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## Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority

I began Ben Stein's article ["Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority," February] with the assumption that it was what its title suggested—an examination of two opposed positions on what television ought to be. I was therefore surprised to discover that the article ends up as a platform for Stein's sweeping personal biases about the medium itself. There is an amazing characterization of television as "unwatchably boring." Aside from the fact that the year 1980 saw the highest levels of set usage in the medium's history, if this were true, one has to ask what all the fuss is about. Or how it is that television is not only the nation's largest, but its most trusted source of news. I suppose all this is the logical result of having as referee a man who clearly detests the game he is covering.

David C. Fuchs  
Vice-President, Communications  
CBS/Broadcast Group  
New York, New York

Despite television's shortcomings, it is today a much brighter wasteland than when it was left up to Beaver and Howdy-Doody for our wholesome enlightenment. But now, holy-rolling across the country, comes the "Reformation." Alas! Just when television is growing up and America is emerging from the dark ages of Victorian sexuality, the Moral Majority gathers the godly gumption to tell us—Jews, Muslims, atheists, and Christians—

just what ungodly sinners we are. Lear has shown more moral responsibility in dealing with sensitive adult issues than Falwell contains in his pious pinky. If Falwell should ever control the media, God help us all!

Geoff Johnson  
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Thank you for Ben Stein's article "Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority." Upon finishing the article, I immediately sent a check for \$25 to Moral Majority begging them to keep up the good work.

Theodore R. Walter  
Canton, Pennsylvania

I've always thought Norman Lear was pretty far out, but I never realized he was so tuned in.

Harbert Ranch  
Granby, Colorado

If the "moral majority" of Americans is so opposed to the current TV fare, who is it out there making *Dallas* and *Soap* top-rated programs? Jerry Falwell's is simply a highly organized special-interest group—not a majority—which, having told me whom I should vote for, now wants to tell me what TV shows to watch. What, in God's name, will be next?

Scout Parsons  
Newfane, Vermont

How can Mr. Lear be so arrogant and smug as to believe everyone accepts the



"An interesting resumé, Randolph. If you'll read it you'll notice that I fired you from this company in 1972 when your memory began to fail!"

# LETTERS

trash parading back and forth on the TV screen? Jerry Falwell's reaction, along with others who constitute the Moral Majority, seems to me to be perfectly normal and expected in the face of an all-out assault on the values long held to be Christian as well as moral. If Norman Lear and his types hadn't started this trend, there would be no need for Jerry Falwell or the Moral Majority. However, if it comes to push and shove, let's all hope Falwell wins.

Arla J. Tracz  
Falls Church, Virginia

I was most impressed by your article "Norman Lear vs. the Moral Majority." I've long been opposed to Falwell and those like him. Not only are they dangerous megalomaniacs, but they are ignorant of the gift of individual thought. I don't believe that those who call themselves the Moral Majority know what it is to think for themselves. After all, it is easier to do what you are told and follow the crowd.

Their claims regarding "anti-Christian" attitudes are another source of irritation. What about those who are *not* Christians? Or, better yet, what about those who don't believe in religion at all? I always thought that they had rights too. According to the Moral Majority, they don't.

J. Bowdish  
Norwalk, California

## To Edward Albee's Defense

With mounting disbelief I read Roger Copeland's article, "Should Edward Albee Call It Quits" [February]. Since when has box-office popularity been any criterion of merit? He summarily

dismisses two of Albee's best plays, *All Over* and *Seascape*, simply because they did not have long runs. He omits from the discussion altogether two even better plays, *A Delicate Balance* and *Tiny Alice*, which may well be Albee's greatest play.

If we are to use Mr. Copeland's ideas of merit, then we must throw out such classics as Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, to mention only two books that failed miserably on first publication

Robert A. Wilson  
New York, New York

Roger Copeland replies: Apparently "the mounting disbelief" that Mr. Wilson experienced while reading my article prevented him from reading it clearly. At no point do I suggest that box-office popularity is a criterion of artistic merit. My reasons for "summarily dismissing" *All Over* and *Seascape* have nothing to do with their performance at the box office, but centered rather on their stiff language, mannered style, and intellectual pretensions.

As for Mr. Wilson's complaint that I omit altogether from my discussion any mention of either *A Delicate Balance* or *Tiny Alice*, I would again advise that he reread the article. Not only do I refer to both these plays, I go so far as to suggest that the title *A Delicate Balance* ironically calls attention to the problem at the heart of Albee's recent work: the difficulty of maintaining a delicate balance between emotional immediacy and metaphysical reflection.

So Mr. Copeland and Mr. Roth would have Edward Albee reveal to the world,

once and for all, that he has really been writing about homosexuals all these many years. That was also the desire of a good many of my freshman composition students who had no patience with the absurd. Can't we get rid of these sophomoric Freudians? No wonder J.D. Salinger went into reclusion. Albee might do well to follow suit... but then, there would be rumors.

