).

I suspect that what bothered me was precisely that the teachers didn't care whether I even attended their classes, let alone about any development of talent or change of heart. It was much like the world of universities — especially in European ones, and somewhat in North American ones as well. The discipline was there, but whether or not a pupil accepted it was his business. Reports would refer to my poor performance in this or that, but only the results counted, never the thought that anyone in the school might actually help the individual develop his talents — so much unlike the Barton School or the Progressive School.

Whereas most of my memories of the classes have very fuzzy contours, a related memory has always remained very clear to me. Very soon (perhaps after a few classes with Herr Fritz) I made the conscious decision, contrary to my disposition at any time before or after, to cut classes. As Dr. Zhivago, in the movie, turned his horse away from the troupe marching across the snowy plain, expecting to be shot in the back and yet escaping notice entirely, I wandered away from the huddled buildings of the school and found a path through some nearby woods, leading to a promontory looking over a village in the valley below, on the side of the low mountain opposite to the town of Sankt Gallen.

Here I would sit for hours at a time. How often, I cannot say. The first interim report on my classwork, behavior, height and weight adds a note saying that I entered on October 6. The cold and the wet, for which I never had the proper clothing, would have driven me from my retreat by the middle of November, I should think. In any event, even a few times at such a retreat would have sufficed to establish the ponderous disposition that characterized the remaining months of the school year, stretching perhaps down to the present day.

What was I pondering? All those contrasts, no doubt. It's one thing to view differences from the standpoint of a tourist passing through. It's another to find oneself plunged into a world governed by them, with no recourse to the first world and its familiar governance, as my parents and younger brother would have each day as they returned to their apartment on the outskirts of Zurich.

Among the differences, some were simply curious—Celsius rather than Fahrenheit, centimeters and kilometers rather than inches and miles, grams and kilograms rather than ounces and pounds (these I may have picked up in the natural science classes that I don't recall attending), clock faces showing not only the 12 hours but also the 24, the constant travel by train rather than by car. I soon appreciated these for their practicality, while the ritual of tilting the head and clicking the heels in the presence of superiors struck me as demeaning: fortunately, it was not a general requirement in the school (I was later told that the habit was confined to those of Prussian descent or military aspiration).

One difference became evident precisely on that promontory, and stands out still today: the church bells sounding out the hours and quarter hours from the village or villages tucked in the valley below. The bells in fact kept me informed of the time. Sometimes they would ring on and on, for no reason apparent to me; to announce masses, funerals, or weddings, I later learned.

Those bells ringing from steeples rising half out of the villages, themselves embedded in woods—they still ring in my ears now, refreshed no doubt by my subsequent experiences in Europe. They intimated another world entirely, one not evident in any place or aspect of life in Southern California. This tolling too I pondered, as I still do today, although now with some idea of its significance: a world in which the affairs of shopping and production, traveling and education appear regulated by some other, some overreaching, some higher destiny, some stable concern against which even the most stringent, humanly devised regulations appear transient, borrowing any reliability they might have from this one. Whatever, I was not part of it, even less than I was a part of the Institute in which my parents had nominally enrolled me.

At age eleven, I was left to my own devices, meager as these were. At the time I was miserable; I do believe that most children in my predicament would have gone under. The interim report of late November of that year, about six weeks after my arrival, records my weight at 58.7 kilograms and my height at 148 centimeters. Early the following March, three and one-half months later, the next interim report recorded nearly the same weight, 59 kilograms, and my height at 162 centimeters: I grew 14 centimeters taller, and considerably slimmer along the way. Perhaps that is not unusual. But it does remind me of my revulsion at the diet offered by the school. To my initial delight, the first meal consisted of spaghetti and fizzy cider, probably homemade and slightly fermented, with children at the long table speaking strange languages and an elder at one end overseeing us. I gluttoned myself and soon after vomited it all up. Breakfast, I recall, consisted of bread, butter, jam and coffee much diluted with hot milk—something children back home would likely refuse to drink. At home, we drank milk, but the milk here was neither homogenized nor

pasteurized I was told, and therefore boiled and unsavory. I must have complained to my parents, because soon I received a small pyramid-shaped carton of cold milk at breakfast, also hardly palatable: other than from the mother's breast, milk-drinking did not enjoy the prestige it did in America. I was later told, rightly or wrongly, that the lack of it during the growing years accounted for the smaller stature of the Europeans at that time. Milk was cherished mostly for the making of butter and cheese, at which the Swiss excelled, but mainly for adult consumption.

Having enrolled some weeks after the school year had begun, I learned only much later that I, too, could pick up weekly pocket money. At first I watched others lining up at a wicket in a dark hall downstairs in the dormitory building, and I assumed I had been left out. I vaguely remember complaining about my inability to buy candies, and being informed that I should stand in line at the wicket too. I also remember being first skeptical and then surprised: sure enough, I received a small fortune in coins—ones with the same design and often the same date as those I would have in my pocket many decades later, symbolizing in some small way the stability of the Swiss economy. What I did with this fortune I hardly recall, except that I would roam the railway station and surrounding streets down in Sankt Gallen, surveying the vending machines displaying very small packets of cigarettes and condoms. At the time, Swiss society, I imagine European society generally, was designed almost exclusively for adults—another contrast with Southern California, with its many shops lined with comic books, toys and candy bars. When I tried to pay my way into a movie house I learned that elders had to accompany children to even the most innocuous movies, many of which were American; there were age restrictions that applied even then, at least in the Canton of Sankt Gallen.

I also remember doing Christmas shopping for my family—and being especially proud to have found an affordable set of cookie cutters, complete with a dough squeezer, for my mother.

The most puzzling of puzzles was the din of all those strange tongues. The children around me, the housemother, the various adults directing the life of the school—such as those

stationed at the crook of the stairway to check whether we had washed our hands and cleaned our fingernails prior to meals—generally spoke German, but around me I also heard chatter in what I learned later to be French and Italian. The English into which my elders would switch for my sake was not quite the English to which I was accustomed, somewhat wooden I might now say. And the few British children, and especially a Scotsman I sometimes walked with to or from a class, spoke an English that again differed from my own.

This too I pondered: Why the multiplicity? It only complicated matters—and often stymied them. I vaguely recall studying the dominant language, and my records show that I was indeed enrolled in German courses, in which I performed poorly, during both the fall and the winter quarters. What I do remember, and very vividly, is wondering why all those words, not only verbs but also nouns, took so many different forms, written and spoken, while English was so much simpler—although I did then notice that a few English verbs, like “to go” and “to be” did vary strangely, and a few nouns, like “child,” “goose,” and “deer” did have unexpected plurals. But for ease of speaking and writing, listening and reading, English beat German hands down, and I was convinced that there must be something wrong with people who wouldn't make a permanent switch.

My incomprehension of languages took an especially memorable form during two extended stays in the hospital in Sankt Gallen, one for a severe influenza (“Cyril lost a considerable time toward the end of the first half of the term through sickness,” wrote an arithmetic teacher in March), and another for the setting and healing of a broken arm (set under half-sedation: a chloroform-soaked cotton wad suffocatingly clamped over my nose). Next to my bed was a small radio, and I repeatedly turned its dial in search of a station broadcasting in English. Usually only at night, with the improved reception, might I find a station—Voice of America, or some American military installation—that made sense to my ears. Otherwise I would suffer through what was probably Swiss German, French or Italian.

Under “General Observations” the second interim report no longer hesitates to record my “objectionable conduct,” “negative

attitude” and “antisocial nature.” That’s the way I, too, remember myself. The seeds of these weeds lying dormant in my innate disposition, the particular soil into which I was planted likely hastened their florid growth. Anti-social I was indeed, but to my mind—now and at the time—circumstances conspired against me as never before or after: they in effect rejected everything I had been raised to accept, and I refused to respect or even fear the palpable agents of this rejection, refused to cower or comply in the slightest. This refusal fit well into my innate disposition to reflect—to withdraw into second-thoughts regarding my situation. Such withdrawal, whatever value it can have later in life, militates strongly, even absolutely against the kind of learning—conformation, really—at issue for the very young, certainly for the prepubescent. For such learning requires above all unquestioning participation, “going with the flow”: exist first, reflect later. Only in this way does one make friends, learn to ski and to play the piano, and begin to move within a language, native or foreign.

And in retrospect I wish now that I had conformed—attended classes regularly in body and mind, done the homework during the study hours set aside before and after supper each day, joined the various groupings of children for extracurricular sports. What might I then have learned, especially in the way of languages! Yet I also know now that I could never have fallen in line; my parents and teachers had not raised me that way. Then and later my father repeatedly said that each must find his own way in life, and I remember him once telling me that others would either take a strong dislike to me or be very attracted, but never indifferent. At the *Institut auf dem Rosenberg* events conspired in the first of these directions.

And then I was gone, just as abruptly as I had arrived six or so months before. Later, my father said, with a pleasantly ironic grin, that the school had “requested” that I be removed. I do recall the incident catalyzing the request. Several kids on my floor in the dormitory (actually, a stately stone building of several stories) had been poking fun at the matron in her absence, and someone (perhaps myself) drew a caricature of the elderly lady on a sheet of paper: I then wrote above the ludicrous portrait, “Guess who?” and supplied the answer,

properly inverted, at the bottom—in imitation of some guessing games I had seen in comic books. On a dare, I then signed it and tacked it to her door at the end of the hall. She was a Teutonic disciplinarian, but I was struck at the time by her reaction: sadness rather than anger. Perhaps it was obvious that I was asking for trouble.

And not a single reproach from my parents. In fact, my father later let on that he found the school administration deficient. For instance, he remembered paying for skiing lessons for myself and my brother, and we received none (I do recall watching others on a beginner’s slope nearby, and feeling a bit left out: it may be that my parents had failed to supply the necessary equipment which, properly stored, would have confirmed our enrolment). But I suspect he had yet another reason. Attendance at private schools in California, at least the schools in Malibu, Hollywood, and Topanga Canyon, assured that each child would receive individual attention, most surely in classroom work but then also, at a boarding school, in personal adjustment to extra-academic circumstance. That kind of attention would have contravened the basic principle of education at this one Institute and, I believe, of education most anywhere in Europe at the time. The principle was akin to that of military training in one respect: conscripts must learn to conform unquestioningly to the commands of their superiors. Strangely, too, this principle was quite compatible with another: out of sight, out of mind. As I have already remarked, my cutting of classes bothered no teacher or monitor so long as I obeyed the rules in their presence. That each lesson required me to change classroom contributed to what my parents would have judged as negligence on the part of the teachers: my absence hardly aroused their notice. One teacher, a germanophone, remarked on the interim report in November: “Cyril is flighty and untidy, he cannot yet work independently. Furthermore, he is unpunctual.” Another, an anglophone, stated: “When Cyril is in the mood and decides to attend class, his behavior is quite satisfactory.” My parents, I suspect, would have replied that they paid these teachers to work with me, to tidy me up, get me to come to class regularly—not to turn me loose, at age 11, enforcing only externals such as washing hands and cleaning fingernails.

My parents' own condition in Zurich no doubt compounded the difficulty. Both were also facing the attention-demanding challenges of re-settling into a strange environment. Already in California my mother was listening to lessons on records in an effort to pick up some German. And although my father spoke German well enough, having studied in Munich for a few years prior to the events of 1934, he was now in the process of changing careers.

In the spring of 1934 my father had received his Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Southern California (with a dissertation titled "Max Scheler's Philosophy of Religion, A Study in Phenomenology"); he married my mother in 1936, taken a teaching post at St. Lawrence College (in Canton, New York) and, planning to rewrite his dissertation, wrote and published a book on a related topic (*The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl, The Origin and Development of his Phenomenology*, 1941). Soon after the publication, and just before departing for a summer vacation, my father dropped by the office of the Dean of the College to say good-bye and was summarily informed that the family-run administration was replacing him with one of their own. He went into shock at the news. Matters were exacerbated by the nearly simultaneous death of my mother's mother, necessitating that she leave for Pierre, South Dakota, by train, taking my older brother and leaving me, at two years of age, in my father's care. The College had given him a year's salary in compensation and, no appropriate positions being available at that late time of the year, he attended some nearby university in New Jersey to study psychology in the fall and spring, after which the family moved back to California, where my father worked as a personnel manager at his own father's industrial laundry (Welch's Uniform and Overall Cleaning Company). The year in Switzerland was intended to prepare him for a practice in psychoanalysis: he studied at the Jungian Institute, even with Carl Jung himself.

As I knew him, my father was ever a striver aspiring to the good life and with considerable awareness of how fragile these aspirations are. As a striver, he often made mistakes, and, in flagrant cases of error, had the good will to express his regret. I recall his meeting me at the Zurich train station when I arrived from Sankt Gallen for the Christmas holidays. I was

laden with several bags, and my father immediately reproached me for bringing so much for so few days. Years later he apologized: these bags were filled with gifts for each of my family. There were a few other occasions, too, when he overreacted and subsequently admitted his error.

My mother, on the other hand, was a born stoic—and so she even called herself on occasion. She preferred to remain unengaged in the background, impassive. I don't ever recall her even taking her children shopping, let alone on excursions to parks or zoos for learning experiences. Her sister, my Aunt Eva, with whom she remained close all her life, told me that my mother had always been that way, a puzzle to their own father. Whenever any of her friends, including her own sister, fell ill or entered the hospital for an operation, my mother would stay away; she even avoided entering her children's rooms when they contracted the usual diseases. She once remarked that people who were ill could not show their better sides, and it was best, for their own sakes, to wait until they could. It did not occur to her to come to a hospital in Sankt Gallen, an hour's train-ride from Zurich. Yet she was an educated woman, and many years later I was surprised to find in her papers long extracts she had, when young, copied out from Thomas Mann's works, passages embodying a passion for life. In the mid-1960s, home from graduate school for the Christmas holidays, I told her I was studying Plato, whereupon she called philosophy a cold mistress. And in the mid-1970s, when I happened to be reading Thoreau's works, she said she couldn't bear such dark literature; at the same time (we were spending the Christmas holidays together in Bermuda), she was reading Flaubert's *Sentimental Education*, which we had given her; she said she found it boring. Both she and my father remarked, on different occasions, that she had once "thrown a fit" at him and had to spend days afterwards confined to her bed in order to recover: never again, she resolved. Still, she took an interest in history, and would read books about Egyptian art and civilization, partly in preparation for one of several world tours my father arranged for them in the late 1950s.

Without much ado that I can recall, I found myself at a different school for the third trimester of the year, from April 11 to July 3: the "Pre-Alpine Institute for Boys on the Mountain of

Zug," an even shorter train-ride from Zurich. The mood was lighter. It was spring. Although a number of languages were still buzzing around me, my own classes were conducted entirely in English and nobody expected me to understand any other. And I returned every weekend to my parents' apartment.

Still, as a late-comer I remained an outsider. What I most recall were my wanderings through the countryside, where I would occasionally see Swiss recruits performing their military service, ominous-looking concrete bunkers and deep tank traps (or so I was told they were, although I now wonder whether here, unlike at Basel, near the border, they were not storm trenches to handle the torrents during the spring melt). And of course cows were always grazing on the hilly fields, home-made bells on their home-crafted leather collars gently ringing in a sweet cacophony accompanying their slow movements through the greenery and flowers of the ever-warmer season.

The few memories associated directly with this second boarding school (where I had a room to myself) I can list exhaustively:

Tennis lessons administered individually by an athletic and commanding Teutonic figure. I may have learned to keep my right arm and wrist appropriately rigid, but lessons came to an end when my racket was stolen: one day, as I entered the dining hall after a lesson, I tossed the racket above some lockers and was startled to discover it missing when I returned. And there was no thought or suggestion of replacing it or borrowing another.

An arithmetic class, which I often cut and for which I never did a stitch of homework until the last exam was pending. For this one exam I did prepare and I performed well—whereupon I brazenly addressed the teacher out in the hall, implying that now I would get a good mark in the course. He replied that I would likely now be able to pass the course, but barely.

Taking a bath (a rare event, and only upon request), where the kindly matron did not hesitate to putter around in the bathroom while I was stark naked: a shock at the time.

A gang of Italian kids shouting among themselves and at passers-by, such as me, who must have insulted them in return,

since they followed me to my dormitory and gathered outside my second-story room to continue their taunts in gestures perfectly intelligible but in words I could not understand. They were heaving a small ball, perhaps a tennis ball, at my window, finally breaking a hole in the glass, whereupon I sliced it half-way through and slid it into the hole, which infuriated the kids ever more, who continued their ruckus until dispersed by an adult. Italian became, for me, the epitome of noisiness, brattishness, and rudeness.

The police arriving on the hill, near the cable-car station, and escorting two young women—who, I was then told, had been regularly offering their services to a couple older boys at the school, who had in turn converted a vacation cabin not far away into a love nest. This story, coupled with the actual sight of the two girls, fed my fantasies for a long while afterwards.

A kindly boy, several years older than I, a Luxembourger, he told me (my first encounter with the name), who not only spoke English comfortably but also permitted me to while away some afternoons in his room, reading his vast collection of comic books. It was forbidden to entertain guests from other dormitories, but the boy, very well mannered himself, took the rules lightly. Given subsequent developments in my life, I wish I could recall his name. But, apart from my report card, there is no written evidence even to show that I myself was enrolled: decades later, seeing an advertisement for the *Voralpinisches Knaben-Institut »Montana«, Zugerberg* in a Zurich newspaper, I wrote to ask for a transcript and was told in reply that a fire had destroyed such documents some years previously. Only when my mother died were my various school records discovered among her papers.

I recall no casual games at either of the two boarding schools. Surely there must have been soccer games, but none in which I participated. The football and baseball with which I was well acquainted did not occupy any space in the Swiss mind, and basketball only came in much later. Then as now, tennis could only be played in all seriousness, and with fully accredited equipment, which I was lacking, especially since the theft of my racket. No buddies either, with whom I might have engaged in a card game or outdoor adventure. My daily life,

and my wanderings through the countryside, were strikingly solitary.

Then it was over. Bags must have been packed, but all I remember is the trek back through Paris for a few days, another ocean liner to New York, where we again lingered for a few days before traveling on to Los Angeles. Upon our arrival our manservant, Read, drove us directly to Laguna Beach, south of Los Angeles: our house on Ohio Avenue was still rented out for some further weeks.

I say Laguna Beach, but actually the house in which we stayed was just south of that village. We stayed in what had been my paternal grandfather's house, perched high on the cliff overlooking Three Arch Bay. He had died while we were overseas, and my uncle now owned it. I had often slept there before, in a dank guest room with two bunk beds and two porthole windows—genuine ones, with brass rims and fixtures. Now I could descend on the rickety wooden stairway to the beach, far below, divided into the two coves, one expansive with inviting sand and translucent water, the other smaller, with rocky shore and massive seaweed choking the water, the two separated by a huge "breadloaf" through which, over the millennia, the tides had bored three passages. For swimming we naturally walked over to the expansive bay, something out of a tourist brochure. But in later years I discovered that the smaller bay, with its cliffs falling directly into the sea, provided richer prospects for skin- and scuba-diving.

We returned to our own house on Ohio Avenue in time for me and my older brother to enter Emerson Junior High School—my first prolonged experience of a public school, this one within five or six blocks of our home. I should have enrolled in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, having skipped a grade at the Progressive School in Hollywood, but I vividly recall convincing the counselor at registration that my year in Switzerland had yielded me nothing at all, that it was a total loss, so that I should enroll in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She compromised and placed me in the second half of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, with the result that I was once again out of synch with the normal flow, graduating then in February rather than in June, with the neighborhood children of my age.

What did I bring back from that year abroad? So far as I can remember, our year in Switzerland never came up as such during family conversation. My parents had met two American soldiers at the Jungian Institute in Zurich, and at least one of these did keep in touch for a long while. And they had also made the acquaintance of a British woman, who accepted an invitation to stay with us a time, who carefully cut the fat off strips of bacon over breakfast, who complained that she had to cross through the boys' room to go to the bathroom, and whom my father finally asked to leave. Other than these few remnants, the year away was for them a year like any other.

I myself had resisted and resented nearly every challenge, eager only to return to the easy-going and fulsome manner of Southern California. Now I could go to a movie without parental accompaniment (in Switzerland even a Walt Disney movie had required it). I could play football in pick-up games on the front lawn of the elementary school across from the house—or baseball on the diamond just across the street, or basketball outside some neighbor's garage—all according to the season. There was no language barrier as I ventured into drug stores, dime stores, or grocery stores to purchase trinkets, candy bars or comic books. I had no use for where I had been.

Yet something was wrong. My one-time buddies appeared to me confined, unaware of the world of differences that had wrenched my heart for more than a year. Unaware, and not the least interested in hearing about what had intervened. To me, they appeared dull. Moreover, television had taken over much of their time—they would watch football and baseball games on the screen rather than play them in the neighborhood. They would watch game shows, too, and even the political conventions of the Republicans and the Democrats—anything at all, it seemed, and on screens hardly a foot wide, black and white, in a dimly lit room, while the sun shone gloriously outside.

While still in Europe, touring through Germany, I came upon antique shops where even my limited pocket money allowed me to purchase exotic sabers and even muzzle-loading pistols of the sort pictured in *Treasure Island* and *The Three Musketeers*—genuine, and available for next to nothing owing to the high exchange rate of the dollar and the poverty driving

many Germans to sell their possessions. These items had some value in the eyes of my friends, and I hung them on the wall in my bedroom, later again in the house at 242 North Layton Drive, into which we moved when I was thirteen years old. They reminded me that there was something special about my year in that strange old world, something that would grow on me for the rest of my life, as I returned over and over again to its mystery.

In the fall of 1952, now entering into the second half of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I began to notice that my refusal to engage in classwork aggravated the dreariness of school. Miraculously, I resolved to apply myself. I began to do the assigned homework. Favorable results were slow in coming—first, the elimination of the D's, then gradually some B's and finally but still sporadically some A's. I especially recall the study of algebra, how I might learn to do the thinking myself rather than suffer the thoughts of others. And also Spanish, where I discovered that English had a structure, something revealed to me only as I pondered the intricacies of the foreign language. And finally even athletics: we would “strip” on all but the most inclement days, exercise in rows, and learn to play a wide variety of ball games on the blacktop and to perform the whole gamut of gymnastic feats inside the gym. I never excelled in any of the sports, but I did learn that bodily activity and team work took many forms and posed many challenges beyond the pick-up games in the neighborhood on weekends and during the summer.

As it turned out, I became what no one could have foreseen in my days at those two Swiss boarding schools: an intellectual. Whereas my marks in arithmetic had been uniformly “unsatisfactory” or “weak” during that year abroad, they now rose in algebra and geometry first to B and then to A. Similarly in physics. Soon I sensed a remarkable difference between these and other subjects such as history, literature and even chemistry: any formulation in mathematical studies was something I *did*, whereas the formulations in these other subjects of study appeared first and even abidingly as the doings of others. This was my first inkling that many grand theories of modern science too, as the theory of evolution, remain, like those of history, essentially formulations of others,

never an experience deriving from actual doings of those learning them.

