Goodrich, Pierre.
DC 125

November 30, 1961

Mr. Donald E. Thompson, Librarian
Wabash College Library
Crawfordsville, Indiana

Dear Mr. Thompson:

You have from time to time suggested that the Goodrich Room on the second floor of the Eli Lilly Library has produced inquiries concerning the books, purpose, etc. to the extent that it would be justifiable and perhaps increase the value of the room to prepare a pamphlet to hand individuals who call and inspect the room for the first time.

This letter is written with the idea that it may accompany other material describing the room.

All the aspects of this room and the ideas contained therein are in the realm of my actual and vicarious experience.

It is hoped that the individual who enters this room will immediately feel the humbling presence of the centuries of written communication portrayed by the walls.

As you stand in the entrance doorway, to your left, straight ahead, and to your right, the centuries from the end of 1000 BC to the beginning of 1800 AD were each allocated equal dimensions.

There were judgments exercised. The first judgment was in the approximate date of the individual's most effective writing.

Basically a sense of motion was indicated by placing the names of the individuals (and occasionally a book) at the beginning of the century at the top and then in declining and advancing progression through the century.

It was amazing how following this general method the walls also generally satisfied an artistic sensibility, although in some instances there were minor shifts made for artistic purpose or other emphasis which seemed justifiable.

Great difficulty occurred in writings such as the Mahabharata. Also, there were instances of the teacher who was in discourse with his disciples but whose experiences and thoughts were not reduced to writing until sometime later. The Mahabharata emerged and you see it placed on the entrance wall. (Here we deal with periods of 1000 years each.) In this epic was the beginning of the Bhagavadgita which appears in the Third Century BC. Sometime prior thereto this "Song of the Blessed Lord" took a content reasonably close to its present form.

You will notice that the Chinese, Lao Tzu, appears in the Sixth Century BC. His thoughts were known as the Tao Te Ching, frequently referred to as the Tao. The well known Chinese scholar, Dr. Y. P. Mei, opines that the compilation was in the Third Century BC.

People who think concerning natural law regard the Tao as such an expression and as important. Thoughts of this kind when they occur influence the thoughts of others following them. One of the influences in Japan today is probably Zen. Here you have the development of Buddhism and the Tao affecting each other.

To my knowledge, Dr. Mei is the only translator into English of the recorded thoughts of Mo Tzu. K'ung Fu-Tse (Confucius) lived between 551 and 479 BC. Mo Tzu followed close on his heels.

A few quotations from the thoughts of these individuals may be helpful:

> Why is it wrong for a man to take the property of another man and right for the great state to take the property of the lesser state? (Mo Tzu)
>
> Why is it wrong for a man to kill another man and right for the king to kill many men? (Mo Tzu)
>
> Rejoicing at a conquest means to enjoy the slaughter of men. (Tao Te Ching)
>
> The Good I meet with goodness; the bad I also meet with goodness; that is virtue's goodness. The faithful I meet with faith; the faithless I also meet with faith; that is virtue's faith. (Tao Te Ching)
>
> The Master said, If the people be led by laws and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame and moreover will become good. (Confucius, Analects, Book II, Chapter 3.)

> The Master said, Is not Reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others. (Confucius, Analects, Book XV, Chapter 23)

At this point it might be helpful to quote Chapter 5, Verse 17, of Matthew:

> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

and Matthew, Chapter 5, Verses 43 and 44:

> Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love they neighbour, and hate thine enemy.
>
> But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

and Kant's "categorical imperative";

> Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. (Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals.)

You may now look at the wall to the left and notice how at that period in many parts of the world -- Greece, Palestine, India, and China -- some of these thoughts were being suggested by individuals mentioned herein. Its continuance is expressed in the Fifth Chapter of Matthew and many other places as will be found by reading the books in the room in which you are standing.

The cuneiform tablet reproduced to the left of the entrance door (according to Dr. Samuel N. Kramer, a translator of the early Sumerian) indicates the use of the word "freedom" first occurred, as far as is now known of recorded language, between 3000 and 2000 B.C. You will note this is about 1000 years before the Code of Hammurabi.

You will find the reverence of early people for the sun portrayed on the right part of the wall in which the entrance door is located. Apparently long before science broke the sun's rays into ultra violet, cosmic, and other rays, the sun was regarded as of importance to the lives of these early people.

You will have to read the Cathas of Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) which come out of an Iranian agricultural community if your curiosity has now been sufficiently stimulated. (When you ask for a Masda light bulb you are using a word which came from this time.)

This now leads us to the second hope of the walls. First, the bumbling experience: and second, the desire to use the books on the shelves plus one's own experience in life to better understand it. If you are now sufficiently humble and sufficiently curious you can explore the questions posed in the bookmark:

What Am I?

Can I?

Ought I?

