

9/22/71

Dear both,

It seems like every time I start to write a letter I'm tempted to begin by apologizing for being in a rush. Unfortunately, I am always in a rush to get back to something, now the rereading of the first part of a book. It was written in 1967 and is still fresh, I'm confident. First 15,000 words, no error with all that hindsight and new work. As I make minor corrections in teletype, in the hope that a private printing may become possible, having faith in angels, I'm impressed by how far ahead I then was. Then the second part, completed Jan-Feb 69. My wife is now retyping the final part. On any other subject, I'd say this is the one that should do the job. Part of the ever-present rush is to get whatever it is done because there is so much that can intrude suddenly and unexpectedly. I won't disturb you with those busy things.

The handbook came today. Thanks. When I finish this I'll sit down and skin it. As I think I wrote you, unless there is some sign of interest on the Hill, I think it is a waste of time for us to be interested except as an intellectual exercise. Those offices, by no more than a phone call, could get the Library of Congress to check a Doane concordance.

Did you once know Nat Kentoff? Is he from New Orleans? He has been waging some kind of campaign in the Village Voice, against the New York Times, which earned all the attention it can get many times over. A young friend spoke to him after I was asked to write him about what the Times did to me. He never answered me, being that important. He apparently isn't going to do anything. He'll hardly get a better case. It really makes no personal difference to me, the publisher having assured the death of the book. But I found myself wondering about this atypical behavior and then wondering if he could be a friend of Shaw's.

I had a strange one this week. The Sunday Washington Post carried a letter to the editor I wrote after it did a too-hasty editorial based on the wrong report that the Attica prisoners had slit all those throats. They had a kooky one from a literate rightist extremist and in some incredible way put the two first paragraphs of it before my letter and had my name under all of it. I phoned in, then they made a "correction" without consulting me, the result being they had me disagreeing with the lesser evil of that letter but thereby agreeing with the awful remainder. I phoned again, and they asked me to do a short piece which will make my position clear, answer the inherent defamation, etc. It is very fair. By the odd thing is that until the editorial page printed its correction, the Post hasn't acknowledged the existence of Flash-UP. The book review editor has a new copout: he always suspects books with unjustified right-hand margins. Poets, beware!

Best regards,