

tion by Owen Fleischman, and others (January, page 9) because it is the first good answer I have seen to the employment problem for highly trained young men. Our society suffers from a lack of research work on the basic problems in difficult scientific and social disciplines, and the consequent reinforcement of fundamental ideas plus leisure for research makes teaching the ideal first job in any field of philosophy, especially physics.

CARROLL B. MILLS
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Lunar contamination

I was interested in the letter by John O. Stoner, Jr regarding the danger of contaminating whatever lunar atmosphere there might be with exhaust gases from the landing vehicle (December, page 13). Just such questions, namely the probable nature of the lunar atmosphere and the consequences of such contamination, were discussed some years ago (see, for example, "Interaction between the solar wind and the lunar atmosphere," F. C. Michel, *Planetary and Space Science* 12, 1075, 1964). There it was concluded that these exhaust gases are likely to be a sizable contaminant to any ambient atmosphere (predicted to have a mass of only about 10^2 metric tons). On the other hand, the major processes that determine the lifetime of neutral gas particles appear to be photoionization, with the resultant ion being swept away by the solar wind, and direct collisions with solar-wind particles, with the recoiling neutral having greater than escape velocities. The lifetime of contaminants can then be shown to be reduced, by either process, to the order of a year or less, rather than the thousands of years required for thermal escape.

One may hardly conclude that it is therefore satisfactory to so contaminate the moon, but at least there is the expectation that such contamination is short lived.

F. CURTIS MICHEL
Rice University

CORRECTION: December 1969, page 97—Joining the faculty of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville as associate professor: Ika-Ju Kang should read Ik-Ju Kang. □

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