

# The correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Alfred Kazin

1.

SCHOCKEN BOOKS INC.  
342 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 17,  
N.Y. TEL. VANDERBILT 6-4167

April 10, 1947

Mr. Alfred Kazin  
91 Pineapple Street  
Brooklyn 2, N.Y.

Dear Alfred Kazin:

Your excellent review of Kafka in the Herald Tribune brings to my mind a lunch appointment which we never made. I hope we can manage one soon.

I'm especially happy about the following points which you made in your article - that Kafka's genius was due to his ability to see «in his private and contemporary agony that part of us all which is more real than the public reality» and thus, to accept «his torment as a guide to the human condition.» Then, also, your understanding of the philosophical con-

tent of this work as «man's search for his own meaning.»

One little detail: Why, for Heaven's sake, do you think that this was a «Czech genius?» The facts are: born in Prague as a Jew, he never wrote a word in the Czech language, but, as you know, always in German. So, whoever may claim him, and I guess we Jews should, if it is a matter of nationality, the Czechs will hardly be able or willing to do so.

Please call me up soon.

Yours,  
Hannah Arendt

2.

Hannah Arendt, 2 Woodrow Court Hanover,  
N.H.

August 4, 1948.

Dear Alfred:

It was a wonderful surprise to find your book here when I arrived. Since then, I have been

reading it every day at breakfast (when I am in my most antagonistic mood) and now I don't remember that I ever learnt so much about this country with so great delight. So, this is a real thank-you letter! I still am a little puzzled about young Kazin who preceded you, because young Kazin's maturity and balanced judgment without any signs of prematurity is a little frightening.

There are some chapters, like the one on Veblen or the little Magazines, that are real masterpieces. Sometimes, I feel like quarrelling, for instance, about Faulkner who in my opinion is a greater writer than you think, as a matter of fact quite possibly the greatest living writer. This is not so much a question of milieu or violence, but rather his extraordinary gift for formulation. (Do you know a better definition of pride than: «If happy I can be, I will; if suffer I must, I can.»?) What I mean is that he knows that passion can be also a way to arrive at truth.

How is the family? Do you now have a «fixed abode»? I don't mean to say that you need it, not in the least. It would only make things so much easier for your friends who can't find you in any of their addressbooks.

Yours,  
Hannah.

### 3.

Hill Farm  
Solebury Bucks Co. PA.  
TEL. Sugan 2751

23 August 1948

Dear Hannah,

It was so good to hear from you, especially with compliments, yet. For some reason the picture of you sitting down to breakfast with my book fascinated me. At first I was insulted: what I said to myself, can I be *that* readable? Then I can't be sound! Then I reflected that

after all, a solid German education represents something that we here just don't get. For myself, since I begin the soul-tearing task of putting words together after breakfast, I try at that meal to be as frivolous and brainless as possible. Any morning you may find me staring at the Lord and Taylor ads in yesterday's Times, or figuring out the number of square yards that have to be weeded in the garden, etc. etc.

Anyway, thank you. It's a good book; it should have been a better one. For years I couldn't look at it without flinching. Six years of my life, with hardly a day off went into it. But you mustn't exaggerate its maturity. You are perfectly right about Faulkner; that's one of the many things I've learned since.

I'm still moored in Part III of *A Walker In The City*, my «book on New York.» That will be something to read if I can ever finish it. But it hasn't gone very well this summer. Otherwise, of course, it has been very rewarding, for Michael is naches beyond words. He now has eyebrows, a vocabulary of five sounds, the usual staggering amount of hair, and a look – oh, Lord, how shall I say it? – of intense child-like wonder. To see him in his outdoor crib, slowly meditating on every new element in the world is to feel an enormous pity and reverence for man, who must learn everything slowly, obviously a lifetime isn't enough.

How are you? How is the book? Do you ever get time for a walk in the country? How is your rheumatism? – We often talk about you, and wonder how you are. Is there any chance of your being in New York soon, and thus able to visit us here? We're only 2 hours away; in fact an hour by train, where a special courier called Carol will pick you up in the car that only she knows how to drive. We're going to be till mid-Sept, I think, so if there's any chance of your coming down, do let us know.

With affectionate greetings from us three –  
Alfred

## 4.

8/ 8/ 50

Alfred – how are you? Don't you think we should get some little sign that you are still alive? How do you think you will be able to come back and face me without even the tiniest little bit of a letter?

I am still a little bothered by the title of my book. Our newest discovery is: *The Burden of Modern Men or Modern Man's Burden*. However, before submitting it seriously and solemnly to Giroux I'd rather have your advice. New York is so so lala. But not hot – unberufen! Come back, I got much too used to you.

Hannah.

## 5.

c/o Bowron, 1775 Girard Av. So  
Minneapolis, Minn.

11 August 1950, Noon

Don't worry, they couldn't keep me here with wild horses. As a matter of fact, shortly after I arrived here, I found myself writing a poem – my first in almost a year – about yellow sand and walking in a wood and the smell of birch leave, so homesick was I for Manomet and the cranberry bog. The truth is that after those pleasant days of real freedom, Minnesota has been one prolonged and boring anti-climax. I don't have enough time to write, am constantly fighting off the innumerable unnecessary social ties attached to my job here, and long to be through and to get back to my desk, my city, my friends. Ironically enough, my classes are the largest in the English department – even my Melville seminar, a very advanced course is jammed beyond all reason. So here I am, have never been so full of stuff but am teaching with my left hand. 'Tis very funny;

I've never less wanted to be a professor. And *therefore* am doing a good job.

Yet let me be just – so long as I can be free. Minnesota is as nice as can be, my students have a touching naive seriousness that sometimes leads to real feelings about poetry. I am living all by my lonesome in a great big house that was lent me free by a man I had a half-hour's talk with six years ago! I feel like a bachelor Pasha. All these bedrooms – and a study, a living room, a dining room, a great big porch. Such grandeur after New York's rat race! The neighborhood is the height of Minneapolis' upper middleclass grandeur. I die of boredom every time I walk up the street. The academic folk around me are decent, decent, decent – and all such damned liberals, afraid of an idea that may even seem to qualify their wish to love despondency. For American liberalism, I see here, is really founded on powerlessness, on «alienation,» on some deep sense of political futility. Politics is – the other side of personal life, the romance of journalism, the heartbreak behind the daily paper. And everyone is so *careful*; one might, I may yet, write a little story about the little world inside this delicately suspended world of academic niceness. I'm just beginning to understand what fiction is – i.e., what, ones one accepts the imaginative power of the fictitious, the *purely* imagined, can be done with an existence whose meanings are always selective; and founded on our ability to choose..... Though I don't have time or energy enough to write, I've never thought more satisfactorily about my tasks and possibilities as a writer.

I miss you beyond words, and can't wait to see you. It's hard for me say this in a letter – but really, Hannah, how often I talk to you that you know not of.

My love to Heinrich,  
Always,

I don't see any advantage in the new title, sorry. Stop fussing about titles; the one you

have will do. How are you coming on the proof? I'll be back surely by the 30th, so there may be time yet to go over sore points and such. However, anything that can be asked and settled by mail, do -

The enclosed is that song you liked - Green Grow The Bushes, Ho! Can't write out all the music, but the words and the first theme are right. We will all sing it together, when we are together.

