

THE JOURNALS OF ERNEST BECKER, 1964-1969



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Rank in the United States, the United Kingdom, and in translation, Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, and the Netherlands. He is now collaborating with E. James Lieberman on the publication of the complete correspondence of Freud and Rank. His e-mail address is kramer@american.edu.

Summary

Written from 1964 until 1969, the year in which Ernest Becker rediscovered the writings of Otto Rank, these journals offer a poignant answer to Becker's call to all of us, and most of all to himself, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Denial of Death* (1973)—becoming “conscious of what one is doing to earn [one's] feeling of heroism is the main self-analytic problem of life.” Reflecting on what he was doing to earn his own feeling of heroism, Becker offers in these journals glimmers of hope for the future impact of his work as well as a riveting self-analysis of his dreams and nightmares.

Keywords: *Ernest Becker; Otto Rank; heroism; culture; death; evil; Terror Management Theory*

Ernest Becker died at age 49 on March 6, 1974, 2 months before he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for *The Denial of Death* (1973). Drawing on the post-Freudian thinking of Otto Rank, which Becker merged with the existential theology of Kierkegaard, *The Denial of Death* brilliantly exposed

the “fear of life and fear of death” as the unconscious mainspring of culture and all human creativity.

THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF ERNEST BECKER



In the 33 years since Becker’s death, his ideas have excited an ever-increasing array of academics, independent scholars, and researchers working across many disciplines. These fields include, but are not limited to, social psychology, humanistic psychology, theology, English literature, existential philosophy, clinical social work, criminal justice, war and peace studies, the Holocaust, terrorism, public administration, and managerial leadership.

In social psychology, for example, the June 2006 *Newsletter* of The Ernest Becker Foundation (<http://faculty.washington.edu/nelgee/>) identified scholars in the United States, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Australia, Israel, Iran, and Japan conducting experiments to test the Beckerian hypotheses of Terror Management Theory (TMT), a theory that explains the symbolic immortality that human beings, usually without full awareness, attach to their most fundamental cultural beliefs. TMT was formulated in the mid-1980s by experimental social psychologists Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski from Becker’s *The Denial of Death* and *Escape From Evil*, a companion book published posthumously in 1975. A number of TMT experiments are now being funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Cancer Institute.

For more than a decade, The Ernest Becker Foundation (EBF), created by Dr. Neil Elgee in 1993, has sponsored conferences in Seattle and elsewhere to bring interdisciplinary applications of Becker’s thought to the public for all of us to learn more peaceful ways to tame our “love of violence.” Chapters of EBF are active in New York and Dublin.

In 2002, filmmakers Patrick Shen and Greg Bennick released a powerful documentary on Becker’s ideas titled *Flight From Death: The Quest for Immortality*. Now available on DVD, this film, with its succession of beautiful visuals and its haunting musical score, won seven best documentary awards and has been screened in cities across the United States, Canada, and Europe.

As a guide for readers who want to learn more about Becker, I am appending a list of the best book-length applications of his thought published in the past three decades. For example, in 2005, in collaboration with The Ernest Becker Foundation, Daniel Liechty edited *The Ernest Becker Reader*, which brings together selections from Becker’s writings, including a complete bibliography of Becker’s publications. For a superb

overview of Becker's thought, one cannot do better than Liechty's elegant and balanced introduction.

BECKER'S JOURNALS FROM 1964-1969 AND THEIR CONTEXT

Recently, at my suggestion, Marie Becker-Pos, the literary heir to her late husband's writings, donated Ernest Becker's journals, correspondence, course syllabi, notes, and parts of his personal library to the Rare Book and Manuscript Collection of Columbia University, where they rest, fittingly, next to the papers of Otto Rank. I am grateful to Marie for her kindness in allowing me to publish the journals of Becker from 1964 until 1969.

In his typed text, Becker capitalized numerous words, phrases, and even whole sentences, probably because, in an age before the personal computer, he was using an old-fashioned typewriter. To remove potential distractions, I converted Becker's capitalized words to italics. I also identified, in brackets, full names and book titles that Becker did not spell out in his text, interpolated obviously missing words, and translated a few of his more obscure foreign phrases.

Written from April 1964 until January 1969, the year in which Becker rediscovered Rank, the diary entries offer a poignant answer to Becker's call to all of us and, most of all, to himself in *The Denial of Death*—becoming “conscious of what one is doing to earn [one's] feeling of heroism is the main self-analytic problem of life.” Reflecting on what he was doing to earn his own feeling of heroism, Becker offers in these journals glimmers of hope for the future impact of his work as well as a riveting self-analysis of his dreams and nightmares.

For the first half of 1964, Becker was in Rome drafting *The Structure of Evil: An Essay on the Unification of the Science of Man*, which he published in 1968. In late July 1964, Becker returned to the United States to prepare to teach in the fall semester at Syracuse University, from which he had been fired in 1963 for protesting the violation of Thomas Szasz's academic freedom in the Department of Psychiatry. At Syracuse, friends had helped Becker obtain a 1-year joint appointment in the Departments of Sociology and Education.

In 1965, with the support of Erving Goffman, Becker landed a 1-year visiting appointment in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, and in 1966, he received another 1-year appointment in the Berkeley Department of Anthropology. When this appointment expired in 1967, the department refused to rehire him, so the Berkeley student government, at the request of 2,000 students who had petitioned to keep Becker, offered to pay his salary of \$13,000. The students were turned away by the university.

In 1967, Becker published *Beyond Alienation: A Philosophy of Education for the Crisis of Democracy*. In fall 1967, he moved to San Francisco State's Department of Psychology. He stayed there until January 1969, when he resigned in protest against the violent police presence on campus during student antiwar demonstrations. The final entry in Becker's journal is dated January 7, 1969, at a time when, with little prospect of an academic position and poor book sales, he had no assurance of being able to provide financially for his wife Marie and children Gabriella and Sam.

In fall 1969, Becker accepted a position at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada, where, throughout the next 3 years, he prepared a second edition of *The Birth and Death of Meaning* (1971), infusing it with the fruits of his reading of Rank, and began to draft *The Denial of Death* and *Escape From Evil*, which he did not live to complete. The dedication page of *Escape From Evil* reads, "In memory of Otto Rank, whose thought may well prove to be the rarest gift of Freud's disciples to the world."

In November 1972, shortly after he finished the manuscript of *The Denial of Death*, Ernest Becker was diagnosed with cancer. A moving death-bed interview with Becker, conducted by Sam Keen, appears in Liechty's (2005) *The Ernest Becker Reader*. Since 1973, *The Denial of Death* has sold more than 600,000 copies.

These journals, covering the years 1964 to 1969, show an ambitious, deeply vulnerable Becker, hopeful but anguished about the meaning of his life and the impact he never stopped dreaming of making on the wider intellectual discourse. "The disparity between my vision of things, and the way they are, is going to tear me apart unless I can live at Melville's lower level of ecstasy," Becker confided to his journal on April 28, 1964, "and this can only be done by renouncing the world, or by engaging in it from within a sound philosophy. I'm not ready to be a Custom's Agent."

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Rome. April 22, 1964

Under stimulus of Barbellion's book I have decided to keep a sporadic Journal. ["Barbellion" was a pseudonym for B. F. Cummings (1889-1919), an English writer who published an influential diary titled *The Journal of a Disappointed Man*.] I think it would be worthwhile to leave a record of some of the reflections of a critical mind in our time—perhaps one of the leading minds in the human sciences. I don't of course expect these pages will be as vibrant, humorous, and heart-warming as Barbellion's—but I certainly hope that they will not be as tragic. Another, more selfish reason for my turning to a Journal is that the world keeps turning

me away, and I am forced to bend back in upon myself for sustenance: I simply cannot find any friends, etc., in Rome, despite my overtures—not even the cocktail parties that I love so much. So, after a lapse of many years, I take to the Journal again. My earlier Journals were gropings of a sensitive and immature mind—unreleased and untrained, unread even. The years between I did not keep any Journal, simply because all my best thought went into my professional writings. Now that these writings are largely done, as far as the main conceptual body is concerned, I can turn back to recording some qualitative impressions, disconnected, random, but still of human and even professional interest.

Today's newspaper brings an item that sums up alienated man in our time: it seems that the increased air pollution of industrial society is seriously corroding stone works of art—i.e., Parthenon friezes, Titus's Arch, Florence, etc. The odd thing is that no mention is made of people at all here: the implication is of course that the art works are more important than people—we can always make more human organisms, even though we poison thousands of lungs and systems—but we cannot make great art. The sentiment is of course true: we have failed to make any art in our time worthy of the name, and since we need art, we need to turn to the past. But has anything ever been more monstrous: valuing dead things over live people? The fact is that we see no beauty in man, since he has become a consumer thing. Rousseau had already protested against antiquarianism that neglects the living life—and we are playing out the final cards of Rousseau's time. It may all end very badly, although lately I have given over somewhat to trusting nature, with something like the following thought: if that's what nature wants, so be it—who am I to complain or interfere? We are really forced to let evolution take its course, since not even the 1,000 best minds in the world today can stop the present madness. This is the law of nature: not one upright hominid, not one hundred geniuses: but the whole sweep of life must be carried forward. All right, sweep on—I'll continue to work and grumble.

(evening)

“Nor did he ever know the chastening, steadying influence of initial failure or slowly-won success.” R. W. Livingstone [1945, Annual Lecture on a Master Mind, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 31, 85-102] on Ruskin. *Eccoci* [Italian, “here we are”], the whole story of my mental health such as it is. The historical and pragmatic importance of my work is so great that it would

pull me into the clouds, if only the going was not so slow. And as Goethe said, who surely experienced this problem, man was not meant to have his head in the clouds. So let us praise plodding publishers and give thanks for the glut of books on the market, the shortsighted habit: they tuck me into nature, keep a dragging web on me that carries me on.

