

Fashionable Nonsense Postmodern Intellectuals Abuse Of Science Alan Sokal

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ABC-CLIO

The year 2000, the end of the millennium: is this anything other than a mirage, the illusion of an end, like so many other imaginary endpoints which have littered the path of history? In this remarkable book Jean Baudrillard—France's leading theorist of postmodernity—argues that the notion of the end is part of the fantasy of a linear history. Today we are not approaching the end of history but moving into reverse, into a process of systematic obliteration. We are wiping out the entire twentieth century, effacing all signs of the cold war one by one, perhaps even the signs of the First and Second World Wars and of the political and ideological revolutions of our time. In short, we are engaged in a gigantic process of historical revisionism, and we seem in a hurry to finish it before the end of the century, secretly hoping perhaps to be able to begin again from scratch. Baudrillard explores the "fatal strategies of time" which shape our ways of thinking about history and its imaginary

end. Ranging from the revolutions in Eastern Europe to the Gulf War, from the transformation of nature to the hyper-reality of the media, this postmodern mediation on modernity and its aftermath will be widely read.

Fashionable Nonsense MIT Press

"The focus of any genuinely new piece of criticism or interpretation must be on the creative act of finding the new, but deconstruction puts the matter the other way around: its emphasis is on debunking the old. But aside from the fact that this program is inherently uninteresting, it is, in fact, not at all clear that it is possible. . . . [T]he naïveté of the crowd is deconstruction's very starting point, and its subsequent move is as much an emotional as an intellectual leap to a position that feels different as much in the one way as the other. . . ." --From the book

Intellectual Impostures Macmillan

What if something as seemingly academic as the so-called science wars were to determine how we live? This eye-opening book reveals how little we've understood about the ongoing pitched battles between the sciences and the humanities--and how much may be at stake. James Brown's starting point is C. P. Snow's famous book, Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution, which set the terms for the current debates. But that little book did much more than identify two new, opposing cultures, Brown contends: It also claimed that scientists are better qualified than nonscientists to solve political and social problems. In short, the true significance of Snow's treatise was its focus on the question of who should rule--a question that remains vexing, pressing, and politically explosive today. In Who Rules in Science? Brown takes us through the various engagements in the science wars--from the infamous "Sokal affair" to angry confrontations over the nature of evidence, the possibility of objectivity, and the methods of science--to show

how the contested terrain may be science, but the prize is political: Whoever wins the science wars will have an unprecedented influence on how we are governed. Brown provides the most comprehensive and balanced assessment yet of the science wars. He separates the good arguments from the bad, and exposes the underlying message: Science and social justice are inextricably linked. His book is essential reading if we are to understand the forces making and remaking our world. Table of Contents: Preface Acknowledgments 1. Scenes from the Science Wars 2. The Scientific Experience 3. How We Got to Where We Are 4. The Nihilist Wing of Social Constructivism 5. Three Key Terms 6. The Naturalist Wing of Social Constructivism 7. The Role of Reason 8. The Democratization of Science 9. Science with a Social Agenda Afterword Notes Bibliography Index Reviews of this book: Meaty and challenging are the words to describe Brown's treatment of the arguments that go on over the nature and social impact of science. "The battleground in the current round of the science wars," he writes, "is epistemology (What is evidence? Objectivity? Rationality? Could any belief be justified?)...The stakes are political, however; social issues are constantly lurking in the background. How we structure and organize our society is the consequence. Whoever wins the science wars will have an unprecedented influence on how we are governed. Brown, professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto, gives a rich and closely reasoned discussion of the issues in the science wars. --Scientific American Reviews of this book: Brown ably takes on many of the claims proffered by the antiscience camp and argues that the logic in those claims is faulty. Brown's engaging style makes accessible complex issues central to the philosophy of science. --Publishers Weekly Reviews of this book: While what has been known as "the science wars" seems to have finally played itself out--not, so much as I can tell, that distrust between the sciences and humanities has been settled, but that interest on the part of spectators has pretty well waned--the issues that animated the debate, and their practical