At University High School, where 10<sup>th</sup> grade began, my first geometry teacher impressed me as simply imposing facts upon us. After executing some tasteless prank, I was summoned to the Boys' Vice-Principal, who, after rebuking me, transferred me to another geometry class, which met the last hour of the school day. Here I sat in the very back row and displayed my usual indifference. Then, for some reason, the teacher—Mr. Morgan, the only one at that school whose name has stayed with me—kept me after class and, leaning over my shoulder in the now nearly empty room, guided me in Socratic fashion through a few proofs. He did this—we did it—on several consecutive afternoons. And the result amazed me. Geometry became something to do, and a joy forever—as a sport or a craft, now a truly liberal art (the names followed the things themselves, as ancient philosophers often insist). This experience, with the name of this one teacher, marked a decisive turning point in my understanding of school work—of intellectual work generally. Long afterwards, someone told me Mr. Morgan had moved on to teach at the University of California nearby, but I have never been able to confirm this development in his career.

It was, I believe, that earlier year, 1950-1951, of pure imposition that provided, already at the time of Mr. Morgan, an essential foil for detecting and appreciating the difference. It served as a constant reminder of how school work could appear—indeed, how any situation can appear. Later, as a teacher myself, I learned even more intimately the paradox of imposition and activation—that utter lack of discipline, expectation, overview and judgement can vitiate activation just as much as pure imposition. It is up to each to rise into activity—and thereby into receptivity. Yet we all stand in need of some moment of grace or luck, some encounter in which the either /or becomes manifest.

Similarly that same year of Babel. Although the cacophony of foreign tongues frustrated me for practical reasons, and contributed to my estrangement, it fascinated me as well, and has continued to do right to the present day. Perhaps the very experience of being left out enhanced my desire to get back in. If all the others could make sense out of situations by making

sense out of those to-me unfamiliar sounds in the air and marks on paper, why couldn't I? How did they do it, such that I might do it too? In class, I became aware of the complications of words—that conjugations of verbs and declinations of nouns were part of the story of sense-making. But, all by themselves, the conjugated verbs and declined nouns recited in class and written on the blackboard signified nothing other than correctness of speech—the teacher's corrections: again, mere impositions devoid of any role in live interchange or lively reading and writing.

Later, first in Paris, I would pass by the offices of driving schools and see several adults receiving lessons on the mechanics of automobiles, with large instructional portrayals of the drive train, steering mechanism, and breaking system. Similarly, I have heard of the European habit of teaching the solfège to students long before they apply themselves directly to playing an instrument. In the end, of course, drivers drive and musicians play, but I still wonder how wise it is to begin what's essentially a performance by studying the materials employed in the performance. I myself "borrowed" my father's car (an exotic Alvis, a British-made convertible with a stick shift on the floor) when my parents were out, and nervously backed it out of the garage, onto the street, then back into the garage, and finally, after many such mini-trials, drove it down to and across busy Sunset Boulevard, around back across and home again. I had studied only my father's gestures with clutch, shift, and brakes. After such performance, I learned not only the rules of driving and the constituents of the vehicle, but also the skills. To my regret, the piano lessons at the Barton School were soon terminated—after the teacher assured my parents that I had no musical talent.

Already at the Progressive School a Mexican woman would come in to teach us some Spanish: she would name items in the classroom and we would repeat the names after her. It was glaringly evident to me, already at age nine or ten, that parroting names fell way short of saying or understanding anything in the language. What we mostly learned, or what I mostly recall, was the Christmas ritual of the *piñata*: with desks pushed to the side, someone blind-folded had to smash the

"ceramic" pot (likely of cardboard) with a baseball bat, whereupon the candies flew around the floor.

As already mentioned, at Emerson Junior High School, after our return from abroad, I began to study Spanish in earnest, in classes where we were required to learn the rules governing the construction of whole sentences. By that time I was applying myself to the tasks assigned, and became aware, for the first time, of the structure undergirding my own speaking and listening, reading and writing. I was in effect learning English grammar, the vocabulary for it (a meta-language) as well as the semantic power of the interrelations among the elements it named: subject and predicate, direct and indirect objects, prepositions and pronouns, verbs and adverbs and adjectives, tense and mood, along with the peculiarities of gender and address (formal vs. familiar), so much more evident in Spanish than in English. Since I was already moving within the semantics, the formal structure no longer appeared as a mere contrivance imposed on me by the teachers.

In the spring of 1955, now at University High School (misleadingly named), I found myself in a Spanish class with a substitute teacher, the intended teacher having to take leave for nearly the whole semester. He was a mature man, not yet jaded, who took a kindly interest in his pupils. He coached us through our first complete discourse, a popular mystery novel, *La noche oscura* (likely abridged if not expurgated and simplified). Fully activated Spanish, then, although confined to reading. As it also happened that semester, I was expelled from the school: I had gotten into a serious fight with a Mexican boy ("Hispanic," one now more accurately says), and the authorities were rightly concerned about the possibility of a race war at the school, which was located dead-center between the two neighborhoods. Transferred to Hamilton High School, I found myself in a Spanish class devoted exclusively to vocabulary and grammar. The contrast was disconcerting, and again I resisted. While the teacher at University High had assigned me an A on my premature departure, the one at Hamilton High grudgingly passed me with a C.

That summer my parents took me to Mexico City for a number of weeks; I had no desire for the trip, since I now had my driver's license and a steady girl friend. We met my older

brother there, who had just finished high school and was continuing his study of Spanish, perhaps as a sideline to his learning the low-life of the city. He felt quite at ease in the language. I recall one evening walking with him and a friend of his along an elegant boulevard. Suddenly, my brother turned to a well-dressed couple on our left and said something to the effect, "I return the compliment — as I learned to say in my class today"; the man had evidently remarked on our disorderly manner of behavior. That kind of spontaneity on my brother's part, and the jocular tone which incited a good-natured smile from the dignitaries, I could never have. Indeed, I quickly learned in those few days that, for all my study of vocabulary and grammar, and ability to read a mystery novel, I could not engage in live conversation in this foreign language.

My fascination frustrated, and my abhorrence unabated, I avoided satisfying the language requirement at the University of Montana until my third year. And after a very few days in a very large class for Russian (this was now the fall of 1959, not long after Sputnik), where the teacher had his 50-plus students sound out the Cyrillic alphabet from one meeting to the next, I switched to German. Thank goodness for that! As well as for the language requirement. Not only was I able to make good on my failure in Switzerland, I was also starting to learn a language that would prove to be an indispensable feature of my life.

The class was small, about 15 students, and Mr. Horst Jarka involved us imaginatively in the learning of the language. At the beginning of each meeting he administered a brief quiz on the tasks assigned the previous meeting (we met five mornings each week, from September to June). He addressed us individually, unrelentingly. I especially recall his illustration of the difference between usage of the dative and the accusative cases with some verbs: he rapidly climbed up one side of the front table and down the other: "I'm climbing over the table" (accusative); again, he climbed onto the table and shuffled around on its top: "I'm walking on the table" (dative). He also enlightened me on the difference between direct and indirect speech, the latter generally requiring one form of the subjunctive mood (that there are two forms still fascinates me). Of course we had to speak, recite, and read aloud; and one day

in the stairway of the building he asked me whether I had ever studied German before: not really, I answered, although I had spent a school year in Switzerland — whereupon he remarked that now he understood why I had less trouble than others did with the pronunciation of the language. I was surprised he noticed; I must have picked up something unawares after all. But then most learning happens similarly, I later discovered.

In my second year of German study the teacher assigned us entire texts to read and discuss. In the first quarter we read *Im Westen Nichts Neues*, which impressed me very deeply: not because the plot meant anything to me, but because the language was finally put to work, transporting me into the life of trench warfare. At the time I had already read *A Farewell to Arms*, and it may be that my naive fascination with Hemingway's novel had prepared me for Remarque's, now in a foreign language (much later, in the summer of 2002, I read the Italian translation of the first, *Addio alle Armi*, and again found it pointed me to what it was saying: *e tu mi seguirai con l'affezione / sì che dal dicer mio lo cuor non parti* — *Paradiso* 32:149-50).

During the second term of this second year, another German teacher invited the students to her home one evening each week for coffee, cake, and conversation. I attended frequently, and again noticed the difference between knowing the materials of the language and actually generating meaningful conversation out of this knowing. I've never been much of a conversationalist, even in my native tongue, and in foreign tongues I still today lack grace. Still, it was important to experience the effort, and my own failures.

Following graduation in June of 1961, I attended a summer school for German language study, sponsored by a university in Oregon and held on the Reed College campus, in Portland. The classes were utterly uninspiring, intended just for practicing the language, and the only benefit the summer school provided was to keep my ear a bit attuned — except that, once again, I was asked to engage in the materials of the language rather than to engage in the focusing so essential to its actualization.

Upon entering graduate school at The Pennsylvania State University in the fall of 1961, to study philosophy, I chose

German literature as my minor. The first teacher I had took us through some dramas of Goethe and Schiller, and babbled on and on about the Greek myths upon which the dramas were drawing, again without the slightest focusing; in another course the same teacher had us read, among other things, Stifter's *Nachsommer*, which I found somewhat engaging despite her unfocused discourse in the seminars. Finally, a new teacher whom, despite her Ph.D., we called Fräulein Lüders, actually addressed what the works were about—Kafka's and Thomas Mann's, among others. What a relief! So much was she interested in what the works were about that she allowed me to write my essays in English. Although I have since written letters in German, I have never composed an essay in any language other than English.

Then there was French. Graduate school required a reading knowledge of two foreign languages. A very close friend happened to teach French, and she drilled me through a textbook we always called "Harris and Levêsqe," where I would memorize more or less dramatic dialogues before studying grammar and vocabulary. The contextualization seemed right. This was already during my first year in graduate school, and the two of us spent ten weeks of the following summer in Paris and St. Malo, where I read through Gabriel Marcel's *Le mystère de l'être*, Albert Camus' *Le mythe de Sisyphe*, and articles in daily newspapers like *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*. I easily passed the reading test in the fall. There was only one hitch: I didn't know what to do with *ledit*, and remarked that it must be a misprint—only later did I learn its usage in legal and scholarly documents ("the aforesaid"—*ladite* if feminine). The academic text I was given to translate was not of the sort that I would normally read, then or now.

Greek I studied for two terms at Penn State. The teacher spoke modern Greek and explained that he would teach us the modern rather than the conjectured ancient pronunciation, in case we would ever travel to Greece. But my only interest lay in reading the bilingual Loeb editions of classical works, especially Aristotle's, the English translations of which often failed to make sense to me. However, I wish I had continued my studies of Greek beyond the rudiments, along with Latin.

Chinese I studied for a couple terms at Antioch College, where I taught for a year as a Danforth Associate. Again, though, just enough to struggle through Lao-tzu's work (and later a few chapters of Confucius'). Here was a language that introduced me to a radically different grammatical structure; now, all the others seemed like mere dialects of one another. As well, the semantic power of sound struck me, since variations in pitch distinguish the meanings of words—so that our western use of pitch to emphasize words had to be abandoned. Also, in the case of ancient texts, the terseness of expression seemed intentional—to leave space for interpolation.

Italian was the last language I formally studied. My wife and I attended the school in Perugia specializing in teaching the language to foreigners. The teacher, Angelo Chiuchiù, whom we got to know even better when he later opened his own school in Assisi, would drill us orally and repetitively with full sentences: "I leave the class," "I leave the class to smoke a cigarette," "I leave the class to smoke a cigarette in the corridor"—and he would mime the action as much as possible. The emphasis lay in basic verbs and then on the proper use of prepositions: "I go to the sea, to the bar, to the cinema, but into the mountains." This was for four weeks in June of 1978. We returned in June of 1979, staying only three weeks because in the meantime Iran had undergone a revolt and Iranians were flooding into the classrooms: where the year before the class had twenty students, it now had sixty. But by then we could travel comfortably in the Italian Dolomites, employing guides to take us on climbing tours. In the passing of time we read many Italian novels and finally Dante's *Comedy*.

Mainly German, French and Italian: the three languages that frustrated me as I would listen to the radio when confined to my hospital bed in Sankt Gallen. That initial frustration, my failure to rise to the challenge, likely made me dream of becoming a polyglot. Yet a polyglot I never became. However, I did become a reader, and I wince at the thought that I might never have learned to read the original versions of the great literature in those languages. Or to listen appreciatively to lectures in those languages. But my ability to speak in them remains limited, so that I have remained beneficiary rather than become benefactor. One reason may well be the familiar fact

that spontaneous gestures of all kinds, as in ice skating and piano playing, strike deep roots only early in one's life—before puberty, I've heard. But more to the point in my case, the reason lies in my inveterate tendency to examine things, thereby distancing myself from them—as I still today pause to ponder the gender of words, the metaphors and other turns of phrase (my own as well as those of others) rather than just moving along. Even as a teacher, starting in the early 1960s, I would be “re-writing” my sentences as I was addressing a class; only much later, toward the end of my forty years of teaching, did I find myself speaking sentences both well formed and open-ended.

In the interim report of March, 1951, a history teacher wrote, “Cyril takes the minimum of interest in his work”; and a geography teacher remarks, “His greatest difficulty now seems in realizing that there exist phases of geography other than that of the USA.” Indeed, I have no recollection of either class, and in subsequent years I experienced much difficulty in classes where the teacher would review facts about the world: names of developments in time or names of places on the globe. I could listen to stories about times and places, but still in college, when studying Russian history, I had no idea what to do with what I heard or read—what I was supposed to remember and restate on examinations. In contrast, mathematical studies, including modern physics, posed no great difficulty: they required me to figure things out. Later I was happy to learn that such studies were rightly designated liberal arts, in contrast to history and geography. Still, the study of traditions and their locations has since become my chief passion.

An elemental experience of time and place: on a trip to Munich my father took me alone out to the neighborhood where he had lived in the early 1930s. Descending from the tram, I could see nothing but rubble cleared off the streets onto the lots where houses had once stood. My father was talking about his lodging here, where he would tease the landlady in late afternoon, asking her what she planned for the “feeding” that evening (especially in German, humans eat and animals feed).

Empty streets, rubble, lonely staircases as far as the eye could see. All this displacing busy routines of human effort. No lectures in a classroom, no photographs or drawings in a magazine, no shows on television, no wide-screen movie, could ever present this clash of place and time. I experienced first-hand the actual result, here and now, against which all the rest, no matter how vividly represented, was second-hand and merely generic—devastation as a *kind* of event.

Of course I was told how it came about: blanket bombing by “our side.” But why? Again, there was a story: war. But why war? A conflict between good and evil, between *ideas* of what is good and what is evil, between representatives of these ideas. And what were these ideas? I did not go so far as to ask, yet I had experienced what no child back home, on Ohio Avenue, had experienced. And the experience has stayed with me: not as dread but as puzzlement.

The tales of war did not frighten me, perhaps because I had no first-hand experience of the action itself. What startled me, fascinated me, about the experience was the revelation that a world of human affairs could evaporate, leaving only a trace upon a place that eerily remained. One can talk about the fragility of these affairs, their impermanence, and illustrate it in many different ways. But the experience on that day in a suburb of Munich was first-hand, two layers forcing themselves on me: the one in its eery presence, the other in its devastating absence. It is this absence that no lecture or book, no photograph or movie, can bring out or bring home.

While human agency, especially in the guise of modern technology, may account for some cases of absence, more or less unaccountable human failure seems to account for it in other cases. There are ruins in Greenland, I hear, that go back many centuries, and historians speculate about what might have accounted for the abandonment of the settlements. Much closer to home, and more readily explained, are the abandoned settlements near Sackville, New Brunswick, here in Canada—on the way out to Cape Maringuin, with Slack's Cove on the one side of the peninsula and Pink Rock on the other, both very much inhabited in centuries gone by. Wandering through the woods or along the beaches, one wonders how a world of farming and fishing, quarrying and logging, could be set up on

this harsh earth and turbulent sea. Yet it was done, and thrived so long as New Englanders to the southwest needed the grindstones and nearby ship-builders needed the lumber, and the railway had not been built inland to serve other settlements much more conveniently.

Also nearby, on the calmer and generally blue seas of Northumberland Strait, a museum documents the earlier modes of transportation across to Prince Edward Island, where now the Confederation Bridge vastly facilitates the crossing. The bridge strikes one as stupendous in its length and height, but the crossing itself is generally unproblematic (except during times of raging winds). Again, the earlier world of skiffs and sleds has disappeared, but it has become a spectacle in itself—for tourists. Just as a photo of the piled rubble and lonely staircases in that Munich suburb can only document the presence, so now the absence gives way to reproductions.

The interactive difference between the world within which we live and the place that may or may not reveal itself as sustaining that world for a while is one I later discovered voiced in Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Terre des Hommes* (much and well expanded into *Wind, Sand and Stars*), and, most thoroughly, perhaps, in Martin Heidegger's various essays on art work. I have learned, though, that many readers judge such works to be "romantic": as expressing a nostalgia for earlier ages when life was supposedly simpler—agricultural rather than industrial. Actually, though, works of this sort invite us to recognize that, whatever we achieve in the way of human configurations, the question remains whether these achievements configure a place where we can be—as distinct from a launching pad for flying off to some other place: whether they form a community in which we can live, a land on which we can dwell, and institutions serving these points of convergence rather than their own expansions.

The ruins of a medieval castle or cathedral may strike visitors of a later age as romantic, and part of their architectural charm no doubt lies in their power to evoke a world having no bearing whatsoever on the place where they actually live, no exigency of reconsideration. In contrast the ruins in the Munich suburbs no doubt unnerved many of those who actually

underwent the fire-bombings, and I have since heard moralists speak of them as an object lesson on the evils of war. For me, though, the experience had the long-term effect of providing a haunting reason for reviewing the temporal sequences of human effort we now call history, not only those immediately bearing on my place (such as the Spanish settlement of what is now California), but those most anywhere (especially those of Europe and, from there, all around the Mediterranean). As stories of the effort to dwell, history and geography bear directly on our own condition here and now. Or may so bear—always leaving open the possibility that they may serve the opposing purpose of diverting us from our own place and time.

In retrospect I can detect a parallel between my experience at the Rosenberg Institute and my experience at the outskirts of Munich: reduction to incoherent elements along with the obliteration of coherent response. In retrospect, too, I detect two contrasting dispositions toward such dissolution...

On the one hand, abhorrence, avoidance, even denial, coupled with attention only to creation, whether human constructions or natural wonders, whether as witness or agent. Some people cannot talk about the bloody surgery they have undergone—or their war-time experiences. Some cannot even visit the construction site of a house, with all the materials lying around in chaos. Others, the "shakers and movers," must always engage in projects to improve circumstances, restlessly instituting order.

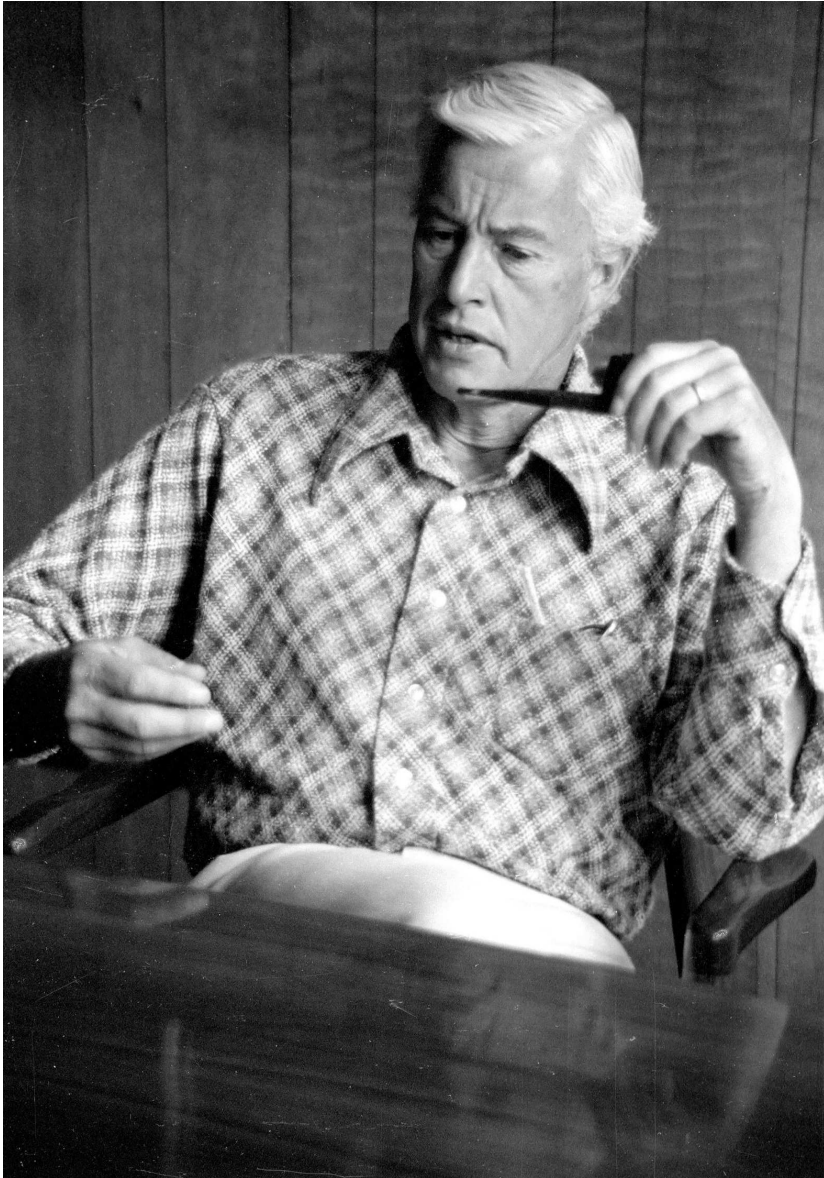
On the other hand, strong recollection of the nothingness out of which moments of creation may arise—and into which they will return. I count myself among those of this melancholic disposition, attending as much to the disintegration as to the integration. The works of the greatest thinkers place us and our thoughts in the middle, and thereby engender a participation in our (shared) condition as teeming, as growing and decaying, as dynamic rather than simply ordered, fixed, static. Those who accept this in-between location, embracing negation as a kind of starting point, a constant reminder of the need for an "updraft of life renewed" (a line from one of Liliame's poems), can not only survive the evils of the day but actually turn them to positive account. That one year, from 6 October 1950, might well have reduced me to rubble; instead it has

served me as a kind of *memento mori* that has helped me to retell stories about far-away times and places in a way allowing them to reveal my own time and place rather than distracting me from them: I need only detect in the narrative constructions an essential response to pending dissolution.

