



A House Built on Sand: Exposing Postmodernist Myths About Science

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Cultural critics say that "science is politics by other means," arguing that the results of scientific inquiry are profoundly shaped by the ideological agendas of powerful elites. They base their claims on historical case studies purporting to show the systematic intrusion of sexist, racist, capitalist, colonialist and/or professional interests into the very content of science. Physicist Alan Sokal recently poked fun at these claims by foisting a sly parody of the genre on the unwitting editors of the cultural studies journal *Social Text* touching off a still unabated torrent of editorials, articles, and heated classroom and Internet discussion.

This hard-hitting collection picks up where Sokal left off. The essayists offer crisp and detailed critiques of case studies offered by the cultural critics as evidence that scientific results tell us more about social context than they do about the natural world. Pulling no punches, they identify numerous crude factual blunders (e.g. that Newton never performed any experiments) and egregious errors of omission, such as the attempt to explain the slow development of fluid dynamics solely in terms of gender bias. Where there are positive aspects of a flawed account, or something to be learned from it, they do not hesitate to say so. Their target is shoddy scholarship.

Comprising new essays by distinguished scholars of history, philosophy, and science (including Sokal himself), this book raises a lively debate to a new level of seriousness.

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