Yet Another “Prominent Female Biologist”

Dear Editor:

I would like to suggest Libbie H. Hyman (1888-1969) as another candidate for the “Prominent Female Biologist” listing that was published in a recent issue (“Prominent Female Biologists,” ABT, 65, 583-589).

Libbie Hyman overcame personal hardships to complete degrees in zoology, including a Ph.D., at the University of Chicago. She published several scientific papers and wrote lab manuals for use in zoology courses. Hyman is probably best known for her extensive six-volume reference work, *The Invertebrates*. During her lifetime she received several awards from scientific organizations and honorary degrees from several universities. There was also established a scholarship program in her honor at the University of Chicago.

Libbie Hyman’s dedication would be an example to any student, female or male. She should certainly be included in the list of “Prominent Female Biologists.”

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Reaction to “How We Treat Our Relatives”

Dear Dr. Moore:

Your Editorial “How We Treat Our Relatives” (Vol. 65, #8, pp. 566-568) contains what we believe are inaccuracies and misconceptions about the human uses of other animals and about the relationship of *Homo sapiens* to the rest of the animal kingdom, and especially to other primates. If these inaccuracies and misconceptions stand unchallenged, especially in a highly regarded science-education journal, there is a danger that others will use them to justify further constraints on the uses of animals in education and research. Our specific concerns follow.

- Much of your editorial proceeds from evolutionary perspectives, emphasizing appropriately that “humans share a common ancestry with other organisms.” You note, for example, that “if animals differ too much from us, the human-related research involving those animals may be pointless…” It is correct, of course, that the evolutionary conservation of structures, functions, and behaviors allows us to extrapolate many research results from animals to humans. Evolutionary relatedness does not, however, translate into moral equivalence between human and other species, even other higher primates.

- You present the assertions of Aquinas and Descartes that animals cannot feel pain as if there has been no evolution in human thought on this issue since the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. To say that modern scientists do not think animals feel pain is without support. Simply because the animal rights literature says that we think so does not make it so. Are there survey data to support this claim? Two federal laws require that scientists consider these issues when proposing experiments for approval. There is even a pain society with guidelines about pain inflicted during experimentation. The out-of-context quote by Rachels, in which scientists allegedly state that monkeys used in experiments by the Defense Nuclear Agency “experienced no pain,” may, like many assertions from the animal-rights literature, prove to be false (Morrison, 2002). We should regard Rachels’s claim as hearsay until we know more about the situation.

- You note that “Kant denied that animals could have any meaningful, worthy, or valuable interests.” What does “interests” mean? Certainly, all animals have an inherent “interest” in survival, in the acquisition of food, and perhaps even in the avoidance of pain. Are they, however, capable of apprehending interests in the way that human beings do? Can they, for example, understand ethical interests such as justice or autonomy? Can they have any interests in the development of advanced knowledge? Again, the ability to hold some interests does not imply equivalence between humans and other animals.

- You cite Darwin’s assertion that “there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties.” What does “fundamental” mean? Darwin’s *Expression of Emotions in Man and...