Letters

In a Democracy: The Privilege To Pursue the Inner Logic

Herrnstein's eloquent statement of the importance of being unimportant (Letters, 24 May): "The basic researcher may be wise to put considerations of importance out of his mind and attend instead to the inner logic of the subject he is studying" deserves a far wider echo than it is likely to receive in the mission-oriented climate of today. For the freedom to pursue the inner logic of one's subject—particularly if the subject is not in vogue—is still unnecessarily hard to come by. And this despite the overwhelming historical evidence that true innovation—as opposed to technological advancement—rests almost solely on those who had or took such freedom.

On closer examination the existing state of affairs is hardly surprising, because the freedom that Herrnstein calls for is often thought of as not merely foreign, but outright inimical to the very basic precepts of the egalitarian society in which we live. In a world in which all men are supposed to be created equal, we are bound to respect and support performance, not individuals. Thus, every individual must perform in some way that we can all judge and he must be held continuously accountable. Freedom to pursue the inner logic of one's subject is equated with freedom from accountability to one's fellowmen. Worse yet, it must be accorded *so that* the individual may perform, which necessarily means—*before* he has performed. This puts him into a privileged position....

Few will seriously question that a federal judge needs autonomy and security to do his job properly or that providing such autonomy and security is a proper use of public funds. Few will argue that the institution of federal judgeships is undemocratic as long as the road to a judgeship is, in principle at least, open to all. Why then the outcries against the scientist? Perhaps there is not sufficient recognition that just as the federal judge is a guardian of our constitution, the serious scientist is a guardian of our civilization. Autonomy and security are essential for him to do his job properly and there should be no objections *of principle* in according them to him. Practice, to be sure, is another matter. But a few bad scientists no more invalidate the point than a few bad judges. We will do well to remind ourselves that we live in a world which still rests largely on individual wisdom. Wisdom indeed dictates that we learn the lessons of history and place greater trust in individuals and less trust in our criteria of their performance. Such trust extended privately or publicly has proved essential in the past. There is as yet no reason to expect that it is not essential for the future.

OLEG JARDETZKY
Department of Biophysics and Pharmacology, Merck Sharp & Dohme Research Laboratories, Rahway, New Jersey 07065

Nods from Author and Reviewer

While reading David Krech's review of my book *The Ghost in the Machine*, I had the distinct impression of being decapitated by a guillotine and subsequently administered an affectionate kiss of life (10 May, p. 649). But I do protest against Krech's reproach that I have neglected psycholinguistics and brain research. The entire second chapter of the book ("The chain of words and the tree of language," pp. 19–44) is devoted to psycholinguistics, and the entire 16th chapter ("The three brains," pp. 267–296) to brain research. I am an old admirer of Krech, and even Homer may nod—but through 57 pages?

ARTHUR KOESTLER
Schreiberhäusl, 6236 Alpbach, Tyrol, Austria

As a practicing polemicist I regret that I cannot (with honesty) take advantage of the opening Arthur Koestler provides when he asks whether anyone could nod through 57 pages of his. Koestler in his book induces interest, thought, and irritation for 384 pages. But drowsiness? No, not even for 57.

I *had* read the disputed 57 pages, and in my review I had discussed "The three brains" (even by name). As for "The chain of words and the tree of language," one might be tempted to ask: "This is psycholinguistics?" But I had hoped—because I admire Koestler so much and (*vide supra*) he, me—that I would not have to give chapter and verse for the few gentle reproaches which found their way into my review of his book. Nor will I even now.

DAVID KRECH
Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley 94720

Pursuit of Women at Yale

I was intrigued by Boffey's implication that my fellow deans suspect me of "pursuing female graduate students" with greater zeal this year than formerly ("The draft: Grad schools, students feel impact of new regulations," 7 June, p. 1088). This "bastion of male supremacy" has "pursued" female graduate students ever since 1892. For the last 10 years, women have represented between 20 and 23 percent of our enrollment. Of all offers of admission this year, 27 percent were made to women compared to 26 percent last year. It would appear, therefore, that the ardor with which we "pursue" women has not been significantly affected by the draft of men.

JOHN PERRY MILLER
Graduate School, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

IBP: International Goals

Several statements in Boffey's report, "International Biological Program suffers another setback" (24 May, p. 865), while referring to the current situation in the United States, might be interpreted as having wider application. This is particularly so if statements are quoted out of context, such as "[it was] questioned whether the IBP can achieve the rather grandiose goals that have come to be associated with it."

The United States is not, of course, the only country where money is at present in short supply, and there are few in which progress in carrying out