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February 26, 1959

Mr. Peter F. Neumeyer
Department of English
University of California
Berkeley 4
California
U S A

Dear Mr. Neumeyer, -

your "Fragebogen" of February 9th has finally caught up with me.

Of course, your theme or your "problem" is a very complex one and I am afraid that I shan't be able quite to satisfy your justified curiosity.

On the whole, it has to be stated that my father always cherished a great deal of admiration for England and was particularly fond of that country - a fondness which, much to his regret, did not always seem to be reciprocated. Whilst he received honorary degrees in both, Oxford and Cambridge and whilst his personal appearances in London, as well as his offerings for the BBC used to meet with the most gratifying success, his English additions never sold more than ten thousand copies each (at the most!), nor - with certain exceptions were the British critics particularly friendly towards him and his efforts. Especially the London Times appeared to harbour a certain animosity regarding T.M., and every now and then he was saddened by the lack of response and understanding which, he felt, he was exposed to in Britain.

His admiration for, and fondness of, England, never suffered from his failure ever to become popular there. As a matter of tradition - not only German tradition but, more specifically, Hanseatic tradition, Britain ranged very high in his estimation. Even as a very young man he had read most that is important in English literature in German translations, and later on he kept up with whatever was new and interesting on the English book-market.

As for his favourite English writer, I cannot but admit that he loved Joseph Conrad more than any other English writing novelist. Knowing full well that many an English critic considered Conrad to have remained a Pole he thought him one of the very greatest story tellers in the best epic sense whom England ever produced, in as far as she produced him.

