

Sas van Gent, Neth
Sept 10 1980

Dear Bob & Gemie

I laughed so hard at that English teacher comment "If you know Dutch you'd understand why Pirsig used the name 'De Weese'; that I never got around to asking what it did mean.

Last spring, when we got to the Netherlands I looked it up in our Dutch dictionary under "D" and still didn't find it. Really frustrating.

When we passed a brick building one day the mystery was finally solved, and we were so pleased we posed this clever photograph to commemorate the occasion. The bottle in my arm is SPA water and has nothing to do with anything.

The koffie label doesn't either except that it's kind of a nice psychic photograph of some Dutch values which have impressed us so deeply we plan to stay at least until spring. The canals are lined with sheep and cows up to their knees in green-green grass with ducks every where and lazy cats that don't hunt for anything and gentle winds and fat Wilhelmina-type women on bicycles and fields of blooming flowers. It was almost inevitable that Wendy should become pregnant. Land of the stork. We expect the new child in April.

Bob



D·E

ZILVERMERK

DOUWE
EBERTS

Het fijne aroma,
de geur en
de smaak van
Douwe Egberts
Zilvermerk Koffie
blijven door
deze lichtelichte
verpakking
volledig behouden.

Het zeer gekende
maalsel is
geheel aangepast
aan de
moderne
snelfiltermethode.

SNELFILTERMALING

VACUUM

Douwe Egberts
Fijne Aroma-Koffie

D·E

ZILVERMERK

gemalen koffie

SNELFILTERMALING

GEMALEN
KOFFIE

D·E

VACUUM
VERPAKT

ZILVER

MATTHEEWS
supermarkt

D·E

ZILVERMERK

DOUWE
EBERTS

HIER OPENEN
omhoog
trekken



Puntjes van
de binnen-
verpakking
uitvouwen



Binnenverpakking bij
inkeping afscheuren of
knippen: hierdoor
ontstaat een
handige
schenktuit.

SNELFILTERMALING

ANNO
1753WAAROM
10 PUNTEN

Doordat deze punten
verpakt is
in een lichtelichte
verpakking
blijven de
aroma en smaak
volledig behouden.
Voor meer informatie
gaat u naar de
D·E geschenken-
centra.



Nieuw! De unieke "Excellent 10"
snelfilterautomaat voor 2-10
koppen lekkere koffie.
Uitvoerige informatie vindt u
bij de D·E geschenken-
centra.

SNELFILTERMALING



Sept
1980



De Weeses
14190 Cottonwood Canyon
~~Gallatin Gateway, Montana~~
~~59715~~ ~~U.S.A.~~

Boyer
59715

500 hours
+
transformation

~~if he calls~~
~~off for family~~

give Mike a
collect
call Mike for
questions

Feb 8
[1981]

Dear Bob -

Can't remember if I wrote
a reply to your last letter
about the end (still?) of the
lost Redford adventure. -
Sort of disappointing, maybe, but
it would have been pretty frank.

Anyway you are still alive and
well in Borgville. For instance
last Sunday night, the Unitarians,
I saw by the Boyman Chronicle.
had a discussion about foreign
famous "underground" book,
Z M M. " I didn't attend.
(nor was I asked.) but it might
tell you something - Names of others
(in reverse) mention it to us
about once every month these

days!

Anyway, as you've probably
guessed (having looked over
the enclosed stuff). Boxerman
is after the real Pissig. And
this time with something really
appealing since you switched
from fantasyland to data
processing —

The ~~German~~ as really
remarkable people and would
love to have you in top
billing for this event in
August.... I assume your
familiar with some of the
people. — (Lilly? Barth?)
more the 2 (I don't read
a hellwa lot.) and Mike

wanted me to emphasize that
this a a NATIONAL event
not just regional state or
local... for whatever that means
to you. I guess and I can
testify that the "Eclipse"
event they did a few years
ago was the most exciting week
Boxerman has had.

Anyway we hope you
really consider it. (No I'm
not "into" computers and don't
understand a thing about them.)
Mike says he can offer
you

