

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## How Flexible Should We Be?

AS A LIBRARIAN, I see a great deal of print. Most of it I skip over. But occasionally I see an article that is clear, concise, thought-provoking, and has implications far outside a certain field or country.

"The Uses of Flexibility," by J. William Fulbright [SR, May 8], was such an article. Thank God a man like him can be a Senator in our government and can stay a Senator. And thank you for providing a forum for men like him.

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SENATOR FULBRIGHT appears to be either wilfully blind or incredibly naïve about the facts of life when he appeals for "benign humanism" in dealing with those who gleefully contemplate the eventual demise of our country.

As for tolerance, moderation, and accommodation, doesn't he know we're noted for them? We accommodate the trampling of our flag in the dust and the bombing of our embassies, libraries, people, and property in foreign countries. At home we accommodate the Mafia, the Communist Party, the KKK, the Nazi Party, student rioters, freedom riders, marchers, sit-inners and lie-inners, the purveyors of filth in literature, movies, and television, and the downgrading of the Puritan ethic.

In fact, about the only thing we don't accommodate any more is the Puritan ethic, or at least that part of it which is characterized by moral cleanliness and trustworthy character, and which expects people and nations to tell the truth, pay their just debts, respect law, order, and other people's property and persons, and earn an honest living.

IRENE PRATER DELL.

Carl Junction, Mo.

A CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, devoted to helping individuals and small groups to pursue their best interests in reasonable fashion and to find themselves through experiencing human relationships, is confronted by many frustrations. Among these is the recognition that the clients' self-defeating stances are nearly universal and are expressed in, and derived from, the societal level—which is virtually immune to the impact of the individual practitioner.

Senator Fulbright provides me with hope. His recommendations relative to the destructiveness of ideology at the international level are a perfect parallel to what I and others have seen as the crucial problem in human growth: the "overcivilization" of the individual.

It has long been evident that attitudes and ideologies are built in psychologically very early in life, that they are reinforced by unreasonable guilt, and that they are enormously restrictive of the use of human abilities. Most of us are forced or persuaded in some degree to believe that we must be blindly virtuous, adhere to some

dogma or ideology, renounce selfish motives, subdue our biological nature, and follow sets of precepts in thinking, feeling, and relating to others. The breadth and intensity of this adherence to rules are highly causative of self-alienation and obliviousness to interpersonal nuances and to the possibilities of enrichment by others; they are also an important determinant of reactive rage and destructiveness. It is no fluke that virtue engenders destruction. One can be ideologically virtuous only at the cost of disfranchising one's basic nature and, with or without awareness, resenting it. Civilizing, when it demands ideological conformity, causes rather than controls violence—even though such violence at times is labeled virtue. It is not at all surprising that "good" boys and girls sometimes erupt with antisocial acts that are so "unlike" them.

Bravos to Senator Fulbright for recognizing so eloquently the importance of the freedom to observe, to think, and to change one's mind.

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SENATOR FULBRIGHT believes that we have become so preoccupied with ideology that we fail to realize that other considerations may be of more importance in shaping policy in Communist countries. I agree that other than ideological motives may shape national goals. But with the Communists, Marxist-Leninist principles seem to be the foundation for much of their action, both in domestic affairs and in international re-

lations. Their behavior in both areas may seem to deviate from basic principles at times, but when it does this is only a variation on a basic theme and not a change in the theme itself.

For instance, it has always been an essential part of Russian policy to establish control, or at least some form of paternalistic protection, over adjacent countries in order to ensure the security of Russia's own borders. This is Russian nationalism at work. The Soviet Union, however, has the additional objective of spreading Communism throughout the world by political subversion, military threats, and support of wars of "national liberation."

Possibly the United States is too preoccupied by ideology in its dealings with Russia, but we cannot forget that the leaders of China and the Soviet Union are Communists, and no matter what national historical considerations are brought into play, this ideological force sways, guides, and deeply influences any decisions they make. This is why ideology cannot be dismissed as readily as Senator Fulbright wishes it would be.

DONALD H. OWEN.

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## Art Explosion

BRAVO TO Katharine Kuh for a) her article on our new Los Angeles County Art Museum [SR, Apr. 3] and b) her tender tact. I am glad that for Miss Kuh, as for me, the great thing is the existence of the museum,

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## No Duke for the "Duke"—BBC, BRdCG

JUST ABOUT this time each year, along with the resumption of other outdoor sports, comes the open season on windmill tilting. The Don Q's change, but the object remains the same. Sometimes it is the press that takes issue with the Pulitzer Prize Committee; sometimes it is the members of the special juries that take issue with the committee for rejecting their choices. This year two members of the music jury have resigned noisily from posts which, the third member of the jury reminded them, they cannot resign (the appointment terminates when a recommendation is submitted).

