

Stanford, at first, was literally overwhelming. It seemed, in comparison with Bryn Mawr, gigantic, to 51 High Tree Bay about 1000 in the number of students. (Approximate Woodside, California, 1963) I felt lost, anonymous and awkward. April 7, 1963 for classes, was an all-day procedure, involving hours of red-tape, in line. I had the feeling of going through a machine! Dear Mr. Ferrater Mora-- I stood for a half-hour in a line which was using, standing in line for football tickets! She was,

Greetings from the land of sunshine and symbolic logic, for she How are you? Have you thought that I am a cold heartless girl not uncommunicative and unappreciative of your friendship? No! No! My silence would certainly justify such an interpretation, but! no! no! I think of you often, and I've tried many times to write to you, but I was unsatisfied with all my efforts. When I first arrived at Stanford, I thought that I should wait until Thanksgiving vacation to write to you, in order to be able to offer more than mere first impressions of the University and its philosophy department. But when Thanksgiving came, and I examined what I had to say, I found it singularly uninteresting. At Christmas, my problem was worse: no letter I produced was good enough, year, but how could I send just a Christmas card? In March, I devoted a lot of thought to the question of whether or not you would prefer a letter to be typed or handwritten, and, naturally, I arrived at no decision at all. I can be such a clumphead. Isn't it silly? But the days wore on, and I simply could not write at all. That, and I grant, is inexplicable; but when one knows the peculiarities of the rather boring psyche of Stefanie Tashjian, one knows that just that sort of thing can happen. Today, I gave up my deliberations, and began this letter, for better or for worse. I am very sorry indeed to have been so long silent--though that's a tame thing to say under the circumstances. Forgive me! Stanford's approach: British Logic and Logic, the validity of which, as a way of doing philosophy,

Are you having a good year? Did all your Kant students write brilliant papers? Has the Philosophy Club pestered you to speak or have you been so flooded by speaking invitations from all over Logic the country that you could not accept? Have you written three books this year or only two? I confess that to my surprise, I have missed Bryn Mawr very much. I had supposed that any nostalgia I might feel would be merely the natural result of having spent four years there, for life there, outside of work, was confining and rarely satisfying. Yet I often come upon myself dreaming of the quiet and the academic freedom. From here, Bryn Mawr strikes me as a paradise for the inquiring mind. But that is perhaps just a way of saying that I miss studying with you.

Do you know that every single freshman at Stanford--and there are hundreds of them--have been reading your book on Unamino this year? It's true. The book has sold out at least once. It is being used in the Western Civilization course, which is required. (It gives men) great pleasure to see the students reading it, not to mention the days when, after sitting for hours on end in classes in which nothing was discussed except formulas, axioms, propositions, classes, and so on, I read it myself, seeking to reaffirm my faith that there is some philosophy which is not dependent on mathematics for its integrity.

Stanford, at first, was literally overwhelming. It seemed, in comparison with Bryn Mawr, gigantic, both in physical layout, and in the number of students. (Approximately 9,000) or a long time, I felt lost, anonymous and awkward. Registration for classes, for example, was an all-day procedure, involving hours of red-tape, and standing in lines. I had the feeling of going through a machine! The first time I did it, I stood for a half-hour in a line which seemed endless, until Eleanor Snouck-Burgonje happened by and asked whatever was I doing, standing in line for football tickets! She was, for a while, the only familiar face, though one rarely seen, for she is in the political science department. I gather that she was not entirely pleased with her work and her department for a while; now she seems quite content, and should receive her M.A. at the end of the summer. When I last spoke with her, she was undecided about what she would do in the fall: more philosophy, more political science, or possibly law school? (She is still in two camps which do not accept any dialogue. There are the logicians and the analysts on the one hand, and the historians of philosophy (for lack of a better class name) on the other.)

The first-year program of graduate work in the philosophy department was also overwhelming. As one of the professors remarked recently (we had all guessed it before), it is designed to be trial by fire, to determine which students will be kept for the second year, and which will be dropped. The program is apparently new. The reasons for it seems to be that the department was not pleased with its quality or reputation; thought it was not getting the cream of the crop of undergraduates (the entrance requirements were raised only last year); and thought that its graduate students weren't very impressive, and weren't working hard enough (indeed, the second, third, and fourth year students are, with one or two exceptions, a sorry lot). Probably the new policy was also instigated by the over-all University drive to become "the Harvard of the West". The other reason is that incoming graduate students have such diverse backgrounds of preparation--in some cases, backgrounds conflicting with Stanford's approach: British Analysis and Logic, the validity of which, as a way of doing philosophy, One Does Not Question--that some new common foundation has to be laid for everyone. In other words, one does not come here to continue what one has been doing (even those who have done British Analysis and Logic have to begin again, though they have an easier time of it); one comes to be more or less an undergraduate again, starting from the beginning and relearning everything with a new vocabulary. We all take more or less the same courses, and we are advised to take only courses which will be of use on the qualifying examinations in May in all the usual subjects. One is not necessarily dropped if one fails these prelims, but one is dropped if one doesn't do well, labored over could be learned from his book on Analytic Philosophy. We talk in variables: "x did y at z".

