

course you know how you want Pilate to come off, but I would make even more of his fear of the supernatural. Lady Murasaki would surely have had him pinned wriggling to the wall on this, don't you agree?"

8



THE SENIOR COURTIER'S SAT IN A CIRCLE

The Japanese heading is *teishin* 'courtier'.

The Senior Courtiers' names are echoes of actual persons who played a role in the nefarious proceedings that led up to Marianne's contract being terminated at UCLA in 1969-70. "Franklin" is Colin Franker (from Guyana, hence here displaced as "Nubian"), then a professor in the UCLA School of Dentistry, who was the campus AAUP representative in those years, and who stood up for Marianne to the senior administrators, among whom the arch villain was a certain David Saxon ("Sachsohn")—a Jew masquerading as a Gentile behind the Anglicized spelling of his surname (the original German form of which I reconstruct here).

The Chairman of the Bureau of Manuscripts, Azazellini, is Giovanni Cecchetti, the chairman of the UCLA Italian Department from 1969 to 1977, who came to UCLA from Stanford in 1969, replacing Franco Fido (a name that will crop up again), who in turn went to Stanford to replace Cecchetti. "Azazellini" is an Italianized version of the character in *Master and Margarita* named Azazello, which is Bulgakov's name for the demon of the waterless desert, the demon-murderer of the Old Testament apocryphal Book of Enoch 8:1-3, Azazel, the fallen angel who taught people to make weapons and jewelry. In Bulgakov's novel, Azazello is a member of Woland's (i.e., the Devil's) entourage.

Here is how Cecchetti was painted in the opening paragraph of my aborted novel, *The Book Not Written* (*Corpora Delicti*):

"He hunched over the letter as he wrote, his ichthyal eyes narrowed to a slit, his spectacles doffed for the nonce and lying unused at his right hand

on the massive writing desk in the studiolo adjoining the Department chancery. Small beads of spittle emerged from the sides of his lower lip as he savored every turn of phrase of the epistle to his minion in Florence. Now and then he paused and looked up through the internal window that opened out onto the vast arcaded atrium that afforded entrance to the Basilica. Students—this was a university building—came and went as he wrote.

“A visitor looking carefully at the atrium’s composite columns with their decorated capitals and engraved figures representing different kinds of monsters would have been struck by the resemblance between one particular grotesque and the studiolo’s occupant, identified by the embossed plaque on the door as the Department’s Chairman, a certain Giovanni Cecchetti.

“Sitting in a high-backed armchair, Cecchetti was gently stroking his smoothly shaven cheeks and rounded chin, with a white, well-cared-for hand. His visage bore that imprint of seemingly open-hearted frankness which only the faces of politicians capable of perfect duplicity acquire. His large aquiline nose with a hump, his prominent sinuous lips that seemed like razor-edges, recalled the Sforzas, perhaps even Francesco in particular. But if that great *condottiere*, to quote the poets, had been both a lion and a fox, of Cecchetti it could only be said that he had the vulpine cunning of a confidence man and not a trace of leonine courage.”

Lady Murasaki’s letter begins (first paragraph) as an adaptation of some passages from Bulgakov’s famous 1930 letter to Stalin, asking to be allowed to emigrate, and continues (second paragraph) by referring to the description of two typically puerile projects (“installation,” “book and tape of cutouts”) that a well-meaning former Brown student had recalled doing for one of Marianne’s Dante courses, in an e-mail message to Marianne which she received just before her death.

To give the reader a proper account of what really happened to Lady Murasaki, here are two documents that will convey the enormity of the evil that she suffered, an evil that was to poison her life till the end.

First, a report written by me as chairman of the Grievance Committee of the UCLA American Federation of Teachers Faculty Union in 1969-70 (Marianne and I were both members of the local chapter):

REPORT OF THE LOCAL #1990 GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE

This is a partial progress report and deals only with one specific grievance, that of Assistant Professor Marianne Shapiro of the Italian

Department. Progress reports on other matters before the Committee will be forthcoming in the next bulletin.

Marianne Shapiro (B.A. Barnard '60; A. M. Radcliffe '62; Ph.D. Columbia '68) came to UCLA as an acting assistant professor in 1968 and was promoted to assistant professor in the same year. Eighteen months after assuming her position, she received notice of nonreappointment beyond June 30, 1970. The decision to terminate was based on allegations, later shown to be spurious, that Professor Shapiro's performance as a scholar and teacher was inadequate. Her appeal to the Committee on Privilege and Tenure of the Academic Senate (Los Angeles Division) resulted in a report, dated May 11, 1970. The Committee found, in part, that the Italian Department's evaluation of her teaching was made on a haphazard basis and involved random unsolicited comments from the students in the sole graduate course assigned her during her first year at UCLA; that she was systematically excluded from departmental meetings in violation of By-Law 188; that the previous chairman had attempted to coerce her into reimbursing out of her own pocket a TA who had performed certain of her duties while she was on a month's Leave of Absence with Full Salary; that her teaching load had been discriminatorily excessive on one occasion; that contrary to personnel procedures prescribed by the President, she was never properly consulted on the courses she was to teach; that her privileges with respect to the assignment of grades were flagrantly abused in at least one case; and that her teaching competence was derogated in public by the current Chairman, specifically in front of students, in such a manner as to constitute an infringement of her privilege to maintain her dignity and reputation inviolate.

