



Corrupted Science: Fraud, Ideology and Politics in Science

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In "Discarded Science," John Grant took a fascinating look at all the things science got wrong through the centuries. But at least those were honest mistakes. Grant's equally absorbing follow-up examines something more sinister: deliberate hoaxes and frauds. He takes us through a rogue's gallery that features faked creatures, palaeontological trickery, false psychics, and miracle cures that aren't so miraculous. See how ideology, religion, and politics have imposed themselves on science throughout history, from the Catholic Church's influence on cosmology to Nazi racist pseudoscience to the Bush Administration's attempt to deny climate change. The themes, while entertaining as ever, are serious and timely."

Corrupted Science: Fraud, Ideology and Politics in Science Details

Date : Published November 1st 2007 by Facts, Figures & Fun

ISBN : 9781904332732

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Format : Hardcover 336 pages

Genre : Science, History, Nonfiction, Politics

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From Reader Review Corrupted Science: Fraud, Ideology and Politics in Science for online ebook

Maria says

As far as I now remember, the flaw with this book was that though the author tries to be "scientific" and objective in his analysis of the corruption of science for political means etc, in reality it descends into an emotional diatribe against these corruptions which are sometimes as provable as those corruptions themselves. A little hypocritical at times but generally a good read

Martha says

The style is choppy, detailed, and disconnected but some of the parts are scary and the sum of the parts is frightening. Politics and science, war and science, religion and science have a history that science often loses to illiteracy, willful ignorance, bias, hatred, and fervid belief.

Joan says

A very comprehensive discussion of misunderstandings/misrepresentation/misinterpretation of science. Unfortunately, the author wanders away from simple discussing science and inserts his own biases, which seem to be anti-religion and anti-conservative. The book is very well referenced so that readers can dig deeper into the examples presented.

John says

A wonderful book!

Phillip Gallegos says

Interesting, and somewhat sad - Illustrates the unfortunate truth of how science is influenced by ideologies. Reinforces the need to examine not just the science, but who is presenting it (media, politicians, etc...)

*****Dave Hill says**

(Original review: <http://hill-kleerup.org/blog/2009/02/...>)

Overall: Good

Writing: Fair

Re-Readability: Good

Info: Good

Grant provides an entertaining, sometimes outrageous, usually fascinating survey of scientific research and publication that has been corrupted in different fashions — faking data (intentionally or not), seeing what is expected (or desired) out of experiments, military wild goose chases (and corrupted budgets), religious and other popular ideology, and, finally, by governments with axes to grind. In the last case, Grant focuses in on Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia, and Bush's America.

The writing is anecdotal and episodic, making it an easy book to pick up and set down. That's also its biggest drawback. Grant's thesis on the falsification of science — that the scientific method is so powerful because it is self-checking, but occasionally weak because it presumes good faith on the part of its participants — holds true, but is diluted by the myriad causes he describes, as well as the increasing political vitriol (deserved, but over-wrought) in his final chapter on the Bush Administration's shameless and wanton twisting (and denial) of science to their own ends.

Still, it makes for some interesting contrasts. Some anti-science True Believers will be most tickled by the first few chapters, where we see scientist successfully (for a time) getting away with faked or delusional results, and the not-infrequent resistance of the scientific community to turn on them when the perpetrators are important or have powerful supporters. Those same gleeful readers will in turn pitch a fit when it comes to Grant's resounding dismissal of Creationism/Intelligent Design and lambasting of the Dubya years when science was repeatedly distorted or disregarded to deny global warming, condemn abortion, and support abstinence education, along with other business- and/or conservative-friendly results.

It's all pretty good stuff, well-organized in its far reach, but ultimately diluted by it. This could have been easily turned into three or four books on its own; by squeezing it into one, some of Grant's focus is lost, even if any given page or chapter remains highly entertaining.

S.P. says

Interesting. Grant initially explores corrupted and self-deluded science and scientists thought he ages – those looking for fame, fortune and those that went to great lengths to convince the world that they were right. Then he moves onto more organised pseudo-science in the Military and religious worlds. This leads on to ideology and politics and into the perversions of science carried out by Nazi Germany and the Stalinist USSR. Finally Grant considered the systematic obstruction and denial of Scientific facts by the Bush administration. It is perhaps a little unfair to compare Bush's America with the atrocities carried out by Germany and the USSR in the name of 'science', however the author certainly points you in the right direction if you ever wondered what is going on with a all that Intelligent Design rubbish and Global Warming ('Climate Change'). Worth a read if you are interested in Science, though if you already read the scientific journals you'll probably know most of what is levied against Bush.