This brings me to the second phase of the room itself: The availability of books. The books are arranged in chronological order on the theory that man at any given point of time is influenced by the conversation which he is able to find in the written records of the past and in current discussion if he wishes to better understand.

Every effort has been made to provide as nearly as possible honest and good translations of the knowledge of each period of time. Where possible, the original language is also available for those who have the capacity to exercise a truly scientific desire to verify by looking at the original. There are a few books where there have been no satisfactory translations in English. There only the original language can be found.

You may highly respect Lord Acton or John Locke and if you wish to check what they are talking about you will find here many of the books which will enable you to do so. For instance, Lord Acton (I am not questioning Acton's good intentions for he was a fallible human being, as great as he was and as much as he wished history to be scientific) may have misstated John Locke in his essay on "Freedom in Christianity." In this room you can check for yourself whether or not this is so.

If you will read the books in this room, it seems to me that you will find man has changed very little in some important aspects over the 5,000 years available for your observation -- so much so that for all practical purposes his conduct is predictable.

At the risk of oversimplifying the problem, there are two statements which stem from man's ignorance and imperfection and the resulting corruption by power:

Proposition No. 1:

> Certain individuals who have come to be called "Liberals" believe that the amount which an apparently more perfect person can accomplish through granting him governmental power

justifies less liberty.

Proposition No. 2:

> The traditional "Liberal," on the other hand, wants to minimize the damage that can be done by the apparently imperfect man, such as we are certain to have in power, by limiting this power.

Hobbes, who was a supporter of the first proposition,* did not disagree that man constantly sought more power, but apparently he pushed aside the thought of Acton which is that "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." (Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton, April 5, 1887.)

If you fear this is out of context you may go to a book in the shelves along the right wall (if you are a student interested in your own serious education) and read the complete letter to Bishop Creighton in which this statement occurs. There are other valuable thoughts in the same letter.

If you accept Acton's doctrine it is one important reason which will drive you to the second proposition stated above.

It seems clear to me, based on this predictable nature, that the choice of the second proposition is the less imperfect and more hopeful choice.

Here I must turn autobiographical.

In 1916 I was awarded by work in course the degree of A.B. in Wabash College and in 1920, after a very fortunate interruption (the United States Army) of my academic work in course, the degree of L.L.B. from Harvard Law School.

One of my teachers was Roscoe Pound, who a year or two later confined himself solely to teaching jurisprudence.

I was active for a number of years in a variety of businesses, learning more law and experiencing fortunate

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* Some people regard Hobbes' Leviathan as "the Old Testament of all Socialists to which Karl Marx' Das Kapital is the New ...." ("Noble Experiments" The London Times Literary Supplement. December 30, 1949.)

and unfortunate experiences. I use the word "fortunate" in its normal sense, although it seems to me the experiences good and bad were fortunate in the sense of their affect on my experience and education. I have come to be concerned about the presently felt necessity of pursuing education, in its present form at least, in an uninterrupted number of years in college. This is one reason I refer to the Army interruption as fortunate.

As nearly as I can tell, the textbook method plus the method of formal courses was partially responsible for my failure to pursue the vocabulary and curiosity which grows out of what is sometimes referred to as a course in philosophy. Later I spent years at this.

While education, if it is to mean anything, must be continuous through an individual's life, I do not subscribe to the idea of Plato that philosophy can only be taught in later years. It comes as early as individuals ask themselves the questions stated on the bookmark in the books in this room and other questions concerning their daily experiences.

While new bearings may be ascertained (as you go along on life's course new points of obtaining knowledge of your direction may be located), the bearings are sought as soon as a choice exists.

About 20 years ago the combined business and legally influenced life I was leading made me question whether I could offer proof of my own points of reference and whether or not very important people in business were making decisions without realizing a sound point of reference.

I resumed the activity of education by reading. Fortunately, I had not been a lone scholar long enough to become entirely discouraged or undisciplined when Dr. Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago attacked the educational system by what is known as the Great Books movement.

An important aspect of this was, first, to make available books for this revival of an educational concept which has apparently been declining for something close to a hundred years. (That kind of educational knowledge had so far reduced the demand for books that the supply was not available.) Second, it was to establish the group discussion in the socratic concept.

It is possible in such a group to look again at the continuous nature of man referred to above. This obviously brings us to the third concept of this room which I will discuss later -- a suitable arrangement for a good socratic discussion.

All of my years of experience up until now in business and in education make it clear that some one or more of the propositions which you will find discussed pro and con in this room are daily occurrences. I find by experience that such language and understanding as have been acquired in the extended reading and discussion which have occurred in these years help clarify what if occurring daily.

The basic ignorance of man should be ascertainable by a thorough knowledge of these several thousand years. This is an important aspect of what is referred to herein in the two above propositions as "apparently imperfect man." The same awareness should produce helpful humility.