## 6.

Overseas Hotel, Key West, Florida  
Wednesday, 20 Dec 1950

Dear Hannah,

At the moment, alas, I am shivering. When I came Sunday afternoon everything was torrid, just as I like, and with a cry of exultation I wiped the sweat off my brow. But the last two days have been windy and cold; no doubt it will pass; it had better. Still, I have a sunburn, for at any time of the day folks passing down Fleming Street can see me under my sombrero dozing on the upstairs porch over a copy of *Light In August*. Except for the unnatural weather (!!!) Key West is lovely, just as I had hoped. I always knew I had an appointment with this place, just as you have one with Greece. The Negroes slouch along the street in great slovenly style, and everything despite the white paint bears the slatternly lazy mulatto-in-carpet slippers look I expect. The waters of the Gulf are *milky* white, and the pelicans pouch on the poles sticking out of the water with their great noses pressed to the water, hence cover all wisdom. The island, as everyone keeps reminding me, is the southernmost place in the US, nothing below us but foreigners. It is only seven miles long, and about 1 or so wide- on a clear day you can see from the Atlantic to the Gulf. Lots of Cubans; I love to look at the women sitting in the bus with their rings and talking bzz bzz all the while automatically and with serene tropical

unconsciousness putting their coiffures in place.... The only thing wrong, besides the weather, is that the Navy is too much in evidence. Sickening stench of mass loneliness and homesickness that comes up at you anywhere too many men are gathered in uniform.

I have been eating yellowtail, polio con rizo, Jumbo shrimp, red snapper, oranges. New York seems awfully far away. If there is a war, maybe we can all hide away here. This is a bad joke. Actually, the place has more jukeboxes than would be considered decent even in Texas the source of all infamy. My friends Denver Lindley and his wife (he is an editor at Harcourt) are also here, which is good. Half an hour ago we watched the sunset from the pier, and a glow he sang out in good Greek (I hope) the first 100 lines of the *Odyssey*. Which made me think more than usual of you.

I miss you very much. I hope you are well. Pray for good weather, and when it comes, try not to hate me too much, for I have a pact with the sun to store away a little for you, and will give it to you when next we meet.

With dearest love to you both,  
Ever,  
Alfred

## 7.

7 June [1951], Hotel Lutetia, Paris-

Dear Hannah and Heinrich:- Have just come from a wonderful fully day at Chartres, and since I am dashing around trying at least to see 1/500th of what there is to see in Paris at the moment, and will be leaving in two days for Aix, had better write now, while I can. I wrote you a card as soon as I had heard about Broch. Though I knew him hardly, I was terribly sad to hear about it. Saw Weill for a lunch the other day, and am going cut to her house Saturday afternoon. We hit it off won-

derfully from the start, and had a hilarious gay lunch, which lasted so long that the poor woman (?) didn't get back to her office till almost four.... Paris is radiant at the moment, the awful weather of the first days has slid into a kind of classic June sunshine, and despite the usual petty gyping and the sometimes incredible unAmericanism of the washrooms, I am having the time of my life, and can neither stop walking nor looking except when sheer fatigue forces me into bed. I have the impression, and everything I hear from experienced people confirms it, that things here are looking up. The prices are awful, the posters growl and shout, but the French are definitely in an optimistic mood, much as they dislike betraying it. Of course the comparison with my last visit here (July '45) couldn't be more astonishing; that was the lowest point except for '40 itself perhaps. But you see the difference in all sorts of small ways. For one thing, they couldn't have been ruder 6 years ago, and now, everywhere, even in the hardened petty bourgeois districts, there's a kind of easy good manners along with the ritualistic outward politesse that seems real. I realized now that Paris's great point must have been 1900, the time of the Great Exposition. If you cover the city pretty thoroughly you get an overwhelming sense that that was the high point, and also, now, the point of all regrets. The other day, near the Louvre, I was amused to see a big sign offering a dinner at fixed price (1500 francs!), everything *cormpris*, including the nostalgia, and the underlying legend--- served just as it was in 1900. It is also just now the most American city I have ever seen since Minneapolis, Minn. The pressure of my fellow countrymen is a little stupifying, and it is becoming almost impossible to say a few words in ill-chosen French to anybody within a mile of the Rue de la Paix without their answering you in English.

It is a very good time, a happy time for both of us. My only occasional regret is that my

days are too passive, I'm just dying to write. But I needed this vegetable holiday after years of the writer's happy prison, and feel all sorts of new powers and possibilities awakening in me. I'm sorry this letter is so scrappy-- and, as you have noticed, I've practically forgotten to think in proper English sentences, for I'm working really hard at my French and have actually made myself understood to two *femmes de cbambres* and the conductor on Bus 94.

Sunday morning we leave for Aix-en-Provence and will be in Provence roughly till the 20th. From June 20-30, Venice and Florence, in the order named. From July 1-14 in Rome, and then I go on to Salzburg.

My best love to you both, write me a card if you can to c/o American Express, Florence, and all the best from Ann.

Ever,  
Alfred

## 8.

Aix-en-Provence, 16 July [crossed out and «? June» put there instead] 1951

Dear Hannah: This is Saturday afternoon in Aix, and all the good burghers of the town are walking along the Cours Mirabeau under the double line of trees sipping beer at the cafes. Provence is very, very hot; I have been in a kind of daze ever since I got here from Paris last Monday, what with the heat and the strangeness of the town, for me. Have been a little depressed from time to time just being a tourist, for my head is full of things and long to work. But the countryside is so enchanting and there is so much to see & to read that everyday I put aside the three or four articles I have still to do and go out. Marseilles today surprised me, it was so wonderful, we went out into the harbor to see the Chateau d'If, for I am an old and stubborn admirer of The Count of Monte Christo, and afterwards ate a wonderful bouillabaisse, which I am surpris-

sed to find I love. I have been seeing more of the country than I had expected to, for I have had to go into Marseilles almost every other day, and never tire of seeing the *composition* of the hills— all gold and green just now, and each detail as exquisitely right, yet strained with the heat of the South, as in a picture by Cezanne. My French is improving, tho' I hardly know why it should, for I never seem to be able to get away from Americans. Aix is of course a university town, with loads of ex-GI's and the rest, and I sometimes talk for long periods of time to my *femme de chambre* just to hear some French. As I think I wrote you, I enjoyed Mrs. Weill immensely; on my part it was love at first sight. And last Sunday we went over there for tea, and stayed a long long time. Catherine was wonderful, too; Herr Weill I enjoyed much less well. Do you remember our discussion once about people who «know better»? The term must have been invented for Eric W. Anyway, I loved being at their house; it was a *little* bit like being at 130 Morningside Drive again. For the rest, there is very little to add. I'm looking forward to Italy (Genoa-Pisa-Florence-Rome), and to getting the galleys of the Walker off my shoulders at last. This last week in Aix has been suddenly tiresome, and sometimes even downright depressing, I'm not sure I know why — it must be the sudden letup after so long a period in which I held on to my book for dear life. The intellectual life, etc. in Paris seemed to me glibber and emptier than I can describe— the French critics are becoming a race of antiquarians. I didn't see Sartre's new play, but I hear it is very talky and pretty sterile. My impression of France's prosperity, confirmed by Anna Weill from expert evidence, grows here. Aix is the most beautiful and the damndest bourgeois town I've ever seen. The insides of the houses are incredible— like mortuary parlors.

Well, I hope to be completely better in Italy, very soon. I so long to hear from you. Please send me a few lines — c/o American

Express Florence until June 28th; c/o Amer. Express in Rome from June 28th till July 13th, when I leave for Salzburg. And do, please, have a look at the illustrations the artist is doing for my book and let me know what you think. I've had some second thoughts about the wisdom of illustrations at all, modest and entirely marginal as the original plans were, and want to be reassured that the pictures don't slop over too much. *Do* write, if only a few words. I miss you both so much.

