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letters

tal science will more than compensate for losses to computational science.

KENNETH G. WILSON

Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

7/83

Inflationary universe

The inflationary universe is in the news (May, page 17). Its tenets: In the beginning time ran fast and much was accomplished. This idea has been around a long time (see Genesis I). Also, "Others suggest that in those crowded, jostling yesterdays, the rhythm of events was faster than the rhythm of the spacious universe today; evolution then proceeded apace, and into the faint surviving traces, we now misread the evidence of a great antiquity. Our knowledge is too meager to estimate the value of such speculations, but they sound like special pleading, like forced solutions of the difficulty."

I am sure many readers believe this unknown pleader has things backwards. Getting from 10 to 15 years old seemed interminable. From 65 to 70 years is frighteningly short. Hubble should be required reading for all young (and old) astronomers. It is good literature with fine style.

Reference

1. E. Hubble, *Observational Approach to Cosmology*, Oxford U. P. (1937) page 44.

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Chaotic computer?

More and more, the computer today is invading every part of the bureaucratic machinery. Paradoxically, all progress concerning computers—and this progress is immense—has the consequence of showing that this progress is never enough; one always needs something more powerful, faster, with more memory, smaller, cheaper, less energy-consuming, and so on.

The physicist Kenneth Wilson, who is very much in favor of the use of computers in theoretical physics, pointed out recently¹ that these machines are small toys "almost just capable to amuse children." The search for computational "power" is limitless and, as with pornography, it becomes more difficult to get pleasure. The big companies use all their imagination to gain a few kilobytes, complexify the systems and have faster machines. Tomorrow they should find a way to go faster than light! But these computers working at n times the "light speed" will still be