

PHILOSOPHY

SCIENCE IS GREAT, BUT SCIENTISTS ARE STILL PEOPLE

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As for scientists, they are not a breed apart. Compared to the scientists of only a few decades ago, they are more numerous, specialized, and costly. But as people, they are much the same, with individualities and frailties like those in other walks of life. Beyond the extreme of acceptable behavior, there may be laxity and negligence and rare instances of fraud, all of which now receive exaggerated media attention. It is common for science frauds to be attributed to ills in our society or to mismanagement of science, but I recall that 40 to 50 years ago, such psychopathic cases seemed as frequent as now on a per capita basis.

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