
CONTENTS

TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION *I*

PART 1: 1918–36 5

PART 2: 1937–40 103

PART 3: 1941–48 171

PART 4: 1949–73 267

BIOGRAPHICAL REGISTER 375

NOTES 399

BIBLIOGRAPHY 421

INDEX 425

TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION

Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) was the director of the Institute of Social Research at Frankfurt University, now usually referred to as the Frankfurt School, and guided its direction and activities beginning in Germany in 1931, during its exile in the United States, and again in Frankfurt after the end of the war. In collaboration with the Frankfurt School writers, Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Leo Löwenthal, Otto Kirchheimer, Friedrich Pollock, and Franz Neumann, he developed what came to be known as Critical Theory. These writers, as a group and individually, have had a tremendous impact on poststructuralist thought, and anyone familiar with poststructuralist theory in the humanities and social sciences will easily recognize its indebtedness to the Frankfurt School.

Horkheimer's own thought underwent a significant development from his early optimism about the possibility of revolutionary change, reflected in the focus of his work on social and cultural transformation. Beginning in the mid-1940s he engaged in a critique of Marx and orthodox Marxism, and his faith in revolution was replaced by a commitment to the transformative power of education. This commitment seems to explain his postwar return to Germany and is reflected in his correspondence and activities of that period.

The letters translated for this volume were chosen from the almost twelve hundred letters contained in *Horkheimers Gesammelte Schriften*, volumes 15 through 18. As the director of the Institute of Social Research, Max Horkheimer was fully aware of its historical significance. His letters allow us to trace the trajectory not only of his life and career but also of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School.

A word about what guided our selection of letters. Although the Fischer edition of the letters often includes the letters to which Horkheimer responded, we have chosen, with one notable exception, to sacrifice whatever clarity those letters might contribute to Hork-

heimer's responses in order to be able to present more of Horkheimer himself. His letters as well as rather copious endnotes usually allow one to infer the substance or at least the tenor of his correspondent's text. We have also decided against excerpting any of the letters, although some are quite lengthy and contain material that is extraneous to the reason for the letter's inclusion. We regard the letters as organic wholes, a reflection of Horkheimer's personal and professional lives, and thus include them as such, even when a disquisition on theory is followed by comments on the most mundane matters.

Since we wished to bring out the trajectory and texture of Horkheimer's life and career as well as the trajectory of the Frankfurt School in general, we chose letters that reflect critical moments in the development of Horkheimer's thought and that of his associates in the Frankfurt School, but we also felt that letters containing information on personal relationships, mundane concerns, individual foibles, and adjustments to life as an exile were also of considerable interest and significance. These things constitute much of the texture of Horkheimer's life and that of his associates. As just one example, it is for this reason that we took pains to include letters that trace the development of his relationship with the woman who became his wife and to whom he was deeply devoted, Rosa Riekher, the "Maidon" of the letters. She was his father's secretary and was neither well educated nor an intellectual, and we have included the lengthy early letter in which Horkheimer instructs Pollock on how he should guide her education both to give the reader a glimpse at the beginning of his most significant personal relationship and because of the youthful Horkheimer's comments on various works of world literature.

Since the collaborators of the Frankfurt School were engaged with the work and thought of the most important men and women of German intellectual life before and during the twentieth century, we also included correspondence to and about a number of these influential figures such as Karl Marx, Thomas Mann, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein. Finally, we included a number of letters written by Herbert Marcuse to and about Max Horkheimer. This was important not only because their exchange brings an implicit rift in the Frankfurt School to the surface but because the issues involved are likely to be of interest to the contemporary reader: the Vietnam War and the student movement. We also thought it important to let Herbert Marcuse speak for himself in view of the passionately critical response by Horkheimer to Marcuse's stance. The matter is of particular inter-

est because it does not seem clear whether the different attitudes expressed are based purely on ideological divergence or whether they derive from the differences in the way Horkheimer and Marcuse connect to the United States. This may well be precisely what Marcuse meant in his letter of November 11, 1967, to Horkheimer and Adorno. By this time Marcuse had become and would remain very much a part of this country, while Horkheimer retains fond memories of the United States from a distance. While Horkheimer admonishes the German students to deal with problems at home and that it is useless and perhaps detrimental to protest matters abroad, Marcuse is at home taking on the problems of home.

