

Forswear, and let your critics have their way,  
Till you demean your calling in vain hope  
Of sharing theirs?

*Brutus:*

I would not if I could,  
For I can strike a stronger blow for Man  
By doing what I best have learned to do  
And making it my life, than giving heed  
To ev'ry thoughtless wight who may reproach

Me and my science, with false cries of shame

And guilt we feel not. Did not Cassius say,\*

"Of your philosophy you make no use  
If you give place to accidental evils?"

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\* *Julius Caesar*, Act IV, Scene iii

### France: Reducing the Ratio

According to a letter addressed by Prime Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas to the French University Teachers Union (see *Le Monde*, 19 Sept.), there are this year, in the public higher education system, 38,102 teachers for 679,000 students. That makes a student-faculty ratio of about 18 to 1 and not the preposterous figure of 80 to 1 cited by D. S. Greenberg in "Academic finance . . ." (14 Aug., p. 658).

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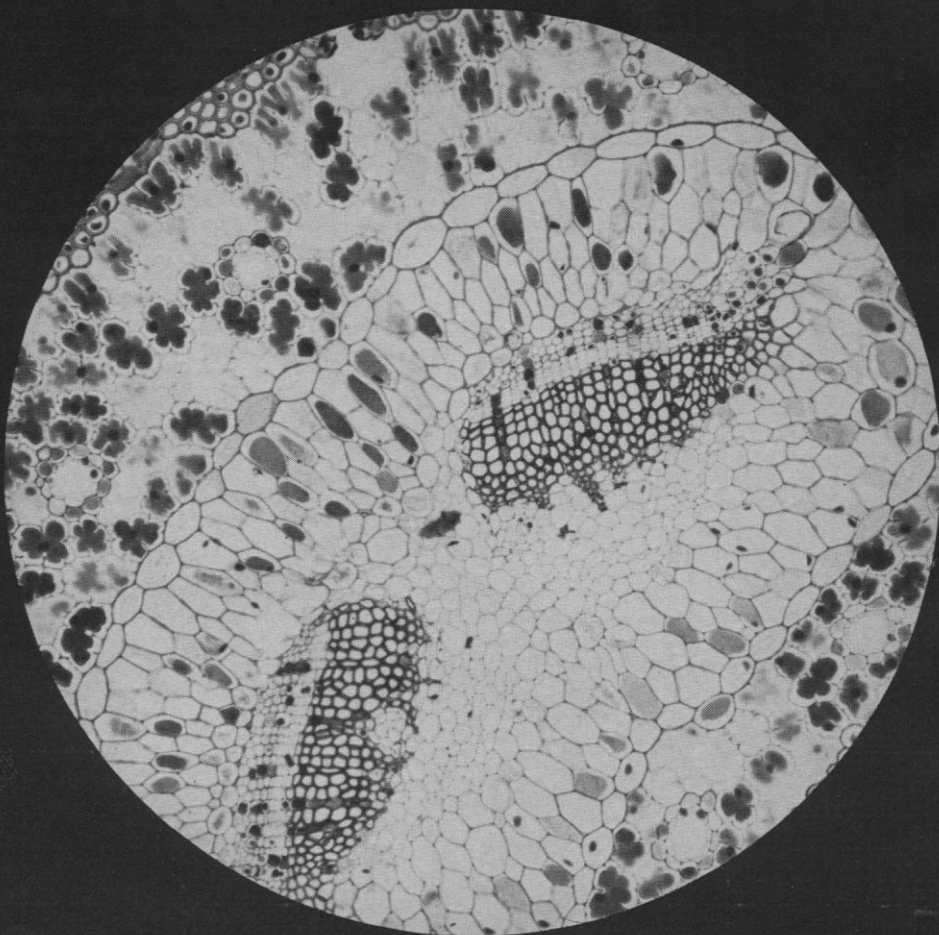
### Molecular Biology:

#### Origin of the Term

In the September 1970 issue of *Physics Today*, in an article "The future of physics," Freeman J. Dyson, of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, speaks of the disapproval on the part of his physicist friends of the fact that Sir Lawrence Bragg, the director of the Cavendish Laboratory, was interested in supporting activities in a field which, Dyson states, did not "even have a name when Bragg was appointed in 1938."