Love from us both —  
Alfred

## 9.

Florence, 25 June 1951  
Dear Hannah:

Florence of a late Monday afternoon. Nothing could be stiller, and after a day, as usual, spent half in churches and half in museums, I have retired to my room at the splendido Anglo-American hotel where my body and bags are lodged at the moment to look at the papers and to resume normal human contact with myself. The weather has been the same even hotness all along, ever since the first few days in Paris. And I have walked at the same pace through Paris, Aix, Marseilles, Chartres (but that was magnificent, indescribable), Genoa, Pisa, and now Florence. For just a little more than a month now I have filled my eyes with pictures & streets and statues, my stomach with good food and drink, have seen Don Giovanni in German, Oberon in Italian, and with my usual conscientiousness have read the papers and the catalogues and the guide-books. But for some reason, starting soon after Paris, I have been in a low state. Workhorse that I am, I was too rudely forced from the womb of labor, and feel as passive as one of those exquisitely sculptured friezes of a cardinal on a tomb forever staring up at the ceiling in amazement. I don't seem to be able to get

into things this time, but regard everything with the same superficial pleasure and ungrateful eyes. Among other things, I have been dying for news of home and some letters, but so far almost nothing but the usual letter from my father, who as long as I can remember, has always written the same letter and ended it with the same genial falsehood: «*nothing more to say.*»

How are you and Heinrich? Do you exist? I miss you both very much. The Weills were good to meet, and since then I have been in vague correspondence with Madame, I having lent her a copy of the Walker. I am slowly reviving, however, after the torpor of the last few weeks, and am just about to sit down to a review of two books on the Russian inquisition system one of them you probably know, *Russian Purge & The Extraction Of Confession* by Beck & Godin. It's not my subject perhaps, but I have been thinking about it fairly steadily, and suspect I have something to say on the subject of Russian purges and police interrogation in general being considered «unintelligible.» We use the word, they use the word, too («Why? What for?») is written all over the Soviet cells), to avoid admitting that the system is exactly what it means: i.e. one of calculated and general falsehood in which it is normal for a majority of the Soviet population to pass through the prisons at one time or other ...

It is interesting, incidentally, that despite my extreme lassitude, the trip has been a succession of things won, and seen, that I had been waiting for all my life and had missed on other trips: Chartres, the Botticelli Venus and Primavera in the Uffizi, the Ghiberti doors of Paradise (just beyond the trolley car tracks in the center of Florence), the Michaelangelo tombs for Lorenzo de Medici in San Lorenzo. And best of all, someone I had known only as a name and have been completely taken with, the sculptor Giovanni Pisano. What work- I can't begin to tell you how great it is. Rude carved heads of prophets and saints, looking

as if each figure itself were struggling out of the block. And the whole body in its solid leanness, the head usually slightly bent to one side, enigmatic as the human face always looks when literally *plunged* in thought- all expressive of the real mystery of faith, such as I have never seen it before in sculpture of so early a period: mystery, i.e. not the mystery of why we believe or what is hard to believe or the mysteriousness of the center, but the mystery of meditation, of a life beyond our life, in which we are seen.

Do send me a line. I want so much to hear from you and know how you are. As I know I've written you my schedule is June 29-July 12, Rome (c/o American Express); July 14-Aug 31, Salzburg seminar, Schloss Leopoldskron, Salzburg, Austria. So write me to Rome if you can.

My love to the Bluchers- Always, Alfred

## 10.

Hannah Arendt  
June 28, 1951.

Alfred-  
just home and found a. the galleys of the walker and b. your letter. Shall read the galleys over the weekend and then communicate with you.

I could not write, and even today hardly can. Broch's death was a sudden and deep shock.-He belonged even more into my world than I had realized when he was still alive. I last saw him 2 days before his death - in my office where he used to come and fetch me for a cup of tea at Child's. And here, right besides this typewriter is the couch on which he used to sleep ect. I somehow can't get reconciled to his being dead for ever.

You see, I am really hurt. First because, one of my more lovely acquaintances in this country put it, I «take this sort of thing (meaning death) so seriously» (is not that lovely?) and second because I begin to realize how many

of my very best friends are between 60 and 70, i.e. am up against the problem of surviving, which is the vulgar version of the more serious question: How does one live with the dead? It is obvious, isn't it, that one needs new feelings, new manners, new everything.

I was glad that you and my friend Annchen liked each other, but never really doubted it. About Weil you are 100% right. Catherine is a problem apart. But for Anne's existence I am always grateful; that it is possible to say at the ripe age of 14: this is going to be my best friend throughout my life, and that it then turns out that this was not youthful romantic enthusiasm but the perfect truth.

Broch's death, as all things earthly, had also its very comical aspects. Nobody, not his brother or his son or his «best friend», knew that he was married. Tableau! When I arrived with these news, 2 of the widows were already in each other's hair, a third was expected, a fourth was being prepared etc. Since Rilke's death I guess no such funeral took place. And all this in Yale and among our dear puritans – who by the way behaved themselves very very well. I had only to remind the head of the German department of his vast knowledge of biographies of poets. He said then: Oh yes, but you know this was the first whom I knew personally – and started to understand just everything. The Americans had at least the somewhat soothing illusion that this was almost normal European behavior, for a poet at least, whereas the Europeans, without any such illusions – Well, this however, we both, i.e. Broch and I, are going to survive beautifully.

–Alfred, write me even if I don't. Think of me, sitting in a corner, very quiet, and pondering the problem of «surviving».

I'll call Carol one of these days. This too was only postponed because of Broch's death.

Always yours,  
Hannah

11.

July 7, 1951.

Dear Alfred – I just finished the proofs – a little late but certainly still in time. I'd rather have your okay for each correction and therefore give you all of them in the following and leave it to you to select from them and inform Giroux (or whoever is responsible).

Only one serious thing: The yiddish transliterations are still very confused; I am no expert, but you do need one. (libbe is wrong, probably libe; your spelling of meshugene is out of this world; I am not even sure with your urime for arme I suppose etc. etc. Please do something about it)

And only one general suggestion (of whose correctness I am not even very sure myself): I have the feeling that you should try to take out or change the few few places where you let somebody else address you by your name. The very identification with the first name of the author somehow breaks the spell for me. But please, as I told you, I am not very shure my self. Wherever I am not sure, I put a question mark in the following:

galley 5 line 4: gods (not Gods)??

9 3: from bottom: Wurst (without Umlaut)

15 24: from top: music that swas as etc.

Libbe????? or Libe

16 #4 1. l&2: der heym or derheym? Heym in italics

17 line 18. from top: His father : Why Italics??

29. «««: ale (not alle); see also below same ## bottom: again the derheym business and pas-sim.

21, # THE OLD DRUGSTORE: The point with the second-hand furniture stores does not quite come through. I suggest that you put the sentence: «The whole block is now thick» etc. immediately after the first sentence.

galley 24, line 19 from bottom: that same man (del. the)

27, middle: del.? After all police stations in

9: Did you look up the prayer? I distinctly remember the Hebrew: Owinu, malkenu, cho-tonu lefonechu: «Our Father, Our King, We sinned before Thou.

29, middle: What is mishegoyim?? Do you mean Meshugener as of gal. 33? Or is that a yiddish word which I don't know.

30, # 4, last 2 lines: «Papa, where are they taking me?» till end: I suggest italics here.

31, ## 2, line 23: thumb.