If the resigned windmill-tilters are in error on this, they are even more in error in the assumption that the lack of a proper nominee for an award in the music category could be made good by nominating Duke Ellington for a special citation. Since one resignee replied, when asked if he had read the citation under which the prize in music is awarded, that he hadn't, perhaps it would be well to reprint it. The words are as follows: "For a distinguished composition in the larger forms of chamber, orchestral, or choral music, or for any operatic work including ballet, performed or published by a composer of established residence in the United States."

I yield to no one in admiration for Ellington's distinctions, and he is without doubt a resident, but large forms are precisely what he is *not* distinguished for. The citation may be all wrong, muddle-headed, and outmoded, but that is the rule of the road the jury members agreed to follow when they accepted appointment—had they bothered to read it.

Some mention has been made of the "precedent" established by the recognition, in 1957, of Kenneth Roberts for his historical novels in a year when no award to a novel was made. But it must be obvious that Roberts was cited for work in the category under which the award was made, and it is at least possible that this was designed to deal with a well-known foible of prize-giving by the calendar: a year rich in production may bring a head-on clash of two or more works worthy of a prize. And it very possibly may be followed by a year of scanty production in which any one of four works edged out the year before would make a very acceptable nominee.

Perhaps the category should be broadened; perhaps the specifications should be changed to take out "distinguished" and "large forms" and anything else that makes the prize worth winning. But that

should be done in an orderly, forthright way, not in mid-competition. To attack those who rejected a nominee on the sound ground that he did not qualify is to engage in—well, in windmill-tilting.

Of the numerous orchestras that have visited Carnegie Hall this year, the one that I would most welcome as a resident ensemble was the last. Unfortunately, it already enjoys a position of honor as the No. 1 pride of the British Broadcasting Corporation, but that was only the more reason, after its series of six concerts spread over successive Fridays and Saturdays, to envy the audience that hears it regularly. Under the alternating guidance of Antal Dorati and Pierre Boulez, the BBC Symphony impressed me as being every bit as resourceful in a variety of styles as the New York Philharmonic, and more than a little better-sounding.

The variety of styles was a built-in part of the program scheme, which bore the catch-all title of *Masterworks of the Twentieth Century*. Probably everyone of the listed works would show the numerals "19" in the date of its premiere, but it was as hard to affiliate the Elgar Cello Concerto, Debussy's *Jeux*, or the Fourth Symphony of Mahler with anything truly of this century as it was to accept Gunther Schuller's *Dramatic Overture* or Blacher's *Concertante Music for Orchestra* as a masterwork. Doubtless there were reasons for performing them, and each was worth hearing, but it is torturing credibility to give Schuller and Blacher rank with Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* or *Chant du Rossignol*, the excerpts from Berg's *Wozzeck*, Schönberg Five Orchestral Pieces, or Webern's Opus 6 Pieces.

Of the works not previously heard in New York, there was the most substance in Michael Tippett's Piano Concerto, the most virtuosity in Roberto Gerhard's

Concerto for Orchestra, and the greatest journalistic appeal in Boulez's *Doubles*. The last of these was conducted by the composer, with that penetration of substance, despite a primitive kind of conducting technique, that characterizes all of his efforts in this domain. It achieves its momentary objective, which is to make the kind of noise that is talked about, but the presence of weightier virtues did not come through. Gerhard's Concerto succeeds, too, in its objective, which is to extol means as an end in themselves—the sounds were alternately shimmering, dense, powerful and evanescent, a sure grindstone for whetting the edge of such a fine performing group. But the demonstration suggested that the work, like the grindstone, was fabricated for purely functional purposes.

The Tippett, on the other hand, is something else. It is a work of quality, in which the Prokofievian kind of instrumental lyricism is crossed with the strong structural sense possessed by some of Tippett's English predecessors, especially Vaughan Williams. It was strongly, poetically, performed by John Ogdon, with Dorati conducting. Some moments suggested that the orchestral part was slightly overwritten, or, perhaps, that it was underclarified, but the substance of a durable work is there.

OF the other English artists who participated (Heather Harper was the able soprano in several works with vocal parts), there was little doubt that the most will be heard, in years to come, of Jacqueline du Pre, who was the solo cellist in the Elgar Concerto. She is young and she is good-looking, which are qualities to enhance any musical performance, but the important fact is that Miss du Pre plays the cello with the assertiveness and assurance of one born to do nothing else. The first few measures of the Elgar tell much about the player who performs them, and Miss du Pre's supremely confident attack was a command to the attention. There is no doubt that she is her country's successor to Beatrice Harrison, with whom the work was long associated, and that she is destined for even higher international rank.

Arthur Grumiaux's incapacitating accident in Brussels recently brought on young Edith Peinemann of Germany as his successor to perform the Bartók Violin Concerto with the Philharmonic. As noted when she made her New York debut in Town Hall a few years ago (en route home from orchestral appearances in Cincinnati), Miss Peinemann has power, control, sensitivity, and musical individuality—a fair roster of attributes for any aspiring artist. The orchestra put its signature to an endorsement with a round of hand-clapping and *bravas* at the end of the concerto, which she might

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