Letters written by Horkheimer in English have not been edited or corrected for spelling or punctuation errors or irregularities. They are reproduced here as they appear in the Fischer edition. The words "original in English" enclosed in square brackets appear at the beginning of each of these letters. Also, most of the letters are carbon copies that have been preserved in the archives, and of course it is often only the mailed originals that included a signature.

The Fischer edition of Horkheimer's letters contains detailed cross-references to other letters, which we have included only when necessary for the benefit of English readers. The translation predicates a readership that, while not having sufficient command of German to read the letters in the original, is generally familiar with the Frankfurt School through critical literature in English and the translations of many of its major works into English. It also provides the uninitiated a view into the Frankfurt School and into German intellectual life before, during, and after the Second World War.

MH TO ROSA RIEKHER AND FRIEDRICH [FRITZ] POLLOCK

Munich

AUGUST 22, 1918

I'm sending Maidon some books today. I'd like to comment briefly on them but am much too nervous to write. Physical health: bad. Otherwise: fine. I'll dictate my comments into the machine as they occur to me.

Since Maidon owns Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, I won't send it. It's the book she should read first. After reading it, Lamartine said to Flaubert: "You've given me the best book I've read in twenty years." I say: "*Madame Bovary* is the only book that could move me to tears." Flaubert is greater than [Carl] Sternheim, much greater because he is much more of a human being. This book is unspeakably human. I haven't seen the distastefulness of the mundane described with such tenacious hatred and lofty style in any other work of art. Madame Bovary's intelligence is certainly not above average, but she doesn't lose her youthfulness. And almost everyone is filled with yearning when young. She doesn't lose her yearning. And she is, therefore, really tormented. What does it matter that this yearning is sensual? In the final analysis the book is not about Emma but about the mundane. Flaubert demonstrates with indescribable skill that her education and upbringing only serve as a stimulus to her will and give her no weapons against it. People are always confronted with the choice of growing old or being tormented. Most grow old. The terrible thing is that her yearning turns into petty misbehavior, into spite. Karl's stupidity is touching. He's been stupid from the day he was born. He only becomes touching after developing a modicum of desire through contact with Emma, after recognizing (perhaps better, sensing) his own inferiority. He becomes pitiful. We all know how tragic it is that our path leads us across the dull pain of intellectually limited individuals. If only all intellectually limited individuals were malicious! If only the mundane were *purely* malicious! Karl is understandable from the perspective of my novella "Der Zaun" [The Fence]. We have overcome this condition. We have overcome *even* this one. But Flaubert paints this tragedy. Flaubert is a tremendous artist. His description of the most trivial object has the most subtle intent. Every soiled skirt, every dirty fingernail, the dishes: everything in a skein of inadequacy, ridiculousness, and ugliness that torment Emma's desire. The ugly wedding ceremony, the monotony of all their homes; these people,

these people! And it is necessary to bear in mind that this is merely the fortuitous external aspect of her fate. It is irrelevant if her circumstances were different, if the instruments of torture were not the same, just as it is irrelevant if a person is tormented in a rural village or the offices of a factory. People are always confronted with the choice of growing old or being tormented because they will encounter only one Rudolph, one Leo, at the most one Karl. We are encountered only once.

Style is lost in translation. The translation is actually bad. But Maidon has to read the book because she dare not put off getting to know the best of all novels. The situation is comparable to that of Mozart's music. Even bad singers can't kill it. Even in this translation the spirit will survive. So read *Madame Bovary* first, before the other books—sitting peacefully, giving no thought to our own circumstances, especially not while reading! Let the spirit of the work be the only thing to have an impact. As Goethe once said, when reading, women always make comparisons between their lover and the books' heroes. They look everywhere for the lover. But I can't be found in any book, not even my own. Maidon, take *Madame Bovary* entirely as a story; keep in mind that nothing, not one word, is unrelated to the influence of the mundane; not one word is unrelated to the heroine. There are also no hidden connections. One doesn't have to look *behind* the words for anything; everything is in the text.

