the interest of the public—and ultimately NIH—that there is a group which enjoys such history, diversity, and respect.

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Exhilarating Editorial

Regarding the editorial by Al Gore (12 Apr., p. 177) and the subsequent responses (Letters, 10 May, p. 793): How dare the Vice President of the United States write an editorial championing scientific research and education in the profession's leading journal! How dare he describe and promote an organizational metaphor for a productive society that is exemplified by the accumulated global practice of investigative science! How dare a long-standing science advocate and author of a best-selling popular science book sully these hermetic pages! Thank goodness there are enough well-dressed emperors among us to dress down such demagoguery!

Every once in a while I am heartened by evidences of a very slowly growing public appreciation of the value of basic scientific research. To see the Vice President of the United States fostering such an appreciation and so resolutely supporting my profession and my passion on the editorial page of *Science* is, quite simply, exhilarating.

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After the letters highly critical of Vice President Gore's editorial, I can only conclude from the apparent discordance between the vehemence of the printed criticisms and Gore's text that some of the writers themselves are politically motivated. What Gore had to say made sense to me.

We can argue about the usefulness of Gore's models and whether we think "big" science or "small" science is the most productive in the long run, but to label Gore's remarks as "offensive and inappropriate" or as being "so full of so little understanding" is itself offensive and inappropriate. What do we want government science policy to be if it should not be directed at a "learning society"?

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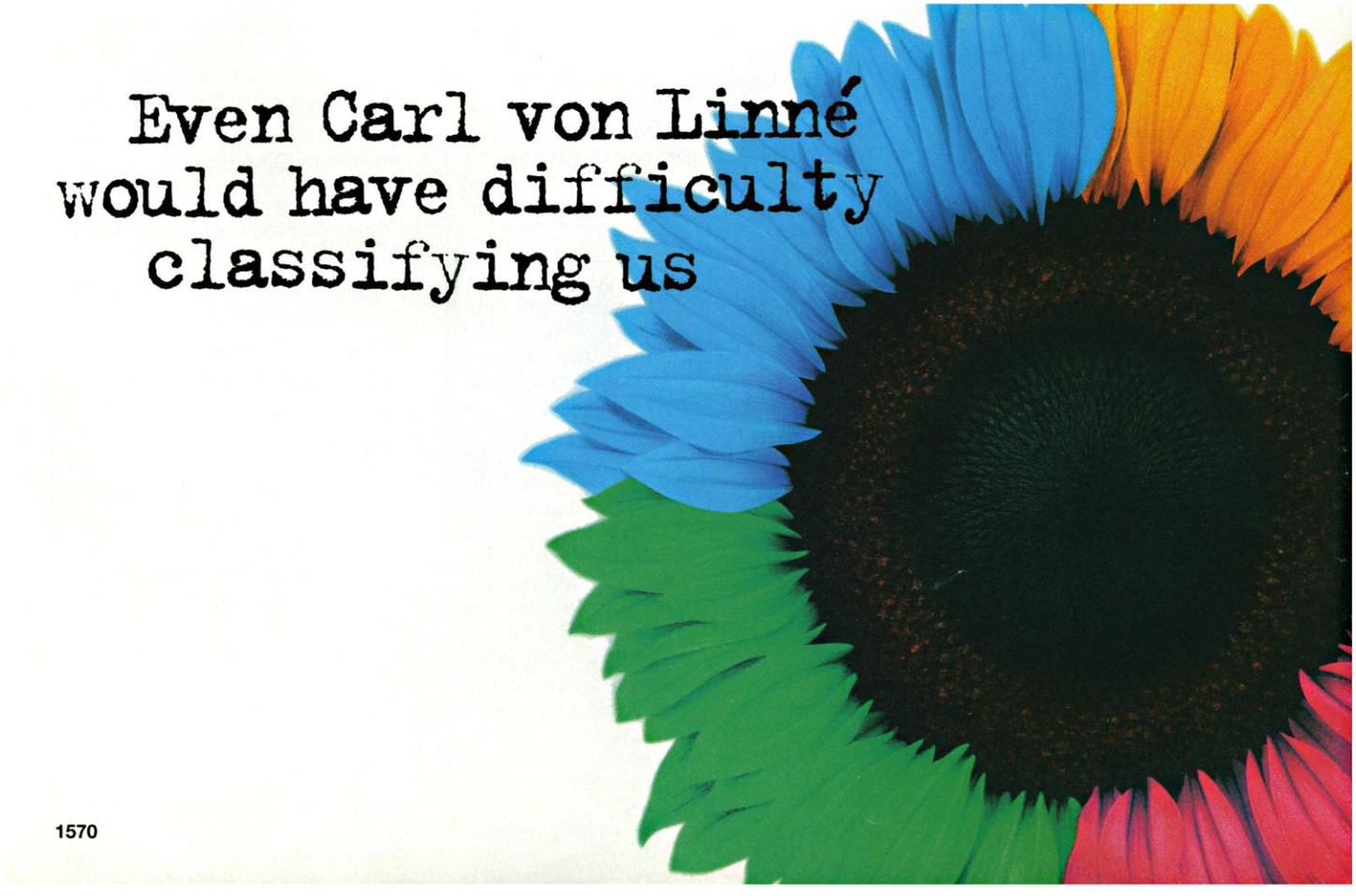
It is not surprising, given the current political climate in the United States, that the readers' responses to "The metaphor of distributed intelligence" not only challenge the opinions of Vice President Gore, but also claim that *Science* does not have the right to print such opinions. Although it is true that "Al Gore is not a member of *Science*'s editorial staff, nor is *Science* or the AAAS a branch of the Democratic Party," as one writer puts it, this is irrelevant. *Science* has printed plenty of controversial editorials written by individuals who are not on the editorial staff. The fact is that the editorial was an important statement of the Administration's policy regarding federally funded science. Gore speaks not only for the Democratic Party, but for the administrative branch of the U.S. government. Whether one agrees with his opinions or not, and whether or not one voted for him, doesn't change this.