Apr. 23, 1964

The aesthetics of marriage: the need for a confrontation with a free and firm locus of natural meaning. Cf. David Gascoyne [1952, *Thomas Carlyle*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.] on Carlyle's unhappy domestic life: . . . from a letter to his wife written after a period of stomach and domestic trouble (two kinds of trouble which really were practically synonyms for Carlyle): "Nay, to tell the truth, your anger at me . . . was itself sometimes a kind of comfort to me. I thought, 'Well, she has strength enough to be cross and ill-natured at me; she is not all softness and affection and weakness!'" This kind of insight sums up a world, and who is not Carlyle's brother?

Apr. 24, 1964

The problem and process of self-analysis increases in both scope and subtlety, to the extent that one liberates himself from his past, and to the extent that one makes a creative contribution to his time. This means that he will have to make new adjustments, of a type that others do not have to make. He has to adapt himself not only to his narrow history, but to the whole panorama of man, to the spirit of his age, to a forecast of the future, to the possible effect of his work, etc. etc.

It is precisely in doing these things, in making these more broad and subtle adjustments, that his nature changes even more, and he becomes what we might call a "universal" man—since he is adjusted to a much larger panorama of external nature and humanity taken in the broad of its meaning and history. Small wonder then that others give obeisance. They are really brought up against something unique, which at the same time most typifies what is most general in man: the human spirit in its individual and yet its broadest manifestation.

If they could see the frantic machinery that goes on behind the scene, so to speak, that enables this continually broad and ever more subtle adjustment—what would they think? They would be less impressed, surely, but would have even more reason for sharing in the universal aspects of his nature: he really belongs to them, and they can offer him a strong home-brewed drink without fumbling.

Apr. 25, 1964

There they were at St. Peters today—a pilgrimage crowd from Naples, buses choking the piazza and the people moving everywhere: burnt faces, black-gaped tooth-missing smiles, faces with no foreheads, occasionally a majestic face, proud, figures bent, short and tall, some on beautiful black-stockinged haunches, heavy and dignified primate pelvises. Something is definitely going on in this universe. But as Carlyle said, everything that is not asbestos is going to burn in this revolutionary time. Well it has been burning since he wrote (1866), in two wars and nearly a third: but now it is really getting messy and crowded, and the solution that can possibly remain is the pure precipitate. Nature is forcing itself beautifully.

The whole point is that a truly free man cannot be an atheist. He must believe in some kind of cosmic process, in some self-transcending meaningfulness of nature—call it what you will. The reason seems very simple, but it reaches right into the heart of life and action. Since every organism is a part of its milieu, it is transcended by it in some way, and must feel itself part of a larger process, else it cannot live. On the human level, simply, this belongingness has become conscious; and, conscious, it is necessary to one's whole feeling about himself in the world.

The question arises as to why some people who profess not to need to believe in God or the cosmic—claim that they're truly free. When someone says that, look close to see exactly how he is *unfree*. I mean that everyone needs some self-transcending meaning, in order to be sustained in his own meaning. Usually it is the other, more dominant people—one way of getting along without thinking about the larger life process. Or, it may be science and technology, and all its gadgets and journals, etc. Another way of getting along [without] a belief in life as a whole. All these things are fetish

substitutes, in a way, for a clean belief in nature. Also, they go along with a generally low opinion of oneself. The truly free man is one who has to be critical of all other dominant people, as well as any fad such as science. Hence he is a locus of independent judgment, cut off from immediate fetishistic sustenance of his environment. But, as a locus of free judgment, he must believe in himself; and, believing in himself, but in nothing else that comes easily into his view, he must still believe that he is not a separate freak, not a cosmic joke—indeed, his very existence proves he is not. So, he must link up with the cosmic process in some way, recognize its meaningfulness in the universe, as someone, say, like [Joseph] Needham does. The truly free, critical spirit reaches, in other words, for a really superordinate source of sustenance.

This is the whole criticism, really, of Soviet atheism today: it is an atheism made possible by technological gadgetry and worship of thing-science—it is not a healthy atheism of free men, who identify with the cosmic process: because at that point, it is no longer atheism. We must look to see where the atheist gets his meaning, and then we will see in what particular way he is being abused. Small wonder that the truly Olympian and free souls in history could not be atheists—they had risen above the ordinary blind, everyday condition, and yet could not, as organisms, deny their link with sustaining nature—Goethe, Dante, Emerson, Kierkegaard, Carlyle, Santayana, etc., etc. It takes a truly autonomous man, in sum, to have simple “animal faith,” because only such a person is free of the automatic constraints of culture and other people.

Apr. 26, 1964

It is truly incredible how one can continue on, no matter how lonely, no matter how few of his deep hungers and desires are satisfied. Only the Higher Primates can live in such limbo of satisfaction, which is why they alone can be alienated. The lower animals live in a more constant tempo of closure with the world. So, when a Higher Primate finally is able to fulfill a deep yearning, he is carried away as if by a great person and his whole life can be wrecked or changed on it; the peaks are just too irresistible when they come, because the gullies between are so long and arid. Perhaps it is better to be a Higher Primate, and to wait for the great fulfillment:

tant pis [French, “so much the worse”] if it never comes—the waiting alone is life at a degree of tautness and yearning unknown in the universe, providing the individual is “conscious” of himself in relationship to the world. Is this some distinction?

Apr. 28, 1964

I think I am really beginning to appreciate what Santayana meant by a “naturalism of the background.” The fact is that all our objects fetishize our world—they are the *mysterium tremendums* which prevent us from acknowledging the great sweep of nature. The philosopher has to be liberated from the “surface” of life, he cannot be an impressionist, as S. so well said. Of course the human face is striking and beautiful—but so is the bluefish, and surely the cat rivals the primate for beauty. Is it possible that nature’s beauty is truly neutral, that the single objects count for nothing, but that the whole sweep of life is somehow the telling thing? In any event, the thinker, if he is to live and work with some equanimity, has to “tuck” himself back into the great sweep of life; objects fetishize us, make us slaves of the purely surface impression; periods of history skew our view terribly; our own life distorts our vision utterly—only the whole sweep from the beginning of time, from Paleolithic to the dynasties of Egypt (already beyond memory of Herodotus’ time), thru the long middle ages, and so on, can give us some kind of meaningful clarity.

There is only one danger in this for the creative person: and that is that it will blunt his passion, slow down his work—think what it would have done to Marx and Carlyle. And yet perhaps not: perhaps this is just what is needed to give one’s work and life an integral realism, that makes them better mouthpieces for the epoch as a whole. We shall certainly be able to judge this at some later date, if I succeed in accomplishing this necessary subjugation of myself to a larger natural perspective—and this is what I have to do: the disparity between my vision of things, and the way they are, is going to tear me apart unless I can live at Melville’s lower level of ecstasy—and this can only be done by renouncing the world, or by engaging in it from within a sound philosophy. I’m not ready to be a Custom’s Agent. In any event, where better to mull these matters over, than in Rome, between the Palatino and the Piazza S. Pietro. Broken stones, trees, and faces, faces.

Apr. 29, 1964

Perhaps that is really the crux of the problem of religion: since everyone trembles and is afraid alone, and since autonomy is impossible, then: let everyone be "afraid" together, in great forms of communal religious awe and cosmic community. The point is that being afraid alone leads to forms of behavior which are self-defeating and socially ruinous; and being afraid together when it is expressed in secular terms and not frankly religious transcendent ones leads to Nazism. This brief observation may encompass the whole powerful truth of personal religion, autonomy and freedom and communal religious forms.

Apr. 30, 1964

It is instructive that the modern dilemma goes back to the ambivalent resolution of the decline of the medieval cosmology. I mean of course that Lutheranism-Calvinism was a blessing and a curse. When Church authority was dead, man was forced to look within. The gain in freedom here was immense: cf. someone like Carlyle and his consciousness. But the fact is that authority for one's meanings still had to come from somewhere—so, in the tight family it came from the concretistic parental objects: as Carlyle said, his strength was built on the pillar in the ground that was his father. The problem, then, since the 19th century, has been taken forward very creatively by the Royce-Hocking tradition: the dilution of authority to the community, but in a new way of pragmatic tentativeness among equals. And so the revolt against the Church, when its authority became weak, may now issue its great fruit: a worldly mission, a true crusade of man within nature: a nature that is meaningfully transcendent, that concerns human efforts *here on earth*; and an authority for one's meanings that comes not from a few parental objects, or from a wrathful god, but from the whole "community of interpretation," and the relationship of equals, each bearing his transcendental effusion from within. This is really the legacy of Goethe and the idealists as Carlyle perceived it, but he could not go on to pragmatism, and to the elect of a whole community: not in his later work at any rate, although in *Chartism* [1839], in his thesis on education, it is there in the germ.

The fundamental question, then, for evaluating any religious issue, is: where does one get the authority for his meaning? The

answer will at once disclose whether the religion is individually liberating or constricting, socially constructive or destructive. The Catholics have only managed to hang on because they still give the semblance of a “community” which the Protestants have never been able to capture, since their creed was caught up in the private-gain mystique.

May 1, 1964

I just realized that it is a peculiar form of egotism, indeed, from which I suffer. It imagines that it is quite all right for everyone else to be living sacrifices to the forward momentum of humanity, to live and die in stupidity, passing thrills, catching at joys and sorrows; but that, just because in my head I happened to slip together some ideas that men have been putting forth in the past, this somehow entitles me to some special distinction, some special favors: the best homes, pleasures, etc. It is probably the same sentiment that such as Tolstoy had, who imagined that all men are mortal, but that nature would make an exception in this case. Imagine! Evidently because some thoughts had come together in his head, this gave his organism some peculiar distinction. Well, it is time to stop all this nonsense, and to be glad that in oneself the thoughts saw fit to merge, that they were easily acquired by intuition, and slow leafing in many fine books, etc. One should be thankful to be living in an elevated critical perspective, and not reach for other things that one still less deserves. After all, the rich are really working and earning their goods. Can I say as much for the ideas which came to me so effortlessly and intuitively, or in such calm moments of repose?

