

Correspondence with Robert Blake and Professor TJ Spencer after publication

Publication/Creation

Apr 1966-Nov 1968

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(FOUNDED IN 1928)

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L26/1-4

Ross-Bleice



CHRIST CHURCH
OXFORD

May 2nd 1966

My dear Moran

Thank you very much indeed for sending me the book, and may I particularly express my gratitude for the most kind inscription in it. I think it is too flattering but I appreciate it not the less for that.

The controversy seems to be proceeding much as one would have expected. I felt sure Randolph would kick up a fuss. A great deal of his annoyance can be explained, not so much by the content of your book but by the fact that someone else has got in ahead of him. He was, I am told, equally cross about Violet Bonham-Carter's book but could not find any public ground for attacking it. I hope you saw Denis Brogan's letter in today's Times - good, I thought, and it was amusing to see him rebuking his own brother! I hope you will not allow yourself to

be in anyway disconcerted by this furor. It was bound to happen. When all the dust has died away, the book will be seen for what it is - a valuable and fascinating character study of the most extraordinary man of our day. I have been reading - or rather re-reading it - with immense interest, for the book is always different from galleys not just in content but in the whole 'feel' of the thing. It is a great triumph on your part, and I congratulate you most warmly. I tried to persuade the Sunday Times to let me review it, but they had already promised it to Cyril Connolly. However, I expect he will be friendly.

Once again thank you so much for such a memorable gift. And I wish you all the best of luck on publication day.

Yours sincerely

Robert Blake

10th May 1966.

My dear Blake

Your letter did me good. We have had a pretty nasty ten days culminating to-day in Brain's letter in the Times. I had hurt his vanity by something I said in the book.

I have always understood that the convention governing the patient/doctor relationship meant that the Physician should not repeat what passed between them without the patient's knowledge and approval and that he should not say anything derogatory to the patient. Applying this to Winston he knew that I was writing the book and indeed Brendan Bracken arranged for me to see Winston's solicitor about the income tax aspect of the book. I saw the solicitor and have a letter from him amplifying the advice he gave me.

Winston was very friendly to my book and if he had been against publication, Brendan would not have arranged for me to see Winston's solicitor. Finally, everybody who has read the book so far agrees that it brings out Winston's greatness. So I feel

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that I have not broken the spirit of the convention. I am not so happy about the question of repeating conversations in the book. Until all this unpleasantness had felt that no-one could object if I repeated conversations favourable to Winston and helping to build up my portrait. Where the conversation was at all critical of Winston I made a point of asking permission as in the case of Lord Reith. Again I asked Templar's permission to print his views on morale since he was an ex-C.I.G.S. I see now that though there are a very large number of people quoted, by adopting this plan I laid myself open to the charge that the conversation was confidential. What is the practice of historians? I find a letter like Brain's very distressing since we were close friends and I had given him the book in advance which he used to write promptly to the Times.

I had looked forward so much to the birth of the book after all these years and all this business has rather damped any pleasure I get on the publication day.

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THORNHILL,
HARBERTON MEAD,
OXFORD.

OXFORD 62896

June 18th 1966

My dear Moran

How very kind of you. We would have loved to accept your most enticing invitation but, alas, that weekend is hopeless for us. We have accepted an invitation to spend Saturday at Henley as guests of the Chairman who is an old friend of mine, and on Sunday we are taking some friends to a concert at Claydon near here to listen to Rostropovitch. So I am afraid it really is impossible for us. I am so sorry for I am

sure we would have greatly enjoyed ourselves, and I would have ~~have~~ liked very much to meet you in person after all our correspondence!

I am busy at the moment on the page proofs of my Disraeli. I think you just beat me for length but not by much. I hope it will appear in October.

Once again thank you very much for asking us. I am very sorry we can't manage it.

Yours sincerely
Robert Blake

17th ^{June} ~~July~~ 1966.

My dear Blake,

My wife and I wondered if you and your wife would like to come to us for Glyndebourne's Werther. This is on July 3rd. If you could it would be nice if you could come to lunch on Saturday July 2nd. at 100'clock. You would be able to get back to Oxford on Monday morning. I am sorry not to give you longer notice but I have rather left our arrangements for Glyndebourne.