38, line 15 from bottom: something wrong, seems to me: do the flies buzz «at?» the bedroom windows in which case you don't need the comma after lamps, or do the people watch the open bedroom windows? You'll know how to fix it.

39, line 23: pigeons

42, line 15 from bottom: torn out

44, # 3, line 6: on my route I often

45, the quotation from the Corinthians: what happened? Why not all in italics? Why the brackets??

line 20 from bottom: word, not world?

46, line 21: I'd suggest to take out «like me»

This seems to be all; I did not try to catch printing errors. Looks beautiful! I saw the drawings and rather liked them. I think it is a good idea to have them. I don't feel quite competent, however, in this. If you want it, I could ask Heinrich to have a look. He knows better.

How are you? Don't itch with writing; enjoy yourself! How is Anne? Still with you? or already back in France.

Love

Hannah

## 12.

Salzburg Seminar, Schloss Leopoldskron,  
Salzburg

16 July 1951

Dear Hannah,

Many many thanks for troubling about my

proofs. Your letter, alas, came only after I had sent the proofs back to Denver Lindley, but with one exception I was able to locate specific passages in the manuscript. Many of your suggestions I have adopted gratefully. Your scornful remarks about the Yiddish transliteration amuse and perplex me. First, they were all checked and respelled, at your suggestion, by Ben Halprin. Second, you do not allow for different kinds of Yiddish pronunciation, in particular that of Litvaks. Third, libbe is faithful to the sound of that word as I heard it; whereas libe is awfully close to the German. Fourth, *urine* is exactly the way «arme» is pronounced \*\*\*\*\* The brackets around the quotation from Corinthians are a mistake; but the reason certain words are in Roman is that in most missionary bibles, and for that matter actually most Testament, certain words are stressed— not always with reason. But I did want to preserve the flavor.

One small thing more. The only reference I couldn't catch in your letter is to «galley 24, line 19 from bottom, that same man (del. the). Would this be the part about the knife grinder? If you remember it as something else, do me the kindness to check with Denver Lindley and straighten this out.

Home was absolutely golden— I cannot remember such joyous weeks. Ann was with me, in every sense; she is in Rome now, but I hope to have her down here for at least the last two weeks. I am sorry you don't know her better; for myself, I have never known such fullness and ease before, and already miss her terribly. After Italy, and the sun, and the post-office clerks who tell you how to save 10000 lire sending proofs back to the states, Austria and the young American academics here seem awfully palid. I am more and more conscious of the terrible softness of these young American intellectuals— everything is concession and «niceness» and «human relationships» and «preparing the right atmosphere.» Uh: I've outworn this old suit of clothes, but will stretch my new body in this one even if the

stitches break... This is no excuse for a letter, I *will* write more and soon– but Hannah, you, too, must write. You seem so terribly, terribly far away suddenly, and I don't like it.

My very best to you and Heinrich–

Immer,  
Alfred

### 13.

SALZBURG SEMINAR IN AMERICAN  
STUDIES  
1 August 1951

Dear Hannah,

Thanks for the picture and note. I was going to write to you this morning anyway, for it is my «free» day, and I have nothing to do but prepare a lecture on Whitman for tomorrow, write, read, talk to people, play the Bach double concerto with M. Gierre from Paris, and examine some student papers. Whether I will succeed in writing even a coherent letter to you remains problematical– I went to the dress rehearsal of *Die Zauberflöte* last night, got to bed very late, and seem in any event to have spent the night dreaming music. I've now seen Idomeneo here and the *Zauberflöte* reinforces my growing realization that Mozart is one of the great masters of the supernatural– that he deals in it as the medieval alchemists dealt in «substances.» Furtwängler drove me crazy last night, he was so plodding and saw, but the opera came through with reverberations that still leave me dizzy. I've been very lucky in getting to rehearsals– Eric Bentley's exwife Maja is the assistant to Berthold Viertel, who is directing Kleist's *Der Zerbrochene Krug*, and I've been able to sneak in to things that would otherwise have been impossible. Do you know Viertel? It's funny to see the old Viennese Jewish stage crowd – Viertel, Therese Giese, Oscar Homolka, etc. – back here now. Viertel I thought quite wonderful– looks like a Rem-

brandt portrait of an old rabbi, heavy shaded eyes and long hair, the crippled walk – sees everything at a glance, cunning and wise, and is so excited, as he said to me in the rain one night, to «be able to do my Kleist again.»

Life here is very pleasant at the moment– the awful rains have lifted, many of the students are quite good, and I have never had so much fun teaching, for I'm really thinking these days, and am beginning to realize more and more what I can do. Every Seminar here has been a dialogue between the Americans and some particular nationality– this time it is the English, who are the brightest bunch we have, and so uproariously funny that no one peering in on us from the outside would believe that this is a serious enterprise. There seems also to be a growing entente between Kazin and German culture– I've been studying with a Viennese school teacher who keeps me on my toes, am reading more and more intelligently, and have on the whole committed myself, *via-a-vis* the Germans here, to not doing unto others as they would have done unto me. I was touched yesterday to receive a gift from one Munich teacher of *Der tausendjährige rosenstrauch* (Deutsche Gedichte). Sunday I had lunch at Attersee with Dr. and Mrs. Hermann Fischer (son-in-law and daughter of the old founder of Fischer Verlag), and learned a lot. Apparently the young writers in Germany are quite hopeless still. Certainly the ones here are not impressive– not free in themselves at all– but Lord, they do try so hard, and read everything, and have theories about everything, and think like a tractor in the mud. The funniest man we have is an Australian Irishman, a hack writer, who as a youth prepared himself for literature by rewriting all the great novels – chapter by chapter, week by week! – Well, I'm too sleepy to write anymore.

Tell me how you are. My best love to you both. I miss you so much.  
Alfred

## 14.

c/o American Express, Paris  
Tuesday afternoon, Feb 26/ 52

Dear Hannah:- Paris is Paris, a little grayer and shabbier than I've ever seen it before, and cold as hell, with that peculiarly damp biting cold I always associate with Europe in February. We have rooms practically on the river—at least I have; Ann spent ten weeks finding me a place, and tho' the hotel is supposed to be shady, and *la lampe électrique plus forte* never comes, and it took three days to get a chair, and so on—my room does overlook one corner of the river from the Place St. Michel, and I am content. Saw Annchen for lunch yesterday—it was lovely. She and Ann have become such good friends they hold hands under the table giggle all the time with some deep feminine secrecy which no mere man can ever hope to enter. The French are also, as usual, very French — behind what I must call that slightly rat-look look of a megacity. I'd forgotten that music means nothing, here. At great expense we went to the opera last night, to see Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*. It was so bad, or worse than bad, so cheaply done, that you couldn't get angry or anything, but only sat there in a kind of stupor wondering what the joke was. I have seen interesting film on Andre Gide; the old man looks, finally, like a man, and is intensely charming. Went on a pious pilgrimage to Simone Weil's parents — both of them very old, the father 88, the mother in her 70's, but remarkably young-looking. And heard the whole fantastic story of how the Catholics, Father Perrin and Gustave Thibon, especially the latter, doctored up the notebooks to compose *La Pesanteur et la Grace*. Mme Weil showed me the originals of Simone's notebooks, which are beginning to come out here volume by volume; the first has just appeared.

