

## On Date's and Pascal's Personal Remarks.

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An article which I recently published in *DM Direct* [Johnston-5] prompted responses from Chris Date and Hugh Darwen [Date-4], from Date again [Date-5], and also from Fabian Pascal [Pascal-4]. In their responses, those authors (i) challenge a claim I made to original authorship of a specific critique of relational DBMSs, and (ii) accuse me of "personal attacks" on Date, and of making a charge of plagiarism against Pascal.

I will address the first issue in a separate article. In that article, I will review Date's pre-1991 accounts of the concept of physical data independence, and will also review my own explanations, in my 1991 and 1993 series, of how to achieve a more complete separation of the logical and physical representations of a database. I will then conduct a "gap analysis" between the two, and attempt to determine whether my contributions were original enough to constitute a significant advance on the original understanding of the concept.

Noting that the issue of separating the logical from the physical goes back to the origins of relational theory does not, by itself, make Date's case against me. The understanding of such basic ideas as data independence evolves and deepens over time. The question is whether, as Date claims, my observations were "staggeringly obvious" implications of that original idea. An alternative to Date's conclusion would be that the differences between the original concept and my contributions are more like the difference between Wegener's hypothesis of continental drift based on the observation of how the shape of the continents seem to fit together, and the modern theory of continental drift based on observations of sea-floor spreading and plate tectonics.

This issue is not yet decided. The answer may well be that my contributions lie somewhere between "staggeringly obvious" on the one hand, and the difference between Wegener and the modern theory on the other. We shall see.

In *this* article, I respond to the second issue – Date’s and Pascal’s accusations. The former accusation is, to borrow a favorite expression of Date’s, *specious*.<sup>1</sup> As for the latter accusation, it is simply false. In addition, as I indicate below, there is actually an important issue here, and I discuss it near the end of this article.

*Note:* all quotations from Date are from [Date-5] unless noted otherwise. All quotations from Pascal are from [Pascal-4], unless noted otherwise. All quotations from me are from [Johnston-5], unless noted otherwise. [Date-3] is republished in Date, *Relational Database Writings, 1994-1997* (Addison Wesley Longman, 1998). Although I do not have the volume, I believe that [Date-2] is republished there also.

### ***In Short.***

In reference to my article, Date claims that I made "personal attacks" on him. But as one can see by reading the article to which Date takes exception, what he calls my "personal attacks" consist of pointing out his personal attacks on others, and requesting that he stop making them. If Date wishes to call that a "personal attack", that’s fine with me. I call it drawing attention to a bad habit.

Specifically, I pointed out that Date called some arguments of mine about multi-valued logic "specious", that he called what he claims was an error of mine a "howler", and that he compared me to a dimwitted minor English aristocrat in a novel by Evelyn Waugh. I said that such behavior was "clearly inappropriate in any professional publication", and that it illustrated a tendency to "invective" on Date’s part. Such was my "personal attack" on Date.

As for Pascal, he claims that I accused him of plagiarism. But I did not. Plagiarism involves intent as well as behavior, and I have no way of judging Pascal’s intent. Indeed, I explicitly said that "honest scholarship, Pascal’s or

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<sup>1</sup> According to Date’s own account of "specious", this word means simply "superficially attractive but misleading". Nothing of a disparaging nature should be read into it.

my own", can overlook prior work. Perhaps Pascal took umbrage at my pointing out that whatever the reason, his failure to reference either of two series of articles of mine was "self-serving".<sup>2</sup> Well, that's what it was, regardless of intent.

On a point of lesser importance, Pascal also says that I claimed to be a "professional logician". But I never made such a claim. In explaining, in response to Date, that I was unlikely to have made a "howler" of an error in logic, I stated that I had passed doctoral level examinations in logic, in the course of earning a doctorate in Philosophy. Indeed, it is precisely such advanced study of formal logic which makes me aware that I am *not* a professional logician. However, the focus of my articles was not on the mathematics of formal logic, but rather on the relationship of various formal logics to patterns of reasoning in everyday language. On that subject, which is the particular perspective that Philosophy takes on formal logic, I do claim a limited expertise.

For those who are tired of this kind of acrimonious exchange, as I certainly am, let this suffice as a summary of my response to these personal remarks of Date, Darwen and Pascal. However, I have also tried to point out an important issue behind the acrimony, without which this exchange would be of no more than personal interest. To get to this material, skip down to the section **Please Fellows: Is There a Point to All This?**, and read to the end.

