

170

CORRESPONDENCE April 16-23, 1953

N. WIENER - MC 22



April 16, 1953  
Korea

Dear Professor Weiner,

I really have no business taking up your time with a letter that is justified in the writing only by the fact that I feel you might be able to offer me advice of a sound nature. I am going on the premise that if one wants information, you must go to the head of the stream, to the spring, as it were, and from the prolific nature of your scientific writings I feel that you are one who would be more than amply qualified to comment upon my dilemma.

I have seen some of your work and heard of a great deal more, so I have a healthy respect for your scientific prowess and integrity of thought. Now last week I came across a review of your autobiography in TIME and from that I noted that although you were an exceptional student, you did have your share of troubles and pitfalls. This made me think that you might take the time to comment on similar circumstances that were mine during <sup>MY</sup> early school years, though in my situation I was neither a good student nor a scholar although I can say that I was distinct from the rest of my class in that I was unhappy.

Having had the ambition of becoming a mathematician for a long time I have nothing to my credit as far as an academic background is concerned. Far back into the dim reaches of my childhood I have harbored this desire for a mathematical life's work and this I carried through into adolescence and finally on into manhood. Progress has been slow, reading and some study that was aborted when I entered the service at seventeen. There is a reason for this and I imagine you will say that <sup>AS</sup> knowledge is of a prolific nature all that I had to do was study and the rest would follow. Study conditions in the service are poor and at seventeen confusions are frequent and without the aid of instruction I became discouraged and stopped.

I had little discipline and only the yearning, quite un-  
 fulfilled. In school, up to the seventh grade, I was an exceptional student  
 and at eight I had a vocabulary double what it should have been. I signed for  
 a library card at five. When I was ten I moved to California where it was  
 the beginning of the end as far as scholarship was concerned. Landing there  
 in the sixth grade I did well and in the seventh I spent only two weeks be-  
 fore I was promoted to the eight. That was the end of it right there. For  
 the rest of my time in organized schools I was at the bottom of the class  
 though I did have a ~~false~~ <sup>flair</sup> for science which was sporadic as to results there-  
 for useless. Most of what I did acquire in the way of knowledge was done  
 through reading at home and in the city library.

I retired from high school in my senior year at sixteen and  
 upon my seventeenth birthday I entered the service. I cannot lay blame for  
 all this anywhere as it is past and I must make the best of many mistakes  
 that both myself and the school made. In five months I will be twenty-one  
 and discharged from the service. I want to begin again the study of math-  
 ematics and I need advice as to how to go about the matter. Now my reasoning  
 is that a man such as you who has taught himself mathematics must have fallen  
 into many pitfalls along the way. Studying with Russell and A.N. Whitehead as I  
 understand you did must have given you opportunity to bypass many faults  
 through association with those great men. Being a confused young man I turn  
 to you and ask, "where do I start?" With a poor academic background and only  
 confidence, and that a slender thing, how do I prepare to enter a college where  
 they will probably not let me in the gate, much less enroll me in the math-  
 ematics department? There is such a terrific amount of material that I have  
 no idea where to begin in preparation. This may seem like a small matter to  
 you but it takes on terrific proportions when confronted with the business end  
 of the thing. I know that there are many worthy young men for you to advise,  
 for instance at M.I.T. where you teach. I am asking as a young man who is

unworthy, but indigent of some advice. I need a pep talk, anything as I am discouraged of ever getting beyond what I am now. I am about to give up the whole idea, however that goes against everything that "matters" to me and I at least want to make another effort. I await your kindness on this matter.

I remain, respectfully

*Carroll J. Biggerstaff*



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GERENTE

R. C. HILL

April 16, 1953.

Massachusetts Inst. of Technology,  
Cambridge 39, Mass.Attention Mrs. George Baldwin.

Dear Mrs. Baldwin,

Thank you for your letter of April 8. We have now received an autographed copy of Ex-Prodigy and have handed it to Mr. W. P. Ehrenberg.

Best thanks for your co-operation,

Sincerely yours,

AMERICAN BOOK STORE, S.A.



EJF:aab.



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April 16, 1953

Dear Dr. Wiener:

Dr. George Crothers of the Columbia Broadcasting System, who tells me he had the pleasure of meeting you during your last visit to New York, is quite eager to have you record for one of the network's finest public affairs radio programs.

The program is called "You and the World," is broadcast over the network five days weekly from 6:15 to 6:30 P.M. and usually devotes a full week of interviews to one particular subject. The subject in which you would participate if you're willing, is medicine, I can vouch for its consistent excellence and high tone.

Dr. Crothers is very much interested in recording an interview with you sometime between now and May 7th and would like to know whether you expect to be in town before that latter date. The actual recording could be made at a time to suit your convenience. Of course, our book would be commented upon extensively.

Dr. Crothers will probably telephone you at M.I.T. within the next day or two.

My best to you and to your fine family,

Sincerely,

*Allan Morris*

Allan Morris

Dr. Norbert Wiener  
M.I.T.  
Cambridge, Mass.

[ans 4/21/53]



Pvt. Ronald D. Jodenberg  
US-55-294-577  
Co. A, 207th Ard. Bn.  
APO-7, 40 Postmaster  
San Francisco, Cal.



Free Air Mail

VIA AIR MAIL

Prof. Norbert Wiener  
53 Cedar Street  
Belmont, Massachusetts

UNITED STATES

my checks  
2



Post. Ronald H. Soderberg  
US 55-244-577  
Co. A, 707th Ord. Bn.  
APO 7, 1/8 Postmaster  
San Francisco, California  
16 April 1953

My Dear Prof. Wiener,

I am twenty years old and am serving with the Seventh Division here in Korea.

We all say we love America, yet how much more we would appreciate her gifts if for only a short time we were deprived them. There are no corner drug stores, department stores, A & P's, movie houses, or any of the things we take so much for granted in Korea. The people here live like those of Biblical times.

Although it is not pleasant to be away from home I feel the better of this experience and fortunate it came so early in my life.

Right now I'm on guard duty. We have two hours on and four hours off. It seems this is the only time I really have a chance to write any letters.

Quite some time ago I started writing to eminent men in the field of arts and sciences for their personal signatures.

It has been an honor to mount those I have received in an album. The album is now

almost a history in biography of our times.

This is my fourth letter to you. I believe I last wrote to you while I was in basic training.

Please, Prof. Meier, would you make an exception and permit me to include your signature with those of Hermann Weyl, Sir Edmund T. Whittaker, Emile Borel, Albert Einstein, and others.

It would truly be an honor to receive your signature as one of the world's greatest living mathematicians, and in time perhaps the greatest.

I shall be very grateful if you will please autograph, date, and inscribe the card I am enclosing.

With many thanks for your time and kindness and the best of wishes to you and your good health and happiness,

I am,

Respectfully yours,

Ronald D. Soderberg



Prof Stein  
New Inst of Tech.  
State Treas

April 16-53

Doc 2

Perhaps? a new approach to the making of an apparatus to read aloud from a printed page is to assume a man were a computer or electronic machine the blood & chemical makeup of the individual were the wires with eyes & ears & other places as receiving of electricity of image & thoughts including new ideas as - a battery. The brain the dynamos.

If we have an image of the page as is given to some paper by total recall (aphograph) the next step is to make it audible. In training animals of a child tentation is built up by commands & authority. This comes from an instructor or trainer. When tentation is built up the commands are performed then a manual of action the mouth, tongue, waving arm or stick plus by watching the subject to be made obey as well as holding his attention by his watching of the instructor. Attention however is also necessary between instructor & subject. In hypnosis a lessening of tentation & equalization of positive & negative all forms sort of condition must arrive between the subject & instructor or hypnotist. It may be the absence of electricity in the subject caused by the instructor. This may be a method of causing a electronic machine in a number way. The dynamos of the brain is focused on certain parts as the words to be spoken.

If the machine has a vocabulary of 50 thousand & \$1,000,000 so as to avoid distortion by absence of a word an automatic stimulus might be given by forming at a similarity between the word as size, shape, outline, various letters, degree of electrical power to pronounce the word.

Various chemical formulas as in a tube could be used as wires to the similarity pronounced words to discover the means & method of electrical connections between stimulus or identification if arrived at.

This would avoid the use of wires + electrical laws relating to the use. When it is discovered they could be eliminated.

So communication or kind of in hypnosis as well as in public speaking you must have the entire attention of the subject.

So communication in hypnosis, public speaking + oratorical they must be passive or relaxed or the opposite a condition must arise between the subjects. The will of the subject must be made obey that of the instructor. They must have a similarity of interests + sympathies or opposite. One must overcome the other by greater power or lack of power in the other. When the command is completed this is lost if obeyed or non-compliance. This harmony of similarity in the word on the screen is to be commensurate in the large number of words in the machine would seem to be an exaggeration of all the various words to be spoken + the electrical influence of frequency necessary for the identification.

In some instances of the brain as well as in hypnosis if the release of the center is stimulus is not given then in a sort of short circuit + continuing stimulus given to the parts this is evidence of electrical contacts open + closed. Hypnotism must be spoken in most cases also this is necessary with animals I think it is not always necessary evidence of electrical influence which when a condition must be avoided as for success.

The action of the blood + nerve in connection or both may be as in the hypnotic clutch or an controllable varying credit + degree of chemical making the difference in people + understanding. The identification of words may be given similar treatment

That photography is a chemical + electrical method of reproduction as is writing by stimulus with ideas from the brain + dynamics which are the various scrawls of past experience into a closely measured (in some cases) an unscrambling of the influence caused by repetition of words must be consistent + possible of reproduction by identification

The means + training of deaf + dumb <sup>at</sup> an early age might have some useful purpose.

J. H. G.



April 16, 1953

Mr. Georges Dube  
Department of Mathematics  
Yale University  
New Haven, Connecticut

Dear Georges:

Tough luck--but Fulbrights are pretty few.

Schwarz has now moved on to Paris, so perhaps Paris would be your best bet after Strasbourg. There isn't much that I can say to a man who knows his way around as well as you do, but we all send you our best wishes and hopes for success.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb



April 16, 1953

Professor Duncan E. Macdonald  
Physical Research Laboratory  
Boston University  
700 Commonwealth Avenue  
Boston, Mass.

Dear Professor Macdonald:

This is to assure you that I will be quite willing to consult with Dr. Armand Siegel on the proposed CNR project which your department is submitting, provided that I am in Cambridge.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

[ama 4/17/53]

April 16, 1953

The New York Academy of Sciences  
2 East 63rd Street  
New York, New York

Gentlemen:

Professor Wiener receives requests frequently for copies of his paper, Time, Communication and the Nervous System, which was published in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences. Any supply of reprints he may have had is now exhausted, and he wonders if it would be possible to duplicate this article here at M.I.T. without violating copyright regulations. If so, it could be mimeographed and distributed as reprints are distributed-- that is, at no cost, and with full acknowledgement of the original publisher of the article.

