

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

417 BOUCKE BUILDING
UNIVERSITY PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 16802

Department of Philosophy

Area Code 814
865-6397

July 1, 1968

Dear Jose,

I have to begin with an apology for the long delay in writing about your book, *Being and Death*. As you know, I have been completely occupied for the past two years in getting together my own book, and also, in writing another one -- this time on Nihilism. Hence I have fallen far behind on my many obligations. My friends do not wait for me to find leisure but publish their books anyhow, and I have a backlog of volumes -- yours, Emil Fackenheim's, Bob Neville's, Maurice Natanson's, etc. -- on which to mediate this summer.

I have read about 75 pp. in your book, and also cheated by reading the section on human death, since it coincided with work I have been doing myself. Let me say first that I am very much impressed with your style. You really write extremely well, and some of the sentences are beautiful. Also, you know what you are talking about, and today in this country, this is a rarity. Our "ontologists" seem to feel that long disquisitions on the absence of Being, or on the character of their experiences in the backwoods of the Rocky Mountains, will substitute for learning and dianoia. I am happy to see that you share my distaste for this sort of thing, without failing to recognize the harmony of poetry and philosophy, in the right way and at the right time. I also liked concretely what you say in the section on human death. Your criticisms of Heidegger seem to me eminently sound. So far as your more general thesis goes, namely, what you call "integrationism," I doubt that I have understood it well enough as yet to comment extensively. I am moved in one moment to agree; in another, to ask whether you are not moving too close to "processualism." My own conviction lies in the direction of what might be called a "harmony of opposites," in which a visible structure perdures and both holds together and allows to differentiate the processes within. I suppose in a real sense I am a Pythagorean, of the Platonic variety. You seem to me at least to be close to this view. I have grasped that you want to avoid

2.

both partial "positions" or weltanschauungen, and also the untenable claim to Hegelian wisdom. I shall be looking forward to your coming ontological works, which I gathered from your remarks in Purdue, are forthcoming.

By now you should have received a copy of my book on the Symposium. May I once again thank you for your earlier interest and help in this connection. With best regards for a prosperous summer,

Stankin

12.18.68