A request for an appraisal was also made by Professor Shapiro to the Budget Committee. Although the findings of that body are not known, there is every reason to suppose that they give the lie to the Chairman's negative characterizations of Professor Shapiro's written scholarship, which includes a monograph to be published by the University Press of Kentucky. The decision to act on the recommendation of the Budget Committee rests with Vice-Chancellor Saxon, who has remained uncommunicative throughout almost the entire duration of the appeal.

The Union Grievance Committee has further ascertained that the official representations of the current Chairman of the Italian Department with respect to Professor Shapiro's competence and deportment have been so patently mendacious and defamatory as to provide actionable grounds for a civil suit, and Professor Shapiro has already taken measures towards the

filing of such a suit.

The Grievance Committee has arrived at the tentative conclusion that the heinous maltreatment and scurrilous attacks which Professor Shapiro has suffered at the hands of the Italian Department are conditioned in part by a long-standing de facto policy of systematic exclusion of non-Italians from all but stop-gap positions in the Department—a clear violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Professor Shapiro's position has been filled by an Italian national, currently residing in Italy, whose qualifications and achievements clearly fall short of hers. Professor Shapiro's dismissal thus appears to have been pre-cooked by the leadership of the Department as a necessary step in securing the appointment of their Italian protege. The Secretary of Labor has been advised of possible violations of the Immigration Act in connection with these matters.

Finally, it has come to the Grievance Committee's attention that certain members of the Italian Department have attempted to induce at least three students to write fabrications which cast Professor Shapiro in a bad light as scholar and teacher. Fortunately, only one such attempt was successful and even then the student later confessed to the appropriate officials that the fabrication had been solicited by a member of the Italian Department. One other student also told of being approached. Clearly, such machinations are morally turpitudinous and as such constitute grounds for the initiation of dismissal proceedings against the faculty members involved. The Grievance Committee is currently compiling a dossier which it intends to bring to the attention of the President and Executive Committee of the Union.

May 24, 1970

Second, a description of the UCLA period of Marianne's career I appended to a letter addressed to the Dean of the Faculty at Brown:

APPENDIX 1: UCLA (1968-70)

When Marianne and I were married in June 1967, she was writing her Columbia dissertation (later published by the University Press of Kentucky in 1975). She moved to Los Angeles where I had a job in the Slavic Dept at UCLA. It transpired during the 1967-68 academic year that the UCLA Italian Dept was looking for a junior person to fill an open position, and Marianne was hired to begin work in fall 1968. The position was initially an Acting Assistant Professorship until Marianne was officially awarded her

doctorate in December 1968, whereupon the Acting designation was removed. From the start, this job was represented to Marianne by the Italian Dept as a regular tenure-track position, with an initial appointment of 2 years (as were all such junior positions at the University of California) and the understanding that 2-year renewals would be expected to follow, depending on assessments of adequate performance, up to the point at which a tenure decision would be made (i. e., a maximum of 3 renewals, for a total of 8 years in the assistant professor rank, as was and is customary everywhere).

Marianne was pregnant when she was hired and told the Italian Dept that she would therefore have to miss the first 2 weeks of the fall quarter (which began at the end of September). She was granted an official leave by the University, and the Italian Dept made arrangements for teaching assistants to fill in for Marianne until she was able to return to work. (NB: Marianne had a Cesarean section, i.e., major surgery, but started work nevertheless, as promised, 2 weeks after the birth of our daughter.) Parenthetically, it should be noted that the Italian Dept subsequently contended that Marianne had not informed them about her pregnancy when she was hired—a bald-faced lie—and made defamatory statements to UCLA officials regarding the 2 weeks of maternity leave she had received.

As soon as Marianne actually started teaching, it became clear to her that she was not being treated by her colleagues (junior and senior) as if she were welcome in the Dept. She was routinely left out of decision making and planning, as if she were a temporary fill-in, not a “ladder” assistant professor. As it transpired later, in fact her appointment had been made on false pretenses. The Italian Dept had from the start never intended to renew her contract after the initial 2-year period. She had been hired as a stop-gap in order to keep the position in the Dept for 2 years until a former member, Gabriele Muresu, who was a Fulbright Scholar and had to return to Italy under the terms of his award, could re-enter the United States and be eligible for employment. In other words, the job was actually being held for Muresu, but neither Marianne nor the UCLA administration was ever told this. In order for Muresu to be hired, Marianne had to be fired. This meant that the Italian Dept had to fabricate reasons for not renewing her contract because her actual job performance—which was superior—could not have served as grounds for non-renewal. That is exactly what the Italian Dept did: they recommended non-renewal on the basis of spurious reasons. They claimed that Marianne was a poor teacher and that her written scholarship was “incompetent.” (NB: it was this very same “incompetent” written scholarship that was

the basis for her being appointed to an assistant professorship in Italian at Yale two years later.)