For my own part, I wish a brief summary could suffice. But because Date has now devoted an entire article to the "personal attack" issue, as he calls it, and because Pascal went on in a similar vein at some length, I must reluctantly respond in greater detail than I have to this point.

### ***"Invective"? Chris Date?***

I did indeed accuse Date of invective in his writings. So after pointing out that his dictionary's definition of "invective" is "abusive rhetoric", Date then challenged me "or anyone else to produce an example of 'abusive rhetoric' in any of (his) professional writings".

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<sup>2</sup> References to these two series are not in this bibliography, but are in the bibliography in [Johnston-5].

I accept the challenge to defend my charge of invective. Here we go.

### ***“Specious”***

Date called arguments of mine concerning multi-valued logic "specious" (in [Date-2]). In response to my objections to that characterization, he later references a dictionary definition of "specious" (in [Date-5]) as meaning superficially attractive but misleading. But the dictionary definition sanitizes the term, and is thus itself superficially attractive but misleading.

An honest person may make a statement which he believes to be true, but which happens to be both false and superficially attractive. But a person who presents a specious argument is no such a person. Rather, he is a person who *intends* to mislead, who intends to persuade others of what is false by crafting a superficially attractive argument. Use of the word provides a way to characterize the person, behind the pretense of characterizing only the person's statements.

This is something that, Date and his associates aside, I believe we all recognize instantly, no matter what our role in the discussion. In the first person: when we say of someone else that his arguments are specious, we intend to jab at him. We intend to be nothing less than insulting, albeit in a highbrow, literary sort of way. In the second person: when our own arguments are called specious, it gets our dander up. Were those arguments said to be attractive but wrong, we would not have that reaction. We would just sit up and be ready to see how the other guy backs up his claim. In the third person: when we read one person calling another person's arguments specious, we recognize what is going on. We recognize that a verbal attack has made its way into a discussion of issues.

“Specious” is invective.

### ***"Prejudiced"***

After quoting some statements of Bill Inmon's, Date said that they were "prejudiced, uninformed, and misleading" ([Date-1], p.201). Well, I happen to agree that the statements in question were uninformed. And like any

uninformed statements, they were, needless to say, misleading. But "prejudiced"? Of course, I consider Date fully capable of coming up with some specious account of "prejudiced" which renders the epithet innocuous. But "prejudiced" isn't that subtle a word. We all know what it really means.

"Prejudiced" is invective.

### ***"Nonsense"***.

In response to a passage in a series of articles by Frank Sweet, Date says that "the sentiments expressed in this particular quote are really nonsense" ([Date-1], p.205). Well, if one has shown that certain remarks are nonsense, there's no need to call them that. Emotively-charged expressions, like these ones I am citing, subtly (or sometimes not so subtly) suggest that the author of the remarks doesn't know what he is talking about. The suggestion is unnecessary if the remarks are obviously nonsense, or have already been shown to be nonsense. The suggestion is a disparaging remark about the author, in either case. Professional writing should focus on arguments, not on authors.

"Nonsense", if not rising to the level of invective, is at least cut from the same cloth.

### ***"Howler"?***

On a point of terminology in the exchange on multi-valued logic (in [Date-2]), Date claimed that I was in error. But instead of simply saying that I was wrong, he said that the supposed error was a "howler". Now, in his latest article, he claims that the word has nothing personally disparaging about it. At the same time, he expresses regret for the expression. I acknowledge the regret, but still claim that the remark was invective. Here's why.

First of all, why did a skilled writer like Date use so exclusively British an expression when writing in an American magazine for an overwhelmingly American audience? Well, when we are unfamiliar with a term, we rely heavily on context to understand it. If it seems pretty clear from its context, we don't bother to stop and look up its dictionary definition. And the context in which Date's "howler" appeared clearly suggests that the word means "a

really stupid mistake". A psycho-semantic analysis of the term might even show that, not quite at the level of explicit awareness perhaps, the term also has connotations of "monkey talk" – not that anyone would necessarily think that, but that many might indeed *feel* it.

And is the British usage of the term what Date claims it is – a usage in which there are no hard feelings, but just a chummy good laugh all around when the poor bloke finally realizes his gaff? Well, I know enough people of our generation – Date's and mine – who were born and raised across the pond. And I can tell you that Date's account of the word is both specious and self-serving – specious according to the dictionary definition, and self-serving because it tries to hide the fact that with that expression, Date made, and fully intended to make, a disparaging remark about me.

"Howler" is invective.

### ***Lord Copper?***

Date claims that "'Up to a point, Lord Copper' has since passed into the language as an elegant variation on 'I disagree,' or, more simply, NO."

It is embarrassing to see Date forced to make such an absurd claim in trying to evade a charge of invective, especially when the phrase, being so unusual, was obviously chosen with care. The phrase "Up to a point" has indeed "passed into the language". It is a way of expressing limited agreement. But "Up to a point, Lord Copper" hasn't passed into the language as anything at all. As we all know, it hasn't passed into the American language of Date's readers. And I can assure you that it hasn't passed into the language of educated British speakers, either. So why did Date choose such a phrase?

Well, what do we know of Lord Copper? Consider the following excerpt from Waugh's novel *Scoop*, in which we have the canonical account of how the phrase is used:

"Mr. Salter's side of the conversation was limited to expressions of assent. When Lord Copper was right he said, 'Definitely, Lord Copper'; when he was wrong, 'Up to a point.'

'Let me see, what's the name of the place I mean? Capital of Japan? Yokohama, isn't it?'

'Up to a point, Lord Copper.'" (*Scoop*, p.16).

Date claims that in using this phrase, he was "just saying 'I disagree' (and perhaps hoping in passing that some reader might be interested in tracking down and reading *Scoop*, and deriving great enjoyment thereby)". I will not comment on this claim. That would dignify it far beyond its merits. Let us pass it by, in embarrassed silence.

Later, Date says that "I did *not* 'compare another author to Waugh's Lord Copper' – neither pointedly, nor in any other way" (Date's italics. And sic. With the "not", "neither ... nor" makes a double negative.)

But what are we to think of this claim? Let's begin by reviewing the facts of the case. First, Date's article entitled "Up To a Point, Lord Copper" was a response to a series of articles of mine on multi-valued logic. Second, Lord Copper is indeed a dimwit, who has achieved his position in spite of his dimness. Next, Date's prior article in the exchange characterized my arguments as "specious", one of my statements in particular as a "howler", and contained a statement in which he "really (did) object, vehemently" to several points I made in those articles. And now Date wishes us to believe that with this remark, in the context of this exchange of articles, he "did *not* 'compare another author to Waugh's Lord Copper' – neither pointedly nor in any other way"?

This strategy of brazenly denying the self-evident will not work. It will not provide Date the cover he seeks. What part of "not" does he fail to understand? And, for that matter, of "compare" and "pointedly" as well?

"Lord Copper" is invective.

### ***Taken as a Whole.***

Taken one by one, it is possible to miss the total effect which the repeated use of such disparaging comments creates. Taken one by one, it is possible to give Date the benefit of the doubt, in some instances at least, and to

interpret his linguistic infelicities as sometimes resulting from nothing more disreputable than an eagerness to set things straight.

But what of the context created by an extended pattern of such language? How is so charitable an interpretation possible, given that pattern? Date's responses to my articles on multi-valued logic (together with those of his associates McGoveran and Darwen) are a good example of such a pattern. In [Date-2], the stream of expressions creating an entire context of invective includes "specious", "perfunctory or even disingenuous", "misrepresents, or misconstrues", "a howler", "every elementary schoolchild knows", and "gratuitous and irrelevant".

Take "misrepresents, or misconstrues" as just one phrase to examine more closely. The natural thing one author says of another, in cases like this, is that the other author has "misconstrued" or perhaps simply "misunderstood" him. But not Date. He uses the more elaborate "misrepresents, or misconstrues". So why did Date explicitly add "misrepresents" as an alternative to "misconstrues"? There is only one explanation. It is in order to raise the possibility that I might have *intentionally* mis-stated his positions. That is invective. Possibilities of intentional misrepresentation abound. But I have never explicitly pointed out such possibilities in the writings of others, and I don't know of many other authors who would do so, either.

Other expressions, in the same article, include "strongly criticizes", "accuses me of, and takes me to task for", "very distressing to be criticized so roundly", "really do object, vehemently", and "cry FOUL! ... cry FOUL again". These expressions are not invective. But they do transform an exchange of views about a subject of importance into a verbal fight, in the process doing a disservice to the audience interested in so important a subject as logic.

So did I write the two articles to which this article of Date's is a response ([Johnston-1,2]) as the opening round in a verbal fight? Did I, in other words, write in the same style I have shown Date to have written in?

