meable material seems to exist. I have tested many plastics and several other materials, but have found nothing that is significantly more permeable to carbon dioxide than to water at normal plant growth temperatures.

If anyone has reason to believe that some material (plastic, metal, liquid, or interface) is significantly more permeable to carbon dioxide than to water vapor, I would appreciate being told of it.

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References and Unreferences

In a graduate seminar in atmospheric science, I require that my students write a research paper. Having found that these student papers can stand improvement, I hand out, at the beginning of the semester, a list of "do's and don't's" for paper writing. One of the "don't's" is, "Don't use a reference unless you've seen the original paper. Are you going to swallow whole what Mason, or Blanchard, or Vonnegut said about Sigurdur Schlockinghausen's memorable 1932 paper that appeared in the *Journal of Irreproducible Results*? Better not, unless you wish to view the world through the particular brand of colored glasses each of them unknowingly wears. Try your own brand; you might find other colors more to your choosing."

Alas, I forgot to tell my students the most important "don't" of all—"Even if you've seen the original paper, don't copy the reference to it from somebody else's paper. It's probably wrong." For years I've been aware of this, but sometimes under the pressure of compiling a small mountain of references, I'd sneak into my reference list one or two I had read but for which I had forgotten to jot down the title, journal, page spread, and so forth. In an attempt to save time, I copied the references from someone else's list. When will I ever learn that this usually ends in disaster? Let me illustrate. A while ago I had occasion to reference a paper which I had read in 1970 in the Swedish geophysical journal *Tellus*. I couldn't find the reference in my card index, but I knew it was cited by the authors of six or seven papers in the 21 September 1972 issue of the *Journal of Geophysical Research,* which I just happened to have on my desk. Quickly I flipped the pages and found an author who cited the *Tellus* paper. He said it had appeared in volume 21, 1970, pages 451–461. I had no reason to doubt the accuracy of this citation, but just to be on the safe side I decided to check this against the reference list of another author who cited the paper. After all, there's safety in numbers. To my surprise the second author said the paper appeared, not in volume 21, but in volume 22. Otherwise he agreed with the first author. So who was correct? Obviously I needed a third author and a third reference list. In a few minutes I found him. He said the second author was correct regarding the volume number, but that both were wrong about the page spread. The paper actually ends on page 462.

Fast losing faith, I turned to a fourth author, and this time, I thought I had hit the jackpot. The fourth author was none other than the author of the *Tellus* paper in question, and, since authors are very careful when citing their own papers, I assumed that he would cite his own paper in impeccable form. He said everyone was wrong—the paper starts on page 541, not page 451. But he said nothing about the page spread. So on I went through the 21 September issue of the *Journal of Geophysical Research.* I found a fifth author who said the proper *Tellus* volume was neither 21 nor 22 but 12. With five authors behind me who could not agree on the citation, I went to the last remaining author who used the reference, expecting by this time a sixth version. But no, he agreed with the second author. The proper volume is 22, and the page spread is 451–461. Authors 2 and 6 are right. I confirmed this at the library.

Do you think I've made this all up? Check the aforementioned journal. But please, no secretaries, no Xerox copies. Go to the library yourself and see what I saw. As for me, I am now a firm believer in the moral of one of Thurber's stories (*1*), "There is no safety in numbers, or in anything else."

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References

1. J. Thurber, *Fables for Our Time* (Harper & Row, New York, 1939).