



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 3, 2014

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## Blinding Me With Science: Fraud and Folly for Fame and Funding

Science's whiz kids are legendary, and its wonders legion. There is Albert Einstein with the crazy hair, and there is nuclear power. There is Nikola Tesla with his fear of shaking hands, and there is the alternating current theory of electricity. There is Edwin Hubble with his cape, cane, and fake British accent, and there is Hubble's law. But then there is also fake science. There was the Piltdown Man, Paul Kammerer and Lamarckian inheritance, the Philippine government and the Tasaday tribe, Charles Redheffer's "perpetual motion machine," and the Cardiff Giant. So while the 1950s white-lab-coat image of the scientist who cares only about Truth was once a popular Hollywood portrayal, the reality is better explained by applying to scientists what Thomas Jefferson said about judges: They "are as honest as other men and not more so. They have with others the same passions for party, for power, and the privilege of their corps" — and for money.



And while scientists and their triumphs have multiplied in modern times, so, unfortunately, have their trespasses. BMJ.com (formerly the *British Medical Journal*) has done much good reporting on this topic. Bob Roehr wrote in 2012:

Retraction of biomedical and life science research papers for fraud or misconduct is more widespread than previously thought and is roughly 10-fold more common today than in 1975, shows a new study published this week in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The study looked at all 2047 retractions listed in the PubMed index as at [sic] 3 May 2012. It tallied the reasons stated by the journal in making its retraction and also examined reports filed with the US government's Office of Research Integrity and other sources. That resulted in reclassification of 118 of 742 retractions (16%) given in an earlier study of retraction from error to fraud.

Also in 2012, BMJ's Aniket Tavare reported, "One in seven UK based scientists or doctors has witnessed colleagues intentionally altering or fabricating data during their research or for the purposes of



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publication, found a survey of more than 2700 researchers conducted by the BMJ.” In the same vein, BMJ’s Tony Sheldon wrote just three months later, “A Dutch survey claims that one in seven doctors have seen scientific research results that have been invented. In addition, nearly a quarter have seen data that have been massaged to achieve significant results.” And going from illusory data to illusory writers, BMJ’s Joseph S. Wislar reported in 2011 that there was “evidence of honorary and ghost authorship in 21% of articles published in major medical journals in 2008.” Note that this sometimes occurs when academics publish work crafted by relatively powerless underlings (i.e., graduate students) as their own.

And while scientific fraud is driven by personal failings, it can have population-level effects. Perhaps the best example of this is bug researcher turned self-proclaimed sex expert Alfred Kinsey, who has been called the “Father of the Sexual Revolution.” By producing subject-questionnaire data purporting to show that perverted behavior was actually the norm, Kinsey convinced millions of Americans that few were really living up to traditional sexual mores. And if this was the case, why shouldn’t they give their own darker impulses free rein? Why, it’s said that Hugh Hefner’s founding of *Playboy* was at least partially inspired by his having read Kinsey’s 1948 book *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* as a youth. Hey, it was convincing — science with a capital S.

But it was actually a con with a capital C. First, the data sample was skewed to begin with since only the most odd and rare of people in the 1940s and ’50s would answer detailed questions about sexuality. In fact, so rare were they that Kinsey couldn’t find enough of them in the general population to constitute a scientific sample. So, as I wrote in “According to Kinsey, Deviancy Is the New Normal” (*The New American*, April 27, 2009):

He plied America’s prisons and back alleys, including in his sample 1,300 to 1,400 sex offenders; 199 sexual psychopaths; other prisoners; and members of Chicago’s homosexual underground, people from its bathhouses and homosexual bars.... *The Kinsey Syndrome* [a documentary] tells us, “He redefined ‘married women’ to include any woman that had lived with a man for at least a year, a broad description that included prostitutes who had lived with their pimps” ... and that he also included “bootleggers, gamblers, male prostitutes, ne’er do-wells, pimps, thieves, and hold-up men” [in his research].

As Kinsey right-hand man Paul Gebhard explained, “Fifty-five percent were prisoners.... We didn’t have enough non-prison people to do much of a comparison — but he [Kinsey] didn’t do a comparison. He simply took the prison people he got and used them as his less-than-college educated sample.... By emphasizing the less-than-college educated sample, he introduced a lot of errors into the data.” Put simply, Kinsey took the behavior of prisoners and perverts and convinced people it was Peoria’s.