The letter from the UCLA administration apprising Marianne that her contract was not being renewed reached her by Special Delivery on December 31 [sic], 1969. When the winter 1970 quarter began, at my instigation Marianne initiated a long series of internal UCLA appeals in an attempt to have the non-renewal rescinded. This included filing a grievance with the faculty Committee on Privilege and Tenure, which ultimately ruled that her privileges had indeed been violated. But this finding was purely recommendatory, and the Vice Chancellor with jurisdiction over the case took no action (i. e., let the non-renewal stand; his oral statement to Marianne when they met in his office was: "What do you want me to do, exchange a chairman for an assistant professor?"). Also at my instigation, Marianne filed the two law suits mentioned earlier. Both were ultimately settled out of court in 1975.

Anybody who is wondering why the suits were not adjudicated needs to know the judicial climate in the late '60s and early '70s as it bears on legal actions by professors against universities. A timely action to seek a writ of mandate from the federal courts—which might have resulted in her reinstatement—was not filed because of the incompetence of Marianne's first lawyers. More importantly, at that time judges routinely upheld confidentiality claims by universities when they refused to make material evidence of wrongdoing by administrators and others available to plaintiffs. Accordingly, in Marianne's federal case, the judge ruled that none of the confidential files in the Italian Department pertaining to issues of discrimination could be subpoenaed. This fact alone made it impossible for Marianne to prove her claim at law.

One of the named co-conspirators in the federal action was Franco Fido, who was chairman in 1968 when Marianne was hired but left UCLA for Stanford and was replaced in 1969 by a certain Giovanni Cecchetti (deceased) from Stanford, who concocted the grounds for non-renewal and thus became the sole named defendant in the state (defamation) action. It turned out during discovery that Cecchetti had in spring 1969 (i. e., while still at Stanford but already having been appointed to succeed Fido as chair of Italian at UCLA) also been the sole reader for the University of California Press of Marianne's book manuscript based on her Columbia dissertation. Judging by the patently spurious reasons Cecchetti gave in his evaluation for turning down the manuscript, it is clear that Marianne's non-renewal had been worked out between Fido and Cecchetti in advance, and

Cecchetti's reader's report to the UC Press was an integral part of the conspiracy.

The noxiousness of the UCLA period and the law suits it gave rise to extends far beyond 1968-70—indeed, continues to this day. The Italian Dept personnel named in the suits have relentlessly pursued every opportunity to take revenge against Marianne by smearing her and blackballing her. They have done this by propagating maliciously false information about her, specifically about her fitness for academic jobs. No further proof of the effectiveness of their smear campaign is required than the fact that she has never had a tenured appointment despite her record.

The words put in the mouth of Franklin, the “stomatologist” (i.e., a medical specialist concerned with the mouth and its disorders; actually, Prof. Franker was an oral biologist) are derived from one of several such letters of recommendation given to me by its recipient, which reads as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND ITALIAN
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

JOHN FRECCERO
ROSINA PIEROTTI PROFESSOR
OF ITALIAN LITERATURE

/handwritten/

Feb. 5, 1988

Dear President Proshansky,

Marianne Shapiro tells me that she may be considered for a position at CUNY. I am happy to support her candidacy.

So far as I am aware, Shapiro has no peers in the field of Romance Philology. Others may match her technical training and expertise, but none have her intelligence, intellectual imagination and her productivity. I read her work on Dante with great attention and almost always with great profit. She is far superior, in my estimation, to Roberto Sarolli, Aldo Scaglione (presently at NYU) or to any of a number of scholars with similar interests because she is never satisfied with literary archeology and never tempted (as was Sarolli) by esoteric obsession. To find her equals, one would have to turn to scholars of two generations ago: Leo Spitzer, Erich Auerbach come immediately to mind, as does Yakov Malkiel.

I am at a loss to explain why she has failed to have the recognition they enjoyed or even the kind of “visibility” that Sarolli and Scaglione have in some quarters. I am afraid it has much to do with the inferiority of Italian

Studies in the United States. Shapiro never suffered fools with much tolerance; many of them for whom she had little respect have now risen to positions of influence in some university circles. I would fault her prudence, but not her judgment: she spoke her mind on intellectual matters in a way that terrified academic impresarios who were intent on having pizza with undergraduates and building up enrollments in language courses. Shapiro is a brilliant scholar and lecturer, an intellectual with passion and energy for her work. She has shockingly little company in her field. She came within inches of winning tenure at Yale (where I was chairman at the time) and was finally turned down simply because there was no tenure slot available. She has been extremely unlucky ever since. Unfortunately, at least in Italian studies, it is luck that counts.