May 14, 1964

If there is one thing that characterizes my life, it is great good fortune. I seem to have blundered out of all the wrong things, and into the right ones! So that's how nature works her ways: blundering, with the desire to keep on. The moral is that we must at all costs facilitate the continuation of blundering, sustain it richly. But we will have to learn to blunder a bit more in unison, so to speak—it should not be such a lonely or fortuitous quest. At

least we have the proper take off point now: we have blundered into complete self-consciousness and the probability of self-liberation. It almost seems divinely contrived.

May 7, 1964

The really stupendous difficulty in achieving a *modus vivendi* with life resides in the terrible, ambivalent nature of the problem: on the one hand—stoicism, complete, Learian. On the other—a sort of Carlylean Calvinism: a knowledge that 6,000 years of history is meaningful, that life has positive value, and that one has a positive *active* task to fulfill. Notice the utter self-contradiction of the problem: utter stoicism—vs.—engaged activism. To live at “the lower level of ecstasy,” and yet, to believe in the highest level. Ah me—truly the Gods were not tasked with as much—unless God himself is the most tragic of figures.

May 12, 1964

It is perhaps most appropriate that the belief in God, like the idea of love, can refer to completely contradictory kinds of subjective experience. In love, it is generous tolerance and respect—vs.—sadism; in the belief in God, it is utter freedom and strength—real individuality and autonomy; or, at the end, blind, slavish subjection and superstition.

This was Tolstoy’s problem, as it comes out beautifully in Tikhon Polner’s biography [1945, *Tolstoy and His Wife*, W. W. Norton & Company]. His own groping for a source of transcendent validation for his own free and unique existence kept being fouled by the orthodox peasant and Church practice of religion. It is the problem of everyone. So, the question we must ask, when we see a group of religious people is: what kind of people are *practicing* the religion—free or slaves? The religion itself is a perfectly neutral vehicle—like love—of human becoming.

May 13, 1964

Tolstoy: “I thought that men should be satisfied with the realization and with the acceptance of the God within us, of the God

who placed his divine spark in us, and without striving to accept God in general. Strangely enough, I at once felt bored, depressed, and frightened. I had no idea why, but I felt that I had suddenly fallen spiritually, and that I have been deprived of all joy and spiritual energy" (in Polner, p. 193). Here it is again: the idea that God is simply immanent striving does not sustain one's own meanings and his existence *in a larger self-transcending framework*. Ergo, the need for "God in general." He had lost "spiritual energy" and felt empty—i.e., empty of meaning, if God is not "out there" in the universe, but instead is indistinguishable from oneself.

Another interesting thing is Tolstoy's reach for the peasant as a natural life force, *where the meaning truly resides*. One can suppose that all the revolutionary love and feeling for the "truth of the proletariat" was the investment of meaning by atheists—an investment into the natural life process; thus, they looked for support to the large, amorphous movement of life. Tolstoy tried it too, until he found that the peasant did not really think it was dignified or natural to work, but that it was a yoke he had to perform!

Conclusion? Simply this: that the really tribal sense of natural meaning and community, that the revolutionaries and that Tolstoy sought, could not be found in any larger, disintegrated society. It had to be found in a real, unified and meaning-creating society of truly free men.

This brings up another contemporaneous point: how does one get a truly meaning-creating society of free men? Evidently not by a totalitarian revolution. Look at Russia-China dispute: the revolution in Europe has sold out to consumer fetishism, purely and simply. What a great and terrible lesson: any revolution that suppresses free creation of individual meanings, *must end by fetishizing man again into competitive consumer posture*. Will China also go this way? Undoubtedly. The "hundred-poppies" period was a hope, and it failed. The answer then? Only a science of man in society that eliminates the need for a totalitarian revolutionary direction. This keeps meanings free and open, and consumer fetishism can never more in.

May 19, 1964

What an apt and grotesque juxtaposition of symbols, to convey the utter meaninglessness and incommensurability of life: i.e., my dream of a night at the opera and the symbol of a starving infant

with a piece of his insides protruding from his mouth. Truly horrible. The reaction of course is one of nausea—the typical reaction to meaninglessness, or better: to the lack of some firm support or indication of meaning. Cf. Carlyle’s “stomach trouble” when he became dissatisfied with his wife. Well, this is the life problem of the original spirit, so I had better settle down into it. Perhaps having a sharp image, and a dream reminder that this is my fundamental characterological problem—the shape that my fundamental characterological problem has now assumed—so that I can continue to take steps to meet it.

May 21, 1964

[Max] Scheler, after his Cologne period (having written that outstanding *The Divine Self*), gradually drifted into skepticism and despair; H. G. Wells, the author of *Anticipations*, wrote *Mind at the End of its Tether* 45 years later. How many others could one name, who had a firm and reasoned faith in the meaning of life, and yet who ended in pessimism and despair? What is the answer? One answer seems to me very compelling: namely, that to use one’s own life span as a time measure for the processes of evolution is the *final egotism* that leads to perdition. One could even go further and say that to use 2,000 years is still to try to read the impatience and limited perspective into natural evolution. If one is going to have *faith*, then one simply has to have *faith*, like Scheler in his Cologne period, and like the less-fanatic Tolstoy of the later period. One cannot ask to *see* the Promised Land, or even to get *hints* of it. One must work, as it is cut out for him, and stop trying to push nature. Today of course we can claim that things are tougher than ever. But we have no way of knowing that even an atomic war will not crimp the ineluctable groping of the life process; and that the self-knowledge we are building—the supreme self-awareness of man gained in only 2,000 years—will not one day be used finally to bring a truly superior time into being.

This was also [Friedrich] Meinecke’s conclusion, after alternating from objective idealism *à la* [Leopold von] Ranke, to materialism: that in the physical world there is tragedy; but in the unknowable higher world there is a higher meaning, and thus cause for hope.

May 24, 1964

To put in recent language what [William] James says in his magnificent essay "Reflex Action and Theism" [1956, In *The Will to Believe: And Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, Dover] the Gnostic quest to have perfect correspondence between reason and the deity it would apprehend, is like the positivist dream of having the structure of science correspond to our mental picture of reality. But reality does not approximate perfectly our tendencies towards it, either in science or theology. Hence, as James beautifully shows, the need for faith *in both fields*. Man is carried along by the total organismic will to put himself into ever-richer contact with ever-larger nature. Here is enough justification for the faith of science, as well as of theology.

May 25, 1964

I wonder if you cannot simply say, in naturalistic terms, to explain man's need for religion: Animals are "at home" in the universe; in order for the symbolic animal to be "at home" in it, he has to feel himself part of a larger meaningful whole, and "let go" of himself trustingly within it. Animals, after all, do "trust" at all times when immediate danger does not threaten. Man can "mistrust" at all times, even when there is no obvious danger. Cf. James' chapter on "healthy-mindedness" in *Varieties [of Religious Experience]*, 1958, Mentor], especially, last example: to be quarrelsome, aggressive, etc. in conversation is to be *insecure in one's meanings*. To find God is then to find a new security, ergo broad tolerance. Perhaps the thing that made the primitive most tolerant of beliefs is that he was really one with larger supernatural meanings; whereas his White counterpart, today, is not.

May 29, 1964

When Cardinal Newman called for a "Science of God" (James, *Varieties*, p. 426), he wanted a system of truths about God. But as James goes on to develop his ideas, he quite rightly sees that religious knowledge divorced from any effect on human *action* is meaningless to man. Thus, we can conclude that the Science of God, like the science of physics or of man, *must be an experimental science*.

Thus, the Divine reality, like the physical one and the human one, *will only be known as it can be known: in human effort and experience.* (Perhaps James [goes] on to develop this idea himself, I have to read further. If he does not, then Newman's idea should be developed, and the Science of God will be approached through the science of men in society—as Comte had actually wanted.)

Furthermore, when we consider God in his pragmatic effects on human conduct (James, *Varieties*, pp. 437-8 & footnote), the matter becomes very meaningful. For example, James says that the idea of retributive justice is pragmatically most important, but that we cannot accept this idea. Then, we must develop a theory of God which is both reasonable—a reasonable idea of why he created the universe; and, which allows us to develop a code of action. This is undoubtedly the problem that theologians have [to] be occupied with. The only answer that occurs to me, and it was mentioned by James in his *Essays on Faith and Morals* [1962, New American Library] is that God is *less than perfect*: therefore, he needs human help in moralizing the universe.

This allows us to keep to a notion of both an immanent and an external god, and also gives us a man-centered imperative. It fits perfectly with a science of man in society, perhaps the only hypothesis that does. *So that, the experimental science of God* (cf. Newman) *becomes the experimental science of morality in society*—which is just what Christ urged. Cf. Tolstoy's insistence on *acts* also. Now an experimental morality is just what the science of man *can underwrite at this point in history, perhaps for the first time, because we know that man is good.*

(I must fill this out, too, with the reminder that Newman's idea of science is the 19th c. idea: Science as *system*. But today we know that Science is evolution, not structure. Hence, a new *developing theology* to replace the previous static one. This is beautiful—too good: someone has surely thought of it and worked it out. See James p. 446; 479 ff.)

June 4, 1964

Goethe of course hit it right on the nail when he said that we ought to take man as he is, and not as we want him to be—and then he's all right. But this is only one corner of the triad—since if we take man as he is, period, this gives us nothing to work toward—*unless we believe in the Fall*. By this I mean the other two points of the triad are: we take man as he is, and work

towards an *ideal* of what God might want man to become, aided by our own active efforts to achieve this ideal. Thus, we take man as he is, *not because he has fallen in sin*, but because he has *not arrived* at what he should become. The God-plus-Human efforts are prospective, and not retrospective. But in either case, we can understand the tolerance of the religious man for man the sinner who has fallen; it is the same compassion we should have for any animal who is “stopped” on the way to any kind of better state.

