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Letters

Founding fathers

In an otherwise "truthful" article ("Truth Aches," SN: 8/15/92, p.110), you mistakenly identify Aaron T. Beck as the founder of cognitive therapy in the 1960s.

The true father of cognitive therapy is Albert Ellis, who developed and popularized this approach in the 1950s. His article, "Rational psychotherapy" (JOURNAL OF GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY, 1958, 59, 35-49), was truly revolutionary.

Michael R. Edelstein
Psychologist
San Francisco, Calif.

Beck has long acknowledged Ellis' major influence on cognitive therapy. But Ellis founded rational-emotive therapy, a close older cousin to cognitive therapy. I think of Ellis as the grandfather of cognitive therapy. — B. Bower

Genes or jobs?

"Genes shed light on common blindness cause" (SN: 7/18/92, p.37) is interesting to me, for I suffer age-related macular degeneration

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Cover: Theories regarding the nature of awareness and self-consciousness have proliferated recently. One controversial proposal contends that the brain contains "multiple drafts" of sensations and experiences that produce an illusion of a "stream of consciousness." (Painting: "Figure #14" by Alfredo Castañeda, 1982/Courtesy of Mary-Anne Martin/Fine Art, New York City)

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(ARMD). Years ago I heard a story of men who worked at the process of butt welding of pipe. It was their job to peer into the furnace repeatedly to determine the exact moment when the metal reached a "welding heat." Eye protection was considered useless because they relied on both the color and liquidity of the metal surface. These men were paid very high wages, but they could work at this trade for only three or four years. They then spent the rest of their lives in a sort of a twilight.

I developed ARMD in my left eye, the one closer to the fire during the several years I spent in an occupation requiring some, but not continuous, forge welding. My father, who was a blacksmith and who had done more forge welding than I, suffered failing eyesight in his 50s, while my first occurrence of ARMD took place at the age of 84. While both may be gene-related, I believe researchers would do well to consider the lifestyle, and especially the occupational histories, of the individuals they study. It would also be interesting to know if there is a sex-related difference in the frequency of this disease.

Ray Ladd
Gladwin, Mich.

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