I hear from Annchen that you are arriving on the 27th of March: hurray hurray! The

hotel here would be alright, if I could get you a room just like mine— i.e. one which has three bay windows and overlooks a corner of the Seine. But the telephone is downstairs, the service is not good; and I don't think, busy as you will be with people here, that such a place is quite what you need. Annchen and we seem to think of the Angleterre for you. But I warn you, as no doubt you have already been warned, that prices have gone up terrifically; unbelievably, in fact. Everything is many times more expensive than it was last summer. This hotel, for example, which is pretty second-rate by any standards, charges me 800 francs per day— all extras included, but still that is an awful lot. Ann, who gets 54,000 francs a month on her Fulbright fellowship, has been having a very hard time of it lately. Ach, but how good it is to see her again; I can't tell you how rich and human and alive it was to see her here, to resume, as it were, the conversation we dropped in Genoa last summer. I still feel a little unsettled, of course, and am not in much mood for sightseeing as such; but I've already begun to work, and if the winter is here, can the spring be far behind?

I hope this finds you and Heinrich well— tell me about his new courses, and what is happening to you.

Ann sends her love to you both, and Alfred.

P.S.: Please do me a small favor? If you would send a postal card to Miss Mildred Salivar at Harcourt, asking her to send a copy of the Walker (enclosing compliments of author's card) to Madame Bernard Weil, 3, Rue Auguste Comte, Paris XI. (to be charged to my account)

PPS / Forgot to tell you about the wonderful Sunday af't at the Comedie Francaise watching that old bedroom farce *Le Dindon*, (Feydeau), to which the French bring their children!

## 15.

March 3, 1952.

Alfred dear, I am pleased with you and your letter. I expect you on the Gare St. Lazare (Don't be silly and take this seriously, I *am* kidding, but still discover that the fact that you are there in Paris makes it a little homelike, or something, I don't know; I am mixed up and want to close the parenthesis -) on the 27th - Hurrah. My plans: I stay in Paris until the 2nd, then one week Basel, then by plane Zürich-Rome, Rome-Athens, Athens-Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv-Paris. I want to be back in Paris on the 5th of mai and then stay there one full week, so that I'll be in Germany in the middle of mai. Your hotel would not do because of the telephone; If at all possible, I need one in my room.

I wrote to Harcourt for Walker to Mme Weil. And quite in style intend to ask you immediately for a *big* favor: I asked Annchen to inquire if it is possible to book passage Paris-Israel -Paris in France in French francs. Reasons obvious. The question is whether one can do this with an American passport. I need the answer urgently. I want to book as follows: TWA, Friday April 11th, Paris-Zürich-Rome-Athens, flight 926. I don't need Paris-Zürich, but that does not matter); and Athens-Tel-Aviv on Monday, April 21, flight 918. Then back on Monday May 5, with Air France, flight 221.

Maybe Annchen has the information already, but I did not yet hear from her and must know it some time next week. If it is possible I'd have to buy more francs. Call her up, will you?, and find out.

Heinrich is fine, has nice classes, larger than last term, is very pleased - cat-like pleased -, has found out a few new things. The so-called intellectual atmosphere here gets a little more depressing, the general political picture a little more frightening every day.

Salut, Gruss und Kuss, affectueusement,  
give my love to Ann -

yours  
Hannah

By the way, the dates which I gave you are not yet definite, but very probable.

## 16.

April 6, 1952  
Dear friends -

I shall be back this coming Thursday, arrive per autorail around noon. Forgot all my English. Am scandalously happy. In the midst of one uninterrupted conversation (not discussion, complete give and take) since the minute of my arrival. Somehow bewildered that such a thing really exists, is at all possible. The greatest consolation. I shall tell you more about it.

Still relieved that I cancelled the meshugene trip to Palestine and can come back to Paris and to you and to Annchen - that is to the things I love and live with. I had not a minute for working; it would be wasted time here, whenever I am not with Jaspers - that is in the morning until 11 and in the afternoon between 2 and four - I read or think things over.

Was in Zuerich where the editor of the Zuercher Zeitung, very enthusiastic about my book, has started a one-man publicity drive, bought a dozen copies, etc. Wednesday I have my first interview with a publisher; wait and see. Not very important but nice.

I do not buy francs because they pay here less than in New York and probably Paris.

Love  
Hannah

## 17.

Hotel d'Angleterre  
44 rue Jacob

Paris, den 27. 4. 52.

Mein lieber Junge – dieser Brief soll Dich so gruessen in dem unheimlichen Land und der zerstoerten Stadt und in der Fremde, wie Du mich gegruesst hast, als ich nach Paris kam. Also eigentlich ein Gruss von Morningside Drive. Und – da ich ja nun doch einmal ein Pauker bin – auch gleich die erste deutsche Sprachuebung. Kurz alles in einem.

Gut, dass Holland so schoen war. Die Gasse von Delft – wie er aus jedem Stadtraum einen Innenraum macht und wie eigentlich das ganze Holland in seiner intensiven Bewohntheit wie eine einzige Wohnung anmutet.

Paris ist immer noch herrlichst. Weiss gar nicht, wie ich den Abschied verschmerzen werde. Sehe viele Menschen – was weniger herrlich ist. Fast ueberall das Eingefahrensein in Theorien und die Unwilligkeit, irgend- etwas mit Realitaet zu tun zu haben. Und wer koennte es ihnen verdenken??

Aber das petit bonheur ist doch eine grosse Sache und eine Realitaet, weil es daher kommt, dass niemand sich vergleicht, sondern, wenn es nur einigermassen ertraeglich ist, nimmt, was ihm gegeben wurde. Ich traf Kaplan bei Chiaromonte; der war ganz verbluefft ueber das Ergebnis einer ihrer unendlichen research-Unternehmen, aus dem hervorgeht, dass niemand in Frankreich wants to keep up with the Joneses.

Meine Reiseplaene kristallisieren sich und werden immer komplizierter. Ich muss Ende Mai nach Lugano (Schweiz), um dort den Verleger von Broch zu treffen. Davor mindestens eine Woche Muenchen. Hier jedenfalls bleibe ich wie vorgesehen bis zum 10. Mai.

Ich schreibe Dir natuerlich meine Adresse, sobald ich sie weiss. Aber erreichen kannst Du mich immer: c/o JRSO, Nuernberg, Fuertherstr. 112

Alfred, alles alles Gute. Halt die Ohren steif. Komm nicht als deutscher Professor

nach Hause. Machs gut (wie man in Berlin sagt) and have a good time!

Von Herzen,  
Hannah

18.

6275 Silsersee 8/5/52

Thanks for your letter. I am glad that you both enjoy yourselves. I am in St. Moritz since last week, incredibly beautiful. The earth, the earth – a good place to dwell on. I'll leave this Friday, stay in Zurich until Monday; then Paris – Hotel d'Angleterre, 44 rue Jacob, as usual – and leave for NY Aug. 16th.

See you in New York, children.  
Ever yours,  
Hannah

19.

Freiburg/ Br.  
May 20, 1952.

Alfred –

I think you owe me a letter this time: never mind.

Here is my itinerary for the next few weeks. I shall be in Wiesbaden possibly already around June 1st until the fifth. Then Stuttgart until the tenth. Then (lecture in Tuebingen in between) Munich again from June 12 to 19 or 20. Then Great Britain etc.

Adresses: Until June 1st: c/o Jaspers, 126 Austrasse. Basel. In Wiesbaden: American Express. I'll probably stay at the Gruener Wald-Hotel.

I need your advice for the following: Oxford University Press wrote a very nice letter asking if my new book is under contract. I wrote to Giroux asking him if he regards it under contract and if he is ready to give me a contract. No reply. What shall I write to the Oxford Press people?? also: Giroux never sent

the little folder with criticism and I am a little angry because I need it so much. What can I do??