I did not. In my first article, in fact, I began by praising Date, writing that "Date's own tutorials on basic logic are a model of clarity". In my second article, I thanked him "for reviewing an early draft of Part I of this article." I

said that "my arguments engage his position more directly because of his helpful comments." Throughout those articles, I refrained from personalizing the argument. I used neither invective nor the language of verbal attack, as did Date and his associates.

So, contrary to the impression Date tried to give, my articles were written in a professional manner, and in them I attempted to show courtesy to those I disagreed with.

Is it too much to ask the same civility of Date and his associates?

The referenced expressions of Date's are invective. The article from which these phrases are taken also shows that Date's use of invective is not confined to the occasional word or phrase. He creates entire contexts of invective. He also turns discussions of substantive issues into verbal fights.

### ***Pascal's Confused and Fuzzy Thinking.***

Pascal says that "Such language often hints of confused or fuzzy thinking....". And again, "much of (Johnston's) article consists of arm waving and posturing (with) .... little *technical* content" (Pascal's italics). Oh my. These are certainly powerful arguments, aren't they? Regardless, they definitely *are* examples of the kind of writing I am objecting to.

It is difficult to find any publication of Pascal's in which he fails to emphasize his deep knowledge of theory and the lack of that knowledge on the part of the poor souls who disagree with him. It's a lonely and thankless job, as Pascal keeps reminding us, and I suppose we ought all to be grateful that he keeps plugging away at it. It is somewhat distressing, however, for those of us trying to learn our theory from Pascal, to come across his own confused and fuzzy thinking.

One part of the theory Pascal claims a lonely expertise in, is formal logic. The formal logic relevant to relational databases is first-order predicate logic. So it is interesting to find Pascal (in [Date-6]) telling us that "Predicate logic .... has been around for thousands of years (sic)". In fact, predicate logic was created by Frege, just over a *hundred* years ago.

In [Pascal-3], Pascal tells us that “Codd .... introduced the term (sic) relation and tuple precisely in order to distinguish them from the physical file and record concepts used in the industry. I am not sure that he used the term (sic) table”.

*Aside.* Here Pascal turns from a mistake about the history of logic to a mistake about logic itself. This time I will follow Date's lead and call this one a "howler", for the correct use of quotation marks was drilled into me in the first two weeks of my first undergraduate course in formal logic.

To clarify the issue about quotation marks, consider the following. Chicago is a city on Lake Michigan, but Chicago doesn't have seven letters because Chicago isn't a word; it's a city. On the other hand, "Chicago" does have seven letters, but "Chicago" isn't a city on Lake Michigan because "Chicago" isn't a city at all; it's a word.

Logicians call this the distinction between the use and the mention of a word. When a word is mentioned, it's put in quotation marks. So Pascal should have put the expressions “relation”, tuple” and "table" in quotation marks because he was mentioning them not using them.

It is hard to use formal logic appropriately if one can't make the basic distinction between words and what they refer to. Perhaps I might go on to suggest (paraphrasing Pascal) that it is "hard to take seriously" anyone who writes about formal logic but who can make such an elementary mistake. And "no wonder" I don't consider Pascal's own material on multi-valued logic worthy of discussion. His "kind of argument, particularly from someone who (feels himself qualified to discuss logic), is not likely to leave a lasting impression".

Pascal could hone his logical skills by considering the following, which I leave as an exercise for him. Consider the title of this section. Note that in the title, the phrase "Confused and Fuzzy Thinking" has no quotation marks around it. Now suppose it did. As a homework assignment, explain how the two titles, differing only in the use of quotation marks, say entirely different things. Describe what each one says. (*Hint:* what are we talking about, in each case, words or what they refer to?)

Am I making my point? This style of writing, which is considerably more restrained than Pascal's own style, is offensive; and we all can see that it is. I am engaging in it, as distasteful as it is to me, to illustrate that point. Since it is offensive, Pascal should stop using it. QED. (On the other hand, if I'm wrong and it isn't really offensive after all, then Pascal won't be offended by it, will he?)

### ***The Very Word.***

Pascal goes on to tell us that "It is very difficult to take seriously anyone who accuses Chris Date, of all people, of invectives" (sic. The word is "invective", actually. It's what logicians call a mass noun rather than a count noun. As such, it has no plural form.) To illustrate: there's a lot of water in Lake Michigan, but no "waters", a lot of invective about, but no invectives. (These are "raised eyebrow" quotes here, Mr. Pascal, not to be confused with the other kind.)