I do not know what sort of position CUNY has in mind. If it is for a scholar and teacher in Romance or Medieval Studies, I am confident that you could not find a better person than Shapiro. If she were to be given such a position, CUNY would at the same time do much to vindicate scholarly and intellectual values at a time when such vindication is badly needed.

I understand that you are working with deadlines. Please excuse my haste.

Sincerely,
John Freccero

Franklin's defense of Lady Murasaki is supported by "Bromley (né Boruchov), an esteemed courtier of the older generation," whose speech derives from another such letter:

Princeton University

Department of Romance Languages and Literatures

201 East Pyne Building, Princeton, New Jersey 08544

Telephone: 609-452-4500

January 29, 1988

President Harold Proshansky

CUNY Graduate School and University Center

33 West 40th Street

New York, New York 10036

Dear President Proshansky,

I gather that you are seriously considering the candidacy of Marianne

Shapiro. I want to give this candidacy my warmest support. Years ago, when I was Chairman at Yale (succeeding Henri Peyre there), I appointed her. Her record was already very impressive, and her performance in the classroom and professionally was of the highest. She is a true intellectual, a committed scholar, and experienced teacher, one of the top specialists in her field. She obviously deserves to be in one of the finest institutions. Her expertise is obvious, and she is a true philologist—in the best sense of the word. Her work strikes me as thoroughly intelligent and sophisticated; it displays a wide range and a genuine humanistic perspective. She covers the field both historically and generically. And her teaching, from all I heard, was much appreciated.

Perhaps the most precise statement about a recent performance that I witnessed concerns a lecture she gave here at Princeton on Gogol and Dante. (The lecture is now in print). The subject was very rich, in fact there was substance for several lectures. But Marianne Shapiro does not dilute. She managed to put things very skillfully together, presented her material with considerable humor, and forcefulness, and generally speaking gave a good and authoritative performance. During the discussion period she was animated, attentive to questions, flexible. I go into all these details because it was clear evidence to me that she enjoys the lecture and classroom situation.

I think she is one of the most serious and most promising available candidates. I do hope that my letter will be of use to you in your deliberations, and stand ready to provide further information.

Sincerely yours,

/signed/

Victor Brombert

*Henry Putnam University Professor
of Romance and Comparative Literatures*

VB:rc

The same (stillborn) job possibility also elicited the following testimonial, this (third) one from a figure (now deceased) whose name came to be known to a public far beyond academe (his son is the screen actor, Paul Giamatti):

The National League of Professional Baseball Clubs

/seal/

A. BARTLETT GIAMATTI

President

January 29, 1988

Dr. Harold Proshansky

President

CUNY Graduate School and University Center

33 West 42nd Street

New York, NY 10036

Dear Dr. Proshansky:

I write on behalf of Marianne Shapiro. I knew Dr. Shapiro when she and I were on the faculty of Yale University in the '70's.

I had great admiration then for her learning and her productivity, and from what I can see, she has maintained her scholarly activity at a very high level. She is a very good teacher of Italian Literature and I learned a great deal in my conversations with her. I have not seen her for some years now, but that is not her fault. I ceased being a full-time member of the faculty the year she left Yale, 1978, and ceased to be actively engaged in scholarly pursuits.

I am confident that she has continued the excellent researcher and teacher I knew her to be. I hope very much that you can give her every consideration at the CUNY Graduate School. Thank you for your attention.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

/signed/

A. Bartlett Giamatti

ABG: mlr

/logo/

350 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022 (212) 371-7300

These assessments were supplemented by a fourth letter, to an administrator at another institution, who made it available for dissemination in view of the writer's death:

*Glauco Cambon
Distinguished Alumni Professor
of Italian and Comparative Literature*

/bell tower/

*The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of Modern and Classical Languages
Comparative Literature
Box U-57, Room JHA 228
337 Mansfield Road
Storrs, Connecticut 06268*

*THE
UNIVERSITY OF
CONNECTICUT*

*Professor A.C. Kibel
Head, Literature Faculty
M. I. T., Room 14 N - 303
Cambridge, Mass. 02139*

December 4, 1987

Dear Professor Kibel,

I take pleasure in writing you to endorse the candidacy of Professor Marianne Shapiro for the position in Comparative Literature at your University [sic].

