



LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

MENTAL HEALTH AND SICKNESS

Sir.—I have heard two talks on mental health and sickness recently given by a medical psychologist from Dunedin. I wish to quarrel, not necessarily with his conclusions, but with his type of argument, which I feel is too common in articles on psychology and in particular in those dealing with child rearing and education.

First I object to his casual use of terms. Despite the influence of Freud on our thought and language, the word sexuality is not used in English to cover all the things Freud tried to make it cover. If a scientist uses a term from ordinary, non-scientific language, he must either use it with its accepted meaning, or else clearly redefine it. Some psychologists stretch a word meaning to cover various ideas not covered by the accepted usage of the word, falsely believing that they have discovered new facts. They have only called old ideas by new names. It does not simplify our ideas of sensuality, love, affection, etc., to say that they should all be called sexuality.

The terms mental health and mental sickness are becoming widely used. The users presumably intend them to mean something different from sanity and insanity. This speaker defined a healthy person as "one who adapts to life as it actually is" (bearing in mind the fulfilment of his biological needs). It is impossible to judge adequate adaptation in general, or appropriate behaviour in any given set of circumstances, without first answering questions such as "What is life?" and "What should man ultimately aim at?" and at this stage the psychologist is faced with moral questions, which he may answer as a private individual, but not as a scientist. Psychologists who tell people what they ought to do with their children or with their own lives are going beyond the sphere of science and their pronouncements cannot be justified by science.

Secondly I object to his sweeping generalisations based on inadequate experimentation and observation. Conclusions drawn from animal experiments can only be used as tentative pointers to human behaviour. Primitive societies are seen as a whole. It is as true to say that the ideal of adulthood in a given society influences the methods of child rearing, as to say, as this speaker does, that a certain type of child rearing produces a certain type of adult. It is indeed hard to say how much studies of humans in relatively simple, primitive, homogeneous and static societies can tell us about humans in our complicated and changing culture. It is not enough for the speaker to say "by and large the easier upbringing produces the healthier mind." he must produce results of studies on our own culture, not just of unhealthy minds but of the whole population. There are hundreds of adults who belie his generalisations, proving

that there are many more factors involved in ultimate mental health than permissive child rearing.

Finally it seems to me biased of the speaker in talks on mental health and sickness not to give any mention of hereditary factors.

BARBARA BREWER (Raumati).

DESIGN FOR MUSIC

Sir.—Most of the points raised by your correspondents, W. N. Sheat and G. I. Rich, have, I think, been fully covered in my replies to your previous correspondents, Raymond Boyce and M. B. Patience. Therefore, I have no intention, with the limited space at my disposal, to enter into correspondence with regard to the "pros" and "cons" of the stage design of the auditorium in question. If I did so I would have to be implicit rather than explicit, and this it would seem leads to confusion.

What your correspondents should realise, however, is that this auditorium was designed as a town hall, and not as a theatre. The latter is usually designed for the specific purpose, whereas a town hall must cater for the many and varied functions associated with a community. Some of these functions take priority over even theatrical or orchestral performances.

It was never intended, to my knowledge, that a theatrical performance should take place with the orchestral setting, or even a portion of it, occupying the stage. This setting can readily be removed and a clear stage provided for a theatrical performance.

As I have already stated, I was in no way responsible for the planning or for the acoustical design of the Town Hall. My article was primarily written to give audience members an idea of the problems associated with acoustical design as applied to music or theatre. However, like the three basic "R's" in education, we have in the field of auditorium acoustics three basic "A's" which make for good theatre, namely, actor, audience and auditorium. Good theatre is based on the skill and experience of the actor, the appreciation of the audience, and the skill of the auditorium designer.

May I conclude, Sir, with a further thought. What is not always appreciated in acoustical design is the fact that optimum reverberation times can be calculated on paper, and the materials to give such good theoretical conditions embodied in an auditorium. However, unless these materials are placed in their correct acoustical position, one is sometimes mistaken in the belief, like the legendary pussy cats in Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite, that all is well in the garden and the flowers are dancing, when in reality they are not.

R. GILLESPIE MELDRUM
(Wellington).

IN THE UREWERA

Sir.—In expressing my appreciation of the documentary series, "Urewera—Forest of a Thousand Peaks," I should like to express also the hope that these particularly fine broadcasts will be repeated in the evergreen programmes, and perhaps also during the Broadcasts to Schools. This series, with the earlier one on Greenstone, is worthy of being preserved in published form.

The various aspects of existence in the vast Urewera, the setting, history, the human and wild life, the potential value of the projects being planned and carried out, were all beautifully balanced in the blending of the whole. To those

of us who have been privileged to meet Sister Annie Henry, whose life and work in the Urewera have become an integral part of its history, the Urewera has been more than just an area on the map. The broadcast of "Forest of a Thousand Peaks" brought it vividly to life.