importance in everyday life, may not have been successfully clarified for the general public. James Robert Brown's *Who Rules in Science?* is the clearest, most accessible book on the subject for the general reader that I have come across during the many years of this bickering. --Tom Bowden, *TechDirections* Reviews of this book: In *Who Rules in Science*, James Brown...warns that there's much more at stake here than people realize. This is not just a battle between postmodernist philosophers and working scientists over whether an electron is real or merely a social construction. It's about who gets to define reality, truth and rationality. --Sheilla Jones, *Globe and Mail* Reviews of this book: The latest and perhaps most comprehensive attempt at rescuing the pro-science "hard" Left from the anti-science cons Left is James Robert Brown's *Who Rules in Science*. Like Sokal, Chomsky, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Lewontin, and others he believes that clear thinking is the Left's best weapon, and that good science is a powerful engine of social justice. Thus, constructivism, which undermines the authority of science and reason, is not only wrong-headed but also socially irresponsible. --Kevin Shapiro, *Commentary Magazine* Reviews of this book: James Brown...details in this very readable book the Great Divide between the humanities and science, and between constructivist and empirically oriented camps...For those who are quite comfortable with the standard approach in science, *Who Rules* exposes a very unpleasant underbelly of science, in which scientists can be influenced by personal or political motivations. --Keith Harris, *Metapsychology* Reviews of this book: A close analysis of the 'science wars' examines the link between politics and epistemology. Brown does an admirable job of engaging the general reader in such issues as the role that science plays in creating or changing the social order and the role of social factors in the creating or changing of scientific theories...The author takes readers through a whirlwind course in the philosophy of science in the 20th century, focusing on the concepts of realism, objectivity, and values. He acknowledges that social constructivists are right in seeing social factors at work in science, but he insists that reason and evidence play a dominant role. Brown sees the democratization of science as one of the central themes of the science wars, and he takes the position that when participants are drawn from every affected social group, more objective science will result. He argues that knowledge grows through comparative theory assessment, and that the way to ensure the optimal diversity of rival theories is by having a wide variety of theorists from diverse

backgrounds; thus the political act of affirmative action leads to more objective science. Brings the science wars home for the lay reader by identifying the combatants, examining their goals, and exposing the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. --Kirkus Reviews Reviews of this book: Brown...here provides a cheerful gloss on some philosophical issues arising from the currently fashionable "science wars." The result is a readable survey of the history of the analytic philosophy of science and the sociology of knowledge from positivism to constructivism, with the positions of the usual suspects characterized and criticized. --P. D. Skiff, *Choice* Reviews of this book: Many readers will finish James Robert Brown's *Who Rules in Science?* Feeling that this "war" is more than a little phoney...The idea that these two schools are at "war" serves only to deflect attention away from their furtive collaboration. *Who Rules in Science?* sheds overdue light on this dark and secret liason. --David Hawkes, *Times Literary Supplement* Reviews of this book: In *Who Rules in Science?*, philosopher James Robert Brown argues cogently for public accountability for science--and public funding for scientists. He points out that debates about what science is, its control and its funding are not esoteric; they are the essence of the politics of science. --New Scientist This is a wonderful book: funny, learned, intelligent, strong-minded. In a clear and understanding fashion, James Robert Brown introduces us to the battles over the nature of science. He is never afraid to make judgements, yet always with appreciation of people's positions, however extreme. If you read only one book on the "Science Wars," read this. My only regret is that *Who Rules in Science?* is not longer. --Michael Ruse, Florida State University This book is a lively, engrossing overview of the philosophical and political issues at stake in the current debates about science. Brown doesn't pull any punches in stating his own views, but he always takes care to present fairly even those arguments with which he disagrees. And he's an equal-opportunity debunker: scientists, sociologists and his fellow philosophers all come in for (mostly justified) criticism. --Alan Sokal, co-author of *Fashionable Nonsense* A breath of commonsense, lucidly and wittily argued. --Robin Dunbar, author of *Gossip, Grooming, and the Evolution of Language* and *The Trouble with Science* *Who Rules in Science?* restores the image of the scientist as a rational actor, capable of generating reliable knowledge and defending the public interest. The book is wonderfully written and should be read as widely as possible. --Ullica Segerstrale, author of *Defenders of the Truth*