I am giving Maidon Voltaire's *Candide*. *Candide* is among the very few eternal and greatest novels in world literature: others are Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and a few others. Neither style nor intellectual content takes particular precedence in any of these books by the greatest creative minds. The books are neither purely tragic nor comic. They are like the world itself. Yet on the surface they always appear comical because their creators tower so immeasurably high above earthly things. The highest, purest joy art can give us is the ability to laugh. The world of these creative minds has so little in common with reality that everything they say sounds grotesque. The external form of *Candide* is the mockery of optimism. Optimism is so fantastically wrongheaded, so unconditionally false, that it demands not proof but only mockery in response. Everything is so clear in *Candide* that reflection is never necessary. As obvious and apparent as it is that the deeds and characters of the little kings, wars, and evils in the land of the Lilliputians are meant to ridicule the life of the masses, it is just

as obvious and apparent that the bloody fates of the characters in *Candide* are a mockery of optimistic philosophy. And through both works one catches sight of the clear worldview of their authors. And there are tears behind both works. Fritz says: "If one only has the truth, its expression is simple." The final clarity is there, in simplicity. It would be best if Maidon did not read *Candide* alone. Fritz can read a few chapters out of this slender volume on clear days in Schwabing.¹ And then you'll both laugh. Then you'll rejoice over our kinship with Voltaire. I've looked for a German translation for a long time and came by this annotated copy. The translation is almost of secondary importance. Even if Cervantes and Voltaire were read in Chinese, they would still transcend the language.

Fritz will, of course, determine the sequence of what is to be read and Maidon's daily quota. *Candide* doesn't count. Instead, it's for rest and relaxation while taking strolls, and not part of the assigned quota. (I definitely hope that you will also share in this enjoyment.) After *Madame Bovary* Maidon should take a bit of a break from reading novels and leaf through the volumes of *Der rote Hahn* [The Red Rooster] and *Der jüngste Tag* [Judgment Day], which I'm sending.² She should think about them, discuss or note what is dubious about them, before she comes to visit me. I definitely hope that she'll take in Karl Otten (selected poems) two, three, or four times. Also complete relaxation! We don't have to agree with Otten. He's more like light refreshment than art or even instruction. Yet he transports us beyond our narrow environment. He's an optimist, but *Candide* will once again cure that. Otten isn't deep. I've never read all of him, yet when I crack open the book I come upon the sentence: "Let's demolish all the country's bridges from the rear." This makes one feel good. Because of his love of mankind, his love of his fellow man ("Who is my brother? Each individual, each one! Each one! Each one!"), let me refer you to my August 6 letter about Hilde Stieler's poem. It is unclear and false but salutary because decisive. Maidon should just read Otten; I have faith in him and in her. He's incapable of causing any harm. And he wakes you up.

I consider Döblin's 1915 novel, *Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun* [The Three Leaps of Wang-lun], the best contemporary German novel by far. It exhibits an entirely superior, most rare, talent. It is true art. The book will be hard for Maidon to read; it will be work for her. But she knows how to work. Naturally, Fritz, if you consider it a good idea or have a desire to read *Wang-lun* first, along with *Madame Bovary*,

