

to the editor

Jocasta mother

I would like to make some remarks about The Jocasta Complex—"The genius and his mother" (SN: 4/3/71, p. 240). Dr. Mathew Besdine suggests that a necessary condition in the development of genius is the presence of a "Jocasta Mother."

The characteristics of the Jocasta personality are rather a free invention of the adherents of Sigmund Freud than a derivation from the contents of Sophocles tragedy. We can also say the same about the "Oedipus Complex."

I accent the idea that an intelligent and sensitive mother can help to develop genius in her child, but only if her child has a natural disposition for this development. The same can also be done by an intelligent and sensitive father. But neither an intelligent mother, nor an intelligent father can develop their child to be a genius, if their child is spiritually mediocre. Besides we know cases when a talented child developed into a genius in spite of a negative relationship with his mother, as, for instance, it was the case with Arthur Schopenhauer who developed his philosophical genius in spite of the jealousy of his intelligent and talented mother, who could not accept that her son was more gifted than she.

American society is to a degree under the domination of a "mom-complex" such that even intelligent educated males reduce the educational and spiritual influence of father to a "negligible quantity." Maybe it is time for American fathers to organize a "male liberation movement" demanding for males "equality" with females in this field and some others, too, for instance, in the military draft.

Anatol von Spakovsky, Ph.D.
Huntsville, Ala.

APA's May Day

Your article "May Day at the APA" (SN: 5/8/71, p. 315) sensitively reflects the concern of our profession; and the fact that the overwhelmingly repressive response of the Government to the young May Day demonstrators (as well as the morass of the Indochina war in general) "became the major topics of conversation of the APA convention."

However, the article concludes with the statement that my resolution, which called on the American Psychiatric Association to "point out to our Government officials the anti-mental-health effects of such a response" was defeated.

The story is not complete. It should

add that the "defeat" of Tuesday was more than compensated for by a "victory" for mental health and peace, when, on Thursday, May 6, the Board of Trustees of the APA unanimously passed a resolution adding "its voice to that of the great masses of the American people who have so firmly expressed their agony concerning the war in Southeast Asia"; and expressing "their conviction that the prompt halt to the hostilities in Southeast Asia and the prompt withdrawal of American forces will render it possible to reorder our national priorities to build a mentally healthier nation."

Isidore Ziferstein, M.D.
Los Angeles, Calif.

I thought the report of the American Psychiatric Association's involvement in May Day activities was accurate and objective. I am happy your readers have been given this opportunity to be informed as to what took place at the APA meeting.

Incidentally, I enjoyed the article "The magnetic world of bubble domains" (SN: 5/8/71, p. 318), and look forward to hearing more in the future about this potential aid to computer technology.

John P. Spiegel, M.D.
Director, Lemberg Center
for the Study of Violence
Brandeis University
Waltham, Mass.

More on dowsing

The editorial note to Mr. Massie's letter in support of dowsing (SN: 4/17/71, p. 260) apparently missed an important point. Rather than question the labels of dowsers as good, bad, etc., in Mr. Foulkes' paper (SN: 2/13/71, p. 119), what is more significant is the actual numbers who took part in the testing. The verdict that Mr. Foulkes made rebutting dowsing was based on an extremely small sample and it is statistically unsound to make such weighty inferences for this sample size.

As a research statistician for the American Society of Dowsers, I would be pleased to submit my statistical evidence, from a sample size 100 times as great as the British sample of R. A. Foulkes, which would tend to confirm the validity of dowsing. I have also sponsored and participated in numerous tests of dowsing, some conducted under state and Federal Government auspices, and would appreciate the opportunity of presenting this evidence to your staff

in order to show what dowsing can do and what it can't do.

For those who question the validity of dowsing, may I refer them to a recent scientific report issued by the Utah Water Research Laboratory which, under carefully controlled conditions, showed "evidence of correlation between magnetic gradient changes and dowsing reactions." I'll also be pleased to compare this carefully documented statistical report against the study made by Mr. Foulkes and I'm confident the Utah Water Research Laboratory report will be found to be more "statistically significant," and with a much larger sample size.

Carl Schleicher
Chairman, Research and
Development Committee
The American Society of Dowsers Inc.
Danville, Vt.

Biomedical second fiddle

Hi diddle diddle . . . second fiddle . . . your note on Jim Humphreys' resignation from NASA (SN: 5/8/71, p. 323) will remind some of us that it was ever thus with biomedical experimentation in the field. In the early days of the bomb test business our biomedical calf didn't even have a fiddle and would have had a helluva time if it hadn't been for greats such as Al Graves, Bill Ogle, Jim Reeves and Al Luedecke giving our Glorious (Medical) Leader, Payne Harris, and his loyal cohorts a break in making biomedical experiments possible even though on a strict convenience basis.

The infant in his crib has a more fundamental understanding of the importance of the study of man than most of the people we seem to pick to run our most important scientific programs in this astronomic era. When will we learn and believe that the determining and ultimate factor in the success or failure of all our human endeavors—in space or elsewhere—will always be our knowledge and understanding of man himself in his relation to our universe?

Ralph M. Lechause, M.D.
NEMCO Research and Analysis, Inc.
Santa Fe, N.M.

Address communications to Editor,
Science News, 1719 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036