We should be delighted if you were able to manage this.

Yours sincerely,

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THORNHILL,
HARBERTON MEAD,
OXFORD.

OXFORD 62896

October 16th 1966

My dear Moran

Thank you very much indeed.
Patricia and I would be simply
delighted to dine with you at
the Mitre & we will be there at
7.30.

In fact we shall be meeting at
lunch, for George Clark has very
kindly asked us, but this won't
give quite such an opportunity
of a talk for we shall have to
leave rather soon afterwards. We

THORNTON
HARRINGTON
010420

greatly look forward to seeing you both.

Yours sincerely

Robert Byrke

CHRIST CHURCH,
OXFORD.

Nov 6 / 68

My dear Moran

Thank you very much indeed
for your letter. Much as I shall miss
the House, I do look forward to my
new appointment. Oddly enough
George Pickering takes up his at
exactly the same time as I take
up mine. It is rather daunting
to succeed a person of Lord Florey's
world-wide fame, but I can only
hope that the gulf is so wide
that no one will try to make
any comparisons.

I hope you don't give up writing
I think a fragment of autobiography
after such a fascinating career as

you have had could be very interesting
and well worth doing.

Once again warmest thanks for
your letter and all good wishes

Yours ever

Robert Blake

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The Shakespeare Institute

Director:

Professor T. J. B. Spencer

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Telephone: Edgbaston 3155

Stratford-upon-Avon

Telephone: Stratford-upon-Avon 3138

Confidential

The Rt. Hon. Lord Moran,
25 Bryanston Square,
London, W.1.

7 April 1966

Dear Lord Moran,

I was very pleased to see in the newspaper last Sunday such a full and interesting account of your book. This is an excellent "trailer" and must surely whet everybody's appetite for the publication. No doubt Ben is delighted with his successful launching. It is melancholy that Donald Hyde is not here to enjoy his share in the venture - he was a warm admirer.

I am sorry that we have not settled our business arrangements before now. Perhaps we could now try to do so. The work that I put in on your book has been enormously interesting and, as you know, it took a good deal of time which occasionally led to delays. I still think, of course, that the best thing for us to have done would have been to put the matter in the hands of the Society of Authors, who have people with plenty of experience of making equitable business arrangements between different authors and their helpers and editors - and it is for this sort of thing that we pay our subscriptions to the Society! But I realise your difficulties in doing this, and I must accept your reasons. So I have had to consult my own advisers.

There seem to be two ways of considering a suitable fee for work of this kind. Firstly, a flat editorial fee; and secondly, a proportion of the sums that will fall due to the Trust.

There are two reasons why the second seems preferable. It is not easy to make an equitable assessment of a flat editorial fee without a full consideration of the value of the literary property involved. But, more important, I should like to hope that my own contribution to the perfecting of the book will have some small effect on its long-term success. In short, I should like to feel that I had a continuing interest in a work which (as I have frequently said to you) is in my opinion of great and lasting literary merit.

Accordingly, I suggest that the Trust pays me an advance against receipts by the Trust on account of its various rights. This should represent a percentage of actual receipts by the Trust and, of course, not of the published price of the book (either in hardback or paperback).

Now, I know nothing about the financial arrangements between the Trust and your publishers, apart from a few remarks in your conversation. So, I am not clear about any unusual arrangements for the royalties from the sale of the book. My advisers tell me, however, that the following would represent appropriate percentages of author's receipts for editorial¹ literary assistance:

(a) receipts from sale of hardback edition	15%
(b) receipts from sale of paperback edition	10%
(c) receipts from first serial rights	10%
(d) receipts from second serial rights	5%
(e) receipts from sale of translation rights	5%

I am told that this works out, on the average, at a royalty of about 2d. in the £ and that this is what a publisher would probably find acceptable in making arrangements between an author and editorial adviser. (I realise, of course, that you have received help from others, and that the sums paid to Amanda and to R.C. should be deducted from this notional figure I have given.)

I do not know how a proposal like this can be adjusted to the special arrangements made by your Trustees. But I hope that what I am suggesting will seem, in some form or other, reasonable to them and to you; for I should very much like to feel indented in a small way with the future of the book and applaud its continuing success.

Perhaps you would let me know what you and your publisher think.

We send greetings and good wishes from house to house.

Yours sincerely,

Terence Spencer

C O P Y.

Marshall's Manor,
Maresfield,
Nr. Uckfield, Sussex.
13th April 1966.

My dear Spencer,

I feel very unhappy about your letter. There is, I think, a danger that things may get out of perspective. I, and no-one else, was responsible for the conception, architecture and the actual writing of my book. This needs saying because the fantastic figures given in percentages which together mount up to a substantial fraction of the sales of the book could not be justified by the wildest stretch of imagination as remuneration for editorial services. They would only be reasonable if you had been part author of the book. I wonder if the originator of the percentages has any idea of the sums involved. What we have to consider is what is a fair remuneration for the advice you gave to me concerning some of the detail, advice proffered over a considerable period of time.

I asked three people, of whom you were one, for advice. In each case it was concerned with the text in the same way as yours, and was given at intervals over a considerable period.

I sought the help of a well-known man of letters who has written a well spoken of biography. He is a man of affairs. His comments and his criticisms were set out very much like your own and sent to me at regular intervals over a period of time comparable with your own. Without any prompting he sent me an account for £200.

The third adviser is not so strictly comparable with your contribution. It is true that he dealt in detail with the book and sent me his criticisms at intervals, but, though the criticism was not very different in bulk it did not extend over as long a period of time. It was not a success - I got little out of it. And when he wanted to go on advising I got out of it. Whereupon he appeared with a literary agent, and ill-conditioned shark of a fellow who named a fee. I was advised that it represented a gross over-payment for services rendered, but to avoid unpleasantness I did not expostulate.

You suggest to me that I should consult my publisher, and I have done so, and Mr. Glazebrook of Constables, who has been familiar with all the steps that I have taken in preparing the book has named a figure of £350. I have asked Nutley Publications who

deal with these matters to send you the cheque,
which I trust you will feel is a fair reward for
the valuable assistance you gave me for which I
shall always be grateful.

C O P Y.

Marshalls Manor,
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The Shakespeare Institute

Director:

Professor T. J. B. Spencer

† Birmingham 15

Telephone: Edgbaston 3155

Stratford-upon-Avon

Telephone: Stratford-upon-Avon 3138

18 June 1966

Dear Lord Moran,

I should have replied to your letter long ago. But I have been in France giving a series of lectures at French universities. I could have written to you from there. But somehow your letter was difficult to answer, and I have delayed doing it, especially as I had to face up to several university crises here when I returned.

But first let me acknowledge with great pleasure your kind gift of a copy of the Book, with its generous inscription and mention of my name in the preface. I think that Constables have made a splendid job of it. Print, size, and general appearance are excellent. I have, of course, been reading ~~many~~ various notices of it, for they were saved up for me on my return to supplement what I had seen already. On the whole, they were adequately appreciative, I thought; and there were some testimonies to your marvellous and compelling narrative style. The arguments over 'ethics' (as someone called it) were, I suppose, not more serious than you had expected. Your vigorous letters were unequalled by your critics. I marvelled and was delighted by the strength of your style! Of course, I as one of your early readers knew that yours was a masterly work, of lasting value; a book which will be read when all the other books on W.C. have been forgotten by all except the specialist historians. And it was an exhilarating experience for me - and one that is not likely to recur, alas - to be in on the early stages of such an important literary work; I have a kind of professional interest, you know.

All this makes it so hard to make suitable comments on your letter about money. And at first I thought I had better keep quiet. Doubtless I wrote a clumsy letter - I was probably hurried, and transcribed the advice given me by my advisers without explaining as much as I should. I deeply regret, I assure, having bothered you or perplexed you at a time which must surely be one of the most exciting and gratifying of your life. Well, it only proves (what I knew already) that one should ~~n~~'t talk about money except personally so that you can clear up misunderstandings as you go along! Though I feel very apologetic, I think I must, in honour, write a few sentences; and then the whole matter can (I hope) be ended for ever.

