

Saturday, June 25

Dear John;

It is so hot. I do not mind it very much, but the people in the street and in all the apartments around me do. Cross, hot noises are coming in through the window. I have been sitting here the better part of two days, scribbling and then typing a little with a glass of iced tea jingling gayly on the shakey table. Your letter arrived on a bad day and it helped. I had just come back from the peace of Great Barrington and was confused by ^{the} city and sore from a chance opening of old wounds. In the afternoon I went to buy your books. Stecher's is magnificent; I had forgotten the delight and excitement of seeing such quantities of treasures. I have wrapped up some of the books and will mail them on Monday. They are the Confessions, a Choix de Poesie de Verlaine and my copy of James. I also bought Either/Or (which I would like to look at and show to Papa for about a week before I send it to you) and Stendhal's Chartreuse de Parme. Unless you would very much like to possess the latter, I would like to call it mine and lend it to you. In that case I would not send it for about ^{three} ~~two~~ weeks. The total bill comes to \$13.00-- \$2.50 for Verlaine, \$4.50 for Rousseau and \$6.00 for Kierkegaard--at least I think that's right. Since I have wrapped some of them up I can't check on it. Will you?

I am sorry they are not cheaper. I considered looking around for second-hands but decided that I could probably not do much better. I was ^{selfishly} ~~very~~ glad that you had not had time to buy them because it was so much fun for me. I have come across referenced to Either/Or several times, but have never pursued my curiosity. I started to read the Stendhal last summer, but the library demanded it back too soon. By the way, if you think of other things

that you want, or more of the same list, let me know. I will be in New York around the 13th of July, so I could easily get more.

I have been rewriting the introduction of the paper with Joy's editorial aid. Unfortunately, she is leaving for Canada tonight so I shall have to wrestle with the conclusion all by myself.. Very difficult for such a dependent creature.

Sunday

The composition of the conclusion of my paper does not advance at all, so I will try to put together some of my ^{my reactions} reactions to the ideas in your letter--or let me say, ^{to} what I understand of those ideas, for one hears what one expects to hear, and dangerously soon expectations are set up at the gate which limit the understanding. I do not know whether your definition of ideas as approaches to truth and bridges between one another is ^{defining} adequate. Perhaps I am ~~understand~~ ^{defining} ~~standing~~ "ideas" too narrowly, but it seems to me that there are so many people in the world who scarcely live in the world of ideas or think about truth that there must be some other kind of reality and justification apart from ideas. I have sometimes thought that perhaps the requirements for justification varied completely with the culture and environment.--that for people like us to whom almost every level of experience is open in thinking and in feeling because we have been educated and know of their existence, the demands were much greater than for a Chinese coolie or an aboriginal African. "To whom much is given..etc." But perhaps there are other kinds of knowledge and feeling which they know and we cannot. I wonder if my emphasis on "justification" seems strange or childish to you. It used to be a much more troubling preoccupation than it now is. Then I used to feel that every minute counted equ

if important decisions were not made at frequent intervals, if I did not think and make moral choices, that death or judgment might catch me before I was ready and before the pattern of my personality was completed. I worried also about infant damnation and what became of all the people who never had a chance to choose. Some of that feeling of impending fate is still there, but now I accept these puzzles more easily knowing how many things cannot be understood.

The burden of personal responsibility is still very great--greater than it should be for me to live and to work peacefully with emotion and effort centered on the things that matter and not showered everywhere. Since I do depend upon people ~~for~~ as the embodiment of ideas or concepts in which I believe, or which I accept as having some validity, relationships with people are more important and crucial than for those who are not so dependent. A word or a gesture, even those that I know to be casual and unpremeditated, takes on symbolic value. In a similar way, my weltanschauung alters according to my companions. Having you there in Great Barrington prevented me from brooding over things that I cannot now change except for the worse; my retrospect ^{often} ~~usually~~ makes things worse instead of better. I do not think I would have broken down ~~if~~ I had not been afraid of what I would be like alone. Yet if you had stayed without that having happened, I think the result for me would have been about the same as it was. It is not necessary to know what it is that troubles another person in order to help ~~the~~ him quite a lot. I am very glad if my dependence helped you to forget loneliness a little, but I am sure other people have and will depend upon you in such a way without making such a specific appeal. Feeling that dependence of all sorts of people, those I knew well and those ~~1/1~~

whose names I did not even know, has helped me very much in the
last few years. It is silly to thank you for being what
you are, but I can at least thank you for having
stayed.

Margaret