Did that year change me? It certainly afforded an unusual perspective on intellectual effort, especially educational effort, a perspective I never would have had if I had remained in the California school system, public or private. Yet experiences do not so much change as reveal us; they drive dispositions and attitudes and talents, good or bad, out into the open. I became an intellectual, I have taken a passionate interest in languages, I have learned that and how tradition encircles, delimits, confines and defines our condition, intellectual or not— all in opposition to, even reversal of, the original experiences. When later I read Hegel on the “Power of the Negative” (in the Preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*) I readily understood his meaning.

A fourth reversal has afforded me some comic relief. I still recall vividly the packs of Italian kids roaming around the school above Zug, shouting at each other, at the heavens above, at passers-by—in an exuberance all the more irritating because I had no part in it. The one pack, in particular, that raged on the street outside my room, after I had insulted them. For nearly thirty years (until attending the language classes in Perugia and climbing in the Dolomites with Italian guides) I accepted the prevalent view of Italians that they were noisy and discourteous; and there were a number of experiences that confirmed the view. Yet suddenly I dealt solely with Italians who were quiet and courteous, the gentlest of people. Then too I began to recall that, sandwiched in with the usual rough experiences inevitable in a foreign land, there had been these very same people, or people like the ones I now experienced—from strangers on the street to employees in hotels and public offices. It’s enough to deprive one of the bitter-sweet pleasures of prejudice.

HENRY BUGBEE



It was Mr. Marvin who suggested that I enrol in a course offered by the new member of the Department. I started with Philosophy of Religion, winter term of 1960.

Already in the early summer of 1958, with wife, child and my mongrel Fido, I had left Los Angeles as soon as my classes ended at Santa Monica City College. Down with what I thought was a bad cold at the time — at Clear Lake, north of San Francisco, it was diagnosed as mononucleosis, and I had to spend several days in a small hospital managed by Seventh Day Adventists — I still felt it necessary to escape the hollow atmosphere of the metropolis. Arriving in Missoula, Montana, I impetuously enrolled in two summer courses, one in sociology (Social Stratification) and another in philosophy (Social Ethics). From the first of these I recall only the self-assertive, slightly contemptuous young woman, wearing conspicuously high-heeled shoes, standing behind her lectern to face a relatively large class; the one item of significance for me was her claim that every situation engenders a pecking order, even prisons (two prison guards later confirmed this to me in gruesome detail). From the second I recall only the unprepossessing elder, somewhat fatherly in his manner, seated before a very small class asking us to consider questions regarding the imperatives of social organization: no information that I recall, nor do I remember the questions, let alone the answers we or the text proffered. It was rather the contrast between the two courses, the two teachers, that struck me at the time: the one engendered an aloof stance looking on at our condition, the other a participative stance transforming both my own vision and my own position. The one struck me as strangely false, the other as incipiently true. So in the fall I enrolled in further courses in philosophy. For I had decided to stay at the University of Montana rather than return to California. Life seemed more

real in a town bounded on the West and North by rough-and-ready looking mountains and on the East and South by sprawling planes.

Most serious for me were still my studies in mathematics and physics. In those days, at least, and both at Santa Monica City College and the University of Montana, these two subjects were taught as hear-think-and-do challenges, with hardly any information simply to be remembered. In addition, meeting this challenge resulted in definite insight into the way things themselves worked. While my parents read books and took an interest in cultural history, the atmosphere at home had always been dominated by the vagaries of opinion, of received conventional views, rather than any discipline of discovery. The hear-think-and-do atmosphere of scientific study appealed to me, and I was set to pursue this study for the entirety of my education and subsequent life.

Yet there was something appealing about philosophy as well. While mathematics and physics engaged me in the development from bit-questions to bit-answers, Mr. Marvin's course recalled the background for this development. There seemed to be a serious relationship between the two. Having to take more courses in the humanities to satisfy requirements for the B.A. degree, I enrolled that fall in Mr. Marvin's Ancient Philosophy, followed by Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy in the winter, Modern Philosophy in the spring, and finally 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Philosophy the following fall. Also in the fall, I enrolled in a logic course (pre-mathematical) taught by Leslie Armour, whose youthful and assertive manner was refreshing, since it too took the form of hear-think-and-do.

Appealing but not quite convincing, especially not as a full-time pursuit. It engaged me in a concern for the whole, and for one's place in the whole, but it floated indecisively over the serious business of learning to determine exactly how things are on the ground. The reading and discussing of reflective works served as a dreamy reminder of a concern unsatisfiable except, perhaps, along the way and within work on the ground — and otherwise amounted to a self-indulgence severing one from the realities putatively forming

its subject-matter. Why concern oneself for the whole, even one's place in the whole, apart from learning to deal with the parts? Why undertake to know oneself if that meant withdrawing oneself, abandoning one's placement? And already at the time I noticed such self-indulgence in others — cocky fellows taking pride in their clever comments and rejoinders. Later I learned that, along side the usual scholarly literature of academia, with its aloof, even absent narrators, there always runs an exotic literature that calls attention to its narrators and thereby unwittingly allies itself with the scholarly version in the formation of a convention that essentially seals us off from what the narration claims it is addressing. Such derivative literatures always lie in the background as smelly reminders to return to the origin — and thereby also to the original literature for clues about where to go.

Not quite convincing, then, but still somehow appealing, as were the other courses in the humanities. The following summer, that of 1959, I enrolled in two courses. One of these, *The American Short Story*, was taught by Mr. Bier, an energetic and inspired man who strode back and forth before a very large class, addressing the questions undergirding the pieces composed by Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bret Harte, Herman Melville. The other course, *Philosophy in Literature*, was taught by Leslie Armour, my earlier logic teacher: the class consisted of only four or five students, and Armour held it in his home, a very old-fashioned house near the river that ran through Missoula; we students would arrive sometime in the afternoon to find our teacher in his tiny study, still sleepy-eyed from his nap, whereupon he would begin reflecting on Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, smoking cigarettes non-stop. While Bier addressed the questions of the soul, Armour addressed those of society. Both directed attention to the substance rather than to the literature itself. Implicit was the invitation to do the same. I accepted, but with trepidation, since I had no independent standards by which to measure my achievement, only those implicit in the teachers I listened to and the works I was

reading — so unlike the standards in my studies of mathematics and physics. I put my heart into the reading and writing required, and was happy to receive an honorable mark in both courses — more for the effort than for the achievement, I suspect.

In those days there was still room for hunger. Mature teachers had been born early in the century and raised in the aftermath of the first world war, along with the economic crises of the 1920s and the political crises of the 1930s. Students were still among the privileged by birth, by talent, or by hard work. By the 1960s students no longer formed a privileged class. Acutely aware of the economic shift from manual to calculative labor, politicians in much of the world have discerned the necessity of extending the years of school-room training to prepare the young to contribute to the workings of societies devoted to the production and distribution of services rather than of manufactured goods. Still, even without any well-defined room for it in training institutions, the hunger continues to gnaw. But its satisfaction now appears to lie outside the classroom: in social reform regarding the environment, nuclear energy, globalization, third-world poverty, AIDS, or hiring practices. Intellectual work then becomes a means of improving the material conditions of humanity — in keeping with the political ideals of the global economy itself.

The best literature teachers I had as an undergraduate would not have fared so well in the academic world that evolved in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. For one thing, when they spoke in class they never explained anything: texts invited us into other ways of thinking, ones both supra-practical and supra-personal (so long as “practical” means rearranging the public world, and “personal” means withdrawing into a private world) — ones revealing, as though for the first time, both the encompassing world and our individual place within it. The leading teachers of the humanities acknowledged the hunger for this disclosure. And since I evidenced this hunger teachers would approve of the substance of my writing, but note its discombobulated style, assigning it a “B.” I suspect that nowadays, except in

schools that have abandoned all academic standards, teachers would not have let me through so honorably.

But literature still struck me as peripheral to the serious business of mathematics and physics. As I had so far experienced it, it consisted of calling into question what it means to know the world properly and to take up a proper position within it. I myself was raised within one set of received opinions, ones more clearly defined because slightly more intellectually formulated than those in which my peers were raised (several of my friends remarked how different it must be to live in a house with a library). Being no friend of such left-overs, I rather enjoyed hearing my teachers calling them into question. Around that time, why I don’t recall, I even read Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Genealogy of Morals* with some relish but little understanding. In retrospect now, I suspect that in those days teachers in the humanities represented the crook rather than the sword but, committed to criticizing received religion as well, could only resort to a kind of negative theology, by which we might cleanse ourselves of reliance on conventional views. Perhaps the dissatisfaction lingering after such a meal drove the next generation to propound positive measures for improving the world — to become agents of the sword.

But now, one of the first days of January, 1960, I was sitting in a class of perhaps fifteen students for a term of ten weeks: Philosophy of Religion. Books to buy and read: David Hume’s *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, Paul Tillich’s *The Dynamics of Faith*, Søren Kierkegaard’s *The Sickness unto Death*, and Martin Buber’s *I and Thou*. The assignments: after reading each book, nearly twenty days for each, submit my reflections on it — no further specifications. During the last meeting (stretched to two hours), an examination, the questions on which were drawn from a long list provided well in advance, each a crossover from the texts to what they were addressing: philosophical questions, then.

At each meeting he entered the room with several books in hand, their bindings bulging with matchsticks marking passages that he intended to read aloud — inspirational passages that came to mind while preparing, yet often as not left unrecited. He sat down at the table before the class, his

back to an extensive blackboard, with light streaming in through the wall of south-facing windows on his right. In those days professors were required to keep careful records of attendance, and he complied, looking up to identify students and then down to insert the appropriate sign. He then began in a low, barely audible voice, which had the effect of silencing the last murmurs among the students. As he warmed to the subject his voice would rise in volume, and he would himself rise from his chair — a relatively tall man, a face deeply and distinctively carved, white shirt with sometimes frayed cuffs, a tweed coat that he would soon remove and drape over his chair — and pace just a bit, alternating the direction of his gaze between us students and the outside view, and sit down again, perhaps to open one of the books. Whether sitting or standing, he went through a cycle with his pipe — cleaning, packing, lighting, smoking, knocking out the ashes.

Henry Bugbee was in his mid-forties, at the height of his powers. He came to the Philosophy Department on the understanding that he would assume the post of Chairman only after serving an apprenticeship under Mr. Marvin. After serving in the U.S. Navy, he had finished his Ph.D. at Berkeley and taught at the University of Nevada in Reno, Stanford, Harvard (for six years), and Chatham College in Pittsburgh (already here as Chairman).

I myself was not even quite twenty-one years of age, and in the January and February and early March of that year I hardly comprehended the development over any one fifty-minute session. I then dug into those books in search of some foothold — rather than skimming them to establish correspondences with the overview provided by the teacher. The only comment I recall from Bugbee himself was that Hume's *Dialogues* referred indeed to *natural* religion, to the various efforts to prove, from considerations of circumstance, the existence of a Source. The other three works introduced modes of thought contrary to this first one: something about ultimate concern, the consideration of our condition as permeated by networks of concern, then the acknowledgment of despair as adumbrating the need and possibility of a relation to the ultimate as well as to the intimate (as distinct

from all inference), and finally the blatant but strange thesis that a countryside or seaside, a dog or a city, a neighbor or a lover could not only appear but also *be* much differently, appear and be worthless or worthy, profane or divine, according to how I myself *am* in my response to them.

In subsequent years I came to comprehend the developments in those texts, even to understand them. Now, recalling my first experiences of them, I necessarily speak through the filters of the intervening years. At the time, for instance, I was struck by his large vocabulary, so much richer than that of any other teacher I had heard speak. My own had always been poor, but apparently many other students were similarly struck: his wife once remarked, in sympathy with her husband's plight, that some students had asked him what "retrospection" meant. Until then I had assumed that a large vocabulary reflected only a literary affectation. I have since come to think otherwise. Just as there is a highly restricted vocabulary for discourse in nuclear physics, another for discourse in micro-biology, so there is one for discourse in explanatory education: here one talks about Shakespeare's sonnets or Hemingway's stories, Plato's dialogues or Kant's critiques, in a language decidedly different from that of the texts themselves, a meta-language intending to instill an overview without engaging listeners and readers in what the texts themselves bring into focus. Talking about what Buber, Kierkegaard, Tillich or Hume were addressing — rather than about their talk (let alone about them as personages) — Bugbee's discourse grew out of the matter itself, drew nourishment ever again from that ground, and found ever-new ways of returning to it. In contrast, merely academic talk, whether scientific or educational, confines itself to becoming clear about what has already been said, and becomes ever-more restricted in scope — precisely in its rightful insistence that new terms be defined in reference to the old.

Although the marks received on the first few reflections I submitted indicated some sort of accomplishment, I felt I was failing to understand not only the texts but also Bugbee's own talk. Courses had always left me cold in which texts and teachers simply paraded facts and opinions, but at least I

could comprehend the recitations. Here, though, I sensed that there was something to understand, as there was in my studies of mathematics and physics. And that I was not understanding it. So I typed out and submitted a single-page statement of my hypotheses. This page I no longer have, but I do recall that Bugbee returned it heavily annotated and asked me to come by to talk to him. This I did, and more than once during that term. I would propose some understanding along with a question, and he would answer in the same manner as he spoke in class, addressing the matter freshly. He would never simply agree that I had got it right, or even amend what I said to make it right. This puzzled me even more, and left me suspended. Yet our exchanges seemed to bear fruit anyway, perhaps because we were talking one-to-one — perhaps, too, because he seemed to acknowledge that I was in there struggling, within at least distant hearing of the subject matter itself. This acknowledgment I came to think of as essential to education as distinct from training and informing, namely a raising, a rising into unfamiliar levels of concern and therefore of possible insight.

But why the suspense? Was I really getting it all wrong? Or was Bugbee only insisting on his own formulations? He was certainly not inconsiderate; he always responded to my questions, never discounted them, seemed to respect and value my efforts, the fact that I stood up and desired to understand.

Just recently I chanced upon a story that raises the question once again, after nearly half a century. Goethe tells of meeting J. G. von Herder by chance at an inn where they were both staying. At the time Goethe was a young man, still in his formative years. He had already admired Herder's works and considered him a master and himself an apprentice, even though Herder was only five years older. He writes:

It was far from a comfortable experience. The elders with whom I had hitherto consorted took great care in educating me, even spoiled me by their indulgence. But from Herder one could never expect any approval, no matter how one behaved.

Since, on the one hand, I was very attracted to him, and honored him highly, and, on the other hand, he awoke in me a feeling of discomfort, I found myself caught in a constant conflict — with the result that there arose in me a discord, the first of this sort that I had ever experienced.

A template of my own condition — except that my master was more than twice my age. Like Goethe's, too, mine "drove me daily, indeed hourly, into new perspectives."

Taken up entirely into mathematical science, I was a man of the Enlightenment, devoted to the formulation of truths — of correct and coherent determinations — mine in essence (called conceptual), derived from and applicable to what I came up against (called empirical). For the student most obviously, and then more maturely for the researcher, the question here is always: Do I have the formulation right? Can I justify it if called upon to do so? And, especially for students but then also for those on the front lines of research, the question takes the form of whether others will approve of one's formulations. For Enlightenment thinkers, legitimate intellectual work consists in storing up linguistic treasures — where intruding circumstances serve only to test their durability. However partially, however tentatively, intellectual discourse appears most readily to us as representing what presents itself — painting a picture of it that can then also stand in for it.

At the time I myself took the Enlightenment ambition for granted — as anyone must who actively participates in it. Only much later did I learn how delicate its fabric is, and how fraught with difficulties — and how competent acknowledgment of the delicacy and difficulty leads to unending efforts to reweave it into forms ever more capable of enduring in the face of ever more intractable circumstance. And also how bold the ambition — how it transfers into human activities and processes what the Judeo-Christian tradition had left to God and specified us as custodians of original formulation rather than as re-inventors of our own. And finally how both these traditions emerge in conflict with, and therefore remain indebted to, the more original concern to distinguish between saying something because the matter

itself engenders it and approaching the matter according to how our established sayings foresee it.

Once, early on in my studies with him, Bugbee queried me about my work in mathematics and physics and said that he could detect a connection between these studies and my willingness to press ahead with him. He remarked that when teaching at Harvard he had a number of students in a class who seemed especially ready to try out the discourse he was offering; upon looking up their records he discovered that they were all mathematicians. Many years later I discovered the same interconnection: it was generally those in the humanities (English, history and philosophy itself) who had trouble breaking out of received ways of thinking, whereas those especially competent in the sciences (these being most representative of the Enlightenment) could entertain alternative hypotheses.

I have often puzzled over Plato's requirement that those entering his Academy should be "geometrical." Goethe endorses the principle as well, illustrating its effect in his own way: the moment the pupil realizes that the straight line between two points is already there before he draws it — thereby allowing him to draw it with pencil and ruler — he actualizes his own intellect, the first and ever recurrent step both in the contemplative and in the creative life.

We can say much the same for being "arithmetical": the moment one learns to count things (as distinct from reciting the number sequence), or measure magnitudes, or rank things in order of appearance (recalled or projected), one responds intellectually to circumstance — subsumes items under principles of identity or relation, without the items so identified or assessed affecting the principles. More recent developments in geometry and arithmetic — into the algebra of the Renaissance, then into analytic geometry and the infinitesimal and differential calculi of the Enlightenment, and finally into the mathematical logic and set theory of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century — assure that such intellection be a process of reasoning (rather than pure intuition), a performance not unlike that of music, where the score, like a formula, reminds one of what to do rather than informing one of how things stand.

Even if more clearly now, already at the time I understood how and that the readings assigned in my first course with Bugbee — those works by Hume, Tillich, Kierkegaard and Buber — constituted a single drama, even a tragedy in the classical sense. And I could even perform it, albeit only tentatively: the outside view of the opening scene, the turn back to origins, the development of the inside view (with all the tightly drawn knots of one's own making), and finally the declaration of release into full participation in what one otherwise only views.

But it was still one performance among others, no matter how much the development meant to me. It did pose the question what performance can lead to — other than ever greater achievements. The talk of ultimate concern, of multi-form despair, of finding oneself with and within rather than over and above circumstance, complemented the talk of mathematics and physics, accounted for the human drama otherwise concealed not only in the results (which always conceal their origins) but also by the performance itself. So far, then, the relation between the two was purely additive: there's knowledge of circumstance and there's self-awareness of one's own engagement in such knowledge — as one might study turtles, say, and then study Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Judgement* to become aware of the conditions making legitimate study of turtles possible. And for me the development may have stopped here, at this duality — if it had not been for a couple chance encounters.

On the broad stairway inside the Library, sometime during the spring term following the term of Bugbee's course in the Philosophy of Religion, I paused to speak with Bill Dougherty, a student who was writing his M.A. thesis under Bugbee. Bill asked me how I had fared in the course, and I replied that I had received an "A," an indication that I must have understood something. Bill shook his head, saying that Bugbee assigned marks according to the academic quality of the work done, not according to the depth of understanding of the student — a distinction that has ever since seemed to me both reasonable and puzzling. Reasonable, because how can a teacher presume to judge in public anything more than what's done in public? But also puzzling, because certainly

the purpose of studying something must be to understand it. In any case, the mark no longer left the satisfying taste in my mouth.

But there had been a previous occasion. Bill once came over to supper and, the meal over, engaged me in a story he seemed to know by heart, that of *The King and the Corpse*, as retold by Heinrich Zimmer in a book of that name. He did not simply tell me the story, he asked me to assume the role of the King in the adventure the story narrates, and to decide at each juncture what I myself would do. An unusual after-dinner form of conversation, especially as it left others as silent witnesses on the sidelines. Only one other time did I find myself called to account, step by step, by an interlocutor, and I have often wondered whether others I have known "in philosophy" would have understood their vocation differently had they experienced such interrogation first-hand rather than just adjudicating from the sidelines. The story begins:

It was remarkable, the way the king became involved in the adventure. For ten years, every day, there had been appearing in his audience chamber, where he sat in state hearing petitions and dispensing justice, a holy man in the robe of a beggar ascetic, who, without a word, would offer him a fruit. And the royal personage would accept the trifling present, passing it along without an afterthought to his treasurer standing behind the throne. Without making any request, the mendicant would then withdraw and vanish into the crowd of petitioners, having betrayed no sign either of disappointment or of impatience.

Then it happened one day, some ten years after the first appearance of the holy man, that a tame monkey, having escaped from the women's apartments in the inner palace, came bounding into the hall and leaped upon the arm of the throne. The mendicant had just presented his gift, and the king playfully handed it over to the monkey. When the animal bit into it, a valuable jewel dropped out and rolled across the floor.

The king's eyes grew wide. He turned with dignity to the treasurer at his shoulder. "What has become of all the others?" he asked. But the treasurer was unable to say. He had been tossing the unimpressive gifts through an upper, trellised window into the treasure house, not even bothering to unlock the door. And so he excused himself and hurried to the vault. Opening it, he made his way to the part beneath the little window. There, on the floor, lay a mass of rotten fruit in various stages of decay and, amidst this debris of many years, a heap of priceless gems.

The king was pleased, and he bestowed the entire heap upon the treasurer. Of a generous spirit, he was not avid for riches, yet his curiosity was aroused. Therefore when the ascetic next morning presented himself, tendering in silence his apparently modest offering, the king refused to accept it unless he would pause awhile and speak. The holy man stated that he wished an interview in private. The king granted the desire, and the mendicant at last presented his request.

Already in the beginning Bill would ask me what I myself would do at each juncture. Not how to interpret it symbolically, but just what choice I myself would make. I don't recall my answers, but I do recall something of the questions; and somehow Bill kept the story going whatever I said.

The story goes on. The king is asked to meet the mendicant at a "funeral ground, where the dead of the city were cremated and the criminals hanged." Here the mendicant set him a task, which was to go fetch "the corpse of a hanged man dangling from a tree." This the king does, cutting the rope with his sword — whereupon the corpse moans and, when the king gropes over it, lets out a shrill laugh. "What are you laughing at?" the king demanded — and the corpse flew back to the limb of the tree, whereupon the king again cuts the rope and this time hoists the corpse silently onto his shoulder and starts the trudge back to the mendicant.

