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Scott Meredith
NY, NY

Dear Mr. Meredith:

Aristotles defination of tragedy is that which excites fear and pity. My definition of your latest letter is that it excites fear and distrust. There has always been a feeling that one reads a Scott Meredith as if it were written by a machine, but of course, a machine that is rooted in the delusions and lies of the times, and a machine that knows his propoganda well; Scott Meredith knows when to label something sour grapes, or dismiss it, or he knows when to be amazed: a crook is a crook is a crook.

In the newest issue of PARTISAN REVIEW/2 /1981 there is an interview with Gilbert Sorrentino by Dennis Barone. I doubt you respect or know Sorrentino, but he said the following: "Artists must confront the fact that they live in this particular world. They should use the very materials of this terrifying world in order to make an art which replies to this world. You cannot make the world any better for yourself or for anyone else by harking back to the time of the glorious primitive. You have to take what they give you and see if you can turn those materials into something valuable. It's a hard time to be an artist, the whole world is geared against it."

I wish to repeat Sorrentino's words loud and clear: "IT'S A HARD TIME TO BE AN ARTIST, THE WHOLE WORLD IS GEARED AGAINST IT."

In a letter dated January 10, 1978 I wrote you the following: "Let me see if I have failed you, or you have failed me, as an unknown, American artist. I am, I admit, a fiendish writer-artist, who writes because the passion in my heart and soul compells me to do so. But you, you reject vision and the special artist, who is a 'very long way from the Middle America of his birth', for look-alikes. We both know this is the ugly truth. What you expect of me--if you expect anything at all--is that I either burn RETHYMNON, or like other tragic artists, maybe return to the Crete of RETHYMNON to destroy myself, as giving testimony to my art, or maybe I should publish RETHYMNON myself, put the books in a basket, and go from door to door to sell it as Madame Dostovsky did with the self-published BROTHERS KARAMAZOV."

Let us not so quickly forget Sorrentino's statement about the artist:
"IT'S A HARD TIME TO BE AN ARTIST, THE WHOLE WORLD IS GEARED AGAINST IT."

Remember what you so recently wrote about Gottlieb and Toole to me? Toole, the artist destroyed by the same kind of man that you are, the man who is not an artist, but who depends upon the greatness of the tragic and dead artist to surport his position. Of course, Gottlieb is not wrong, it turns out that Toole should have just stuck around, to take more punishment....to suffer more torment, more rejectance, and of course, if he would have, he would never have been published; and now....and now, the corporate Scott Meredith dares to lecture me in the exact same spirit, the spirit of darkness and cruelty, and the Doubting Thomas.

Here's a line from your pen, dated January 20, 1978: "Artists have been complaining for centuries that they've lived in the worst of times..." Again: "IT'S A HARD TIME TO BE AN ARTIST, THE WHOLE WORLD IS GEARED AGAINST IT."

Thus I refer in a specific way to my letter, January 10: "Believe me, there is nothing mystical in your phoney letter, as opposed to my work, so I naturally realize that such imagination on your part would have been, in any case, psychologically impossible for you. And since the word 'mystical' has been profanely used by you, let me use it in the sacred artistic sense. The final act of Zwillingsbrüder, which may take place in a remote castle along the African shore of Crete, at Francocastello, will be-- to be mystical--done out of my belief that art is inseparable from the artist. In this sense I want to quote to you from the LETTERS OF MICHELANGELO, by E. H. Ramsden, Volume One, p. xxiv, for I can do nothing more than state--as I have lived, and come to see the bitter truth--that the tragedy of Zwillingsbrüder, which is my artistic work, will endure even if I don't, even if I drown myself off the shore of Crete:

'But just as only a work of a high dramatic order can be classified as tragedy, so only lives lived on a commensurate scale can be described as great.'

Maybe when my life is given up, then my works will be published."

Do you remember that letter of several years ago? And now, it has been many years, and I have gone through more darkness; and I have written a novel, previously called Blueboy, IN DARK DESPAIR.

But just think, I look towards the sacred gate at Frangocastello as the final liberation--death does not worry me; I dread only men like you who have come to rule the earth with their machine like lives; and so, in commensurate scale with my life, and the dictates of my life, my study and life, my manuscripts and everything I am or possess go to exile to Crete....to a certain village; there, I will work out my special fate. There, I give witness that I rejected the Cold American Monster, the enemy of the true Artist from the bottom of my heart and with all my will and spirit; in Crete, I will suffer to escape the American Dream and Nightmare; and above all, your demonical words....it will be AN EXILE UNTO DEATH, and my life, my art, my struggle, and my fate now is decided: but again, I honor my life in my soon to be future exile; and as for my experience with you, it has been an experience with evil mindedness; and unto my death, I'll fight you, for the victims sake, for Blueboy.

