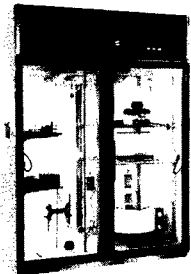


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## LETTERS

### Ethics Advisory Board

In the article "Ethical risks in biomedicine" (News and Comment, 17 Apr., p. 307), it is stated that "the work of the old Ethics Board has not yet found a secretary of HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare] or HHS [Health and Human Services] willing to endorse it. Califano ignored it."

As chairman of the Ethics Advisory Board under former HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr., I would like to correct the record. First, I believe the Ethics Advisory Board experiment did falter because of disinterest at HEW-HHS and the Office of Management and Budget, but only after Secretary Califano left office. Second, Secretary Califano did not to my knowledge ever ignore the Board or its work. Indeed, I believe, as I think all members of the Board do, that Secretary Califano felt it was extremely important for an independent body like the Board to advise the Secretary on the complex and important ethical issues arising in federal health policies and programs. Moreover, Secretary Califano acted positively upon all recommendations which the Board made to him except for some about in vitro fertilization, which he published for public comment before taking action. Final action was prevented not by disinterest but by departure from office.

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### Citation in Astronomy

A certain systematic parochialism is too often found in scientific literature—in the United States as well as in other countries. In the science I know best—astronomy—many review articles published in the United States contain few or no references to papers written in languages other than English or to groups of authors working outside the United States. Has science, in this field, been developing only in the United States? No one really thinks so.

J. Lequeux, editor of *Astronomy and Astrophysics* (a journal that, about 20 years ago, resulted from the merging of many important Western European astronomy journals), has found (1) that, in 1978, the "impact factor" worldwide (derived from the Science Citation Index) was 9.91 for the *Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics*; 2.71 for

the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*; 2.31 for *Astronomy and Astrophysics*; and less for other journals.

One concludes that, nowadays, American scientists quote only themselves; the process is dangerous. Languages other than English are discouraged. Young (or not so young) scientists elsewhere in the world publish in English, but sometimes in broken English, missing the opportunity to be clear. This usually does not help, however, as American scientists do not quote them.

This kind of parochialism is spreading, and it is leading to a new form of American intellectual colonialism: only Americans do well; American science is exported or good scientists are imported from abroad, where they are transformed into American scientists; foreign science is good only when submitted to American leadership. I am possibly darkening the picture; I have many good friends and colleagues in the United States, and elsewhere, who have always been extremely fair; and I cannot fail to pay here a due tribute to all I owe American science, and to American astronomers in particular. But in the present situation, I see severe threats to the universality of science and to the independence of non-American scientists in their choice of a language, a subject, and a channel for publication.

I hope my friends will pardon me, and I hope they will understand what I mean—in time.

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#### References

1. J. Lequeux, *J. Astron. Fr.* (No. 9), (June 1980).

### Industrial Participation in Engineering Education

At the recent Sixth Annual AAAS Colloquium on R&D Policy, much consideration was given to the health of the science and engineering educational enterprise. Particular attention was focused on the cutbacks in the Reagan Administration's budget for science and engineering educational support within the National Science Foundation. Many speakers suggested that the industrial world pick up some of the slack created by federal funding cutbacks. Since Seat-

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