I should appreciate hearing from you soon as to whether such a duplication of the article would or would not violate your rights as publisher of the article.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. George Baldwin  
Secretary to Prof. Wiener

hb

[ans 4/17/53]

April 16, 1953

Philosophy of Science  
Williams and Wilkins Company  
Baltimore 2, Maryland

Gentlemen:

I shall list below the titles of three articles which Professor Wiener wrote for Philosophy of Science. His supply of reprints of these articles has long been gone, and he now wonders whether it would be a violation of copyright regulations to have additional copies mimeographed here at M.I.T. The articles are:

- N. Wiener and A. Rosenblueth, and J. Bigelow. Behavior, Purpose and Teleology. 10, 1, Jan. 1943.
- N. Wiener and A. Rosenblueth. The Role of Models in Science. 12, 4, Oct. 1945.
- N. Wiener and A. Rosenblueth. Purposeful and Non-Purposeful Behavior, Oct. 1950.

Professor Wiener's purpose in having these articles mimeographed would be to distribute copies in just the way reprints from publishers are distributed. He has no intention of selling such copies, or of failing to acknowledge properly their source of publication.

I shall look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. George Baldwin  
Secretary to Professor Wiener

h



April 16, 1953

Mr. Wallace A. Sprague  
Managing Editor, Parade  
405 Lexington Avenue  
New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Sprague:

I think Professor Karl Deutsch might be able to help you. He is on the faculty of M.I.T.'s English and History Department, but at present is a Visiting Professor in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University, and you could reach him there. If he can't do an article himself, I think he might be able to suggest someone who could.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

[ans 4/27/53]

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE  
DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND ASTRONOMY  
HANOVER, N. H.

BANCROFT H. BROWN  
B. P. CHENEY PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS

April 17, 1953.

Dear Norbert,

I don't know when I have enjoyed anything as much as your extraordinary story of an unusual boy growing up in the very ordinary climate that I knew so well. Much of this is, of course, pure nostalgia. As far as birth goes, I am exactly 15 days your senior. I was brought up in Hyde Park, a dozen miles south of you. And so many things that you mentioned, clicked. I have a good memory.

I pondered over the subscription issue of The Youth's Companion, just as you did ; but I never heard of anyone who actually tried to get 100 subscriptions, or one. I also made various essays at St. Nicholas, and never got more than honorable mention. I once met a girl who had bagged a gold medal ; but she had a much higher opinion of herself than I had, and I didn't let it get me down. Cudjo's Cave was a very good book. I still recall a bit, towards the end, of the "dying Cudjo and the drowning Silas", locked in each other's arms as the underground river carried them off towards their final resting place ; in those days the universe was so logical, and every one got his deserts.

Born practically in the shadow of the Blue Hills, I probably rate them higher than you do ; I gather they were for you a later acquisition. I liked "Sassamon Road", "Sawcut Notch", and "Wildcat Trail". I actually saw a very few rattlesnakes on the loose, and a local worthy had a knack of catching them, and then displaying them in the local drugstore window.

Years ago I spotted Norbert and Constance in Orna Balcony, and realized this could not be a coincidence ; I am pleased to know the facts. You do an amazingly good job on my favorites, the Pontifexes, in The Way of All Flesh. Butler's book has delighted me for 40 years. Your tiny vignette of Charles Nelson Haskins is one that I am delighted to add to my recollections of a very remarkable New England Yankee.

You are eminently fair to the Harvard mathematicians of the 1919-1922 period. Your picture of Osgood, Coolidge et al in the front row of the Mathematics Club is devastatingly true, and in perfect taste. This was not a strong group (always excepting Birkhoff) ; yet it was a vastly entertaining group. I don't think I was ever taken in by them ; I respected some of their qualities and abilities ; but their ways were not my ways.

Everything you had to say about Huntington rings true. His colleagues certainly thought him a harmless potterer. It is not to our credit, but the graduate students of that time found little significance in what he was doing. I have often thought of this ; and for my own part I have explained this (perhaps rationalized this) by



recalling his attitude towards his Doctrine of Proportional Representation. We felt he was unreasonable when he wrote :

(A) "No method can be regarded as satisfactory which is subject to the Alabama paradox".

(B) "Now it is a common misconception that in a good apportionment the actual assignment should not differ from the exact quota by more than one whole unit."

If you assume that a good apportionment exists, then if you accept (A), (B) follows. But suppose a man says he doesn't accept (B). Huntington thinks such a man has no right to be heard.

At any rate, Huntington had no impact on our group, and perhaps that was our fault. You say he set his sights too low. I can't argue against that. He did have supreme faith in a somewhat trivial outcome of his ideas : his system of proportional representation. He defended this before the high and the low, and with perhaps unnecessary fervor. Here he had supreme faith. Did he have the same faith in his really significant developments of Postulate Theory? Were these to him of real importance in mathematics, as his Theory of Representation was of importance to government? And when I have raised this question, I must add that the man remains the enigma to me that he is to you. Perhaps a partial answer is that the whole set-up at Harvard was inimical to his ideas, and that he was not strong enough to brush this aside and stand on his own ; but this is a partial answer at most.

I think the outstanding feature of your book is not the father-son clash, but the simple recognition of the fact that you are a Jew. This you handle magnificently ; and this will live.

But I am going to confess, most of the time I sat back and enjoyed life. We aren't so far apart. You were the prodigious prodigy ; it is fair to say I was a minor one. We shared a lot of experiences, and once on a visit to friends in Foxboro, I got the same leeches on my toes that you did. I had better eyes, and better muscular coordination. You had, and have, more mental energy. We both have a lot of endurance : I once walked 55 miles in one day, but there was less of me to transport. You greatly excel in imagination, in ability to select, adapt, and put together. I am conventional (and you have caught me perfectly on p. 232). You develop new ideas, work with the leaders. My niche is undergraduate teaching. And so your book was a serious challenge -- and a lot of fun.

Sincerely ,

Bancroft

[ans 8/1/53]



DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS AND ASTRONOMY

HANOVER, N. H.

BANCROFT H. BROWN

B. P. CHENEY PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS

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 he is to you. Perhaps a partial answer is that the whole set-up at  
 Harvard was ideal to his ideas, and that he was not strong enough  
 to press this idea and stand on his own; but this is a partial  
 answer at most.

I think the outstanding feature of your book is not the labor-  
 ion class, but the simple recognition of the fact that you are a Jew.  
 This you handle magnificently, and this will live.

But I would like to confess to you that I still look and  
 enjoy life. I am glad to hear that you were the brilliant prod-  
 igy; it is nice to say I was a minor one. We shared a lot of ex-  
 periences, and mine on a visit to friends in London. I got the same  
 lessons on my trip that you did. I had better eyes, and better un-  
 derstanding. You had, and have, some mental energy. We both  
 have a lot of endurance: I once walked 55 miles in one day, but  
 there was less of me to transport. You greatly excel in imagination,  
 in ability to select, shape, and put together. I am conventional  
 (and you have taught me carefully on p. 232). You develop new ideas  
 work with the leaders. My mine is underground teaching. And  
 so your book was a serious challenge - and a lot of fun.

Sincerely,



MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Electrical Engineering

April 17, 1953

Dr. Nathan Rosen  
Department of Physics  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Dear Dr. Rosen:

I am sorry I was so short of time when you called at the office last Monday. I was about to take up the matter of what we could do for Professor Ollendorf after having received Dr. Wiener's letter to you of March 25.

I feel that there are grounds for saying that Professor Ollendorf's presence with us would be helpful both to him and to us. I would like to explore the possibility of bringing such a matter about.

One question that immediately raises its ugly head is the item of finance. Would we need to, in effect, hire Professor Ollendorf? If so, would you give me some indication of what in your judgment he would need, and perhaps an indication of how long he should remain with us. I would need information of this kind before I could properly size up the situation.

I think it is better that I correspond only with you on this matter until the situation is clearer than it is now.

Sincerely yours,

GSB:EJM  
cc: Prof. Wiener ✓

Gordon S. Brown  
Head, Department of  
Electrical Engineering

C  
O  
P  
Y

HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL



MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

STANLEY COBB, M.D.  
*Bullard Professor of Neuropathology*



PSYCHIATRIST-IN-CHIEF  
*Massachusetts General Hospital*  
*Fruit Street, Boston 14*  
April 17, 1953

Professor Norbert Wiener  
Mass. Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Wiener:

I should like to get in touch with Dr. Mandelbrot,  
who I understand is working with you. Could you please tell  
me how to get in touch with him (both by mail and by telephone).  
I succeeded in getting his first name today, but that was as  
far as I could get.

As ever yours

*Stanley Cobb*  
Stanley Cobb

SC:A

[ans 4/21/53]





*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*Massachusetts State College*  
*Agricultural Experiment Station*  
*Amherst*

April 17, 1953

Dr. Norbert Wiener  
Department of Mathematics  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge 39, Mass.

Dear Dr. Wiener:

I think I express the sentiments of our entire Sigma Xi Chapter in conveying to you our appreciation for your inspirational lecture of April 15th, befitting to the occasion of our initiation ceremony. We have received many favorable comments from those attending the lecture, and we were very happy that you could honor us with your presence.

If you will please submit to me your expenses incurred on the trip I shall see that you are promptly reimbursed.

Sincerely yours,

*S. B. Hitchner*

S. B. Hitchner  
Chairman, Program Committee

SBH:H

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[ans 9/22/53]

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 WILLIAM DUNCAN STRONG, Ph.D., Research Associate  
 FREDERICK H. OSBORN, Litt.D., LL.D., Honorary Associate  
 ANTOINETTE K. GORDON, Associate

April 17, 1953

Dear Norbert,

I enclose a copy of the review which I have done of your book for the Virginia Quarterly. I always hesitate to review a book by someone I know, and yet I have often taken great pleasure from reviews of my own work written by appreciative friends. Such a task is doubly difficult when the book is an autobiography.

With warm regards to you and Margaret,

Yours,

*Max, W. M.*

Dr. Norbert Wiener,  
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology,  
 Cambridge 38

P.S. I leave the end of May for six months field work in the Admiralty Islands, a restudy of a village I studied twenty-five years ago, when the present leaders were small children.

[ms 6/1/53]

Professor Wiener:

This is a very good, temperate and penetrating review of your book. There is too much perhaps of the "bright eyed boy" and too little of the achievement of the adult. I feel though that you should be well pleased with it.

J. T.





DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO

ONR:420:EWM:alp  
17 April 1953

Professor Norbert Wiener  
Department of Mathematics  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Wiener:

Thank you for the manuscript that you recently sent to me. Your approach to quantum mechanics seems to be quite new and interesting. I would like to receive any new manuscripts that you might write in the future on the subject.

In response to your telephone call of last week, I have examined the possibility of arranging some support for Dr. Seigel's work on this problem. If Dr. Seigel could submit a formal proposal for his program through the Business Office of Boston University (I understand that his work in the future would be done at Boston University rather than MIT), there is a good chance that we would support it. The ONR Boston Branch Office can provide him with instructions for the preparation of proposals.

