

# to the editor

## More on psychosurgery

If Peter Breggin (SN: 3/11/72, p. 174) were a victim and/or relative of the type of person who may one day be helped to live a "normal" life by perfected techniques in psychosurgery, he might well be out fund raising for the researchers rather than throwing roadblocks in their path. I sincerely hope that Dr. Breggin's crusade serves only to point out the truism that psychosurgical techniques demand close scrutiny and supervision considering their potential for misuse, rather than to halt further progress in this field. Which of us, given a loved one with a cleft palate, a failing kidney, etc., would wish that remedies for these defects were not available? If Breggin, or anyone else, were related to the type of person prone to violent episodes (see for example p. 63, NEWSWEEK 3/27/72) he would pray for the day when he could wake in the morning and not have to wonder if he would ever see the night.

Wendy Wilson  
Columbus, Ohio

My opinion is that Dr. Peter R. Breggin is right. I don't think that persons' brains should be operated on to change them to something they ought to be, by whomever standard.

Olaf C. Olsen  
Shawnee Mission, Kans.

Your letters to the editor have dealt extensively with criticism of my remarks on the return of lobotomy and psychosurgery.

Dr. Arthur Winter, a lobotomist, wrote about the newer techniques that they are not designed to "alter personality" (SN: 4/1/72, p. 212). But let me quote from Dr. Winter himself in his new book, *The Surgical Control of Behavior*, where he concludes that lobotomized patients are "more placid—sometimes passive." In another recent book, Lothar Kalinowsky describes lobotomized patients as more shallow, though less so than in the era of more grossly destructive lobotomies. And William Scoville, president of the International Association for Psychosurgery, himself a lobotomist, states in several articles and in Dr. Winter's book that all forms of psychosurgery perform a "blunting" function. Even the more refined mutilations of the amygdala and hypothalamus are described as "sedative" operations by several experienced psychosurgeons. All psychosurgery has a pacifying effect, subdues conduct and blunts the emotions. In animals, it is called taming.

The entire limbic system is interrelated. Damage to any one part causes an overall reduction in its function. It follows inevitably that the personality as a whole must be disturbed by such maiming.

Finally, I must challenge Dr. Winter's logic when he states that psychosurgery returns a person to his previous level

of functioning. How can damage to the brain restore function? Whenever detailed cases are described, we find what we would anticipate—damage to the brain impairs the personality when that damage is inflicted upon the emotion-regulating centers of the brain.

The interested reader might wish to consult my lengthy review with 100 references, placed in the Congressional Record of Feb. 24 by Rep. Cornelius Gallagher.

Peter R. Breggin, M.D.  
The Washington School of Psychiatry  
Washington, D.C.

## Television violence

Are you certain that your reporter along with the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior is not also open to the charge of camping with television industry representatives (SN: 4/1/72, p. 214)?

I object to his description of FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson's statement in an aside as "(almost as violent as a typical Saturday morning cartoon)". How? Did Mr. Johnson bop Senate communications subcommittee members on the head with his script?

In the best traditions of "living color" your reporter characterized Mr. Johnson's recommendations as "drastic," whereas from what I can determine they are "far-reaching," "revolutionary," "an about-face," and "regulatory."

I can believe that the broadcasting industry views Mr. Johnson's proposals as "drastic" but should your reporter?

Anna Marie Mulvihill  
Somerset, N.J.

## Making sense on marijuana

The recommendation of the marijuana commission (SN: 3/25/72, p. 197) was the first sensible suggestion made so far. It would not make marijuana legal but would quit clogging our courts with very minor offenses so our law officers would be free to pursue more serious duties.

Mrs. Henry J. Stein  
Cairo, N.Y.

## Interrelations

In SCIENCE NEWS for March 18 (p. 189), Richard Gilluly quotes Barry Commoner to the effect that "everything is connected to everything else."

Naturalist John Muir (and probably others before him) beat Commoner to it by at least 60 years: "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."

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**THE LIMITS TO GROWTH:** A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind—Donella H. Meadows and others—Potomac Associates/Universe, 1972, 205 p., diagrams, \$6.50; paper, \$2.75. A computerized forecast, see SN: 3/11/72, p. 165 and SN:3/25/72, p. 202-204.

**ORTHOPEDIC MEDICINE:** A New Approach to Vertebral Manipulations—Robert Maigne, M.D., transl. from French by W. T. Liberson, Ed.—Thomas, C. C., 1972, 433 p., illus., \$22.75. Presents a system of vertebral manipulation integrated into the general field of contemporary medicine, shows step-by-step techniques of maneuvers of relaxation, mobilization and manipulation illustrated by photographs and didactic diagrams.

**PHYSIOLOGICAL BIOCHEMISTRY OF THE FETUS:** Proceedings of the International Symposium, 1970—A. Alberto Hodari and Federico Mariona, Eds.—Thomas, C. C., 1972, 375 p., photographs, diagrams, \$19.75. Comprehensive review of new insights into the functional development of the fetus, from automatic and chemoreceptor control of fetal circulation, to feto-placental physiology with special reference to cyclamates.

**PLANETARY QUARANTINE:** Principles, Methods and Problems—Lawrence B. Hall, Ed.—Gordon & Breach, 1971, 173 p., photographs, drawings, \$14.50. Articles describe research on fundamentals of planetary quarantine, microbiologic assay of space hardware, control of microbial contamination, microbial survival in deep space environment, and back contamination.

**POWER, POLLUTION AND PUBLIC POLICY:** Issues in Electric Power Production, Shoreline Recreation, and Air and Water Pollution Facing New England and the Nation—Dennis W. Ducsik, Ed.—MIT Press, 1972, 322 p., illus., paper, \$12.50. Presents concepts and analyses originally formulated by Interdepartmental Student Project in Systems Engineering.

**PREDICTION OF RESPONSE IN CANCER THERAPY—**Thomas C. Hall, Ed.—Nat'l Cancer Inst. (GPO), 1971, 298 p., photographs, diagrams, tables, \$4.50. Symposium papers, topics range from cell kinetics and therapeutic response, hormonal influences, immunological, and genetic factors, to studies with solid tumors, and in vitro predictive tests.

**THE RADIO AMATEUR'S HANDBOOK—**Headquarters Staff of the American Radio Relay League—ARRL, 1972, 49th ed., 704 p., illus., \$7.50; paper, \$4.50. Manual of communications theory, design and construction, contains descriptions of latest solid state devices and construction projects covering the entire field of communication by radio.

**TO LIVE ON EARTH:** Man and His Environment in Perspective—Sterling Brubaker—Johns Hopkins Press, 1972, 202 p., tables, \$6.95. A Resources for the Future study, offers objective survey soberly analyzing the underlying factors—demographic, economic and technological, and explores short-range and long-range alternatives.

**WILD AUSTRALIA—**Michael K. Morcombe—Taplinger, 1972, 112 p., 90 photographs, mostly in color, \$7.95. Handsome presentation of Australia's colorful birds, flowering trees, wildflowers, small creatures of the night, and other fauna.