“O King, let me shorten the way for you with a tale,” the corpse says. And the bulk of the story consists of the corpse reciting twenty-four tales, each containing a conundrum submitted to the judgement of the king. “If you know the answer and do not reply, your head will burst into a thousand pieces,” the king is told. For the first twenty-three the king gives a carefully considered and incisive judgement, whereupon the corpse flies back to the limb of the tree, forcing the king to start all over again. Bill took me through those recorded by Zimmer: Aged parents die of grief after their daughter had been disgraced in a complicated series of events — which of the three protagonists was guilty of their deaths? Three Brahmins revere a girl who had unexpectedly died — when she was miraculously resurrected, which of the three deserved her? A man raised in complicated circumstances goes to make an offering to his dead father and finds that three different men stretch out their hands — which of the three deserves the offering? A man and his bride, along with another man, depart for a voyage, during which both men are decapitated and the woman replaces the heads on the wrong bodies — to which of the men does the bride now belong?

Neither the king nor I could answer the twenty-fourth question: A tribal chief and his son end up marrying a princess and her mother (the chief the princess, the son the queen), and each woman bears a male child — precisely how were these two related to one another? Each was both uncle and nephew to the other, so there was no way of saying what each was and was not. Stumped, the king “walked along with a remarkably buoyant stride, bemusing the problem in silence.” And the corpse held its peace as well, and stayed in place.

The specter in the corpse now warns the king that the mendicant is an imposter and plans to sacrifice the king to the corpse. The king must decapitate him. Which he proceeds to do. “Then a mighty sound of jubilation arose out of the night from every side . . . ”

I cannot recall whether Bill got me to the very end of the story. But I see now, reviewing the printed version, that the king is granted one wish — “that the twenty-four riddles

told him by the specter, together with the story of the night itself, should be made known over the whole earth and remain eternally famous among men.” The “story of the night itself” is the twenty-fifth — and left for each to decide.

I sensed the import of the story already that evening, and understood that its actualization requires not only a steadfast resolve but also the paradoxical ability to be stumped. At one level, we have to decide matters, issue judgements — even if we are not socially recognized leaders. At another, we have to let ourselves into the matter itself, take it on its own terms, prior to judgement. Having to follow in the footsteps of the king, I partook of the presumption essential to kingship — that truth and its redemptive jubilation consist in getting it right, having the correct answer, being an efficacious judge, legislator, arbiter, the central cause and motor force. Only from explicit participation within the presumption does its implicit predominance become clear, along with its essential inadequacy to the matter itself.

These chance meetings with Bill Dougherty might well have tipped the scales. Bugbee himself took a leave of absence from teaching during the spring of 1960, and I continued my studies in mathematics and physics, enrolling in only one course in philosophy — on Aristotle, taught by Mr. Foss, who came to replace him for the term. With a pronounced German accent, he spoke to a relatively large seminar in a manner that struck me as philosophical rather than scholarly, explanatory, or pedagogical. And I again felt I understood very little. I chose Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* on which to write the required essay, and this work has ever since aroused my interest and admiration. During the following summer I enrolled in two Political Science courses, only one of which left any memory: Mr. Karpat’s on Totalitarian Government, where he spoke to the spirit of Russia and assigned novels (among, I suppose, other kinds of literature): I recall reading Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons* and finding it fascinating as a way of sensing the life out of which a form of government might evolve. These various courses kept my previous studies with Bugbee simmering, and during the hot summer days in the lush Montana countryside and the swimming excursions afforded by the Bitterroot

River, I was torn between the purely intellectual life of mathematical work and the apparent concretions looming in literary work.

My transcript from the University of Montana indicates that I had a reduced study load in the autumn: a seminar on Experience conducted by Bugbee, a course on the Modern Rationalists, and ones in Intermediate German and German Conversation. However, I remember also having been enrolled for a short while in a mathematics course, something about number theory. To my astonishment, it left me cold. The fault may have stemmed in part from the teacher, new to the Department at the time, who, though pleasant enough with us students, seemed to have his mind elsewhere, likely on his career, and could only throw the ideas at us in a fragmentary way, as though they were already done and we only had to go home and fill them out in their doneness — so unlike Mr. Hashisaki's manner, which allowed mathematical work to emerge on the spot and at the moment. But if there had not been any luring alternative I would likely have knuckled down and seen it through, then finding other masters who could engage the spirit as well as the calculative faculty. I vividly recall sitting at my study desk, alternating between assignments in that mathematics class and those in my philosophy classes (German was just a hobby for me, where, as I have already said, I read my first novel in the language, Remarque's *Im Westen Nichts Neues*). I dropped the one so early that it has left no trace other than this one vivid memory of frustration with the cold.

So I was now "in philosophy." Although my transcript shows that I did well in the course on Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, I recall nothing about it except my distress at the cheap anthologies, designed as they are to convey cultured opinion in all its variety. What I do remember, and in some detail, is the course on Experience: we read Van Gogh's letters (*Dear Theo*), Gabriel Marcel's 1933 essay *On the Ontological Mystery* (Bugbee's own translation of *Positions et approches du mystère ontologique*), and, as though to confirm my conversations some months before, Heinrich Zimmer's *The King and the Corpse*.

The letters Van Gogh wrote to his brother tell of the intended result of work (here, of painting), something about the work itself, and a lot about the materials and dispositions requisite for the work. Although I have always resisted the effort to understand art works by concentrating on the personal life of their creators, when I discovered the collection of Van Gogh's paintings in the Musée du Jeu de Paume (which in those days still housed the impressionists' paintings, now in the Musée d'Orsay), I found the paintings (his and also those by Monet, Renoir and the others) all the more powerfully revelatory of our possible and urgent being on earth. This revelation has stayed with me ever since — that, in Thoreau's words, we must learn to "live deep and suck out all the marrow of life."

Then Marcel's essay: those concrete approaches to the sense of being struck me at first as again showing the thinker at work rather than the polished scaffolding of thought often expected of a philosophical treatise. I recall his question — Where are we actually and already? — and also his answer that our initial condition is one where multiple functions define our being. This answer I later learned has its roots in Aristotle, whose neologism "in-act" (*en-ergeia*) can rightly be translated as "at-work" or "in-function" — where, however, the act, work or function at issue must be discovered as rooted in nature rather than in convention. Modern institutions — those of our democracy, science and education — have reversed the ancient location of function and in doing so have not only increased their own effectiveness and power, but also left the individual with a gnawing emptiness. Unlike later French thinkers, Marcel wastes no time railing against the power-grabbing of modern institutions, as though they and their servants were to blame. Rather, with the help of Bugbee, he introduced me to the thought that thinking consists in an individual gathering of oneself, a *recueillement*, that essentially acknowledges the exigency of being, *l'exigence de l'être*, rather than determines the properties of human being or what we human beings ultimately deal with. Precisely this passion for determination characterizes our modern institutions of science, spills over into political and social institutions and, skirting the acknowledgment, leaves

us holding a tightly knit but still gnawingly empty bag. I was struck too by Marcel's passing remark that the opposition of one vs. many, so essential not only to our tradition of metaphysics but also to routine intellectual work, can float unmoored over the more fundamental opposition of emptiness and plenitude — whereupon a whole new vocabulary becomes appropriate (mystery vs. problem, *disponibilité* vs. both activity and passivity, participation vs. observation, urgency vs. factuality, testimony vs. dialectic).

It was a seminar on "experience" and already at the time I had some intimation of its direction, although now in retrospect I can appreciate its unique purport much better. The art we learn to engage effectively with circumstance earns and retains its status as an art only so long as it grows, and ever re-grows, out of our engagement with circumstance just "prior" to our effective response to it. Without such "grounding" in the recollection and anticipation of encounters an art never takes root or, if it once did, withers, leaving only ossified simulacra — as is evident in the wrangling of scholars defending and attacking positions of their own.

But I'm not sure that Bugbee himself ever stated as much. In keeping with the art, his own talk engaged us directly in the address of the books we were reading, thereby providing yet another discourse, this one expressly live — and enlivening those otherwise mute ones in our solitary reading at home. And our writing, too.

Already at the time I noticed how difficult it is to write in response to such literature while doing justice to the art. It's so much easier to describe and criticize and illuminate the opinions of others, and then to propose and defend one's own — as hollow as such discourse may be, and decried by Plato at the beginning and by every thinker since. In the seminar itself I could detect three apparent failures: one elderly and portly gentleman who had his life behind him and would tell yarns that converted every thought into a long-familiar opinion; a spritely young know-it-all, majoring in English literature, who had learned to twist every thought into a literary cliché; and a young girl who furiously wrote down every word Bugbee uttered. There was one other fellow, a tall lanky man, married but still young, who

smoked a pipe and spoke quietly — and who spent his summers on fire-lookouts in remote regions of the Rocky Mountains. However, I never read anything any of them wrote.

I myself struggled. I would write up something to submit, but without much direction other than what I absorbed, piecemeal, from the meetings and the readings. Then, as we were assigned the remaining text — the collection of tales recounted and explicated by Heinrich Zimmer — I hit upon a technique that, I now see, belongs to the art essential to philosophy proper.

The first of the tales told of the miser Abu Kasem insisting, at first, on not replacing his tattered slippers and then unsuccessfully trying to dispose of them: thrown into the Tigris, they entangle the nets of fishermen, whom he must indemnify; thrown out through his window, they cause destruction for which he is held responsible; burying them in his back garden, he arouses the suspicion of a neighbor, who reports him to the tax authorities, who fine him hugely; left in a pond out in the country, they clog the town's water main and bring more penalties on his head; left on a balcony to dry before being burned to ashes, they fall on the head of a pregnant woman who then miscarries, the fine for which reduces Abu Kasem to beggary.

Vividly I remember sitting at my typewriter, up in a kind of loft with a sloping pine ceiling, wondering what to write in response to this story. Finally, instead of offering my thoughts about it (as Bugbee had instructed), I began simply to retell it — several times over, each time tweaking it a bit to bring it into closer parallel to the course of life itself, and of my own life. I then distinguished four levels of retelling: the first remaining very close to the original in its detail, including the names of the protagonists and the words marking the junctures of the development; the second dropping the proper names and generalizing the formulation of the junctures; one other I don't recall; and finally the one recounting a possibility that lurks for us all — that places us at each juncture, much as Bill had required of me that one evening of re-enacting that other story. For instance, Zimmer tells of Abu Kasem buying "a huge consignment of little glass

bottles for a song" as well as "a large supply of attar roses from a bankrupt perfume merchant" to place in the bottles; less imagistically: someone, it could be in Missoula, Montana, has enjoyed a streak of luck. The task, then: to keep the story moving rather than stopping to label the symbols or to extract any message.

By asking me to read my experiment to others in the seminar, Bugbee seemed to express some approval (I recall reading it aloud very awkwardly). His apparent approval seemed all the more significant when he admitted, in passing, that this one story of the collection had meant the least to him.

This approach to texts — interpreting them as a musician interprets a score, not as a cryptographer does a coded message — I have since come to understand as central to philosophical thinking. In the end, though, in the ultimate retelling, it depends on the willingness to be the one otherwise only talked about. This ultimate requirement Bill Dougherty taught me to fulfill when coursing through the tale of the king and the corpse. And soon I found myself fulfilling it in the reading of, and writing in response to, yet another story in that collection, one that ingrained itself much more deeply in my memory and life.

King Arthur, caught unarmed in the woods by an aggrieved knight who intended to kill him then and there, convinced his adversary to spare his life if he returned one year hence with the correct answer to the question "whate women desyred moste dere." The King and Sir Gawain travel throughout the kingdom, asking every man and woman they meet what they thought the proper answer might be. These answers, corresponding to what we might expect, they gather into two immense volumes. But as the day of the meeting with the aggrieved knight was approaching, the King goes out again "to seke a lyttele more" and runs into an ugly hag "riding a richly saddled palfrey." The hag informs him that none of the answers written in those volumes will satisfy the aggrieved knight. In exchange for yet another, she demands that, if this answer works, the "best knight of England," namely Sir Gawain, would take her as his wife. Asked by King Arthur, Sir Gawain agrees, for

friendship's sake. At the fateful meeting, then, the King tries each of the answers gathered in those two volumes and only when they all fail does he try the one given by the hag. It works, of course, and so Sir Gawain marries the ugly hag in a full ceremony, and a high mass, followed by a lavish banquet at which Dame Ragnell (so she was called) tears into various meats "with long tusks and fingernails until only the bones remained."

That night, in the bed, Sir Gawain could not at first bring himself to turn and face her unappetizing snout. After a little time, however, she said to him: "Ah, Sir Gawain, since I have wed you, show me your courtesy in bed. It may not be rightfully denied. If I were fair, you would not behave this way; you are taking no heed of wedlock. For Arthur's sake, do kiss me at least . . ."

"I will do more," he says, turning to face her. And there lying next to him he sees the most beautiful woman he has ever set eyes on. By marrying her, by consenting to kiss her, he had broken an evil spell. She explains, however, that she can be beautiful only part-time: fair by day and foul by night, or foul by day and fair by night. And that he may choose. Stumped, he cedes the choice to Dame Ragnell herself, whereupon the spell is completely broken, and she shall be his "fair and bright both night and day."

I have retold this story over and over again, at first in writing for my teacher and then more or less invisibly throughout my subsequent life. One of the few substantial utterances I recall from that seminar is: "As you take things, so you have them." Later, I learned that Aristotle quotes Anaxagoras to that effect, just as Plato re-scores Protagoras. Things can be either beautiful or ugly, often alternately but even simultaneously. But so, too, any significant proposition or formula worked out in the most advanced research depends for its truth on the ways we have developed for taking things under consideration; a commonplace I later discovered in the literature accounting philosophically for the stupendous achievements of modern science. Bugbee's maxim — as Anaxagoras' and Protagoras', at least as re-scored by Aristotle and Plato — formulates a mystery that must be experienced and appreciated before we can plumb it.

As a mere opinion, a conclusion drawn perhaps from the adolescent experience that things appear differently to different people, the maxim is just one more answer found in some volume — and will let one down the moment one has to deal decisively with any critical development.

At the time, though, what struck me most about the story, in my four-fold retelling of it, was the answer both proffered by Dame Ragnell and incarnated by Sir Gawain. The turning point that saved both King Arthur's life and Sir Gawain's wedlock was the ceding of sovereignty — the verbal and unwritten answer to the question what women most desire, but then also the willingness both to embrace the ugly condition and to resolve the frustrating alternation by letting it work itself out.

Retelling this one story in the final mode, so that it tells not of others but of myself, brought me once again to the question of human agency. On the one hand, we have to do something, take charge and make decisions; on the other hand, what's at issue within the domain of our leadership works itself out on its own, in its own right — so that, in addition to the hard work, the hardship of our own sovereignty, there's that of ceding it. Later I learned that and how the canonical works of our tradition derive their power from their ability — their readers' ability — to move steadfastly within the apparent contradiction.

Such successive retelling has the advantage of lending weight to the original, the literal telling: a man or a woman may in fact appear ugly and then reappear beautiful in the ways described in the tale. The figurative retelling then reinforces the point, as when we recall Aristotle saying of the genuine exercise of a craft that it both completes what the nature within the thing to which the craft is applied cannot itself bring about, and follows this nature, keeps in step with it. Or the whole Kantian project of allowing concepts to determine, in large measure freely, what we happen to experience. The procedure of retelling a story taught me both to observe very carefully the detail of any given account and to bring the whole back to what I could recognize as my own experience. Clarified as well as recalled, experience appears both new and old, ever again refreshed precisely while firmly

anchored in what has already happened, both sustaining and sustained, anticipatable and memorable.

All this in marked contrast to the kind of interpretation — whether of works of art, works of philosophy or working situations — that decodes the detail without reviving the story, as one might analyze the detail of a Bach fugue without playing it oneself.

My kind of interpretation gave me access to the full power of the genuinely philosophical works that came my way. However, it set me at odds with the procedures other teachers enacted and expected me to enact — in courses on modern philosophy, modern ethics, and existentialism, all of which turned me off. Much later, as a teacher requiring my own students to embed the formal structures of works by Aristotle and Kant, Thoreau and Emerson, Dewey and Heidegger, in stories of their own recalling such experiences as those structures intended to highlight or enhance, I found students going through similar agonies at the crossroads of philosophical and other kinds of interpretation (scholarly, expository, dialectical, critical . . . ). I recall my satisfaction when one told me he now knew the difference and could adapt himself to various procedures without betraying the philosophical one — indicating a facility and flexibility I wish I had had at his age, for I might then have been able to explore silently a wider variety of courses and texts.

In retrospect now, I appreciate the fuller significance of learning to retell stories. Following Bugbee's lead, I was reading the originals structurally, like mathematical or logical formulas, but already instantiated at each juncture with names of people and of their peculiar decisions, developments and metamorphoses. In retelling a story I was then activating the interplay between form and instance, bringing each into relief. The more the form of a story becomes pronounced, the more it allows for further instances, including the reader. Kierkegaard poignantly remarks in his *Concept of Dread* that it's one thing to understand what is said (whether by another or by oneself) and quite another to understand oneself in what's said.

Here I detect another feature of mathematico-logical work that facilitates philosophical work. Most concretely, numbers are forms (variables) awaiting instances within propositions: “12 divided by 3” awaits what mathematicians call an argument, such as “there are 12 people and we want to form 3 platoons of the same size, so . . . ”; “10 times 6” awaits something like “the lawn is 6 feet wide and 10 feet deep, so how much fertilizer should we spread evenly over it?” Also, the sequence “1, 2, 3, . . . ” not only supplies names for quantities and magnitudes, but also serves to order events: “plough first, seed second, irrigate third . . . ” With the advent of algebra, the variables take numbers as instances, as in  $a(b + c) = ab + ac$ . And with space and time formalized on a grid with points as instances, we witness the evolution of formulas later called functions, and with these the new calculus and physics of space and time, with infinities of points as instances on a continuum. And finally we witness the development of propositional calculi, these culminating in the formulations of set theory.

The creative paradox of both mathematical and literary formulation is the same, at least when each is at its best. The form only *is* when instantiated, yet the instance only *is* when taken up in a formulation. We may pause to consider the formulations by themselves, asking about the interconnectedness of their parts, and we may pause to specify their domain of instances; but the actual work proceeds in often silent interplay of the two. Asking whether the formulations correctly describe the way things are, or demanding a clarification of the instances in advance of formulating them, we opt out of the interplay.

I gradually discovered that what holds of interpreting a myth holds also of interpreting Plato’s *Sophist*, Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Spinoza’s *Ethics* and the rest. A young man from the State of Maine once showed me an article in a Maine newspaper reporting an interview with a theater director from the same State. The interviewer asked what production the director was planning next, and the director replied that he was going to stage Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*. At the time (the early 1970s) the young man understood the joke to reveal both the audacity and the simplicity of the natives of

Maine. But I detect some truth in the director’s reply. Since then, I myself have staged Kant’s work twice in writing and many times in teaching.

Learning to interpret participatively, one not only develops an individual voice but also discovers the stories already preforming perceptions — the ways we already take things, and therefore have them: the world in which we already dwell. And then we may recurrently rediscover things themselves as both new and old.

So much was I impressed by the power and revelation possible in the retelling of stories, starting with myths and culminating in philosophical works with only a sprinkling of instantiations, that for years, both as a student and later as a teacher myself, I could not understand why so many others could not abide it. Of course, this misunderstanding got me into all kinds of trouble.

But I’ve let my own story here get way ahead of itself. Back then to those earlier months . . .

One of Bugbee’s most effective habits of talking in and out of class was to bring in other witnesses to the subject under consideration. Not as authorities to lean on, but as voices worth hearing in the context. Hardly ever even as a strong recommendation — although I do remember him saying that it would help if I read through the entire Bible, and that I should take Plato’s *Republic* very seriously (“the first great work in phenomenology,” he said — a truth that fully dawned on me only decades later, after having taught the work over and over again).

He must have called in the voice of Heidegger’s *Introduction to Metaphysics* already during the seminar on experience. For at the end of the term, and having returned to Brentwood for the Christmas holidays, I slowly read it through. I have vivid memories of walking across Sunset Boulevard and down a narrow winding residential street with no sidewalks but high hedges crowding over the curbs — down to and across Sepulveda Boulevard and through the older residential areas of Westwood, now with sidewalks separated from the streets by strips of lawn, to the sprawling campus and broad study tables of the library at U.C.L.A.,

where I would each day ponder my way through a few pages of this resounding but to me hardly intelligible book. Apart from what I was reading, the entire experience has stayed with me in two other ways.

For one, nobody I ever knew would walk through Brentwood rather than drive or wait for a ride. While walking one responds essentially and continuously to the circumstances already there, in contrast to the narrow and fluctuating conditions of the road. Fulsome reading and writing also belong to this walking way of life, even if, from one's study, one is recollecting rather than seeing, hearing, smelling, touching directly. Otherwise, walking may figure only incidentally in one's hobbies, such as fishing along a brook, as I often saw my father doing (who himself used to say he wouldn't walk a block to buy cigarettes if he could drive instead). It reflects on Bugbee's way of talking that his students generally took to walking as an activity in itself. I have read that David Hilbert and other mathematicians in the 1920s in Germany would regularly go for day-long walks together, and Werner Heisenberg reports the same with his fellow physicists. I do believe that this disposition comes through in their writings, which are somehow more meaty, more earthy than those of the mathematicians and physicists who followed in their calculations rather than in their footsteps.

For another, I was, for the first time in my life, reading a truly philosophical work entirely on my own rather than under the supervision of a teacher. And doing so in a public space, one quite foreign to the official space of my schoolwork in Missoula. Although the campus of U.C.L.A. exudes an atmosphere in keeping with the spirit of Southern California — perhaps most typified by sunbathing in alternation with engineering — the Library countered this spirit with its insistence on silence, its array of tables, its immensely high ceilings, its book-lined walls, its Gothic-style windows. Here, I would read about a question embedded within our condition and signaling our own embedment within it — the basic philosophical question, in Leibniz' formulation I later learned, but now as posed to us rather than by us:

The question looms in moments of great despair, when things tend to lose all their weight and all meaning becomes obscured. Perhaps it will strike one like a muffled bell that rings into our life and gradually dies away. It is present in moments of great rejoicing, when all things around us are transfigured and seem to be there for the first time, as if it might be easier to think they are not than to understand that they are and are as they are. The question is upon us in boredom, when we are equally removed from despair and joy, and everything around us seems so hopelessly commonplace that we no longer care whether anything is or not . . .

On my own, I said. But, far from cut off, I was reading my entire circumstance coevally with those pages, day by day. Much reading seems to be about something, something beside where and how we are at the moment. Now, all alone with the book, I found myself addressed by what it itself was addressing, namely everything, or our various ways of being with everything, or its possibility of being or not being for me and for others. The possibility of its not being: as so eerily evident in that neighborhood devoid of sidewalks.

Without my reading earlier in the year, within hearing of Bugbee's voice, I would not have been properly attuned to Heidegger's way of rendering the questions of our entire tradition — these questions as rooted in circumstances themselves.