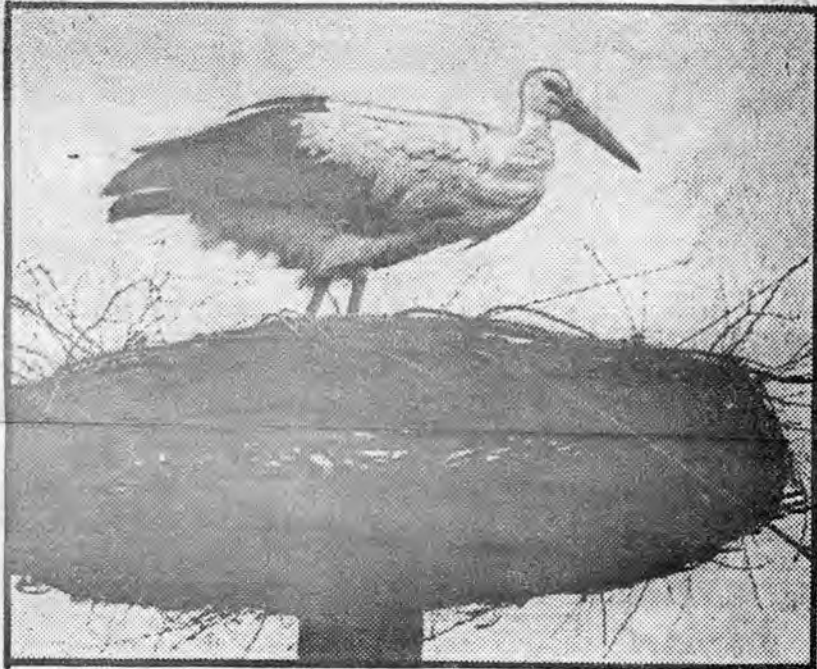
Nell Pirsig

GEBOORTE DATUM 20 April 1981

GEWICHT 3950 gr.

VADER Robert Maynard Pirsig

MOEDER Wendy Kimball Pirsig



Ooievaarsnest bezet

BUNSCHOTEN - Op het erf van de familie C. van Dijkhuizen aan de Bunschoterstraat in de polder tussen Bunschoten en Nijkerk, heeft zich een ooievaar genesteld. De ooievaar of *ciconia ciconia* komt meestal omstreeks deze tijd naar Nederland en blijft hier tot augustus of begin september. Het aantal broedvogels is de laatste jaren in Nederland sterk afgenomen. Gebroed wordt meestal op daken of op kunstmatige nesten geplaatst op hoge palen.

AIRMAIL - LUCHTPOST



*Amstel.
Nelle 81
Bertla
Amsterdam*



915716

*Mrs & Mrs Robert De Weese
14190 Cottonwood Canyon
~~Gallatin Gateway 59715~~
Montana ~~Bozeman~~
U.S.A. mt 59715*

Sas Van Gent,
Netherlands,
April 24, 1981

Dear Bob,

I think that now, while all the aftermath of Ordinary People is being absorbed and before you arrive at firm decisions about ZMM, is the best time for me to set down all my thoughts about how it should be done. Putting them in a letter this way should enable you to think about them and change your mind back and forth at leisure in the normal creative way.

GENERAL

My overall feeling is that the film should be low key and low budget with lots of "space" in it. My idea at one time was to take about five people and a pick-up camper and a couple of motorcycles and some videotape equipment and see if, learning as we went, we could put together some footage that we could present to a producer for 35 mm production. I felt that the less slick and "artistic" the film looked the better it would be for the story, and I gather from the reviews of Ordinary People that that is exactly the attitude you took there and it worked.

Another idea I might have pursued if you had lost interest was to go to Sweden and talk to the representatives of the film industry there. Many of their films have exactly the kind of low key sensitivity and absence of theatrics that the book calls for. In many ways it's an extremely delicate story, particularly in the portrayal of Chris.

NARRATIVE

I think the dramatic force of the narrative is almost entirely dependent upon the mystery of the narrator, and if this mystery is lost the whole story goes with it. The narrative was constructed to remove a series of veils, one at a time, carefully and in sequence, from in front of the true nature of the narrator.

In Chapter 1 the narrator is established as a rather normal, unexceptional fellow. The purpose of John and Sylvia was mainly to render this "ordinariness" of him. The reader has to buy in on him early, believe in him, want to keep him going because as the book progresses this narrator's ordinariness becomes more and more incredible and in the end is demolished completely.

In Chapter 3, the first veil is removed when Phaedrus appears in a storm. In Chapter 4, confidence is restored by John, Sylvia and Chris and a maintenance-oriented Chataqua. In Chapter 5 another veil is removed and we learn that Chris shows signs of mental illness. Chapter 6 again restores sanity. In Chapter 7 we have one of the most difficult chapters, in which the reader is persuaded that Phaedrus is not the narrator, even though he really is. This is absolutely essential to the construction of the plot, for the whole climax becomes flat and meaningless if this is not accepted.

In part 2, the mystery of the narrator becomes the mystery of Phaedrus, and a series of veils reveals more and more about Phaedrus. He was a teacher in Bozeman, Montana. He was in

pursuit of something. What was he looking for? Quality. What was that? . . . To raise that single question was the purpose of the whole narrative. All the characters except Chris and the narrator are disposed of while a series of veils is removed about Quality in terms of Phaedrus's struggle with it up to his psychic death through shock treatment.