But, again, taking man “as he is,” with no call *upon one’s own energies*, within a projected ideal of *what God might need our help* in tending toward—this single focus is sterile, and we must sooner or later fall from our toleration. We need the full triad. This is all James, of course, in one way or another—man’s efforts, plus imperfect God in a pluralistic universe.

The whole problem that James faced is one of passivity toward the God, versus activity in the subject which are in ambivalent tension: passivity = no call on one’s efforts; activity = *what kind of strange and unimaginable God*. No wonder James tended toward the arms of the absolute, and then rebelled from it: it would annihilate James’ efforts. But it is just this ambivalent tension which seems to explain the strange and unimaginable God best: Why after all do we have such [a hard] time being passive and trusting, if God were not somehow connected with our own efforts—passiveness then seems a *surrender of Godly powers themselves*. Overactivity, on the other hand, is simply not possible, *since we get our major meanings from outside ourselves*. Here is the religious problem in a nutshell, with which James and so many others have struggled. I am sure it has been covered by better theological minds than myself—but at least I have arrived at it for myself too.

This is another reason *why we need our fellow man*: he makes the human efforts of the strange God *more believably necessary*—because we see them in great number and energy. Thus, in the great community of free men, *it would theoretically be easier to be active and passive at the same time: because passivity is shared, and activity seems to make its weight more clearly felt!* This is the stage of the problem that the individualist James did not get to—nor did Tolstoy.

June 11, 1964

The problem of “nature’s immortality” and possible meaninglessness, really derives from the starkness of life. We imagine that

nature is potentially evil and meaningless, because to us the *concrete* life is of positive value. Actually, the only way to sanity in this business is to try to see clearly what exactly nature's value is—what she is really up to. Each life is built on a chasm of bones, and the earth is a graveyard. Okay. But is nature trying to preserve life? Not at all: she is concerned only with one thing it seems: *the creation of "more-life."* She is not looking to a utopia in which all life will be preserved, and even animals need not be slaughtered: this would be impossible on the conditions of life itself. But evolution surely shows the production of ever-more life.

Now this fact not only puts meaning squarely back into nature, and makes life a positive value. It does something much more: *it points in the direction of a morality in harmony with nature's intent.* I mean of course, a morality which would assure "more-life." The task of the science of man, then, as a moral science, is to outline the conditions for "more-life," and thus put itself at the behest of furthering nature's intent. It is already clear from the unified science of man what this morality is: not capitalism, not totalitarianism of any form; but a new humanism that seeks the expansion of the greatest number of *individual centers* of life. Thus, "more-life" shifts from mere number, where it has remained until now, to an increase in the quality of action and the productions of consciousness, where it has only slowly and sporadically shown its effects so far.

This means, finally, that nature has put the moral mandate into the whole tradition of humanists and scientists of man (considered broadly), and it is now our task to carry on the production of "more-life." The scientists of man, and their historic ancestors, thus show themselves to be a true elite, an elite for which the whole of the rest of mankind can be said to exist, as a sustenance to their efforts and direction. Of course I cannot mean this [in] an "elitist" sense that excludes anyone from their potential development. The elite, as it exists at this point in history, is the small body who carry the seed for the expansion of all:—it is in this sense that I mean elite. But it is a sense which seems to me indisputable, because we know exactly where the other "elites" stand on the moral question—the *natural moral question*, it is a pleasure and privilege to say—of "more-life": i.e., the Pentagon, the Birchers, the Russians, and the communists in general: they are against "more-life" almost wholly.

July 31, 1964 (back in Syracuse!)

There is a point at which the scientist's "trust" is more strictly rational than the poet's nihilism. I mean that, for example, for all his avowed atheism, someone like Freud could not conclude his credo with the very last lines from Kazantzakis's *The Saviors of God* [1960, Simon and Schuster]. The fact is that the scientist does see—and sense—the cumulativeness of meanings in the advance of knowledge: he knows their definite meliorative powers, and is thus, in a sense, plugged into a direct line of naturally cumulative meaning. The optimism of rationalism is an optimism of people who are building cumulative knowledge and know it. The despair of irrationalism or extreme romanticism is a despair of poets who see and sense only flux and change, and ignore cumulation.

August 21, 1964

Nietzsche's dictum on style says all that needs to be said, once and for all, on this subject: "Improving our style means improving our ideas, and nothing else" (*Human, All Too Human*, p. 261). Now, applying this, we notice many things heretofore puzzling. For example, why is it that someone with an extremely broad and erudite mind can write so badly. I sense, in certain cases—in fact more than sense—that the reason is that this particular thinker, for all his erudition, *has not proceeded* to a superordinate theoretical conception. It is this alone that orders, relates, and *spreads out and paces* his ideas. It is after all the superordinate conception that alone orders and clarifies erudition. Interestingly too, it is often the real innovator who presents a system, who writes with perfect clarity and sequential exposition. Freud comes to mind here—the point being that the systematizer is the one who has really ordered his thoughts, by definition and by fact. And in my own work of applying Dewey's phenomenology to the problem of mental illness: the clarity of Dewey's ideas thus retranslated is due to the fact that I've related them to a broader and at the same time precise theoretical frame. When he wrote there they were pure genial intuitions for the most part, and hence necessarily vague or poorly communicable. Thus, instead of saying that *The Style is the Man*, we should have to go further, and say: *The Style is the Mind*, is the level or Knowledge at that particular epoch. It is conceivable that one day we shall have a Plato-Aristotle who

will write within the covers of one book the clearest and simplest exposition of all man knows—and *this precisely because he really knows it*, has really arrived at a superordinate vantage point for the digestion of all knowledge. In this view, we are wrong to fear the multiplication of knowledge: what we see multiplying is non-knowledge, useless precisions, blind speculations, Alexandrian inquiries on logical lines, and so on. Real, cumulative knowledge may one day boil down to a most simple body. Which leads to a final speculation: Is God's basic knowledge itself really absurdly simple?

Sept. 6, 1964

Is it really possible that Kazantzakis's terrible vision and intuition is the correct one for our time: that man is here to burn, and that our epoch is the one of the great burning up? I feel the truth of this intuition more and more—it pervades me like [a] thrill: a terrible and yet colorful and awesome unfolding. Africa, India, S.E. Asia, the Americas, Europe: life consuming itself in fire, famine, cruelty, oppression. And this is the point: all this is happening *not primarily* because *reason* is failing to do its job: but even more awful: it would happen anyway, because reason cannot do the job at this epoch in history. There is no alternative than to burn things up, because the best thought simply cannot be implemented to save us. What will come out of this crucible? Again the awesome thought: *perhaps just that which it is reason's task to help realize*: the new dignity of life and the respiritualization of man's relationship to the cosmic mystery. In sum, it may be that this has to be forged in the crucible of blood, and cannot be *by its very nature* forged in that of reason.

Sept. 7, 1964

On reading Hegel's philosophy of history: is it just possible that we are coming to an epoch which will make a new reconciliation with the conceptualization of human destiny that Hegel represents? Isn't the last 100 years the epoch par excellence of reaction against Hegel because, he hampered *human activity and agency*. But now, having put this into effect, and laboring under the necessity of putting it into effect, we have completely dispersed *any idea*

of what the agency might serve. Are we entering an age in which human agency will be reconciled with the Divine Idea working itself out in nature? After all, history shows that we do not go on reacting against a world-historical conceptualization, long after the fruits of the reaction have been attained. And it seems to me that Hegel's conceptualization is the logical successor to the decline of the Providential cosmology dispensed by the Church. Instead of history serving man's redemption, i.e., the earth as a proving ground for man—man serves and is consumed by God's purpose—the earth as the ground for the realization of the Divine.

Sept. 11, 1964

The realization is truly an astounding revelation: you cannot be a truly ethical man if you have hope. At least not in today's world. The whole point is truly immense: in modern society it is hope that is at the root of the destruction of the human element: either alienated, naive unfounded hope as in commercial-industrial society; or historicist, self-defeating, anti-human hope, as in communist industrial society. As *Toda Raba* [1964, by Nikos Kazantzakis, Simon & Schuster], so well shows: only Geranos the true humanist and pacifist—precisely because he did not believe in man as an end, or in any type of goal *which would realize human benefits and human returns*. Ergo, Kazantzakis's "rotten-thighed" hope as the last whore to be abandoned. This came home again in my argument with John Crump: he holds to a "cataclysmic theory of social change": anything is good which "promotes the dialectic" and brings things to a point. Why is it good? Because it takes a toll of life? Because it brings disaster and chaos? No—because some "good may come of it." Phoenix out of the ashes of the cataclysmic theory: the mystical hope again.

Only when we realize what K. so well understands will we be able to bring our own moral freedom in line with natural process: namely, *that man is already being sacrificed* for a goal which transcends him, ergo it is not for humans to sacrifice others *for their ends*. But what about the revolution? What does one actually *do* to the counter-revolutionaries? Alas, here in context the act calls with its own logic: and one must make the motions *as if* he had hope.

Oct. 29, 1964

Very good symbolic dream—worth recording. Triggered by talk with Ron [Leifer] about several individuals' identity-crises, and whether I also had had them, but had been able to overcome them. The dream is about a smoldering oil-stove at 402 Chestnut St. It is extremely dangerous to pick up or handle *by myself*, for fear that it will explode at any second and destroy me with flaming oil. I throw my yellow frayed shirt over it, but it only burns the shirt and becomes more dangerously active. Finally, I take it with extreme caution and very slowly descend the front stairs with it, and throw it upon the lawn—where it extinguishes itself. The interpretation of the dream is evident: The smoldering oil-stove is the personality-crisis that one does not dare take in hand, for fear of being engulfed. The scene, of course, took place where I was born and grew up. Throwing the shirt over the stove is the naive hope that the deep-seated smoldering problem can be choked out by an identity-rag—but it cannot. I then successfully attack the problem with my own powers, and defeat it. Thus proving that what I told Ron is true: I have been able to overcome my own core, smoldering identity problems, with my own resources.

