

Letters

with which she is unfamiliar.

SIECUS (the Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S.) was formed in 1964, by leaders in medicine, religion, the behavioral sciences and education for the express purpose of establishing human sexuality as part of our total health and personality structure, and of encouraging professional schools in the above areas to teach the facts about it. Today, 95 per cent of the medical schools of the United States include course work in human sexuality, and their medical students, as well as thousands of other professionals now trained, would be the first to decry and at the same time pity E. Rouault's lack of factual knowledge.

MARY S. CALDERONE, M.D.,
Glen Head, N. Y.

An author replies

To the Editor:

In response to Dr. Thomas S. Szasz's criticism (Letters, April 21) of my treatment of Francis Barany ("Lord of the Venus Flytrap," March 31), I would like to point out the following:

I did not "consistently" attribute Francis Barany's devotion and hard work to his being an insecure foreigner, but to a combination of factors, among them innate intelligence, a mother bent on her sons' academic success, and a school where Francis's gifts were allowed to flourish.

Surely Dr. Szasz would agree that in the development of a gifted youngster there is a complicated transaction between the individual and his environment. Francis Barany is not excelling in a "big empty hole" but in a specific historical context which includes the displacement of his parents after the Hungarian revolution. The family's feeling of insecurity in its new surroundings is a demonstrable fact. How that has rubbed off on Francis seems to me a legitimate field of inquiry.

It no more denigrates Francis's achievement to attribute it in part to his family background than it denigrates Mahatma Gandhi's achievement to say that he was driven to excel by the misery of his countrymen. The reasons why some gifted persons employ their gifts and others allow them to go to waste are more mysterious than the gifts themselves, and have nothing to do with "ethical relati-

vism" (whatever that is), or with comparing the "Hungarian-Jewish Baranys" to the "all-American Louds," except to say that the former had the will and ability to excel in an unfamiliar environment, while the latter sank into mediocrity on their own native ground.

TED MORGAN
New York City

Mark of distinction

To the Editor:

After reading Marcia Cohen's article "Bite" (April 14), I thought you might like to see my 14-year-old daughter Robin's answer to being called "tin grin."

She decided to start a campaign to make the wearing of braces a mark of distinction rather than ridicule, so she sketched out a "Braces Are Beautiful" design and asked me to have it printed on a



T-shirt — or "Teethshirt," as she called it — and also on a poster.

When they were delivered, she started selling them to local "tin grins." Would you believe it, even some non-braces-wearers have purchased them?

J. ROBERT JAMESON
Delmar, N. Y.

A dialogue on oil

To the Editor:

"Why was there a shortage before the shortage? The case against Big Oil" by Brit Hume (Dec. 9, 1973) misstates many facts and interweaves fact and biased allegations in such a way that it could lead readers unfamiliar with the subject to accept as facts what are merely Mr.