This is the end of the veils as far as the narrator can remove them, but there is still another a veil that the narrator himself doesn't understand. Phaedrus, the enigmatic villain of the narrator's tale, is threatening to take over the narrator's whole personality. Chris is in danger, but from whom? From Phaedrus or from the narrator himself? Chris seems to reject the narrator and mourn for Phaedrus. How can the narrator do anything at all but give up and let things take their course? What can save the situation?

What saves the situation is one last veil, which was concealed back in Chapter 7. The narrator has made a mistake. The father Chris mourns for isn't dead after all. He is still alive and is the narrator himself.

Here the book ends for most readers, leaving them a little puzzled and a little haunted by it all, wanting to discuss it with someone and ask questions. A few perceptive readers and one lone British critic kept on going beyond the end of the book into a whole other interpretation which the narrator never really gives you. John, and Sylvia, the bourgeois butts of the narrator's criticism, are now seen as tolerant friends. Chris, the troubled brat of the narrator's tale, now appears as almost saintly, and the benign, omniscient narrator, whose point of view the reader has had to accept as true until now is seen as Phaedrus himself, broken, his mind half-destroyed, struggling desperately to recover.

What really happened? In the end Phaedrus said he wasn't insane. But the court ruled that he was, and his symptoms through the book are classic textbook symptoms of schizophrenia. What is wrong here?

I think the effect of ending the book on this question rather than an answer to it is correct. Questions can be stories too. Even though the audience is not consciously aware of another possible story, something in their subliminal minds responds to it, and that is why the story lingers with them so. Subliminally they know Phaedrus was getting better, not worse. They know he was acting rationally, not irrationally. But they can find no words to justify this and that is what haunts them. It gives a kind of resonance to the book, a sense of sounds from out of the range of hearing that nevertheless affect the main sounds.

The book doesn't demand that the reader accept any other conclusion than the psychiatric one. It merely casts some question on this psychiatric conclusion and then stops. But there is an alternative, Zen explanation: What occurred in Chicago was not insanity but enlightenment as it has been understood for thousands of years in China, India and Japan. The book never says this because to do so would sink it completely and would in fact be bad Zen to bring up.

* But the question of what really happened to Phaedrus is taken up again in the book I am now working on and will probably be taken up still again in the book after this one. This means that if the film script varies too much from the book there may be a continuity problem for my next book, which is another reason for not changing the ending.

There is yet one more veil that went not only beyond the narrator's perception but beyond the author's. I didn't begin to see it until long after I had written it, and after I saw it, I just left it there and never exploited it, but it helps explain the power of the final scene with Chris.

The psychiatrist, Jung, wrote that we all live in a world of values derived from ancient myths. Old tribal experiences control our lives without our even knowing it, and when sometimes a story or a scene has a strong emotional impact it's because one of these ancient value-myths has been tapped.

In this narrative a son's father has lost contact with the world. No one believes in him any more. The son is the only one. And his belief in his father is forcing him further and further from the world itself with only his father left to hang on to. Then his father seems to abandon him and he suffers a kind of death right before his father's eyes, and seems to cry out "My father, why hast thou forsaken me?" His father is transformed by this, and as a result of his son's sacrifice, returns to the world again.

I'm convinced that this unintended Christian value-myth was the real source of the power of that scene and that if it is left inviolate the same effect may be possible on film. I also think, however, that deliberately inserting allegories into stories is dangerous writing and usually creates a kind of overdramatized "theatrical" effect that kills everything. The secret, I think, is just to know it is there but leave it alone, not crush it, not exploit it, just let it be.

THE CHAUTAUQUA

To me, giving someone the ZMM narrative without the Chautauqua is like giving someone a diamond ring without the diamond. The Chautauqua is what came first, and at one time was intended to be the whole book. The narrative was originally intended to remove the "ex-cathedra" effect, the "talking down," the pontification, which pure essays get into become they come from a disembodied speaker. The narrative puts the Chautauqua into the mouth of someone fallible. The reader is not quite so put off by all the high-flown talk about philosophy because he realizes the narrator is just trying to say something he believes in and he isn't perfect either. That was the original reason for the narrative.

Probably my greatest misgiving of all about this film is that because philosophy is so hard to film and narrative is so easy to film there will be an almost overwhelming pressure to subordinate the Chautauqua to the narrative; chopping it here and there, working it around here and there, slipping it in there and there into nooks and crannies of the narrative, hoping that somehow it will squeeze in. It won't. What will result is a

slipshod, superficial intellectualism that will smell up the whole film with that slick commercial shallowness for which America and Hollywood have become so well known.

