

November 28, 1960

Dear Jose,

Thank you for your superb and very chivalrous letter. I would have answered much sooner, had it not been for my frantic apartment hunt, which probably ends today since this morning's Herald Tribune suddenly offers two apartments to choose between. One is on the Rue Jacob and the other on the Rue Bonaparte, so I shall have to develop a St.-Germain-des-Pres personality as rapidly as possible, and put my Ile St. Louis completely aside.

As for academic matters: I have enclosed a list of philosophy courses around here. I am still at a complete loss as to which are best --- every remark seems enormously clever to me when it is made in French --- and would be overjoyed if, in a free moment, you could check the ones that look good to you. An unfortunate thing happened: namely, that in response to a poster which announced that Jean Wahl would meet all students interested in writing for a Diplome, I, being "interested" but by no means enthralled, went to see Jean Wahl. I guess that I did not make my mission clear, because he wanted to know why on earth I wanted to write for a Diplome with him. The answer was simple: I did not want to write with him at all, I had only thought that all students who were interested in writing for a diplome should see Jean Wahl --- as a sort of a clearing house for projects. He is not at all interested in my project, metonymy as the coordinate of metaphor, following the approach of Jakobson and Halle in Fundamentals of Language, and I am not at all

interested in adapting it to the works of some particular philosopher, as Wahl suggests. Sooner or later the misunderstanding will be dispelled, as my French improves, and he will be quite relieved, I think, when the problem dissolves.

Meanwhile, Levi Strauss' course, entitled contemporary papers in contemporary journals, or something like that, treats entirely of the kind of free wheeling linguistics which I like. There is simply no telling here who is going to be teaching what under what heading --- although everyone seems to know except me. No, that is not true at all. I have seen even French students reeling dazedly from poster to poster, and asking passerby when and whether Piaget is lecturing on a given Friday, and where.

There has also been the problem of student restaurants. At first, I thought it might be worthwhile to sleep on the sidewalk in front of Labillon, as four hundred students, including as always one ex-Bryn Mawrter, were doing, but then I decided that there are some problems which are not grave enough to warrant resorting to extreme measures. I went home to bed, and got in line the next morning. I am enrolled in some uncontested restaurant, but I never go there anyway.

As you can see, this letter rambles rather disorganizedly among its typing errors. Last night I took the sleeper train from Aix-en-Provence, where I had spent

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the weekend with old friends. The Wagon Lit was comfortable enough but the lady in the next compartment sang through the night, and as a result, this morning is not as bright and clear as it should be.

Paris improves with the weather, the apartment situation, and possibly, news of the Kennedy family. I have really never been in a place where there is so much to do, by which I mean that Danbury, Connecticut was never like this. Yesterday, I saw someone actually catch a fish in the Seine, and every day has its entertainment and general air of crisis. The Fulbright Commission has suddenly left us --- equipped with useful inhibitions on expressing American solutions for the French problems of alcoholism and Algeria --- entirely on our own, which is a wise and generous move.

Your book sounds exceedingly profound. I have always wondered about your approach to problems of mortality, etc. When will it all be published?

I think I shall go now, and see about the first of the apartments. I suppose that I shall wind up with both or neither of them. I do not know why it occurs to me to mention in this context Nadia Boulanger. In her most recent public lecture she was moved to tears, and I wonder whether such a thing has ever happened to a Logical Positivist.

5-X11-60.

Sincerely,
Renata