Although all the ONR Physical Sciences and Mathematical Sciences funds have been spent or committed for this fiscal year, we expect to be able to make new contracts again after 1 July.

With best personal regards.

Sincerely yours,

*E. Montroll*

ELLIOTT W. MONTROLL  
Director  
Physical Sciences Division

Copy to:  
Dr. Armond Seigel, MIT  
Prof. J. R. Zacharias, MIT

*Re AS - see also letter to Seigel at Wisc - in  
Quartz - Theory etc.*

MÜNCHEN 23 17. April 53  
LEOPOLDSTR. 6/III  
TEL. 360432

Herrn Professor Dr. Norbert Wiener

Massachusetts

Sehr geehrter Herr,

Ihr Buch "The Use of Human Beings" hat einen tiefen Eindruck auf mich gemacht. Es verdient m.E. weiteste Verbreitung, ebenso wie ich dies dem bereits alten Buch von Robinson "The Mind in the Making" und einigen Schriften von North Whitehead wünsche. Das bezieht sich auf Ihre Bemerkungen darüber, wie die Welt z.Zt. regiert wird und welche klägliche Rolle die Wissenschaft im Bewusstsein der grossen Masse spielt. Ueber letzteres sagt auch Ortega y Gasset kräftige Worte.

Darüber hinaus enthält Ihr Buch eine Fülle von Anregungen zur Kritik von Zeiterscheinungen, die bei mir eine besondere Resonanz auslösen. Was Sie z.B. über den Marktwert von Kunstwerken sagen, scheint mir mit meinen Anschauungen verwandt zu sein. In einem kleinen Vortrag, den ich im December in dem Münchener Deutsch-Amerik.Club hielt, und von dem ich einen Abdruck beifüge, finden Sie auf S. 7 einige Bemerkungen, die dies bestätigen. Nur um Ihnen zu zeigen, dass Sie nicht ganz vergeblich in die Welt hinausrufen, sondern auch an unerwarteten Stellen auf Verständnis und Sympathie stossen, habe ich mir die Freiheit genommen, mich mit diesen Zeilen an Sie zu wenden und begrüsse Sie mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung

*Wolfgang Otto*  
(Wolfgang Otto)

[Ans 5-28-53]

BERNARD G. RICHARDS

103 PARK AVENUE

NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

April 17, 1953

Professor Norbert Wiener  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Boston, Mass.

Dear Professor Wiener:

Perhaps the book of science for children with illustrations of stars and planets, etc. which you are seeking to locate is the "Wonderland of Science" by Arabella B. Buckley, presumably an English writer. I recall that my own children had the book and read and reread it until it was torn to tatters. But since none of them became scientists, perhaps my surmise is erroneous, after all.

As a former friend of your honored father, the late Professor Leo Wiener, and as an old-time Boston newspaperman, I am reading your book with special interest, and possibly I will have something more to say about it later on in one form or another.

I used to meet your father at the office of the Boston Evening Transcript, for which I did considerable writing, at a vegetarian restaurant somewhere near School Street, and on two or three occasions I visited your home in Cambridge, once for dinner when I sat next to a very bright and very shy boy whom you may recognize.

I am enjoying your very fine story and feel thankful for the pleasure I am deriving and for the cherished old memories which it evokes.

With expressions of esteem, I am

Yours very truly,

*Bernard G. Richards*

Bernard G. Richards

[avg 6/1/53]

BGR:pe



# In the World of BOOKS

## Dusting off the Bookshelf

VIII — *Keidansky*, by Bernard G. Richards

A Reappraisal by LOUIS LIPSKY

My attention was recently caught by a copy of Bernard G. Richards' *Discourses of Keidansky*. I have not seen it for many years, but have retained a general impression of its contents. I still remember Keidansky, however, for that sparkling character was renewed and reincarnated in the personality of my friend Richards, whom I have known and worked with over all the intervening years. (I first met Richards in 1901 at a Zionist convention in Boston, which he was reporting for the *Boston Post*, when he was being trailed by a tall youngster in short pants now known as Dr. Horace M. Kal-len.)

The book was published in 1903. Many of its chapters first appeared in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, then the leading daily newspaper in New England. How Richards got into the staid *Transcript* is an engrossing story of the ambition and aptitude and zeal of a young man who came out of a Yiddish milieu and learned how to write English in a few years with remarkable freedom and skill. This young man from Keidan was able to turn the tables on those who were then engaged in telling the Jews of the East Side how to live the American way. Richards was one of the first of that generation to rid himself of the Yiddish idiom and to tell the so-called Americans in good English about the Jewish way of life; and to remind them of their recent origins.

His book was acclaimed by the literary critics of the day. Stories were written about Richards himself—where he came from, his struggle with poverty. He was a literary sensation. He was admired and praised and encouraged by a number of the leading American writers. Julian Hawthorne predicted that he would do important and useful work in the literary field. Mitchell Kennerley, a young publisher, started *The Reader* magazine, of which Sinclair Lewis was an associate editor, and invited Richards to become one of its contributors.

The *Discourses of Keidansky* has gone the way of many good books. It is out of print. It is a relic of the history of the times. Its ideas are out of circulation. I read the book again the other day and found—to my surprise and satisfaction—that it retains the living tang, the surprise and the pleasure, that come from meeting an old friend who still has the old spirit, the old fascination and the tempo of youth. He talked of things that are no longer in the living world. (But are not many of our thoughts about things and persons who have passed but still live in memory?)

\* \* \*

In Keidansky, Richards created a "character" who followed the manner of Peter Dunne's "Mr. Dooley," but Keidansky had his own line of talk and talked from his own changeable platform. The charm of the character was not in its seriousness or timeliness. It was not supposed to be logical or erudite. Good humor and satire identified the sprudling of Keidansky's thoughts. That constituted his charm.

There were the cafes, the Yiddish theatres, and the Yiddish newspapers and their writers. There were the characters who lived in the Ghetto, fed on ideas generated elsewhere, trying futilely to create their own world. Keidansky was talking of Pintero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*; of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*; of Tolstoi's *Art*; of Abraham Cahan; of Janowsky the anarchist; of Jacob Gordin the Yiddish dramatist. He was performing acrobatics with themes like "The Feminine Traits of Men," "The Goodness of a Bad Man," "The Tragedy of Humor," "The Immortality of Principle." He was sensitive to contradictions and allergic to logic. He was practicing the art of paradox, which was done to death by the brilliance of Israel Zangwill and the cynicism of Oscar Wilde. Keidansky was sitting on the fence with regard to Zionism, but if any Bundist or Comrade or Yahudi talked against Zionism, Keidansky

got off the fence at once and let them have it good and plenty. (How innocent all the talk about Zionism was in 1903! How far off it sounds!)

\* \* \*

The Yiddish theatre is now dead. Gordin left no heir and Jacob P. Adler no successor. The descendants of the old Yiddish actors have left the East Side and may be found in the movies or on Broadway. Maurice Schwartz has a wandering theatre, depending upon adaptations, spectacles and plays made to fit his own histrionic limitations. The old Ghetto has made room for the clearance of the slums; it has gone up in dust. East Broadway and Grand Street are no longer recognizable as Jewish streets, nor is the Boston ghetto what it was then. The old cafes have lost their identity. The kibitzers are not the same kind of people; and who would want to go to a cafe even if there were kibitzers, with radio and television in the home, and the movies just around the corner? Scattered on Broadway you will still find some of the old waiters of Schmuckler's, Zeitlin's and Gertner's, who have faint, inaccurate memories of the old cafe life. They tell the weirdest stories of the people who used to frequent the smoky, stuffy eating places.

The Cafe Royale is said to be a lineal descendant of Keidansky's cafes, but that is a gross calumny, for the Cafe Royale, for all practical purposes, is no longer a place where you sit and talk with interesting people. Its denizens are not interesting and do not talk. It is like a lobby through which many curious people pass. Cafe Royale is where the yokels go thinking they are looking at the glamor of a world which is no longer there.

Where are the Yahudim of yesteryear on whose backs Keidansky made his jests? Their places have been taken by Galicians and Litvaks who give a poor imitation of the real article. These pseudo-German Jews appear on the letterheads of the charities; they wear top hats at funerals; but they still have to learn the manners of the genuine Yahudim.

Keidansky stopped talking because he had lost his audience and had nothing more to talk about. The scenery and the actors changed. In fact, the Ghetto graduated; its people scattered in all directions; they are to be found in Brooklyn, the



Bronx, Queens, Westchester. Their children are on the American stage, in the American writers' guild, among the columnists and the commentators, the scenario writers and the writers of the latest novels. They are to be found on the faculties of colleges and universities, among the actors and the singers and the comedians on Broadway. If they have cafes at all they may be found at Lindy's or the night clubs. What has happened to them has happened to the cafe of Vienna and Warsaw and Berlin. Life has moved away from the old places. And the old places have disappeared.

\* \* \*

Destiny forced Richards to abandon Keidansky and turn to Jewish public life. His puppet could not be relied upon for a stable living. For a time he was the editor of the *New Era* magazine; then with Jacob de Haas he got out *The Chronicler*, a weekly publication which struggled and died in its infancy. His connection with public affairs started with the Kehillah. He was its executive secretary, with Dr. Judah L. Magnes as its chairman. For a number of years he fought for the movement and with Dr. Magnes on account of it. Dr. Magnes had taken up the Kehillah idea after his official devotion to Zionism had cooled off. He was the first banner-bearer of democratic revolt against the founders of the American Jewish Committee. Then he deserted the flag and was regarded as a "lost leader." Theoretically a democrat, in practice he had no confidence in what was called "the masses," and gradually became the representative in the Kehillah of the philanthropists and was smothered there in their warm embrace. This put Richards and all supporters of the democratic idea out on a limb. The treasury was taken away from the "masses." But Jewish politics at that time were not as brutal as they became later, and Richards settled his affairs with the Kehillah in amiable fashion and moved into the American Jewish Congress agitation, which was also a revolt against the philanthropists. There he remained for many years, going to Versailles with the Jewish delegation, holding on to the "rump" Congress with amazing tenacity until the advent of Hitler. He left the Congress to Stephen Wise and Bernard Deutsch. When he retired from the Congress he was involved in the fortunes of the Democratic party and had an office in Washington where he labored

for the leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt for many years. He was the Jewish specialist in Democratic circles and served as adviser on foreign groups. In recent years he built up the Jewish Information Bureau which is the office from which he conducts his varied affairs.

\* \* \*

From this sketch it is apparent that Richards lost contact with Keidansky because he was absorbed in other interests and never looked back to locate and find him. He wrote articles on Jewish themes; he contributed to magazines and helped compile several Jewish books and wrote a short history of Zionism in the United States; and having a retentive memory became an expert on matters historical in American Jewry. Keidansky receded into the distance and became dimmer and dimmer with the years. Richards did not write the promised novel, had no time to give to the writing of essays, in which he was a master. He became, to all appearances, a staid burgher of the new day wondering where in blazes he and the postwar world were drifting to!