The problem, of course, is that if the Chautauqua is filmed in its entire complexity it will be too dull and too difficult for anyone to sit through. It has to be boiled way, way down. I think it can. It has to be dramatized and interrelated with the action wherever possible. This can also be done. But it must be subordinated to the narrative. Some of it may have to be done in a very dry, dreary dull way that will certainly weaken audience interest. If this has to happen, this has to happen. This isn't Jaws. The purpose of this book is to tell people something, not just entertain them, and if part of the audience is so dull they can't stand any kind of straight information whatsoever, the film will just have to lose that fraction of the audience. Otherwise things get into that lowest-common-denominator approach that destroys the integrity of the whole film effort and reflects on the book as well.

In my previous letter I said I had some ideas about how to solve of the problem of making the Chautauqua interesting without cheapening it, and a guess now is the time for these.

POINT OF VIEW

To me this seems like the most important thing I have to say here so let me back way up for this.

The teacher of composition who most affected my writing was the poet Alan Tate, who died a couple of years ago. His name is usually associated with Robert Penn Warren, who wrote All the King's Men, and as Warren described him, "With Tate writing was a matter of life or death." You couldn't spend fifteen minutes in a class with him without understanding that.

I sat through three quarters of Tate's advanced composition classes during which he assigned Henry James's The Turn of The Screw as a story for analysis. In the story, a governess, assigned to take care of two children, tries to protect them from a ghost of their former governess. She fails and the boy dies. At the end of the reading Tate astonished everyone by saying there really wasn't any ghost at all, it was all in the mind of the governess who was telling the story. I got upset by this and got into a ferocious argument. If there was anything that was obvious about that story it was that there really was a ghost. But, point by point, sentence by sentence, Tate argued me down and by doing so demonstrated what was the whole point of the assignment, the importance of point of view.

James believed that to make a story rise up from the page and come to life you must establish a specific point of view for the reader and never violate it except when absolutely necessary and then it must be changed only in the most careful and deliberate way. Tate said that The Turn of the Screw was a demonstration of this principle in which he deliberately tricked you into thinking the ghost was real by his use of first person point of view.

Tate said the first person point of view is by far the most

powerful in its control of the reader but it is also the most hellish in its limitations upon the author. The author is in a straight-jacket. He has no "meanwhile, back at the ranch" shifts to help him work the story along. He is locked inside the head of the narrator and must show only what the narrator can see in the order the narrator sees it. But the reward for this straight-jacket punishment is that whatever the narrator sees becomes the reader's reality. That was why it was so hard to see that ghost in The Turn of the Screw was an illusion in the mind of the narrator.

The first person point of view has never been popular with writers because of its mechanical difficulties, but as Tate's analysis showed, if you've got a fantastic, incredible tale to tell, and if the whole success of the story depends on the reader being convinced it is true, then the first person is the way to tell it. It was out of Tate's class and the argument about The Turn of the Screw that the ghost called "Phaedrus," was created.

My idea for making the Chautauqua bearable to a film audience without cheapening it and for solving some other extremely important problems as well, is to carry James' advice about point of view right on into the film. I think there are tremendous advantages to locating the camera right inside the head of the narrator and never letting it get out of there. In this first person point of view the audience should never see the narrator's face. That is the way to sustain his mystery, which is so important to the dramatic suspense of the story and, by God, that is the way to handle the Chautauqua. The dry, prosaic Chautauqua can flow and weave freely into the other elements of the story with a kind of symphonic intermingling because the audience knows that everything is part of the panorama of the narrator's internal point of view. You can move back and forth from highway to thoughts to Chautauqua to India to Bozeman to Chris and to the Chautauqua again to Chicago in any order you want with complete freedom and ease with no explanation needed because the audience will always know they are seeing just what the narrator sees and remembers and thinks about and that is the natural way his mind is working.

And that's really the way life is too; not just a series of external objects and faces but a mixture of these with memories and reflections and interruptions in a kind of endlessly changing kaleidoscope. The reality portrayed by this free-flowing mixture is more true to life than conventional presentations whose reality is based on limitations of the old theatrical stage. Once the audience gets used to it the screen can shift from Chautauqua to road scene with such ease no one will know it is happening, and all kinds of liberties can be taken. If the narrator has a hard point in the Chautauqua he wants to make he can visualize a blackboard and make a diagram. He can stop a motorcycle in action and do a strobe-lighted sequence to show how it works. He can do anything.

And there are other advantages:

1. The plot of the story only works if the audience accepts the idea that Phaedrus and the narrator are completely separate people. This separation will be impossible if you show both their faces. People will see right away they are the same. When you use first person, and show Phaedrus' face only, this problem is completely solved.