Yes indeed, that is the word which touched a raw nerve, isn't it? But I have already answered Date's challenge to provide examples of invective in his writings, and have also helped Pascal with some basic concepts and facts about logic. So I see no reason to accept Date's claim that his professional writing is free of invective, and no reason not to "take me seriously" when I talk about logic.

### ***Plagiarism?***

Pascal refers to my "accusation of plagiarism". But I never made any such accusation. I spoke of Pascal's "failure to attribute" an important critique to me, not of "plagiarism".

But is this just playing with words? Would any reasonable person have understood my "failure to attribute" statement as an accusation of plagiarism? Well, later on I referred to authors "who might seek to appropriate our work for their own, or who might, to their own advantage, happen to overlook our contributions". Here I hope I was making it clear that there are two interpretations of Pascal's failure to attribute, and that only one of them would amount to plagiarism.

Is this still playing with words? Would any reasonable person still have understood me to be accusing Pascal of plagiarism? Well, consider this. I also stated that "honest scholarship – Pascal's or mine – can always be incomplete".

How clear does it need to be for Pascal? I said that I was the originator of the ideas. I said that Pascal's "honest scholarship" could be incomplete. I did *not* say that Pascal had plagiarized. And I do not appreciate being accused of something I didn't do. To paraphrase Date, "here I cry FOUL!".

### **"Sic"?**

In this article, I have attempted to *illustrate* the style of writing to which I object, and not just to describe it and comment on it. By illustrating it, the reader of this article, even if he has not read the articles of Date and his associates that I allude to, can *feel* the impact of their kind of language, and better understand why I find it offensive.

One piece of that mimicry is Date's overuse and misuse of "sic". The point in using "sic" of something quoted is to assure the reader that what appears inside quotation marks hasn't been mistyped, that it really appeared in the original exactly as shown. That's why the most common use of "sic" is when a word inside a quotation is misspelled.

But Date frequently uses "sic" to point out what he believes are mistaken ideas being expressed in the quoted passage. My textual analysis of his usage suggests that he uses "sic" to introduce a brief aside about a minor point which he just can't let pass without a comment – a point, however, that he wants to correct or at least object to without disturbing the main flow of his own argument.

Taken by itself, there's nothing of an invective nature in Date's repeated misuse of "sic". But I include it in my stylistic mimicry because it seems of a piece with the rest of what I consider an unprofessional way of writing. (To provide another exercise in the correct use of quotation marks, for Pascal and perhaps for Date as well, can they catch Date's misuse of quotation marks in the opening quote in the section **Lord Copper**? I refrained from

using "sic" with respect to that quotation just so I could provide them another hopefully enlightening exercise in basic logic.)

### ***Please, Fellows: Is There a Point to All This?***

I am the one who raised these personal issues, in the article of mine at the center of this storm. I take full responsibility for doing so. Why, then, one may reasonably ask, did I raise the issue *in print* at all? If I did not respond to Date and his co-authors in kind, in the series on multi-valued logic so replete with their invective, then it was because that's what I chose to do. Given my choice, what right do I have to complain of the treatment?

No right at all, of course. But I am not making a personal complaint. If I had chosen to, I could have given as good as I got, as I believe this article has shown. No, I raised this issue in print to complain, for one thing, on behalf of many of us – to complain about the unprofessional way Date and his associates write, and specifically about their invective. We can't stop reading Date, as distasteful as his style is, because what he has to say is so often worth reading. But why do we have to suffer through the invective?

For another thing, and indeed far more importantly, Date and associates' style of engaging those who don't fully agree with them harms us all, harms the community of shared interest which binds us together. Let me explain.

Intelligent and informed professionals may disagree on quite fundamental issues. The obligation shared by those of us who publish is to conduct our public disagreements in a way which encourages (i) a focus on the issues, (ii) a willingness to admit when one is wrong, (iii) a willingness to acknowledge and commend the valuable contributions of others, (iv) a clarity of discussion, and (v) an openness to participation by others who think they may have something to add.

We're all in this together. We're all trying to get closer to the truth of the things we share an interest in, to get clearer and more useful perspectives on the problems which vex us collectively. But when an author finds himself called "uninformed" or "prejudiced", or finds his carefully reasoned conclusions called "specious" or even "howlers", the natural response is to fight back. The natural response is *not* to try to read the name-caller's own

statements in the best possible light, to make the best sense of them one can. It is, rather, something like this: "There may be a glimmer of a point in my opponent's arguments, but I'll be darned if I'm going to acknowledge it. I'm going to try to make him look as foolish as possible."