Dyson is here referring, as his article makes clear, to molecular biology. When I pointed out to Dyson that the term "molecular biology" had in fact been used in 1938, he wrote me that he had based his remark on the fact

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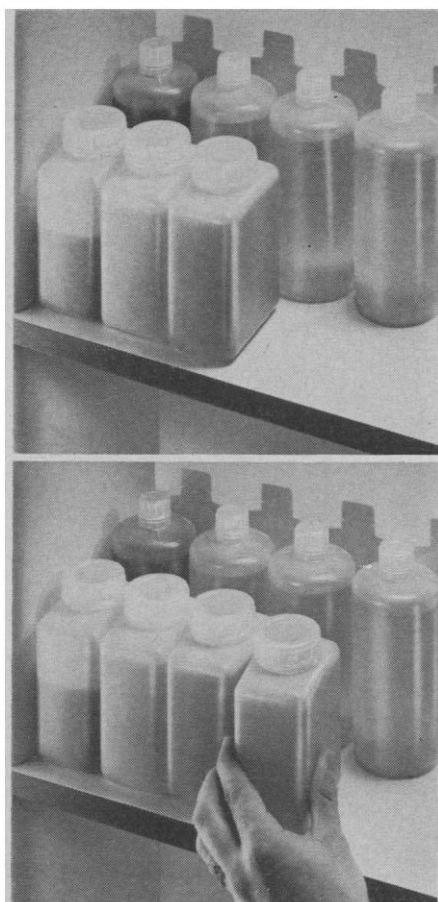


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that an article by E. L. Hess, "Origins of molecular biology" [*Science* 168, 664 (1970)] "fails entirely to mention any use of the name earlier than that by Astbury in 1945"; and Dyson suggested that I "write a letter to the editor of *Science* to set the record straight."

My letter to Dyson contained the following paragraphs:

Very shortly after I was appointed, in 1932, the director for the natural sciences in the Rockefeller Foundation I urged the Trustees, with the full backing of the then president of the Rockefeller Foundation, Max Mason, that the science program of the foundation be shifted from its previous preoccupation with the physical sciences, to an interest in stimulating and aiding the application, to basic biological problems, of the techniques, experimental procedures, and methods of analysis so effectively developed in the physical sciences.

This proposal was accepted and approved by the Rockefeller Foundation Trustees, and progress in the program was sufficiently prompt and promising so that when I drafted the "natural science" section of the Annual Report of the Rockefeller Foundation for 1938 this section began with a sixteen-page portion, pages 203-219, which was headed, in large type, MOLECULAR BIOLOGY, the first sentence being "Among the studies to which the Foundation is giving support is a series in a relatively new field, which may be called molecular biology, in which delicate modern techniques are being used to investigate ever more minute details of certain life processes."

Thus I think that it must be conceded that this field did have a name when Sir Lawrence was made the Director of the Cavendish in 1938.

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#### Yogurt Fit for an Armenian

I have read with shock the improprieties urged upon your readers by letter writers Segal and Goodman for the making of yogurt (31 July and 9 Oct.). In all generosity, I must admit that Evalyn Segal has genuine insights into portions of the process. She uses whole milk and she understands the application of yogurt to cucumber salad. But she recommends a dangerously imprecise method of measuring preincubation temperature of the boiled milk and goes on to say that the milk container should cool slowly wrapped in "two heavy Turkish towels." Jerome Goodman, on the other hand, writes that he uses "powdered skim milk" (may my sainted grandmother forgive

my repeating such things on my own typewriter), and then prescribes incubation at 43°C using a "thermostatically controlled electric frying pan."

Such things cannot go uncorrected in a journal of science and humanism. Whole milk is used, of course. It is placed in a crockery bowl and mixed with the culture. But the proper temperature for the start of the incubation period is ascertained by dipping the elbow into the milk until one feels a sensation neither of hot nor of cold. Then the covered bowl is wrapped, first, in the second section of *The New York Times*, and, over that, a baby blanket made of virgin wool given in a layette 12 years earlier by an aunt in Watertown, Massachusetts. The coverings are kept in place by a flat granitic rock weighing approximately 8 pounds. The next morning you can expect yogurt fit for an Armenian.

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#### Livermore Lab Response

Boffey's article on the Gofman-Tamplin charges against this Laboratory (28 Aug., p. 838) quotes me only through the intermediary of Gofman. The quotations in the article are not in accordance with my memory of the conversations.

Thus, I did not tell Gofman that "it would be a 'grave mistake' for him and Tamplin to testify before Senator Muskie's subcommittee last fall." To the best of my recollection, I did not see Gofman between the time Senator Muskie called him to testify and the time he returned from the hearings.

I do not recall saying that the Laboratory was a "fragile institution," and that we couldn't "take a chance on injuring relationships between the lab and the commission." I thought, and believe I said, that the Laboratory's (or anyone else's) ability to get an objective hearing for controversial recommendations is "fragile," and depends on the willingness of many people to look dispassionately at views to which they have given support. In particular, I thought that coupling technical recommendations with attacks on individuals and institutions could only damage this ability.

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