[Chaosmosis](#) Springer Science & Business Media

Cutting-Edge Fashion Illustration is the go-to resource and inspiration if you're a budding fashion designer, fashion illustrator or just simply want to learn more illustration techniques. Covers all key areas of illustration using traditional, digital and mixed media methods, offering clear advice on how to manage color, textures, patterns and how to create your own fashion portfolio. Easy to follow step-by-step tutorials demonstrate each of the techniques, followed by a gallery of inspirational images show how to use each technique in your own illustrations. Erica is a fashion illustrator working with key fashion publications in London, UK, one of the world's leading cities of fashion, so her style is very commercial and current!

[The Best of All Possible Worlds](#) Springer Science & Business Media

This volume contains two essays by Frederick Crews attacking Freudian psychoanalysis and its aftermath in the so-called recovered memory movement. The first essay reviews a growing body of evidence indicating that Freud doctored his data and manipulated his colleagues in an effort to consolidate a cult-life following that would neither defy nor upstage him. The second essay challenges the scientific and therapeutic claims of the rapidly growing recovered-memory movement, maintaining that its social effects have been devastating.

[Quantum Sense and Nonsense](#) Profile Books

Shortly after the cessation of hostilities, Jean Baudrillard published an article entitled "The Gulf War Has Not Taken Place," arguing that the conflict had been a "hyperreal" event, a product of superinduced media illusion and saturation TV coverage. Moreover, there was something like a duty to abandon any belief in its real-world occurrence, since in Baudrillard's view "the true belligerents are those who thrive on the ideology of the truth of this war." It is in response to Baudrillard and other proponents of the so-called postmodern condition that Christopher Norris has written this extended essay. He argues that their stance is both politically disabling and philosophically confused; that it rests on a wholly unwarranted skepticism with regard to the claims of enlightened critique; that there exist more cogent alternative theories of truth, language, ideology, and representation; and that postmodernism is best understood as a symptom of the deep cultural malaise that marked many responses to the Gulf War. Norris's book combines a vigorous critique of these ideas with a strong counterargument grounded in the values of

reasoned inquiry and open exchange. He offers incisive commentary on the work of Baudrillard, Lyotard, Foucault, and other influential French theorists and on the American neopragmatist school represented by Richard Rorty and Stanley Fish. While careful to remark the differences between them, Norris finds many of these thinkers adopting an "end-of-ideology" rhetoric that has also been revived by Francis Fukuyama and other celebrants of United States hegemony in the guise of a "New World Order." Aligning himself most closely with Habermas, Chomsky, Eagleton, and the tradition of enlightened dissident critique, Norris here offers an impassioned defense of the modern intellectual's continuing role as critic of real-world politics and government. *Uncritical Theory* is a timely challenge to much of what passes for radical thinking in an age of postmodern commodity culture.

Uncritical Theory North Point Press

First published in 1995, this polemical study challenges generally accepted truths of the Israel-Palestine conflict as well as much of the revisionist literature. This new edition critically reexamines dominant popular and scholarly images in the light of the current failures of the peace process.

Cynical Theories Arrow

This book explains, in simple terms, with a minimum of mathematics, why things can appear to be in two places at the same time, why correlations between simultaneous events occurring far apart cannot be explained by local mechanisms, and why, nevertheless, the quantum theory can be understood in terms of matter in motion. No need to worry, as some people do, whether a cat can be both dead and alive, whether the moon is there when nobody looks at it, or whether quantum systems need an observer to acquire definite properties. The author's inimitable and even humorous style makes the book a pleasure to read while bringing a new clarity to many of the longstanding puzzles of quantum physics.