The ignorance and imperfection of this writer, and others in connection therewith, result in this room's being imperfect -- as you, upon reflection, may discover you are. This is, however, no cause for fatalism but it is possible that this, if properly used, may furnish an important means of individual education.

The education here available discards all of the formalized concepts of education, such as courses and departments in this and that. It simply makes available an opportunity to read and think, check, explore, observe, and discuss. It is only the individual who accomplishes his education.

The socratic discussion which is mechanically well arranged for in this room can furnish the occasion for progress through the long written experience contained in the books in this room and exercise in and concerning the ideas contained therein. It remains to be seen if enough individuals who are reasonably each other's peers can be assembled together in our present-day educational community to engage in their cooperative development of such apparatus as they are born with and have subsequently cultured in a way that it might be reasonably hoped they would be provided with a vocabulary and intense desire to pursue this education through their lives.

The vocabulary produced by the present departmentaliza-tion probably makes this too difficult a discipline for most individuals if they do not engage somehow in the activity which is here made available and perhaps may be used.

A socratic seminar assumes a group of people sitting around the table in this room for two hours who have all read the same book, and at least some of the preceding books, who will carry on a discussion concerning that book and man and what may be learned out of such an exercise.

The two socratic examiners can sit either together at the end of the table or separately one at each end of the

table. They can interrupt. Lecturing should be taboo either by the examiners or by individuals. It is the examiner's right to interrupt the lecturer. It is the socratic peer's right to become the examiner of the socratic examiner if the examiner fails in his duty not to lecture.

We are so unaccustomed to this activity which was an accustomed activity over a hundred years ago that it is difficult to find a place for it in present-day education. It denies the objectivity of anyone, including the professor. It can, by skillful examiners and sufficiently unskilled socratic participants, be used in support of the first proposition. It can also be used in support of the second.

By removing the aspect of the lecturer and the dictatorship which exists in the normal classroom with the professor as the dictator and the student as the slave of the dictator, it increases the chance that the individual will more readily detect the course towards dictatorship of an alleged elite which is described in the first proposition quoted herein, or may pursue and make his decisions in support of a free society as too briefly stated in Proposition 2 hereof. You must remember that these individuals in the United States of America claim the right, subject to constitutional limitations protecting to some extent the minority, to elect representatives and determine important matters governing others.

Whether the opportunity will be used or whether it will result in good cannot be predicted. It at least seems more hopeful.

There is opportunity for both breadth and depth of education for those who have the will really to use this activity whether they be a professor who supposedly knows all there is to know or the student who is supposed to learn.

I feel as if I am not sufficiently emphasizing the current aliveness of this discussion and that it has continued so far at least the period of time indicated in this room.

Listen to Plato (Fifth Century BC) reporting the statements of Socrates in the "Gorgias":

> And that, Callicles, is just what you are now doing. You praise the men who feasted the citizens and satisfied their desires, and people say that they have made the city great, not seeing that the swollen and ulcerated condition of the State is to be attributed to these older statesmen; for they

have filled the city full of harbours and docks and walls and revenues and all that, and have left no room for justice and temperance. And when the crisis of the disorder comes, the people will blame the advisors of the hour, and applaud Themistocles and Cimon and Pericles, who are the real authors of their calamities; and if you are not careful they may assail you and my friend Alcibiades, when they are losing not only their new acquisitions, but also their original possessions; not that you are the authors of these misfortunes of theirs, although you may perhaps be accessories to them.

Or, look again at the left wall where you see the name of Sophocles. Sophocles wrote a tragedy called "Antigone." Antigone was the heroine. She had violated a decree of the tyrant and the following discussion takes place:

Creon: Do you, I say -- you, with your downcast brow -- own or deny that you have done this deed?

Antigone: I say I did it; I deny it not.

Creon: ....Knew you the order not to do it?

Antigone: Yes, I knew it; what should hinder? It was plain.

Creon: And you made free to overstep my law?

Antigone: Because it was not Zeus who ordered it, nor justice, dweller with the Nether Gods, gave such a law to man; nor did I deem your ordinance of so much binding force, as that mortal man could overbear the unchangeable unwritten code of heaven; this is not of today and yesterday, but lives for ever, having origin whence no man knows:....

.....

Creon: Obedience is due to the state's officer in small and great, just and unjust commandments;...

Haemon: Father, the gods plant reason in mankind....

