

Dear Theo,

I just received your letter and enclosed 250 francs. If I may consider your letter an answer to my proposal, I can indeed agree to what you say. In short, to avoid further discussion or quarreling, in order to have some answer when those leading ordinary lives accuse me of being without any “source of income,” I want to consider the money I receive from you as money I have earned.

Of course I will send you my work every month. As you say, that work will be your property then, and I perfectly agree with you that you have every right to do anything with it; even I couldn't make any objection if you should want to tear it to pieces.

I, for my part, needing money, am obliged to accept it, even if somebody said to me, “I want to put that drawing of yours away, or I want to throw it in the fire, you can get so much money for it”; under the circumstances I should say, “All right, give me the money, there is my work, I want to get on.” I must have money, in order to get on; I try to get it, and therefore – even if you were completely indifferent to me – as long as I get your monthly allowance, without conditions forbidding me to do certain things, I will not break with you, and I agree to everything if need be.

My way of considering you and your money matches your way of considering me and my work – and as long as the balance is kept – I agree to it. If I receive money from you and you receive drawings or paintings from me, and if I have something to justify myself in the eyes of the world, though we might have nothing else in common, though we should write and speak about nothing, even then I feel satisfied for the moment, and I agree to it completely.

Even if it should be your high pleasure to tear up my work, or maybe leave it peacefully alone, or if you should try to do something with it, I have no right to find fault with you. But only if I am allowed to consider it a purchase on your part.

Be so kind as to inform me what abusive term I used with reference to your friend Braat in my last letter. As far as I can remember there is nothing in it about Braat except the remark that during the months I spent at Goupil & Co.'s in Paris, I already thought him in poor health. If my memory does not deceive me, we were often in each other's company, and I fail to understand what gives you the impression that I “do not like him very much.” So many years have passed since then, and my life has changed so much in these years that the people I knew in those days have left no more than rather vague and effaced pictures in my memory – and that I seldom or never think of them – which nobody can reproach me with, I think. But as to Braat, now that you write about him in such a way as to suggest that I do not particularly want to take notice of him, I say, far from it – will you kindly assure him that I pity him, as I do all those who suffer, and that, if he should happen to remember me, I send him my kind regards, and that I wish him as much peace and serenity as one can possibly have in such a situation? What use is such a wish to him? – not much – therefore one wants to keep such things to oneself unless one is called upon to say something. At the same time I beg of you, in case you should have said something about my having written in the way you reproach me with, to tell him that you have only imagined the abusive term. For most decidedly you will not find it in my letter.

You write that you tried to answer my letters, but refrained. In the same way I on my part intended to write you another letter, but I refrained too.

However, I want you to know that if you feel inclined to leave the work you are going to buy from me alone, or even tear it up, this is no reason for me not to do my best on it.

For this month I have some pen-and-ink drawings for you, in the first place those that are at Rappard's for the moment, about which I had a letter from him, telling me that he liked them all, and especially admired the sentiment in “Behind the Hedges” [F 1129, JH 461] and “The Kingfisher,” [F 1135, JH 468] and the first three “Winter Gardens” [F 1130, 1128, 1133; JH 465, 466, 485] which he also liked very much.

Beside those, I have a few painted studies which are your property, which I will send you if you like, but if you don't care to have them, I will ask you if I may keep them for some time, as I need them for my work. The one is a large study of a weaver, weaving a piece of red cloth [F 29, JH 471] – the little church in the cornfields [F 34, JH 459] – a view of a little old village here in the neighbourhood.