Humanitarian Imperialism Verso

The first book to provide a comprehensive look at the problem of gullibility, this groundbreaking work covers how and why we are fooled in areas that range from religion, politics, science, and medicine, to personal finance and relationships. First laying the groundwork by showing gullibility at play in the writings of historic authors we all know, developmental psychologist Stephen Greenspan follows with chapters that

describe social duping across the gamut of human conduct. From people who pour bucks into investment scams, to those who follow the faith of scientologists, believe in fortunetellers, or champion unfounded medicine akin to snake oil, we all know someone who has been duped. A lot of us have been duped ourselves, out of naive trust. It's not a matter of low intelligence that moves us to, without evidence, believe the words of politicians, salesmen, academics, lawyers, military figures, or cult leaders, among others. Greenspan shows us the four broad reasons we become drawn into gullible behavior, and he presents ways people can become less gullible. Greenspan takes us into the vast realm of gullibility from the fictional Pied Piper to the historical Trojan Horse, then through modern-day military maneuvers, political untruths, police and criminal justice scams, and financial and love lies. While there have been earlier books focused on liars and manipulators of all sorts, this is the first to focus on the gullible who are their victims, and how the gullible can become less likely to be taken again.

The Transparency of Evil Liberty Island

In 1996, Alan Sokal, a Professor of Physics at New York University, wrote a paper for the cultural-studies journal *Social Text*, entitled 'Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a transformative hermeneutics of quantum gravity'. It was reviewed, accepted and published. Sokal immediately confessed that the whole article was a hoax - a cunningly worded paper designed to expose and parody the style of extreme postmodernist criticism of science. The story became front-page news around the world and triggered fierce and wide-ranging controversy. Sokal is one of the most powerful voices in the continuing debate about the status of evidence-based knowledge. In *Beyond the Hoax* he turns his attention to a new set of targets - pseudo-science, religion, and misinformation in public life. 'Whether my targets are the postmodernists of the left, the fundamentalists of the right, or the muddle-headed of all political and apolitical stripes, the bottom line is that clear thinking, combined with a respect for evidence, are of the utmost importance to the survival of the human race in the twenty-first century.' The book also includes a hugely illuminating annotated text of the Hoax itself, and a reflection on the furore it provoked.

Who Rules in Science? Indiana University Press

In this bold and original study, Jeff Kochan constructively

combines the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) with Martin Heidegger's early existential conception of science. Kochan shows convincingly that these apparently quite different approaches to science are, in fact, largely compatible, even mutually reinforcing. By combining Heidegger with SSK, Kochan argues, we can explicate, elaborate, and empirically ground Heidegger's philosophy of science in a way that makes it more accessible and useful for social scientists and historians of science. Likewise, incorporating Heideggerian phenomenology into SSK renders SSK a more robust and attractive methodology for use by scholars in the interdisciplinary field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). Kochan's ground-breaking reinterpretation of Heidegger also enables STS scholars to sustain a principled analytical focus on scientific subjectivity, without running afoul of the orthodox subject-object distinction they often reject. *Science as Social Existence* is the first book of its kind, unfurling its argument through a range of topics relevant to contemporary STS research. These include the epistemology and metaphysics of scientific practice, as well as the methods of explanation appropriate to social scientific and historical studies of science. *Science as Social Existence* puts concentrated emphasis on the compatibility of Heidegger's existential conception of science with the historical sociology of scientific knowledge, pursuing this combination at both macro- and micro-historical levels. Beautifully written and accessible, *Science as Social Existence* puts new and powerful tools into the hands of sociologists and historians of science, cultural theorists of science, Heidegger scholars, and pluralist philosophers of science.

The Sokal Hoax Springer

In this collection of essays, her first since the best-selling *The Worst Years of Our Lives*, Barbara Ehrenreich delves into the soul of the 1990s in search of the American zeitgeist after "The Decade of Greed."

