

HAROLD WEISBERG
ROUTE 12 - OLD RECEIVER ROAD
FREDERICK, MARYLAND 21701

3/5/87

DEAR HAROLD,

CONSIDERING THE HARSHNESS OF YOUR LETTER, THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE MUCH I CAN WRITE TO CONVINCING YOU THAT THERE WAS NO MALICE INTENDED ON MY PART... BUT I'M NOT ABOUT TO IGNORE YOUR STATEMENTS WITHOUT GIVING IT ONE MORE TRY.

FIRST, YOUR LAST COMMENT MUST BE ADDRESSED — "AND I AM ASHAMED OF YOU, THAT YOU WOULD GIVE SUCH STUFF ANY SERIOUS THOUGHT AND HAVE NO BETTER OPINION OF ME"

THE SIMPLE POINT IS — I NEVER NEVER EVER TOOK "SUCH STUFF" SERIOUSLY, IF I HAD, I WOULD HAVE CALLED YOU DIRECTLY 13 YEARS AGO. PLEASE BELIEVE THAT.

ALSO NEWCOMB TORE LOTS OF PEOPLE APART... GARRISON, PERRY SOWES, ... EVEN LIFTON, I DIDN'T CONCERN MYSELF WITH HIS EVALUATIONS OF CRITICS. I WAS INTERESTED IN HIS RESEARCH, NOT HIS VALUE JUDGMENTS OF PEOPLE. THE ABOVE IS WHAT I MEANT ABOUT A "NEWCOMB - WEISBERG FEUD." AS YOU WROTE, "IT IS NEWS TO ME." WELL THAT'S POINT #2. SINCE YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT HIS CRITICISMS, THAT MEANS THERE WAS NO OPEN FEUD OR CONFRONTATION BETWEEN YOU TWO, BUT IT DOES MEAN HE WAS DOING A BACK STABBING JOB ON YOU WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

THIS ISSUE WAS A CONCERN OF RITA'S, NOT MINE. IT ONLY CAME UP IN PASSING. MY REFERENCE TO "NOT CARING LESS" ABOUT IT WAS NOT RUDELY INTENDED,

(2)

I SIMPLY MEANT THAT I WASN'T CONCERNED WITH IT. IT WAS NONE OF MY BUSINESS AND IT WAS MINOR TO ME, BUT RITA WANTED TO LET YOU SEE IT. SHE WAS CONCERNED BY IT. SHE ASKED ME IF SHE COULD RUN IT BY YOU. I WASN'T TRYING TO CAUSE YOU OR RITA ANY PAIN. I JUST GAVE THE TWO OF YOU A CHANCE TO DISCUSS IT, CLARIFY IT, WHATEVER. I CERTAINLY WASN'T DOING ANYTHING UNDERHANDED OR BEHIND YOUR BACK. (NEWCOMB'S COMMENTS ARE, BUT NOT MINE). I KNEW RITA WAS GOING TO ASK YOU ABOUT IT. IF I HAD THOUGHT, FOR ONE SECOND, THAT YOU WOULD REACT AS YOU HAVE, I WOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED IT TO HAVE OCCURRED.

NEITHER THIS LETTER, NOR MY LAST ONE IS DEEMED BY ME TO BE "SELF-JUSTIFICATION," BUT MERELY AN INNOCENT AND HONEST EXPLANATION. YOUR CALLING ME IMMATURE AND QUESTIONING MY TEACHING KIDS AND MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD ARE UNNECESSARILY SPITEFUL AND UNJUSTIFIED.

AS FAR AS MY OPINION OF YOU, I WILL REITERATE. I CONSIDER YOU ONE OF MY HEROES AND OUTSIDE MY LATE FATHER AND JFK, I CAN'T THINK OF TOO MANY OTHERS. I'M SORRY YOU'RE MAD. YOUR CRITICISMS HURT A LOT, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY'RE INACCURATE OR UNFOUNDED. ALSO ONLY RITA SAW THAT LETTER AND ONLY BECAUSE YOU AND I BOTH TRUST HER. TRUST ME, HAL, I'M YOUR FRIEND.

P.S. CHICAGO'S ZAM MAGAZINE PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE OF MINE. I'M NOT WHAT YOU SAID.

Ed Tatro

(3)

P.S. I DO HAVE SOME SERIOUS ISSUES I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU — OSWALD'S MILITARY INTELLIGENCE FILE, OSWALD'S POST OFFICE APPLICATION DISCREPANCIES, OSWALD/MONTELEY SCHOOL OF THE ARMY ALLEGED LINK, THE JOHANN RUSH — HEKRY HURT FEUD (AND "FEUD" IS THE RIGHT WORD) ETC.

