



Misdirected science

Communication across the revolutionary divide is inevitably partial.

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You may be wondering at the incongruity that science can put a man on the moon but cannot resolve the question of how to feed pets. Is it science itself or the usage made of science that creates the problem? My short answer would be that science is often lopsided and performed badly. For veterinary science matters are made worse by the ties, both subtle and not so subtle, that bind it to the artificial pet food industry.

Others have voiced criticism. J E Lovelock FRS, author of the Gaia Hypothesis, says: ‘Science has taken over from religion and it has become a rather corrupt church. It’s in its mediaeval theological phase.’² At a rather different level veterinarian Dr Jon Lumley suggested: ‘You do not need a postgraduate degree in nutrition to evaluate the effects of raw bones on a dog’s dentition — in fact, it appears that the qualification would be a serious disadvantage!’³ If some science is fundamentally flawed then in part this may be due to uncertainties surrounding scientific methodology. Nobel prizewinner Sir Peter Medawar commented:

Ask a scientist what he conceives the scientific method to be and he will adopt an expression that is at once solemn and shifty-eyed, solemn because he feels he ought to declare an opinion, shifty-eyed because he is wondering how to conceal the fact that he has no opinion to declare. If taunted he would probably