I am sure that I voice the appreciation of many listeners in congratulating all those who combined to give an especially fine presentation.

NANCY BRUCE (Wanganui).

AFTER NINE O'CLOCK

Sir.—J.C.R. writes in *The Listener*, speaking of *Radio Roadhouse*, "The only thing that puzzles me is that the NZBS hasn't yet got round to the idea of a repeat weekly at a more comfortable time than late on Wednesdays." This opens up the whole question of appropriate timing. If a census of listening hours could be taken, I wonder how many people would be found listening after 9 p.m.? A large proportion of the population is early rising—people on farms are usually up considerably before the lark—and no power on earth is going to keep a worker awake after a certain time in the evening. Even people who habitually listen late tell me their concentration ebbs. It frequently happens that things like BBC *World Theatre* are pushed into the late hours. Has a programme arranger ever sat huddled with his ear in the loudspeaker and an anxious finger on the volume, ready to turn down swiftly the despair and trumpets of a Greek tragedy, against the muffled moans coming through bedroom doors? Followed by black looks and bitter words at breakfast? If he had, he would give it a miss next time.

There are also many things, humorous and otherwise, that are suitable, and even desirable, for the young of various ages, which come on after what certainly should be their bedtime. Here of course we come up against the homework problem but that is with us in any case. Obviously it is all very difficult, but I am sure that a large body of reasonably intelligent people would very much like to hear the really good things while they are still sufficiently awake to listen. If this means repeat programmes, why not?

NINE P.M. DEADLINE
(Auckland).

(Unfortunately, there are so many differing opinions about what are "the really good things."—Ed.)

"DR PAUL"

Sir.—I was surprised at your answer to "Long-Suffering Listener's" letter asking when she will be hearing the last episode of the radio serial *Dr Paul*. In spite of the blunt editorial answer "No" I think I can acquaint "Long-Suffering Listener" with some more or less accurate information on this serial.

It has been running for 15 years in America and is still going. The episodes are recorded in Australia using local talent there, from scripts that are forwarded from America. The players are unaware of their ultimate fate in the story, their advance knowledge of the story would be only about 15 to 25 episodes ahead. It is the practice to record say 15 or so episodes over a period of a couple of days—this was evidenced last year sometime when the woman who plays the current "Elizabeth" was included in the cast of a stage company that toured New Zealand—sufficient episodes had to be recorded to last for

her period of absence from Australia. The foregoing information was broadcast I think from 2ZB when the serial "Elizabeth" was interviewed in Sunday Supplement.

My opinion is that "Long-Suffering Listener" can expect *Dr Paul* to be running up till at least 1963 and possibly beyond.

MERE MALE
(Wellington).

A. R. D. FAIRBURN

Sir.—I am compiling a bibliography of the published works of the late A. R. D. Fairburn, which will probably be published early next year.

Among Mr Fairburn's papers are a number of clippings from the magazine *Action*, published in Auckland from about 1945 to 1948, but as they are incomplete in most cases, reference must be made to them in their original setting before they can be included in the bibliography. I have so far been unable to locate any files of *Action*, and should be most grateful if any of your readers who have, or know of the existence of, any copies, would write to me at the Auckland University College Library.

I should also be glad to hear of any items by A. R. D. Fairburn in small, ephemeral, or out-of-the-way publications which may have escaped my notice.

OLIVE JOHNSON,
Auckland University College.

"DEATH OF A SALESMAN"

Sir.—An article in the July 12 issue of *The Listener* wrongly attributes to Elia Kazan the credit for both the stage and film versions of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The film was in fact directed by Laslo Benedek, whose only other American film, *The Wild One*, was banned in New Zealand last year.

P. G. FAMA (Dunedin).

A MUSICAL CAREER

Sir.—In my recent interview with *The Listener* published in the issue of July 19, I find that the statement concerning my plans for going overseas, and my marriage plans, is giving an erroneous impression. I would like to state that there is no alteration in my plans to continue my musical career in New Zealand and overseas when it is possible.

LOLA JOHNSON (Wellington).

WASTE PAPER BASKET

Sir.—I don't want to aim at anybody in the top left-hand corner—I haven't done that sort of thing since I was at school, when the ink wasn't ball-point and the intention was malicious—but I would like to see just how near to your interesting waste paper basket I can throw this letter without its actually falling in. If it does accidentally fall inside, no matter; plenty of paper scraps and possibly even animal warmth will keep it cosy until oblivion.

J.M. (Wanganui).