The other major event in the program is the Proseminar, a required course which is the presentation, each week, of a paper by a first-year student. For this, the whole department, faculty and all students--about 50 people--meet, whereupon the victim reads his paper, and is then interrogated or cross-questioned. It is unpleasant for everyone, especially the victim. (I have not yet been given my turn.) The questions are not asked out curiosity, but out of the desire to see how much the student knows. Once some ignorance has been uncovered, it is pursued relentlessly, the result being that one comes out thinking that the student knew nothing, which is sometimes unfair. The avowed intention is, I think, a fairly accurate report of the facts. (I have tried to be fair and objective.) As for me, I was miserable for the whole first quarter. My courses were chosen for me by my advisor, who had no sense of my weaknesses and strengths, nor was I able to obtain reliable enough information about courses in order to change. I couldn't make any sense out of class discussions and the constant analysis of language, and when I could, I thought it so

purpose of the Proseminar is to allow the faculty to identify the students (there is little or no student-faculty relation), and to train the students to give papers in public. In practice, it is a waste of time. Most of us are so confused, being in the process of revising all our knowledge, and have such undeveloped ideas anyway, that the papers are dull and uninformative and poorly presented. The faculty doesn't seem able to identify students after they have spoken any more than they could before; and it seems more sensible to train advanced students to present papers in public. But these arguments carry no weight with the department. We have no say about the program. Again, it is like being put through a machine, and the only way to make any change is to quit, which many have done in the course of the year.

The faculty itself seems split in two camps which do not attempt any dialogue. There are the logicians and the analysts on the one hand, and the historians of philosophy (for lack of a better class-name) on the other. The logicians, especially John Myhill, are very impressive, and Donald Davidson, who teaches epistemology, ethics, and philosophy of language and meaning, works hard at being a good teacher. He is interested in intensionality, and voluntary action; he clearly considers it his duty to teach us to be clear and to have arguments for all occasions. The historians of philosophy are neither clear nor philosophical. The history courses are not, in general, very good at all. The history of philosophy is regarded as a necessary evil to be undergone for the sake of the prelims, and the historians of philosophy do not protest this view, though it quietly regards the members of the opposing camp as "technicians". There are one or two professors who have a foot in each camp. Anyone who is interested in anything described as existentialism is either in the Modern Languages Dept., or in the Humanities Dept.

Metaphysics here is the study of work by Strawson and Ryle and others, with side reference to Aristotle. Sometimes via Anscombe and Geach, and Locke. Epistemology is devoted to the problems of sense perception and memory, and counterfactuals. All discussion of ontology is in terms of Quine's essays. Philosophy of Science is the study of Carnap, foundations of mathematics (I've heard enough talk about the Frege-Russell definition of number to last the rest of my life!), probability, and the problem of induction. As for Logic, they try to teach as much as they can as fast as possible. With the exception of Logic, I think that a lot of what is here labored over could be learned from Pap's book on Analytic Philosophy. We talk in variables: "x did y at (time) t", or "J believes p", since that manner of speaking is assumed to be a way of achieving clarity. Here it is a conclusive criticism of a philosopher's work, or of an argument to say, "It isn't clear." (It is, by the way, extremely difficult to say what the predicate "isn't clear" means, as it is used here. Like "interesting", it has more than one meaning.) Most everyone thinks there are no substantive problems in philosophy, that metaphysics is nonsense; and some think that ordinary language is interesting, but formal languages are more interesting.

The foregoing is, I think, a fairly accurate report of the facts. (I have tried to be fair and objective.) As for me, I was miserable for the whole first quarter. My courses were chosen for me by my advisor, who had no sense of my weaknesses and strengths, nor was I able to obtain reliable enough information about courses in order to change. I couldn't make any sense out of class discussions and the constant analysis of language, and when I could, I thought it so