In due time I returned to Missoula for the beginning of the winter term. My transcript records that, besides a course in Advanced German, I completed three courses in philosophy. Of two I have no significant memories: one on the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century empiricists and one on 20<sup>th</sup>-Century existentialists. The teachers talked about Locke and Hume, Sartre and Heidegger, in the conventional manner, reviewing the opinions of the authors and testing them against some vague standard already assumed rather than first revealed in the works. These courses held no interest for me, and since such pedagogy still had the power to drown out the voices

whispering from the texts themselves, I could only fake my way through.

The third course was a seminar on Oriental Thought, which Bugbee introduced by telling us that he had chosen “thought” for the title in order to leave open the question whether the texts we were reading—the Hindu *Bhagavad-Gita*, the Chinese *Tao Te Ching*, and a collection of Suzuki’s essays on Japanese Zen Buddhism — strictly qualified as philosophy in our western sense. I recall him admitting that he himself was not especially qualified to be teaching the literature, so that we were all going to have to explore it as novices. His admission implied that we can read any text philosophically, that philosophy is an art rather than a subject. A corollary: even the most rigorously philosophical work can be read unphilosophically, something I’ve experienced over and over again ever since.

In retrospect, I can see both why one might hesitate to call those Hindu, Chinese and Japanese texts “philosophy,” and also how the study of them today can help us pick up the torch. Since Socrates and on into the Enlightenment, the contemplative life in the West has insisted not only upon its individuality (that each must stand apart to figure things out independently), but also that our discourse be designed to bring others into this individuality rather than simply drawing them into its truth. In contrast to the literature of the Orient, so far as I am familiar with it, our own tradition makes full participation in circumstance contingent upon the development of an agency both systematically critical and painfully individual. In often attenuated forms, this strictly philosophical tradition infiltrates much of our western education and can surface especially in the fields of physics and mathematics — at least as I experienced them in the 1950s (whereas chemistry, which also attracted me, seemed a bit sullied by the requirement that I simply memorize the results of previous research). Years later, my respect for Nietzsche rose considerably when I came upon those pages in *Human, All Too Human* where he insists on the study of some modern science as a prerequisite for freeing oneself from fascination or obsession with mere results.

What Krishna tells Arjuna, what Lao-Tzu says about leadership, and what those Zen stories suggest, introduced me to the thought that agency by itself — the critical and individual stance — generates around itself a super-structure that, although dedicated to clarity, can distract from its own source, which requires openness rather than agency, participation rather than individuality, if it is to place us at its threshold. On this account, our own tradition blocks the way back to the source — even denies any ground distinct from agency itself. I remember Bugbee recalling a moment in Herrigel’s *Zen and the Art of Archery* where the master, puzzled by his pupil’s inability to handle bow and arrow in the Zen manner, read up on Western philosophy and discerned the reason: “You have a much too willful will,” he said.

Bugbee might start a seminar by reading a short passage from one of the assigned texts, and then undergird the reading with its own question, bringing it out within his own account of some experience — this in an interplay between a recalled moment (say, on board the transport ship he commanded in the Pacific War) and experience somehow recognizably our own. He was, I believe, an unsurpassed master of this interplay, at least in spontaneous oral form, so that his talk never appeared as merely autobiographical, an experience personal only to him, nor as an extracted generalization to be applied to others. The interplay then took on meaning only as we listeners found ourselves in it, and resumed it in our own work. Whereas thinkers in our tradition, increasingly from Plato through Locke and Kant, tend to assume we already know what we mean by “experience” (and may therefore turn to the question of its source or structure), Bugbee’s talk first revealed it. Without such revelation, “experience” tends to denote the early stage of human being, prior to the development of competence and insight — a blend of sensory exposure and conceptual reaction.

Oriental literatures themselves seem ideal for goading us into thinking about the source of our own tradition. If only we could master the languages in which they are written (which I have not). And if we could learn to read them

philosophically (something of a paradox) and not merely as an excursion into the exotic.

Having himself mastered the art of thinking philosophically, Henry Bugbee stood as a model for learning to read philosophically — a prerequisite not only for reading philosophical books in the spirit appropriate to them but then also other works in a similar spirit — novels and poems, even films and cathedrals, as well as the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Tao Te Ching*. He was a master thinker. Most of my other teachers stood for opinions, defended positions, or simply assigned readings about which we would write a “paper.” Over the years I came to believe that many of my colleagues could not engage in the wide spectrum of literature that engaged me because they had never studied with a master. I understand that the same holds for musicians: whom they study with sets the standard against which they will henceforth measure themselves, and so also the limit to which they can rise.

One of the many paradoxes of studying with Bugbee lay in the peculiar — very powerful but equally indirect — relation to the western canon his voice represented. On the one hand, both the readings chosen for a course and the talk engendered during our meetings raised questions that seemed idiosyncratic, not at all in service to the familiar headings of ethics, ontology, epistemology, philosophy of society, of religion, of art (let alone today’s fashionable headings aspiring to put philosophy in service to reigning institutions — ecology, medicine, sexual relations). On the other hand, the reading and talking opened us out precisely to the great literature of our tradition from Plato and Augustine right through Descartes and Kant and all the way to Nietzsche and beyond. In retrospect, I can see why and how: whatever the literature we were reading and discussing, Bugbee’s manner quietly redirected us toward its source, or a source, so that the canon could now resound in response to what we ourselves could address, and thereby shed that initial and deadly sheen of opinionation requiring us to respond to it rather than to its source. And once we ourselves are responding to the source, we gladly listen to others doing the same. Whereas the battles of opinionation

require one to withdraw into one’s own position, ever more weakened, or simply hardened, from exposure.

Bugbee’s habit of incidental citation profoundly affected my own disposition to read: I would eagerly seek out the books. Herrigel’s *Zen and the Art of Archery*, Thoreau’s *Walden*, Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet*, Tillich’s *The Courage to Be*. I also sat in on a seminar he held on Augustine’s *Confessions*, a work I had tried to read for Mr. Marvin’s course in the history of Medieval Philosophy. On that earlier occasion Augustine’s form of address — directed to God, and in strongly Biblical language — had put me off, but now the daily readings, laced with regular meetings during the week, brought this work home to me. I recall him telling me that the seminar comprised the remnants, the cream of the crop, from the first term of a two-term sequence in ethics. Contrary to my naive assumption at the time, and for many years afterwards, I had to learn that most students strongly desire education in opinionation (culture) and find the real thing very frustrating and outstripping their patience.

Then came spring term, and some intertwined developments that realigned my studies with Bugbee. To graduate with honors in philosophy I had to take both a written and then an oral examination. The questions I no longer recall, but I do remember proceeding in a rather cavalier manner when writing, and then speaking rather recalcitrantly when meeting with the five members of the Department. They failed me (although not anonymously, Bugbee assured me outside the building as he mounted his bicycle in the cold late afternoon). Thoroughly dashed, then, was any hope that the Department as a whole would appreciate my underlying commitment sufficiently to forgive my bad manners. I then quickly took the decision that appeared equally bad in form but proved to be the most appropriate: retaining only a special seminar on Gabriel Marcel’s *The Mystery of Being*, along with a German class (review and composition), I dropped both a five-meetings-per-week course on Kant and a three-meetings-per-week course in Aesthetics (this being taught by Bugbee himself), in order to concentrate nearly all my energies on a single writing project.

To others, including Bill Dougherty and Henry Bugbee, my decision indicated that I was merely sulking. To me, though, the experience was the first in a series that drove home the fact that my interest in philosophy was contingent upon my ability (and the opportunity) to engage in first-hand thinking, the exercise of the art — rather than in the consideration of what others, past or present, have done in its name. Eventually I discovered that such is precisely what full-fledged literature does and therefore encouraged its readers to do — and that I needed to study it carefully in order to develop the art. Many years would pass before I developed some tolerance for hearing and reading others simply keeping track of what genuine thinkers were saying (often disguising this hack work with some sort of critical apparatus). Such tolerance as I did develop became possible only as I learned to translate simultaneously back to the original — a mental exercise requiring that I already partook of it.

Reading the two volumes of Marcel's *The Mystery of Being* for that one seminar, I began spending much of each morning writing about a learning experience that had engaged me about six years before, when I was sixteen-years old, letting everything I read bring into sharper focus what otherwise only haunted me in fuzzy outline. In brief: months before I could obtain a full driver's license, my father took me to a used-car lot where I picked out a 1937 Ford coupe, for which he paid \$65. After he arranged for the installation of hydraulic brakes, I was free to work on the car — replace the engine with one I rebuilt myself, rebuild the transmission, have the interior reupholstered, and more. Eventually I rolled the car and then replaced the body with one purchased at a junk yard. Also at a junk yard, I found a couple two-gear rear axles (from the swankier Lincolns of the time) that I combined into one and installed. Before long there remained of the original only the basic frame. And once I could legally drive it on public roads, I regularly took trips around California, exploring its deserts and its parks, sleeping in the back, which I had converted into a bed.

At the time I was reading Robert Henri's *The Art Spirit* — one of the works assigned in Bugbee's course in Aesthetics —

presenting a collection of notes and lectures again revealing the workshop of art, i.e. on-site learning of a matter in contrast to classroom learning of results secured by others. Without saying as much, Bugbee had a way of drawing the discourse of any genuinely contemplative text back to this workshop, and Marcel's style of "concomitant approaches" lent itself easily to such a reading. But how else can one actualize such discourse if not by entering into some workshop of one's own? Or re-entering it, reconsidering one's earlier learning, presenting it again in its power? How else can the discourses of others issue from the matter itself and not merely resound and mingle as echoes of an unknown source?

At one seminar meeting, Bugbee arrived with a thick manuscript in hand, a scholarly work on Gabriel Marcel. This was late in the spring, when teachers generally began to feel and show exhaustion. He had not prepared for the seminar, and proposed instead to read from the manuscript that a publisher had sent him for evaluation. What a shock to hear it read aloud! The vocabulary was familiar, and even the "theses," but the stance sounded utterly foreign to the original as Bugbee's voice had been resuscitating it. I recall one comment of his own: he found that scholarly accounts presented thoughts in predigested form. Whereas, I suppose, our own reading and talking required us to bite into, chew on, and digest the original — for nourishment rather than mere filling. Ever since, I have struggled with this difference, both as a reader and as a writer. Also with the fact that it is not especially well recognized, as when scholars align original thinkers along with their fellow scholars, as though their talk was of the same kind and then usually insist that newcomers move within this kind as well. Such scholars, I assume, have never worked with a master.

Being that spring a part-time student, I could try my clumsy hand at the task of drawing whatever I was reading back to its source — which required that I be a full-time writer as well. Each morning I would take an early uphill walk — the converted garage in which I was living nearly abutted a foothill of the mountain range looming to the north — and return to my own literary tasks of the day before.

This experience contrasted with the usual procedure of full-time students, who had to scurry from one classroom to the next, week after week — and then write a “paper” at the end of the term, squeezing in whatever reading was necessary for this final chore. The result — a novella-length essay — I submitted to my teacher, and he returned it unannotated, with the remark, “Thank you for showing me this.” His reticence was both unsettling and reassuring.

For some, the contemplative life consists in pondering generalizations about the universe as a whole, purposes, right action, knowledge, or the purport of the tradition of contemplation itself. Bugbee — his very example, his talk — pulled me into the original sense of contemplation: one starts with what one knows — has known, experienced, loved — and reconsiders it, drawing it into an holistic focus essentially giving way to what comes next. My definitive move into philosophy, my decision to pursue my studies at the graduate level, stemmed from this dawn of knowing as loving, both these pertaining to what one actually deals with — in contrast to hearing about something (essentially a generalization) and straightening this out for oneself (comprehending a complex of interrelated properties). Subsequently, when employed as a teacher and cooperating with colleagues, I was repeatedly startled and dismayed that the academic enterprise attracted many intent upon knowledge uprooted from instances and therefore essentially loveless. Such is indeed the knowledge at issue in many academic fields, and students do well to master some corner of one or another for the sake of obtaining gainful employment. I was much distressed to hear colleagues who professed a commitment to the metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle speak as though the knowledge at issue here was dissociable from love. “Substance,” I remember once blurting out, “makes no sense except as loved.” But then love takes root in and grows out of contact with instances — this car here, the transmission of this car, the gears of this transmission. One might in some sense love nature as a whole, but there is no healthy love of the laws of nature, i.e. of one’s own formulations about things (perhaps this is the love of careerist scholars).

That knowing and loving necessarily intertwine becomes evident as we learn to contemplate instances. In the final decades of my teaching career, I would ask students to employ the vocabulary and arguments of canonical works to learning experiences of their own. When studying Aristotle’s *Organon* they would then have to reconsider some development to which they could themselves testify, now employing the sequence sensation-experience-craft-knowledge, the distinctions hyletic-kinetic-telic-eidetic, individual-particular-universal, opinion-knowledge — all the while retelling their own story. Essentially a love-story, and for many students the first time where “knowledge” designated a full-bodied relationship to what is known rather than an extraction from what they had been told or some interrelation of ideas they had figured out for themselves. Some thereby learned to read great works while keeping in touch with the ground out of which these works spoke. Just as I myself had learned to read them, starting with the stories in *The King and the Corpse* — and to write in a similar vein.

I don’t recall Bugbee ever making a thesis out of the relation between knowing and loving (as for instance Dante does in his *Commedia*). The relation simply emerged in his talk. It also comes through in his *Inward Morning* and various essays, including “Thoughts on Creation” and “On Starting with Love” — works that I read only years later, when I no longer had the opportunity to hear him speak. That others now must begin with the result reminds me of the difficult task we all have when reading canonical works — the recovery, in our own voices, of the voice leading to the results.

About works in which he could not discern the relation he would only say something like, “I’ve worked through Hegel but could not find myself in it” or “Nietzsche seems to have been unable to distinguish between service and servitude.” Just as he never argued for the accounts of others, he never argued against them. In either mode, we recoil into a fortress of opinion, a form of avoidance if not of denial, and thereby refuse to bear witness, the core act of the art of contemplation.

In the fall of 1961 I entered graduate school at the Pennsylvania State University. Bugbee had strongly advised I pursue my studies there, saying that I would find one of the few living philosophers he could vouch for (John M. Anderson). He seldom offered such definitive advice. And it was right, as far as I could ever tell. And, as it turned out, he himself accepted a position there, starting also in the fall.

Graduate study at Penn State required that I review, largely on my own, the entire gamut of canonical thinkers — Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Augustine, Boethius, Thomas Aquinas, and then the whole modern tradition from Descartes through Kant — after which we students could select our favorites. There were two examinations, one to qualify for the doctoral program and another to certify completion of the program. Departmental policy required that we sharpen our teeth solely on the greatest. One teacher, Hans Freund, informed me of this policy explicitly: one reads always to understand the one who wrote, never directly to understand a third party. Recourse to “secondary sources” was implicitly but emphatically discouraged.

All the while, though, I was struggling with something else. My one interest in philosophy, the single driving force of my reading and writing, consisted in what I had learned from Bugbee — a paradoxical inwardness, or a coming back to oneself, that opens one out holistically onto and into one’s natural, or unpremeditated, circumstance. Such an interest could find nourishment in the canonical works of our tradition — not always easily, but nonetheless with meticulous reading. And in Oriental literature as well, so far as I could tell. But how could I myself grow within this arduous dialogue — independently, with a voice of my own? Much later, I discovered the extent of this challenge in any field requiring that one settle back into origins in order to grow out again into the open. Although it may be necessary to have studied with a master (whether in music or painting, literature or now philosophy), the very proximity of such originality in another very often paralyzes the apprentice — as it very nearly did me. Perhaps most commonly, as I witnessed in students of Heidegger and Wittgenstein, indeed

also of Bugbee, one levels off into some secondary version of the endeavor. A master seems to represent a completion, but in truth serves only as a medium. I myself appreciated my great fortune in having been drawn into this medium but began to agonize over what I might do on my own — get out of it, so to speak, or through it.

One way of breaking out of the one is to discover another, one leading perhaps to something of the same thing but contrasting with the first in every apparent way. In this, too, I was fortunate and grateful. I remember saying that where there are two there may also be three.

During my first year of graduate work I was persistently plagued by doubts whether I was cut out for it. I contemplated dropping out and joining the air force; I even went so far as to sign up for a physical examination and interview, the first of which I clearly failed (my right eye being severely damaged from a young age), and the second of which I believe I failed as well (“Fighting among personnel is strictly forbidden: What would you do if you came around the back of a building and discovered two fellows squaring off?” to which I answered, “Well, I guess I would judge how severely they were . . .”).

At Penn State I never enrolled in or even attended any of Bugbee’s courses. However, one evening he and a young fellow of the Department spoke at a meeting of the undergraduate Philosophy Club, and here I heard him speak on some question of ethics. I don’t remember the question. What I do remember is, first, the marked contrast between the two speakers sitting at a table at the front of a classroom and, secondly, that I could, for the first time, follow the development in Bugbee’s talk — with the kind of satisfaction that comes from finally understanding the development in a complicated orchestral piece. I also recall telling him on one of the following days that I much appreciated his presentation, whereupon he remarked, as he did so often to others as well, that what he said was now gone — he himself could not resume the conversation.

During the fall term I wrote a long draft I called “Situational Ethics,” where I located the questions of ethics as

emerging of themselves within concrete dealings (such as rebuilding cars) and serving the concretion — rather than engendered after the fact, in a mode of aloofness, and begging for subsequent application (as would be appropriate in law-making). I showed it to Bugbee, thinking it might be reworkable into an M.A. thesis. He agreed, and even asked another student to read it. However, nothing came of it, since, after I wrote the qualifying examinations in the spring, the Department voted (not unanimously, I learned) to allow me to proceed directly into the Ph.D. program, with the M.A. being awarded along the way. A good thing for me, since the task of writing a thesis would have bogged me down and likely put an end to my academic prospects.

Also that fall, I enrolled in a seminar on Heidegger's *Being and Time*. The work had not yet been translated into English, and with much fear and trembling I set myself to reading it in the original German — five or six pages each day, thirty-five or forty each week, which to my surprise sufficed to get me through the work by Christmas. This was my first experience of an extended account of being in a situation prior to the questions thinkers pose about the ultimacies transcending it. Kant's *Critiques* do this as well, but I studied these only afterwards, as I did John Dewey's *Art as Experience*, which addresses the same question, although not as thoroughly. The task proved formidable, and I suspect that most people "in philosophy" never undertake it, turning directly to questions of transcendent foundation or consummation — or, especially nowadays, to questions of utility. Heidegger's *Being and Time* is the only work I know of that asks how our everyday involvements might give rise to such overall questions — and thereby helps protect these from losing contact with our actual condition. But then the task is to bring such involvements into view, and not to settle questions but to raise them. As I was to learn more clearly with the passage of the years, this task requires that one learn and develop an art. Hitherto I had, under Bugbee's guidance, learned to think through single recalled situations — my own rebuilding of cars, or Sir Gawain's dealings with Dame Ragnell, or Saint-Exupéry's flying over deserts and

mountains, or Herrigel's practicing archery with a Zen master in Japan. But being situated *per se*?

After the first meeting, the teacher suffered a burst appendix, and Hans Freund took over the seminar as an extra course. We met once each week for a long evening, with tea and cake served by his equally German wife half-way through. He had studied with Heidegger in the late 1930s (Heidegger later confirmed this, showing me Freund's signature in his class book), and had an original unmarked copy of *Sein und Zeit*, from which he would summarize passages, glancing at his notes. He made no effort at all to think what the book was saying — rethinkingly play it, as a good violinist will do a score, or direct it, as a good conductor must do his ensemble of players. He reviewed the topics and recited the assertions, not even the questions. This non-engagement spurred me on to work through the text on my own. Also, being the only student who was reading the original — there was a paraphrase (by John Wilde) the others passed around among themselves — I would often meet with Freund during his office hours and go over text readings, collating passages that gave me pause beyond those recited during the evening sessions. I recall a heated debate with him about the notion of *entfernen*, which Freund understood simply in its native sense of "removing" (as a grease-spot from a necktie) or, in its easy reflexive sense of "distancing oneself" — whereas I detected in the text a more subtle sense of nearly the opposite: our being where we are consists in constantly "removing the distance between . . ." and "coming in close to . . ." After a while Freund conceded that there was something to what I was saying. In general, all my exchanges with him took the form, new to me, of sustained dialogue with an elder where I would stand on my own and not just seek clarification.

There was a third project during that first term of graduate studies: at a loss for a course, I contracted an "independent study" for which I wrote an essay on Parmenides where I developed the themes I had learned from Bugbee. I took the otherwise abstract-sounding fragments about being — the sameness of being and thinking, the same being everywhere — and gave them a situational meaning.

At the time I feared that the Department reader (Stanley Rosen) would take exception to the tweak, and was startled when it turned out otherwise. Much later, I realized that the question of the relation between thinking and being lies at the basis of all great work of our tradition, if only in counterpoint.

Winter term of 1962 brought a telling clash: Richard Gotshalk talking about Aristotle and Stanley Rosen talking about Plato's *Philebus*. The two were even friends at the time. And both took philosophy very seriously as a way of life rather than a choice of career. Yet what a difference!

Once in a seminar Rosen confessed that in his youth he had aspired to become a poet, and that Leo Strauss had convinced him of Plato's reservations about that choice. He also insisted that the most prominent thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, among whom he counted Wittgenstein and Heidegger, had succumbed to the lure. He then held Plato to be the supreme thinker, with two corollaries: first, that, to avoid the fate of Socrates (the rage of the masses), Plato had carefully disguised his doctrine; and second, that our contemporary problems stem from a failure to recognize the need for this doctrine. As far as I could ever tell, the doctrine in question stated the familiar Platonic principle that reason rather than appetite should rule. But what reason revealed, other than its own right to rule, Rosen never brought into view. In this one course on Plato, plus another on Descartes, he mostly ranted against human and especially academic frailty. There was no suggestion of a richness lying dormant in our circumstances and possibly awakened if only we ourselves awoke to it — or that the texts under study might serve as wake-up calls (summoners, as we read in Plato's *Republic*).

And that's what Gotshalk did in his course on Aristotle. He would come into the room, write on the board the passages from various treatises we were to read in the interim, and then address some question, generally returning to a concrete experience to which he could directly testify. All in a manner reminiscent of Bugbee. In fact, he later told me that he had met Bugbee just as he was about to embark on studies to become a concert pianist, and then got converted into philosophical studies, first at Harvard and

then at Northwestern. Without Gotshalk's example in class, and his encouragement out of class, I might not have survived graduate studies that first year. In effect, he kept the spirit alive — the one I had inherited from Bugbee.

The spring term brought yet another contrast: while Gotshalk taught a seminar on Kant's three *Critiques*, John Mourant, the Department's aging Medievalist, taught one on Thomas Aquinas' *On Being and Essence* and related works. In this case of contrast, there were no significant similarities.