Princeton asked me to participate in their Seminar in Criticism, six lectures with discussion for 1,500 \$. Nice, isn't it??

I miss you both and kiss you.  
Hannah

I had a very nice time with Zilkens who'll tell you that I'll probably come to Cologne in July.

## 20.

bei Wiesener,  
Simmerer Str. 114  
Koeln (Sulz)

Dearest Hannah- Simply overjoyed to get your note this morning. How I've missed you here, I would have written long ago, but was discouraged by your lack of any definite address (yes, I could have written to Nurnberg), and kept thinking I would meet you in some city near here. Anyway, you will be in Wiesbaden June 1st and that is the Whitsuntide holiday, so will try to come out to Wiesbaden then and to see you. In addition to everything else, and so much to talk over, I need your presence in Koeln- for a very definite purpose whenever you can arrange it. Ann is coming tomorrow, to stay; and as soon as we can get things settled, we plan to get married here. We had planned originally on waiting until London, but I shall have to be at Cambridge University for a big conference and the complications even in England may be such that we are afraid to wait that long. Paris was too difficult, but Koeln is *possible* - if I get some of the 100,000 papers we both need. For obvious reasons, we had hesitated to get married in Germany; but what counts for us is that we get married, not where. AND IF YOU ARE OUR WITNESS, all will be well. So: I will talk it over with you in Wiesbaden, and as

soon as I know when we can get married here, I will let you know. We count on you!

Saw Zilkens last week for the first time, and liked him enormously. He was so full of you, kept on talking about you all evening. Which I well understood, and was envious that he had seen you. Really, I've missed you achingly. Germany is not in the least like what I had expected. You really shouldn't have told Zilkens that I was worried about anti-Semitism here- I may have been before I came, a little, and most subconsciously. But everyone has been as nice as pie. Only, it has been just dreary and lonesome. The people are good, good, some of them!- but dull as they come, real pedants. My students are all terribly young and nice, speak English well, seem eager, but American literature here is all uphill work, terribly elementary. And tho' they all seem to think I am «a creative person» and marvel that I can lecture without notes (!!!!), there are faint reluctant grumblings that the stuff I give them is too interpretative, not *factual* enough. In short, the Joneses and the philistines are with us everywhere, and Germany for me, so far, is pleasant and boring. I'm working hard as I can at the language, understand most of what is said to me, amuse the shopkeepers and others by my unerring mistakes, and when time permits, recite German lesson faithfully to myself. But it is not the language that is the stumbling block - it is the sheer emptiness, I mean the petty-bourgeois emptiness and pedantry which sometime get me down. Cologne is rebuilding so fast, one hardly notices the ruins after a week. But the feeling of the rubble and the dust and the general joylessness is everywhere. Zilkens actually amazed me by his intellectual intensity and his personal eagerness - 'tis so rare. Was amused to learn that Frau Zilkens is a descendant of Moses Mendelssohn.

If I sound «browned out,» as the English used to say during the war, put it down to fatigue - I've just spent almost three whole mornings going from office to office here trying

to get registered, and am disgusted. On the other hand, the people I live with are very nice, I like the youngsters in my classes, Ann is' coming tomorrow, Hannah is in Germany—within shooting distance, or kissing distance; and all will be well.

*Please* write me again, tell me exactly when I may hope to see you in Wiesbaden.

May, 30th, I will be in Munich, for a lecture at the university. Any chance of seeing you then?

I'll write Giroux immediately— I can't understand why he is so careless. And I congratulate you (a little enviously!) on the Princeton lectures; it's a wonderful chance.

I *must* see you soon.

Much love

Alfred

## 21.

Sunday -

Alfred -

it was good to hear from you. Hook - well, what else did you expect? Did you see his article in Times Magazine? Today, they bring a few replies to it. I'll see Mary tonight and I assume we shall talk about the magazine for the nth time. I do not want it any more, have a feeling that it is too late. The only nice thing is Mr. Truman for whom I have a real affection. Let's see how he is doing. Maybe the Democratic Party will wake up to the realities in this country & stop the idiotic talk about economics.

Princeton is over and was nice up to the non-bitter end.

I am delighted that you still want me. Sure, in that case it is December 7th, but think it over carefully: this means that I would stay till Thursday, December 10th!! Since I have my lecture on Wednesday night. Are you not in NY before? Don't I see you? And where does the gentleman sleep??

How is Ann? How far is the novel?

Yours, wie immer -

Hannah

## 22.

January 26, 1954.

Dearest Alfred-

I just see that, God knows through whose fault, a note which I wrote you remained unmailed. Mille gratulations et felicitations! I think this is wonderful and since Smith is not too far away from NY there is no reason why I should object. So, you have my okay - not that you asked for it as you properly should have done. I forgive you. But now come soon, and let us celebrate. When do you intend to be back - the 1st or the 7th? I could not quite read your handwriting.

Here nothing new - except that I accepted lectures in Notre Dame on Philosophy and Politics and am pretty busy (but happy). And that a vague possibility exists that I shall have to go to Europe for 4-6 weeks for JCR some time in spring. Yours and kisses to both of you,

Hannah

Thanks for Cummings. It is an excellent review and quite interesting.

## 23.

9/ 14/ 54.

Dear Alfred -

A propos Flaubert's anger: Do you know that the Greeks counted anger among the pleasant emotions?

And don't you think that this Narrishkeit between us has lasted long enough? If we want to be angry, let us be angry together.

As ever.

Hannah

24.

58 Paradise Road, Northampton, Mass. Sept  
18, 1954

Dear Hannah:

I am very glad. Thanks.

I don't know when I shall be in NY again,  
but when I am, I shall call you.

Love,  
Alfred

25.

58 Paradise Road  
Northampton, Mass.  
Dec 22, 1954

Dear Hannah,

Alas, no lunch was possible yesterday, for at lunchtime we were just pulling out for Northampton. Ann has been having such a bad time of it with early period sickness that it seemed best to come home. Anyway, it gave me a pang to leave you in the library with nobody, nobody around to buy you a Dubonnet or to say a friendly word. Are all the regulars still there? The reader of the six-columned Bible - the author of the definitive work showing up Spengler- and all the true people, the last solitaries, who can breathe in the wonderful wax on the tables of the people? Some day, if you are good, I will give you my private memoirs of life in the 42nd Street library. And if you are not good, I will give them to you anyway. I look forward to our reunion.

Beautiful day, clear and bright: I feel full of blessings.

My love to you.  
Alfred

26.

2200 College Avenue  
Berkeley 4, California

Dear Alfred -

Mr. Smith called me and we had lunch - he is a nice fellow - and I was glad that you did write and felt your friendship extending over the continent. This morning, when I came down to breakfast - I live in the Women's Faculty Club, a kind of nunnery - somebody greeted me with «I just heard Alfred Kazin speaking and I sleepy as usual got excited and asked: Where the devil is he? \*\* Of course in New York and talking over one of these modern devilish machineries. But it was nice for one moment.

How is it here? I don't yet know. All I know is that this is certainly one of the strangest and most beautiful spots on earth. What is so strange is not the landscape as such as the climate which goes with it and which is always just right - neither hot nor cold, sunny and fresh, so that no matter how you are dressed you always feel just right. An altogether different bodyfeeling, a kind of over-relaxation.

