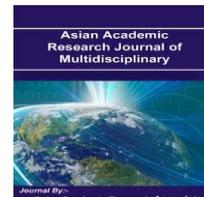




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THE FAILINGS OF SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Modern scientific investigation had its origins in the 17th century, and unfortunately still retains many of the prejudices that were prevalent at that time. Chief among these is the notion that all things can only be understood through a foundational, humanistic outlook, proceeding deductively from first principles that were generally accepted as true, rather than acknowledging that the natural phenomena under study were actually governed by comprehensive natural law that united all such phenomena within a unified system. Consequently, the usual approach taken by scientists was, and to a large extent still is, to abstract phenomena under study from their natural contexts, to circumscribe each of them with a bordering box, and to measure and describe those phenomena as carefully as possible in humanistic terms, preferably with the use of mathematics. Thus abstracted, the phenomena would not be encumbered with any connections between them and their natural contexts, which, if regarded at all, would be considered irrelevant to the investigation. Thus, any such phenomena would be seen as isolated and unresponsive to the contexts within which they naturally arose. For the early years of scientific investigation, in which classification was a dominant criterion, this approach worked tolerably, rendering objects of study suitable for placement in gridded museum drawers, but it was unable to address questions of how the various phenomena related to one another and to the natural contexts within which they actually evolved. This has resulted in several regressive research strategies in scientific investigation, which I investigate in this paper, with pertinent examples, together with what I submit are more reasonable alternative explanations, using a holistic, synthetic approach.

There is a common, but nevertheless unhealthy, tendency among both scientists and the lay public to regard all scientific inquiry as sacrosanct and beyond reproach or questioning. This tendency is not new, but it is inimical to the scientific process, which works best if an open-minded researcher rejects all preconceptions and simply observes the behavior of the whole system, and from that, draws appropriate conclusions. The correct role of science is to disclose truth, but often this is accompanied by the unfortunate and incorrect assumption that all scientific investigation is impartial and unbiased, and by the belief that truth is invariably established through the practice of science. As a retired scientist-academician who has seen several favored theories overthrown by new revelations, I am well aware that this is not always the case, but rather that it is, in fact, seldom the case. There are several reasons for this unhappy circumstance, and in this paper, I hope to elucidate the main ones.

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