Michael C. Smith  
Los Angeles, California

## Fuller's Fans

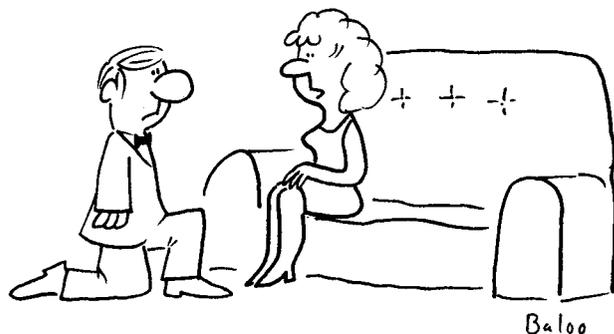
Shame on Hugh Kenner for stabbing Bucky in the back and worse for your suggestive cover line: "Are His Visions Follies?" ["Fuller's Follies," February]. Nobody is perfect, nor his works, but the heritage that Bucky Fuller will leave behind in the form of his tangible domes, maps, and Dymaxion ideas more than offsets any fault one may find with his writings. He has sparked a whole generation of young people to "do more with less," and the consequent savings in energy, resources, food, and you-name-it will be a legacy far and away more than any current living American will leave behind. Besides, how can visions indeed be follies; they are only untried proposals, and as such cannot be follies unless proved to have failed.

Franklin R. Stern  
Providence, Rhode Island

## A Reader Responds

I enjoyed John Fludas's review of *The Stories of Elizabeth Spencer* [Book Briefs, February]. But in the second sentence he says, "As a Southern writer she has been compared to Katherine Mansfield, Flannery O'Connor and Eudora Welty. . . ." Doesn't he really mean Katherine Ann Porter? Katherine Mansfield, born in New Zealand, was British, not Southern.

Eileen H. Salisbury  
Newhall, California



"I'm afraid I could never marry you, Charles, but have a nice day."

Please address letters for publication to Letters to the Editor, Saturday Review, 150 East 58 Street, New York, New York 10155. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. We are unable to acknowledge or return unused letters.

# We're looking for people to write children's books

Writing for children is the perfect way to take up writing, says the author of 53 children's books. Your ideas come right out of your own experience. And while it's still a challenge, it's probably the straightest possible line between you and publication — if you're qualified to seek the success this rewarding field offers.

By Alvin Tresselt, Dean of Faculty

**I**F you want to write and get published, I can't think of a better way to do it than writing books and stories for children and teenagers. Ideas flow naturally right out of your own life experience. While it's still a challenge, the odds of getting that first unforgettable check from a juvenile publisher are better than they are from just about any other kind of publisher I know.

Later on, you may get other checks from other publishers. But right now, the object is to begin — to break into print — to learn the feeling of writing and selling your work and seeing your name in type. After that, you can decide if you want your writing to take another direction.

But after 30 years of editing, publishing, and teaching — and 53 books of my own — I can tell you this: you'll go a long way before you discover anything as rewarding as writing for young readers.

Your words will never sound as sweet as they do from the lips of a child reading your books and stories. And the joy of creating books and stories that young people 'really dig' is an experience you'll never have anywhere else. (In this age of boob tube illiteracy, convenient morality, and plastic values, do you know of a more important audience?)

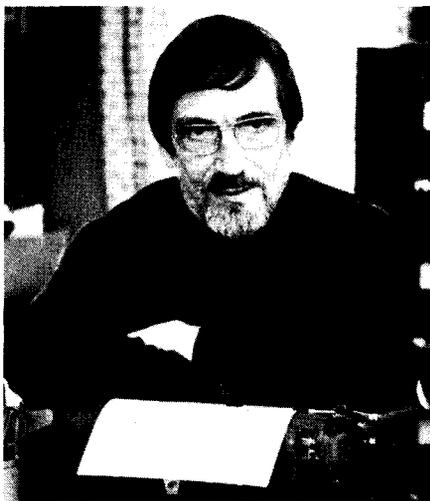
But, that's not all. The financial rewards go far beyond most people's expectations because there's a surprisingly big market out there for writers who are trained to crack it. More than 130 million young people's books are purchased each year. Between 2,000 and 2,500 new titles appear annually and new authors account for as many as half of them.

There are also 250 monthly magazines looking for material for young readers. You can imagine how much writing it takes just to keep them going!

## 'Am I really qualified?'

Yet two big questions bedevil nearly every would-be writer: "Am I really qualified?" and "How can I get started?"

This is our definition of a "qualified person": It's someone with an aptitude for writing who can take constructive criticism, learn from it, and turn it into a professional performance. That's the only kind of person we're looking for. The reasons are simple: our reputation is built on success, and if prospective students don't have the earmarks of success, we probably can't help them. And we tell them so. It's only fair to both of us.



Alvin Tresselt was Vice President and Executive Editor of Parents' Magazine Press, the first editor of *Humpty Dumpty's Magazine for Children*, and a board member of the Author's Guild. His 53 books for young readers have sold over two million copies.

To help us spot potential authors, we've developed a revealing test for writing aptitude. It's free, and we don't charge for our evaluation. But no one gets into the Institute without passing it. Those who pass and enroll receive our promise: You will complete at least one manuscript ready to submit to a publisher by the time you finish the Course.

