

I was delighted by your remark that Alan seems to have you in his
mind then even that he should! And he do I!

Via Monetti, 8
52044 Cortona (AR)
March 17, 1983

Dear Bob:

Thanks for the telegram. I have made my reservations and will fly Rome-NYC on Thursday April 21, arriving (exhausted) in the late afternoon or early evening. I will stay in NY with the kids that weekend and go to Chi on Monday morning. My Bd of Eds meeting is Tuesday. I will go back to NYC Wednesday morning April 27 and thence to Rome again on the evening of April 28. Let's meet, then, on Wednesday the 27th or Thursday the 28th; I'll have most of Wednesday and all of Thursday available. I look forward to it. I expect you have a fair amount of news after all this time.

*in New York;
I'll be in
Algonquin, I'll
call you the
end of the week
before or on
the weekend.*

I was concerned about one thing in our phone call. You said you had not received my letter about the arrangements as I hoped they would be made. But that must mean that you did not receive my expense information regarding the trip to Sunnyvale February 7-8. Damn! I probably sent you the only copies of that stuff -- if they're lost what do I do? Check to see if you didn't receive that letter after all.

I wasn't surprised that meetings could not be arranged for the end of April. It sounds to me as if the Atari design group is in severe disarray. Nor does that surprise me. All those delightful people may be computer geniuses but they have a long way to go before they are ready even to start thinking about making an encyclopaedia or anything remotely like an encyclopaedia. The remark that the "idea of an encyclopaedia is confining" is the tipoff. Of course it's confining; and thank God it's confining. There have to be some limits to what you intend to do and what you intend to offer. Read Wordsworth's Sonnet "Nuns fret not at their marble walls." It's about how necessary limits are to a work of art. If nothing else the painting has a frame; it's not infinite. But there are other limits, too, interior ones. Infinity and art are at the opposite poles of thought and the one is the death of the other. When I said the IE should, among other things, be a work of art I meant it should be fine, that is, have limits, be finite, if you please. The opposite is not really infinity -- that is not within man's capacity; rather, it is happenstance. Do you want to make a kind of bag of oddities, an enormous peddler's pack of information -- but no knowledge, because knowledge, unlike information, is organized, has limits, is a work of human art? If you do, I don't. (This is rhetorical; I don't think you do; you understand the difference; and I suspect Alan does too.)

In saying this I don't want to be understood as insisting that the limits on the IE be too strict or even very strict. Certainly they should not be as strict as those that confine and define a print encyclopaedia, even one as large as EB. We have in fact still to develop the "rules of art" that will have to be developed for the IE. For example, a rule of art of a print encyc -- that like things be treated in like ways (and in like space) -- may be wrong for the IE, since it will never all be visible at once. Not entirely, wrong, of course, but wrongly conceived if we think of it as being exactly the same rule for each work. And so on. I want to think more about this. But that there must be rules of art I am sure. Human beings cannot work -- cannot do good work -- without them. You know this. Alan knows it. Susan knows it. I doubt if anybody else does -- maybe Brenda, because she's read some Aristotle.

I was delighted by your remark that Alan seems to regard them even that to be stupid! C. L. M. I!

I was delighted by your message that Allen seems to have got his length