Mourant assumed that we all understood the words (in which case I'm tempted by Hobbes' designation of them as "counters"). The only task was to sort them out into a proper understanding of the text. Although there were some members of the class who could play this game, I could not. I settled instead into a careful reading of large chunks of Thomas' *Summas*, discovering how these systematic treatises helped me understand Aristotle's more diffuse metaphysical works. A strange and incisive experience in itself: wrestling with one canonical thinker to help wrestle with another, until they both blessed me.

Gotshalk announced during the first meeting that he would be concentrating his attention on the *Critique of Judgement*. However, since I had never studied the first *Critique*, I took on the task of reading this one through as well, along with the second and the third. The seminar hours conveyed the sense that we had to wrestle with these texts to get them to speak fully to us. Gotshalk himself embodied the match, leaving me and the hand-full of others to do the same. As though to provide a Greek chorus of one voice, there was an exchange student from England in the seminar, and he would occasionally interject the conventional scholarly view on some theme in Kant's works, vainly playing that other game, where commentators wrestle with one another rather than with the works themselves. Indeed, one could always object — as critics have to Heidegger — "That's not Kant," to which I would now reply: "Of course not, it's Gotshalk." However, it is still legitimate to ask whether Gotshalk is indeed wrestling with Kant, but this question can only be decided within one's own match with him. In the case of great works, we must ask, paradoxically, "What's the

question?" And it's only while risking a response to the works themselves that the question, and thereby its answers, can emerge. In any case, what makes a great work great is that the questions it seems to raise are really raised already by what it addresses — and incessantly cede to this source, leaving commentators to mull over the fragments. Decades later, a colleague, puzzled by my manner of citing short passages from Aristotle while slowly re-thinking his work, admitted that he had been taught to read books quickly to get the gist. I was as much surprised at his manner as he was by mine. There are two extremes of anti-literature, the one digging for details and the other soaring high into overviews; the "mean" takes the form of a match requiring the development of an art and issuing in yet another performance.

Gotshalk's talk resembled that of Bugbee: a voicing that both shed light and transformed listeners into witnesses. Yet Gotshalk offered something Bugbee did not: his seminars on Aristotle and Kant opened up the playing field on which I could struggle with two of the greatest thinkers of our tradition. Bugbee himself remained with works that expressly recall our position as witnesses. Still, the backbone of our tradition runs through the thinking that first culminated in Aristotle and then again in Kant, each of whom not only drew the work of his predecessors into definitive form but also gave rise to a vast array of further topics. Without Gotshalk's help, I may never have had the opportunity to wrestle fruitfully with these two. In subsequent years, when I turned to the specialized topics of logic, I often found myself rehearsing what I had learned in the winter and spring of 1962.

As it happened, Bugbee also attended the seminar on Kant. During our meetings I recall him saying: "... so it's understandable that two divergent schools, positivism and existentialism, came out of Kant." It was one of those apparently off-hand remarks that often comes back to me.

In the fall I studied Plato's *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* with Robert Price, and Descartes' *Meditations* with Rosen. Both courses afforded the opportunity to ponder deeply these works, so crucial to our tradition. Both teachers glued

attention on the texts rather than on what the texts were addressing. But with a difference: while Price took a good-natured interest in becoming clear about those two dialogues (he distributed a diagram of a "definition by division"), Rosen saw at every turn in the *Meditations* a sly perversion of some sort. In the one course I pursued the question of how nothingness could enter into the question of being, and in the other, not knowing what to do with Rosen's negativity, I paraphrased every single paragraph of this one work by Descartes. Two very salutary exercises. Decades later, in conversation with a colleague, I realized how rare it was to be able to dwell for an entire term on a single text rather than scurrying through many.

Before the start of winter term in January, 1963, Gotshalk caught me one day to say I should drop by John Anderson's office to arrange for a course with him. After returning from Berlin the previous fall, he had taught a course in the Department of Mathematics. I had in the meantime nearly forgotten that he was the reason I had come to Penn State.

His time during the week being taken up with administrative work, he proposed that we meet each Saturday morning for a couple hours during January, February, and a bit of March. There were no readings. Perhaps a question to think about for the next meeting. Anderson never expatiated on his own, as Bugbee and Gotshalk would do — and I later, in their footsteps. Rather, he grilled me, and when I started off on a long development he would cut me off. I had to learn to answer concisely, knowing that his counter-questioning would keep the development on track. The questions concentrated attention on the matter itself, not on how to formulate the complications of some received philosophical problem into some defensible, essentially conventional whole. He had no patience with any effort to cite a third party, any witness except my own. Decades later, Jamie Crooks pointed out to me a Socratic twist in Plato's *Protagoras* — freedom entails that we answer on our own rather than lean on the answers of others. But my appreciation of this twist likely stems from the dialogues I had with Anderson on those Saturday mornings. Only the experience of dialogue can reveal the full force of questioning

— which otherwise peters out into problem-solving within the matrices of received opinion. I suspect that many who are “in philosophy” have never experienced genuine questioning.

Yet Anderson had an uncanny way of unexpectedly opening up windows onto other thinkers. My peers experienced this as well: catching him in the doorway of his office or in the hallway of the Department, we would say something about Plato or Aristotle, Kant or Hegel, Sartre or Heidegger, and he redirected our thoughts with a one-sentence reply. In answer to a complaint about Sartre, he remarked that you can read him while asking just how he doesn't go as far as Heidegger. Or about Dewey's and Santayana's habit of talking physiologically about moments of consummation, he replied that this was their way of making sure that philosophical considerations remained grounded in what actually happens. In response to my expressing disappointment upon hearing John Wilde speak at a conference, he said the man was apparently very effective in the classroom.

I do remember the question that started our Saturday meetings off: What did I take to be most essential? Necessity, I replied, influenced by my work in Aristotle the year previous, and perhaps by my reading of Heidegger's works. His questions then ground away at my answer, always with a sense that the stakes here were simultaneously the understanding of what arises for encounter and the understanding of how to rise to it. It was uncanny how he would stay with the theme and not pass associatively to others. In this one theme — or question — all the others would loom without having to change the subject. Decades later I heard a woman, then the President of King's College in Halifax, Nova Scotia, tell of a similar experience she had at a British university where she did her graduate work in philosophy: meeting for the first time at the home of her tutor, she remarked something about the fire in the fireplace, and her teacher quizzed her on the spot what she meant, how she knew what she assumed she had perceived — and this for weeks on end, during every subsequent meeting. She was impressed but admitted that the questions posed by her

teacher were inconsequential, serving simply as an exercise in analysis, a training of the mind for noting distinctions and difficulties in formulation, useful perhaps for many practical purposes, including debate.

Toward the end of the term (in early March of 1963) Anderson did pose a number of questions of a personal nature. What are you going to do when people disagree with you? Why am I at times happy and at times unhappy? What future do you have in mind once you complete your degree? — I don't recall my answer to the first at the time, although I have had to answer it ever since. To the second, after a pause, I answered abruptly that our sense of time stems precisely from the alternation of things going well and things going badly; I recall the answer because it was the only answer to which he nodded in silence. And to the third I answered that I assumed I would get a job teaching in some out-of-the-way college and pursue my interests in solitude.

In response to this third answer, Anderson came back to his friend: Bugbee, he said, would have given his right arm to stay at Harvard — an argument *ad verecundiam*, one indicating a difficulty that did become ever more apparent over the next decades. Philosophy is an art, a vocation requiring one to work alone (it is not a cooperative enterprise, as modern science definitely is), but also to address others in their ineluctable being. An art must be learned and developed by practicing it, both concentrating one's attention on the matter at hand and bearing the objection and incomprehension of those one addresses — just as a composer of music must do. In bright company of the sort provided by Bugbee, Gotshalk and Anderson, reaction to my work enhanced the concentration and the development of the art. Anderson was indicating the possibility of the opposite situation, where the reactions of one's fellows would not at all share in any concern for the matter itself but rather defend some opinion, some position (of the speaker, rather than of the subject matter). Much later, a composer who had studied and taught at the Julliard School of Music in New York City spoke to me of a talented pianist, a friend of his, who never fully developed her art; he attributed her failure to her

condition as a teacher in a small college where her colleagues were not really artists.

“There is such a thing as healthy contempt,” I was startled to hear Anderson say. From Bugbee I had learned that whether or not those we meet appear affirmable depended on our own disposition toward them (a principle re-enforced in my reading of Kant’s ethical works); he once told a story about someone coming into Hiroshima right after the bomb, finding the situation ghastly and hopeless until he set to work helping the living. Contempt had appeared to me to be a fundamental human failing, an expression of one’s inability to respond whole-heartedly to a situation. How could it ever be healthy? I was left to figure that out for myself.

One who plays and teaches only by rote will likely, in the passage of time and the frustrations of aging, surround himself with a bulwark concealing his ineptitude from himself as much as from others. In contrast, one who genuinely practices the art will always be learning, and so remain essentially vulnerable. In one of my few conversations with Bugbee at Penn State, he confessed to feeling bad at having blown up in rage at a meeting of some faculty members who were discussing Heidegger, at least one of whom had somehow been deflecting attention from the core. Bugbee did not know what to do in the face of pretentious incompetence. Anderson, I believe, was trying to prepare me to deal with difficulties where Bugbee could not.

The following term — spring of 1963 — Anderson offered a course in Aesthetics. Students were to read Dewey’s *Art as Experience* and Santayana’s *The Sense of Beauty*. He himself said nary a word about these works: we were to read them and write up a brief account of how they each addressed the questions he himself was addressing: aesthetic form, expressive form, comedy, tragedy and the sublime. One evening each week he entered the room with his manuscript and very slowly enunciated his thoughts in aphorisms. The long pauses in between allowed each to sink in, and listeners to interconnect them. He cleared his throat regularly, as though to punctuate. There was ample time to take leisurely notes, if we so wished, and to raise questions, which he

answered without changing style. He never spoke personally — never instantiated his variables — so unlike Bugbee and Gotshalk. The two hours or so passed in the mode of a meditative exercise, in a mood like some of Eric Satie’s well known pieces. In contrast, Bugbee’s meditative discourse took the overwhelming form of polyphonous chords, like J. S. Bach’s compositions. Yet, for all the remarkable differences there was sameness as well, which confirmed that I too might develop the art in my own way.

During the same term I met with Anderson each Saturday morning I was studying Kant’s first *Critique* again, this time in a small undergraduate class conducted by Mr. Druckman, the only teacher in the Department who dated from the time when Penn State was still an agricultural college; he was trying to think the work through, albeit in the conventional epistemological manner.

During the term of Anderson’s course in Aesthetics I was enrolled in a graduate seminar on the Stoics, conducted by Hans Freund, where I came to appreciate the themes Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius had isolated out of Plato’s account of Socrates; I submitted a hand-written term paper, and Freund accepted it, remarking only that I should know such was not normally allowed.

Then, the following fall I enrolled in a seminar on Rhetoric, conducted by Maurice Natanson, on a visiting professorship for this one term. Natanson was a very thoughtful man who would alternately ponder some example (he once told about a troubled student who came one evening to Martin Buber’s home— being exhausted, Buber asked him to return the next day, and the student then committed suicide that same night) and puzzle over some text (I was inspired to write a careful account of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, a work that has stayed with me ever since).

During all those years, starting with that course on the Philosophy of Religion at the University of Montana, I was startled by the power of speech, first of all in its spoken and then in its written form. Once working within hearing of Bugbee, then Gotshalk and finally Anderson, I could never afterwards confuse the discourse of great works, either

traditional or contemporary, with its academic spin-offs, forms of speech aspiring to capture their prey at a distance and then sell it to others — rather than allowing speaker and listener, reader and writer, to be seized by it.

My intellectual life and work have ever since stemmed from my astonishment — often intermingled with frustration. What accounts for the difference? What is going on in the one that makes it so hollow, even when functional and predominant — and, in the other, so revelatory, even if partial and rare? What exactly, or even inexactly, gets concealed in the one and revealed in the other? How are the two interrelated? How might I myself continue to relate to the one while knowing the other?

Out in the teaching world where the roles were reversed — I had to help others rather than be helped by them — I encountered the dominance of hollow discourse and struggled constantly with it. My earlier commitment to mathematical work helped me in the face of its basic forms: hard-core analyses taking as their standard the rigor of the mathematical sciences, and soft-core syntheses taking as their standard the imagery of mythical accounts. The one struck me as pseudo-science and the other as pseudo-myth. In both cases I had experienced the power of the real thing, perhaps the only effective protection. Yet, for all my frustration and disappointment as I struggled against them, the contrast has been essential: momentous discourse consists precisely in the overcoming of its hollow counterpart — for a while only, since any successful effort leaves ever-fading echoes and finally only relics that once again must be overcome.

LILIANE



Winter term, early January of 1961 at the University of Montana. About twenty of us were seated along an extended seminar table. The teacher sat at one end, reading succinctly but woodenly from his three-by-five filing cards. At the beginning of one of these indifferent hours I passed out slips of paper to those present, announcing an up-coming meeting of the student Philosophy Club — not to the teacher, of course, and also not to a mature woman who, I had understood, was only auditing the course — and whom the teacher had addressed as “Mrs.,” thereby distinguishing her from the undergraduates. This woman had also been my laboratory instructor in an earlier course on the German language: to me, then, she stood firmly in the camp of the adults.

That very afternoon she approached me in a nearby hallway, where I was leaning against the wall waiting for something I don’t recall. “Why didn’t I get one of those invitations?” This the first of a long line of challenges, after the laboratory, where I was repeatedly pestering her to borrow a pencil.

I don’t recall her ever attending one of our meetings, which consisted of discussion on some topic laced with beer, live music (saxophone, trumpet, clarinet, bongos). What I do remember is coming to her office — in a ramshackle building hastily erected to accommodate the expansions necessary for the G.I.s returning from Korea. At the time I was enrolled in an Intermediate German class, where I was supposed to read, among other things, an essay by Ernst Jünger, whose heavy prose and political drive made little sense to me. I came more than once for help, and one time brought along a bag of apples and a rolled up reproduction of a Van Gogh painting of cypresses.

Here was a woman who *knew* something —knew a lot of things, I soon learned, and ever more over the years. I had been raised in a society where men generally knew something, and where women, so far as they were truly feminine, complemented this world of knowledge with home truths, affections and environments. Moreover, women stood in material need of men, who were also expected to come to their aid in such matters as holding doors open for them, helping them get seated at restaurants, holding their furs or coats as they slid into them—relieving them of both physical and mental labor. Recently I saw a Howard Hawks film, his 1953 *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, which portrayed very accurately, and very sickeningly, this understanding, at the time generally accepted by both men and women, of their respective roles. For many viewers the movie was perhaps a spoofy comedy of manners—a disposition that has since met its end, certainly by the late 1960s. I myself didn't have to wait: Liliane put it immediately to an end, already in the early chilly days of that January.

Knew something? She could fluently speak and write both French and German—to me an amazing feat, all the more so since these two, and English as well, were languages she had learned outside the home. But what amazed me all the more was that she could talk about the literature written in these languages—and with contagious gusto. Although she had never read a word of Ernst Jünger, she immediately understood what he was saying in the essay I presented to her—some historical and social issue, I'm sure (having since read his extended essay *Der Arbeiter* myself), but what exactly I can no longer say. I myself knew nothing of the subject, even after she paraphrased it into English so that I could parrot it later in class.

Some months later—in the spring of 1961 (since I remember our sitting together in the sun outside the garage-apartment I rented in Missoula at the time)—Liliane read me an essay she had written for one of her classes. She was describing some character in a novel whose frustrated existence she herself likened to “a train derailed in a tunnel.” Trains and tunnels? Why, I wondered, would anyone want to change the subject? By that time I had myself plunged

into considerations of troubled human existence—with notable help from Kierkegaard's *Sickness unto Death*, for instance. Derailed? Well, all right; but what's gained by considering yet other troubles, one's not experienced by the character in the novel, or by us?

Since that spring day I've continued to struggle with the question of figurative language—fruitfully, I believe, as is perhaps possible only for a literal-minded person. Against my own training in logical and mathematical modes of thinking—perhaps within this training as providing the necessary counterpoint—I've come to understand that all packed discourse is essentially figurative, even if explicitly so only when its issue is essentially twofold: a coming-into-view of something inextricable from our own rising to it, or a coming-out on our part that only makes sense along with a re-discovery of what we are dealing with. Recently I noticed a recurrent figuration in the Bible (I Samuel 25:22 & 24, I Kings 14:10 and 22:21, II Kings 9:8) where various personages, including David, Ahab and God himself, rage about the misdeeds of some whole population, stating their own intention to exterminate all “who pisseth against a wall”—apparently the literal (Authorized King James) translation of the Hebrew. The figure says something important, albeit figuratively, about each scene in its entirety. Yet every other translation I have consulted (three in English, one in French and one in German) supplant it with an explanatory word, either to read something like “males” or, inaccurately, “people.” That I could appreciate the difference stems in some part from my life with one who understood it from the start, and who in fact became a very fine poet.

As soon as I brought her over to my apartment she asked for the knitted vest I had been wearing to class. Right in the middle, at my sternum, a strand had broken and was gradually working itself loose, so that an ever-growing hole was appearing. She had brought along a knitting needle and set to work reinserting the strand back through some of the loops to pull the hole closed, whereupon she fastened it with needle and thread.

This was the first in a long line of object lessons on taking care of things that I otherwise simply used. As chance

would have it, I had never known intimately anyone who would willingly, naturally and skillfully put ordinary things back into proper order. The difference in our origins may have accounted for some of my astonishment: I from an advanced consumer culture, where we simply discarded clothing that was falling apart, she from a post-wartime culture where one had to protect what one had. More, though, I was struck by the fact that this woman, in whom I was soon to fall (or rise) in love, not only soared high above practical affairs to write complicated essays in languages that were not her own, but also immediately came back to earth. My older brother once, early on, referred to her as a “bluestocking” lacking any grounding in the concrete. His misunderstanding was in turn understandable, since he never would see her in concrete situations, let alone on beeches and golf courses at night, mountain or country paths by day.

The sculptor Giacometti once remarked that, if he had to rescue either a Rembrandt or a cat from a burning house, he would choose the cat. My work with Henry Bugbee had prepared me for this delicate question, and now Liliane did so again. It’s possible to revert prematurely from literature to, say, fishing, and thereby forsake development of the art — just as it’s possible to recoil from cats to seek refuge in literature, and in art work generally. Yet the two — the Rembrandt and the cat — must both be saved in the practice of our own art.

At the time of my writing this, we have read through Dante’s *Commedia* at least twelve times — one canto each morning, usually just after breakfast, she reading aloud and I listening. I’ve often been struck by the 10<sup>th</sup> canto of the *Paradiso*, where the narrator intervenes, saying that he sets the table and leaves us to feast and nourish ourselves — that those who do not grow wings to fly where the gems he has seen lie are like those who await tidings from the speechless — that what he has witnessed is precisely the coupling, in love, of the bride of God and her groom.

Talk of applying what one reads to one’s life can be misleading, even perverse, suggesting analogies with institutional rules or cooking recipes — a kind of correspondence theory of truth. Rather than speaking of application, we might speak

of incarnation, as a conductor must incarnate, and cajole his musicians to incarnate, the spirit of the work — whereupon the work, its remnant inscribed on paper or in memory, first becomes a work, an actual working. I think of King David who, fearful of the fate of Uzzah (who had tried to steady the Ark of the Covenant as the oxen jerked it toward Jerusalem and whom God struck dead for that very reason), stripped to a loin cloth and danced playfully, “with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet,” before the cart — and thereby got it to its proper destination — while Michal, who had earlier loved David dearly and even became wife to him, now “despised him in her heart” and remained therefore barren (II Samuel: 6).

On many evenings, in the cold of January and February in Missoula, we sat together in my car for a while before attending a conversation hour at the home of my German teacher. Here, as I recall, we would talk not about the power of literature but rather about our personal difficulties. We were both taking steps to procure various possibilities of graduate study; we must have talked about these. But at the time she was also suing for a divorce, and I definitely remember our discussing this. Already the previous December the girl I had married three years before, both of us hardly out of high school, had secured a divorce from me on the grounds that she had never fully lived, never achieved any sort of independent life, before consigning herself to the conjugal structures; her decision suited us both perfectly, and there were no hard feelings on either side. Liliane had similarly gotten into an unsuitable marriage at the same age as I had, but she was meeting with some resistance and much ill feeling. Our futures were opening out. And it was also an open question how they would intertwine. Meanwhile, though, just talking about these matters brought us closer together.

Then came the major turn. At term’s end, the middle of March, Liliane had to fly to Paris to meet her mother, who had offered to take her daughter, aged two years and eight months, so Liliane could pursue her studies single-mindedly. And she urged me to accompany her for those ten days. In a rush, I got my old passport from my parents in Los Angeles,

whereupon we flew to Seattle where it could be renewed and we could fly over the North Pole in a sleek new jet. Liliane's Parisian cousin had arranged for two slits in the Hotel Studio, on the Boulevard St.-Germain, just off the Boulevard St.-Michel with its bookstores and cafés on very wide sidewalks lined with plane trees just beginning to sprout their fresh leaves.

Jet-lagged at first, and toward the end down with a nasty cold, we wandered through this city, all the more glorious in its intimations of spring, visiting the various historical sites and the student hang-outs (the Cave Huchette, one was called: a cramped and smoky basement for jazz lovers), letting seep into my mind the odors and sounds so distinctive of Paris — smells of the iron-clad urinals displaying their patrons' legs down from the calves, the ever-recurrent sirens of vans rushing by with contingents of armed policemen. Other than the student hang-outs, all this I had seen, smelled and heard with my father, mother and two brothers on our way to and from Switzerland eleven or twelve years previously. But Paris with a lover is another Paris altogether.

Arm in arm we walked along the Seine, sunken far below the bustling streets, with its bums and lovers and lonely fishermen (what could they catch? who would eat it?). Or above, along the tree-hung sidewalk, past the *bouquinistes* languidly standing by while curious collectors sifted through the motley piles of used books. Through the Jardin du Luxembourg, with tired legs and feet, yet learning that if we rested on one of the flimsy folding chairs an aging attendant would immediately ask us either to produce or to purchase a ticket for the privilege; watching children playing on the gravel and seated adults reading their books. Through the Jardin des Tuileries, again with its peculiar gravel but now largely punctuated with fountains and sculptures, up past the Place de la Concorde with its obelisk Napoleon stole from Egypt, onto the immensely broad and luxurious Champs-Élysées to the Arc de Triomphe, around which modern victors made their way in their mostly tiny and noisy cars. — Now as before, I was taken along, but now and unlike before, my guide was not only informed but passionate both for the place and for me. She procured tickets at the Olympia,

where we heard Edith Piaf, her singing all passion and truth, her entry strangely preceded by an acrobatic show, and at the Salle Pleyel, where we heard Isaac Sterne play, scowling at the audience until it fell silent, we sitting close up in very expensive seats, the only ones still available, noticing that he was sweating profusely as he worked his violin to pierce the soul.