But if you get Richards aside these days—not in an East Side cafe, but somewhere further uptown—and you get to talking with him off the record, you see in his twinkling eyes the volatile Keidansky looking out at you. There Keidansky looks for paradox and makes startling references to causes and personalities; there he still is capable of hearty laughter (touched with cynicism, why not?). There with the eyes and spirit of Richards, Keidansky reveals himself. He still finds fault and praises the young creative talents with cautious judgment, and so far as you are concerned, you will agree that in his personality Keidansky is as young and as alive as he ever was.

You wish that Keidansky were again delivering himself of his *Discourses*, with their oblique but penetrating view of the world's kaleidoscope and their keen reflections upon men and events. While the haunts and scenes of the youthful Keidansky are no more, his texts are still as valid as they ever were, and a confused generation in a distracted world might still read them with pleasure and profit.

## Judaism Through History

AS A MIGHTY STREAM, the progress of Judaism through history. By Julian Morgenstern. The Jewish Publication Society of America. 442 pp.

Reviewed by JOSHUA BLOCH

It was a happy thought which prompted the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College to urge Dr. Julian Morgenstern, that upon his retirement from the presidency of the oldest of Jewish institutions of higher learning in this country, he compile for publication a volume of his addresses and papers. As a result the public is now presented with *As A Mighty Stream*, a collection of fourteen well selected papers, which Dr. Morgenstern had written at different times during the years 1913-1947.

In these their distinguished author endeavors to show that Israel's history actually offers a consistent record of continuous contact with the civilizations of various nations and peoples whose cultures affected Jewish thinking and living to such an extent as to discard, quite often, the old indigenous way of life and thought in preference to those of the nations with which the Jews had, at one time or another, a measure of contact. Almost invariably this was

done not without resistance from those who, advocating isolationism, passionately insisted upon maintaining intact old institutions, practices and traditions with considerable success and with results not altogether disappointing. With each contact Judaism adjusted itself to its new environment and under new conditions enlarged its content and enriched its spirit.

Again and again Dr. Morgenstern refers to the role which the prophets have played in early and later life of the Jews and how far-reaching is the influence of their teachings even down to our own day. Pre-exilic and post-exilic Judaism drew upon the word and work of the prophets for the setting up of that ethical and social order with the maintenance of which both Judaism and Christianity are so vitally concerned. Dr. Morgenstern is able to show that many aspects of contemporary Jewish thinking and experience go back to an early day. Already the exiles in Babylonia conceived their destiny as that of being perpetuators of the Jewish people and its traditions. They therefore devised ways and means for themselves and their descendants, even to our own day, to preserve their Jewish identity in the midst of



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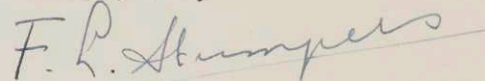
April 17, 1953

Professor N. Wiener  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Mathematics Department  
Building 2  
Cambridge 39, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Wiener:

I had to leave M.I.T. for Europe and I could not say good-bye to you since I did not find you in your office last Tuesday. I did enjoy your lectures and I think they will be a great help in my future work. I thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,



F. L. Stumpers

FLS:en



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April 17, 1953

Mrs. George Baldwin,  
Secretary to Prof. Wiener,  
Massachusetts Inst. of Technology  
Cambridge, 39 Mass.

Dear Mrs. Baldwin:

Our permission is given for Dr. Wiener to reprint for free distribution his three article which appeared in Philosophy of Science, as indicated in your request of the 16th.

We shall of course appreciate his giving credit to himself and Dr. Rosenblueth(as well as Dr. Bigelow on the one article) as authors, and to us as publisher of PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE.

Sincerely yours,

B. G. WALSH

BGW\*W



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Dr. Herbert Wiener  
M.I.T.  
Cambridge, Mass.

4/18/53

Dear Dr. Wiener -

There has never been any doubt  
that you had a brain - but what  
a delight to find, upon reading  
your latest book - that you  
also have a heart, and a big  
one at that.

Thank you for the pleasure  
and profit gained from reading  
"Ex-Prodigy"

my compliments to your wife.

Sincerely  
Cleora Stanforth.

[ans 6/1/53]

345 Duail St.  
762 Madison Ave.  
Albany, N.Y.

4-19-53

Dear Dr. Wiener: I am overcoming some natural diffidence in writing to you, to tell you how much my husband and I are enjoying your Autobiography. It was unexpectedly exciting to read your recollection of our days at the Encyclopedia, and to know that you remember me as pleasantly as I do you. Your career has been of interest to me throughout these years, and the recent recognition of your work has given me great pleasure. My father used to inquire about you often, and prophesy your fame, continually. I have read the Cybernetics, at least as much of it as I could follow - and found its theses stimulating to contemplate.

My own career has followed other lines, tho I feel too, that the Encyclopedia taught me much. I find myself looking thru some of its pages, and sampling some of the articles I wrote (signed by Mr. Rhines) with nostalgic pleasure, on rare occasions. I married my dear Doctor, + we have one daughter, now married to Dr. J.C. Hurewitz of the Columbia faculty on International Studies. They have two lovely little girls who are our pride and joy. - During the Depression, I went back into social work, and have recently retired as executive of the Jewish Social Service, where for fifteen years, I spent some useful (I hope!) years, in the resettling of refugees in this area. Now I am busy



with related volunteer efforts.

My husband is greatly interested in the hope that you hold out for further knowledge leading to the rehabilitation of the deafened, since this is a field in which he has done some work, particularly for the local Veterans Administration, where he is now Chief in this specialty.

What a sense of humor you had in the days in Albany! There are several incidents at the Encyclopedia office which I remember well. One was a literary hoax which we tried to concoct, in the fashion of the day. I had hoped to be able to send you a poem you wrote on the then controversial painting 'The Nude Descending the Staircase', but I seem to have lost it during many mornings. It contained some lovely lines about 'thou needst no garment,

The winding Stair

Is ample Cloak for all thy baredness:

And I remember how once, when we were working at the State Library, a haughty dame named Mrs. Van Rensselaer Van Blarcom, or some such thing, mistaking you for a library clerk, ordered you to find her genealogy. This you did in double quick time, with great courtesy, much to the amusement of Mc Donnell + me. A few years ago, I read that Mr. Thines had died in N. Y. at the age of 99!

It is good to know that you have found personal happiness as well as success. May the years continue to bring both to you and your dear wife in great measure.

[ans 6/1/53]

All good wishes. Sincerely,

Rose Bochever Freund



Copy

189 Laurel Street  
Fairhaven, Mass.  
April 19, 1953.

Professor Oswald Veblen  
Princeton, New Jersey.

Dear Professor Veblen,

Thank you for your prompt reply regarding Professor Wiener's letter. I doubt if a book dated so early in the relativity era would justify such effort to secure. It occurs to me however that probably nobody better than you could briefly quiet a lot of my curiosity with answer to a question.

Why does very responsible relativity literature for the public so completely avoid Euclid as a solid geometer, going to such extremes as to call the spherical triangle "non-Euclidean", and declare the "geometry of Euclid", therefore that of Bowditch and navigation, "invalid for the surface of the earth"?

An enlargement of the same question, that could have the same answer as the preceding is - Why does such literature ignore Euclid as an ideal geometer, therefore naturally one of artificial construction, by criticism of him as a physical or astronomical one? I take it that that is how the Euclid definitions of straight and parallel lines get criticized - I'll have to admit that I am not aware of any company in this explanation.

If you find any error in my mathematical history, or anywhere else, I'd be glad to hear of it.

Sincerely yours

Warren L. Swett



*National Society for the Study of Communication*

Committee on General Methodologies

Seth Fessenden, Chairman

University of Denver

Denver, Colorado

April 20, 1953

Dr. Norbert Wiener  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Wiener:

Efforts are being made to assure the best possible programs for the NSSC convention which will be held concurrently with that of the Speech Association of America in New York this coming December. One of the most important sections will be looking Toward a Theory of Communication. Dr. Murray has been asked to sponsor the program; I have been asked to arrange and chair it.

In order to make available to the convention the thinking which we consider to be the most challenging, we are asking you and three other outstanding contributors toward a theory of communication to speak. The others are Dr. J. L. Moreno, Dr. Allen Walker Read, and M. Kendig. You undoubtedly know each of these people and recognize the areas of thought and emphasis that they represent.

The format of the program will be arranged to fit into not more than a two hour session. The present plan is to ask each speaker for a fifteen minute formal presentation and then to utilize the balance of the time as a group in informal discussion around topics and questions raised by the members of our audience.

Dr. Murray and I hope very much that you will be able to accept this invitation. Without your contribution an effort to look Toward a Theory of Communication would be incomplete.

Sincerely yours,

  
Seth A. Fessenden

[SMA 5/6/53]





VETERANS ADMINISTRATION  
HOSPITAL  
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April 20, 1953

YOUR FILE REFERENCE:

IN REPLY REFER TO: 5154-10EW

Dr. Norbert Wiener  
Department of Mathematics  
Massachusetts Institute of  
Psychology  
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Doctor Wiener:

You may remember a small discussion on a subject of "Psychic Energy" with me when you visited Topeka recently. I am the ophthalmologist who sat in on your session with the psychologists. Inasmuch as I came to Topeka to become a psychiatrist, I am very much interested in the subject of our discussion and have done considerable reading on it since you were here. In particular, I have acquainted myself with Claude Shannon's "Mathematical Theory of Communication." It immediately occurred to me that the question of psychic energy was really a question of amounts of information being transmitted by the nervous system. Then I got hold of the 1949 Macy Conference on Cybernetics. I was particularly fascinated by Dr. Heinz von Foerster's "Quantum Mechanics Theory of Memory." I noticed that you, for some reason, had awfully little to say in the discussion. It looked to me as if Foerster had introduced the subject of "energy" into psychic processes on something like a tenable basis although there are admittedly difficulties with this theory, as pointed out by Kubie and others.

Could I have the temerity to ask you whether this concept of Foerster's alters your view that psychic processes cannot be rendered in terms of energy but only in terms of transmission of information which, as you so aptly pointed out to Abramson, is a dimensionless quantity?

We certainly enjoyed your visit to Topeka and I sincerely hope we can get you back here for another visit someday.

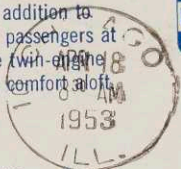
Sincerely yours,

*Paul Guggenheim, M.D.*  
Paul Guggenheim, M.D.  
Chief, E.E.N.T. Section

[ans 5/28/53]



Mainliner Convairs—newest addition to United's fleet—carry forty-four passengers at almost 300 miles an hour. The twin-engine planes are pressurized for your comfort aloft.



Dear Norbert,

I am flying thru a  
clear beautiful sky reading  
your clear beautiful book.  
and hoping so much  
that you will be at  
Princeton.

Yours,

Ernest S. Smedley

April 18, 1953

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Mr. Norbert Wiener,  
Mass. Institute of  
Technology  
Cambridge 38

Mass.



