

10/24/67

Dear Mr. Arnoni,

Twice at your invitation I have confronted you with fact. Twice, like the little bully-boy who challenged to a marble game and cried when he lost, you have avoided factual response and resorted to what I from this take to be a specialty of yours, slander -when it is not face to face. I regret your ill temper and worse manner have given me this personal measure of the kind of man you are, the kind of, pardon the expression, mind you have.

When you so completely abdicated any pretense of reason in your letter of May 20, 1966, as you had reality in your letter of four days earlier, I decided to ignore you for there are too many constructive purpose to which I can put the little time allotted me to warrant epistolary debate with a man who does not respond, save in libels. I content myself with asking Vince to caution you, lest you write such actionable letters to those out of sympathy with your seeming objectives.

Now I did not ask you to send me the marked copy of your erroneous attack on Jim Garrison. You did that, apparently soliciting comment. Again it appears that you have written what you cannot either support or defend and again you resort to the language of the intellectual gutter. Again also, it is your unimpelled selection.

Your record is a strange one. You assailed my first book without having read it and you complain about the letter you solicited also without having read it. What kind of man are you to solicit comment and then not read it? Have you nothing better to do than waste time for those who want nothing to do with you?

The "low regard" in which you say you hold me troubles me little, especially when I have the picture of yourself that you have drawn. But with this low regard, what in the world tempted you to seek my comment on your really very bad piece on Garrison?

Your comment on my "vanity publishing" is first, entirely inaccurate, for no vanity house published my work, and speaks the unwanted fruit of your long associations, albeit unwilling ones, with those who befouled the world of the 30s. Your letters to me are marked by that time of "reasoning" and temper. It comes in particularly bad taste from a man whose publication can survive only on the contributions of others (I alone pay for my work, with increasing debt and without personal appeals), and more especially because the issue containing this departure from fact and demonstration of ignorance also contains another such appeal.

I do recommend your own sentence to you, however: "Being a writer presupposes one's control over one's words". Never did I see a man as anxious to end as successful in proving his point, and from this I take your own measure as a writer.

Is it that you are so used to people of principle fawning over you, as though you alone run personal risks and financial jeopardy to say what you want to say, as if you invented it, that you cannot bear for another to have the strength of his principles? Are you dismayed that your own great estimate of your own analytical powers and your own ability to write or to attract writing in this field has left you so far short of what was possible that you burn when you get a sample of what you missed?

Whatever causes this unparalleled display of intellectual bankruptcy, perhaps if you have rational moments, you understand. But do me the great honor of not sending me your magazine and not seeking comment from me. You are unmanly. Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg