I answered your questions about 'optimism' too briskly. May I add that now?

1) Oliver's book: that three-wise monkey had read CEA 1962.

2) I did not think that was so optimistic, which is one of the things.

From its 3d sentence, it was full of promises with Aldous Huxley (who had died recently). It was certainly full of worry that at least under the intension of the "myself" on page 265.

But as I read it, that may be a way of distancing myself from many of the real world problems that I think address. My own education was proceeding.

Am I such a pessimist now? At one level, I feel the need for that picture – to avoid hybrid, and understanding the hopes of a self-renewing, a-exceeding prophecy. I don't take pessimistically
to my 10-year-old daughter. I think there is a reasonable chance that nuclear deterrence will work to prevent general war: hardly a kind of balance one can be complacent about.

I guess it is the BBC's excuse and what not see today in South Asia and fundamentalist Islam and most of Africa that underlay my perplexitation – and what many quoted at the meeting about the widespread denial of these true ocean realities: but south of the Rio Grande is not much more exciting! That on the bread-baskets to which I was mainly alluding.

The idea of 1962 in fact just succeeded the Cuban missile crisis. We could hardly have been feeling very complacent at that moment either! But I don't recall any specific allusions to it at that conference. Our agenda was "Biology" – purplestone mean
The main difference in my work between 1962 and now is a shift from resignation to activism. In 1962 I was just looking outside the lab, had little practical sense of what (little or much) I could do to influence the course of events at partly local.

By 1971 I was feeling more optimistic..."cooperating relations with the PRC in some disputes with the USSR..." and the opportunity to play some part in the negotiation of the BND disarmament treaty.

Today I am again dismayed at the regressivity in US-USSR relations. The fault is by no means equally shared, but our policies are hardly blameless. So my mood may not be too far from that of 1962. But I am a little better able to vent that anxiety now - at the rate of some 20% of my time in Washington - at least partially on a few devices.

Today's seminar itself was a lift. It may have been "theological" to the converted, but I don't have enough of that milieu (less than I did at Stanford) now, either at my own specializing institution now in my change on the fortune. We were, as happened rarely, at least addressing the right questions.

Sincerely,

John Lederer

(2)

Gerald F.
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2/2/72