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to human cultural roles, as opposed to physiological sex, and Pearson asserts that to confuse the two is to "perpetuate the myth that biology is destiny." According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, however, "gender" originated as a philological term designating nouns that are masculine, feminine, or neutral. While social scientists are free to appropriate the word to draw a useful distinction within their field, it is not incumbent on the rest of us to do so. Pearson's claim is akin to arguing that, because the word "queen" is a term in social insect biology, the Queen of England no longer qualifies for her title because she does not have an enormous abdomen or spend her days laying eggs.

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Universities Defending Themselves in Japan

The accurate report on "Science in Japan" (4 Oct., p. 43) lacked local color. The practice in Japan of employing one's own graduate students is a defense against Tokyo, Kyoto, Waseda, and other big universities entirely populating the faculty at all Japanese universities, a fate just as unattractive as the present one. And rather than all things "flowing" to the University of Tokyo (D. Normile, 4 Oct., p. 44), it seems to me that Tokyo, Kyoto, and the other powerful central universities exercise financial, political, and academic influence to co-opt promising local research. The flip side of this is that in a field such as environmental science, a great deal of really meaningful research gets done at the local, so-called *ekiben daigaku* by researchers with much less to lose. *Ekiben daigaku*, or "train-station box-lunch university," is a lovingly denigrating term for those universities appearing at every train stop; whether delicious or not, the hungry must eat them.

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Ethics of AIDS Study

It was reported by Jon Cohen (Research News, 27 Sept., p. 1797) that, according to some members of the involved studies, Stephen O'Brien did not contact them before initiating the analysis for the manuscript

"Genetic restriction of HIV-1 infection and progression to AIDS by a deletion allele of the *CKR5* structural gene" (M. Dean *et al.*, Reports, 27 Sept., p. 1856). Investigators from some of the studies are reported to have been in the process of forming collaborations with others to engage in the analysis completed by O'Brien's group.

For the past 8 years, O'Brien has been a member of the Hemophilia Growth and Development Study (HGDS). While his laboratory is the specimen-processing unit and repository for the study, the primary role of his genetics group is one of scientific collaboration, not service laboratory. Samples and clinical data have been provided to O'Brien for the express purpose of conducting investigations such as that of the report in question. O'Brien contacted representatives of the HGDS to notify us that he was proceeding with the analysis well in advance of distributing a first draft of the manuscript. Subsequently, a further two drafts were received for comment, criticism, and approval before submission.

In view of the criticism expressed by those quoted in Cohen's article, we believe it necessary to state clearly and unequivocally that O'Brien and his group have at all times shown the highest ethical standards and scientific rigor in the conduct of analysis and reporting of this research.

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Thyroid Protection

Michael Balter, in his article "Children become the first victims of fallout" (Special News Report, 19 Apr., p. 357) states that radiation exposure [caused by fallout from the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident] "could have been countered by rapid administration of nonradioactive iodine to 'flush out' the radioactive isotopes from binding sites in the thyroid."

In fact, radioactive isotopes, once bound in the thyroid, cannot be flushed out by subsequent administration of nonradioactive iodine. To be effective in preventing the uptake and binding of radioactive isotopes, stable iodine must be administered before exposure. A daily 130-milligram dose of stable potassium iodine, starting 30 minutes to 1 day before the arrival of fallout or other material contaminated with radioac-