

24th of February

Greetings ~

Finding a momentary leisure time →
or rather not feeling like studying for
my these exams on Monday → I thought
I would pass on a few words, be it wise
or otherwise.

Someone said that men possess thoughts,
but ideas possess men. I'm trying to find
out just what idea it is that keeps me
going. ~~For all I know,~~ it's a sort of
detachment that is in reality either an
escape or a defensive mechanism or even
a cloak covering selfish desires.

I'm afraid that a prevailing
cynicism is beginning to show its unmistakable
traces in my talk. One girl just
told me the other day that everytime
she talks with me she goes away
feeling very depressed. Other people
are beginning to make comments also
and I'm not sure whether I should

feel pleased or uneasy. Sometimes it's amusing to shock some of these people into some deep thinking, but I suppose there's nothing to be gained in making these unimaginative souls unhappy.

You wrote last time about emotion making the world go around for women. I think that it is a generalization that applies equally to men. Invariably we are touched by one or the other side in a raging controversy, and from thereon we rationalize our position. After all, it's pretty easy to justify almost everything, even for these Puritans.

It is strange, but the course of one year has greatly affected my outward attitude, although I imagine that it was always present somewhere within. Especially now as I watch all these risse activities, I wonder whether they can practically conceive of anything beyond their little shell. All most of them care about is getting along, and one gets along the best in this world by being fairly mediocre.

People with vision or ideals are just sticking their necks out — they are misfits, suckers in their own right, I suppose. Yet a lot of people are happy in that role.

You didn't feel the earthquake that shook Seattle (perhaps you were pre-occupied); I can't feel the mental, or perhaps spiritual, earthquake that is shaking all my thinking. It seems that my creed is now "je ne sais pas." ^{Yet} In spite of all this turbulent confusion, I hang on to the vestiges of "morality" (in the large sense of the word) rather passively and dumbly. I tell people that it is worthwhile to do this and that when I am myself beginning to doubt all values. Rather exciting and interesting perhaps, but not comforting.

Yet perhaps there is a good point in that it has led me to appreciate Nature much more — the roaring waves of the ocean & the green velvet of the hills are almost inspiring. And how

I long to go skiing once more. That
time is life — not this sordid city.

About sophistication — I managed
somehow to have gotten a pretty good,
even attractive perchance, definition. A
sophisticate is a keen person who
perceives the follies and weaknesses of
men and sees the utter uselessness of
dissimilarity and truth except as tools for
immediate personal material gains. Thusly,
he may resort to the common vices of
the rabble, have his share of fun,
realizing that he had better worry more
about himself if he wishes to avoid an
unsatisfying life. Sophistication is
this attitude, no doubt, one of conde-
scension. Now, does that make you
want to be a sophisticate?

As far as morality is concerned,
I think it's a matter of geography and
time. The so-called immorality of delin-
quency is, in my opinion, not less
preferable to the immorality of some
of these "civic leaders" and "upstanding
business men" — even though the

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Latter's is of a more impersonal nature, the sort of immorality that isn't recognized easily because one doesn't easily associate the signing of a contract or an order with the starvation of workers or oppressive labor conditions. But maybe I'm just a "Red" or a "radical."

Two weeks ago, I met up with an interesting experience, and I suppose there's a moral or a "Confucius Say" somewhere in it. I was coming back to Berkeley from Oakland (right across city) about 10:30 and as I waited for a street car, I noticed two slightly tipsy fellows trying to un-park their car with bad success. So I stepped in and got their car out with a little manipulation. I told them I was on my way to Berkeley and easily persuaded them to let me ~~have a~~ drive there.

The owner was very affable about it, but the other kept protesting that they'd have to drive back if he didn't want to take a chance with that fellow's driving when drunk. They wanted me to have a drink with them, and they

wanted to hire me to drive them home,
but I just kept on 'cause I needed some
sleep badly myself.

Well, I finally let myself off,
having saved a good 30 minutes and
7¢. I kind of wonder what eventually
happened to them. Incidentally, they
took me for a Chinese.

My sister writes from Japan and
seems to be suffering from cold, lack
of comforts, and custom difficulties.
I may be going over in a short while
and perhaps I would likewise suffer.
I'll have to learn first to keep my
thoughts to myself — pretend I'm just
another flag waving patriot ready
to believe anything I'm told.

Well, I have definitely come to the
end of this letter. I hope my ramblings
don't seem too flighty and incoherent,
even though that's how I feel.

When you write again, I hope
you'll tell me of the social whine
up there and perhaps something of
your job. Till then

P.S. Read "DREISER" and it will
either make you shoot
OR jump out of the window.

Goretz