

work for Stratospheric Change. Otherwise ozone trend monitoring will continue to be based on a set of instruments whose long-term stability is in doubt.

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Mitochondrial DNA in Sperm

Roger Lewin's parenthetical explanation of why sperm do not as a rule contribute mitochondria to the zygote (Research News, 2 Oct., p. 24) is, I'm afraid, incorrect.

Rather like a machine capable of generating more energy than it consumes, a sperm without a mitochondrion would be a most remarkable sperm indeed. The maternal inheritance of mitochondrial DNA in most eukaryotes is caused by exclusion of the sperm's mitochondria from the zygote at fertilization.

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"Homology" Controversy

In relation to the controversy over the use of the term "homology" to express identity of sequences in proteins or nucleic acids, I found myself in agreement with the more classical biologists who protest that this word already has a precise meaning, and it is not being used in this sense by modern molecular biologists (Research News, 25 Sept., p. 1570). One wonders indeed what is wrong with "percent identity," since this is the obvious term to use. Is it perhaps too obvious or ordinary and an example of scientists' increasing reluctance to use simple words to convey their meaning and to coin noninformative new words or to arbitrarily

redefine words already in use? Clearly science needs a precise, technical language that must be learned; but have we gone too far? The same problem applies to legal language and to that vast mass of deadening verbiage that emanates daily from one or another bureaucratic office. A recent *New York Times* article (1) began, "The Tower of Babel so annoyed the Almighty, the Bible tells us, that the Lord forced its builders to converse in a babble of mutually unintelligible languages. A glance at any of the thousands of scientific journals published these days is enough to tell the story; the titles alone are enough to sow confusion among all but a few initiates." We have indeed come a long way since Isaac Newton could write very clearly, "In the beginning of the Year 1666. . . I procured me a Triangular glass—Prisme to try therewith the celebrated Phenomena of Colors" (2).

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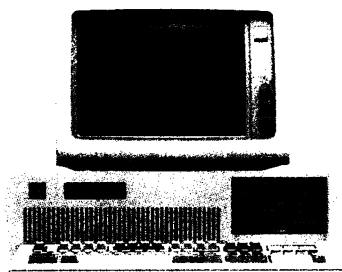
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