Nov. 15, 1964

An intriguing speculation: The two times in my life (which I remember) when I had conflicts with oppressive authority figures in jobs over me (at the U.S. Embassy, and Upstate Med. Center)—were both times in which I was plagued by back-trouble: the first time was lumbago and other types of pain; the second was actual cervical arthritis, as revealed by X-ray. Now isn't it fascinating to note, for whatever it may be worth, that one of my major autonomy-crises was when, in my teens, I had to pretend that my back was hurt in the bicycle accident because my father wanted to collect some insurance? I remember how I protested against this, how I chafed at it, and how I succumbed to the heteronym with despair. The whole matter would seem pure fantasy, to connect the early "trauma" with particular body illness, so definitely localized, and so observable, were it not for a further striking fact: that the back trouble *completely cleared up* on both occasions mentioned, as soon as I quit the jobs!

Feb. 7, 1965

God in his infinite wisdom remains hidden (Kant), because if we were to experience Him as a definite object, we would become slavish, oppressed (var. Hegel), and His work would no longer be freely done through us.

Apr. 9, 1965

The best that God can do is a helpless baby; the best that I can do is a problematic book. And so God works his ways.

May 8, 1965

The whole contrast between true Christianity and bourgeois progressivism (including Marxist progressivism) is summed up in the valuation of the personality vis-a-vis the valuation of the world. In the Christian view, the person, including all that lives in nature *is of greater value than the earth*. The fallen state is thus *fallen* into the earth—not fallen in value *as life*, but fallen into a *less worthy sphere* of existence. We have only to look at a person in all his complex suffering magnificence; or a child, in all his amazing neutral potential of becoming—and, looking at these, we have only to see how life treats them, what they have to expect *from* the world. It is, as Bossuet [17th century French bishop and theologian] said, that worldly honors are unworthy of true Christians. Life, as existence emerging from essence, is the source of God's greatness; the earth is merely the unworthy stage for this drama. Tillich says this too when he urges that nature too "is fallen"—that trees, etc., must be redeemed also.

Contrast this with bourgeois and Marxist progressivism: *for them the idea is that life on earth can be good, that the earth with its gadgets and stuff, is good enough for man*. Even: too good. Note that the Russians have a legal fine for failing to keep up one's car. Examples from the U.S. on the greater valuation of things than of persons are not necessary: the whole culture screams it out. The whole of modern ideology, in whatever camp, is thus opposed to the Christian valuation of the person: it screams out that life on earth can be good, that earth (and now outer space) is greater and

better than man; that it is an arena for the exercise of his trickster-hood, as globe-jet-traveler; as space-ship manipulator and stepper-outer, etc. It is one vast merry-go-round of manipulatory pleasure; and it is a merry-go-round that screams out: the earth is greater than man.

When Radin's Indian declares [1960, in *The World of Primitive Man*, Grove Press], on seeing New York, that nature is great, but Man is greater still, Radin takes this as a humanist declaration that the primitive may teach us. But we now see here the subtle and confused clash between humanism, primitivism, Christianity, and modern technicism (bourgeois or Marxist). The Indian does not mean that man is greater than nature, but that nature as life—in man—is greater than things. And this is what primitive spiritualism declares; and what Renaissance humanism declares; and what Christianity declares. But it is not what modern technicism says. But Christianity goes beyond primitivism and humanism, precisely in that they have come to terms with earth. To the extent that primitives have adapted to earthly life, they have devalued the spiritual person—which is what they will do *for the sake of peaceful adaptation* (by killing anyone who disrupts the spiritual balance, etc.). Enlightenment humanism also came to terms with earth, and devalued man: witness the solid front against Rousseau by the other philosophers: it was not the individual they valued. The whole difference shows in Melville vs. Ben Franklin. After all, what destroys Ahab and the others, but the bending of inexhaustible human energies to obsessive earthy tasks. And this is true Christian criticism.

Nietzsche's superman can be criticized for the same thing, as Unamuno does. But I wonder whether in that vision the superman becomes such by transcending earthly meanings from within his personality. And perhaps with this Nietzsche charted the true Christian compromise: the use of earth as a mere testing ground of higher divine significance. The superman does not adapt to life: *this is where pagan Dionysianism failed*—it adapted to the new conditions of Greek life. The superman carries on the transformation of the earth with his own meanings. This is what Greek Dionysianism failed to do—and thus the ritual *became drama*, it became a spectatorship. *And then it discovered "tragedy."* The earlier ritual was power. But when man stopped "playing power," and began to reflect on *his attempted adaptation*, then he could see the *tragic nature of life: the tragedy is already the Christian one*: that man is greater than the conditions which earth provides for his

fulfillment, expression, and happiness. But this could not be discovered until man tried to adapt to earth *on its terms*, rather than using the earth, as the primitives did, *as a vehicle for the expression of divine meanings*.

Christianity, then, re-primitivized the whole thing, *and yet kept the action centered on man*: the earth was the scene for the expression of divine meanings working through man. But it was not good enough for those meanings, and adaptation was not possible or desirable. Hence, the end of the world as an integral element of early Christianity. *It was, finally, the adaptation of the church to the non-ending of the world that was eventually to vitiate Christianity. Luther tried to revive it by infusing the Divine into everyday acts, but for this a new theocracy would have been necessary, and not a new commercial fetishized quest* (or a continuation, rather, of the medieval one). The adaptation of the Renaissance, the 18th c., then the 19th and the 20th, completely ruined the Christian overvaluation of life and devaluation of earth.

Only today, in the mid-20th century, is such an original primitive-Christian vision again possible! Today we see that the earth is not good enough for man, because even modern man has not been able to make it so, *even though he himself is so empty and devalued that he is good enough for earth*. Still, it will not do: earth is still not good enough even for this poor specimen.

July 2, 1965

Interesting dream reflecting my new probings and revaluation of Judaism, on reading Buber and Hasidism. Before going to bed I was invaded by the most wonderful ideas and feelings about my own heritage and past; thinking, since I have decided to re-poetize and re-mythicize my world-view, why not Judaism in preference to Christianity? After all, as Buber so well understands it, Judaism is really the sanctification of the community, and offering it up to God. And the belief is that when the whole world is thus sanctified the Messiah will come.

Here is the dream: I am in Paris (I think), and a very large popular men's store—the time is some time back. My uncle Max owns the store, and it is the origin of much of our men's fashions, etc.—gabardine raincoats, for instance. I notice that the French gabardine raincoats are very cheap, and I do not particularly want any. But what I do ask for is something to eat. Max brings out a plate

for me to eat on, and I remark how beautiful is its design; but he says it is a very ordinary plate, although I find it superbly beautiful in its simplicity. I eat. That's all I remember of the dream.

The interpretation, of course, is direct. The "French" world, the world of the development of my identity, and my secularization also, has behind it the world of my own traditions and ancestors—represented by uncle Max. I don't really want anything of the fabricated goods of this identity-supplying (clothes) French world; what I really want is the basic food of the Hebrew world. The dish that is used is really to them very ordinary and basic, but I now find it exquisitely beautiful in its simplicity. (Cf., my thoughts yesterday on the supreme idea that the Old Testament talks about the Beauty of God.)

July 8, 1965

What am I to make of this vivid and remarkable dream? In a railroad station, a family of—what can I call the extreme clarity, humanity, brightness, and yet distinctly Orangutan quality of their faces? Well, this family greets me with a kindly and strange word, something like "krogmal"—which means "thank you" or "congratulations" (in the dream of course). Then, one of their members is very sick, and fears he will die. But I console him, and am sure that he will get well and live. In parting, he extends his hand and grips mine—and his hand, in contrast to the extreme cleanliness of their faces, is very dirty and filmy greasy. I shudder, and wipe it carefully when I leave him.

What to make of this? I think it sums up beautifully the character of my preoccupations and anxieties at the present time. The railway station is of course the symbol for the historicity of events and their progression. The ultra-human yet Orangutan people is a potential development of man, that congratulates me on my work: i.e., my work is relevant to the family of man, and to history, if not to my people in my time. But even this family is threatened with extinction (the dying man). And this is brought most distastefully home to me by his all too-human greasy handshake. In other words, the specter of death for all mankind, and the race as a whole, as well as future life in human form—it is all under the potential curse of death. And my work, not meaningful to my own time, may be meaningless to all time.

Dec. 5, 1965

On seeing Rod Steiger in *The Pawnbroker*. The film is in itself a whole theory of personality and self-transcendence, the problem of meaning and integrity of the self. In order for Steiger to be able to carry on in the face of the destruction of all that he loved, the death of his children, the violation of his wife—and *his powerlessness to do anything*, as he lamented—in order to carry on, he had to repress. That is, to narrow his personality down around a single theme. And this, as he told the helper, was money. Money was next in importance to Einstein's theory, as he said.

But narrowing down to this fetishized theme also meant, obviously, closing off his personality from receptivity to others. Ergo, whomever he came into contact with he caused further to fall back upon themselves, because of his own need to keep closed (all the people in the pawnshop, the woman who offered her love, the Negro who wanted to talk, etc. etc.).

And then, when the memories of the past kept coming back, he could not contain them. The breaking point was when he found he was earning money made on prostitutes—the final self-degradation recalling his wife's degradation, and the utter destruction of his personality: because the focus on money was dirty, meaningless, money, earned through the destruction of people,—i.e., he remained alive on the destruction of others—which is just the theme he wanted to bury from his past.