I DIDN'T DO SO DIRECTLY IN DEFERENCE TO YOUR HEALTH. NOW IF WE CAN PUT THIS BEHIND US, I'D APPRECIATE IT. IF NOT, THEN I'VE DONE MY BEST TO CLEAR IT UP AND CAN DO NO MORE,

E. T.

James Lee's article "War on Imagination" in our last issue prompted a flood of letters. We wish we had space to print all your comments, and maybe someday we will. Meanwhile, here is another installment in the continuing saga of the Ultimate Battle -- The Pen Versus The Sword...

"War on Imagination" Feedback

by Edgar F. Tatro

I wear many hats as a defender of imagination. I wield many swords as a soldier against fundamentalists and other organized Orwellian mind and morality controllers.

As a veteran english teacher of specialized elective courses such as 'science fiction, mystery and horror' and 'satire and comedy,' I am an enthusiastic promoter of offbeat literature and creative writing. I envision a teacher as one who takes his students on an experience that they couldn't have taken alone. I consider myself a tour guide to imaginative worlds created by masterful word magicians. Hopefully, by careful literary analysis, I help students become better readers and writers themselves.

Now I am keenly aware that a thin, amorphous region, riddled with heated controversy, exists between what is considered acceptable educational material and what is judged as utterly blasphemous, all depending upon the backgrounds of those judging. However, academic freedom IS the mainstay of vibrant education and student motivation. Thinking, imagining, doubting, and wishing are not crimes or sins except in Orwell's 1984 and other facsimilies of Big Brotherhood.

As a teacher of media and propaganda, my goal is to mold my students into critical thinkers by exposing the many fallacies inherent in our society every day (ad hominen, band wagon, circular reasoning, false cause, selected preference, hasty generalization, defective appeals to authority, force, pity, ignorance, and integrity, etc). By analyzing such illogical concepts, as well as slanted or loaded writing and speaking, students are given the opportunity to fairly and objectively appraise the sacred cows of values, politics, heritage, history, television rhetoric, and religion.

To do less is to condition them like mindless sheep on a path to pathetic oblivion. Fundamentalists who try to limit the knowledge, imagination and critical thinking of their offspring (and perhaps everyone else if they could get away with it), deserve a special place in hell assuming there is one. The encouragement, by any means, of brainwashing human beings is an unpardonable act.

Hypocrisy is alive and well in the fundamentalist movement. The greatest crimes are committed in the name of morality. The greatest sins are committed in the name of the Lord.

As a published writer of science fiction, mystery and horror, I am particularly unnerved by James Lee's essay, 'War on Imagination.' It is difficult enough trying to obtain some modest success within our strange little nest of the macabre without being attacked by pseudo-

elite morality mongers hovering like parasitic condors over my precious manuscripts. Since I often teach my own stories in school, I feel doubly threatened by these neanderthal goons wearing blinders.

As a published researcher of the conspiratorial aspects of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, perhaps the last true political champion of education for the masses, I have confronted the same kind of right wing fanaticism hiding smugly behind a facade of clever stonewalling, national security, evidentiary mutilation, evidentiary fabrication, and blatant falsehoods, all in the name of truth and justice. The concepts and motivations lurking beneath political coverups and the War on Imagination have been given birth with the same ugly roots in common.

Finally, as a father I want my little girl to receive a well-rounded education. I want her to be allowed to stretch her imagination. I want her to be open-minded, strong-willed, value-oriented and considerate of others. I want her to do unto others as she would want them to do unto her. Regarding faith, what she wants to believe will be her decision...but don't ever stifle her imagination.

This is not to say that I have no concerns about lack of censorship. In fact, I have often written about my concern that freedom can cause abuse of freedom. Also as a lecturer of subliminal influences, backward masking messages, and peer pressure conditioning tactics employed in drug-oriented and satanic-oriented rock and roll albums, I am sensitive to the subject matters with which our children are unnecessarily bombarded.

The difficulty is determining which concepts are harmful and which are constructively thought provoking. There is no simple solution and although it is important to make our elected officials properly represent our wishes, I have virtually no faith in most politicians. Most extremes are detrimental to any society and I will conclude by saying that the fundamentalist movement is one extreme we can all do without. Keep up the good fight, James A. Lee!

The above letter was mailed to 2AM on October 28, 1986, more than a month before Attorney General Edwin Meese was forced to turn his attention away from censorship and direct his efforts to more immediate political concerns: the Iran-Contra arms deal coverup investigation.

We find Mr. Tatro's suggestion that 'The concepts and motivations lurking beneath political coverups and the War on Imagination have been given birth with the same ugly roots in common' particularly appropriate.

We welcome your comments.

—Gretta and Paul Dale

We gratefully acknowledge the editorials in recent issues of ROD SERLING'S TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine, NIGHT CRY, and ESPIONAGE as decisive blows in the fight for freedom. The time to speak out is NOW! Now, while we still can....