My classes are overcrowded and I am overworked. The worst is that I have to get up at 7 o'clock in the morning and that means to break a life-long habit. The result is that I feel as though I am never quite awake and myself, although I suppose nobody else notices it. The students are pathetically eager and very hard-working. They know quite a bit, but up to now I have not yet discovered anyone who is really very bright. It is partly the system here; these state-universities defend themselves against the inevitable constant lowering of educational standards which comes with mass-education. The result is an examination-system compared to which the French system or even the Chinese is a breeze; this is simply torture. It does not make anybody brighter; they literally have no time to think or even to read properly. Pages and pages of bibliograp-

hy are thrown at their poor heads. All my graduate students look as though they need a good night's sleep.

The faculty is sleepy anyhow, nobody outstanding here; the oath-business has done a very great and very real harm. This place had just been in the process of becoming a real university. I suppose that the natural scientists are outstanding, but they live in the clouds of thermo-nuclear physics, on the mountain or rather up in the hills, invisible either for security regulations or for some other reasons. Moreover: They are among the few faculties in the country who did not only not come out for Oppenheimer, but were extremely busy going to Washington testifying against him. But our department is very «liberal», in a wishy washy way and the neighborhood of the Ford Foundation's behavioral Center at Stanford makes its influence felt. Everybody believes in some kind of nonsense - value-theory, or semantics or behavioralism or psychoanalysis or what not. This Center is really something. I was invited and went there to have a look. (There is the Hoover library and that was my reason for going, and right I was.)

Friday I was in San Francisco where Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer*, showed me around - a longshoreman, a veritable king showing his kingdom. Telling me how he lived before he «settled down» to being a longshoreman. Riding on the freightcars, sleeping «in the elements» picking fruit, prospecting for gold, and doing all kinds of odd jobs. And all that in such a way that for the first time Whitman came alive and it was as though for the first time I really saw the country, and these lonely people with their tremendous courage wandering in it and not getting lost because wherever they went there was some bit of simple kindness, and they, touched by the kindness, but not tempted by it to settle down, rootless in an altogether different way from what I know, wanderers for whom everybody became a brother and nobody ever a friend.

How are you and how is Anne? Everything all right? Drop me a line when you feel like it. I feel pretty lonely.

As ever,  
Hannah

## 27.

58 Paradise Road  
Northampton, Mass.  
March 18, 1955

Dearest Hannah,  
How wonderful to get your letter at last. These days, when I do get to New York, the place seems awfully strange, for there is no Hannah to call up. Otherwise, I am content to stay here. It is very strange. On the surface, I lead the most contented semi-rural sort of life: my lectures, my students, colleagues, etc. Within, I am and have been seething ever since I came here; it has been the most tremendous spurt forward for me, in my thinking. I have never found it so difficult to sleep, for sheer inward excitement, and I get up every morning, to look at my river (right outside my window) and my trees, breakfast cup in right hand holding me with the force of gravity right down to earth, trembling with the joy of being alive here. I like this quietness, I like it. I know, poor dear, how strange and foreign and even repellent, the American Academic machine must seem to you. And God knows, Smith is at the opposite remove from that academic factory, the U. of California. But I do confess, in the face of the subdued but plain outcry I hear in your letter, that at the moment, this sort of routine suits me. Anyway, I spend most of my time at my desk; I have only one class, and that a cinch. Next year at Amherst it will be different, and then I will make the outcry!

Ann is fine, and not too big yet, and is going through all the prescribed cycle. At first she was miserable beyond words with the

preliminary nausea; now she is lovely, radiant, shining.

I have fallen madly in love with trees. I wish I knew why, but I want to draw them, write poems about them. The other day, when I saw a reproduction of Cezanne's chestnut trees (?), which I had seen in its native glory at Minnesota in 1950, I held that I was nearing a secret truth. Of course it is the bareness of the season that makes the trees seem so bony, electric, primeval. The bare branches jut into the air electrically. Perhaps it is all due to my infatuation with the theory of nature, or rather the book of nature, I've been thinking of so long for my American writer's book. But when the river outside our door was iced still, I skated (among my many accomplishments here, I've learned to skate) up the river in the twilight, all the way up, with my friend Helen Bacon, who teaches Greek here, and felt as if the trees were looming large over us like a canopy.

I am also working on my book of selected essays, «The Inmost Leaf,» which, if I can get it in by May 16th, will be out in the Fall. I am very excited by it, also distressed by the badness of many pieces; still, the essay is a form I particularly love, as you know.

Ah Hannah, Hannah, you took my word for it and went all the way West, to that Absolute West, as an American *could* say, and you are being pushed around and made to get up much too early, and you are in the presence, I see it all so clearly, of the hungry Americans, the really hungry feed-me-oh so imploring feed my mind Americans, As opposed, that is, to the besserwissern of N.Y. After such knowledge, what forgiveness? What balm can I offer? What consolation for being put into the midst, the very midst, of ur-Amerika? Only remember to complain, to sorrow, to gossip, or to laugh, in my direction. I miss you so much. I miss you so much.

*Immer,*  
Alfred

## 28.

58 Paradise Road, Northampton, Mass.  
Tuesday afternoon, June 28

Dearest Hannah, Many thanks for the Gurian memorial, which came this morning. Reading you at breakfast almost blew me out of my chair, so powerful, and dear, and inimitable, is the passionate voice of your prose. Ach, how long it has been! How long, how long! I had promised myself the treat of seeing your face by now, but the baby may come any day, any hour!- and I must stay put.

Life is sweet in summertime Northampton; we have a terrace, and many trees, and much sun. My book of essays, «The Inmost Leaf,» comes out in the Fall, I spent weeks and almost months trying to write a special essay or preface for it, trying to convey the spirit of my effort as a critic, in exactly such words as yours on p. 38, last sentence of the 2nd paragraph- «True greatness, even in works of art, appears only when we sense behind the tangible and comprehensible product a being that remains greater and more mysterious, ...» But not having these words, I did not say it; and so the reader will have to understand it from my essays. I am working on lots of other things, but looking forward to getting clear of many small jobs. How are you and how was California? I long to see you. Send me a word.

Ever — Alfred

## 29.

Palenville, 8/17/55

Dearest Alfred:

I know, I know I should have dropped you a line, but we did not get away from New York this time, we melted away and only slowly did we our proper state. It was really beastly hot, so beastly as I never knew NY before.

But this looks dark indeed: I'll leave by

plane on August 31 – for three-and-a half months! We are back from Palenville next Monday, so there is one week left, and I suppose it will be the week when you are more than busy with moving the family from Northampton to Amherst.

These are the plans in a nutshell. I surely must have written before about the trip. Just in case: First Venice (via Paris), then Milan because of the Congress for Freedom Conference which pays my transportation; then Rome and Athens. Then Israel and Istanbul. Then back to Basel, Jaspers, as usual, Germany and finally England, Cambridge this time, where I'll stay with my little cousin. Glorious, isn't it??

I am very much looking forward to reading the Melville piece! And even though it must be rather boring, I think the Loose Leaf and the re-edition of Native Grounds are fine! But I know how you feel. Harcourt Brace proposed a few months ago that I prepare also a volume of essays and I shuddered at the thought of it. There will be plenty of time when I am old and tottering. And in case I do not live to a ripe old age, as I certainly intend, I did you a dirty trick anyhow, and may as well confess: Heinrich and I had to make a testament and decided that you will be our literary executor for all things in English. It did occur to me that we might have asked you – but it was too hot and you were too far away. Don't get mad, dear; you know it won't get you anywhere. And the whole thing is anyhow only for the rather unlikely case that we i.e. Heinrich and I die both at the same time.