you can read it at the same time as *Maidon* or right afterward. (You *must* read it at some time. But there are so many things we must read.) It's perfectly alright if you planned on first tackling something else, because I think it will be extraordinarily beneficial for *Maidon* to work on these books independently (especially on *Wang-lun*). Since she is not supposed to study philosophy without me, her entire assignment may consist of the kind of effort that reading *Wang-lun* will entail in addition to studying French. This is obviously not a matter of enjoyment or relaxation but of work. Döblin demands much from the reader but also gives much in return. He presents the world as it is, in its eternity. It is probably for that reason that he intentionally set the action in an unfamiliar time (around the eighteenth century) and in a foreign country. But his artistry is so great that, in the final analysis, the unfamiliar time and the foreign country are more real and more familiar to us than our own. I'm recommending the book so highly for *Maidon* because from it she will learn to understand the way of the world not only in terms of individual destiny but also in terms of the life of the people. She will gain a broad perspective that will show her nothing new yet let her see more at one time. She will gain both a political and a cosmic perspective. In this book the masses experience the tragedy of the world rather than of a single individual like in *Madame Bovary*. Based on the example of the people, larger connections become clear, and individual destinies are intensified (not trivialized as in other books). The horror of death and suffering is intensified a thousandfold. Practical philosophy is pursued. The book is truly great. The inscription I wrote on the title page reflects the content (among other characteristics) that leads me to love the book. I should take the actual inscription from page 494, where it is written: "Resolutions are of no help to the individual if he is restless. Nothing internal is overcome by resolutions. Everything must take place automatically." The plot is based on this principle. But this principle is false if it is not understood in a very specific way. These words are misleading: "Everything must take place automatically." For once again this applies only to *others*. Since I want *Maidon* to avoid drawing personal comparisons under all circumstances but particularly in this book, I am asking her at the very beginning to figuratively place *Wang-lun*, *Ma-noh*, and me next to each other so that from the first sentence in which they appear she will be cured once and for all of seeing even the slightest resemblance between one of the two and me or Fritz. *Ma-noh* has a slanting brow, *Wang-lun* a weak one;

neither of the two has eyeglasses; neither is kind. If Maidon does not grasp the big picture, she should feel perfectly free to start by absorbing the details. The descriptions are thoroughly masterful; individual pages wonderful. It goes without saying that she is not to skip a single page of any of the books I have sent and especially not look at the ending before having read them. The second book of *Wang-lun*, *Die gebrochene Melone* [The Broken Melon], is so powerful and gripping, I have yet to come across its like in any modern work. Its tragedy is so compellingly and at the same time so touchingly and mournfully presented that by the end we move from a state of singular reverie to one of boundless awe. Decline in *The Broken Melon* means not to resist, not to hate; love of one's fellow man is a faster, more violent suicide. Wang-lun experiences this without acting, and actually with curiosity, until almost the end. But he is unable (perhaps out of pride) to leave his death to soldiers; therefore, he kills himself. Thus he finds a task that assists him past the senselessness of suicide: the task of defending the Golden Rule, of engraving it on people's minds for eternity, thus helping him to transcend himself. This is only possible by defending one's life with the sword; this is the tragedy of the world and of the book. But good teachers who want to help always die in the end, even when they have a sword. That's enough about the content.—There are occasional deficiencies in the structure of the plot; occasional vagueness and artificiality were unavoidable. Yet the work is proof of the potential of German literature. The thought that runs through the work (as *we* read it) is: all people are not redeemed; redemption is not sudden, not violent. Many become human beings. But there is abandon and bliss in death, even without redemption. Redemption is and remains as I describe it in my novella "Erlösung" [Redemption], the cessation of all desire.

If possible, Maidon should read *The Three Leaps of Wang-Lun* as the second great book after *Madame Bovary*. (I am not counting *Candide*, since it is being read aloud during breaks.) But I must note that you have to take a bit of a break to recuperate. Many descriptions are so singularly gruesome that the danger exists that they will fill all your nights and days with horrible fantasies. Yet I'm sure that the book will be an exciting experience for her, aside from this drawback, which she must energetically overcome.

