

sex. In the title, "Protein interactions with a gender-specific gene of *Schistosoma mansoni*" (3), does the word "gender" refer to different human immunological responses or to whether the worm itself is male or female? The title "Gender-specific and gonadectomy-specific effects upon swim analgesia" (4) will startle a reader who expects "gender" to describe human cultural roles.

I would like to advocate a few simple rules for lessening this confusion. First, the word "gender" should not be used to refer to suborganismal effects or organization. DNA banding, neonatal tissue, and in vitro drug-membrane transport are all unlikely to be affected by social roles. Second, the word "gender" should not be used to refer to nonhuman organisms without any apparent social structure (5). Discussion of plant or coprolite gender is meaningless if gender is a social construct. By using "gender" as a synonym for "sex," we confuse the language and perpetuate the myth that biology is destiny.

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Meteorite Recovery

In the ScienceScope item of 30 August about Antarctic meteorite recovery (p. 1161), the international aspects of such recovery and analysis are not discussed. The Japanese were the first to systematically search for meteorites in the Antarctic. I have lobbied the current Russian and former Soviet governments to use their extensive Antarctic infrastructure to recover meteorites. Instead of operating alone, the United States should encourage a joint effort from the Antarctic international community to integrate their resources and collaborate to advance a common goal efficiently and effectively.

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Cosmic Cat?

Is the picture accompanying the 16 August Random Samples item "Cosmo-thriller" (p. 877; also shown in the introduction of this issue's Letters section, p. 325)—like the feminist's vision of God as Goddess—an ailurophile's view of Creation? The orange comet in the picture looks like a cat I used to know. Could a hacker fan of Garfield have planted the picture in the National Science Foundation's supercomputer image files?

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Letters to the Editor

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