I have known Prof. Shapiro for a long time through her numerous and distinguished publications in Comparative and Italian literature. She has contributed assiduously to several leading journals, both in the US and abroad, with a clear focus on Renaissance and medieval literature, Italian as well as French, Provençal and English, and she has also worked on contemporary figures like Ezra Pound and John Ashbery in connection with those traditions. Renaissance Quarterly, Dante Studies, Romance Philology, Signs, Bulletin de la Société Neophilologique of Helsinki, plus contributions to Festschriften published by Mouton in The Hague or by Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, are some of the examples that come to mind. Her first book, on the figure of woman earthly and divine in Dante's Comedy, was a courageous and well reasoned endeavor to spotlight the problem of woman's position in medieval culture through one supreme example of poetry. Her second book, The Hieroglyphic [sic] of Time, published by Minnesota University Press at the beginning of the present decade, was an innovative and carefully thought out study of the sestina form from medieval to modern times, from Arnaut Daniel to John Ashbery, with a rich section on Renaissance poetry on a European scale. I remember referring approvingly to this book because

of a subtle and rigorous analysis of a sestina by Michelangelo (the reference occurs in my recent Michelangelo's Poetry, Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), but I liked the book as a whole because Marianne Shapiro succeeded in connecting her several specific analyses of so many different poems by different authors into an organic whole to evidence the continuity of a European tradition across language boundaries. It was not easy to do, and I consider this one of the finest achievements in Comparative literature; methodologically up to date, aesthetically sensitive, erudite yet far from weighted down by the erudition. There aren't many scholars with this kind of scope and range today, or with this sustained background. Of the two further books that Prof. Shapiro has now ready for publication, the one on Dante's De Vulgari Eloquentia promises to be extremely interesting since she concentrates on Dante's revolutionary ideas in linguistics and aesthetics there, while the one on Ariosto's poetics again holds much in store for readers of European poetry and poetics at large. I recommend Marianne Shapiro without reservations.

Sincerely.

/signed/

An Equal Opportunity Employer

(Glauco Cambon)

Despite being removed by nearly two decades from the UCLA calumnies, these letters give the lie to the claims of incompetence that served as the basis of Marianne's termination.

That Cecchetti was a criminal liar is evidenced by a letter he wrote to Muresu, the original of which was obtained by the aggrieved departmental administrative assistant, Margaret Bachtold (now deceased), and made available to me in 1970. (The translation from Italian is Marianne's.)

University of California, Los Angeles

Department of Italian

Los Angeles, California 90024

April 15, 1970

Dear Gabriel,

The letter with all the questions, etc., etc., reached me some time ago. In the meantime Laura White also returned, who represents the secret sin of the whole Department (a sin, however, only in thought; and how much sin-

ners in thought were poor failed cretins is demonstrated also by ancient Mosaic law, which relegated them right to the bottom of the scale of commandments). Laura White, then, spoke to me of that telephone call (a long-distance sin?) she made to you.

Before answering the many questions, let me give you some news and exhort you to take steps.

Professor Chiappelli will be in Florence (Via Bertani 1) from the 18th to the 25th of May. Call him some morning at about nine (not after: you will find the number in the telephone directory or through the operator), and even go pay him a visit. I have handed him your two longest pieces on Casti; you give him the other things you have ready, and tell him what you are doing. Chiappelli is, as you can imagine, a very important voice in the Department and has taken its building very much to heart. — I spoke to him about you and he wants to meet you. It is not certain if he will turn up in Rome. If so, you can see each other there.

As for practical things from your point of view, really it interests us little what roads, more or less traveled, you take to get here. The important thing is that you have it by September 1971. In the meantime if the opportunity comes to you to get an assistantship ordinario, do not reject it. It's comfortable, both for the title and in order to have your feet in both stirrups [i.e. "run with the hare and ride with the hounds"].

As for Rolfe's old proposal to hire you and put you immediately on unpaid leave of absence, I haven't really thought much about it because it seems a pretty useless thing. The truth is that we have an unfilled position of Assistant Professor (Fido's; as I think you know, when a professor resigns his position recedes to Assistant Professor: it is a University rule), which we are keeping for you. Next year two Visiting Professors are coming: Enrico (Arrigo) Castellani, the historian of the Italian language from the University of Rome whom I hope you will meet, as Visiting Professor for one quarter; and Dmitri Vittorini, lecturer from Oxford, as Visiting Professor for two quarters. This for the purpose of filling empty places. When you will be here, we wish to continue periodically the Visiting Professor system, of Castellani's sort but not Vittorini's. A propos, Vittorini is the son of Elio, but it must be the one disowned by the Sicilian writer and unknown to all his friends.

In its own good time we will make you a firm offer definitely if Chiappelli agrees with us. I imagine it will be around February or March 1971 unless there are urgent reasons on your side.

To create a journal is not possible as long as the Italian Quarterly exists in the California university system—which, for a start, does not finance two journals in the same field. They will have to give the Quarterly the final

blow one of these days, for it is moribund now for some time. If not we will have to find money outside the University, something which would probably not be entirely impossible.

The "evaluation" of the Department because of the scandals of last year I think is dead for lack of breath, once they noticed the evil things deliberately disseminated by Bachtold. The investigation of the so-called "misappropriation of funds" on the part of Marga [Cottino-Jones] and Fido, officially presented by Bachtold because of her lowdown (even criminal) menopausal desire for revenge, ended with the complete exoneration of all.

There are, however, big storms in the Department caused by the malignant slanders on the part of those who must leave (like Shapiro) who have banded together in a group with Bachtold in order to demonstrate that the department is full of mafiosi criminals who want to be among themselves and therefore eliminate all competent and honest persons. But time is a gentleman and goes along its way without turning left or right. When the end of the quarter comes we can all draw a deep breath for being at last without the stink of the ambulatory cloacae that pestiferate not only the offices of the department but even the whole university, not to speak of all of Los Angeles. You can smell that stench from ten miles away—at least I smell it, as does Chiappelli, for we are new and have not had the time to get used to it, like those people in Moravia's "Epidemia".—Bachtold wanted to sue me because in the job she finally found she was demoted and earns much less. When they called me about this I simply said that Bachtold had tendered her resignation in writing (to which I led her with very special tactics), and it had never been said that an employee, after tendering his resignation, could sue his employer for damages, an employer who had never really fired anyone because resignations are tendered of one's own spontaneous will. That was enough to put things back on the road. Pietralunga wants to sue me too, thus Shapiro, and it seems also Burney. When they question me I will answer, as I have also answered Levine—since when does an employer become obliged by law to renew an expired contract? These are after all simple answers. But it seems nobody thinks about the most simple and obvious things.

Now I'll give you bad news. The Regents, instigated by Reagan, have decided to eliminate the Summer Quarter and return to "Summer Sessions" because the quarter cost too much to justify its existence, while "Summer Sessions" are "self-supporting" (student funds, for they must pay a tax for courses if they want to attend). That means that we have lost the three positions and the "support money" (for equipment and half-time secretaries)

that were given us when the summer quarter was instituted in 1967. We have lost three lecturers (the positions of Pietralunga, Burney, and Mauro) and one more Teaching Assistant was given us for consolation. We have also lost \$3000 from the fund with which we paid the bibliographer and bought books for the little departmental library. We must pull in our belts a bit. I have written Levine an angry letter, but I know we can manage all the same.

My son is almost all better; he went back to school a little while ago. He limps a bit, but in a month or two he should be perfectly in order.

I think I've told you everything except that Pasinetti has left and is now in Venice. Phone him, perhaps, or visit him.

Many [good] things. Ciao.

Your

Giovanni [longhand].

P.S. [longhand] The many corrections (there should be more) are due to the people who came and went in my office, as if it were a seaport, while I banged the typewriter.

One does not need to be a cryptanalyst or a criminal investigator to understand what the self-incriminating phrases "secret sin" and "to which I led her [Bachtold] with very special tactics" refer to.

Two law suits were filed by Marianne, one against Cechetti in State Superior Court for defamation (libel and slander; Cechetti had made statements to newspaper reporters, among others), the other in the United States District Court against the Regents of the University of California et al., for violation of her civil rights on the basis of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Every member of the Board of Regents was a named defendant, as were all the UCLA senior administrators and all the tenured members of the Italian Department. Given the judicial climate of the '70s, such suits stood little chance of success because judges—particularly federal judges—were loath to compel universities to disclose the content of confidential documents, and Marianne's was no exception, although the timely filing of a writ of mandamus by Marianne's original attorney (who turned out to be incompetent) might have caused her to be reinstated. Bad luck with attorneys and judges continued to plague her when her federal case was assigned to Judge Manuel Real—long notorious for his lack of judicial probity (a bill of impeachment was filed against Real in 2006 in the U.S. House of Representatives by the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee). The judge in the defamation case also proved to be an insuperable obstacle: it transpired that he was a member of the same Catholic fraternal order as were certain members of the Italian

Department and some of their powerful friends in the Italian community in Southern California. Motions to have the judges removed for cause were unsuccessful.

These law suits were ultimately (1975) settled out of court for a pittance (reimbursement of legal costs). But they had a long-lasting malign effect, and I always blamed myself for insisting that they be pursued. Here is an excerpt from a letter that I wrote in 2000 to the Dean of the Faculty at Brown, explaining how Marianne had been criminally denied a regular position (*pace* Freccero's disingenuous statement, it had almost nothing to do with luck):

*Anyone who looks at Marianne's CV will doubtless wonder why a scholar with such superior academic accomplishments has failed to secure the permanent position her record so clearly warrants. The answer is straightforward: **she has been blackballed for over 30 years by the Italian academic establishment.** This utterly unjust, illegal—and cruel—punishment has been visited on her in retaliation for a law suit Marianne filed in 1970 against the University of California and the Department of Italian at UCLA where she was employed in 1968-70.*

*I need to explain that **the entire blame for this law suit is mine and mine alone.** It was I who insisted that Marianne take legal action after her contract at UCLA was not renewed. I felt at the time that the wholly spurious grounds given for her non-renewal by the UCLA administration (including the chairman of the Italian Department) had to be challenged both within the University and in a court of law. Marianne was reluctant to contest her non-renewal, but I pressured her.*

*The Privilege and Tenure Committee at UCLA upheld Marianne's charges that the Italian Department's action was unjustified on procedural grounds, but this finding had no executive force and was ignored by the administration. Two suits were then filed, a state court action against the chairman for defamation of character (libel and slander), and a federal action against certain other members of the University for violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (discrimination on the basis of sex and ethnic origin). Both suits were settled out of court, but the damage these suits caused was irreparable and unceasing. **If it had not been for my insistence, Marianne would never have gone to court. She would thus not have suffered the relentless persecution to which her former colleagues have subjected her for over 30 years.***

I think it material to spell out what forms this persecution has taken.

First, before Marianne came up for tenure in 1982 at NYU, the head of the Italian section of the Department of French and Italian—who had been her colleague at UCLA in the late '60s and is now back in that department—sent agents provocateurs to her classes in a thuggish attempt to disrupt her teaching. He then torpedoed her tenure case by invoking fabricated data concerning her teaching. Second, when she applied for publicly advertised senior positions after being terminated at NYU, poison pen letters were written to the chairmen of the relevant departments smearing her candidacy. (A particularly well-documented instance of this practice took place in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Washington, whose chairman informed one of Marianne's referees that such letters had been received. The referee then told her.) [added 8/20/06: The man who started the poison pen campaign is Franco Betti, who was in the UCLA Italian Dept. when Marianne was there but was denied tenure and went to the U of Washington, only to leave for another position just the year before Marianne was in Seattle to give a lecture in connection with being on the short list of candidates. Betti got wind of Marianne's candidacy and alerted the UCLA mafia; this criminal group then wrote the letters. Betti is now back at UCLA as a full professor.]

Marianne has repeatedly applied for positions everywhere, in the United States and abroad, and has invariably been turned down. The question hovering over all this is: how can the superlative record of teaching and scholarship documented in the material accompanying this letter be reconciled with the complete failure to secure a regular academic position?

How is it, indeed, that a person who has 1) been continuously involved over the entire span of her career in comparative scholarship that moves among works in Italian, Provençal, Latin, English, French, and Russian, as well as, occasionally, German and Spanish; 2) held appointments in two prominent Departments of Comparative Literature (UC Berkeley and Brown), which involved teaching a variety of courses, from literary theory to the European epic, and supervising teaching assistants; 3) made evident her eagerness to exploit her unusual versatility in building a program and offering a range of innovative courses; 4) looks and feels many years younger than her age; 5) is bursting with energy and ideas—how can such a scholar have been totally deprived of the opportunity to work?

I ended my letter with a plea:

The Brown humanities faculty badly needs a person with Marianne's

qualifications and accomplishments, if the ambitious new Ph. D. Program in Modern Languages and Literatures currently being discussed is to become a success.

Won't you give her a chance?

It fell on deaf ears.

Detailed characterizations of the individuals who perpetrated the crimes will be found in the annotations to section 82 ("Contrapasso"), where these crimes are recompensed, and which I wrote after the manuscript of the book had been finished. I explained to MH what had precipitated my decision to name names:

Dear Mike,

I'm in the process of compiling a key to the hidden references in 82. I'm doing it "for the record," i.e., so that if any reader wishes to know, I'll have something ready to let them see what's behind it all. I also think it's important that there actually be a detailed written record—naming names—of the atrocities that were committed against Marianne. These started in 1968 and continued for the rest of her life.

Meanwhile, in case you're interested, I'm attaching a copy of the report I wrote in 1970 as Chairman of the Grievance Committee of the UCLA Faculty Union. This should give you some idea why I had to write my 82—as Jacob said to me after reading it—so obviously "filled with hate" [he even made a terrible face when he said the word "hate"]. Mind you, this report falls far short of exhausting all the evil that the UCLA Italians did to Marianne. And then they hounded her for the rest of her life, as I told you, writing poison pen letters to prospective employers, among other evil acts.

I blame the administrators above the departmental level even more—most of whom were Jews, I'm ashamed to say. As Marianne wryly remarked [she never lost her sense of humor, no matter what], the Deans or Provosts or Vice Chancellors are inevitably "Jewish capos." David Saxon—alias Sachssohn—was the most criminal such Jew, but he wasn't alone: at UCLA the ones who looked the other way instead of intervening while the Italians did their evil deeds were named Arnold Band and Philip Levine (Band was the Chairman of Comparative Literature; Levine was Dean of Humanities in the College of Letters & Sciences, hence Cecchetti's immediate superior in the administrative chain of command). At NYU, the Dean was named Norman Cantor, who told Marianne to her face when she went to complain about her appointment being terminated unjustly: "your

scholarship clearly makes you worthy of reappointment with tenure, but the head of the Italian section [a cipher named Luigi Ballerini who was a former member of and in cahoots with the UCLA mafia, having been in the Italian Dept there at the same time as Marianne, and who later returned to UCLA, where he still is] doesn't want you, so don't expect me to intervene." At Brown, it was a Provost named Frank Rothman. Of course the main criminal there was an Italian, Franco Fido [the "Dog-Man" in my 82], who was also the chairman at UCLA in '68 who hired Marianne under false pretenses—i.e., only as a device to hold the FTE for their Italian protégé named Gabriele Muresu until this nonentity could reenter the country from Italy; Fido then moved to Stanford in '69 and to Brown later. So you see how through terrible bad luck (who'd have predicted that Fido would be at Brown when we showed up there in '89?) as well as the unremitting malevolence of the Italians (the mafiosi have long memories and never give up persecuting someone who's crossed them), aided and abetted by the perfidi iudaei, Marianne's academic career was torpedoed at every turn. The more distinguished her record as a scholar became, the more sedulous was their criminality in persecuting her.

When one says "I hope he/she rots in hell," one rarely has anything concrete in mind beyond putrefaction. But my 82 spells things out. That was my goal, Mike. Saxon is dead, and so is Chechetti [= Azazellini] and some of the other criminals too, but I want the image of someone dancing on their graves to endure ad finem seculorum.

*Your friend,
Michael*

Among the most scurrilous statements issued by the UCLA mafiosi were those that impugned Marianne's stature as a teacher. Marianne was a first-rate classroom instructor from beginning to end, and I wanted our daughter to know and preserve this image of her mother based on the testimony of students. I also wanted to remind her how courageously her mother had borne the terrible hurts inflicted on her.

December 8, 2005

Dear Gebu-Lurve,

I decided to fax you the attached letter from Mom's former TA after all (instead of waiting for you to come here to read it) because I wanted you to see how deeply an intelligent and obviously sympathetic person appreciated Mom.

It hurts me very much that no one beside you and me grieves for Mom. No one hardly ever mentions her. This includes my friends/acquaintances/relatives. People behave as if she never existed. Maybe the reason is that they don't want to make me feel sad, but the effect is exactly the opposite. It makes me feel very, very sad, every day, to realize that no one is thinking about Mom besides you and me.

Mom was not an ordinary person, and she didn't have friends. But she had a totally uncommon and very sturdy sense of duty. I think you and I were the only people that really saw this. Maybe Ben, too, who loved Mom and always mentions her to me with great warmth and admiration. As do Mike Haley and Nils. And Simon.

You know that Mom loved you very much ("more than words could tell"). She also wanted to protect you from badness, so you wouldn't be affected by how miserable she felt all the time because of what happened to her. More than once Mom told me that she woke up every morning with a feeling of terrible dread and terror, knowing that she had failed and had no prospects. It didn't make it any easier to bear that she knew her life had been poisoned because of the evil that people had done to her, the horrible injustice of it, that it was totally undeserved.

Can you begin to comprehend how Mom must have felt all these long years? Can anyone viscerally encompass the daily act of courage Mom had to perform and the willpower Mom had to summon up so as not to let her feelings spill over and engulf you and me?

I've been crying a lot the last couple of days, but I'm suppressing my tears to write this to you.

*Lurf,
/signed/ Pooyin*

Here is the Brown student's appreciation of Marianne.*

12-9-92

Dear Professor Shapiro,

You have been kind enough to thank me for my help as TA for CO 121. But I want to thank you with all my heart for making my job—through two semesters—a pleasure.

You treated me with respect and consideration at all times. You solicited my opinion on matters where I hardly presumed to have one; and yet you

*He is now a professor of classics and comparative literature.

never assumed that even a single task or chore was automatically my responsibility. You were kindness itself in taking me seriously as a professional in training, someone with a busy schedule and obligations far beyond our classroom. You spoke well of me to students and openly thanked me for whatever small service I managed to render. You took me into your confidence on a number of matters which I could not reasonably expect to be privy to, but which were in the highest degree educational and eye-opening. In fact, looking back, I see now that you dealt with everyone evenhandedly, with courtesy and good humor, always giving our awkwardness and half-formed ideas the benefit of the doubt.

And even in what some might consider just a detail you stood up for the rest of us in demanding a bigger and better lecture hall—believe me, it made a great difference—in place of an absurdly overcrowded classroom.

Not many professors in my experience are so understanding of the lot of the grad student.

All of this apart, mind you, from your wonderful remarks on Ulysses and on every theorist and theory under the sun.

I sincerely hope you will not mind my saying these things. I just wanted you to know how much I learned and how much fun I had during the last year—thanks to you.

*Yours,
[signed] Michael
Michael Gleason*

The question posed by Sachssohn (“extruded a half-whispered aside”) to the Emperor is an adapted version of the one Saxon posed to Franker (and which Franker reported to Marianne and me) when the two met to discuss the case, namely: “Do you expect me to exchange a Chairman for an Assistant Professor?”