

SCIENCE NEWS

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COVER: Lanterns on the Ota River in Hiroshima. People dedicate and float the lanterns each year to memorialize the A-bomb dead, whose charred bodies "made the river run black." Though the war is over, the effects of the A-bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki continue. See p. 284. (Cover photograph by Joanne Silberman)

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OCTOBER 31, 1981

SCIENCE ON THE AIR

SCIENCE NEWS prints the latest written word of scientific developments and noteworthy news. We've set this space aside to inform our readers of programs of scientific interest that are scheduled on television and radio. Check your local listings for exact times.

• **Nov. 7 (PBS) "Kalaupapa: The Refuge"** A documentary about the residents of Kalaupapa on the Hawaiian island of Molokai, victims of leprosy. Attention is paid to changing attitudes toward "the separating sickness."

• **Nov. 21 (PBS) "Einstein's Universe"** Written by Nigel Calder, this program makes Einstein's theories understandable to lay persons. Included are demonstrations, animation and special effects and talks with physicists and astronomers.

• **Nov. 27 (PBS) "Autism: Reaching the Child Within"** A look at how three families with autistic children cope. Included are an examination of the characteristics of autism and a report of the search for a cause.

• (PBS) **"Cosmos": Nov. 3 "Travellers' Tales"** A look at the planets, in particular, Jupiter; **Nov. 10 "The Backbone of Night"** An examination of stars; **Nov. 17 "Journeys in Space and Time"** Discussion focuses on interstellar travel; **Nov. 24 "The Lives of the Stars"** An examination of stellar interiors.

• (PBS) **"NOVA": Nov. 1 "Did Darwin Get it Wrong?"** Current challenges to Darwin's theory of evolution from fossils, biology laboratories and the creationists; **Nov. 8 "Animal Olympians"** A juxtaposition of human and animal feats of speed, endurance and grace; **Nov. 15 "Artists in the Lab"** Art forms created through the use of computers and lasers; **Nov. 22 "Notes of a Biology Watcher: A Film with Lewis Thomas"** Biologist and essayist Thomas explores the mysterious wonder of life; **Nov. 29 "City Spaces, Human Places"** A look at ways to transform city parks, plazas and streets.

• (PBS) **"Odyssey": Nov. 3 "Little Injustices: Laura Nader Looks at the Law"** A comparative look at consumer complaints in different cultures; **Nov. 10 "Myths and the Moundbuilders"** A look at huge earthen mounds that were built by early American Indians; **Nov. 17 "The Three Worlds of Bali"** The world the Balinese live in, the world of the gods and the world of the demons; **Nov. 24 "Masters of Metal"** A look at the changing theories—brought about by new dating techniques—of the development of metal technology.

LETTERS

The shroud: Art and knowledge

It is uncertain as to why Dietrick E. Thomsen in his editorial (SN: 10/3/81, p. 211) confuses the question of the significance of the Turin Shroud with the question of when human life begins.

What is certain, however, is that both subjects and questions are legitimate areas of concern and study for the scientific community.

What scientists must remember is that all phenomena are proper subjects for study and determination, not merely those that lead to some technical advances.

We must remind ourselves that we are not only bodies, but we are people who have needs to understand our world in all of its manifestations.

Knowledge of reality and events is power because it gives us all the awareness we need to control, alter and develop ourselves rationally and in relevant connection to the rest of the world, the here and now world and the world of our historical past.

As scientists, our mission is to relate to the facts of life, including those that tell us that human life begins at fertilization and to study those phenomena which yet mystify and puzzle us. Let us not relinquish this responsibility. This is the charge and challenge of the scientific community. We must not only study the distant reaches of our universe, but we must continue to elucidate the nature and events which are close to us.

Imagine the activity on our earth planet if the shroud had been picked up on the nose of a

rocket. How much money, time, work and curiosity would have gone into studying it. Even the gates of the budget-holders might have been opened.

Isn't it somewhat sad to think of how unromantic we think our lives and planet are sometimes? Have we become too detached from ourselves or is it merely a desire to run from the truth in the hopes that something else will be a better guide?

I hope and trust that the scientific community of our nation will reinforce its role in discerning and promulgating knowledge throughout our system, regardless of the events and forces under study and consideration.

Monte Harris Liebman, M.D.
Hartland, Wis.

I want to say how very much I enjoy your magazine.

A note, however. In the article "Image problems for Shroud of Turin" (SN: 10/17/81, p. 245), STURP is quoted as saying, "We can conclude that the Shroud image is that of a real, human form . . . It is not the product of an artist. The blood stains are composed of hemoglobin."

I think, perhaps, you should have noted that the stains' being hemoglobin does not necessarily preclude their being put there by an artist; it only precludes their being, say, paint. I might add that radioactive dating would prove only when the stains got onto the cloth, not how they got there. A first century artistic effort is only that.

Thanks again for your excellent magazine.

Patricia Williams
Covesville, Va.