But a slip of an anonymous *New York Times* typesetter symbolizes even better the discrepancy between promise and performance during the present Administration. In the *Times* edition of 29 January 1973, a tiny box on page 1 announced a sweeping new federal science support program, details of which were to be found on an inside page. This just happened to be the obituary page. I wondered then whether this entertaining slip was Freudian or sibyllic.

In view of subsequent government steps, characterized recently by the Federated Societies of Experimental Biology as "preparing the funeral march of the National Institutes of Health," I should have been alarmed rather than amused.

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Birth Order, Family Size, and Intelligence

The relation of birth order and family size to intelligence reported in the article by Belmont and Marolla (14 Dec. 1973, p. 1096) is remarkably similar to my observations in a study of almost 800,000 National Merit scholarship participants (*1*). However, whereas Belmont and Marolla determined the relation by means of a nonverbal test (Raven Progressive Matrices), my own study indicated that the effects were probably verbal in origin. Since the data used by Belmont and Marolla also contain language scores, I hope that the relation of this variable to the nonverbal scores will also be studied.

Belmont and Marolla note that the mean score for only children does not follow a family size gradient. I have also observed this phenomenon (*2*), but I have found no adequate explanation for it. That is, if scores tend to decline with both birth order and family size, why doesn't an only child follow this same rule and thus have the highest mean score of all?

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1. H. M. Breland, *Psychol. Bull.* **80**, 210 (1973).
2. ———, "Birth order, family configuration, and verbal achievement," *Research Bulletin 72-47* (Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N.J., 1972).

Occam's Razor and the Watergate Tapes

In his report "Watergate tapes: Critics question main conclusions of expert panel" (News and Comment, 22 Feb., p. 732), Nicholas Wade adds his contribution to the tape decoy that has been distracting our attention toward what constitutes consciously manipulable and easily distortable "evidence" ever since Alexander Butterfield accidentally (?) revealed the presence of the tapes last July. Wade apparently supports President Nixon's public relations and legal defense staffs in their allegation that the technical experts appointed by Judge Sirica and the White House (!) may have overlooked the possibility of technical failure in the Uher 5000 recorder.

But, if we accept this "explanation" of the 18½-minute silence on that tape, then we must formulate separate explanations for each of two already missing tapes, for any tapes or tape segments that turn out to be missing or rerecorded in the future, for missing dictaphone recordings, for portions excised from documents, for missing CIA records, and so forth.

As scientists who believe with William of Occam that "entities must not be multiplied without necessity," should we not seek a more direct and elegant explanation? There are two, both formulable in terms of "sinister forces." One posits mysterious spirit beings whose actions are beyond our understanding. The other points toward self-serving human beings whose actions would be defined as "cover-up to the third power" (a cover-up of a cover-up of a cover-up).

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Conserving Renewable Resources

Colin W. Clark (17 Aug. 1973, p. 630) presents an elucidating and useful model of how a resource with a regenerative capacity may be overexploited. He uses the Antarctic blue whale population as an example.

Regrettably, a quick reader may get the impression that Clark presents a strong mathematical argument in favor of the view that only through socialism would the world be able to avoid catastrophic overexploitation of its natural resources. The postulate of Clark's