We often dined in one of our slits: wine and cheese, baguettes and paté — and, new to me, white chocolate. Drinking too much, getting sick on it all, sleeping together on the narrow cot. And leaning on the railing outside the floor-to-ceiling door-window, looking out onto the Boulevard St.-Germain, with its streaming traffic, its swarming pedestrians, mostly mature-looking students (so unlike those generally lost souls, still children, we call undergraduates in North America), and its flowering trees.

The whole while, Liliane would be telling me stories. Approaching the Cathédrale de Notre Dame with its flying buttresses, wandering inside among its pillars and under the stained-glass windows (the musty smell of it all, the strangely lit dark), climbing the narrow stone stairway (so like that of the Cave Huchette, yet in the opposite direction), looking out over the Seine and the City — all the while she would be telling me about its origins, the ringing of its bells, Victor Hugo's novel of Quasimodo and Esméralda, walled up and dying in each others' arms. There was the place where the Bastille had stood, its famous occupant the Marquis de Sade, its storming during the Revolution. And back to the projects of Louis XIV, out at Versailles, and forward to Napoleon III, his reconstruction of Paris with the help of Baron Haussmann. All intimations from which, over the decades, I could discover and reconstitute, from these seminal and erotic beginnings, the inheritance we otherwise only live off obliviously.

Whereas today one enters the Louvre by descending through a glass pyramid into a space reminiscent of an airport, in the spring of 1961 we entered a small door, a kind of servants' entrance, near which stood the marble statue known as the Victoire de Samothrace, "the winged victory," a fragment dating from around 310 B.C. and intended as a

commemoration of a victory at sea. We recently returned to it, still standing at the head of a royal stairway, poised as though on the prow of a ship, ready to take flight. Its missing arms and head and its one missing wing do nothing to diminish its forward movement, whether by flight or, more noticeable in its present condition, its energetic stride, one knee gracefully protruding through the garments flowing from the hips down over the feet. Liliane's words at the time left me with the sense of incarnated liberation, this being the essence of any genuine victory. Perhaps, even more importantly for my own education, they instilled in me a memory of my heritage, essentially also an intimation of our destiny.

All this was foreign to me, suckled as I had been on images of virtue drawn from the Far West, with its victories illustrated exclusively by the daring of pioneers or gun-slingers who open new vistas despite the raging elements, or defend law and order against the simply vicious. Here, in the Paris revealed by Liliane's stories, was virtue guided by ideas rather than simple prowess. Until then I had only heard and read about the crossroads of freedom and bondage, truth and falsehood, and their interrelations. Here, now in these stories, were actual things marking these crossroads. The Winged Victory and the Cathedral, the Obelisk and the Arc, the voice of Edith Piaf and the strings of Isaac Sterne — all were spanning the difference, embodying the tension.

Not so foreign were the paintings in the Musée du Jeu de Paume — the name of which itself resumed the theme of emancipation (as in the 1889 painting of nearly the same name by Jacques Louis David). The ones first capturing my attention — overwhelming me, in fact — were those by Van Gogh: landscapes, portraits, still lifes. The ruggedness in his works, life in its wildness, brought something home to me, coincided with something of my life in the Rocky Mountains, and with much of the literature that was beginning to capture my attention as well. Meanwhile, the collection has been moved to the Musée d'Orsay where, I'm told, visitors must first fight their way past an array of academic paintings — which might, I suppose, underscore in an indirect way the

exigencies of liberation so marvelously and emphatically at issue in all the works of the original collection.

My reading the previous fall of Van Gogh's letters had spurred me to look more carefully at reproductions of his paintings. But the awareness that these now before me were the originals to which the letters so often referred, and from which the reproductions were drawn — well, this changed everything. Both the letters and the reproductions bore witness to the "teeming of being" (*Wesung des Seyns*) — my own, our own, every *thing's* own. In Missoula, the source hovered faraway, over the horizon of my direct experience, not unlike that of children's tales: very present to the imagination but remarkably absent from actual encounter. There's always a difference between resulted work and originating source, just as logicians distinguish between the referring and the referred. This difference we must ourselves traverse — learn to do so, arduously and at our peril. But at least, and at last, here in the Musée du Jeu de Paume the works hung directly before me, eliminating one of the intermediate stations, shortening the distance of the traversal. And in a context closer to their material origination (in the spring of 1965 we drove our car to Arles and Saint-Rémy as well). The "teeming of being" was no longer something I only read about or had indications of.

It's not that recourse to the original work at its original place enhances the comparison of the two for accuracy of representation. Any real place, whether Paris or Missoula, presents us with a complexity of unresolved tensions, thinly or thickly veiled by illusions. The work, then, whether an accomplished painting or a hearty letter, offers a resolution of these tensions, thereby presenting perhaps something of the place, its tensions, but re-engaging us in it, in them, now in the mode of a fragile resolution, harsh or mellow. But without any sense of the original tension the resolution makes no essential sense, and leaves us on the sidelines keeping track of peripheral detail.

I learned something similar in the academic year 1965-66, when teaching at East Carolina College. I found the tensions between blacks and whites very frustrating, not at all resolvable in my own encounters, and aggravated by my

efforts to rise above them. I happened to have handy a copy of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, which I had read grudgingly sometime during my undergraduate years. But now it all came together, the novel and the place and the inheritance — and my own present condition. Not as an historical description, which tells only of what was, but as a full-bodied re-enactment and momentary resolution furnishing a future. Somewhere in the novel a character says something like, "Lincoln emancipated the slaves, now someone must emancipate the Comptons." In this key I came to read the reflections of Thoreau and Emerson, Whitman and John Dewey.

And one late December in the early 1970s we flew from Canada to Athens for the holidays. Besides puzzling our way through the ruins of the Acropolis of that city, of the temple-grounds perched high on the hillside of Delphi, of the temples again at Corinth and Olympia, of the theater at Epidauros — besides all this, in the rain and cold of December, empty of tourists, I was reading through the entirety of Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths*. Before the eyes in my head lay the land and the sea, blown by the wind and burned by the sun, then all these fragments of human construction, while in my reading there appeared the stories of Apollo and Dionysus, Zeus and Hephaistos, Agamemnon and Achilles gathering all these fragments together. Indeed, earth, air, fire and water. Later, I could read the fragments of the early Greek thinkers, then also Homer's and Hesiod's, Aeschylus' and Sophocles' works in the same gathered spirit — which no doubt affected my reading of Plato and Aristotle as well.

But Liliane came from the world of Paris — obliquely, being born and raised a four-hour train-ride away (two-hour, now). Conducting me along the boulevards, to and through the parks, museums and historical sites, she spoke out of this world as out of an inheritance, and enticed me into it — pulled rather than pushed, as parents naturally pull rather than push their children into their own culture's way of thinking and perceiving.

Emerson says somewhere of John Locke that he writes as from reading books rather than from experience — second-

rather than first-hand. That distinction my work with Henry Bugbee was already driving home. Now, however, I was getting it on site. As is especially if not exclusively possible for lovers. It was she, starting most emphatically with our sojourn together in Paris for a few spring days in 1961, who kept me from falling into that other honey-head, and sweetly perishing therein. For, in my own experience, Bugbee's students generally missed the all-encompassing dimension of tradition when working with him, and instead devoted themselves to the sheer immediacy of encounters, especially within wilderness, taken both literally and figuratively. True, tradition also permits one to read and write and talk out of books, second-hand, rather than out of experience. Hypersensitive to this possibility, the line of British thinkers, from Francis Bacon through John Stuart Mill and beyond, aims precisely to establish then-new manners of investigating nature, setting up governing institutions, and eventually educating children and adolescents — manners that leave the individual (the investigator, the citizen, the youth) free from inherited inside views, free to decide matters freshly. Now that these aims have been accomplished they themselves form a powerful dimension of our tradition. Further effort on their behalf can only take the form of quiet maintenance, or frenzied intolerance of any supplementary effort — as happens with any tradition.

I have since known many North American professors who have spent considerable time in Paris and other exotic cities. However this experience may have influenced them, they ended up on one side or the other — usually on the North American side, whereupon their experiences abroad were those of tourists. With Liliane as my guide — then and over the subsequent decades — I fared differently. For one thing, although herself exotic, rooted as she was in the multilingual culture of Luxembourg, she and I shared coincidentally a number of experiences from times before we met. As a young girl in the mid-1940s she spent two summers in a Swiss family near Basel, where she picked up the local Swiss dialect and was thrilled to "climb" (walk up) the Rigi. Around the same time, I myself was lodged in Swiss boarding schools. About these experiences, and the influence

they had on our lives, we often spoke: for her a delight and an emancipation, for me a horror and a constraint. And often over the subsequent decades we returned together to various regions of Switzerland to hike the mountains. Then, too, her first abode in North America was with a family near San Francisco, where she attended high school as an exchange student: about California we each had much to say. Further, each had just gotten out of a youthful marriage that had no future: we knew what this sorry condition was like.

And we had even shared a literary experience: Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. When first learning English, she procured a copy of the novel from her local library and read it over and over again, mouthing the words, working on her *r*'s and *th*'s, understanding (she assured me) hardly a word. For me, it was the only assigned high-school reading that somehow lured me into its world of contrasts, not only London vs. Paris but Old-World revolution and my own education in New-World revolution: perhaps the novel worked for me because I was still haunted by my recent experiences in Swiss boarding schools.

Just recently we attended a performance of Dvorak's *New World Symphony*, a work Liliane called to my attention already in the first days of our acquaintance. For her, the symphony announced the New World she herself was undertaking, however much critics like to say it represented nostalgia for Dvorak's native Prague and even took its name from a street in what was then a red-light district of that city. For me, it recalled the seriousness of the Old World that at first repelled and then ever-more attracted me.

Things would have gone much less fruitfully if Liliane had defended the Old-World culture — insisting, in mind if not in body, on returning to it. It was rather the opposite, and over the years she has often reminded me that, had it not been for me, she would have gone to America and never even looked, let alone gone back. Thus no force pulled me toward this World other than its spirit. Already early on I interpreted it as pulling me back to the origins of the New World — of the Jeffersonian principles of government but also of American literature itself, from the repertoire of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, devoted to cleansing the effects of Old-World debris

(I think of Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau), to the repertoire of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, aspiring to re-enact the origination (I think here of William Faulkner and John Dewey). Precisely the direction of the pull of emancipation on her provided the necessary counterpoint to its pull on me in the opposite direction.

Something of the paradox can be seen in Rousseau's famous opening of *The Social Contract* where "Man is born free and everywhere he is in irons" reads both as a reproach and as an incitement to rectify by returning to our origin. One can read the remark as an empirical constatation: some people have committed serious errors that we have inherited, and we should now set things right. But we might also read it as an *a priori* constatation: at any given moment we are "in irons" and are called upon to return to our native condition for that moment — which might then require some empirical adjustments, but ones that will then become "irons" as well. In either case, it helps to remember that this is an Old-World thinker speaking around 1762. And also that the New World came to read him in time for 1776.

Recently I had occasion to notice the difference in our birth certificates. My birth certificate is registered under the heading of "vital statistics" and records information not only about time and place and parental origins, but also about the medication used by the physician and the number of children (alive, stillborn, dead) of the mother. It originally served the purpose of keeping track of birth rates and the like. It did not, at least originally, serve most centrally as documenting my identity: each individual establishes his or her own identity in the course of time. My father never had a birth certificate: identity was established, for purposes of obtaining a passport, by people who knew him, and when he turned sixty-five and needed proof of his age, the census bureau provided a document showing that there was a 14-year-old boy, with something like his name, in the family in 1920. I do have a birth certificate for my mother, but the name on it does not correspond exactly to the name on her passport and other documents (on my own birth certificate, for instance). At the time, at least, many people quite innocently changed their names, especially their given names, in the course of

their lives, as they moved from one place to another and from one job to another; even the assignment of a Social Security number was not bound to a birth certificate. — Now compare this with Liliane's birth certificate: when having to produce one for some bureaucratic purpose she must get a new one each time, since in the margins of her certificate get recorded all kinds of things, such as marriages and divorces, that have nothing to do with statistics — they rather define her identity. Thus the identity of the individual, and consequently the individual's ability to move through institutional structures, is an affair of the state. A passport and a social security number, for instance, are issued in a woman's maiden name, precisely because this name allows the state to return at any moment to discern her institutional history on her birth certificate.

Any North American who has taken philosophical literature seriously will recognize that its defining impulses have been Old-World both in origin and in idiom. Yet recognition of this does not assure either participation in or resumption of the spirit of origination. That spirit came through to me in the paintings of Van Gogh at the Musée du Jeu de Paume — surrounded by those of Renoir, Monet, Rodin, Degas and others, then too by the violin playing of Isaac Sterne, the singing of Edith Piaf, and the architecture of Baron Haussmann — all under the guidance of one who was already part of it by dint of birth, education and resolute study. Over the years, once firmly ensconced in this spirit, I could understand my own work as stemming from it.

During my many years of employment at various colleges and universities I was repeatedly taken aback by the disposition of colleagues to engage in philosophical work devoid of that spirit. Even those who had studied abroad struck me as committed to a baneful separation of powers — all the more as they advanced in their field, whereas less career-minded teachers could more easily confess an awareness of, and interest in, the spirit originating both philosophical and artistic work. Yet only the strong experience of the origin can assure an emancipation from the compartmental understanding of disciplines, where debates rage about the status of philosophy in relation to modern science,

modern politics, art work of all ages, even love affairs and personal hobbies. Nearly all my colleagues talked abstractly about origins, not concretely from them — indeed, most talked only about what others had said. Both surprised and disappointed, I have asked myself how talk can allow for both while apparently favoring the weaker one.

The aspiration to be right in one's own formulation differs fundamentally from the aspiration to get the formulation right. The first entails that one consider oneself to be the origin of the formulation, whereas the second takes any formulation as an excrescence of the origin originating also the one testifying to it. The talk of those aspiring to be right typically expresses the desire to grasp and capture the subject, to establish and defend a position of their own. The talk of those aspiring rather "to get it right" typically acknowledges what may, and ultimately does, grasp and capture us all, positioning us in variable ways. Those paintings by Van Gogh and Renoir, that music by Sterne and Piaf, that city architecture by Haussmann impressed the second aspiration on me — as did my work with Henry Bugbee. Yet I have since learned that modern universities, committed to the promulgation of the first aspiration, provide at best an indifferent, at worst a hostile environment for the second.

After those ten days we hastily returned to our still somewhat separate lives in Missoula, Montana. With so much ahead of me in the way of formal studies I had only the vaguest sense of the power those experiences with Liliane in Paris were to exercise on my development during the next decades. And, jaunty as only appropriate for one who was not quite twenty-two years old, I had no idea whatsoever of the weight I would have to bear, as anyone does who has learned — and will continue unceasingly to learn — the distinction between dilettante, possibly even careerist interest in the field, and creative commitment to work in its name. Fortunately, I should add. In Aeschylus' account of Prometheus, hope was the first of the three gifts the Titan gave us — so that we would cease foreseeing doom: only on this basis does fire have much use, and does learning an art, a long and arduous process, appear bearable.

It was not simply Paris and the first-hand exposure to the embodied spirits of our tradition, so easily forsaken by their New-World progeny, it was rather the embodied guidance through all this that provided an opening through which I could enter again and again over the coming decades. And the guidance, therefore the opening, has continued.

The day we arrived back in Missoula I entered late the first meeting of an afternoon seminar—one of only a handful of belated arrivals, along with perhaps two or three absences, in my entire graduate and undergraduate career. I recall entering rather breezily, for me an uncharacteristic manner—aware that I had just caroused through Paris, at the other end of the world, whereas others had been slogging it out in the boondocks. Perhaps that unusual and passing mood contributed to my subsequent decision to drop most of my courses—I had more than enough credits to graduate in June—and devote myself mostly to writing and reading on my own. As already mentioned, I retained my German course to keep in practice, and the seminar on Gabriel Marcel's two-volume *Mystery of Being* that a few of us had cajoled Henry Bugbee to take on as an extra course to teach. Liliane sat in on this seminar as well, and I recall one meeting during which the few of us sat outside on the lawn—one of those May days in which unusually warm weather brings tidings of new life and welcome indolence after months of cramped, increasingly frenzied indoor life. Just recently I came across a note Liliane had inscribed on the final page, otherwise blank, of the second volume of *Le Mystère de l'être* that she must have been reading at the time: "One doesn't write about Marcel but one writes with him. Bugbee."

We were living more and more together, even though we retained our separate apartments, each deeply engaged in our respective studies (she finishing her M.A. thesis in French Literature). After having worked through the English translation of Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics* during the previous December, I was slowly working through the bilingual edition of his *What is Philosophy?* and even trying my hand at translating a very short piece called *Der Feldweg*. All of this in the spirit of free intellectual exploration, or even

creativity (since I was also writing a philosophical journal), as distinct from the spirit of academia, where students and professors read and write to satisfy the requirements of those who can advance or retard their movement.

Then, a few days before my birthday in May, Liliane brought me a book she had ordered some weeks previously and that had just arrived at the University bookstore: a copy of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. I was shocked: I had not even worked my way through the entirety of Kant's first *Critique* or Plato's *Republic* or Descartes' *Meditations* in English, and here was a more recent, as yet untranslated work of monumental proportions and in a language I could barely understand. Well, one day I might be able to read it, I thought, but not for a long while yet. It was then just a birthday gift; and it was the thought that counted.

As it turned out, though, I read it through, the first of many times—that fall, as I have already said. I had arrived at Penn State University, an ex-agricultural college situated at the exact intersection of the diagonals drawn from the corners of the state, and had enrolled in a graduate course on *Being and Time*—offered even though the work was not yet available in English. Students generally had to rely on commentaries, something I was loathe to do, and likely could not have done even if I had tried. Could I manage the German for those 437 pages? I doubted it. Yet those pages were already in my personal possession, I did not have to order the book or borrow it from a library. So I tried the first few pages, resorting constantly to my German-English dictionary (not an especially good one, I later discovered), occasionally asking Liliane for help (we had adjacent carrels in the Library), and I saw that, with an immense amount of work, I might be able to do it. Fearing still that I could not finish the 437 pages by term's end in December, I assigned myself a minimum of about five each day, every day of the week. The arithmetic was simple, yet at the end I was still surprised at, and not a little proud of my success.

This experience of reading changed my intellectual life forever. That I was able to work with the original text certified a possible ability to consider the origin to which the text addressed itself. It liberated me from the traditional

manners of philosophy, while also allowing me genuine access to each of them: I began to understand their prevalence in our intellectual inheritance, their creative power, and their confinement.

Recently I was reading a review of a book on economics where the reviewer distinguished the initiating approach of John Kenneth Galbraith from that of routine textbooks as they introduce students to the study of the market economy we have inherited. While a standard textbook focuses attention on individuals producing and consuming (I recall Adam Smith talking about a baker plying his trade and selling his bread), Galbraith's *The New Industrial State* started from the other end, focusing on "a world populated by three large entities: big business, big labor, and big government." Each approach then aspires to account for the opposite end. — The market economy is there, and the study of it must decide what is most real about it: individuals pursuing their own interests, or "large entities" interacting with one another pursuing shared interests. Here we have an example of "the question of being," one among the many others that we easily find operative in each academic field, each defined by its propensity to pursue one or another of the answers that accompany each question. Philosophical debates have explicitly raised such questions: what is "more real" — data from the five senses, or rather ideas from a unifying intellect; individual human beings, or rather the individual city; nature abounding with her own drives to development, or rather our own ability drive circumstances to serve our own development. And of course whether and how it might make sense to talk about a single source creating all such entities, whether a Big Bang or a Big Father. And in each instance there lurks the question of how we might best comport ourselves, wisely rather than foolishly.

Liliane's gift liberated me from such metaphysical debates. It plunged me into a careful, ever-again repeated examination of where and how we are prior to such questions — *so that* these all-too-human inquiries can regain their roots and bear fully nourishing fruit. No previous work had ever posed *this* question — of where and how we are prior to intellectual questions of whereto and wherefrom, of

fact and obligation — even though some (especially Plato's *Republic* and Kant's first *Critique*) do come close to it, and others (say, Descartes' *Meditations* and Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*) have bequeathed simulacra of it — various abstractions obtained by observing intellectually modified versions of our where and how. Heidegger's *Being and Time*, more obviously than his *Introduction to Metaphysics* and subsequent essays, asks the reader to suspend the question that drives the greatest philosophical works of our tradition — namely, how it is that our initial "where and how" gets consummated (in wisdom, plenitude, or whatever) — *so that* this concern, too, can freely develop rather than fall immediately into stultifying channels.

If I had not worked my way through this one work, I might have remained within the framework of the literatures of genesis — such as Augustine's *Confessions*, Kierkegaard's *Sickness unto Death*, Thoreau's *Walden*, Robert Henri's *The Art Spirit*, Saint-Exupéry's *Wind, Sand and Stars*, Rilke's and Van Gogh's letters, and no doubt the exotic works of the Orient — all of which have contributed to my appreciation of the suspension. These were the legacy of my work with Henry Bugbee — which reminds me that not only metaphysics, not only the various (nowadays often social) spin-offs of metaphysics, but also the very literature of genesis can stunt intellectual development. As it turned out, I could go on to profit from all kinds of study — not only of canonical works but also the entire tradition of logic.

Language was the problem. And not only as an obstacle. Also as a puzzlement, a wonder — that one could (and I might) draw things into focus, make them present, provide anticipations of them, recall them, for oneself and for others. And perhaps *learn* to do so in tongues never entirely one's own, even if not in the full range of nuances within which a native speaker and writer moves, often blithely or obliviously. Already the summer between undergraduate and graduate studies, attending that German immersion program held on the Reed College campus in Oregon, I was distressed by the question. Of the several courses offered there was one in which the teacher projected slides of the various cathedrals of Europe — one after another, with a droning voice reciting

the time and place of construction and the peculiarities of style. The course, like all the others, intended simply to practice students in the language. This one especially infuriated me, since it left me having only to listen, record and repeat facts of no importance in themselves, while surely inside each of these constructions lurked a spirit that, in mere touristic array, shrank out of sight, leaving only rubble. I could hardly bear listening, as much out of boredom as out of indignation at the betrayal. But Liliane had accompanied me, and she, having no problem with the language and having heard some of the facts already during her secondary education in Luxembourg, had a tolerance for such recitation that I myself have never really developed. In conversation with me, she would review some of the differences in architectural style, dwell a bit on the detail — for instance, the Gothic striving heavenward, evident in steeples and flying buttresses, and the Romanesque squatting earthward, evident in its domes and windows. There was enough thought in her account I could draw on to satisfy the requirements of the course, to recognize something of what had struck me in Paris the previous spring, and to anticipate important discoveries during our subsequent travels through Europe. And to keep my faith in language alive.