trivial that I then couldn't understand why anyone would devote valuable time to such work. Part of my problem was one of vocabulary; it took a long time to learn the necessary jargon. Philosophy of Science demanded more logic than I knew, and was a struggle from the beginning (the foundations of geometry) to the end (Carnap's axiomatization of the theory of relativity). In the Logic course, the Logic that I had learned at Bryn Mawr was covered in a month or so, and the course raced on altogether too quickly for me. (Moreover, as a graduate student taking the course, I was required to take a special section in Set Theory, which also proceeded very rapidly, and soon caused me great troubles.) My courses were so scheduled that I had no time to study during the day, and there was never enough time in the evening, no matter how much sleep I was willing to sacrifice. The other graduate students in my class, many of whom have M.A.'s in Physics and other subjects and were much older than I, seemed to have no trouble at all with anything, whereas upon I thought that I was the stupidest girl in the world. To complicate matters further, I got sick. I had trouble coping with the world at large, had unfortunate living conditions, and was, in general, in the worst possible circumstances. Each day was a strain on my self-confidence (of which hardly any exists now). Some students dropped out, and I considered doing the same thing. I don't know what kept me going. I suppose that I did not leave simply because the thought of being a quitter was very distasteful. Somehow, I got through the first quarter--not well--but I got through. The second quarter was better, in the sense that I finally adjusted, and could make some sense of the class discussion, and also chose a more reasonable program than my advisor had chosen for me for the first quarter. My work finally seemed to produce some results, whereas first quarter, work as I might, I got nowhere.

I am very disappointed to have to recount all this to you, and not some kind of success story. I had hoped to do well, to be, if nothing else, a credit to Bryn Mawr. Some of my failure has been my own fault, the result of my own sheer stupidity; some of it is due to inexperience, and some to circumstances I could not control. At present, I am in the middle of the third quarter, and a few weeks away from prelims, or qualifying examinations for the Ph.D., so I am embroiled in furious preparation, which consists largely in learning as many arguments as possible, and trying to learn number theory and set theory, meanwhile trying to keep up in regular course work. While I think I have improved since the second quarter, in looking over the work I have done this year, I feel I have done nothing very worthwhile. I would like to think that I have achieved some clarity and facility in thinking, but I believe that what I have learned is only how to use some conventions. Perhaps clarity consists, after all, in the use of these conventions; I don't know. At any rate, I have no confidence that I will do well on the prelims. There is simply too much to learn. One has to have one's knowledge on the tip of one's pen; since I am learning most of the material for the first time, I don't see how I can manage enough facility. There are four examinations, and one has to pass all of them at once; it is not enough to do well in three and poorly in one. For me, the Logic exam is the biggest hurdle, since I have no natural ability for logic at all, and the exam promises to be very difficult, judging from the ones we have been given as examples. (I don't know enough logic even to understand some of the questions!) My biggest fear is that I will not do well enough to be asked back for a second year of study, and a second chance at these examinations....

It is now April 21, and I want to send this letter off to you, without more interruptions. Could you do me a kindness, and read the relevant parts of this letter to Kathleen Johnson, for she wrote to me asking for information about Stanford, and I was simply unable to find time to write her a suitable letter? I do not know whether to recommend Stanford to her or not. I don't know her interests, and I can't decide how valuable the training offered is. Most of the students in my class are quite dissatisfied with the program.

I send greetings, too, to Priscilla and Jenny. I've wanted to write to them, for they were good friends to me, and I am very fond of them. I simply haven't had the time or heart to send letters which couldn't contain much cheerfulness. I've tried many times to write to you, but it was almost lost with all my efforts. When I first arrived at the University of Chicago, I sent all good wishes to you and the other members of the Philosophy Department. I hope that you and your family are well, and that you have been enjoying a good year. I was in the office when the Christmas Eve card came, and I examined what I had to say. I found it singularly uninteresting. At Christmas, my mood was worse: no letter I produced was good enough, but I could send just a Christmas card. I devoted a lot of thought to the question of whether or not you would prefer a letter to be typed or handwritten, and, naturally, I arrived at no decision at all. I can be such a clumbhead. But it is all over the days were on, and I simply could not write. I mean, it is irrevocable; but when one knows the peculiarities of the rather lively psyche of Stefanie Tashjian, one knows that just that sort of thing can happen. Today, I gave up my deliberations, and began this letter, for better or for worse. I am very sorry indeed to have been so long silent--though that's a tame thing to say about the circumstances. Forgive me!

Are you having a good year? Did all your Kant students write brilliant papers? Has the Philosophy Club pestered you to speak-- we have all been so flooded by speaking invitations from all over the country that you could not accept? Have you written three books now, or at least two? I confess that to my surprise, I have missed you somewhat much. I had supposed that any nostalgia I might feel would be due to the natural result of having spent four years there, but life was so busy and so good, was so thrilling and surely satisfying. But it is the memory of the old days, of the old friends and the academic atmosphere that makes me think of you as a paradise for me indeed. Well, my dear friend, I shall be glad to see you just a day or saying that I miss you.

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