I'm also sending a short book by Alfred Lemm, *Der fliehende Felician* [Fleeing Felician], as proof of how a decent person (Alfred Lemm is very worthy of our esteem) can produce pure rubbish. I'm

sending it for instructional purposes, since reading a shoddy piece of work often allows one to comprehend more quickly the heights reached by a good novel. You have to read it with a sense of humor. Up to page 41 I was unable to restrain myself from writing observations in the margin. After that my observations would have been more extensive than the text. I had a good laugh. All the characters bear some resemblance to us as we were when we first met. They're all easy to understand as opposed to being incomprehensible like characters in many great novels; they all have something in common with the period of our earliest apprenticeship. Precisely because of this, it's easy for us to judge Lemm's mistakes. It is precisely because of this that we empathize to a certain extent with what takes place. Naturally, the only sympathetic characters are those members of the radical branch of the organization. Yet they all suffer from the fact that every one of them is actually not a person at all but an embodiment of one of his or her own ideas. Stella comes off very badly, for, in spite of her otherwise fine mind, she appears to have succumbed to the pitiful pathology of converting prostitutes to the Salvation Army. Prostitutes or not very gifted seamstresses. As a consequence of his own confusion Lemm was also unable to present any proof of Stella's intelligence, other than speaking constantly about her pale and intelligent face. Neither Lemm nor Stella seems to be clear about the concepts she uses and upon which she builds her life because, on page 93, she emphatically asserts: "We have no right to happiness." Then on pages 121–22 she speaks about the immeasurable happiness she derives from things of the spirit. Well, is she happy or not? Degrés, Weinbaum, and Deutsch are extraordinarily likeable—in *reality*, not in Lemm's novel, because Lemm is continuously annoyed that these people are worthy and capable (even without recognition from others), whereas his Felician, with whom he probably identifies, consists of nothing but flaws. He *has* absolutely nothing; he only always lacks something. He is incapable of raising Gertrude to a higher level. He is too pitiful to love Stella. He belongs in the muck into which he fell; his downfall is not at all tragic but instead very gratifying. The only tragedy is that he hurt Stella. This complete idiot! But the reasons that lead Lemm and his Felician into battle against the truth are so typical and common that, because of this, reading the book can even be exciting. He shouted: "You defoliated the world; I am young and want it to be green." "Felician could not help but find it horrible to live in a time in which all role models have lost their validity because of so much that was totally new."—But there are by any account surely enough

role models! Schiller, Benjamin Franklin, Hindenburg! I also recommend Ganghofer. Indeed, Felician lives in the age of role models. Why is it that he goes right to the people, to the only strong people who are freeing themselves from slavery? He doesn't belong there at all. He is vain and nothing more. But it is precious when Lemm attempts to represent the ideas of these strong and less stupid individuals at the assembly. Degrés states that "the intellectual despises the all too modest resources available to nature," and in this way Lemm claims to explain absolute painting! But no: the artist leaves the resources of nature to nature, and he uses the resources of art. Both are sovereign realms: the one creates with the sexual organ, the other with brush or pencil. Neither is to be the poor imitation of the other, because otherwise each would lose its justification for existence! But anyone who doesn't understand yet *still* wants to explain blasphemes. The intellectual does not in any way despise the resources of nature: even artists sometimes have children.—It is instructive to observe how anger and envy are able to turn an entire worldview into absurdity through the distortion of a single word. On page 79 Weinbaum's entire speech rests on Lemm having him say that it is necessary to wean oneself from making judgments, while *damning* judgments are appropriate and entirely in the spirit of the work. Then he proceeds to speak about the will to improve, evidently referring to Stella's death sentence, while the intelligent and sympathetic lady, who is in daily contact with Weinbaum, sits there and doesn't validate his views at all; she takes no notice at all. The interlude of the spectator's death: a hateful obscenity. And how Lemm feigns understanding for and sympathy with these people! Yes, the most infamous thing about books like this (Bourget) is that the authors act as if they had understood those they attacked and as if they empathized with them. There is always hatred for resolve, always hatred for taking things to the limit. Submission is what is loved; in brief, the bourgeois. Uncle Lewald is the ideal, as is the "colony." It's not an accident that the inhabitants of the "colony" participate in sports. They actually occupy themselves in as disgustingly mediocre a way as possible. The social democrats who convene there with the architects and businessmen are certain to belong to the Scheidemann party. The phrase "in clever moderation" is their motto. It is priceless that, in his naïveté, Lemm has the girls practice shooting pistols so that they can rely on their personal strength. And poor Felician, who is already so touched by his contact with people that he can't even fraternize with his dear brothers! Human contact is indeed dangerous. On page 182 the notion that comforting a crying