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**The father of the sexual devolution:** Despite the fact that Alfred Kinsey used fraudulent data to provide a scientific justification for the normalizing of perversion, his “research” shapes modern sex education to this day.

Worse still, we now know that Kinsey and his co-conspirators collected “data” on the sexual responses of children via “oral and manual stimulation,” as Gebhard put it. In other words, they were molesting kids, but eluded justice because they operated under the cover of “science.”

Add to the rampant scientific fraud a good dose of incompetence, and what is the result? As the *Economist* reported in a 2013 piece entitled “How science goes wrong”:

A rule of thumb among biotechnology venture-capitalists is that half of published research cannot be replicated. Even that may be optimistic. Last year researchers at one biotech firm, Amgen, found they could reproduce just six of 53 “landmark” studies in cancer research. Earlier, a group at Bayer, a drug company, managed to repeat just a quarter of 67 similarly important papers. A leading computer scientist frets that three-quarters of papers in his subfield are bunk. In 2000-10 roughly 80,000 patients took part in clinical trials based on research that was later retracted because of mistakes or improprieties.

## The Danger of Consensus

Most people might never guess that the majority of “scientific” endeavor could be pure bunk. But isn’t this common to many fields? Are most journalists a true credit to their craft? Do most politicians really understand how to preserve civilization? Do most lawyers do their utmost to safeguard the integrity of the law? The average in any field is just that — average. But just as it isn’t the average athlete who breaks records, it likewise is only the exceptional scientist who has breakthroughs, who innovates, invents, and pushes back frontiers — often against fierce opposition from the majority.

This brings us to “majority-vote science” and the climate-change debate. So often we hear that the “scientific consensus” is that man’s activities are changing the climate. Why, a think tank that recently recommended “cost-effective climate action” actually calls itself “The Copenhagen Consensus Center,” and NASA claims on a webpage entitled “GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: Vital Signs of the Planet,”



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“Consensus: 97% of climate scientists agree ... that climate-warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities.” Yes, I suppose it’s much like the 1949 R.J. Reynolds commercial stating, “MORE DOCTORS SMOKE CAMELS than any other cigarette.” (Ironically, my father was a doctor who for a long time smoked Camels!) So, hey, puff away — as long as it doesn’t raise the temperature.

Such claims should raise doubts, though. Especially since, as the American Meteorological Society wrote after conducting a survey of its membership, “perceived scientific consensus was the strongest predictor” of meteorologists’ global warming views. In other words, scientists’ perception of scientific consensus shapes scientific consensus. Even more to the point, however, the Canada-based group Friends of Science just released (Feb. 3) a review of much-touted 97-percent consensus surveys and concluded, the organization wrote in a press release,

Contrary to claims of these most-cited 97% consensus surveys, there is only 1-3% explicitly stated agreement with the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] declarations on global warming, and no agreement with a catastrophic view. “These ‘consensus’ surveys appear to be used as a ‘social proof,’” says Ken Gregory, research director of Friends of Science.... “The 97% claim is contrived in all cases.”

Of course, if we can’t trust studies, can we trust studies of consensus? Can we trust studies of studies? Well, it could also be pointed out that there has been no global warming for approximately 15 years now, that some of the world’s most influential climate scientists — at the University of East Anglia’s Climatic Research Unit in England (UEACRU) — were found peddling fraudulent science in the Climategate scandal, and that the United Nations Environment Programme predicted in 2005 that there would be 50 million “climate refugees” by 2010 (and later tried to scrub the prediction from the UN website). Yet even this isn’t the point. For whatever one’s opinion on the facts, figures, fantasies, frauds, and fears, a simple truth is inescapable: Consensus is not science.

No one made this point more brilliantly than late author Michael Crichton, who in a 2003 Caltech speech said:

Historically, the claim of consensus has been the first refuge of scoundrels; it is a way to avoid debate by claiming that the matter is already settled.