Serious professionals soon lose interest in such exchanges. Their place is then taken by readers who instead just like a good fight. Everybody loses, except those who are interested in blood sports. And I have no interest at all in catering to them. I have more serious work to do. (Most of which is currently being carried out in my monthly column, *Modeling Matters*, at [datawarehouse.com](http://datawarehouse.com), to give myself a plug.)

We members of the community of data management professionals need to encourage open debate. We should be taking part in an extended conversation in which we encourage others to participate, and in which we bring out the best in one another. Our objective should be to help our community develop insights that more and more closely approximate the truth of the matter, and that give rise to ever more useful conceptual tools, methods and perspectives.

Date and associates' style of writing is antithetical to this objective. It encourages divisiveness, not consensus, showmanship, not collaboration, defensiveness, not openness, antagonism, not cooperation.

Date has made such a lasting mark on our discipline that he could easily afford to generously encourage others, including those who disagree with him and not just those who closely follow his lead. Such encouragement certainly includes correcting their mistakes. But, as I have tried to show in this article, even when points of view other than one's own really are mistakes, there is all the difference in the world between how Date and his associates correct them, and how responsible members of a professional community should correct them.

If there is anything really important in an exchange like this, this is it. Let's all try to be responsible members of this community which binds us together. Let's all try to help and encourage one another. And let's all hope that so important a figure as Date decides to try, also.

### ***A Possible Point of Reconciliation.***

Date is concerned to "vigorously defend" relational theory and its relevance to practical issues in the management of data. I applaud him for doing so, and admire the skill and erudition he brings to the task. Perhaps in fighting that good fight, the distinction between the argument and the author sometimes gets lost, in what Hugh Darwen called (in a personal email) the "cut and thrust" of vigorous debate.

Taken in that light, it is (just) possible to see how Date could have taken my use of the term "invective" as an unwarranted "personal attack" on someone whose intentions were often of the best. Moreover, in [Date-5], he did apologize for any offense taken – though, pointedly, not for the writing which gave offense. He said that "If Johnston felt I was 'disparaging him as an author', then I apologize".

Date also expressed regret at using "howler" – in spite of an implausible explanation of what that term means. And he did claim that the "Lord Copper" allusion was nothing more than a statement that he disagreed with me. This last claim is frankly fantastical, but perhaps we can take the retreat to mere disagreement as another (tacit) expression of regret at one more of the excesses which the cut and thrust of vigorous debate seems to engender in him.

These regrets and apologies, even given their qualifications, are civilized and professional, and I sincerely thank Date for them.

For my part, in contrast to Date's dictionary, the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, has "invective" as "denunciatory or abusive language" – less harsh than the definition of "abusive rhetoric" which Date finds in his own dictionary. The "denunciatory or" softens the impact of "abusive"; and "language" is clearly less intense than "rhetoric".

And what *I* intended by "invective", and believe is a better reflection of how the term is currently used, is something like "disparaging personal remarks

or allusions".<sup>3</sup> And I believe that I have documented, given either of these two definitions, Date's frequent use of invective.

If, on either the *American Heritage* or my own definition, Date is still offended, then I, in turn, apologize for offending him. I am quite willing to drop the term "invective" and substitute its definition – "disparaging personal remarks or allusions" – wherever the offensive term occurs. Beyond that, I can simply say "Here I stand. I can do no other."

Having each of us expressed regret for any offense we have caused one another, I hope we can simply end the personal remarks here. For my part, I will do just that. As Date said, according to Pascal, "Life is too short". Life is indeed too short – too short for disparaging personal remarks and allusions, too short for creating an atmosphere of divisiveness and antagonism, too short to pass up opportunities to encourage and help one another. Date and I are both convinced that theory is eminently practical. For my part, I would welcome any opportunity to work with him in persuading others of that fact and, in the process, to help strengthen that community of shared interest I earlier referred to.

## ***References.***

Note: my article [Johnston-5] was in response to [Pascal-2a,b]. The later ones are in response to mine.

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<sup>3</sup> Nor is the difference from definitions in standard dictionaries an error. Definitions change whenever dictionaries are revised, and they change because they are no longer consistent with the changing patterns of usage of educated people.

[http://www.dmreview.com/editorial/dmdirect/dmdirect\\_article\\_archive.cfm?EdID=6126&issue=120602&record=5](http://www.dmreview.com/editorial/dmdirect/dmdirect_article_archive.cfm?EdID=6126&issue=120602&record=5)

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