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20 April 1953

Dr. Norbert Wiener  
Department of Mathematics  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge 39, Mass.

Estimado Dr. Wiener,

En mi poder su muy atenta del 25 de marzo. Le estoy muy agradecido por sus indicaciones relativas al problema del paseo del borracho. A la primera oportunidad lo consultaré en el Cramér y en el nuevo libro de Doob.

Debe usted sentirse orgulloso de haber escrito una carta en un español tan correcto y sin ningún acento extranjero. ¡Mis más sinceras felicitaciones!

Las noticias que me da usted me han causado mucho gusto. Le agradecería felicitara a Barbara por los dos maravillosos nietecitos y a Peggy por su carrera, en la que, estoy seguro, se está distinguiendo brillantemente.

Muy en especial me permito felicitarlo por su autobiografía. Todas las críticas que he leído al respecto la alaban efusivamente y parece un libro extraordinariamente interesante y magistralmente escrito. Me he propuesto leerlo en un futuro muy próximo.

Le he pasado sus saludos a toda la familia; en especial a Arturo y Virginia. Dice Arturo que ya le escribió él a usted acerca del manuscrito.

Saludos afectuosos a la Sra. Wiener, a Barbara y a Peggy de parte de mi mamá y mía; y, nuevamente, muchísimas gracias.

Atentamente,

*Emilio*



Box 756  
Juneau, Alaska, U.S.A.  
April 21, 1953

Dear Professor Weiner:

This note is written because your life and my son's life are so different ! I heard your radio interview.

My son, Dale Roff, is in his fifth year at M.I.T., in Architecture; he took two years of Chem. Engineering before he found he didn't want it. He was 17 years 2 months when he left for Tech. and took tests at Boston Univ. which indicated that he was 5 years beyond his chronological age mentally, but 3 yrs. behind emotionally ! He received 4 B's this semester, and 1 C. (in oil-painting, I think.) He has never had any money, and now has a part-time job. He married a Radcliffe graduate last June, and expects a baby on his own birthday: May 19th. His father-in-law is an instructor at the Rhode Island School of Design: Carol Fulkerson.

They live 2 miles from Tech because it is cheaper. My son was run over by a loaded six-wheel truck across the pelvis on July 10, 1951, which crushed it like an eggshell in many pieces, with the left leg nearly detached; so he is lucky to be alive, the doctors tell me.

My mother was born and raised in England, and as I was very ill with cancer and the doctors up here didn't know what it was !-my mother raised my children in the excellent European discipline until they were 8 years old, and <sup>became</sup> better able to care for them. So they both printed their names at three years, wrote them, and other words, at four; read at 4½ years; took out library books as well as re-reading their own bookshelves over and over again <sup>at 5</sup>. When I took Dale to Seattle for medical checkup at ten years, the school authorities wished to place him in his school ! But I felt that he



THE HUNTER DRAGS HIS SEAL OVER BROKEN ICE AND PRESSURE RIDGES TO HIS HOME. FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY ONES, OIL FOR HIS LAMPS, AND CLOTHING FOR THE FAMILY, THESE NECESSITIES OF LIFE FOR THE IVORY CARVERS OF THE NORTH ARE FURNISHED IN LARGE PART BY THE ALASKAN HAIR SEALS.



was already unhappy at being ahead of his group, so felt he should remain in the 5th grade, as I didn't have money for special tuition. I was so worried and anxious and in extreme poverty.

Both our children were rejected by their father from birth, and underwent great emotional distress therefrom, and with the doctors giving me "ten days to two weeks to live", due to their wrong diagnoses, I couldn't let them get too attached to me. Each "ten days", I tried to prepare them to face their life without any parents --to teach them a philosophy of life, religious faith--(with their crackpot dad telling them several times a week: "Remember, God hates you. God is vicious." --(my husband was very religious, in his way; 7th Day Adventist inaway )-- and how to make a living --(concerning which I knew nothing )

Eventually, I weighed 70 pounds, and went down to the States to die, so as not to frighten my children; I gave my body to science, but after a year of operations and radium experiment, they sent me home with six weeks to live ! But, since that would make too many people happy, I didn't die, but I have never been quite alive either ! The cancer was of the jawbone, caused by faulty wisdom-tooth operations, and left me badly deformed. I always have to wear a head covering which my poor children explained about, in answer to thousands of questions by acquaintances down thru the years; Their father ordered them to leave his home when each child reached 14 years; I will never know how I kept them home thru highschool; and the miracle of them earning their way to college !

My daughter worked two years after highschool and earned over \$7,000 by stenography, playing in dancebands (hated it) and teaching piano. She saved over \$5,000, and took 8 subjects her first year, at the University of Oregon, majoring in music, getting 6 A's, 1 B, and 1 C. Her English teacher wished her to rewrite her assignments and sell them --but Lane was so knowledge-hungry, she couldn't take the time ! She went to Hawaii her second year but didn't enter the Univ. She studied painting at the Museum under a fine man, who insisted that she go to the Beaux Arts in Paris " at once." But she wished a college degree, and as she had contracted a serious tropical fever she returned to the States and attended college in Michigan; then a scholarship to Mary Washington College in Virginia; then back to Michigan where she collapsed with overwork and hunger just before the end of the school term. Worried me crazy !



Lane married a splendid man after his completion of his 5th year at Michigan. He was trained to be a minister, but since that was his mother's idea, he now works for an airlines, but is not too happy, and will no doubt find himself sometime. He is remarkably well-integrated as a personality, and Dale says he is the most-adult man-of-his-age that he has ever met.

Dale worked summers (hi school yrs.) in electrical shops and for the Univ. of Wash. Fisheries Research; wiring buildings; for the local Architectural firm. He built a house during high school, installing the plumbing with aid, and using it as a workshop to build his own chemical smelz and skyrockets, etc. He built toys of plywood, to sell, in order to pay his light bill, and oil for heating. Everyone stole things if he relaxed a minute; shot thru his windows while he was away at college, because they do so resent anyone who reads and writes ! You see, there is no difference between an Alaskan hillbilly and a Tennessee hillbilly type of person !

Dale took a home-study course in electricity during high-school, played clarinet, flute and sax in the school and city bands, was in Sc. and photo clubs, a Star Boyscout, and during college summers was in the Men's All-town Chorus and Players group (1 play, as I remember it.) All this time, I was worried crazy !!! ---my poor cubs ! During the war yrs. here, the delinquency was extreme, with boys and girls drinking and fornicating immeasurably. So my two had to report by phone if they even delayed getting waited on at the butcher shop ! --just no place to raise people ! Dale loves square dancing, but tho a naturally graceful ballroom dancer, he still feels inadequate--needlessly. His wife loves to dance, which is healthful relaxation, and better than card-playing ! !!

He hasn't written to me since Thanksgiving-time, which is most painful and humiliating. These Juneau wolf-people !



THE HUNTER DRAGS HIS SEAL OVER BROKEN ICE AND PRESSURE RIDGES TO HIS HOME. FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY ONES, OIL FOR HIS LAMPS, AND CLOTHING FOR THE FAMILY. THESE NECESSITIES OF LIFE FOR THE IVORY CARVERS OF THE NORTH ARE FURNISHED IN LARGE PART BY THE ALASKAN HAIR SEAL.

*More power to you in your wonderful life. Mr. Wenzel's sincerely, J. Roff*







THE THEORY OF COMMUNICATION OF  
GEORGE HERBERT MEAD

G.H. MEAD:

Born: 1863; died, 1931.

Professor of Philosophy at the University of Chicago.

Writer on social philosophy and social psychology.

OUTLINE OF BASIC IDEAS:

1. A fundamental point of Mead's theory of communication appears to be his presupposition that communication is a part of the social process. That is, communication takes place when a group of individuals is trying to accomplish something jointly. A social process implies that, among a given group of individuals, the satisfaction of a given need (or act) of one depends upon the actions of other individuals.

If there is no group of people trying to do something jointly, in that case any problem of communication does not arise: there would be no point to the communication, nor any criterion by which to judge its success or failure.

Communication can be considered successful in so far as it promotes the goal of the joint activity in which it takes place, and it is unsuccessful to the degree that it hinders the attainment of the common goal.

2. ROLE-TAKING:

The ability of individuals to communicate with each other is tied up, in Mead's theory, with their capacity of role-taking. What is meant by "role-taking" may be explained as follows:

An individual "A" takes the role of another individual "B" if "A" can anticipate or predict what "B" will do in response to a given act or gesture of "A". That is, if "A" were to make the gesture of raising a clenched fist, and if he were to anticipate what "B" would do in response, then "A" may be said to take the role of "B". In that case we might say that, since "A" is already aware of "B's" prospective response when he raises the clenched fist, "A" takes "B's" prospective response into account in making the gesture. The gesture itself in such a case is called the SIGNIFICANT SYMBOL.

3. SIGNIFICANT SYMBOL:

Language consists of significant symbols. Most significant symbols are vocal, or sub-vocal, gestures, and not physical gestures. A good vehicle for a significant symbol is one which affects the person who makes it in the same audible visual or some other sensible manner as it affects other persons.



4. MEANING

"A's" anticipation of what "B" will do in response to "A's" gesture constitutes the meaning of the gesture to "A". If "B" does in fact respond in the way anticipated by "A", then "A's" meaning is confirmed; otherwise the meaning is not established and, to that extent, the gesture becomes meaningless.

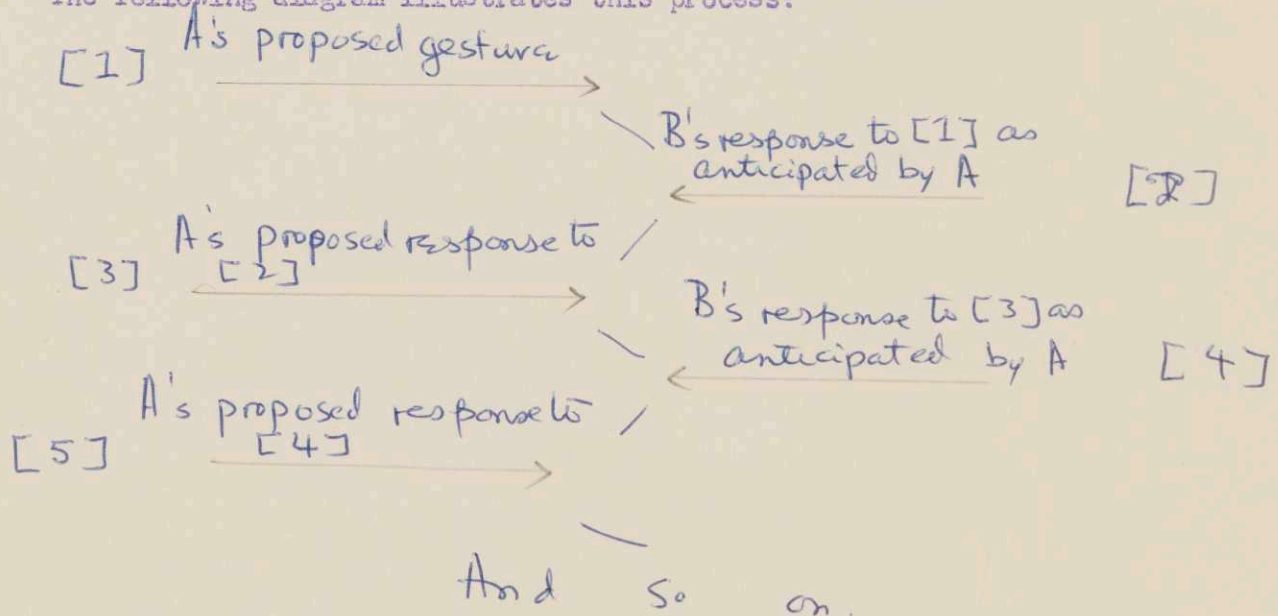
In order that there be meanings for gestures (which are in that case significant symbols), there must be a prior social process or other means of social conditioning, so that people can be expected to respond in certain predictable ways to given gestures.

