priorities that gave ascendency to the seeking of global preeminence over improving the quality of our national life, that these same priorities led to our intervention in Vietnam, and that they are likely to lead to further such interventions, which "seem to undermine the way of life they seek to preserve and spread" (pp. 168–69).

Blankenship would like to use the Apollo decision as an index of the quality of our political decision-making and wants to blame the decision-makers for our not doing better things. He asks, "Why have we had an Apollo but not, for example, a decent health care or welfare system?"—implying that this is part of "a set of questions different from those posed by the author." But I believe my book faces this question squarely. We went to the moon because the values held by the majority of the American people and their leaders in 1961 found Project Apollo congenial. We do not have a decent health care or welfare system because neither in 1961 nor now is there sufficient support in the American polity to accomplish those goals. Thus, if the Apollo decision is an index of anything, it is an index of the values we as a people held in 1961. Blankenship dissents from these values, and so do I. But it is he, not I, who confuses a description of what was with one of what should have been.

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Quality Control

Because of its tremendous importance and the real danger of its quietly falling by the wayside, the peer review system so ably defended by Gross (Letters, 9 July) deserves additional and continued support from concerned scientists.

The biological scientific research community, as well as officials of such federal agencies as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, has on numerous occasions in the past praised the peer review system as the fairest way to maintain "quality control" over proposed projects, a control doubly necessary in these times of decreased funding of basic research. Scientific merit must remain the sole basis for award of the meager monies available; and the "relevancy" fad folk must realize that, as Gross also argues, true relevance and "applicableness" will, in the long run, derive far more often from the tackling of well-chosen basic problems than from "direct" approaches when the latter are of a superficial nature or of low scientific merit.

Administrators long out of personal research activity, no matter how well meaning, are seldom as appropriate judges of the quality of a specialized project as are pertinent panels of the principal investigator's peers in that particular field of research.

JOHN O. CORLISS
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Injustice to Women Scientists

Our society is overgrown with trivial hindrances to the advancement of women. This is so much a part of our culture that we are scarcely aware of it. Most of these minor injustices would have no effect at all by themselves, but in the aggregate their impact is enormous. They add up to a widespread, low-key slighting of women, a refusal to be aware of what women can do and and are doing. This affects hiring practices quite directly. More important, it diminishes the aspirations of young women and thus compounds the problem. Therefore it is important to call attention to these offenses and to consider their effects.

One such affront to women is the title of the widely used reference work, American Men of Science. It offends women scientists, whose biographies are included in the volume but whose existence is explicitly denied in the title. Furthermore, the name suggests at a glance that scientists are men. Since these prestigious volumes are used not only by members of the scientific community but also by students, reporters, and so forth, and are visible in libraries everywhere, this pernicious suggestion reaches many minds.

Like many other disparagements of women, this one was inadvertent. No malice was intended. In 1906, when publication of American Men of Science began, the title may well have been appropriate. This is no longer the case.

DORA B. GOLDSTEIN
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Mass Transit Subsidies

Constance Holden, in her report on mass transit (News and Comment, 11 June, p. 1118), says that "mass transit systems cannot be self-supporting, but must be subsidized, just as automobile travel is" (italics added).

She should know that highway travel pays its own way, capital and operating costs, just as she recognizes the need for mass transit subsidies—subsidies amounting to more than half the total operating costs. The effect of such misleading statements, were they to bear fruit, could put far too great an economic load on our society to allow them to pass unchallenged.

FRANK T. BARR
8623 Northeast 10 Street,
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Barr has a point, although, strictly speaking, once taxes become government property and are then redistributed for a specific purpose they can be called subsidies. Also, some areas are clearly getting more from the redistribution than what they put in.

The Highway Trust Fund clearly encourages the use of the automobile. Road users have no choice about where their taxes go. They go into the construction of more roads, with the result that many have been built simply because the money has been available to build them—which in turn generates more user taxes, especially since alternative modes of transport have been left to wither. Nixon himself has acknowledged this imbalance, since under his revenue-sharing proposal he suggests that states be able to use money originally earmarked for highways as they see fit.—C. HOLDEN

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should not be entitled to a full subsidy for his education. A more serious problem for higher education is the premature filling of tenure slots. In computer science, the next 10 years will produce a generation of new Ph.D.’s more qualified than those of us who now hold the professorships. If these new Ph.D.’s are frozen out, the field will suffer.

