
information crossfile

Daniel E. Koshland, Jr., editor of *Science*, in his May 24, 1985 editorial writes with feeling (and humor) about the self-deceptions practiced by scientists and by their editors. He describes the "low-paying profession of science" with all its exasperations: "Mother Nature . . . our implacable enemy . . . who guards her secrets more closely than the CIA" and students whose illegible hieroglyphics are "sometimes called handwriting." Koshland magnanimously forgives all scientists who, in the face of such odds, call upon "a touch of fantasy in regard to the importance of (their) missions and the elegance with which they should be recounted."

Koshland concedes that "up to a point, delusions of grandeur are valuable and desirable" but eventually, he points out, problems arise.

"The distilled product," he says, "is a manuscript – the ballad of the troubador, to be delivered to what he perceives as an eager audience. But there are too many ballads. Moreover, troubadors convince themselves that audiences want to hear every detail of the odyssey. Someone," he insists, "must select whose song is sung and at what length. Thus enter on the scene new characters with icewater in their veins, hearts resistant to fire, and epidermises that are not dissolved by tears. They are editors."

Koshland maintains that "editors are paid and treated worse than authors," but that they are sustained by their own peculiar delusion, *righteousness!!!*