example, A. B. Reiskin and I are studying normal basal cells and carcinogenically induced epidermoid tumors in the hamster pouch. As is often the case, these tumors have a higher mitotic index than their normal counterparts. In addition, the tumors have a shorter duration of DNA synthesis, and labeling is more intensive (there are more grains per labeled cell) than in normal cells. Since the fraction of cells that become labeled after a single injection of tritiated thymidine is higher in the tumor than in the normal cell, it is clear that in this case the tumor cells have the shorter generation time, or the larger fraction of proliferating cells, or both.

In any case, these arguments and the infusion experiment are significant only for those therapeutic situations where effectiveness hinges on mitotic activity of the target cells during exposure to the agent. Barnard may be justified in his skepticism about most cancer chemotherapy, but I tend to be more optimistic in view of our lack of complete understanding of the mechanism of action of current therapeutic agents (including ionizing radiation).

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Desert Vegetation in Nevada

"Succession in desert vegetation on streets of a Nevada ghost town" [*Science* **134**, 670 (1961)] is a commanding and iconoclastic title, and an article on this subject deserves very careful reading. Upon such reading, I feel sure the paper deserves commendation—and comment. In this study, Philip V. Wells (New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas) compared the density and frequency of the most abundant species on the 33-year-abandoned streets of an ephemeral ghost town in Nye County, Nevada, with conditions on "undisturbed" adjacent bajada. He shows that "several shrubs of dry washes can become established in abundance on . . . an alluvial fan," and states, "Obviously, these pioneer plants of the desert play a role similar to that of successional plants of more humid regions."

As a statement of what Wells is trying to topple, I quote Wells: "Shreve . . . concluded: 'Each habitat in each subdivision of a desert area has its

own climax, which must *not be given* an elastic definition and *must be interpreted* as having a genetic relation to any other climax" (italics mine). May I quote again, this time directly from Shreve: "It is not possible to use the term 'climax' with reference to desert vegetation. Each habitat in each subdivision of a desert area has its own climax, which *must be given* an elastic definition and *must not be interpreted* as having a genetic relation to any other climax." I by no means imply that Wells purposedly misquoted Shreve. As an unintentional misquotation however, . . . this is the most interesting psychologic twist of its kind in the ecologic literature, to my knowledge, completely in accord with the thinking and reasoning Wells has expressed throughout his paper. The case of the ghost town supports and substantiates Shreve's generalizations, not the contrary.

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The misquotation caused by the misplacement of the word *not* was lacking in the manuscript, appeared first in the proof, was corrected by me in the proof, but slipped through into the final printing. Hence, the "psychological twist" deduced by Egler as the reason for the error must be traced to the editorial office or the printer. Even after undergoing surgery by Egler, my article provides no basis for his sole conclusion, given ex cathedra in the last sentence of his letter.

As a statement of what Egler is trying to topple, I quote his quotation from my article: "several shrubs of dry washes can become established in abundance on . . . an alluvial fan. . . . Obviously, these pioneer plants of the desert play a role similar to that of successional plants of more humid regions." I would like to quote from the original, in context: "Since the word climax, as applied to vegetation, conveys an idea of relative stability, it seems scarcely applicable in the case of desert washes, which are periodically scoured by floods carrying great quantities of coarse detritus. The average wash presents an extensive open surface favorable for invasion by pioneer plants possessing the requisite adaptations for efficient seed dispersal, celerity of growth, and early maturation. One might suppose that all plants of this habitat have a greater water requirement than plants of upland

sites and for this reason are restricted to naturally irrigated areas of the desert. However, the present study shows that several shrubs of dry washes can become established in abundance on *the more xeric upland portions of* an alluvial fan *when the competition of the dominant upland shrubs is largely removed.* Obviously, these pioneer plants of the desert play a role similar to that of successional plants of more humid regions." This does not necessarily imply that Egler has edited to alter meaning, but as a "psychological twist," it appears to have been overlooked by perennial critic Egler in his survey of the ecological literature.

The evidence presented in my report is at variance with the "autosuccessional" views of Shreve, as well as with his related views on climax vegetation. The latter were distorted by the typographical error, but, thanks to Egler, now stand corrected.

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The Cunningham Amendment

Your recent editorial [*Science* **135**, 877 (1962)] commented on the terms of the "Cunningham amendment" to the postal rate bill, an amendment to end free or subsidized delivery of Communist propaganda by the Post Office. As the author of the amendment, I would appreciate the opportunity to add several facts for the benefit of your readers, many of whom may have a desire and need for certain Russian or other Communist bloc publications. These might include outright propaganda, daily papers, magazines of general interest, and scientific journals or papers.

There is no intention on my part, as I have often said, to deny to any American any material he needs or wants to receive. I do not believe it would be possible or practical to bar Communist propaganda from the country, but I do believe that the vast majority of Americans are in favor of ending the subsidy given Communist propaganda, especially at this time when American postal rates are almost certain to be increased.

Accordingly, the House of Representatives felt it was time to take cognizance of the fact that the Russians and other Communist governments have long violated the reciprocal