First, I must say that some of the things you mention in your letter had never passed through my mind. I was solely concerned with a way of payment that anyone who is, even in a very small way, concerned with a literary property would like; the continuing interest. The facts are simple: £1 a year for the period of copyright is more valuable than £40 down, because a man grows old

and he leaves a widow. The journal of the Society of Authors is full of this sort of thing, nearly every number. Of course, publishers detest small royalties and like to pay a sum for services rendered and have done (and doubtless you too, with your professional background, naturally expect to get a job done and paid for and that's an end). But an artistic property is a very odd kind of property; and most publishers have come to accept the necessity of petty percentages, I believe. The fact is that Longmans pay me a 1% royalty on a book, and Penguins are paying me a 1% royalty on one of their literary enterprises. It means that I get very little, but I get that little for a long time and so does my widow; and it responds to inflation. There would, theoretically, have been no difficulty in calculating a minute percentage which would represent for me a continuing interest in your book. The financial difference to you and your trustees would have been trifling ; trifling to you but of some significance to me. So, I think that the appropriate reply to my letter was that your trustees had considered the suggestion, but found it impossible to accept... that the amounts of money involved were exceptionally large, and a tiny percentage difficult to calculate... that the subsidiary rights were complicated... and that altogether an outright payment of a fee was the only reasonable procedure, etc....

So, I do hope you realise that I don't mind in the least your rejecting the clumsy and ill-expressed proposal in my previous letter. But I do care very much that you shouldn't jump to conclusions, which are remote from my way of thinking. My admiration for you is very great - naturally I esteem highly a man of remarkable literary ability (as well as everything else). The only ~~xxx~~ valuable advice I have given you is not to take advice: your natural literary talent is so strong and instinctive that I know that you were in danger of damaging the surface of your book by taking inappropriate advice (and some of the advice on that typescript was bad, whereas your natural way of writing was often superb). I knew, and I told you as I told Glazebrook and poor Donald Hyde, from the first reading your book, that you had written a masterly work. I would hate to have the slightest coldness interfere with our relationship now, a relationship which on my side has been one of respect and affection for both you and your lady.

I have sat at the typewriter and typed this myself straight off. You must forgive its errors and omissions.

My wife and I went the other day to Glyndebourne to hear our friend Janet Baker sing Dido. We passed near Maresfield, and this, and the whole occasion, made us remember very vividly the delightful time when you took us there; we remain grateful for that, as well as for many other things.

This letter is too long. Have you the patience to read such a long one? I will conclude with the most important thing: our good wishes (and congratulations) to you both.

Yours sincerely,

Terence Spencer

24th June 1966.

My dear Spencer,

I was delighted to get your letter. No, I feel I am to blame and that the misunderstanding was due to my hasty action. However, all this belongs to the past.

It has been a disappointment to me that quite a number of the reviews began by considering whether the book out to have been written, and at the end of their indignation they were in no mood to decide whether it was a good or a bad book. The American reviews on the contrary have been, with one exception, most appreciative. Of course not all the English reviews were like this, but the Times Literary Supplement for example had what I really call a clumsy review.

However, I imagine that the fate of the book ultimately is not in the hands of the reviewers but will depend upon what the reader thinks of the book.

I confess I had really looked forward to the appearance of the book and was a little disappointed by the acrimonious atmosphere.

We are now relaxing here in the quite tolerable weather. We had a pleasant three weeks in Portugal in March and home to visit my son in South Africa in January.

Constables are sending me the French translation of the book, and I believe that the orders both in France and in Sweden are encouraging.

Yours ever,

19th May 1967.

My dear Spencer,

I was delighted to get the two Penguin Shakespeares. I think they are beautifully printed and produced; the printing is quite unlike what one usually gets in a paper-back. Indeed I feel that it ought not to be called a "paper-back" at all. I am very glad to be able to add them to my library.

I have just been in America for three weeks talking about my book, and there stayed with Mary Hyde at Four Oaks Farm, a delightful setting for her activities.

I miss not having to take up one's time. I am not much good at doing nothing. I always like an excuse for wandering, and the Americans meet one half way with their quick enthusiasms. I always find them stimulating as an audience, eager and friendly.

We are here for the Summer, though the weather is forbidding.

I hope it will not be too long before we meet again.

Yours ever,

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

*With the Compliments
of
Professor T. J. B. Spencer*

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15*

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH