



"OWLS DO CRY"

Sir,—Let us agree readily on one thing: that pikelets are made on stoves and not in ovens. And on another point (before someone raises it): that if I, or Messrs Hall, Turner and Vogt for that matter, tried to prepare a dish like *Owls Do Cry* it would be a good deal more indigestible than Miss Frame's novel. But the *cri de coeur* in the closing sentence of her letter raises issues upon which agreement may be sought in vain. Miss Frame seems uneasy with any discussion of her book. We are bidden to eat the pie, simply, I suppose, to enjoy and absorb the book. But haven't we done so? All those who had anything to say in *The Listener*, the present writer among them, made it reasonably clear that to read this book was to be enlarged and altered. May we not go on to discuss the ingredients of our enjoyment, and the factors that prevented that enjoyment from being complete? The good eating and the indigestible bits as well? Very rarely does any novel give unalloyed enjoyment. I believe that criticism in New Zealand (and, by the same token, the writing of novels) will be in a healthier condition if we do so. And I cannot see any enmity between enjoyment and discussion.

W. H. OLIVER (Christchurch).

THE CHICKEN-HEARTED

Sir,—It is difficult to decide just where to start criticising R.M.D.'s rather splenetic attack on those who are attempting to investigate, albeit with small success, the fields of parapsychology and extra sensory perception. Leaving out his attack on Dr Rhine, which scarcely warrants notice, on Duke University, whose results he assures us are suspect because it was named after a successful oilman, and his appeal to "Authorities" who support his view (although he does not tell us how anyone can be an authority on something which he says does not exist), we are left with his complaint that "scientific" investigation has failed to confirm Rhine's results.

This is rather like approaching an accountant and asking him if his work confirms Mr Hoyle's latest cosmological theories. Perhaps R.M.D. would tell us which branch of science he considers competent to study E.S.P., and by what criteria the results are to be examined. His reference to the "cold, hard facts of physics" merely obscures the issue since many of these facts had to be discovered before the science could exist.

A science can only function on the basis of reproducible experimental fact, which history shows us had to be discovered by someone who was prepared to stand a deal of criticism, abuse, and persecution for flying in the face of accepted scientific dogma. Perhaps R.M.D. would like to prevent investigation in any field which he considers to be outside the class of science, but progress can hardly be achieved by sticking religiously to the well-worn track of "scientific knowledge" and ignoring happenings which do not suit our particular set of beliefs.

A number of prominent scientists (Kelvin amongst them) have been ruined

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by the furious attacks of their small-minded contemporaries, for going on record to the effect that they have witnessed events inexplicable in the light of scientific belief. To R.M.D.'s frontiers—"ignorance, illiteracy, superstition and sentiment" we must add "the closed mind." STUDENT (Wellington).

Sir,—It will probably be widely agreed that in the realm of parapsychology, Dr J. B. Rhine is rather small beer. Still, one need not confine one's reading to those authors who express the views one prefers, and physics is not the only science on which authoritative works are being produced. In our desire to avoid being credulous, we may very easily find that we have carried our incredulity to the point where it has become just a specialised form of credulity after all. The greatest superstition of all is the impression that the science of physics has said the last word on all subjects. I invite your correspondent R.M.D. to enlarge the frontiers of his own mind, by spending six shillings on a little "Teach Yourself" volume rather misleadingly entitled *Teach Yourself Psychical Research*. This was printed in 1955, published by the English Universities Press Ltd., London; the author is Dr R. C. Johnson, M.A. (Oxon.), Ph.D., D.Sc. (Lond.), of Queen's College University of Melbourne. It contains a fairly extensive bibliography, and though perforce very sketchy in itself, does cover a lot of the ground. I do not wish to be disagreeable, but if I have to risk being in error I would prefer to err with Dr R. C. Johnson than in the company of R.M.D. I also like the company of Dr Laurence J. Bendit, M.A., M.D. (Cantab.), D.P.M., formerly Assistant Physician of the Tavistock Clinic, whose thesis, *Paranormal Cognition*, was accepted by Cambridge University and published some years ago by Faber and Faber.

MARION KIRK (Auckland).

PARLIAMENT AND 2YC

Sir,—Your lucid article brings to the surface again a subject which must always be a thorn in the side of many listeners, the relegation of 2YC's programmes to 2YX when Parliament is being broadcast. You set out convincingly the reasons why this occurs, but perhaps one could ask whether the broadcasting of Parliament is in fact warranted.

I think that any Government would be loath to abolish the broadcasts unless it felt it was on very solid ground, mainly on account of the fear that it would be providing ready ammunition for the opposition. From inquiries I have made, it would seem that in this city, at least, very few people listen to Parliament, and even then not often. Of the rural districts I cannot profess to speak, but I would expect to find a somewhat larger body (pro rata) of listeners in the country.

This year we are to have an election, and this provides the opportunity to gauge the feeling of listeners on this matter. A referendum could be taken on polling day, without much extra expense, and could perhaps put an end to this somewhat vexed question.