2. The first person point of view enables a peculiarly compelling intimacy between the narrator and the audience. In the book the narrator almost whispers in the reader's ear in such a confidential intimate tone that he sometimes breaks through the reader's own shell of isolation and transports him into the narrator's world as if in a dream. I think this could happen on film too.

3. The earlier statement that the narrator's face should never be shown can be amended for one exception: the dramatic climax. In doing so you give this climax a tremendous visual power that it couldn't achieve by any other means. The narrator, whom the audience has never seen, sits down beside Chris in the coastal fog and says, "Don't cry Chris. Crying is just for children." The camera shows his gloved hands from his internal point of view and then, as quietly and unobtrusively as possible, it shifts and shows the same gloves reaching up and wiping a tear from the narrator's face -- which we see now for the first time. We see that his face is much older and tired than before but it is Phaedrus all right, and we gradually understand the most important point of the whole story. He has come back.

In the final scenes where Chris and his father bank and turn down the ocean highway, talking freely back and forth, both faces are now shown in the conventional objective manner. The relief the audience feels at returning to this "normal" way of looking at things should parallel Phaedrus' own relief at this new perspective of himself. Now it is understood that the real ghost of the story -- the unseen narrator -- is gone. You never really saw his face because he never really saw his face. He never really had a face. He was a fiction, really, created by the courts and psychiatrists. Phaedrus had accepted this fiction after his shock treatment, but Chris had not. And that was the source of Chris's troubles.

In using the first person the film has traded off one kind of freedom for another, and the one that is given away wasn't needed anyway for this story, but the one that is gained allows a kind of film to be made in which intellectual concepts can be handled as freely as desert scenery, and a high dramatic power is gained through a single shift in point of view. It's an unusual way of showing things, but it's an unusual book, and an unconventional film technique is actually more appropriate to the book's style than a conventional one.

CASTING

Narrator

If the first person convention is followed and the narrator's voice is never associated with any face until the

end, then I could read his lines myself and, you can be sure, say them exactly the way the author intended them. However my voice may be too thin and high for this part and I've noticed that authors reading their own works often don't do nearly as well as actors. Authenticity isn't necessarily Quality. That's for you to decide.

Phaedrus

One of the most interesting conversations I've had about this film was with Joseph Strick, who directed Ulysses, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and some other art films. In his opinion, the acting of the narrator and Phaedrus roles would make or break the film. He thought the actor chosen should be unknown, so as not to compromise Phaedrus' mysteriousness. He thought there should be a long search by both of us together, auditioning as many as 100 or 200 actors to find the right one. "When you find him," he said, "I predict you will know it right away. There will suddenly be no doubt in your mind."

Strick's offer was rejected and I would have forgotten this except that his prediction was accidentally fulfilled. An actor appeared who gave me exactly the eerie feeling that he was talking about. I felt I was looking at a double.

His film name is Peter Coyote. I haven't seen him act but got the feeling from his off-stage actions that he is probably very good, and some of the articles that I'm sending along here also seem to indicate this is so. When I told him I would mention him to you he sent this material so that you wouldn't think I was pushing "Sleazy Eddie" my "brother-in-law who can't find a job." Peter has a two-level personality. On the surface he is bright and funny, but underneath there is an extreme seriousness that seems just right. He is a motorcyclist and a mechanic and was a friend of Chris. Chris used to fix cars for everybody but, as Peter told it, he always undercharged and lost money. The look of mixed anger and hurt on Peter's face as he told that about Chris was what suddenly produced the "double" feeling.

In one way it's irrelevant to his acting that he was one of the first to find Chris's body, and that he spent many weeks with the police trying to find the murderers, and actually found witnesses and got them to testify, but in another way it is not irrelevant. It think his memory of Chris may have a very deep effect on his performance, and in the final critical dramatic scenes we may see from him a kind of ultimate effort that would be hard to get from someone else.

Casting is, of course, your decision not mine. But if his acting seems right to you then we are in great luck.

John Sutherland

One major disadvantage of the first person point of view is that if you don't show the face of a character you have lost one of your most important visual means of telling his story. I think this could be made up in part with a montage technique, where instead of showing the narrator's sadness by a baleful look on his face, you could show it by putting sadness in whatever he

happens to be thinking about. If it is a motorcycle, for example, it could be shown on a cold rainy day, with some dents on it or mud on it, and an effect of sadness would be created. Getting along with the narrator's face, however, puts a huge burden on everyone else in the narrative, who, to some extent, will have to create him in their faces. John Sutherland's support in the opening chapters will be critical, I think, and I've been hoping you might consider this role. As was said earlier, the purpose of John and Sylvia is to make the narrator seem like a normal conventional American through his relationship to them. If you take the part of John that normality will be immediately conferred upon the narrator and the film will be off to a very strong start.