If, in the course of interchange of significant symbols the meanings of the individuals participating in it are continuously confirmed, communication may be said to take place successfully, otherwise it is unsuccessful to the extent of the lack of confirmation of meanings.

5. "MIND"

Upto this point we have examined some basic elements of communication. But communication is neither simple nor static. Once a person has taken part in communication through significant symbols, he does not simply revert to the level of pre-linguistic communication. Because through this process the person has developed what Mead calls a "mind." He has become capable of thinking, i.e., this person has a fund of significant symbols at his disposal, and he has acquired the capacity for using them by himself.

Thinking here means the ability to visualize or imagine another person's responses to one's own gestures and, of course, one's own responses to the other person's responses, and so on endlessly. The following diagram illustrates this process:



This process of thinking resembles the thinking-out of moves in a chess game, where moves and counter-moves are worked out by the player in his "mind" before actually making the move.

In the process of thinking the "other person" usually is not any given individual, but what Mead calls a "generalized other," that is to say, an abstract mental sparring partner. The "generalized other" is often supposed to stand for a community, or society, or organization, or even a physical state of affairs, which is relevant to the particular activity of the individual, with which his thinking is concerned. It is possible to develop a generalized other because the society, or group, or state of affairs, possesses a structure, which the individual abstracts.

6. Writes Mead: "Language [which consists of significant symbols] implies organized responses [on the part of the individuals participating in the social process]; and the value, the implication of these responses, is to be found in the community [of persons] from which this organization of responses is taken over into the nature of the individual himself. The significant symbol is nothing but that part of the act which serves as a gesture to call out the other part of the process, the response of the other, in the experience of the form that makes the gesture. The use of symbols is then of the highest importance, even when carried to the point attained in mathematics, where one can take the symbols and simply combine them in accordance with the rules of the mathematical community to which they belong without knowing what the symbols mean. In fact, in such fields one has to abstract from the meaning of the symbols; there is here a process of carrying on the rational process of reasoning without knowing what the meaning is. We are dealing with  $x$  and  $y$ , and how these can be combined with each other; we do not know in advance to what they apply. Although symbols under certain conditions can be handled in such a fashion, we do, after all, bring them to earth and apply them. The symbols as such are simply ways of calling out responses. They are not bare words, but words that do answer to certain responses; and when we combine a certain set of symbols, we inevitably combine a certain set of responses." (Mead, G.H. Mind, Self, and Society, pp. 268f.)

7. There are two types of control that guide communication. One is the goal of the activities of the group. Communication in that case is guided and directed by the necessity of reaching the goal. The other is provided by the nature of the activity of the group itself: here the guiding necessity is that of keeping the activity itself going.

8. When the problems arise within the process of communication then, writes Mead, "the necessity of establishing agreement between the symbols mutually used, and that which they symbolize and the results of the conduct they imply, calls for a one to one correspondence between the symbols and those things and characters symbolized in the experiences of the different individuals,.... Such a determination of mutual agreement in cooperative conduct is.. essential not only to this conduct but to what is called "thinking"



in the individual..." (Mead, G.H. The Philosophy of the Act., p. 51)

9. SUMMARY:

"The principle which I have suggested as basic to human social organization is that of communication involving participation in the other... This participation is made possible through the type of communication which the human animal is able to carry out--a type of communication distinguished from that which takes place among other forms which have not this principle in their societies...

"[The human type of communication involves] the person who uses his gesture and so communicates assumes the attitude of the other individual as well as calling it out in the other. He himself is in the role of the other person who he is so exciting and influencing. It is through taking this role of the other that he is able to come back on himself and so direct his own process of communication. This taking the role of the other, an expression I have so often used, is not simply of passing importance. It is not something that just happens as an incidental result of the gesture, but it is of importance in the development of cooperative activity. The immediate effect of such role-taking lies in the control which the individual is able to exercise over his own response. The control of the action of the individual in a cooperative process can take place in the conduct of the individual himself if he can take the role of the other. It is this control of the response of the individual himself through taking the role of the other that leads to the value of this type of communication from the point of view of the organization of the conduct in the group. It carries the process of cooperative activity farther than it can be carried in the herd as such, or in the insect society." (Mead, G.H. Mind, Self, and Society, pp. 253ff.)

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Journal of Ethics, XXXV (1924-25), 251-77.

April 21, 1953

Mrs. Louis E. Burgner  
Shadowlawn  
Oberlin, Ohio

Dear Mrs. Burgner:

Many thanks for your charming letter, and in particular for the letter from my father which I shall cherish.

Every time I look back on my father's writing, I am again struck by his literary power and intellectual clarity and sincerity. I am sure that you will understand that, with all affection and honor to his memory, it was in some ways a harder thing to grow up under the shadow of a real giant than it would have been under that of a sham giant.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb



April 21, 1953

Mr. W.P. Champlain  
Research Personnel Officer  
Johns Hopkins University  
Operations Research Office  
6410 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, Maryland

Dear Mr. Champlain:

I have in hand your letter of April 13 about Mr. Georges Dube. Mr. Dube is a sincere, personable young scholar, but not absolutely off the top shelf. If he is taken onto a job with this knowledge, he will probably do himself more than credit, but I think it is late enough in his career for me to be able to say that the highest flights in mathematics are not for him.

As to his character and loyalty to the United States, I have only the best knowledge of both. I know that as a soldier in Japan he did some acts of kindness to Japanese mathematicians which tended to give our country a good name among the Japanese.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

April 21, 1953

Dr. Stanley Cobb  
Massachusetts General Hospital  
Boston 14, Mass.

Dear Dr. Cobb:

Dr. Bennoit Mandelbrot is living at the following address:  
c/o Trilling, 89 Mason Terrace, Brookline, where the  
telephone number is BEacon 2-2931. His office at M.I.T.  
is in the Research Laboratory of Electronics, and his  
telephone extension is 2530. The M.I.T. number is KIRkland  
7-6900.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. George Baldwin  
Secretary to Prof. Wiener

h



April 21, 1953

Miss Mary E. Corning  
Journal of the Optical Society of America  
National Bureau of Standards  
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Miss Corning:

There are times when I feel like a very remote ancestor of what Cybernetics has become at present, for the subject has ramified so much. The application of Cybernetics to any instrument, and to the spectroscope in particular, is legitimate and the paper you have sent me bears internal evidence of competence.

In view of my unpardonable delay in getting to read it, it would be very unwise for me to try to verify it in detail, but it is the sort of work which is being done and must be done, not only for the spectroscope but for all other continuously registering instruments, optical and non-optical. I therefore strongly recommend that you publish it and make it a precedent for other articles of the same sort.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

"Spectroscopy from the Point of View of the Communication Theory. Parts II and III."

April 21, 1953

Dr. George Devereux  
Director of Research  
Winter VA Hospital  
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Dr. Devereux:

I shall enclose a copy of the note I have received from Dr. Farnsworth. I think his suggestion about the Harvard Social Relations Department looks good. I will be glad to pass along to Harvard the information about yourself which you sent me, but I shall wait to do so until I get a go-ahead signal from you.

Meanwhile, if there is anything else I can do, let me know.

With good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb



April 21, 1953

Mr. Jason Epstein  
Editor, Anchor Books  
Doubleday and Company, Inc.  
575 Madison Avenue  
New York 22, New York

Dear Mr. Epstein:

Naturally, I feel very complimented by your desire to reprint The Human Use of Human Beings in your Anchor Book Series.

As to changes in the text, I am of open mind as far as anything that may improve the value of the book as such. But I want it distinctly understood that I have already refused and shall refuse again to make any changes which are prompted primarily by a desire for greater conformity or fear of the consequences of my opinions. The book is an honest expression of what I think, and while I will not pedantically stick to the text where I can improve it, I would infinitely rather never sell another copy than succumb to the motive of saying what I do not believe in order to make it more sellable. If this is distinctly understood, I shall be very glad to discuss the matter with you or with your representative.

Houghton-Mifflin has not enlightened me as to the terms you propose to make with them. While Houghton-Mifflin has the full right to carry on negotiations, I alsomam an interested party and should like to be kept informed, not only of the literary measures involved, but of the size of your proposed edition and the sum of money you intend to pay for it.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

April 21, 1953

Mr. Albert R. Getchell  
Addison C. Getchell and Son  
74 India Street  
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Getchell:

I am not quite sure that the book you sent me, Young Folks' Science in Story, is the book at which I looked when I was a child of three or four. But I am quite sure that if it is not, many of the illustrations are shared between the two books, and it is quite possible that the two books are the same. I remember particularly the picture of the balloon ascension. My impression, for what it is worth, is that the book I had was a shorter one, perhaps even an abstract of the longer book.

Thank you very much for thinking of me in this matter, and I shall return the book soon, after I have had another chance to look at it. It is part of the pleasures of being an author to make contact with new friends through one's books.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb



April 21, 1953

Mr. Thomas H. Greene  
University Residence Hotel  
45 West 11th Street  
New York 11, New York

Dear Mr. Greene:

It is always delightful to hear from people who knew my father and me in old times, and I thank you very much for your letter.

As to your boy, I shall be glad to have him in the office and talk with him, but since I do not know him or his ability, I can make no promise that I can be of service to him. However, the door is always open.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

April 21, 1953

Mr. Donald J. Merwin  
"This I Believe"  
485 Madison Avenue  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Merwin:

I am complimented by your invitation to participate in Mr. Murrow's radio series. I shall enclose a draft of what I should like to say. Please feel free to make what suggestions you feel are necessary, in particular those which relate to expanding or contracting certain sections of the material.

I shall look forward to hearing from you soon. With thanks and best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb  
Enc.



April 21, 1953

Mr. Allan Morris  
Simon and Schuster, Inc.  
630 Fifth Avenue  
New York 20, New York

Dear Mr. Morris:

I am ready to give Dr. Crothers of the Columbia Broadcasting System a broadcast for "You and the World," and I shall welcome a call from him at any time--preferably as soon as possible.