child on the street is more valuable than any meeting of intellectuals must be answered with "also more valuable than evening dances! definitely more valuable than stylish tailoring!" I recommend the book because it can teach us what mediocrity has to say against us and because it provides a textbook example of how to distort worldviews. Lemm is at least candid enough to show Felician as he is from the very beginning: a fool. But confrontation with fools hones the dialectic, makes us happy and self-assured. Indeed, we show our true colors *in opposition to* Felician and *for* the radical wing of the assembly. Of course the miserable and intentionally distorted depiction of those people exhausts neither us nor them. We're also not the crazy ones recruiting prostitutes for the Salvation Army. We forbid Felician, who is incapable of love (pages 9–10), to philosophize about love. We reject intellectual compromises; we despise anyone who refuses to hear the truth! We are completely and consciously on the path to truth; therefore, we lack any sympathy for Felician, the fool. (Our will to clarity may also make it difficult for us to understand Prince Myshkin but not Dostoevsky's novel, which remains splendid.)³ I can't love Prince Myshkin. Throughout my reading of the novel I was tempted to give the epileptic prince morphine or a good slap so that he would once and for all stop walking around as a living reproach to other people's destinies. This picture of suffering! Jesus was a Jew and a fanatic but not an idiotic Russian prince. It's almost blasphemy.

Maidon should tackle all these books! Try to understand the first ones and to take a firm stand against every word in the last. Maidon, we won't enter into any treaties with mediocrity! Maidon, our life is work! Maidon, my love is also unconditional, and I will remain a fanatic in my love. There was originally something of Felician in all three of us: my tendency to become demoralized and always to give up; some tendencies in Fritz during our time in Brussels; Maidon's propensity for enjoying a comfortable life. We have overcome all of this. We are past our apprenticeship.

Some time ago I attended a performance of *Figaro*. They can't play Mozart here. Wagner laid waste to the theater. There were some singers with excellent voices (Feinhals, etc.), but they have no clue about Mozart. Our productions were much better in spite of the worse voices. Here they think they have to present everything as realistically and as sentimentally as possible. The end result is something like Lortzing. With their uproarious applause audiences today hear an opera with almost the same phoniness as they view a painting. They no longer

have any inkling of what art is. I saw a performance of Edvard Grieg's *Peer Gynt* (unfortunately with the housekeeper) that was a totally unheard-of vulgarity. I didn't know what was worse: Ibsen, the actors, the musicians, or the audience. I can still forgive Ibsen because he at least meant well (which, however, is not an acceptable excuse in artistic matters); Grieg's music is lovely. But, given the immaturity of the theater public, the presentation is wretched in every way. This is one of the horrors of the war that will not go away with the advent of peace. By now I have a very low notion of the taste and the understanding of the local public. In any case, I will soon be going to Richard Wagner's *Tristan* in the Prinzregent theater and hope that they will at least achieve something respectable in their specialty. By the way, I have a certain instinctive aversion to the Prinzregent theater. In the meantime I've been to a small gathering at St.'s.⁴ Being there is painful for me even though it provides some diversion. I very quickly come to dominate in conversation with the men in attendance. I become the center of attention so quickly that they feel exposed in front of the girls and secretly hold this against me. These people spend their entire lives thrashing out undefined concepts and empty phantasms. Their talent appears to be an accident, and their goodwill is touching within the narrow confines of their consciousness. This social interaction will soon come to an end. Incompetence!

Taste is becoming coarse; people are getting more stupid and bloody-minded by the day. We're living in total darkness and in hell. Those who are capable of judgment all seem to be struck dumb or dead. Probably dead. Alfred Döblin is a man of letters. What he is beyond that probably doesn't amount to much. We're alone, totally without precedent. We need immense strength, and we have it. We must always consider the end; it confronts us every day and wants to seize us. We are not afraid.

