

Brooklyn College

Bedford Avenue & Avenue H, Brooklyn 10, N. Y.

Department of Philosophy

May 30, 1967

Professor Jose Ferrater Mora
Department of Philosophy
Bryn Mawr College
Bryn Maur, Penna

My dear colleague Mora:

Of course I remember you. I remember you very well indeed. Don't we all remember much better people we met 15 years ago than those we met last week? A side effect -- altogether not too regrettable -- of the aging process accelerated, no doubt, by the Brooklyn College ambiente and slowed down, I hope, by the Bryn Mawr beauties. Also, there is a certain feeling of guilt I have towards you, and guilt can be a powerful help to memory. Did you not actually teach for a while, a year or so, at BC? And yet, I do not remember one single step I had taken to come closer to you, philosophically and personally. This, too, is typical BC., what with 15 hours of teaching, a new course almost every term, and no end of committee work. What pressures one had to withstand term after term, year after year. Hence, no time for writing either. Only during the summers. Till, I managed about 2 articles and papers per year, as an average. There was the language handicap. I was 30 when I started to learn English, and this is a little late. I shall never feel completely at home in English. Finally, I was almost 40 when I woke up from my teutonic arrogance and started reading and studying the empiricists, old and new. 1947, when I shared an office with Feigl and Sellars at the University of Minnesota, the shock wave started submerge me and my existentialism, and ever since, as you rightly diagnose my case, I have been trying to grow empiricist gills without completely losing my existentialist lungs. But you know how it was during the last 30 years or so: one had hardly time to grow the proper gills when a new wave came and one had to begin all over again. After the positivists the ordinary language people, and now the structural linguists, and I haven't even started catching up with them. After all, it is not a question of being up to date, but of sharing what I think is a most exciting period in philosophy. Don't you think so? Just the same, I think the structural linguists form the last wave I shall try to assimilate myself to. I am getting a little tired.

It was awfully nice of you to write these friendly and complimentary and understanding lines. I thank you very much indeed. Perhaps our paths will cross again and give us occasion to walk together for a while, even if it is only a walk to a good restaurant where we can have dinner together if you spend a weekend in New York.

With my best wishes for a good summer,

8-6.67.

Sincerely,

Walter Kaufmann

001206