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THE GRADUATE INSTITUTE
OF THE LIBERAL ARTS

April 29, 1963

Professor José Ferrater Mora
Bryn Mawr College
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Dear Professor Mora:

Thank you very much for El ser y la muerte. I have begun to read it, dictionary at hand for the passages where my vocabulary fails me, and find the book absorbing in its careful development of argument instead of the galloping metaphysical or freefloating lyricism found in some other literature on our subject.

One question has occurred to me: the question of Rilke's "eigener Tod." (1) In Malte there is not only "der eigene Tod", but also its opposite, mass manufactured death, following the disease mechanically assigned to the patient by the doctor (the Salpetriere passage). This seems to affect the end of your Rilke discussion - though I must admit that in the brief space allotted to the theme complications of this sort can hardly be justified.

(2) Rilke's development can be - and has been - described in terms of developing from the idea of "der eigene Tod" to the ideas of the Sonnets to Orpheus and the Duino Elegies - "der Doppelbereich", to be brief. You are quite right in keeping "der eigene Tod" and the idea of the "Doppelbereich" cleanly apart, since two different questions (not just: two answers) are involved. My own question is, where and in what context this second Rilkean problem would fit into your book. I have not finished it yet, but looking at the structure I wonder how you would treat the "Doppelbereich" concept of Being. But undoubtedly I'll find the answer as I read on.

My own book will be out before long; I've finished all the proof reading except the revision, and the first two volumes of the series are out already - you probably saw them; Merlan on monopsychism, a fascinating study, and the first volume of the new Bayle bibliography (I am not a Bayle admirer or scholar).

Thank you again for the gift of your book. It is much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Gregor Sebba

GS:mm

19-V-63.