... Let’s be clear: the work of science has nothing whatever to do with consensus. Consensus is the business of politics. Science, on the contrary, requires only one investigator who happens to be right....

In science consensus is irrelevant. What is relevant is reproducible results. The greatest scientists in history are great precisely because they broke with the consensus.

Crichton then went on to give examples of revolutionary scientists confronted by risible majorities. There was Ignaz Semmelweis’ 1849 evidence that puerperal fever was a contagious process and Dr. Joseph Goldberger’s proof that pellagra was caused by diet. There was Wegener and continental drift theory, Pasteur and germ theory, Copernicus and heliocentrism, Marshall and the bacterial cause of ulcers, and many, many others. Consensus said all these men were wrong. History proved them right.



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Crichton then concludes his takedown, writing, “Consensus is invoked only in situations where the science is not solid enough. Nobody says the consensus of scientists agrees that  $E=mc^2$ . Nobody says the consensus is that the sun is 93 million miles away. It would never occur to anyone to speak that way.” Precisely. If you have the facts, you present them. Consensus is something you talk about *when you don’t have the facts*.

Of course, one last point should be made here: It’s relatively easy to get a consensus when you’re able to buy it. That is to say, getting government grants becomes more difficult if a researcher isn’t willing to do politically correct science (and maybe draw politically correct conclusions). As British science writer Nigel Calder pointed out in the documentary *The Great Global Warming Swindle*, if he wanted a grant to study squirrels, he wouldn’t ask for just that. Rather, he’d say he wanted “to investigate the nut-gathering behavior of squirrels with special reference to the effects of global warming.” “And that way I get my money,” said Calder. “If I forget to mention global warming, I might not get the money.”

## **Fringe Science**

Just because the majority is often wrong, however, doesn’t mean the fringe is usually right. You might have once seen the headlines and titles: “Will women soon outrun men?” “Momentous sprint at the 2156 Olympics?” and *Catching Up the Men*. The idea is that if “recent” track-and-field record trends continue — with the gap between the sexes closing — women will equal or surpass men on the athletic field at some future date. The gap was greater years ago because it was not just a function of intersex biological differences but also lifestyle differences: Women didn’t participate in sports as seriously or to nearly the same degree, so they hadn’t tapped as high a percentage of their potential as men had. But this also informed that the gap would never disappear, but, rather, would simply shrink to the size biology dictated it should be. So in an effort to confirm this hypothesis, I went online and examined world-record progressions.

It only took about 15 minutes.

And I was surprised.

Not only did I find out that recent trends — the previous 15 years — showed no narrowing of the gap, but I learned something. As physiologist Dr. Stephen Seiler and co-authors Jos J De Koning and Carl Foster wrote in their 2007 research paper “The fall and rise of the gender difference in elite anaerobic performance 1952-2006,” “Analysis of elite sprinting performance in running, swimming, and speed skating during the last 50 yr reveals that the performance difference between males and females has ceased to narrow and has actually widened since the mid-1990s.” *Widened?* How could this be? Seiler explained in an earlier paper, “Reduced use of anabolic steroids [due to drug testing] may be the reason women runners are no longer becoming like men.” This makes sense. After all, these drugs are essentially synthetic male hormones, and women derive greater relative performance gains from them because men’s bodies already produce copious amounts of “steroids” naturally.



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**When the crystal ball breaks:** Feminist-influenced research predicted that women marathoners would equal the men by 1998. The reality? Boys' high-school track-and-field records are still considerably better than women's world records.

And what explains the contrary picture the other studies paint? The "recent" trends they analyze often aren't all that recent, but in some cases include the last 100 years. Obviously, since this period encompasses the pre-feminist era — a time when intersex lifestyle differences were greater and women generally didn't participate in sports — it's folly to assume that the next hundred years' evolution in the intersex performance gap will reflect the last hundred. And how is it that these "researchers" can't figure this out?

Don't be so sure they can't. Not only are some scientists anxious to produce data confirming their ideology — which creates incentive to fool yourself (rationalize) as well as others — but the media is much more likely to publish news that confirms their ideology. Moreover, "man bites dog" is a story; the reverse is not. So an attention-dependent media that loves attention-grabbing claims will often be provided them by attention-seeking scientists. These factors perhaps explain a prediction in the article "Will women soon outrun men?" (actually published by science journal *Nature* in 1992) that women short-distance runners would catch up to their male counterparts in the early 21st century — and that marathon records would be equal by 1998.