I've never been satisfied with the portrayal of John in the book (And neither, you can believe it, has John.) I kept him dull and two-dimensional because I worried that he would upstage the narrator. But with the first person I don't think this is anything to worry about. You can't upstage the narrator when the narrator is the stage. I could do a lot to enrich John's part if you are willing to take it.

PROPS

The Honda Superhawk that made the trip is available, but it's a 1964 machine and might give an unintended obsolescence to the film. Also, I'm ashamed to say, it needs some maintenance. That's what success does for you.

MONEY

If Warner Brothers is ungenerous in its offer for the book I hope you can consider other producers who have made offers that are not. If this is so, there should be no problem at all.

CONCLUSION

That's about all the advice I have at this time and as I read back over it I can see you saying, "Well, God, I hope so!" It's quite a sermon, and is a kind I almost never make. I once compared a basic author to a mother-in-law and am reminded of that now. Everybody knows she gave birth to the desired one and you've got to be nice to her, but damned if she's going to run the marriage. Once you get going on the film I'm sure my influence will get weaker and weaker and I'll never have a clear field to run all these ideas through like I have now, so that's why I'm going on at such length. Certainly it's better to have all these ideas and reject them for good reason than never to know about them at all. Ultimately the only real mandate is the one contained in ZMM itself, "I don't care how you do it, just so it's good."

Good luck on your period of reflection. If it lasts past the first of July we may be seeing you in Norway. Plans will depend a lot on how our new passenger likes the boat. If it becomes definite that a film will be made that will certainly take priority over the second book and we will move to whatever location suits best for as long as you need us. As a matter of fact the setting of the second book is in Manhattan, and I have to go there anyway to do some research on it.

Dec 15 1981
Tanager, Norway

Dear Bob & Gennie

Many thanks for the noodel of Mary and her Lamb. We really like it and will frame it for Nell's wall if she ever gets a wall. We would put it overhead for her but her ceiling is so low she would reach it and that would be the end of it. Right now it is clothespinned to an internal laundry line and continues to look good hour after hour after hour.

Ted is in Minneapolis studying Zen under Katagiri Roshi and enrolling at the U of Minn. When we see him this Christmas I will tell him you wrote

I haven't written anything for publication since 1977 except blurbs for other people's books and I hate to spoil a good record like that, so I will let the Corona offer go by. I don't know what the problem is exactly, some sort of contrariness that won't go away. The second book is coming along all right. (It still has Indians in it. I thought I was going to lose them for a while) but

I really don't want to publish it either.

The Modern Language Association is paying for our trip this time. They have a special session on ZMM at their 27-30 convention in New York and asked us to attend which is really nice because they have no idea the original version of ZMM was a paper on Quality that was written for and read to the Rocky Mountain MLA.

On January 6th we will be talking to Robert Redford ^{Candy} depending on what happens, we will either return to Norway (where we are now iced in, with a foot of snow on our deck) or stay to work on a film.

So if you see a long procession of enormous trucks full of motion picture equipment stopping at your door one of these days, you'll know who it is.

Rob & Wendy and
Nell



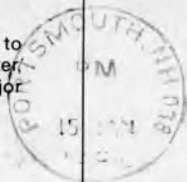
Fabe Gennie DeWeger
14190 Cottonwood Canyon
Bozeman, Mont. ~~59715~~
59715
U.S.A.

St. Moritz
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Convenient to
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and major



ALWAYS

ZIP CODE



United States 13c

X marks the room
where R.R. decided to
go ahead and film
Zmm.

Bob.

Babe Gennie Denvers
14190 Cottonwood Canyon
Bozeman, Mont, 59715

50 Central Park South, New York, N.Y. 10019
For reservations call (212) 755-5800.
Out of New York State call toll-free 800-221-4774.

D

Mar. 30, 1982

Dear Bob & Gennie

We're back again from Krazyland and slowly settling back to normal but not for long. Redford's script writer will probably fly here for ~~long~~ ^{all} in-depth conversations, then ~~we~~ ^{they} go back to Minnesota, talk to the Sutherlands and then retrace the old historic ZMM trail, stopping, you can be sure, at Cottonwood Canyon. This is likely to be the advance preparation for an entire on-location film crew with Redford, who has announced he will play the narrator; Lew Carlin, the script writer; probably ~~me~~ and ~~and~~ Waxy & Nell, and God knows who else.

Everything is, of course, "maybe". There isn't even a contract yet. We are really in the illusion-business now. Hang on.

Bob & Waxy & Nell

Robert Pirsiq
c/o William Morrow & Co.
105 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

USA



Bob & Genie DeWeese
14190 Cottonwood Canyon
Bozeman, Mont. 59715



U.S.A.