For your information, I am enclosing the text of a proposed broadcast which I am sending at the invitation of "This I Believe," Edward R. Murrow's show. I don't see any reason why the one broadcast should exclude the other.

I continue to get excellent fan mail on my book, and what new reviews appear are all to the good. But I am fully reconciled to not being a best seller. If there are any signs that the sales of the book are picking up, I shall be glad to hear of them.

Meanwhile, all best wishes to you, your secretary, and the whole Simon and Schuster crowd.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

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April Twenty-second

1953  
Our 54th Year

Mr. Norbert Wiener  
c/o Simon & Schuster  
1230 Sixth Avenue  
Rockefeller Center  
New York 20, New York

Dear author of "EX-PRODIGY":

This letter is written in the interest of the patients whose lives are entrusted to us for medical and surgical care.

As you may already know, this is a free, nonsectarian, entirely charitable institution for the treatment of the tuberculous. Many are obliged to remain here over a period of years. For this reason one important part of the care becomes that of keeping the mind content and it is our experience that nothing contributes more to self-forgetfulness and relaxation than the reading of a good book. One of the nice things about being the director of this institution is that of seeing the thrill that comes to a patient, long a shut-in, when he realizes that within his grasp is the opportunity to read the book for which he and his companions have long hoped.

A copy of your excellent book circulated among our patients would indeed occasion much joy and meet with the deepest gratitude of both patients and the hospital staff. Since our budget is limited I hope that we may be privileged to receive from you an autographed copy, gratis.

I fully realize, however, that you perhaps receive many similar requests and to comply with all of them could become quite a financial burden. With this in mind may I add that we hope for this book only in the event that you feel you are in position to send it.

Faithfully yours,  
*Philip Houtz*

Philip Houtz  
Executive Director

OPENED 1899



PH/eb

[ans 4/29/53]

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N B C T E L E V I S I O N

A Service of Radio Corporation of America

April 22, 1953

Professor Norbert Wiener  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Wiener:

Just a note of appreciation to you for your recent appearance on "TODAY" and for a most interesting and entertaining interview on the extraordinary happenings in the life of an ex-child prodigy.

I am sure I don't have to tell you how pleased we were by your unexpected visit to the "TODAY" set last week and hope it was the first of many more.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Richard A. R. Pinkham  
Executive Producer  
"TODAY"



# NASSAU TAVERN HOTEL

PALMER SQUARE



PRINCETON, N. J.

April 22, 1953

Dear 温訥:—

at the conclusion of tonight's first meeting of the 10th Conf. on Cybernetics we unanimously expressed our sentiments of having to miss you & wishing you could be here.

I asked Ted Pien, my son-in-law, who is teaching at M.I.T., to bring my copy of Ex-Prodigy for you to autograph. Thanks, and thanks for your very complimentary paragraphs. Mrs. George Birkhoff told me in Berkeley.

Yours  
Guanter

[ans 6/1/53]

April 22, 1953

Mr. John T. Diebold  
62 Columbia Terrace  
Weehawken, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Diebold:

I find that I did agree to the publication of my City College lecture after all. It was sponsored there by the Alumni Association of the Chemistry Department, and the lecture was published in the Baskerville Chemical Journal.

I'm sorry that you won't be able to use the lecture, and that my agreement about its publication had slipped my mind at the time I talked with you.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb



April 22, 1953

Professor S.B. Hitchner  
Agricultural Experiment Station  
University of Massachusetts  
Amherst, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Hitchner:

I want to thank you for your hospitality to my wife and me while we were in Amherst. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit with you and meeting your group.

It is more than generous of you to offer to pay the minor expenses I incurred in driving to Amherst. Ten dollars (a rate of about seven cents per mile) will be sufficient to cover this expense.

Again, my thanks for a good time. With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

April 23, 1953

Dear Professor Wiener,

The members of the Library Staff Association wish to thank you again for speaking to us at our last meeting.

We all enjoyed hearing about the "Problems of an autobiographer." I am sure that those of us who have not already read your latest book will want to read it soon.

Thank you again for being our guest speaker.

Sincerely

*Anne R. Cox*

Secretary,  
Library Staff Association



Endekill Road  
Staatsburg, N.Y.  
April 23, 1953

Dear Dr. Wiener,

As an ex-prodigy of sorts who is still trying to remake herself in an acceptable human shape, I should like to thank you for your book. It has been enormously heartening, and it has helped me with some of my own problems. It's good to know that one can recover as completely as you have done from a prodigious childhood.

Perhaps you may be interested in a case history that, though much less spectacular, is not entirely unlike your own story. My parents were Russian and Polish Jews -- immigrant children who grew up in the slums of New York's East Side and ultimately became schoolteachers. My father worked me as yours worked you, though with the addition of beatings as well as abuse. He was, however, a schoolmaster rather than a scholar; he had no genuine learning or love of it, and what he demanded of me was high marks and parlor tricks, such as memorizing poetry in ten seconds flat, that could be shown off to envious relatives and friends.

My precocity seems to have been spontaneous; I am told that I began to talk fluently at eleven months and taught myself to read at three years. It was not allowed to stay spontaneous, however. I was crammed at home till I was seven, then entered in the third grade; at ten I reached high school. Illnesses lost me a year and I was fifteen when I entered college. During all this time the pressure was unrelenting. I was expected to excel all my classmates in all subjects, and treated as a failure if anyone got a better mark than I did. Even my illnesses were regarded almost as wilful failures, and when like you I became nearsighted at eight I managed to conceal it for two years, by memorizing the school eye-charts, for fear of the inevitable reproaches. Since my I.Q. was 180, my father could not argue that I was an average child responding to superior teaching; nevertheless he succeeded in claiming credit for my achievements by insisting that I had no will-power of my own and would never have learned anything without his pushing.

than yours

I had a far less normal childhood/in other respects. I was allowed no freedom, no friends, few pleasures, and no money, and felt my home to be a prison from which I gladly escaped to school. In my teens I was secluded from the other sex almost as rigorously as a nun, and I believe I was eighteen or so before I was permitted to open my own letters. Both parents were morbidly possessive, jealous, and suspicious; my mother did me little good by assuring me that I was hopelessly unattractive and too inept to learn wifely arts, and that no man would look at an intelligent woman anyway.

I must have had some mathematical ability, for I remember discovering the binomial theorem for myself, by arithmetical means, when I was nine. My real talent, however, was always for writing. I began to win prizes early, and dreamed of a college position which would permit me to write on the side. Since I was a girl, however, my career was not considered important. I have a younger brother who was trained expensively as a doctor, but I myself was given the cheapest possible education -- teacher-training at Hunter College,



from which I graduated at nineteen with literary prizes but no other distinction. At twenty I took my M.A. at Columbia, paying for it myself out of scholarship money. Immediately afterward I was ordered into a teaching job in a New York high school. I hoped soon to leave home and live in peace, but instead promptly developed a nearly fatal thyroid disorder which kept me a semi-invalid for the next seven years. During this time I published a couple of books and earned a few thousand dollars by writing, but as my medical treatments were expensive I was considered an unprofitable investment and treated accordingly.

At twenty-seven I finally escaped through marriage. Since then I have recovered my health, had two sons, nursed my husband through a series of mental and physical illnesses, published books and magazine pieces, of my own and collaborated in my husband's writing. Today, at thirty-eight, I hope to devote more time to my own novels. All in all, I suppose I am one of the moderately successful ex-prodigies whom you describe in your introduction.

As you say, it doesn't feel quite good enough. But I do not entirely regret my forced precocity; it may have saved my sanity. I have seen three of my cousins chivied into insanity and others left hopelessly neurotic. But I myself was lucky enough to read Shakespeare and Dickens and Shaw and Victor Hugo and even Plato before I was ten, and consequently gained enough knowledge of the world to know that something was horribly wrong with my parents and to reject them as authorities. Of course I grew up with the usual distortions -- with fear and helplessness and loneliness and a sense of failure, masked under intellectual arrogance and assertiveness. Such qualities are even less acceptable in a woman than in a man, and I have been trying to restrain myself ever since, at twenty-three, I escaped from my parents for a few weeks at the MacDowell Colony and found out what was wrong with me.

If you are not too busy to answer fan mail, I've a question or two. Are we all clumsy? I was, particularly in the feet -- I never could learn to dance. But I'm ambidextrous and skilful with my hands, and have wondered if prodigies tend to be left-handed. I believe Macaulay was an extreme case both of precocity and of clumsiness, and I've known others.

As you can see, I'm still rather bitter, particularly as my parents continue to pursue me with efforts at possession and control. But in another twenty years perhaps I shall be as mellow as you are. You've given me hope! Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

*Coy Davidson*  
(Mrs. W. J. Gresham)

Just by the way; in science-fiction (or rather fantasy) have you tried C.S. Lewis' interplanetary trilogy? And in mycophagy, have you tried the sulphur polypore, Strobilomyces, and the chantarelles?

*Edms 6/1/53*





2222 Dwight Way c/o Lynn  
Berkeley, California  
April 23, 1953

Professor Norbert Wiener  
Mathematics Department  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Wiener;

I have just completed a necessarily hurried reading of your book, Ex Prodigy. I say, "hurried", because I had to read it at the University of California Reserve Book Room, where it is at present loaned out for one day only. (I managed to get it for two straight days.) I assure you that when my financial condition improves (this summer) I shall purchase a copy of your book.

I commend you for the excellence of your literary style, for the elegant and uniformly fitting vocabulary which you employ throughout. You are, in my opinion, much too modest in your account of your work during your periods of study at great universities and with great teachers.

As a Negro I especially appreciate your statements on minority groups. In view of the fact that you could very easily have not mentioned the subject, your printed words serve as an unerring guide to one who would seek a mentor in human relations. I, also, by the



way, have tried to see my minority status as part of the status of a number of minority groups, and I hope that someday soon I can work actively to try to lift all minorities just a bit higher in social status in this country. It is statements by eminent men of science such as yourself that serve in a large measure to keep focused intelligent public attention on the problems of scholars and minority groups, on this ground, as also on others, I wish your book wide circulation.

Unfortunately, Professor Weiner, being an absolute layman as far as mathematics is concerned, I did not understand too well the technical mathematical terms you employed in your book, e.g. "integral equation," "differential equations," "analysis situs." I am ashamed because I am a twenty-seven year old graduate student in philosophy, and I have had no mathematics since high school. I realized even before I read your book that a modern philosophy student should have a grasp of mathematical ideas and techniques. Therefore, I ask that if you have the time and the inclination, would you please indicate two or three texts from which I might dig out at least a rudimentary grasp of the ideas and techniques of modern mathematics. I would be willing to spend a good deal of my free

time to gain a good grasp, but I cannot spare time to pursue courses in sequence here at the university, having a rather full schedule in philosophy set up for the next year.