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As many of us know, giving individual scientists their own RO1 grants provides them with the opportunity and incentive needed for them to explore their own creative ideas with the perseverance required for new discoveries. Let us as scientists thank Vice President Gore for communicating with us and reminding us of our obligations in helping to create and harness the power of "distributed intelligence" that can be used to improve our lives.

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Nesting Dinosaur

The idea that dinosaurs might brood their eggs ("Another nesting dino," Random Samples, 10 May, p. 819) is not unexpected. Among their living reptilian cousins, the snakes and lizards, well over 100 species are known to brood eggs or maintain a nest, and more than 10 species engage in communal nesting, including the green iguanas of Panama. Maintaining and guarding nests with eggs is particularly well known in such reptiles as crocodilians, king cobras, and pythons, the latter becoming endothermic during brooding. However, the conclusion drawn from these dinosaur nesting finds—that oviraptorids are engaged in avian-style brooding behavior—stretches far beyond the evidence (accordingly, a crocodile, turtle, or python, preserved similarly, would be exhibiting "avian brooding behavior"). Perhaps "the strain of egg-laying" would have resulted in the fossil python's untimely death, as it was with *Oviraptor*. Hirsch *et al.* (*1*) showed that the addition of the shell to dinosaur eggs and bird eggs is fundamentally different. This is illustrated by an Upper Jurassic dinosaur egg, which had a pathological multiple shell, typical of modern pathological reptilian eggs (commonly seen in marine turtles), but dramatically different from those of birds. Pathological reverse peristalsis in the avian oviduct produces an "ovum in ovo," as opposed to a double-shelled reptilian pathology, thus degrading the dinosaur-bird connection.

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Benefit-Cost Analysis and the Environment

In their Policy Forum of 12 April (p. 221), Kenneth J. Arrow *et al.* argue that benefit-cost analysis should play a role in determining environmental, health, and safety regulation—a conclusion with which we agree. But we disagree with their proposed method for discounting future costs and benefits. "Ideally," they write, "the same range of discount rates should be used in all regulatory analyses." It seems to us, though, that there is a big difference between short-term health and safety regu-