Thus, the "schizoid break," the complete opening of his personality—first in seeking out the woman who befriended him; then, in wanting to die at the hands of his Negro employer; finally, wanting to be shot by the hold-up men. But when the young helper was shot instead, the whole world then cracked open in its meaninglessness. The ending was both symbolically perfect, as well as correct in terms of personality dynamics: i.e., what do you do when all the images of meaninglessness rush by your mind, and you cannot control them? You make your body a focus point of feeling and centeredness, by causing it extreme pain—thus, he puts his hand thru the spindle. (Just like Bellelheim's young schizophrenics: same motif—the control of a fluid and evanescent world by focusing pain on one's self, like the primitive). Of course, it has the Christ-motif too—the stigmata on the hand. And it is also the Christ theme: when the universe is just overwhelming with its senselessness—when the whole out[side] world becomes an overwhelming object with which one cannot cope, then one humbles

oneself completely, allows oneself to be destroyed by it, thus granting it validity, and finding one's place in it.

Thus, we might say that from Steiger and schizophrenia to Christ is just the same quality of reactivity. But note well the difference: Christ *lived* as an unrepressed, open person, and thus affected the quality of life of those who touched his, in a positive way (Steiger, remember, was actually responsible for teaching his helper to value money above all, and so triggered the robbery). The sacrifice, then, of the open person, is *the proper sacrifice*, since it relates him to the unknown source of all meaning, even while enriching and opening lives of those he comes into contact with. *This* is the difference between personality disorder and true religiosity.

And so we see in utter clarity why people live repressed lives—why they close their personality to a narrow focus of meaning: the academicians, the Pentagon, the administrators—the whole world in fact, except the religious genius. And the reason is that to open oneself means to potentially lose oneself in a maze of meaninglessness. *Unless* one is willing then to center meaning on his *own painful self-sacrifice*. In other words, the open self is the “masochist” by the very necessity of his adaptation. And so we can understand why it takes a *truly strong* personality to be willing to make this sacrifice, to live this style of life. The only way to make sense out of the maximum meaninglessness that comes with unrepressed living is to *refer oneself to the ultimate source of meaning*, and this means automatically to humble oneself. When one realizes that he is unable to do anything, then he himself must become *as nothing*. And this is more than can be asked of the mass of men, since we must live and work and continue on—which also explains why the Christian conversion must always come after the experience of one's own utter worthlessness—one's basic “sinfulness.”

May 5, 1966

The problem of the Christian witness as the open person, from a position of strength. What exactly do we mean when we call this openness “strength”? Why is it strong to make no distinction between the public and private in one's life and thoughts, to reveal oneself as one feels oneself to be at the moment, with no thought to dissimulation, or to self-flattery? Why is one willing to appear the fool, only to preserve the feelings of others—where is the

strength in all this? Wherein does it differ, say, from masochistic, weak openness? I think in this: that it is the “strength of innocence”—that is, the strength that comes with not imagining *that there is anyone one could be responsible for*. It is the innocence (and strength) of not having to, or imagining that one has to, refer everything to one’s own *self*—since one does not have any sharp consciousness of a self that he is responsible for. One is responsible only for others, only for preserving and enhancing them. One has nothing to affirm, or to defend: one is *innocent* of any motives. One knows that he is *worthless, et voila tout* [French, “and that’s all”]. Thus, we might say that one has the “strength” of not having to maintain any “personality defenses,” any artificial “self-affirmations.” One’s “center” is absorbed in a higher center (or a “deeper” one)—a transcendence or an ontological immanence, or both at once. Thus, one is in the world, but not confined to the world. One has, in a word, the “strength” of multidimensionality, the strength of extra levels. What one has “lost” in the form of entrenched “defenses” around oneself, one gains in “depth” of inner reference-points, so to say. We might say that the personality, instead of being an “armored tank,” becomes a vast and open territory: when the enemy invades it, he finds no opposition, no target—no “worthy” opponent. He thinks, then, that he sees a weak and willing prize to conquer; but before he knows it, he has been used up by his own scorched earth policy, and the vast and open territory stretches out as calmly and inviting as before. This is a way of describing an encounter between a “closed” and an “open” person, then—of two types of strength: the armored one obvious and apparent, real and destructive; it is a strength that has effects in the world. The other is not obvious and not even real. But neither is it destructive; yet, it does have effect on the world: like the vast and inviting territory of the invaded land, it causes the invaders themselves to change when they enter into contact with it.

The Christian witness, then, is the strength of innocence, and of transformation of others. As Luther and Hamann held, God’s transformation into the visible world was a *labor of humility*. [Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788), a Prussian critic of the late German Enlightenment.] God humbles Himself in the drama of creation. Is this the way man also must work, in order to continue creation? But God also creates via the destruction caused by the closed personalities—the masses of men and their leaders, all thru history. “And God hardened the Pharaoh’s heart . . .” Thus, we don’t know. We can only, like Hamann, look for signs of how

God's grace is going to work; by granting humility, or by hardening hearts. From the way it looks, the last decades of this century will be a history of hardened hearts and unlimited destruction. *But if God is weak, he must work also in this way!!!*

In other words, God in his *weakness*, in his humbling of Himself into creation, can only work in weak ways: either by grace allowing people to become Christian witnesses; or by lack of grace, causing destruction to be wreaked upon the world. Now, by grace, of course, we mean the "opportunity" afforded by the whole context of the accident of one's life in society and history.

Thus, grace is the only kind of "election" that one could expect from a "weak" God: the "election" of the accidents that develop within the miracle of creation. (The "miracle" as Hamann so beautifully saw, is not special divine intervention, but Creation itself, the first "let there be light"—the primitive experience of the wonder of the opportunity of life.)

Thus, and only thus, are we in a position to understand, once and for all, the utter responsibility of the Christian witness for a new kind of conduct: he is the locus and culmination of a whole web, an infinite web of accident, circumstance, death, sickness, plague, history, that caused him to have this new consciousness—(which is what we term "grace"—this whole complex of events). In other words, he is the heritor of all the anguished loving humiliation of a weak God to bring into being a new kind of moral action: a new courage in the face of life, a new witness to the truth of creation, a new consolation to less fortunate spirits. The Christian life is the lived indebtedness to a weak and loving God.

This means that each act and each thought of the Christian witness is the manifestation, in the present, of an eternal call. If he shirks the duty of truly new being, he *actively betrays the weak and loving God*.

Does this make too much of man? But man is "made in God's image": he is fashioned for a divinely ordained task (Is. 49).

But what, finally, are we to make of Kierkegaard's repeated insistence that for God "everything is possible"? We can say that indeed this is so, but in a way that we cannot understand. We can only hope and trust, even as we act. And it is this chasm across which we walk, and perhaps again, the only appropriate chasm provided by the weak and loving God, who both uses man up like chaff, and yet needs him.

June 20, 1966

Interesting Taoist-Kierkegaard dream: At the beginning, someone has a (how shall I describe it?—folding footlocker-val-pack) which no one can open, and has not been opened for years. I say cockily that I can open it—but fail to do so. Later in the dream, the occasion occurs again, this time seemingly more impossible; I now say I can do it—I will only be the instrument of its opening. It opens. I run to the man who gave it to me, who is shaving in the bathroom, shouting, “A miracle, a miracle, bow down to God!” and I kneel down and give thanks.

The interesting thing is the symbol of the footlocker, whence all earthly identities and adaptations come; the other is the circumstance under which I announce the miracle: in the pedestrian atmosphere of everyday shaving. The miraculous, then, does not break through spectacularly into the world. It comes with submission of self to God’s grace.

Jan. 30, 1967

The recurrent oedipal problem, appearing this time in an unusual guise. I was uncommonly unsettled by talking with a Jewish convert to Christ in the local Campus Crusade for Christ evangelical push. But I didn’t know why or in what way, until the next morning when I had to meet my large (over 900) class in Wheeler Auditorium. Suddenly, on the way to the university, the old terror of loss of control, of inability to carry thru in the face of the large task of meeting an audience that I had met so calmly (relatively) and self-assuredly so many times before. This gave me the clue: what had manipulated me?—what had deprived me of my sense of command, of *freedom*? Then I remembered: Dick Lichtman was with the N.Y. Jew-Christian and myself for a few minutes, and had opposed him, e.g., refusing to reveal his own beliefs and inner self, as the Evangelist did; “I was lost until I felt Christ touch my head, etc.—I went down on my knees—go home tonight and do it, believe me—you are unfinished until you do, only a half-person until you are saved, etc.” Well, I sympathized with this, and spoke to him partly on his terms: in a word, I opened myself up to him *and was manipulated by him*; I was given instructions into the Truth, and in effect, called a “schmuck” in so many words, by another sadistic Jew-turned-Christian. The

thing that made it so undermining was *that I was being manipulated in the very area and by the very symbols that I had freely chosen for my own liberty and strength*: in other words, my freedom was co-opted and preempted not by someone who pooh-poohed my choice, but by someone who claimed to have done it better.

So there it was, and there it is: we must insist on maintaining our integrity, our choice, *our freedom*. When this is encroached, we are reduced to *determined and manipulated things*. And this is the crisis that W. James also went thru. Only when I saw what had happened did the pressure lift, and I breathed freely again. I could turn again to the Bible reading and my relationship to God as a *free* act, and not as dictated on a model by another man. I was not pre-empted. I dreamt that night that I had bought a pair of *purple* corduroy slacks: obviously I felt that my identity was grotesque, but the reason did not appear until the next day. I also dreamt after that that I went into a bar (French?) and everyone was ordering a strange national drink, sort of milky-brandy thing. I ordered one, and discovered to my surprise that it was made out of stringed egg-whites, such as remain in the pan from poached eggs. Evidently, the bartenders made their living by buying up this poached-egg residue, and selling it as a deluxe drink, at great profit. I seemed to be the only one to realize this. Interpretation? After the purple slacks, probably a revelation of my individuality in the face of what everyone else accepts as “proper nourishment”—but which will not do for me. Probably an enjoiner to the right to choose my own life-nourishment. At least, in retrospect of the next day’s crisis and analysis, this is what it would best reflect.