July 7, 1982

Dear Bob & Gennie:

Sorry to be taking so long to keep you informed about R.R. The reason is that we don't know ourselves. It may fall through. Redford's agent and my lawyer have been screaming at each other so loudly Redford called us personally to ask that we fire our lawyer. We said no. That is where matters stand. It is a kind of Indian "powers" contest between a Hollywood way of looking at things in which Z.M.M. is literally a "property" they are going to own completely, and a Zen way of looking at things in which there is a quiet ethical center of everything that should be adhered to, particularly in the filming of this book. I think Redford is sort of caught between these views. Whether we have a contract will depend on which way he jumps.

I'll let you know if a contract is signed. Nothing can happen before then.
Bob (over)

We have just arrived in Sweden and
so far it looks very good. Much
different from Norway where the people
are straightforward, honest and simple. Here
they seem more complex - and interesting.

R.H.

Robert Pirsig
c/o William Morrow & Co.
105 Madison Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10016

U.S.A



AIR MAIL

Bib & Bernice DeWese
14190 Cottonwood Canyon
Bozeman, Montana

59175 U.S.A.

Göteborg, Sweden

Thanksgiving, 1982

Dear Bob and Gennie,

Merry Christmas from our new Apple computer word-processor. This machine really works! Every time I finish a chapter with it I feel like I've gotten away with something illegal. All the drudgery is gone (almost). It's no substitute for the meditative part of writing but the agony of typing and retyping and retyping again is gone. At last writers get to buy a lot of nifty professional equipment too.

Redford finally made an offer but we decided to let it go. He just wasn't right. His financiers were also warning him this was a dangerous book to try to film, and I think they were giving him good advice. Sales are holding up, and since they're enough to support us modestly it seems better to work on book 2 and not get into any more of that fame and fortune, Hollywood stuff at this time.

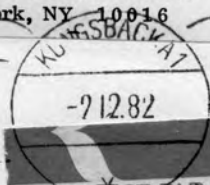
It was exciting to experience, in a way, but always seemed to leave a kind of "what-was-that-all-about" hangover effect.

Sweden looks more and more like a permanent home. It's like a Volvo car--not very exciting and somewhat overpriced, but durable and relatively problem-free. It's a good place to write and think and raise a daughter and meditate and grow old.

↑
mistake

Bob

Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Pirsig
c/o W. Morrow & Co.
105 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016



AIR MAIL

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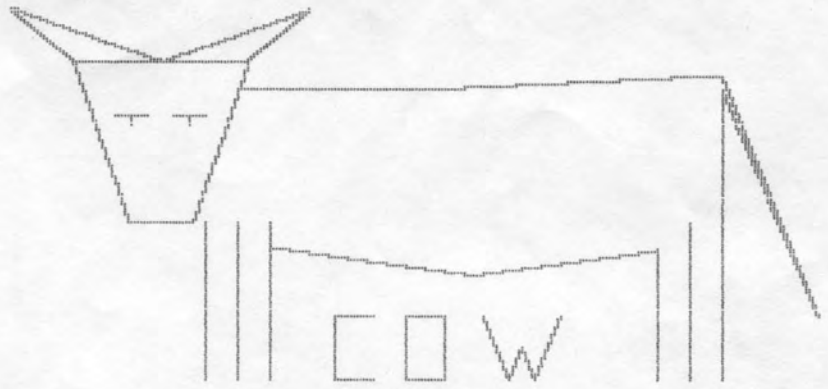
Mar 4 1983

Dear Bob and Gennie:

Good to see your letter and think about going from Sweden to Bozeman again, but it would be a poor use of time. I have just a handful of creative years left and a book to finish before they're gone. The first part of the book was completed last week and I am really exhausted from it. Old Dusenberry and the Indians are still in there, but the themes have been expanded the same way motorcycle maintenance was expanded in the first book. Tomorrow we're off to the Canary Islands, which are a kind of European Florida, for a week of sunshine and rest.

When the book is done I'll be more than happy to come and hype everyone about computers. It's really wonderful to have this beautiful machine, which would have cost about a million dollars in 1965, all for my own use. I think the conference is a little off the track already, however. Computers are mathematics. They were invented by mathematicians for mathematicians and their real beauty is the beauty of pure mathematics. To have a conference on computers in which there are no mathematicians is like having a conference on Catholicism in which there are no priests. Interesting, maybe, but off the track.

Bb



You've heard of computer art? Here it is! (Nell just loves it. By pressing the keys she makes one line appear at a time ^{on the TV screen} then the whole picture disappears and she makes it come back again.)

