PHILOSOPHY

WHEN SCIENCE FAILS

7.02.2008 1 COMMENT

Science fails if there is no gain in knowledge. At least in my research field the majority of papers does not provide any significant new knowledge leading even to the incredible notion "Beam me up". Paper output is reaching an all time height as reported in a recent Nature commentary [1, 2]. Fancy websites like Eigenfactor are only cluttering the very basic fact that there is only occasionally some gain in knowledge.
Whatever you are going to vote here — if I would have to write a book on science failure I would spend around 50 pages on personal misbehaviour (annoying but not really interesting), 200 pages on the science industry (also not very interesting but maybe informative for some outsider) and the remaining 250 pages on science system flaws (or how to leave main stream without any proper funding).

In my slip box "science industry" there is already a recent letter of an editor

> Sometimes it takes 8 or 10 tries to find someone who will agree to review a paper. The typical excuse is "I'm too busy" … The temptation, and sometimes the need, is to turn to potential reviewers in less-related fields or those who are not so "busy" (i.e., are not producing much themselves). This inevitably leads to less-knowledgeable reviewers and often reviews of lesser quality…

which explains why the quality of published is going down rapidly. In the slip box "science system flaws" there is currently a recent Edge commentary

I have changed my mind about the omniscience and omnipotence of science. I now realize that science is strictly limited, and that it is extremely dangerous not to appreciate this.
Science proceeds in general by being reductionist. This term is used in different ways in different contexts but here I take it to mean that scientists begin by observing a world that seems infinitely complex and inchoate, and in order to make sense of it they first “reduce” it to a series of bite-sized problems, each of which can then be made the subject of testable hypotheses which, as far as possible, take mathematical form…

I can´t imagine any better explanation, yea, yea.

NACHTRAG

Rebecca

7.02.2008 AT 18:36

Remember that science is a philosophy,a manner of thinking/reasoning, not inherently an industry. Its value should not be measured by productivity, such as novel discoveries and new drugs/therapies to enhance the human condition, but by the innate nature of the scientific philosophy to enlighten the outlook of the scientific thinker. And for the enlightened thought to be communicated. So say I.

COMMENTS ARE CLOSED.