## When we teach, you learn

I've learned a lot about writing for children and I love it. Now I'm passing my knowledge on to my students so they can profit from it. When I'm not writing my own books I spend my time at The Institute of Children's Literature, a workshop for writers that does only one thing and does it better than any other educational institution I know of: It trains qualified people to write for the young reader.

This is the way I work with my students, and my fellow instructors — all of whom are experienced writers or editors — work more or less the same way.

When you're ready — at your own time and your own pace — you send your assignment to me and I read it and reread it to get everything out of it you've put into it. Then I edit your assignment with a red pencil just the way a publishing house editor would — if he had the time. I return it along with a detailed letter explaining my comments. I tell you what your strong points are, what your weaknesses are, and just what you can do to improve. It's a matter of push and pull. You push and I pull and between us both, you learn to write.

## The proof of the pudding

This method really works. I wouldn't spend five minutes at it if it didn't. Last year we received hundreds of letters like these from successful students: "Before taking your Course (which I checked out with the National Better Business Bureau), the short stories I scribbled for my two tiny tots never caught an editor's fancy," writes Emily Burns of Salem, Ore.

"My first sale, to *National Catholic Weekly*,

was a Course lesson. Then I sent another Course assignment to a writer's competition and won first prize of \$400!"

"My instructor's advice was invaluable in plotting, character, motivation, and dialogue. I am most grateful for her personal interest and encouragement. Best of all she helped me understand my own strengths and weaknesses and how to emphasize the first and remedy the second. Better instruction hath no man than this!" Elizabeth Henley, New Cambria, Mo.

Marilyn Day of Marissa, Ill. says, "I'm proud of this accomplishment. Now I'm no longer a housewife, I am a *writer!*"

And Mary Carruth, Dublin, Cal., writes, "I sent out my first article with a prayer and a hope, and it was accepted. Your Course with its structure and support, has been everything I hoped for and needed."

"When I started this course, I did not really think that I had the ability to write", writes Sister M. Laetitia Mudde, West Haven, Ct., "But my instructor made me believe in myself." I have a file full of similar letters. People like yourself so full of pride they could easily convince you that indeed it is a pity more people — men and women — don't take up writing for children.

## Free Writing Aptitude Test offered

To find qualified men and women with an aptitude for writing, the Faculty and Consultants of the Institute have prepared a four-page Writing Aptitude Test. It is offered free and will be professionally evaluated at no cost to you by our staff.

Just mail the coupon below to receive your free Test and 32-page illustrated brochure describing The Institute, our Course, Faculty, and the current market for children's literature. If you demonstrate a true aptitude for writing, you will be eligible to enroll. But that's entirely up to you.

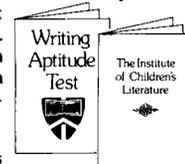
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Dear Mr. Tresselt:

H-06

I am interested in your program to help new writers get started. Please send me your free Writing Aptitude Test and 32-page brochure. I understand I am under no obligation whatever and no salesman will visit.



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# APRIL SPOTLIGHTS

COURTESY, THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART



The Guggenheim's retrospective of Arshile Gorky's work includes "Agony" (1947).

## Art

"I do not paint in front of, but from within nature," said the Armenian-born Vosdanik Adoian, a.k.a. **Arshile Gorky** (1904-1948), who will receive the most comprehensive exhibition yet of his work in a retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum, New York City. Forced to flee marauding Turks as a child, later immigrating to Watertown, Massachusetts, where he was fired from his job at the Hood Rubber Company for drawing on the packing crates, Gorky went on to become one of the leading figures during the Forties in the creation of a new and dominant American art. His truly original art—variously described as the last expression of Surrealism and the first of Abstract Expressionism—is all the more remarkable for the long, self-imposed apprenticeship he spent imitating the modern masters—most notably Cézanne, whom he considered the greatest of the moderns. The brief flowering of his mature genius, which emerged only a few years before his suicide, will be seen in the context of his slow, sure, artistic growth. (April 24 through July 19.)

## Film

Federico Fellini's sexual phantasmagoria **City of Women** will burst upon American screens this month. Marcello Mastroianni plays Snaporaz, a battle-scarred soldier in the war of the sexes who, in pursuit of an elusive beauty, stumbles upon a convention of angry feminists. There, some practice karate, while one sixtyish woman with seven husbands expounds upon the joys of polygamy. Spotted lurking in the corner, Snaporaz is set upon. He escapes only to have his life imperiled by a carload of teenaged punk rockers; and is eventually rescued by the aging, rifle-toting Dr. Zaübercock (Ettore Manni), who announces a party that

night to celebrate his 10,000th romantic conquest.

*City of Women* is sure to enrage feminists. But as always Fellini is, without apologies, Fellini. "Going to the cinema," he says, "is like returning to the womb." Of women he declares, "They represent myth, mystery, diversity, fascination, the thirst for knowledge and the search for one's own identity. Women are everything." (Opening in New York April 8.)



Marcello Mastroianni in Fellini's *City of Women*.