Science Fictions University of Chicago Press

In 1996 physicist Alan Sokal published an essay in *Social Text*--an influential academic journal of cultural studies--touting the deep similarities between quantum gravitational theory and postmodern philosophy. Soon thereafter, the essay was revealed as a brilliant parody, a catalog of nonsense written in the cutting-edge but impenetrable lingo of postmodern theorists. The event sparked a furious debate in academic circles and made the headlines of newspapers in the U.S. and abroad. Now in *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science*, Sokal and his fellow physicist Jean Bricmont expand from where the hoax left off. In a

delightfully witty and clear voice, the two thoughtfully and thoroughly dismantle the pseudo-scientific writings of some of the most fashionable French and American intellectuals. More generally, they challenge the widespread notion that scientific theories are mere "narrations" or social constructions.

Abstract State Machines Harvard University Press

In a provocative analysis written during the unfolding drama of 1992, Baudrillard draws on his concepts of simulation and the hyperreal to argue that the Gulf War did not take place but was a carefully scripted media event -- a "virtual" war. Patton's introduction argues that Baudrillard, more than any other critic of the Gulf War, correctly identified the stakes involved in the gestation of the New World Order.

Science as Social Existence Picador

BOOK OF THE YEAR in The Times, the Sunday Times and the Financial Times Have you heard that language is violence and that science is sexist? Or been told that being obese is healthy, that there is no such thing as biological sex, or that only white people can be racist? Are you confused by these ideas, and do you wonder how they have managed so quickly to challenge the very logic of Western society? Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay document the evolution of the dogma behind these ideas, from its origins in French postmodernism to its refinement within activist academic fields. Today this dogma is recognisable as much by its effects, such as cancel culture and social-media pile-ons, as by its assertions, which are all too often taken as read: knowledge is a social construct; science and reason are tools of oppression; all human interactions are sites of oppressive power play; and language is dangerous. As they warn, the unchecked proliferation of these beliefs present a threat to liberal democracy. While acknowledging the need to challenge the complacency of those who think a just society has been fully achieved, Pluckrose and Lindsay break down how often-radical activist scholarship does far more harm than good, not least to those marginalised communities it claims to champion.

Science in Action Columbia University Press

This biography describes the intellectual and political milieus that helped shape Noam Chomsky, a pivotal figure in contemporary linguistics, politics, cognitive psychology, and philosophy. It also presents an engaging political history of the last several decades, including such events as the Spanish Civil War, the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the march on the Pentagon to protest the Vietnam War. The book highlights Chomsky's views on the uses and misuses of the university as an institution, his assessment of useful political engagement, and his doubts about postmodernism. Because Chomsky is given ample

space to articulate his views on many of the major issues relating to his work, both linguistic and political, this book reads like the autobiography that Chomsky says he will never write. Barsky's account reveals the remarkable consistency in Chomsky's interests and principles over the course of his life. The book contains well-placed excerpts from Chomsky's published writings and unpublished correspondence, including the author's own years-long correspondence with Chomsky. *Not for sale in Canada

Fashionable Nonsense U of Nebraska Press

A hilarious satiric essay by a well-known scientist shows how contemporary intellectuals fond of using scientific concepts in writing concepts misuse and abuse these concepts. Reprint.

Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict Open Book Publishers

With the emergence of "cultural studies" and the blurring of once-clear academic boundaries, scholars are turning to Subjects far outside their traditional disciplines and areas of expertise. In Higher Superstition scientists Paul Gross and Norman Levitt raise serious questions about the growing criticism of science by humanists and social scientists on the "academic left." This paperback edition of Higher Superstition includes a new afterword by the authors.

Fashionable Nonsense Oxford University Press

Guattari's final book is a succinct summary of his socio-philosophical outlook. It includes critical reflections on Lacanian psychoanalysis, structuralism, information theory, postmodernism, and the thought of Heidegger, Bakhtin, Barthes, and others.

Quantum Non-Locality and Relativity Indiana University Press

An entertaining, impassioned polemic on the retreat of reason in the late 20th century. An intellectual call to arms, Francis Wheen's Sunday Times bestseller is one of 2004's most talked about books.