

Saturday 9-11-81  
Princeton NJ

Dear Jimmy and Ann,

Since I see you so rarely (and Ann ~~hardly~~ <sup>not</sup> at all) and I can hardly afford our occasional phone conversations which I generally relish (as aimless chatting between friends is a luxury I rarely enjoy while at Princeton principally because I have few or no friends to speak of) I've decided to write instead.

I understand that you, Jimmy, in a recent conversation with Lila cast aspersions on my character by implying that I might be a pothead. Although I openly admit a certain proclivity for pot, I don't smoke the stuff often enough to enjoy the title of marijuana aficionado. In fact I'm still smoking the remains of an ounce of the lightest meditation weed which Lila purchased sometime last October. With this in mind, even the most amateur pothead would dismiss me as a wretched pretender. It is true, however, that my personality ~~exhibits~~ <sup>exhibits</sup> some of the characteristics of the hardened cannabis addict, namely euphorious alienation and an abberent penchant for procrastination. But I find much to my dismay that how no matter how much or how little dope I smoke, my personality persists.

It is true that these days I'm much less apprehensive about the future than in months past. In fact I seem buoyed by an unconscionable optimism for which I can find no basis in reality. Perhaps it's that I'm enjoying my academic work, or what little I do of it, this semester. Bear in mind that although I'm slated to complete the requirements for my M. A. this June, I still have two incompletes on my record and have yet to start my master's thesis, which in theory is due sometime this May. The real reason for my new-found optimism is ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

(Lila, for the record, is not even a proto-pothead, and will smoke dope only on ceremonial occasions, since she fears the staff members her inseparable social interaction with any student)

my realisation that agorophobic panic over the future simply will not do, and that reasoned indifference is a far better posture.

By the way, I saw Elena last night, and extended <sup>to</sup> her your warm<sup>est</sup> regards. As it happened I was on my way to a "semi-formal" extravaganza at the Graduate <sup>College</sup> (the first time I <sup>have</sup> set foot in the place this year, and remember that I lived there two years ago) when I noticed that the light was on in Elena's room, so I stopped in for a brief visit. When I asked what she was doing <sup>alone</sup> in her room on a Friday night, she replied that this was the first time in ~~may~~ months (her Generals are coming up this ~~in~~ May.) We talked for a half an hour or so with few pauses but even less comfort. Whereas I want to, try to, communicate and discuss our lives, her posture has become that of an opaque shell. She resolutely refuses to tell me anything personal about herself. It's getting to the point where our rare meetings, undertaken only at my initiative, seem useless, hardly worth the small effort involved. I can't help thinking that she is still hurt (or "humiliated" or both) and that she is protecting herself from the intrusions of my rather innocuous personality by maintaining a militantly inscrutable front. I suspect (and this is only a suspiscion) that our separation has left a void in her life to which she would never admit, to me anyway, and perhaps not even to herself; and this in part explains her approach to me. Or perhaps we have so little in common that we cannot share ourselves as friends; and as lovers, the time for exchange has long past. Of course I suspected that this would be the case long before we broke up. Still it seems a shame; I owe much to her, I still look back fondly

on the times we did share, but when we get together, this all seems a dead letter. Perhaps this is the feeling that so annoyed and upset me during my last and most unsatisfactory encounter with Emily Apter. (that was last June with Steve and Sally if you recall.)

One of ~~the~~ <sup>my</sup> ostensible reasons for writing ~~the~~ <sup>this</sup> letter is to ask you, Jimmy, a favor. In a fit of unmitigated ambition, I decided to write an idea piece on the Iranian Revolution. My original intention was to submit the piece to the Times,

knowing that it would never reach the editorial board but happy in the belief that it's the thought that counts, but then Lila suggested the obvious--that I have a possible "in" in the shape

of ~~your~~ <sup>Jimmy's</sup> most distinguished brother. I'm not even sure that the piece has any merit to it, although at a gut level I feel that it is a hip, a suggestive approach. As <sup>regular</sup> readers of the Times, you all can judge for yourself, although bear in mind that the copy that I have enclosed ~~is~~ is not the finished product.

As for ~~Jim's~~ Jim's brother, he may dismiss outright such flagrant influence-peddling, or you all may feel that the current problematical state of family relations would make my ~~ambition-jobbering~~ <sup>self-promotion.</sup> inappropriate. As for the piece itself,

your brother may feel that it panders needlessly to the bearded upstarts <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ made the revolution in Iran; on the other hand he may interpret the premise of the piece <sup>as</sup> ~~and~~ properly anti-revolutionary. Whatever. Tell me what you think, by phone or letter. As a rule I can usually be reached late at night at my house--between 11 PM and 2 in the morning.

I look forward to seeing you both in the near future, although that probably won't happen too soon. If you all are hanging around Cambridge during the summer, we may get to see

for the "Op-Ed"  
page 1 The NY Times. (w)

of course I would appreciate where  
total confidence on your parts where  
the piece is concerned.

quite a bit of each other in Cambridge where I may relocate in preparation for the deluge (where jobs are concerned, that is.)

I fully recognize that I'm putting myself at risk by writing this letter which may serve as a textual <sup>material</sup> ~~case study~~ for Freudian analysis. He protests too much about the pot, you will say, his meditations about Elena are surely projections reflecting his own trauma at love lost, and what the hell ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> these misplaced pretensions to intellectual authority? I ~~do~~ can't say.

See you soon, Write or call if you get around to it.

Love,

St \_\_\_\_\_ ↔

(a conclusion reinforced by the conspicuous absence of any discussion of his involvement with Lila)