John McCarthy
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Flying Saucer Sightings

D. I. Warren (6 Nov., p. 599) has brought forth an interesting theory. A number of people that I have talked to reported that the only reason they happened to see the flying saucer was because they went outside to “see what was bothering the horses.” So it was really the horses who first sighted the UFO. When horses are used for the primitive task of simply supplying tractive power, they are undoubtedly victims of the status frustration syndrome. Therefore the theory must be valid.

K. W. Templin
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Los Angeles, California 90054

Sirens’ Songs

In “Songs of humpback whales” (13 Aug., p. 585) Payne and McVay mention “the possibility . . . that some other species have been included with . . . [their] data on humpbacks.” Although they refer to several species of whales, they fail to mention the most likely candidates, the Sirens. Their song has been described as “clear” by Circe and their voice “sweet as a honeycomb” by Ulysses. These definitions compare well with that of Payne and McVay: “beautiful and varied sounds.” It is unfortunate that no recording of the Sirens’ songs was made by Ulysses (probably because his hands were tied at the time); it would have been interesting to compare it to the recordings made by Payne and McVay.

Mario C. Rattazzi
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lar resistance, water use efficiency tends to be higher in C₄ than in C₃ plants.

The intracellular resistance is composed of physical and biochemical components, the latter being identified with the carboxylation reactions. Several attempts were made to partition the intracellular resistance into these two major components by theoretical analysis, but these procedures were queried. Experimental evidence implied that the main component of the intracellular resistance was the carboxylation resistance. This was also supported by other data for a close relationship between intracellular resistance and levels of RuDP carboxylase activity. Such evidence suggests that, even in C₄ plants, levels of RuDP carboxylase activity may be a major limitation to photosynthetic rate. In C₄ plants the lower intracellular CO₂ resistances probably result from the efficiency of the PEP carboxylation system in the CO₂ concentrating ability of the mesophyll cells.

In terms of adaptation and evolution, it is clear that, in arid environments with high solar radiation and high day temperature, C₄ plants have several advantages over C₃ plants. The C₄ plant has no apparent photorespiration, greater photosynthetic efficiency under high light intensity and higher temperature optima, and makes more efficient use of water. However, R. O. Slatyer emphasized that one cannot extrapolate directly from single leaf studies to the behavior of whole plants or plant communities, since many factors contribute to overall growth and water use. Furthermore, with regard to economic food yield, such as yield of grain, many other factors must be considered and potential rate of leaf photosynthesis is only one determinant.

In evolutionary terms it appears that both C₄ plants and plants with CAM have arisen polyphyletically among several of the more advanced orders of both dicotyledenous and monocotyledenous plants. The Caryophyllales and the Euphorbiales include both CAM and C₄ plants, but several other orders include only one or the other. All plants apparently rely on the photosynthetic carbon cycle for the ultimate steps in CO₂ fixation. In CAM and C₄ plants, the C₄ dicarboxylic acid products serve essentially as mechanisms for prefixing and concentrating CO₂ in the photosynthetic tissue. Furthermore, in primitive aquatic
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environments with low oxygen levels, low light intensity, and the absence of water stress, plants with the C₃ photosynthetic carbon cycle would be at no disadvantage. Only with the colonization of terrestrial environments of high radiation, increasing oxygen levels, and increasing aridity would CAM and C₄ acid fixation and metabolism be advantageous. Again, though, it was emphasized that competitive evolutionary advantage is not just a matter of leaf photosynthesis.

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Clinical Aspects of Inherited Disorders

Genetically determined growth deficiencies, cancer genetics, genetic carrier detection, prenatal chromosome analysis, and prenatal detection of inborn errors of metabolism were some of the topics discussed at a meeting on the clinical aspects of inherited disorders held at the Medical Center, University of Alabama in Birmingham, on 9 and 10 April 1970. The meeting was opened by J. F. Volker, president, University of Alabama in Birmingham, and John Leslie, regional medical director, Maternal and Child Health Services, Health Services and Mental Health Administration.