It's really wonderful that you're together. You're so strong, Fritz; I'm so happy. I'm terribly looking forward to seeing you again! It's possible that there will be a good opportunity for Maidon to come here before mid-September rather than later. She might also have to wait until after the fifteenth, perhaps till October. In any case, could I have a very detailed report on the state of her health, because I can send a telegram from one day to the next. On September 14, if we're still capable of deliberation, you and I will thoroughly deliberate Maidon's physical aspect, which you, Fritz, were able to capture so splendidly (a really brilliant achievement). In the meantime she's in the best hands possible.

There's nothing new here. Your book arrived, and I will read it as soon as I have time. Naturally, I'm not getting any work done. I'm no longer in room 12 but on the same floor in room 30, which has some important amenities. (Among others, a much better attending physician. Also, she can't stop by quite as often.)—By the way, did you know that my cousin Sigi (Cahn) was killed in the war? I wrote a fairly warm condolence letter not for his relatives, who don't matter to me, but because I liked the poor guy. He was a decent person in spite of everything. My parents intend to return at the beginning of next week, but you can write me at any time without worrying about it.

Lao Tse writes:

For compassion

In war brings victory,

In defense brings invulnerability.

Whomsoever heaven would establish,

It surrounds with a bulwark of compassion.

The old Chinese man was already aware of this seven hundred years before our era. It seems as if he dedicated these lines to Maidon personally. Naturally, scholars still don't agree on whether he wrote her name as "Mai-Din" or "Lai-Din." The latter pronunciation is more common in Chinese. I believe that the ancient Chinese were not at all stupid; doubtless, they had fewer prejudices; doubtless, they dragged around fewer ideas from German philosophy professors. Lao Tse says of the one who knows:

Neither can one attain intimacy with him,

Nor can one remain distant from him;

Neither can one profit from him,

Nor can one be harmed by him;

Neither can one achieve honor through him,

Nor can one be debased by him.

He is, therefore, the noblest person on earth.

And about the exercise of power: "Ruling a big kingdom is like cooking small fish." He also asserts: "Where armies have been stationed, briars and brambles will grow." Further: "He [the good general] does not use force to seize for himself."

He places placidity above all
and refuses to prettify weapons;
If one prettifies weapons,
this is to delight in the killing of others.

Further: "Weapons are instruments of evil omen," and "Victory in battle, we commemorate with mourning ritual."⁵ I have indiscriminately chosen these words, words that he gives as advice to the rulers of his time. It is claimed that the rulers followed them. This was seven hundred years before Christ. We now live two thousand years *after* the birth of Christ. Progress indeed! For the sake of progress we now fly in airplanes, and a few years ago the civilized world danced at the sight of the first airship, just like an Indian tribe before its medicine man. The sad thing is that many are suffering, and the danger is that this era will devour us. We are prepared. We are laughing. I am happy. In his latest comedy Sternheim writes: "A girl has only one possession: Honor! Just like a soldier. Which, of course, is something fundamentally different."⁶—Salut! All right, Maidon, I love you.

Max

(Please confirm receipt immediately.)

MH TO ROSA RIEKHER

OCTOBER 25, 1921

Dear Maidon:

Whenever I want to write you I become conscious of the complete dichotomy between being and reality. I'm supposed to *write* to you, the person with whom I am in an immutable bond during all my days and nights; the person with whom I am, in the most intimate sense of the word, one for eternity; the person through whom every genuine deed in my life first gains significance; the person to whom my existence is dedicated down to the most trivial detail. It would be unthinkable for a person to want to make contact with his own soul—with what animates him and is palpable to him at every second as his very own life force—via the mailman! That's nonsense and yet true; it's a contradiction and yet it exists. But the person confronted by it can go mad!

I don't know whether it is only memory that makes earlier suffering appear insignificant in the face of current suffering or whether it is