There have been other "newsworthy" predictions. Thomas Malthus said in 1798 that exploding populations would cause widespread famine. Picking up this ball and running with it, Stanford University professor Paul Ehrlich predicted in his best-selling 1968 book *The Population Bomb* that hundreds of millions would die of starvation in the 1970s; undaunted when proven wrong, he later said that four billion people would starve to death in the '80s, including 65 million in the United States. And now, even though average caloric intake rose 24 percent during a period when world population doubled, Ehrlich's only admission of error is that his book was "much too optimistic about the future." Perhaps if he wasn't starved for Truth, he'd know that with more than 70 nations worldwide having birthrates below replacement level, our population bomb is a dud.

Yet ideology is such a powerful factor that it generally trumps newsworthiness. After all, the mainstream media give articles by global-warming skeptics short shrift even though they would certainly attract attention. But the bright side is that sniffing out ideologically driven science is as easy



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as understanding your age's prevailing ideology. For example, the Nazis set out to prove that the Germans were descended from a race of Aryan supermen — who lost their great powers through miscegenation — and believed they could recreate this master race by accelerating evolution in a sort of hothouse environment. Now, would you guess that this hypothesis was driven by sincere scientific curiosity or by the ideological belief in race as destiny? Likewise, whenever we see science that confirms our fashionable “isms” (e.g., atheism, multiculturalism, and feminism) and Equality Dogma, we should see a red flag.

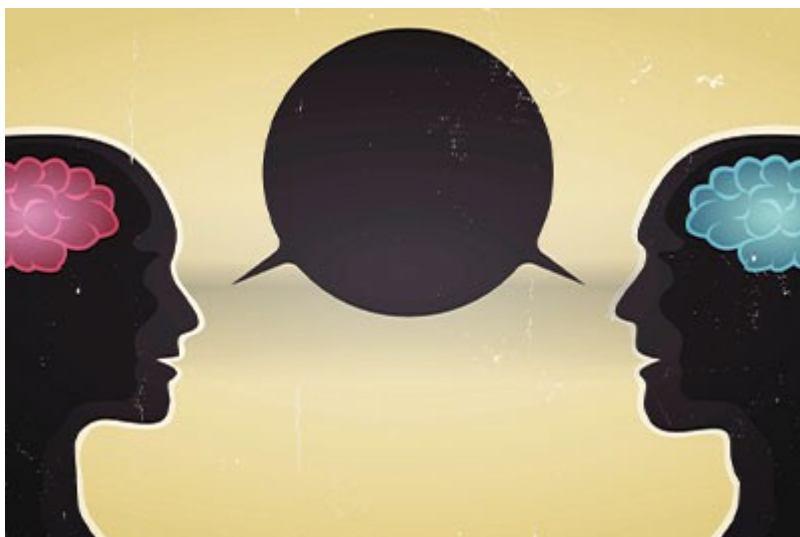
And the lens through which much science is filtered today is what I'll call “sexual Marxism.” This started with the idea that sex is meaningless because males and females are the same — except for superficial physical differences — and has graduated to the proposition that sex is meaningless because “male” and “female” don't really exist, not as hard-and-fast designations, anyway; this is the notion that your “gender” can be whatever you feel it is. As with all Marxism, however, it turns out that some sexual identities are more equal than others.

Many years ago I read about the measurement of brain activity via brain-imaging studies. In one article it was pointed out that women's brains become active in many different areas when performing most tasks, while men's brains activate only in one particular area. Not surprisingly, the interpretation was not that the phenomenon confirmed the old stereotype that women are “scatterbrained,” but that, to paraphrase the article, it may mean a woman will make associations a man won't. A while later, however, I read an article about how when trying to recognize faces, men's brains lit up widely while women's exhibited isolated activity. The conclusion in this case?

Men may have to work *harder* to perform the task.

So same phenomenon+different sex=different interpretation. You know you're witnessing pseudo-scientific sleight of hand when the media-academia axis can't keep its propaganda straight.