D. W. Smith (Seattle) discussed the genetic basis for clinical disorders and presented a new classification of growth deficiency syndromes. He emphasized the importance of genetic disorders in medical problems and classified their source as (i) genetic imbalance in which there is a numerical or structural abnormality of the chromosomes, (ii) a major mutation which is transmitted in an autosomal dominant, autosomal recessive, or X-linked manner, and (iii) polygenic factors which include multiple minor variants interacting with the environment. Smith listed the presumed frequency of newborns who have or will have a disorder due to each of the three types of genetic determinations as 0.5 percent for chromosomal imbalance, 1 percent for one of the approximately 1500 individually rare disorders caused by major mutants, and 10 percent for a disorder due to polygenic factors including common malformations, diabetes mellitus, schizophrenia, and the like.

C. J. Witkop, Jr. (Minneapolis), discussed genetic heterogeneity, particularly in gingival fibromatosis and amelogenesis imperfecta. He indicated that recent developments in biochemical genetics have shown the heterogenous character of many human traits that previously were thought to be determined by single genes.

After discussing the role of hereditary factors in cancer of the skin, endometrium, breast, and colon, H. T. Lynch (Omaha) emphasized the potential for cancer control through utilization of genetic information for early cancer detection in individuals that are at increased risk.

In discussing the question, “How can the teratogenic action of a factor be established in man?” W. Lenz (Münster, West Germany) indicated that few such factors are definitely known in man though many have been suspected. He contrasted the findings due to thalidomide with the drug Meclizine, which has come under suspicion. Comparison of thalidomide embryopathy was made with phenocopies and other established syndromes having similar clinical features. He further indicated the great need for the collection and analysis of data on intake of drugs, such as LSD, in order to answer the question as to its teratogenic properties in man. J. Warkany (Cincinnati) discussed other aspects of determining the teratogenicity of a drug and observed that we should not neglect the single case that may be caused by an unknown teragen, and therefore that we should be most careful in drawing conclusions. Use of serum enzymes, muscle biopsies, and electromyography in diagnosis and detection of carriers of the gene for muscular dystrophy were discussed by C. M. Pearson (Los Angeles).

James L. German (New York) discussed disturbances of sexual development and the role in human sexual differentiation of various genetic determinants on the X and Y chromosomes. In the last few years new approaches to the study of growth regulation and to human behavioral disorders have been made through the study of sex chromosomal aberrations.

The autosomal aberration syndromes were discussed by W. Finley (Birmingham).

I. A. Uchida (Hamilton, Ontario)
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outlined the study which she and her colleagues designed in order to ascertain the association between diagnostic x-rays and the risk of a trisomy offspring.

In the discussion of prenatal chromosone analysis, M. N. Macintyre (Cleveland) indicated how this procedure might be considered lifesaving since, without this technique, families at risk for having a child with a chromosomal aberration syndrome might be advised by the counselor to avoid further pregnancies.

H. L. Nadler (Chicago) discussed the use of cell cultures and his present experience with regard to the detection of inborn errors of metabolism prenatally and mentioned the genetic disorders for which such diagnoses are possible. The direction of things to come in the treatment of genetic disorders were discussed by J. H. Menkes (Los Angeles).

A panel on the special problems of the abnormal child was moderated by C. J. Rosecrans (Birmingham). M. M. Cohen (Boston) discussed some of the dental problems in mentally retarded children, especially in Down's syndrome. R. B. Allison (Birmingham) outlined some of the problems in the psychological evaluation of mentally retarded children. S. Davis (Birmingham) summarized the functions of the University Affiliated Facility at the University of Alabama in Birmingham and the various diagnostic resources available to the family physician with regard to the evaluation of children with congenital malformation syndromes. J. Money (Baltimore) compared the psychologic findings in patients with sex chromosomal aberration syndromes.

Another panel, concerned with prevention of genetic disease, was moderated by E. G. Waldrop (Birmingham). Subjects covered during this discussion were genetic counseling, by S. C. Finley (Birmingham); therapeutic abortion, by A. C. Christakos (Chapel Hill); amniocentesis, by R. V. Barnett (Birmingham); and the psychiatric aspects of therapeutic abortion, by P. H. Linton (Birmingham).

The seminar was supported by Project 262, Maternal and Child Health Service, Health Services and Mental Health Administration, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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