J. EDMONDS (Wellington).

CROWN AND COMMONWEALTH

Sir,—It is understandable that Mr R. M. Hutton-Potts, as a newspaper editor, sees the Commonwealth in terms of the day's headlines and the printed word, but he over-rates the importance of Ministerial communiques and the

prepared speeches of Royalty as factors bearing on what he calls the "continued existence" of the Commonwealth. The British Commonwealth and Empire has been established on firmer foundations than this: on deeds, not words.

For centuries, men and women have worked with courage and vision to build a unique world-wide association of some 600 million people. Problems there are, and stresses and strains, natural enough in the development of this vast multi-racial community. But the problems are being solved and the stresses are being borne because the countries of the Commonwealth and Empire are linked together in numberless ways: by a common loyalty to the Crown and all that it stands for, by ties of kinship, communications, trade and commerce, by the intricate patterns of social, economic and political relationships which have become part of the enduring fabric of life in many lands.

Those of us who have experienced something of the spirit and substance of the Commonwealth in peace and war have no doubts about its "continued existence" as a world Power. Whatever its faults, the British Commonwealth has done more for the peace and progress of mankind than any other association of peoples in history. Today, as individual nations are "growing up" within the Commonwealth, new and powerful forces are being brought to bear on the age-old problems of disease, ignorance and hunger, the basic causes of war. In international relations the Commonwealth and Empire is a vital Third Force, an area of stability where the conflicting policies of the United States and Soviet Russia may be modified and controlled until they no longer menace the peace of the world.

F.C. (Sumner).

THE MUSICAL CLIMATE

Sir,—Mr Richard Hoffmann has seen fit to deplore the low standard of appreciation and awareness of modern music in this country. He gives one reason as being the unimaginative programmes presented here by overseas artists.

Julius Katchen, at the conclusion of his first New Zealand tour, publicly stated that he had been misinformed as to the musical climate in New Zealand, and that in any future tour he would amend his programmes accordingly and include a greater measure of contemporary music. In his first tour his repertoire consisted almost entirely of the "better-known classics," and this lack of variety was deplored by critics generally.

It is admitted that in this country the performance of a new work at every concert is not always done, but if Mr Hoffmann would care to look over the programmes of touring artists and ensembles of the last ten years he will find in most cases quite a high proportion of contemporary works—including a few by American composers.

Mr Hoffmann has been absent from New Zealand since 1947, apart from some few short holidays, and I really doubt that after barely three weeks in New Zealand he has been able to analyse the musical taste of the entire country so authoritatively and completely.

C.C.G. (Auckland).

Sir,—In your issue of August 23, Richard Hoffmann lets the cat out of the bag—"NEW MUSIC IS NEVER BEAUTIFUL," he tells us—which, in part, we knew before, of course; the only mistake in his epochal pronouncement being the word "music." He should have said—"new noise is never

beautiful." The dictionary definition of music is: "Harmonious combination of sounds"; consequently, the term is obviously out of place in connection with the hideous noises which are characteristic of most modern composition. Logically, what is not beautiful must be ugly, and every person who attempts to glorify ugliness in any department of art or literature does a grave disservice to mankind.

L. D. AUSTIN (Wellington).

TOWN AND COUNTRY

Sir,—Like many others, we read and appreciate "Sundowner's" articles in your magazine. In the issue of August 16, however, we feel he may have missed the point—or possibly, have missed the opportunity to point the moral!

Is it advisable to throw the land open, indiscriminately, to town dwellers when they chase, unmercifully, a valuable cow until in terror she attempts to leap the barbed-wire fence, and in so doing, tears her udder so badly that she must perforce be dried off and fattened for slaughter—this, when she is still a young animal, with many potential years of milk-production ahead of her? Or when they leave the gate open and let the bull out, to visit, joyfully, the neighbour's herd on a peaceful Sunday afternoon when both owner and neighbour are away from home—the result being rancour, not only between owner and town-dweller, which perhaps counts little, but also between owner and neighbour, which is disastrous?

I am afraid these are but two of many similar incidents which have happened in this corner in the last five or six years, but respect for your space does not permit of further enumeration.

Since you yourselves are town-dwellers, however, I presume that the only space taken up by this missive will be within the W.P.B.

SMALL FARMER (Kaitangata).

AFTER NINE O'CLOCK

Sir,—I read with interest "Nine p.m. Deadline's" letter in a recent *Listener* on late radio broadcasts. Your editorial comment that "unfortunately there are many differing opinions about what are the 'really good things'" is very true, but there are a good many people in this country (and I am one) who agree that jazz music is "really good," but who are prevented from listening to it because broadcasts rarely begin before 10 o'clock.

It would be very much appreciated, I am sure, by all lovers of jazz if at least some of the best jazz broadcasts could be made a little earlier, to enable them to listen to and enjoy their favourite music.

EARLY TO BED
(Gisborne).

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Non-Rock-'n'-Roll Fan (Auckland): The programme is ruled by popular choice. The trend is now to another style.

D.F.A. (Wairoa): Also to be heard from 1YZ, 2YZ, 2XA, 2XP and 1XN.