Something similar happened again during my studies at Penn State. In those days, at least, a doctoral candidate had to pursue a “minor” outside the Department, and I had chosen German literature — again, to sharpen my ability to work within this foreign tongue. As I have already mentioned, there were a couple thought-provoking seminars offered by Fräulein Lüders (I recall reading Franz Kafka’s *Der Prozess* and *Das Schloss*, then also Thomas Mann’s *Zauberberg*, a novel called *Die Rote* and even portions of Kant’s *Kritik der UrsteilsKraft*). But the other courses available in that Department again consisted of recitations of fact — about works and the era in which they were written (one of Schiller’s plays allowed the teacher to review Homer’s story of Agamemnon for purposes of comparison). I remember reading through Stifter’s *Nachsommer* with some interest having nothing to do with the teacher’s droning. In most courses I had to submit a “paper.” However, in one there

was a final examination instead, and I would not have passed it if it had not been for Liliane, who was also enrolled: the night before, she primed me on the facts she rightly believed would serve me well — with the consequence that, our exam papers being nearly identical in fact-recitation, the teacher approached Liliane afterwards to ask her whether I had copied hers; fortunately, or perhaps intentionally, we had written the exam at the opposite sides of the room, which only added to the teacher’s puzzlement.

For decades to come, Liliane was always at my side. Most obviously in linguistic matters. I mentioned already that she taught me French from scratch. In addition, she has constantly helped me with German. And later, starting in the mid-1970s, she taught me Luxembourgish, again from scratch. In all these languages she would read aloud portions of the books she was reading for herself. When I read something to her she would correct me ever so gently in my pronunciation: she had me read the entirety of Flaubert’s *Un coeur simple* aloud in just a few sittings. Both in my speaking and in my writing she would correct my grammar. And as we were listening to the radio or talking with others in one language or another she would notice words or expressions that I would not likely have known, and prompt me accordingly. Also, as we walked around Luxembourg she would talk to me about the lore associated with the places, and later I would notice the allusions others would make to this lore. She was a born teacher, with all the exactitude and patience essential to that vocation.

At my side also in that she followed me to Penn State, whose Romance Language Department was a sham; one member even advised her not to come, especially since she had been admitted, with financial assistance, to a couple high-ranking departments elsewhere. Three years later we marched up to the stage erected in the football field to receive our Ph.D.s together, with a cheer from the crowd. And then she followed me to Freiburg, Germany, for which I had received a Fulbright Fellowship: of course, the language posed no problem for her, but there was nothing special for her in that place. And on to East Carolina College, as it was then called, where I had obtained a mail-order position, and

then she a cut-rate one. Finally, in 1967, to Mount Allison University (really only a college) where she first flew up to look the place over, only to note that it seemed suitable for me — but where the Romance Languages Department was again a shambles. In all these moves she had everything to lose and nothing to gain, except my company. And in all these cases I might well not have survived if it had not been for her company: they were strangely hollow places, and only together did we succeed in providing our own intellectual filling.

The one intellectually challenging experience evolved from her initiative and talent, not from mine. When in North Carolina for the academic year 1965-66, we were both applying for positions elsewhere. Liliane was offered one (a sabbatical replacement) at Antioch College, in Yellow Springs, Ohio, to teach French language and literature, and so I applied and was offered one to teach philosophy (actually, an “internship” supported by the Danforth Foundation)—partly because, I’m sure, Liliane had made it clear she would not accept the offer to her unless I had one as well. This institution, private and expensive, attracted highly talented and well prepared students, and inculcated a spirit of intellectual adventure. It was the only academic appointment (apart from a summer-time position at Northwestern University) where I had classrooms full of bright youths, and where the institution took education seriously rather than only paying lip-service to it. That it finally folded in July of 2008 came as a surprise, although in retrospect I do detect some elements accounting for its instability. I remember students demanding that the College withdraw its investments from South Africa; and some of its policies engendered senseless permissiveness: when we were there, first-year students enrolled in no courses, but were expected to visit professors and arrange for their own studies on the fly; we never saw or heard of any who could do much more than fall back on what they already knew, and the experiment has ever since stood as a reminder to us of our own responsibility to provide leadership.

She remained also at my side with books: the French classics, of course, and then books of contemporary literature

in several languages, books about mountain expeditions to accompany our modest hiking in Switzerland, a constant stream of contemporary novels (mostly American, some British, Australian, South African and Canadian), and books about artists and their works. She would search them out, usually buy rather than borrow them, then pass on to me the ones she figured (almost always rightly) would suit me. I began to notice that most people we knew didn’t read nearly as much. But then I wonder whether I would have had the imagination, interest and trust to procure books all by myself, apart from the classics in philosophy. I don’t believe so.

Reading novels formed an essential counterpoint to my own work. Not only the classics like those by Proust and Faulkner, but also many excellent works that do their work and then fade from memory. Great novels take one inside situations, so that both circumstances and responses reveal themselves in their essentially bewildering multiplicity. Like philosophical works, then, novels help one overcome one’s fascination with results, so unlike the effect of newspapers. Philosophical works — the great ones — also form an inside view, but they seldom root their accounts in images of actual incidents but rather draw attention to the conditions of their actuality. Philosophy was born, explicitly in the works of Plato, as an insistence that such images trap listeners and readers in dramas not their own — which certainly can happen, as is evident in critics and commentators who insist that the originals reflect the opinions, the positions, the problems of their authors.

My reading of novels gradually made it clear to me that philosophy began as a contemplation of nature as she (the gender is essential) appears through the eyes of *techne* (craft, with some reservations) and that it has ended as a contemplation of nature as it (the gender, again) appears through the eyes of aloof investigation (a new craft, narrowly conceived as technology). Students of philosophy initially pursue questions framed by this second pair of eyes, and consequently not only read philosophical works of bygone ages anachronistically but also resort to novels for distraction, emotion or expression — hardly for revelation. In those two graduate seminars conducted by Stanley Rosen (who con-

sidered himself a representative of the beginning in Plato, although I never heard him speak a word encouraging a direct focus on this beginning) liked to say that contemporary philosophy, chiefly the schools of Heidegger and Wittgenstein, had drifted into poetry, by which he seemed to mean whatever Plato named by this name when seeking a contrast for the kind of thinking his own works inaugurated. Rosen was onto something here, even if he could never pursue its full significance, at least not in the early 1960s. For the essential development subsequent to modern eyes has in fact concentrated attention on what is “simply” going on as we are “simply” there in some situation, just prior to the extraordinary formations of craftsmanship of either sort, always undergirding it and thereby falling into oblivion.

Not only did Liliane bring these extra books into the house, she also took me out of the house into the cities and towns of Europe. She was the one who read about the Maeght Foundation near Nice, with its works by Giacometti, Calder, Miró and others, booking then a flight from Paris to Nice during our short stay in France in the summer of 1966. Starting in 1971 we had Eurail passes each summer, and she repeatedly took us to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, at first for its Van Goghs and eventually also for its Dutch masters; from there to Rotterdam, The Hague, down then to Antwerpen and Brussels, and further down to Basel and Zurich. In later years we traveled to Florence, Rome, Venice, more recently to the Prado in Madrid and the Greek ruins of Sicily. Starting as I had with the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century paintings in France, at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, I could then move back to the Dutch and Flemish masters, and finally to the Italian Renaissance artists, whose efforts to renew Christianity required of me the utmost concentration and patience but finally came to make sense — as they should, since those efforts form an essential dimension of our inherited condition, with its roots in Ancient Greece, its trunk in Ancient Rome, and its culmination in various 20<sup>th</sup>-Century works re-tilling the soil.

As with the best literary and the best musical compositions, so with the best paintings and sculptures: I return to them again and again, whether on site or in reproduction,

and begin to forget when and where I first came across them. They have all become part of my life — friends forever, and ones who seem ever fresh when I meet them again. I can understand the importance of first introductions, and mine came almost entirely with Liliane.

Philosophy is an art, and although very special in nature and varied in form, it stands in an essential relationship with other arts, in a kind of reciprocal spill-over. If I had teamed up with someone in my own field I might never have learned this holistic bearing of art, and would likely have retreated into the various look-alikes of philosophy, such as personal seeking of the good life, clever quarreling over intellectual questions, constructing a world-view, or even addressing social questions arising in sexual relations, military policy or environmental degradation.

It was she, too, who got us involved in mountain climbing — the sort requiring two hands as well as two feet. She had always been a walker — with tales of her adventures in the park-lands above her home town, Esch-sur-Alzette. Her family had acquired a car relatively late, in the 1950s, when her father first earned his driving license and never learned to drive at ease, let alone with courtesy (any outing with him terrified her mother and demoralized any other passenger, myself occasionally included). So walking was much more ingrained in her character than in mine: I had become a walker about the time her family became automatically challenged. Having learned from my philosophical studies with Henry Bugbee that talk about the real vs. the illusory is itself illusory unless unfolding within and attuned to where we are, I had recently taken to walking myself. I never saw my father walk anywhere, except up and down trout streams while my mother read *The Ladies' Home Journal* in the car. That spring when Liliane and I first met we walked together up the Rattlesnake near Missoula, Montana; that fall in the hills around State College, Pennsylvania; and starting in the late summer of 1964 along the well groomed paths of the Black Forest near Freiburg, Germany. During the summer of 1969 we drove to Disentis, Switzerland, to drop Colette off at a “vacation colony” for children from Luxembourg; it was then that we began learning to under-

take long and strenuous hikes into higher altitudes, slowly expanding our repertory throughout Switzerland, France, Austria and finally the Italian Dolomites.

But climbing differs essentially from walking, no matter how strenuous. Hiking up along forest roads and paths, we would talk, often about our reading and writing. Indeed, we worked out the first drafts of our collaborative projects in the early morning hours of our tours through forests and over glaciers. Climbing, we were to learn, requires full attention to where one is at each moment — to the rock, its footholds and handholds, its crevasses, its solidity or fragility, wetness or dryness, and the interrelations of balance, points of security, positions of the rope — all this usually after an exhausting approach to the point where the actual climb begins. While athletic to the extreme, the event is fully intellectual as well — totally mind-absorbing. On us it had the effect of melding mind and body, as no doubt happens in any genuine sport at the moment of its enactment. Not having incisively experienced such moments of melding, intellectuals likely retreat not only into their studies but also into their minds, so that they become Cartesians despite themselves — and this profoundly affects the writing and reading of both poetry and philosophy.

It started one day in 1980 (June 28<sup>th</sup>) when we hiked up to the Rifugio del Velo della Madonna, or rather to the site on which the refuge was being constructed, within view of San Martino di Castrozza far below. Near the site was the hut made of corrugated iron to which we had hiked the previous year. Now, though, it was still submerged in snow but for a descending entrance. Santina, the wife-to-be of the *gestore-to-be*, emerged, probably for a smoke, and Liliane engaged her in a conversation about the construction site. Soon we were all huddled in the hut — with Silvio, who was also a mountain-guide. And soon enough Liliane was asking him whether he could teach us the art of climbing.

Or it started already in the summer of 1978, when we each wrote an essay in Italian at the University for Foreigners in Perugia: Liliane wrote about our passion for the mountains, saying that we hoped to find hiking places in Italy, and the assistant teacher (Angela, I recall, since the

main teacher was called Angelo) had her husband draw up a list and photocopy maps of various places, San Martino di Castrozza among the most recommended.

It was not until the summer of 1981 that we again hiked up to the Rifugio managed by Silvio and Santina, and we began seriously planning for the subsequent year (Liliane still being somewhat weak from an operation the previous February). And then we had our first lessons from Silvio in the summer of 1982, with follow-ups the following summers.

Soon after we had learned to scale cliffs in the Dolomites an architect came by our apartment in Luxembourg to assess the quality of the balconies, and when he climbed from one to the next Liliane offered to secure him with a rope, mountaineering-style: he assured her that he was a climber himself, and soon enough Liliane had made arrangements with him to take us to the local climbing garden — a beautiful spot in the hills nearby, with rope-length climbs of every degree of difficulty, starting in the largely beech forest below and emerging in the largely pine groves above, overlooking the undulating hills. This became a steady sport for us during subsequent springs and summers, and once even in winter. And it was Liliane again who would fall into conversation with other climbers and thereby find yet other routes to climb — among whom the then-director of Statec (like our StatsCanada), Georges Als, the then-Minister of Culture, Robert Kriepps, and the then-Vice-President of the emerging University of Luxembourg, Jean-Paul Harpes. From her conversations with this last, we ended up attending small seminars in philosophy over the next decade and a half, where I regularly presented my work, some of which also at international conferences he organized. From our conversations with the first, we ended up climbing in the evenings, after his workday — and one memorable evening, already darkening as we were trudging back to the car, he recited a long poem in English that fit the occasion.

Bodily and intellectual work then reconvened. As they must. And it was, I repeat, Liliane who kept the two ends together, in constant cyclical motion. That the discussions of academic philosophers so often disappoint might derive from their failure to keep the relation going — the failure to

participate in the Platonic-Aristotelian bequest, where the exigencies of the manual arts play themselves out in counterpoint to the exigencies of the mathematical arts; the failure to participate in the Kantian-Hegelian bequest, where the exigencies of the then-new investigative arts, as introduced by Descartes, Bacon and Galileo, play themselves out in counterpoint to the exigencies of the commanding arts of leadership, both secular and divine. Such failures take many forms: retreat into the manual or into the investigative arts (absorption into hobbies at home or some science at school); or into opinions wrought by others and cast on the walls as shadows of themselves for non-participants to judge (absorption into the books and articles of scholarship); or, perhaps most healthy, into the exigencies of teaching or administration.

In contrast to most others we have known, our own life has proceeded in a unity of concern. Whether reading or writing, teaching students or working in the library, walking around town or in the woods, or just lying in bed, with or without the radio (Radio Canada, CBC, Musique 3 Belgique, France Musique, Südwest Rundfunk), we have shared a single life, one rarely divided into work versus play. This unity was perhaps most evident as we were writing in our adjacent studies at home, each hearing the movements of the other, mostly in silence, although occasionally one of us would ask the other about a word or come to share something just discovered. Indeed, at other times we scoured each other's writings, calling attention to rough spots. I would listen, as only appropriate, to her reading a poem she had just finished writing, and she read through entire drafts of my own essays and books — even my monstrously long work on logic (slowly, over weeks), not only suggesting improvements in my syntax but also questioning the clarity of the technical explanations.

Friends and acquaintances often remarked on our unity. The earliest I remember took the form of disapproval. Early in the 1970s a young fellow, a former student of Liliane's at Antioch College who came to direct some Becket plays at Mount Allison, remarked that we should live more independently of one another, suggesting we take separate

vocations to enrich our lives separately. But after that I recall only admiration, often with a slight envy; one woman whose house we regularly passed while walking together to school, often hand-in-hand, pausing to speak to one another face-to-face, even briefly kissing, remarked: "My husband loves me, your husband adores you." An older man driving up to see our house under construction, and us constantly there together to clean up and to make revisions: "It must be marvelous to be able to work together on such a project." A German friend used to refer to our love as a *Jahrhundert-Ereignis* — something happening once in a century. An artist, a painter in Luxembourg, several times referred to us in our relatively advanced age as a *Liebes-Pärchen* — intending the German idiom with slight envy and irony.

The secret, I believe, lay in a willingness to be helped — a strangely rare disposition. We are born helpless, and remain so for many years, more or less conspicuously. Part of growing up means learning to fend for oneself, freeing oneself from dependence on others, starting with severance from one's parents — to venture out alone, to suffer defeat without expecting others to prop one up, to take on the task of refashioning circumstances rather than simply settling into them — in short, to help oneself rather than wait to be helped. Indeed, independence, relative self-sufficiency, is certainly a virtue that distinguishes the mature from the immature. Yet such virtue highlights only half the story. All by itself, it lands us in illusions. And, if we insist on it, into delusions of grandeur, even outright vice, as appears to be the case in the demagogues we read about in daily news and history books. Generally, the reason this virtue can lead to illusion, delusion and even despair, is that we are all essentially dependent on others — which might explain why tyrants tend to kill off precisely those on whom they most rely. Also on bodily conditions, our inherited or acquired capabilities, and what some call grace. We are dependent not only for survival, as children most obviously are, but also for any creative activity, whether of an organizational, artistic or contemplative nature. Specifically, the illusion, or delusion, arises when we suppose a clear knowledge, in advance, of what's good and what's bad. Such pre-knowledge pertains to what is essentially

murky: each actual circumstance not only tests our knowledge but fundamentally — if we let it — gets transformed, even undone, for the sake of the momentary actuality, its novelty. The stuff of tragedies.

Humility is another name for the willingness to be helped. The more independent and knowledgeable we are, the more it behooves us to keep close to the edge, the precipice — not so much to allow for expansion, or to extend our range, as to keep acknowledging the primacy, over our conquests, of what happens to offer itself at the moment, our actual situation. In such readiness lies the essential, the consummative maturity, something we must learn and re-enact ever again. All great philosophical literature thematizes this readiness, formulating it ever again freshly: Aristotle's talk of potential versus actual knowledge, Augustine's talk of merit versus grace, Kant's distinction between concept and intuition, Heidegger's interrelation of being as cast and being as casting. Most familiar to us today is Nietzsche's twist on the ancient theme of activity versus passivity — formulated clearly by a woman in one of G. B. Shaw's plays:

People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them.

This is the maturity essential to youth and perhaps early middle age. But it needs help if it is to grow any further and not leave us in the lurch. All along and not only later. And Liliane helped me get up, seek, and make — to sojourn at the edge.

There was that material help: without her I would not likely have persevered in my graduate studies, or even completed some of those vacuous courses in the German Department (except those by Fräulein Lüders: she was a thinker), or learned French or improved my German over what I learned in classes (both languages essential to my subsequent work) — and would certainly not have integrated myself into Europe, via Luxembourg and its language, or engaged in mountain climbing as a healthy counterpoint to my intellectual work. Perhaps I would not even have learned

to eat properly: already as a child she ordered a book on nutrition, *Iss gut und bleib gesund*, to instruct her mother, and together we developed a diet based on fresh fruit, steamed vegetables, and a modicum of animal flesh.

Yet it was more the unity these material benefits served. A life together, a shared spirit that overrode without eliminating differences — a unity precisely of contraries. In one form or another, unity hangs over everyone, I am convinced; deny it as one might, betray it as one so often does, fail at it as we inevitably will: we always yearn for it. I detect it precisely in those who insist on “looking out for number one” — as Humphrey Bogart plays it out in *Casablanca*.

Material help I received from many other people and circumstances: without the financial help of my father I would never have been able to pursue my studies in Montana; without the frequent fire-side discussions, with John Bailiff, of canonical thinkers (of Spinoza, I especially remember) I would not have learned to talk about works in a way suitable for the comprehensive examinations at Penn State; without the low teaching load and short academic year in Canada I could not have spent nearly as much time and energy on my own writing projects; and without the publication program supported by the Canada Council the results might never have appeared in the public domain.

To repeat a canonical thought: material help does not suffice for spiritual development. And a more recent thought bears repeating as well: spiritual development essentially unfolds in a vacuum. Traditionally, what guides development is a sense of fullness, a plenitude that happens to be lacking, that came to us and then departed and left but a memory and henceforth an anticipation of itself. But only the departure calls attention to the original arrival — something my experience in Swiss boarding schools drove home to me already in childhood; and something the losses now, in old age, again drive home.

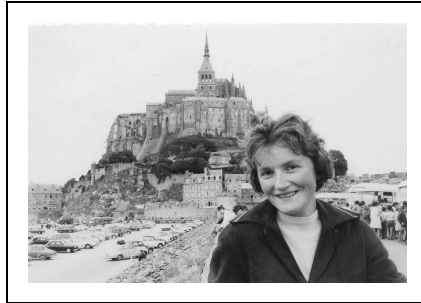
My work with Henry Bugbee led to the careful study of Augustine and Eckhart, Kierkegaard and Heidegger, and taught me to contemplate the relation between plenitude and vacuity, and the role this relation plays in the discovery of

the questions and answers guiding otherwise merely formal debates of ethical and epistemological import.

Liliane provided both the framework and the affection sustaining my life-long devotion to this study.



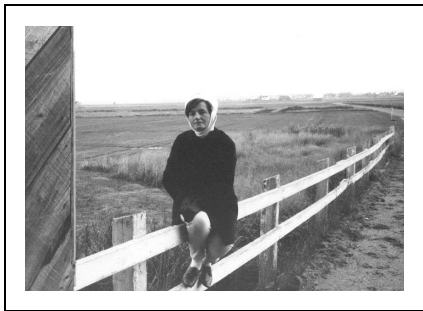
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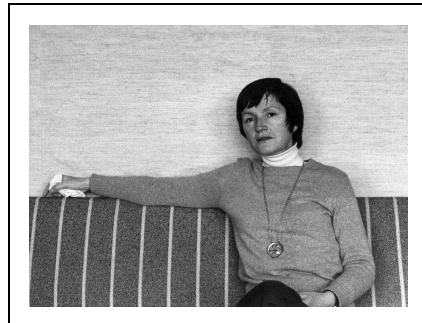
1962 Mont-Saint-Michel



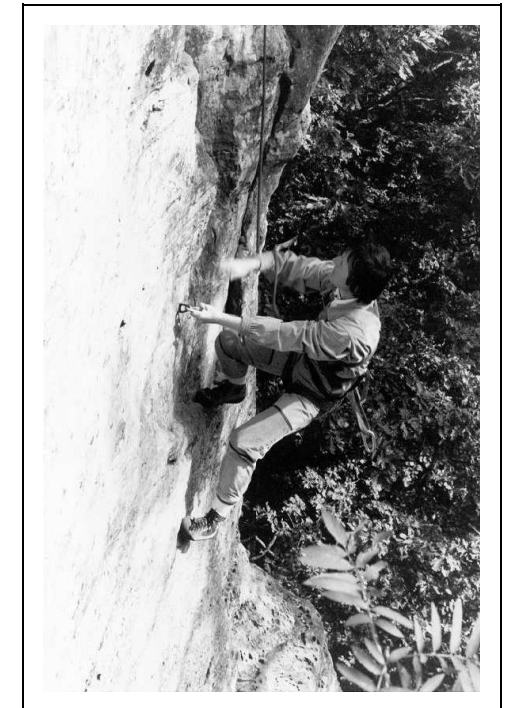
1961 Missoula



c. 1970 Tantramar Marsh



1979 Gasperich



1988 Bäerdrëf