In conclusion, I confess that I picked your book up because I expected something akin to the journalistic treatment of prodigies (I had read the article you named in This Week Magazine on Mr. Sidis). It was a most pleasant disappointment to find a work of objective judgment, thorough scholarship, wide ranging memory and deep psychological insights that obviously (to me) have grown out of a hard-won keen awareness of humanity. I hope you will accept the favorable comments that form the body of this letter - they are not meant as flattery in any sense of the word. I leave to others, more versed in literary criticism than I, the task of pointing out any possible points of disagreement with your book.

Wishing you continued success in your life's work, I am,

Sincerely yours,  
Fauntleroy Glee

[aut 6/1/53]



# "This I Believe"

*Presenting the Personal Philosophies of Thoughtful Men and Women in All Walks of Life*

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485 Madison Avenue, New York City

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23 April 53

Professor Norbert Wiener  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge 39, Mass.

Dear Professor Wiener:

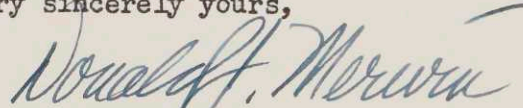
We were delighted to receive your gracious letter of the 21st and your contribution to the program. Thank you for responding so promptly to our invitation and our congratulations on a very fine script.

As you will notice, I have suggested an insertion at the end of paragraph three, in order to return the focus to your personal philosophy and to show the bearing that these trends have had on Norbert Wiener as an individual. This is only a suggestion of course - please feel free to rephrase your script in any way you may choose.

I am contacting Miss Marie Houlahan, at Station WEEI, in Boston, to arrange for a recording date at a time convenient to you. We are most anxious to have your broadcast for inclusion in the series which we are now preparing and hope that you will be able to make a recording within the next two weeks.

On behalf of the entire Editorial Board, may I once again express our sincere appreciation for your cooperation and the excellent contribution you have made.

Very sincerely yours,



Donald J. Merwin  
Editorial Assistant

DJM

"This I Believe" **Enc.**  
... a daily radio series  
... a weekly newspaper feature  
with guests and  
Edward R. Murrow

2-2-2

my own dignity by others. I say "dignity", but what I mean by the word has nothing whatever to do with pomposity and is indeed its deepest enemy. Neither is dignity in any way inconsistent with humor and a cheerful attitude to life. I cannot indeed claim any thorough-going cheerfulness in these days of the external threats of Armageddon and the destruction of civilization, and of the internal threats which tend to put us all in spiritual blinders. But I can say at least that I want - I want so desperately - to be able to maintain a hopeful attitude to life.

Here I must speak out more definitively against those tendencies to restrict our spiritual movement, to tell us what to think, and to immure us as cogs in an impersonal scientific research machine. The goose that lays the golden egg has become a Strasbourg goose nailed down by its feet to the floor of its coop and crammed with information, not cracked corn, to the end that from the degeneration of its brain - not its liver - a profitable commercial commodity may be drawn. (Because I am a scientist, I feel <sup>cut</sup> ~~( )~~ these tendencies in a very personal way, whether they are directed against me or against others.)

I have no belief in any knowledge of the truth that can be reached without a very real possibility of error,



Insertion for This I Believe:

It is easy to maintain a calm philosophy of life and a spiritual equanimity in a vacuum, or in an ivory tower.

~~But~~ ~~Unfortunately~~, whatever equanimity is left to us today is one which has to support itself against the shocks and alarms of a spiritual battle. <sup>9</sup> We are living in a world where there are many power/<sup>ful</sup> forces definitely hostile to scholarship and to human dignity.

If, like myself, a scholar happens to work in a field with engineering applications which may pay off in industry or in weapons of war, he is likely to find himself reduced to an impersonal ~~man~~ place in a scientific machine which blunders along through its very mass and bulk. I cannot and do not accept such a life, and I prefer the right to make mistakes on a piece of paper and to come out of them with a better understanding of the truth to the unwelcome privilege of participating in the expenditure of millions of dollars.

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

NEWS DEPARTMENT

April 23, 1953.

Dr. Norbert Wiener  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Dear Dr. Wiener:

Confirming our telephone conversation, we are publishing this year a supplement devoted to a discussion of American democracy in celebration of the 75th anniversary of the paper's founding. We feel that an article on technological improvements that may be impending and may be accelerated will be appropriate to the general theme, and I was gratified to know that you would be willing to undertake it. What I would particularly like to have in the article is an estimate of how much of the nation's productive processes could be completely automatized on the basis of known techniques. Farm production would be included in this category. Is it possible, for instance, to plow, sow and harvest the land of some vast area such as the State of Illinois through mechanical controls limited to two or three central points?

The second phase of the article might take up the question of how employment would be affected. In other words, if the full possibilities of automation were realized overnight, with no provision for the workers whose jobs became useless, to what extent would the labor force be reduced? And what would be the long term and short term results of this on our social habits and our present existing democratic institutions? Could we, for instance, adopt shorter working hours for everybody at more or less the present wage levels?

10880.  
These suggestions outline the general field we would like to cover. The length of the article should be around 2500 words, and I should be much obligated to you if you would let me know when I might expect the copy. From our point of view the sooner the better, but we would be glad to have it whenever you can provide it. I might add that a number of the most prominent and gifted Americans in their fields have accepted our invitation to take part in this symposium, so it should be a good one.

Yours sincerely,

*Thomas B. Sherman*  
Thomas B. Sherman,  
Editor Special Supplement.

[ans 4/27/53]



D. Klein from Inst of Tech  
Boston Mass

April 23 '53

Dear Sir

In Luce magazine for latter date there is an interesting  
account of a German gentleman who was here in Binghampton  
N.Y. in 1870 which may be useful in finding a man  
to read aloud by mechanical means.

This gentleman seems to have had a brain of a  
approximate size to Mr D. Webster although with somewhat  
tendency. He seems to have written a manuscript of a  
universal language which he was obsessed with.

His apparent mastery of all languages by an sub  
course of unusual method may be worth down  
somewhere in his writings. Perhaps in an upstate  
college there may have been preserved.

It would seem worth while to find out his method  
if possible.

Sincerely yours  
A. J.

April 23, 1953

Dr. P.C. Mahalanobis  
Indian Statistical Institute  
203 Barrackpore Trunk Road  
Calcutta 35, India

Dear Dr. Mahalanobis:

As you will remember, in our conversation on February 18 you promised me definite information on or about April 1 about my wife's transportation costs and income tax matters relative to your invitation to me to visit India during 1954. Because I had not heard from you since this conversation, I got in touch last week with Dr. M.S. Sundaram of the Indian Embassy in Washington. I am told that he has tried to reach you by cable, but has not yet received any reply.

You will understand that for me to plan to be away from M.I.T. for a period as long as you suggested inevitably involves the plans of others in addition to myself. I feel that I cannot hesitate any longer to make a definite commitment about my plans for next year. Hence, I must consider that your option on my services has now expired, and I request you to abandon all your efforts directed toward arranging my visit to India. It will be impossible for me to consider an invitation to visit India in 1954, and I am not willing to make any commitment whatever on any invitation you may extend to me at this time.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

cc: Dr. M.S. Sundaram  
Prof. W.T. Martin



*copy of [unclear] [unclear]*

**JOHN T. DIEBOLD**

*[unclear] [unclear]*

**HARBRIDGE HOUSE  
INCORPORATED**

**62 COLUMBIA TERRACE  
WEEHAWKEN, NEW JERSEY**

Carroll J. Biggerstaff  
ER Division (Engineering)  
USS Princeton CVA-37  
c/o FPO San Francisco,  
California



April 23, 1953

Dr. M.S. Sundaram  
Embassy of India  
2107 Massachusetts Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Sundaram:

I want to thank you for the help you have given me during the past week in seeking further information about the invitation extended to me in February to visit India next winter.

I regret that I cannot wait any longer for confirmation of the invitation. Such confirmation is already almost a month late in reaching me, and, as I have explained to Dr. Mahalanobis, it is not only my own plans that I must take into account.

You will find enclosed a copy of the letter I am sending today to Dr. Mahalanobis.

Sincerely yours,

Norbert Wiener

hb

As you will remember, in our conversation on February 18 you promised me definite information on or about April 1 about my wife's transportation costs and income tax matters relative to your invitation to me to visit India during 1954. Because I have not heard from you since this conversation, I got in touch last week with Dr. M.S. Sundaram of the Indian Embassy in Washington. I am told that he <sup>has</sup> tried to reach you by cable, but has not yet ~~succeeded~~. *received any reply.*

666666666

You will understand that for me to plan to be away from M.I.T. for a period as long as you suggested inevitably involves the plans of others in addition to myself. I feel that I cannot hesitate any longer to make a definite commitment about my plans for next year. Hence, I must consider that your option on my services has now expired, and I request you to abandon all your efforts directed toward arranging my visit to India. It will be impossible for me to consider an invitation to visit India in <sup>1954</sup> ~~the near future~~, and I am <sup>not</sup> ~~unwilling~~ to make any commitment whatever on any <sup>you may extend to me</sup> ~~fu-ther~~-invitation/at this time.

Dear Dr. Mahalanobis:

*February 18<sup>th</sup>*  
*our own cons. or*  
*stated*  
*or we don't*  
*April*  
*information*  
*about my wife's travel plans color records tax matters*  
*relative to your invitation to us to visit India during 1954.*

As you will remember, you promised me definite knowledge of the status of the various conditions necessary for my Indian trip on or about April first. Not having received

any communication from you whatever, about a week ago I began to make attempts to get in touch with you through the Indian Embassy. Dr. Sundaram has been unable at this time to secure any answer to his cable.

It is now close to the first of May, and I consider that in case there are valid reasons for you to delay in notifying me, the least that you could have done would have been to write to me explaining these reasons. As this has not been done, I fear that any arrangements you might make concerning a trip of mine to India would not be convincing enough to enable me to act with confidence upon them. I therefore request ~~+~~ you to abandon all efforts on my behalf and I shall take it for granted in all my actions that the trip to India is off.

You will understand that for me to take a trip to India involves the fortunes and affairs of many other people, and that if I cannot be notified in due time, I must take the action into my own hands and inform you that I cannot go.



Head of School of Science - Saul Cohen

Phys. Dept - Thornton

A. Koeftler

Brandeis University, Thursday, April 23, 1953.

Dinner at 6 p.m., lecture (2 hours of lecture and discussion) at 7:30 p.m. Accommodations for the night provided by Brandeis. Friday morning conferences with students.

Purpose of Seminars Series:

To introduce students (the senior class) to some of the intellectual and moral problems they must face after college. An attempt to help them apply the knowledge they have acquired in college to problems of "the real world." The central issue is the relation between values and conduct.

Method of Operation of Seminars:

To provide opportunity for students to meet and talk with men and women who have dealt with these problems. Leaders will be those who have combined a working philosophy with a productive life. They are asked to talk about their personal development, answering such questions as:

1. What were the major turning points in your life?
2. What have been some of the moral choices you have had to make?
3. What problems have you faced in translating values and beliefs into action.
4. What are the possibilities ~~and~~ for and the limits of productive ~~think~~ living in the field of mathematics?