And given that scientific observations are often like ancient documents written in cryptic languages, interpretation is always a factor. In the case of the brain research, for instance, sure, the organ's active regions are as apparent on a video screen as hieroglyphics on a well-preserved sarcophagus, and they represent activity. But what does this activity really mean? Add to this that only certain academics' interpretations are deemed “newsworthy” and that reporters often present their interpretations of the interpretations, and the reader often gets interpolation.





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**Girls rule, boys drool?** Since modern research refutes the notion of the sameness of the sexes, the new feminist tactic is to spin the findings as proof of female superiority.

A good example of interpretation's power is the notion that all babies start out as female, with a boy's primary male sexual characteristics only developing upon the release of testosterone some time after conception. I've also read a less widely disseminated position that it's more accurate to classify all newly conceived babies as "intersex." Now, leaving aside the deeper theological discussion of what makes one male or female (e.g., soul differences), the obvious point is that a cause of the sexual development in question deeper than the hormone release is what causes that cause (an XY chromosome configuration). And how would you characterize this cause? "Being male" leaps to mind.

And one misconception leads to another. If sex is considered some nebulous thing that has already "changed" in half the population in the womb, is it any surprise that many people believe we can change it outside the womb? I'm referring to the increasingly popular diagnosis of "Gender Identity Disorder," in which science is telling us that it's now legitimate to perform "gender-reassignment surgery" based not on any physical tests, but solely on *feelings*. A person can have a male body and a male chromosome configuration, but, nonetheless, a slave-to-fashion physician will insist, "His brain is telling him he is a girl" (much like the doctor's brain is telling him he's a scientist. Perhaps we need some career-reassignment surgery).

And all this pseudo-science has had its effect. Many millions of people will now refer to a boy who identifies as a girl as "she," and millions more believe there is a "gay gene" or some other inborn cause of homosexuality when no such cause has ever been proven. A recent *USA Today*/Stanford University/Resources survey showed that 80 percent of Americans believe that global warming will hurt future generations to some degree. And a pre-1996-Olympics poll showed that 66 percent of Americans believed that "the day is coming when top female athletes will beat top males at the highest competitive levels" (no doubt, I heard it happened in 1998 already).

So what is the solution to these scientific woes? Some say that money and prestige need to be stricken from science, but this sounds much like the old McCain-Feingold argument that money must be purged from politics. Certain things require funding and elevate esteem, like it or not, so perhaps the problem is better explained by Pogo: "We have met the enemy, and he is us." As long as we elect politicians with skewed priorities, we'll have government-influenced science such as the climate-change variety; as long as we subscribe to nonsense such as equality dogma, we'll have researchers peddling feminist-slanted science for prestige and profit and a media willing to disseminate it; as long as we fund politically correct universities with tax and tuition dollars, we'll continue getting politically correct research; and as long as there is little accountability for scientific fraud — note that Climategate con-man Phil Jones still has a career at the University of East Anglia — we'll still have fraudulent science. And figuring that out isn't rocket science.

Can a people have a scientific establishment that is better than they themselves are? After all, whether good science is at the fringe or the center, it is always in one place: wherever the Truth happens to be. And I suspect that people don't want all that much more Truth from their science than they do from their politicians.





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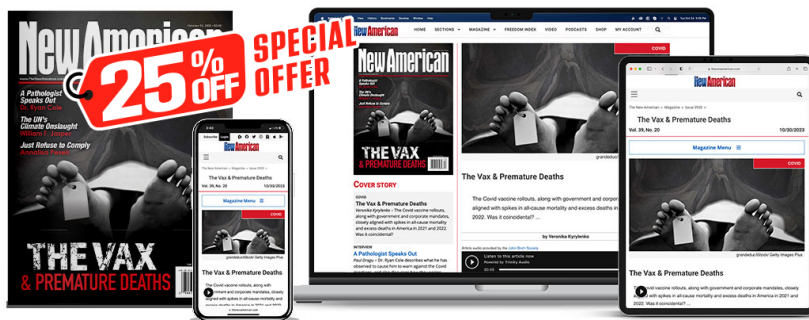
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