

DRAFT

*the company is in no  
position to  
overrule*

Dear Mr Williams

Thank you for your letter of 29 November concerning the 1973 award of the Booker Prize for Fiction.

While sympathising with the comments expressed in your letter, I think that I should point out that the <sup>determination</sup> award of the Prize ~~has nothing whatsoever to do with the company.~~ An independent panel of judges, chosen for its knowledge and experience of the literary world, is appointed to select the winning book and ~~it would react very unfavourably against your company if we were to refuse to accept the judges' decision.~~ It is a different matter for literary critics however who are in no way obliged to agree with the judges' choice.

*If it were, the Prize would not be acceptable to the Publishers.*

Once the Prize has been awarded, the winner is perfectly free to do with it whatever he chooses. Your directors naturally do not agree with Mr Berger ~~in~~ so far as his criticisms of your company are concerned, but to start a public debate with him ~~or to refuse to hand over the amount of the Prize~~ would have given the impression that the company was on the defensive. By refusing to be drawn into a confrontation and by accepting its obligations in a calm, relaxed and dignified manner, your company minimised any adverse effect on ~~your~~ <sup>its</sup> ~~company's~~ business and reputation and has, in fact, earned ~~it~~ considerable credit.

Yours sincerely

Peter Smith  
Public Relations Adviser

11 December 1972

*By no stroke of  
the imagination can it  
be said that we "proceeded  
to stroke this snobbish  
writer", and these words  
in the Sunday newspaper  
and completely unfounded  
are*

*(That, the firm is in the  
hands of trustees and not,  
at the time of our award, under  
the control of the company.)*