

Siegfried Mikuteit Autobiographical Writing from 195

Prompts given by someone else:

Fables and Philosophy: time explanation

How the world looks to me, beliefs about major matters of life

(1) Account of heredity, environment (ancestors, place of birth, and places of residence, early friends and school peers)

(2) Include a series of descriptions of people, places, and events, which genuinely influenced me (anecdotes, incidents, conversation, etc)

(3) Social beliefs? Do I like people in general? (what kind) What are the qualifications required to gain my friendship? Do I like men better than women? Have I any real concern for underprivileged people? Why do I hold these attributes? What are my religious beliefs? Do I believe in God? If so under what aspect? Agnostic? Why?

Political beliefs? National or international politics. Am I interested? What do I want to be and be doing in five or ten years from now and why? What would constitute to me the greatest disaster? Why?

Siegfried's story:

I was born on July 9 1929 at Pagrienen in Memelland, which at that time was an autonomy under supervision of Lithuania. With my parents and my sister I lived in a rural district through a very happy childhood until the outbreak of World War II.

Due to my father's occupation, I was able to enjoy the opportunity of travel through all Baltic countries and Finland even before I attended school.

At the age of ten I entered high-school which to me brought about a definite change in life for it took me out of the quietude of village school days into a life where my craving for answers to questions was satisfied by our teachers, and where I also learned to find answers myself, although the beginning was very hard.

Quite often I chanced to listen in school to conversation of students in their last year of study, and their display of studied knowledge fascinated me considerably, and induced me to learn harder for I was stimulated to possess such knowledge myself. I was always amazed when I noticed how these seniors elaborated on problems under consideration; however it was too obvious that they did not agree on anything else but a fact. My aspirations for more knowledge began to grow always after such selfless conversations.

As time went on, my questions became more explicit and particularly so in the field of natural sciences. For at that time I had observed by listening that all of reality is based on empirical observation and grouped in indisputable laws of nature.

World War II had already commenced and our interests were consequently guided to some extent. The guidance was aligned with my personal interests: fortunately enough. I had heard special lectures in

high school about rocket propulsion and being sufficiently enterprising, I set out immediately to explore on my own. Out of tin cans I built myself a so-called "rocket" and used dynamite as a propellant, which I was lucky enough to obtain from a friend. However, upon igniting the fuel it exploded and consequently sent me for six weeks in the hospital instead of the "rocket" into the air.

After this unsuccessful attempt I had ample time at my disposal while in the hospital. Almost inevitably I began again to think about the conversations of the other students. There I realized that during the course of conversation, they never mentioned themselves but that the interest lay in a world outside themselves, a world of objectivity, which was nature around me conceived by the natural sciences.

Again I was overcome by a desire to be able to answer all questions put forth by myself, but as yet I could not see objectively but put too much personal judgment in my verbal excursion on nature.

A few years later with more knowledge at my command, it did disturb me to hear anyone interpret occurrences in nature from their point of view; thereby considering that a fact [was] what they believed to be true, but which I definitely knew to differ from the way they saw it. Only such realization of knowing filled me with happiness. It seemed that my ears were particularly good when natural phenomena were discussed, at such times I grew tense so as to get every word of the discussion assuring critically that nature was not misinterpreted within the limits of my learned horizon.

Near the close of my high-school education, I realized that I would enjoy life better if I would be afforded to answer such questions concerning nature and beyond that explore into the vast reservoir of unfounded [?] knowledge to satisfy my own question for this new knowledge yet to be discovered. By virtue of having been afforded and having attended high school, I knew that I was destined by tradition to attend a university to become a member of {unclear} academics. However the post-war period was to intervene quite abruptly in my plans.

It was shortly after graduation that I became cognizant that the study of natural sciences would equip me with the necessary knowledge to penetrate deeper into the realm of the yet-to-be-known. The establishment of such realization made me choose the natural sciences as my profession.

In October 1944 we had to flee our home for it became a combat zone against Soviet Russia.

[From another page]

When my parents and I were led across the border towards West-Germany we were apprehended by Russian border guards and retained in prison. [unclear] first time our entire belongings were taken from us, among them our family documents including my high-school diploma

We were brought to Oelsnik/Vogtland where I continued to attend high school until the end of World War II and beyond that until my graduation in March 1948. Concurrent with my postwar education, I worked in Oelsnik/Vogtland as a physical science aid and mathematics aid for the Institut für Angewandte Physik. Here I performed subprofessional chemical and scientific work in engineering physics, physics and electronics. Led up, conducted and assisted in physical tests and analyses made appropriate calculations involving the use of algebra, trigonometric functions, logarithms, analytical

geometry, graphs, determinants, progressions, permutations, and {unclear] in the computations of experimental and theoretical data.

Subsequent to my graduation I attended Frankfurt Institut of [unclear], East Germany. After one semester attendance I have been forced to work as a [unclear] on a project of the East-German Government, reason nonconformity political spheres.

From there I fled to the refugee camp Webensbealt-Folzgitter, West-Germany. I lived with my parents until 1950. At this time we were transferred to Happen-Westfalen. There I worked as a computerist for a Medicine Mfg Co. until my immigration to the United States in March, 1952.

I took a job as a lab technician with Union Carbide Research Laboratories in Cleveland where I performed production quality control until my induction into the army in November, 1953. [eg in the time of the Korean War]

IN the service I received training as a radio-operator but on the basis of my education I performed duties as a computerist in military surveying. As my language barrier receded, I became an instructor in mathematics and surveying.

After my release from active duty in October, 1955 I took a job with Glastic Corp as a lab technician, here I performed such duties as evaluation of chemical, physical and electrical properties after the effects of heat, [unclear] and normal usage. At the same time I attended John Carroll University, where I was placed on the Dean's list for my scholastic performance.

In September 1956 I visited my parents and attended simultaneously the Univerisity of Gottingen. I was a member and participated in activities of the mathematical student society, and the student aeronautical club of the Max Planck Gesellschaft.

In January 1958 I returned to the USA, and now I hold a job with [unclear] corporation where I am in charge of physical and electrical testing. I also serve as a coordinator on current development projects and in technical representation of the company.