In any event, the crisis has reinforced my belief that a teacher and friend must follow the Socratic model of non-transferences, non-interference teaching, so far as that is possible at all. We must awaken *the individuality and freedom*—permit them to make *their own choice*. Otherwise, we are sadists and enslavers. No man is a model for any other one, except as he shows that freedom and individuality are possible: he should be a freeing model, not a binding or molding one.

March 1967

Interesting dream: Awesome and fantastic monster that lives in a deep lagoon. It somehow falls to me to *copulate* with it (and

thereby placate it?). Anyway, it has to be copulated with, and I am the one. The thing is somewhat incommensurate, given its size in comparison to me. But the main thing is that I must first *talk with* it, for a while. Evidently, this will “placate” it, or make it somehow amenable, fearsome as it is, to this new human and necessary contact.

The only thing I can figure out, is the analogy from [Lucien] Goldmann’s work on Pascal [1964, *The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision in the Pensees of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine*, Routledge]: viz., that we can enter into contact with substance, with the ground of things, but that for man it is important to enter into a cognitive relationship and preparation *first*. So, the monster is the awesome ground of things, with which I must make connection; *but intellectual preparation and relationship comes before the actual ontological organic one.*

May 1967

Interesting dream about wearing out the soles a second time on my good brown shoes. I take them to a shoemaker, and he says that these tops cannot be re-soled again. I then decide to wear them out as they are. Obvious identity dream in line with the current crisis; viz., I have worn out *two identities* already on my present body (two “souls” “soles”?), and thus can graft no more new ones on. This accords with my present situation, in which my intellectual identity seems, too, to be “worn” out: i.e., leading nowhere in really creative terms. This is what has been bothering me: that my 5 books, and my theoretical work, are *completely beside the point of the present social and world crisis*. Thus, I am called upon to make a new “platonic” adaptation: realize that as a man of knowledge, I am superfluous to power and action.

Nov. 28, 1967

In a very real sense, and when all is said and done about one’s life, his hopes, fears, plans, weighings, refrainings, judgments, preventions, cares, attentions, considerations—it is proper that one should be little more than a reflex of his situation and times; that he should be jerked about by his neurosis; completely involved in a fetishistic way in his choice of life and career. All this thought

and distancing, all this attempt to rise above the actions and passions, and judge it and one's work in relation to it; all this attempt to keep one's life and perpetuate one's work and potential influence: what is it worth? Does one pretend to be *God*? The ingratiating thing about Socrates, when all is said and done about him, is that for all his thought and reflection, he too was but a reflex of his "*daimon*," his "game," his life and times. Let us live, work and die like the poor mortals that we are: but wholeheartedly, and unreservedly. This is faith in God, instead of the attempt to replace him by trying to rise above one's life.

Dec. 16, 1967

It would be ironic and somewhat fantastic if Dr. Botkin was correct—and yet it would be proper too: the most advanced theorist of psychosomatics is not immune from repeating in his own life the panoramas that he detects in others—as Freud himself proved in his own self-analyses, and his erroneous self-analyses.

I won't have the laboratory results back till Monday, but Botkin doesn't think that anything is really wrong me, based on his examination. He as much as said that it was a hypochondriacal fabrication of mine—this long 2 month illness stemming from the virus cold; and now terminating with this chest heaviness and continued fatigue and weakness. When I told him it was serious enough that "I even missed my weekly guitar lesson, something I had never done—as I told my wife," that was the final straw for him, that it was psychological: I was trying to prove to her and to myself that it was serious.

It would be a proper reaction to the whole unesthetics of my life here in S.F. [State University], and the sharp change it represents; from Berkeley: going from a first-rate campus to a second-rate commuter one. Going from a great platform teacher of classes of a thousand, to a kind of Syracuse Extension teacher of 90 commuting, half-interested students. Throw in my sharp change in home life: instead of going to a campus and spending the day, I mope around at home 5 days a week and fall into a baby-sitting role most of the time. Add to this the stinking domestic and world situation: the utter failure of the university, and the tradition of knowledge I represent; instead, the victory of the demagogues and the punks, and the inevitability of social unrest and repression, where relevant and vital knowledge is only a vague ghost off

scene. Add to it my general feeling of being *dépaysé* [French, “lost” or “out of one’s element”] here on the Coast: I dislike the freeways and the whole thing, and we have no friends here, and no familiarity with vacation spots, etc. If I conjured up an illness on the basis of all this, this total blockage of meaning on which my life depends, it would be no surprise. We’ll know Monday.

Monday: *That’s correct!*

Apr. 2 1968

Phil de Fremery’s thought that music achieves its effect by repetition; and that therefore it conveys the inevitable; and that somehow, the total effect of variation of repetitions, within a unity that is inevitable, reconciles one to one’s whole life—this is the experience of the musician. [Phillip de Fremery, a student of Andres Segovia, is a classical guitarist.]

This is beautiful, and makes me think that if you had to sum up *all* art it would be on these lines: They stress inevitability, and so reconcile one to the world as it *is*; but they also stress *freedom*, within the inevitability. And so they underline that man’s life is not in vain. It signifies a *hopeful struggle*, not predetermined.

Music, then, would stress inevitability within a time stream: so that what bothers man most, namely, the anxiety of random events in an irrevocable time stream, is appeased: events become *just so*, exactly (clarity of note and tempo) as they are meant to happen; but with the variations of freedom. The unity is then a triumph of reconciliation. This is the least discursive handling of this problem, which may explain why musicians are the most repressed: they can only give the most intuitive handling of the problem of freedom.

Art and sculpture, then, would stress the inevitability of materials, but the freedom of new perceptions and new shapes. The universe is not *exactly* as everyone thinks they see it; materials are not *bound* to call into the shapes most people imagine.

In literature, even a fateful story like Kafka’s *The Judgment* affirms the possibilities of a freedom denied to [Georg] Bendemann, within the complete determinism and inevitability of his fate. The reconciliation is to the inevitable; the triumph is the glimpse of possibilities of freedom for the individual.

But why stop here? This too is the problem of the science of man, and the argument that has raged over an image of man since Hobbes and Rousseau up thru Freud and the new ethologists: "What is there about human nature that is *fated* and inevitable? And what, on the other hand, are the possibilities of freedom within the fated human condition?" Hence, the utter superiority of Tillich's ambiguities as the absolute inevitabilities of the human condition, over, say, Freud's instincts. The one permits a vision of freer men in a community of man; the other binds man to a phylogenetic determinism.

So we can conclude, as I did in *The Structure of Evil*, that the image of a science of man that one accepts is one that he is personally comfortable with. It is an esthetic problem: reductionists—determinists see one kind of world, and want it; utopian-humanists see another, and want it. A humanist science of man is, then, "bad art" to the present period of history and habits of perception.

And that is why the philistines are only comfortable with exactly representative art and exactly reductionist determinist science: their tolerance of, and urge to, freedom is almost nonexistent: freedom is the exercise of appetite within the inevitable. And that is why art and revolutionary scientific views are associated with youth.

June 15, 1968

The most instructive comment on my present situation is the recurrent dream that I have been having for well over a year now; the basic theme is the same, but the trimmings vary. I am back working as a waiter again at the Highland Hotel, being assigned a locker, and changing my clothes for the waiter's uniform. Last night the process was very pleasant to make it easy, the captain gave me the same locker for both street and waiter's clothes (this is of course usual, but in the dream it was not). No mistake about its meaning: that my present identity is firmly related to my waiter's identity; i.e., it is a transient, doubtful, insignificant one. Also, when I took off my street clothes, I mistakenly put them back on again, instead of the waiter's uniform, and had to take them off twice. In other words, again, the easy possibility of confounding both identities. Only this time, in the dream, my street clothes were literally in tatters and rags! Not so wholesome. And the

waiter's job was set up for me to be a breeze; begin at 8, no breakfast to serve, etc. All at my own tempo.

Of course I am not longing to be a waiter again; but my present identity, in relation to the developing social crisis and triumph of irrational forces, is in almost complete rout. There is no doubt about my superfluousness to the times; about the failure to achieve a meaningful relationship to world in our time. Hence, I'm still where I was when I was a waiter. No doubt if the Highland were still there, and I was teaching around Springfield, I would really take a try at working as an extra during rush season, just to see what happened. The only thing that keeps me in the present identity is that there simply is no easier way to earn \$16,000 a year. *Eh bien, Ernest, voila ou tu en est.* [So, Ernest, this is where you're at.] There is a strange self-indulgent luxuriousness about all these thoughts—that somehow they are liberating and transcending.

One intriguing thought has been recurring to me lately. What if the Emersonian ideal of self-reliant man were a true evolutionary emergent? That is, the effort by life to transcend itself, an effort that cannot be species-wide, but can only cover a small area of developing life? In this case, the whole thrust of the Enlightenment would not find its realization in the masses of men on earth; this seems more and more impossible. Instead, man's reason would have created, from within earthly chaos, struggle, and decay, a new direction for the emergence of new types. If this is true, then it coincides almost too well with the new ability of man to leave the planet and colonize space. An evolutionary phoenix will rise out of the ashes of earth, and fly into space: the earth will have served evolution well, as it always has. And the millenium, as we have learned in our time, will not be here. Life will have existed only to transcend itself and to move on; and the earth is not the place for this realization, but exists only to spawn it and die. And so after all the ideal may be the really real. If only we knew where to look. But creation is Logos, and we can see in it many things that make empirical sense. What if we were right about this?

