

***41. Letter of Acknowledgement and Appreciation to Three Professors
at the University of Winnipeg (1993)***

“Too often, I think, we are so caught up in the day-to-day that we do not take adequate time to ponder what we have just passed through. I strongly suspect this to be an error and a loss, a rushing on or rushing ahead of which age or future events often make a mockery. However, the times and our own ambitions seem to urge us onto the expressway of life. We find it sometimes difficult to see the need for holding up or possibly even jeopardizing our life projects by going on some side trip. I strongly doubt that I am as prone as many to sticking to the shortest and fastest routes of life (perhaps I am even something of an expert at taking side trips); I do know, however, that, with having recently acquired my Honours degree and locked into MA mode, a certain effort is required to stop, turn around, and, instead of giving this past year of study a merely fleeting glance, gaze more steadily over the ground thus covered.

“I took only three courses: American Literature, Modern Philosophy, and Postmodern Philosophy. All three were honours courses and provided me with abundant opportunities for stimulating thinking and serious and sometimes not-so-serious writing. In addition, I was privileged to get a taste of, in the role of teaching assistant, the inner workings of classroom instruction and student evaluation. I feel very fortunate in having made the choice of courses that I did and, moreover, having had such instructors as made allowance for my sometimes abrasive free-spiritedness.

“I look into this world and see that there is much said by many people without the wholehearted attempt to say what is true or at least what is thought to be true most deeply and hiddenly. There is an unwritten law amongst educated, cultivated, goal-oriented people to dispense with candour and honesty when it threatens to alienate and offend others. It is the policy of prudence and promotion; I cannot gainsay it insofar as it both turns and greases the wheels of society. However, without a few individuals who, I might say right now are destined either to be glorious successes or forgotten failures – without these few individuals both partially blessed and partially cursed with the kind of critical eye that never closes, educated society would quickly lose faith in its overall integrity and its aptitude for the most penetrating self-examination.

“I number myself among those both blessed and cursed in having to stand apart. It is in my ability to stand apart that I find my greatest strength. It certainly does not come in the form of extraordinary intellectual or artistic abilities. I also seem to have had a great deal of luck.

“So what I am saying is that my good luck has held steady over this past year and I count all my experiences at the University of Winnipeg very happy and beneficial ones. I know the world well enough to know how large a role chance plays in it and so how the situation could easily have turned out otherwise. Therefore I wish to express my gratitude to those people primarily responsible for making this past year of study so amenable to my particular mode of learning.”

– You take his juggling to be a wonderful act more important than saying something substantial.

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