You may turn to the wall on the right where over 2000 years later you will find the protection to Antigone written into the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America -- perhaps for the first time in any written constitution of government. The heroine of this Greek play would doubtless have voted for the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

Turning to the right wall again you can look at Calvin and Locke. (One of the interesting things about Calvin is that he demonstrated the utter ignorance of man, in which he so believed, by some of his own conduct; but this does not lessen the importance of the attack he made on the tyrant.) Listen to Calvin:

> When Daniel disobeyed Darius he disobeyed no law. The king was utterly without authority.... In fact, he was hardly worthy to be considered among the ranks of men. Now do you see what I mean? (Commentary on Daniel)
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> I affirm, that if they (magistrates) connive at kings in their oppression of their people, such forbearance involves the most nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by the ordination of God.... Because the king had exceeded the limits of his office, and had not only done an injury to men, but, by raising his arm against God, had degraded his own authority....as if God had resigned his right to mortal man when he made them rulers of mankind...we ought to obey God rather than men.... (On Civil Government, Chapter 20.)

and to Locke:

> For men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker -- all the servants of one sovereign Master, sent into the world by His order, and about His Business -- they are His property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during His, not one another's pleasure:....
>
> This freedom from absdute arbitrary power is so necessary to, and closely joined with, a man's preservation, that he cannot part with it but by what forfeits his preservation and life together. For a man not having the power of his own life cannot by compact, or his own consent, enslave himself to any one, nor put himself under the absolute arbitrary power of another to take away his life when he pleases. Nobody can give more power than he has himself....
>
> The freedom, then, of man, and liberty of acting according to his own will, is grounded on his having reason, which is able to instruct him in that law he is to govern himself by, and make him know how far he is left to the freedom of his own will....
>
> ...have a mind to unite, for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties, and estates, which I call by the general name, property. (A Treatise of Civil Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration.)

Two hundred years after Calvin and one hundred years after Locke, you may turn to the Declaration of Independence and read the following:

> ...We hold these truths to be self-evident... they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness...That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles....He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers, to harass our people, and eat out their substance....A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people....

Perhaps you will now read again the entire Declaration of Independence.

I have tried to show the reality of this room, the picture of the walls, the study desks which can be used to enlarge or decrease the size of the socratic seminar, and the books which are sufficient for more than the present-day education. This is all related simply to man. This room in which you are standing and what it portrays are alive and real.

The fact is, it is perhaps a most real reality. It is closely related to our daily lives. A careful examination of Euclid's own definition of the point from which his Geometry starts will show it is a mental concept not reproducible physically.

If further support is needed, it might be reasonable to say that this, such as it is, is the best I am able to do at the moment. It is based on conversation not only with a large part of the books in this room but also in conversation and discussion with my peers, and sometimes those who are more than my peers, concerning the questions, problems, and educational activity thus indicated.

Dr. D. Ellton Trueblood, for example, utilized this idea a number of years ago at Earlham College. He did not have the same opportunity that this room presents, nor did he have very often a true socratic examiner.

Sometimes debates can be carried on by correspondence. In the seven shelves at the right of the room which have been reserved for my further experimentation you may find the results of some of this in the books by Dr. Felix Morley, Dr. F. A. Hayek, and Dr. Wilhelm Roepke, individuals who to some substantial extent seem to be presently committed to the second proposition contained herein.

The scholarship on which this room and its contents is based has been checked as much as possible. No certain idol is being presented. You can go on with the exploration on your own.

In conclusion, although the books come down to the present time, particularly in the seven shelves thus mentioned, it seemed that the picture of the walls should start with the word "freedom" and end with the Declaration of Independence.

The cross on the wall provoked some discussion. Why is it not at the birth of Jesus Christ or the death of Jesus Christ? It seemed to go into the whole picture reasonably well where it now is. It had by that time at least been clearly raised as a standard of devotion and appeal coming from Matthew 28:20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...."

Greece had fallen, Rome was falling, and Tacitus (you see him on the wall you face at the door) said of the Germanic nations:

> They do not, however, deem it consistent with the divine majesty to imprison their gods within walls or represent them with anything like human features. Their holy places are the woods and groves, and they call by the name of god that hidden presence which is seen only by the eye of reverence.

This does not necessarily subscribe to the idea that at the moment the cross became the symbol above indicated that the people who used it necessarily did good with it or understood some of the civilizations where there existed actually more liberty than existed in some nominally Christian areas of European civilization.

Shortly, as you again can see on the wall, there was a night following the Roman dictatorship which was, as all dictatorships would be, evil and corrupt. In this night even the tools of the Greeks lay unused for lack of knowledge of them. But the Renaissance and the Reformation carried on. In the Roman Chant on the wall you face and

and the Reformation Chorale on the wall to your right you now may be stimulated as to the relationship of these two great musics as means of communication and thought. The true student may read the music and words and by arrangement he may hear the best recordings of this music.

I hope that this letter satisfactorily expresses to you, to future students of Wabash College, and to the people who come into this room the possibilities which exist for more complete education so that at least it would not be difficult for one who had reasonably understood even the books mentioned in this letter to see that he might be different from Socrates' description of the technician:

> They (artisans) know a great deal about what they know and they are greatly ignorant because they think that is all there is to know. (Apology)

Sincerely,

Pierre F. Goodrich