

The March for Science Had Nothing to do with Science

A march for science is a contradiction in terms.

Marching is an expression of our subjective emotions. Science is an attempt to put emotion and subjectivity aside in order to discover how the world works. If you march for science, you are clearly marching for something other than science, and damaging the standing of science in the process.

Many of the marchers seem to be protesting Trump's environmental policies. As a lifelong environmentalist myself, I am glad to see people wanting to protect the environment. But the placards should speak to the environment, not "science."

And of course the appropriation of science for political purposes goes far beyond the environment.

Within medicine, perhaps the most emotional issue is whether parents have the right to decide about vaccinations for their children. This is often described as a science issue, with self-described supporters of science supporting forced vaccination against people they dismiss as mindless yahoos. But to present the vaccine issue as a simple all or nothing for everyone issue is neither logical nor scientific. Real science is never "settled." Nor does it ever endorse forcing people to do anything.

The real issues surrounding vaccination go far beyond whether to vaccinate or not to vaccinate. They concern very important questions such as whether genetic differences among children create vulnerabilities, whether it is safe to inject aluminum (and other adjuvants) or mercury (used as a preservative, especially in the flu shot), directly into the bloodstream, where the liver cannot provide protection, and also whether

the present schedule should be revised or spread out or started later in infancy. These are not issues that will be elucidated by marching. They require evaluation by honest scientists who are not gripped by political or emotional agendas or corrupted by pay-offs.

The search for objectivity was eventually abandoned in the classical world. It is currently under severe attack in our own culture, and in particular from people claiming to march under its banner.

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