Robert Pirsig
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FLYGPOST
PAR AVION

Mar 83
answer to Parona Conference

De Weeses
14190 Cottonwood Canyon
Bozeman, Mont. 59715
USA

Box 3292
Portsmouth, N.H.
03801

May 3, 1987

Dear Bob and Gennie,

Two professors at the Regis Jesuit College in Denver are now doing a teachers' manual that will supplement Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance in classroom courses and are being very thorough about it. (More thorough than I ever was.) As part of this thoroughness one of them came down to Minneapolis last Christmas vacation and stayed with us at my father's house for three days and went through old reviews and drafts of the book and talked to John and Sylvia Sutherland. The other, Thomas Steele, would like to come to Bozeman this coming June and look around and hopefully meet you and get a better picture of what went on. Here at last is your chance to say what really happened.

One of these days we'll be there ourselves. Nell is now six and has heard about Bozeman and you (Your print of Mary and her Lamb hangs right outside her bedroom door.) and wants to go to Montana to see the mountains. Book 2 has to get done first, though. Maybe sometime next year.

Bob Piracy



madg.
THE REGIS JESUIT COMMUNITY
3539 WEST 50TH PARKWAY • DENVER, COLORADO 80221 • 458-4100

19 june 87

Dear Gennie and Bob,

I hope the enclosed items return to you in good condition. I thank you very much for entrusting them to me. I have not yet had time to do more than skim them -- first things first, you know, like golf -- but I know already that they will help me both with some specific points and with a general sense of the "drift" of the whole set of relationships.

And very much the same goes for your kind reception of me. I have not cognitively and emotionally unpacked the several hours we spent together, though I have begun to go back over the pages that tell of the trip's moving through Bozeman region. Already I have a very definite sense of how much better I grasp the progressions of the narrative and follow the subtle shifts of personal relationships than I could have only a week ago. Meeting the two of you was like being let in on a secret.

I spent most of yesterday and today working on another book, and tomorrow I leave for Albuquerque, where I ought to have some freedom to get at the whole set of materials -- including some of the "paper trail" which I gathered together at the MSU library after I left Cottonwood Canyon.

I will probably have some further questions and requests for introductions-in-writing to some of the persons you mentioned -- like RMP's former student who's an editor of Field and Stream, I seem to recall. I'll write you for anything along that line as soon as I get a clear question or two to ask such a victim. Right now the only question that occurs: about 2 1/2 pp. before the end of Chapter 15, the narrator says that he was using a rhetoric book written by a couple of MSC English Department members; would there be anyone around after nearly 30 years who could tell me what that book was? --Don't sweat it; I will ask RMP as well.

My coauthor had a copy of the Redford letter, so please just keep that; he also ran across an interview in the Denver Post with Peter Coyote, who is a real actor (if that's not a contradiction in terms) and not an escapee from a Navajo folktale.

Thank you again for your hospitality. ... Flynn Park School, huh? Interesting.

June 26, 1987

Dear Bob and Gennie,

Thank you for talking to Steele. Everything he's done so far indicates he's going to write a good book. At first I was worried that he would put in some sort of Catholic slant but it doesn't look like that will happen.

I'd forgotten how little you've heard from us in recent years. You're among our favorite correspondents since because you don't write much we don't have to answer much. As I told one fan, asking a writer to be a pen pal is like asking mailman to go for a hike.

We got the boat back a couple of years ago through the canals of Germany and France, out the Mediterranean, down the coast of Africa to where the Trade Winds are steady and then across the Atlantic to the West Indies, then up to Bermuda and New England. Now it sits in tall grass in our back yard. From our kitchen window we can see a nest under its bow-pulpit where two robins are raising their second brood of the season. I don't think we will be sailing again until the book is done.

The book is coming along slowly but well. Since the first one is still selling, there hasn't been much financial pressure to hurry and, despite all appearances in Bozeman and afterward, I'm really not one to hurry when I don't have to.

New England is fine, as always. There is still the old tradition of individualism here and respect for arts and crafts and education, so I don't feel like quite such an odd-ball as I did in the Mid-West. Portsmouth is Wendy's home town and her family has lived in New England since the time of the Pilgrims so we have a geneological right to be here.

It's really beautiful in a sad, timeworn way. Fogs roll in from the sea and maples turn red in the fall on roads that have been here for more than three centuries. Nell starts first grade next fall at a private school founded just after the Revolutionary War. The cemetery here contains graves of some of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Nell's maternal grandfather, who has not been well, took us out to his old family plot in Manchester, New Hampshire, and Wendy and Nell helped him prune away some of the overgrown shrubbery. He said Wendy's brother and sister would never take care of it after he was gone and he wondered if we would. We said we would, and he seemed grateful. There are still many people here who care about things like that. "Our Town," the play by Thornton Wilder, was about life in New Hampshire.

If you are coming this way (and why don't you) let us know.

Bob Piracy

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