July 29, 1968

When Rollo May says that the myths and symbols of the dream life tell us much more about what is going on with a person than any waking analysis or rational self-appraisal might—I can only

agree. The dream life tells us what a person really feels about his identity and his world. The problem has been, in dream-analysis, to correctly provide a vocabulary that translates the symbols in terms of identity in life-cycle and world-context. Freud did not do this, but he began it, badly, with the sexual mystique; or, he disguised it atrociously with the complex rationalizations of his own self-analysis. Basically, the person is afraid of only one or two related things: that his life is meaningless, his powers naught, his face unimportant, his efforts futile—this, on the one hand; and with it, that he will die, be extinguished, and amount to nothing. On the other hand, he fears for the world-life, that *it* too is for naught, will die, amount to nothing, end in chaos. We might call this the ontological rooting of all basic anxiety, the *Sorge* [German, “worry”]; perhaps Heidegger and the existentialists have already covered it—I don’t know their writings well enough to know. Certainly they do talk about it. But let us relate it directly to the identity, to the life-style, and to the dream life and the basic anxieties. Then we can purify psychoanalysis and universalize it at the same time. This is the task for psychology in our time.

Along with these reflections, one might say that as a person approximates the real content of his dream life to his *waking* self-appraisals and fear, then he is at the height of his problems—“unrepressed,” “fully functioning”—no matter how much in a condition of basic fear and anxiety for himself and the world. He can still lament, *Eli, Eli, lama shabachtani* [Aramaic, “My God, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”]

Which brings us to the last point, two recent dreams that approximate my waking feelings: In the first, I am helping out in uncle Max’s shoe store; there is only me and a younger hep-type man. The store is robbed by a racially mixed group of 3 or 4. I see that they mean to possibly kill us with the knife, and so I struggle out of the store into the street. It is in a state of repair, all torn up. An army officer sits on the sidewalk at the corner, waiting for a bus. I call “officer, help” and fall into the street struggling.

A beautiful sum-up of all I feel is wrong with the world: the torn-up streets, deserted or in a state of anarchy; the army-officer representing the war-machine, and yet it is to *him* that I must turn for help. And all of it back to my childhood helping out in uncle Max’s store—full circle for the meaninglessness and futility of my life in this historical epoch.

The second dream is back to Springfield, the scene of my childhood, with the houses all torn down by urban renewal (I have not

seen this yet, but can imagine it). Yet, there are no weeds, but nice rolling fields in which men move between the half-torn and overgrown stumps of houses with trucks, etc. At one house, where mine was, a dead mother-cat, and several dead or dying kittens. One kitten, the most alive, has one blind eye, and can talk. It asks some kind of question of me, I don't recall what. The mother cat is eaten away by maggots. I ask the passing men why they don't care for these creatures; they reply that they do, and I get a glimpse of the food: it is not what cats need in order to live.

No comment necessary. A kitten is evidently one of my own identities, drawn from the cat-playing recesses of my early childhood. I am the purblind one who talks. We are all in a state of decay and death—my mother the latest dead (a year or so ago). The world is not too ugly, but it is in ruins, and the people in it do not provide the nourishment we need to thrive.

Wakingly, my thoughts are all in this direction of late. With the Reagans and the Wallaces running for office along with the Humphries; with Israel and the Arabs still fighting; with the continued exile of reason from life the world over; and of humanism on the downfall and defeat in every country. What is this life, what is our world, what can we expect? For 2000 years man has dreamt of understanding and controlling the world to his own use and inner development. And yet again we see that the dreamers, the visionaries, those who would work for man, go down like wheat before the men of hate, war, control, manipulation. Is it that God has other designs for us than what our best minds and spirits have so slowly etched out? It surely looks that way. My own role as a man of knowledge is a sad and spurious thing. *Thy will, Lord, be done.*

Aug. 30, 1968

It is amazing how deeply built-in the Oedipus is. The night before I was to be a discussant at the APA (psychology) meetings, I dreamed that I went to pick up a lot of mail, but my father, or some junk man, had piled a lot of junk over the door and I couldn't get at it. I said that I had come to get P. Singer's mail and my own, hoping that would do the trick. Again, you see, the superordinacy of the parental evaluation: I do not have an identity (mail addressed to me as a professional person; also, "male"?). The father's evaluation is the one, and I can only overcome it by invoking another

superordinate symbol—Singer. And so the unconscious keeps its symbols and its feelings, no matter what the external world does or shows; call up a somewhat stressful performance and the old mash is again stirred up.

Nov. 22, 1968

Just looking at the mess the world is in generally; and locally with B-grade movie actors as governors, and tap-dancers as senators, and bookkeeper-businessmen as university trustees and regents; and the result that I will probably soon have to quit in mid-year rather than teach on a police-guarded campus:—just look at such a world, with a great teacher like myself a superfluity, a shadow, or at best a luxury; and what about the marvelous organic energy of a George Ginopoulos, who runs a hot-dog stand; and the acme of idealism-honesty-courage and straight-thinking of a Mario Savio at the information booth of a bookshop. It must be a doltish mind indeed that refuses to see that in such a topsy-turvy world, either one of two things must be the case:

1. It is run by a devil, or a perverse God who delights in human suffering and folly; Or, 2: It is run by a God of Love, who has quite other possibilities in mind for it than the ones we can imagine or hope to work toward. Since I believe in all simplicity in the second case, it is only a matter of time before I completely cut my emotional and intellectual links with the promise of scholarly work. I am already well along the way, but still succumb to this devil's temptation to believe in man's mind. Ah Ginopoulos ah Savio, ah Max Heit, ah Louis Becker, ah Herman Melville—Ah you glorious wretches, you Divine abortions . . .

Nov. 23, 1968

Interesting little anxiety dream in reference to present crisis at [San Francisco] State, the impending monetary crisis and the prospect of depression, etc., generally. Which has been troubling me increasingly of late—not in a continual sense, or heavily, but simply with growing urgency as a very likely happening. I dream of Gabriella [Becker's daughter] having difficulty breathing due to some kind of contamination of the air. I examine the man

standing next to her, who protests that he is entirely proper, with nothing to contaminate her. I look at the underside of his belt, which has a green-fungus mold, and that's what Gaby is breathing. Obviously, in the dream I am both the examiner and the man. The belt is to me the symbol of the father, of the provider. And the anxious question is whether this provider can sustain his own young, or be responsible for their inability to survive. Again, what a marvel the language of dreams.

Dec. 10, 1968

Interesting dream, attendant upon my anxieties about flying to Buffalo for an interview for the very attractive job: should I leave my family—what if something happened to me, where would they be, what would they do, etc. I reason that the job is not so important, that something good will surely turn up later, something even better, and that my devotion to and care of the family is the principal thing, etc.

The dream: I am at the head of a table in a simple but good restaurant, and the menu is a plentiful meal: two soups; also exotic, because the main dish is a lion meat *mélange*. The other people don't look terribly interesting, and I turn the meal down because Marie and the kids are home—it is all too much trouble to eat out, even for such a sociable occasion.

Then, I am bike-riding and a cop hails me (I think for a wrong turn). I am brought before a right-wing tribunal, who ask, "You went to a leftist banquet?" No, I reply, I distinctly turned it down. It was a lie, since I didn't turn it down for political reasons, but for ones of family expediency. Then, I add, after all, I am my own person. Obviously not quite true, since I did not act on my own regarding the banquet—the family was the deciding consideration. Then, I proceed to give the tribunal an impassioned speech about human dignity, inner worth, etc., which is designed to win them over, and does.

The meaning, I think, is clear, in relation to my present dilemmas: I win over the issues by verbal eloquence, by dodging real issues of identity and freedom in the face of the world's activity and claim on me. The family allegiance and sedentary life—bike-riding, which I now do daily around Stow Lake, is the alternative that has to be saved by some duplicity.

It is clearer to me lately that I am masking my fear of finitude, of death, of being stupidly killed and ended, and my life having no real weight or meaning. I am masking this by devotion to the family, what would happen to *them* if I were to die, etc. Who would educate Sam [Becker's son] and Gaby into the kind of historical-personal perspectives that alone can help them become persons, etc. Now there is some justification for these misgivings and anxieties. But goodness, man, you have got to live on the world's terms, like all flesh: you have got to travel on its roads and in its skies, you have got to take your insignificant place with all men; you have got to die; you have got to have only the tiniest weight in the destiny of man, if you have any weight at all. You have got to accept this and live it, and trust God. If he created you into this kind of situation, then that's the kind you have to live in. To try to stretch this into something greater is not going to be done; you are defying God in effect, if you try to secure your life and fashion your own weight. The trouble with the creative person is that by throwing off the yoke of the people around him, he also throws off the unquestioned acceptance that daily action is right. Then he sticks out and starts to question and fear. The task, then, is clear; that after he wins his freedom, he has to contrive to slip back into the daily dumb acceptance that sustains all other men. There is no alternative.

Jan. 7, 1969

Nice dream reflecting my present thoughts. I am on a ship, and we are all running around deck—throng of us, captain and crew, passengers, all running. The striking thing to me was, after so many ship trips, and with all of us running like mad, how steady and even the ship moved, not a roll. Then, we all dash to the lockers for a change and a swim. We have to grab a sport-coat on the way to the lockers, out of a huge variety hanging in the entrance. I spot a nice leathery looking, well-tailored one, and as I reach for it, I begin to block the crowd coming in, and create a bit of a jam—also prejudicing my first choice of a good locker. So I say the hell with it, and take the first coat within reach, and then move easily into the locker room, with plenty of space and choice.

The meaning of the dream is obvious. Lately, I have been thinking if the thing for me to do is not to plunge ahead like everyone else into the stream of life, and forget about my special

role, stance, calling, and perhaps mission. Just live it out, since I can really control nothing at all, and have to die unfulfilled and without any knowledge of success, just like everyone else. So, the ship signifying life-passage, and now I am running with the crowd. And I am amazed at how smoothly it all goes. But to the locker room I grab for a special identity (the garment), and this hamstring things up, even for myself, in terms of ease in the locker room and the pleasure of a swim. So I say to hell with it, grab an identity at random like everyone else, and the thing is facilitated for me.

APPENDIX
*SELECTED BOOKS ON ASPECTS OF
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