

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music he hears, however measured or far away.

Henry David Thoreau would probably turn over in his grave if he heard what we might do to his beautiful writings.

Wayne Stroessner
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The announced use of "s/he" has the same stigma attached to it that your "woman professor" does, drawing attention to the use of terms even more recognizable as sexist. In addition it has the drawback of not being syllabifiable, except by saying "or." I would suggest that editorial policy omit the "s/he," and simply insert "he or she," "him or her," "hers or his," when an author uses one of the other personal pronouns to denote what is really applicable to both sexes.

Utilization of current words is much better than introduction of an entirely new symbol clearly identifiable with women's lib (according to one interpretation). It does the cause more harm than good.

My personal preference is to consider "mankind" as a generic term, and not introduce "humankind." I accept most of the new non-sexist terms, but feel that certain compound words, in particular, i.e. "Manhole," "manslaughter," "mankind" are better left as generic terms.

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Editorial Response

Mr. Stroessner's and Dr. Bell's letters express some legitimate reservations regarding the modified pronoun forms we have adopted for use in the journal. Our rationale for writing the editorial and making the

changes is, we think, equally reasonable.

We want to reassure Mr. Stroessner that our intention is not to rewrite Thoreau. However, we do think that he should bear in mind that Henry David Thoreau lived from 1817 to 1862 and his writings reflected the social conditions and viewpoints of his time. *ABT* should, in our view, reflect the progress our country has made in extending human rights to all citizens since that time.

The purpose of the editorial was twofold: (1) to draw attention to the lack of an inclusive male-female pronoun; and (2) to have a consistent policy for dealing with the manuscripts that are accepted for publication in *American Biology Teacher*.

The idea of inventing a new pronoun is one that has occurred to a number of other people; Miller and Swift's book contains an entire chapter on alternatives. For our purposes it seemed important to use terms that are familiar—with some modification. We are sure that Dr. Bell would agree with us that although it is true that "s/he" may have feminist connotations, it is equally true that "he" may have male chauvinist connotations for those on the other side of the controversy. Unfortunately, we have no middle ground in our language. We welcome suggestions on new pronouns.

The forms we propose are somewhat jarring if one is reading aloud from the journal, but we think that anyone who uses our articles for this purpose will be sufficiently eloquent to supply "or" as needed.

Finally, we think that the problem Dr. Bell raises regarding compounds that begin with "man" is one that can be solved according to the context of the word.

We agree with E.B. White that "true inequality does not lie in our tongue, it lies in our hearts and in our habits, and language is remarkably sensitive to both" (Miller and Swift 1977), but we also believe that language can and must reflect change.

Joan G. Creager, editor
Patricia A. Masters, assistant editor

Reference

MILLER, C. and SWIFT, K. 1977. *Words and women: New language in new times*. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

A Glimpse into Biology Teaching in India

Are you sometimes depressed by the frustrations of your teaching situation? Are you discouraged by lack of materials and equipment, by the number of different class preparations, by the excess number of students in your laboratory and the lack of lab time? Or perhaps you lament over inadequate pay!

Come with me on a brief visit to a typical secondary biology classroom-laboratory in Dhamtari, India, a town of about 50,000 people. Meet Mr. Bhelwa, fifty-year-old veteran science teacher and his retired principal, Mr. Bachan, with thirty-seven years of experience. I had occasion to spend much of a day visiting with these delightful people and their school while my wife attended a church conference, the reason for our being in India, October 22 to November 14, 1977.

The campus of this private school built in the 1930's seems spacious enough and attractive. Once inside the sturdy looking buildings, we discover quite small rooms with very few furnishings. The biology room is average size by our standards, but Mr. Bhelwa has forty to fifty students in each of his classes, which demand four to five preparations on his part. Mr. Bhelwa has eight older compound microscopes for the entire class and very little other equipment. Visual aids, reference books, and models, are not available. Classes meet for only thirty minutes per day with a sixty minute "practical biology" block on Friday. Classes meet daily from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM and Saturday 9:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Students buy their own ancient English medium biology book geared to follow a "Biology Syllabus," a phylogenetic guide. Students learn facts so as to