

22 dec. 1964

Dear Nell,

I am very disappointed on reading the first phrases of your letter. How is it possible that the tape recording did not reach you after four months?

Unfortunately the manager of Guertin in Antwerp who came in person to me to call for the parcel, met with a serious car-accident some days ago and is now in the hospital. I hope however he will soon be able to explain how the parcel was sent and tell me what can be done. I feel sure it cannot be lost. Let us hope the stars will fight for us.

This set apart, I am in the seventh Heaven with your letter which is the deepest you ever wrote to me. But how shall I be able to find the words in your language to communicate with you on such a subject? I can only do my utmost and, as you know German, I will take the liberty to quote my Goethe in his language.

The questions about the sense of human existence which you put in your letter have puzzled me as far as remembrance can reach. And now, getting older, even more. Is it possible that life should have no sense whatever? That as plants and animals and all things living we crumble into dust going back to where we came from? Is the awareness of a reality beyond human understanding no more than an illusion or, on the contrary, the only way we have to apprehend this hidden reality which the natural limitations of our organs of sense precludes us from perceiving? And, if the latter is true, why is human nature so made that we are condemned to the tragical fate of spending a life in darkness of ignorance? As with you, the way in which you appeared in my life and have since then always been present in my thoughts, seems to me a miracle? Is it so that kindred souls are driven to seek each other with such a force that no obstacles, however great, can prevent them to meet? Are time and space only subjective forms of apprehension as Kant thought they are?



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Well all these questions about "the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns," as Shakespeare said through Hamlet's mouth, remain unresolved for ever?

In the beginning of his *Faust* (part I) Goethe wrote:
"Habe nun, ach! Philosophie,
Juristerei und Medizin,
Und leider auch Theologie!
Durchaus studiert, mit heißem Bemühen.
Da steh ich nun, ich armer Tor!
Und bin so klug als wie zuvor ..."
and further, "Denn hab' ich mich der Magie ergeben"
To know the truth, he sells his soul to the devil
but is saved by love
But you know the whole story. At the end of the 2nd Part
an angel sings at his burial:

"Wer immer strebend sich ~~berührt~~ bemüht
Den können wir erlösen."

This is also my faith. We will never know the truth
about the last things. We can only do our best to
work humbly and unselfish and try to be, as Goethe
said in his poem "Das Göttliche,"

"Edel sei der Mensch,
Hilfreich und gut."

Am I an unbeliever? — Who does know what
he really believes?

When, after the war, Frank's friends brought us the
fatal news of his death in the Nazi-camp, they told us, no
body had seen his corpse. Years and years I have hoped
he would come back one day, perhaps on a Christmas Eve.
Never did I say a word of it to Paula. But, after ten
years she told me she also had been hoping all the time.
And now? Of course, I am sure of it: all chance of a
return has vanished. I know it, I believe it and I have
accepted my fate. And still, sometimes, unexpectedly
I catch myself still hoping, still believing — And
the same applies to what we call our faith.

"In my little self is nothing" as you so beautifully
write in your letter "if not that something more than I."

We will be with in spirit, my Paula and I, on Christmas
Eve. You will light the candles and we will be silent
and happy together, one soul, listening to the music
of the stars.

With all my deep affection
Hermann

P.S. I just receive your kind note with Gewerken's note and
the invoice proforma 2nd P. 8112. With these documents
I ~~was~~ able to take up the matter with our mailing
department. On the phone they tell me that, according
to their experience, the parcel has been tendered at your
home during your absence; but, as a registered parcel
is not delivered without the signature of the addressee
the postman must have taken it back. They tell me
that in the States registered goods are not ten-
dered more than once; the parcel is probably
still there where it can be claimed back within
six months. I say a prayer this may be so.
Please examine the matter with your post-office
as soon as you can. If the result should be negative
our Post-office on its side will do its duty, but before
they move they, quite logically, must be sure it is not
there. Good luck!

I send you back the documents you sent me,