Thy with love Hannah

### 30.

September 29, 1956.  
Dearest Alfred –

Thanks for Moby Dick. The Introduction ist wunderbar. Congratulations.

We shall have to postpone our Wiedersehen. I leave tomorrow by plane for Europe – 6 weeks. Shall be back around Thanksgiving! I miss you, mon vieux, and if you are not going to miss me, I shall be beleidigt.

Heinrich asks me to give you his love – emphasis on love, he loves your introduction. In such cases, he becomes quite affectionate, almost tender.

Love –  
Hannah

### 31.

AMHERST COLLEGE  
Amherst, Massachusetts  
Department of American Studies

as from: 96 Maynard Rd/ Northampton/Mass  
21 April

Dearest Hannah – Very kind of you to send me Rahel V. You are the only classic of our time who is being disinterred her time, and from the news of the approaching canonization of The Burden Of (Kazin's Time! in paperback's I can see students writing doctoral theses on –Houghton Mifflin turns back the book, etc. etc. I am very happy to see Rahel in English – I haven't read it all yet, but it's a fascinating book, and one I'm grateful for, objectively as well as «sentimentally,» because I'm doing a long introduction to the new edition of Anne Frank's diary, and am reading everything I can get on the German Jews of the past as well as of the future... Thanks, too, for the essay on the Hungarian Revolution which is simply splendid, really first class in style as well as in point. I think that as usual you underestimate the Russians, a bit, and I'm puzzled why you should find Ehrenbourg & Not Bread Alone more symbolic of Russian feelings than, say, Pasternak. I gather from my Slavist friends that there is a mighty current in Soviet writing which, tho' it is obviously will not be

encouraged or satisfied, testifies to enduring traditions in Russian literature .... And having read a fair amount of Jaspers lately, who seems to me a beautifully un-serene and quite Dostevskian mind (except that he writes the way D's characters write, not, alas, Dost. himself) I'm puzzled more than ever by the solemn disapproval I detect in parts of your paper about certain free minds there who do, who do (I have as good reason to believe in their existence as you have not to) hold on to the «pivotal» tradition still.

Well, I've resigned my professorship at last, and am looking forward without much fear to the future. I found that my whole inner freedom was being blasted by this job, and the minute I resigned, found myself deluged with money offers! Seriously, I feel much lighter of heart, and a book that has tormenting me for a long time, on the most presentness of present moments in American fiction (the uncharted country ahead) had become clear.

I rejoice in all your writing, old-new as well as new-old, and when I am moved almost to tears, as I was this morning by your heroic little note on Magnes in the Jewish Newsletter, rejoice in you all over again.

Love always —  
Alfred

### 32.

October 14, 1957

Dear Alfred —

Thanks! This belongs among the very very best of your writings. And it is by God the first article on Dylan Thomas which I read with joy — and without blushing. Blushing of course not for what he did, but for the vulgarity and stupidity of the critics reporting it.

I hope you are better. Let us get together soon. Heinrich just left with the most beautiful Schnupfen in the world.

As ever,  
Hannah

### 33.

370 Riverside Drive  
Hannah Arendt Blücher  
September 9, 1961

My Dear Alfred —

I read a pre-print of your review and I was very touched. Now I feel rather helpless faced with so much praise. But then, behind the praise I hear the old tone of our friendship, of those elementary things we always had in common and — obviously — still have.

Thank you!

Annchen (Weil — Paris, you remember) will be here for a few days next week. I am sure she will want to see you. Will you come? I expect her on Wednesday. She will stay until Sunday or Monday.

As ever yours —  
H.

### 34.

ALFRED KAZIN  
110 Riverside Drive  
New York 24, N. Y.  
13 Sept

Dear Hannah— I'm so glad that you've had a chance to see that little review. Although I hate doing omnibus reviews, and hope never to do another, I must say that this one gave me a chance to write about a book that normally would not have been offered to me. And no doubt I had no business passing in stern judicial review over a work grounded in technical philosophy! But I must say that your book moved and excited me, drove out all sorts of modern cant, in a way that no «technical philosophy» ever could. What a visionary you are, as my most beloved poets are! You start from

the assumption of a world in ruins, and there's no place for you to go but up. So that wearied and soiled by the banal despairs of everybody every day, I suddenly felt that I was being brought back to my natural rights with fresh pleasure of belief. It's really a great book, and I realized with fresh pleasure at certain crucial passages on human mortality and the cycle of nature how privileged I am to have known you. I think that of all the people I have ever known, you have been the staunchest in thought, the freest from conventional faithlessness.

I have a little «office» downtown, with a telephone - Or 5-4570. My new home number (not listed) is Tr 3-2160. Hope to see you soon - hope it may be possible to meet with Annchen.

As always,  
Alfred

### 35.

ALFRED KAZIN • 110 RIVERSIDE DRIVE •  
NEWYORK 24, N. Y.  
17 February

Dear Hannah

I gathered myself up mightily two days ago to make a call to you at Wesleyan, and discovered, by way of a very grumpy voice at your old extension, that you are in New York. And now you are ill. Recover soon and let us have a drink.

Meanwhile, I have a favor to ask of you. When you are able to put pen to paper, would you tell me exactly where in your old friend St. Augustine I can find that definition of love as «I want you to be.»

Sometimes *les heureux sont la puissance de la terre*; at least if they are writers.

Love from  
Alfred

### 36.

February 20, 1962

Dear Alfred -

I am well again and I'd love to see you. I tried to reach you by phone, but discovered I did not have any of your secret numbers.

Augustine - I tried to locate the *amo - volo ut sis*, but have not yet succeeded. The worst would be to consult the index in Migne which I will do soon.

This only to greet you and in the hope of another telephone call.

Affectionately,  
Hannah

### 37.

HANNAH ARENDT

370 Riverside Drive, New York, New York  
10025  
9/15/66

Dear Alfred -

Thanks for having sent the Jarrell piece. It is extraordinarily good and beautiful. How incredibly sad that we shall not hear again this voice which to me always sounded as though it came from Fairyland.

All the best, and a Happy New Year  
Hannah

### 38.

Saturday

Alfred -

thanks for going through the trouble to console me. Your letter - the only possible reaction to this idiotic business for which I am not to blame. And therefore the only bright spot in a week in which I was nothing but furious. Your letter showed me the way to laugh. Thanks!

Now that the business is over and in case you do not feel so ashamed of me that you don't want to see me ever more (could not blame you, that is the way I feel myself) – call me and come for a little *schwatz*.

As ever,

Your article just arrived. Thanks!  
Have not yet read it.

Hannah

### 39.

APARTMENT 16B  
440 WEST END AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10024

April 13

Dear Hannah

I was very happy indeed to get the new issue of your totalitarianism book, with its lovely Hannah-like inscription, and would have received it sooner if you had sent it to the right address! Sad, sad, but the book is here, more alive than ever, and though the name of one of its old friends seems to have disappea-

red forever from the prefatory matter, I shall always feel that I have some personal relation to this book and rejoice to see this new edition on my shelves.

Always, dear,  
Alfred

### 40.

440 West End Avenue  
New York, New York 10024  
22 May 1974

Hannah Dear,

I was very sorry indeed to hear from Helen Wolff just a moment ago of your recent illness. I had just come back from the lunch of the National Institute – one of my principal purposes in going to said lunch was to introduce you to my daughter Cathrael. I looked for you in vain, called Helen, and here I am – to say that I am sorry, that I hope you are recovering, that you are very dear to me & to many many others, and that I hope all is well by now.

With love and all good wishes,

Alfred ●