

250 Douglass Street
San Francisco, California
December 20, 1965

Dear Mr. Ferrater Mora,

I appreciate your sympathy about my encounter with the street-ruffian. I am recovered--the soreness is gone--and I am not preoccupied now by its having happened. I do take careful precautions if I am to go out after dark, however.

The news concerning your own encounter with Mrs. Crenshaw is discouraging. I should like to think that that Bureau of hers could serve my purposes, but probably it can't. I shall do two things. The first is to write Mrs. Crenshaw herself telling her what those wishes of mine are according to which she says things will "proceed." We shall see what reply I get. The second--and this is the more important--is to ask Mr. Leblanc if he would be willing to place a letter for me in your hands. He was going to place one in the Bureau for handy use after he is gone to Europe, and I daresay he has by now done this. But I have no confidence whatsoever that I could, needing that that single letter be sent somewhere, write to Mrs. Crenshaw and have it actually sent. She would likely send every other letter and not that one.

I have now mailed off to Mrs. Zeldin a Christmas card--this I had very much in mind doing. Thank you for her address. And it is most kind of Mr. Kline to write again to her about me. But don't count on anything. She wrote me last summer that they had found a person for the replacement appointment, and that he seemed quite good. He was a young man from Chicago, as I recall, and he was crippled with polio, and he badly needed a decent first-year appointment to enable him to prove that he could carry out academic duties properly. Now if he has turned out to be a good person, I should think the College might well want to ask him to stay and that he might want to stay.

Another piece of information about my situation here. A short ago I declined an opportunity here to "compete with" one of the men presently in the Department of Phil. at San Francisco State College for the job he himself holds here now. His holding of his own job turns out to be not a secure thing, though I understand he wants passionately to remain here (his wife ~~XXX~~ holds an appointment in a college nearby). I was told that I might join the "competition" for his job and that other people elsewhere would be being invited to do so, ^{too}. I thought about this and concluded that it could only be sharply disadvantageous for me to join such a competition. There are several reasons for my judgment, among them these: (1) I suspect that, despite all, the person will actually be reappointed to his position; (2) he teaches symbolic logic courses about half the time, and if the Department should decide against him, they would be almost forced to seek somebody competent in symbolic logic; (3) I feel that it would be very hampering to me to be seeking another appointment openly, as I am already doing, and yet to be seeking at the same time one--and an extremely unlikely one at that--here.

Now, a remark about my work here. Perhaps the Department here should just offer me their post and be done with it? Their not offering it to me means perhaps that I am judged to be a poor bet? Well, perhaps. But, in that event, they are wrong. XX Two (out of thirty-three) students in my Plato class have made it plain to me and probably to others as well that they dislike me and all I stand for; they themselves care only about logic and linguistic philosophy and despise what they refer to as the "biographical data" of the history of philosophy. But many of the others have made it clear that they like my approach and my encouraging them to find their own ways of thinking and working in philosophy. And some of those others are working very well indeed. In any event I know myself from direct observation that, on the whole, my classes here have gone fairly well and oftentimes quite well. Once in a while, a dull class session takes place, and doubtless that is my fault. But generally my classes are marked by a lot of discussion--and interesting discussion, too--and my students are obviously responsive to what I say. I spend a great deal of time, moreover, outside of class conferring with them about their papers (and their troubles, in some cases); you can guess how much time this is considering how many students I have. They seem appreciative of this; and for my part I am appreciative of the fact that the papers submitted to me have shown, in many cases, very good minds put to hard work. I am impressed by many of these students here--even some of those who work forty hours a week at jobs, and take two or three courses besides, talk and write very well, and it is exciting to watch them as Platonic dialogues get under their skin. One fine, bright chap in my Introductory Philosophy class--this one class went poorly at first, but I worked extremely hard to get it on the right track and I did at last succeed, I think--came in ~~the~~ the other day to say with a blush that, though he has expected to go into the automotive business because he "loves cars," he has, reading and thinking about the Apology and the Gorgias, come to feel ~~was ashamed of~~ "ashamed of" himself for his "neglect of important things." (He hadn't read the Symposium, by the way; he didn't know about Alcibiades's shame.) I by no means urged him to desert his plans for an automotive (and moneyed) future, but I did warn him that the "disquiet" (his word) he now feels may become a hunger.

Men and women students like this (I've good ones of both sexes, and I very much like teaching men and women together) delight me. But even if there were a serious opportunity for me to stay in San Francisco, I should have to turn it down, I believe. I must seek lighter duties if such are to be had. These are killing.

A final remark: If you find yourself inclined to disapprove of my refusing to "compete" for the other person's job here, please do bear in mind that I myself have to be the one to make such a decision as I've made. I myself have to weigh considerations and make the best judgments I can and then act on these.

I do not at all regret coming for this year to San Francisco. On the contrary. I've had excellent practice in a variety of things.

Sincerely,

Julia

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