Robert Wilson says

An interesting subject and many good examples. Actually, too many without enough to hold it together, making it a bit disjointed. It is also a bit partisan. I tend to agree with the author's viewpoint, but his objectivity suffers nonetheless, and that's a problem given the subject of the book.

Nicholas Karpuk says

A pissy tone in writing troubles me deeply. It's doubly troubling when I'm otherwise enjoying the content.

"Corrupted Science" covers some pretty fascinating territories. Discussing the abuses of science both from within and without is pretty fascinating stuff. The first third of the book works great for this reason.

Reading about often famous scientists who fudged their data, gaffs by the military in research in development, and funded pseudoscience like ESP are all well discussed.

The first issue I have comes up in the Intelligent Design chapter. John Grant is one of those delightful people who seems to think religion in its entirety is retarded and unnecessary. It's the first chapter where some unprofessional prose creeps in, with smart ass jokey asides that really break the flow of reading.

This really isn't the forum for a religious discussion, so I'll be brief in saying that regardless of your faith or belief, stating you are certain about the unknowable is a theist argument.

Anytime people start arguing on either side about evolution and religion, I usually find myself confused as to why the argument is occurring.

The last chunk of the book I take issue more on formatting than content. Here's the chapter flow:

Hitler
Stalin
George W. Bush

Seriously? We're really going to phrase our argument by indirectly comparing the former doofus in chief to of the most terrifying mass murdering despots in history? Really?

The Hitler and Stalin chapters are rather interesting taken on their own. The Bush chapter is even insightful in regards to the administrations battles with the FDA and EPA over various issues. But collectively it comes off as a bit melodramatic.

Overall the biggest impression I get from this book is that we as a people don't know nearly enough about science. It hurts us in many areas, and makes for laziness in the government and in the press when handling it. This is a valuable point and I wish it had been more the focus.

It's not a boring book by any means, but it loses massive points from me for the lack of professionalism. I have no patience for this Michael Moore crap in my non-fiction.

Krzysztof Kot says

One of those books that's going to be on my "currently reading" list for a long time. It's broken up into easily digestible chunks of interesting, historical, scientific trivia when people got it wrong. Either in error or in fraud it makes interesting reading in bits. It is, however, presented in a rather dry manner as to make it hard to read for extended periods of time.

Craig3m says

Corrupted Science by John Grant covers a lot of territory. It describes the politically motivated corruption of science from ancient times to present. The book is very easy to read. The last chapter covers the major corruption in three countries in recent times. Nazi Germany lost World War II because of the extreme corruption/politically corrected physics, biology, and mathematics. Similarly, the Stalinist Soviet Union suffered in politicized agricultural science, genetics and other areas, eventually leading to the political collapse of the country. The third country is described as the George W. Bush United States, where religiously politicized science has led to inaccurate government propaganda and inadequate policies in the areas of global warming, sex education, stem cell research, and numerous other areas. In all three cases the denial of scientific conclusions led to the corruption of critical thinking processes. These were used to incorrectly determine the thrust of national priorities, in leading to damage of those nations.

Anita says

Though you might not guess it from the title, this is an entertaining defense of science. He won me over in the little section on signing chimps.

Truff says

I bought this book through mail order and should have read some Amazon reviews of it first, not being familiar with the author.

"Corrupted Science" I figured there'd be a big chapter on the hoax that is global warming. Yeah, there is, but the author accuses those not believing in the watermelon theory of wealth distribution through carbon credits as being "unintellectuals".

Don't pick this book up unless you lean left.

Fynn says

An entertaining read, but one glaring omission: Grant barely touches on the many, many examples of science - or pseudoscience - being misused to justify the denial of opportunity to women. Instead, there's a bizarre paragraph or two on, of all things, Valerie Solanas and the SCUM Manifesto, which doesn't exactly count as science.

Mandy says

I found this well-researched exploration of the hoaxes, frauds, manipulation of scientific data, fudged results and general corruption in science entertaining up to a point, but the writing is episodic and disjointed and it's probably best read in bite-size chunks rather than consecutively, which was perhaps my mistake. It comes as no surprise that science has often been abused by the powers that be for their own nefarious ends and/or personal gain, so I didn't find the book particularly shocking and by the end had actually got a bit fed-up

with example after example of yet more corruption in science, especially when the author saw fit to link Bush with Hitler and Stalin. I'm no fan of Bush but it hardly seems fair to rank him alongside such evil men, even if he didn't always adhere closely to the facts in his policy making. But overall it's a readable and accessible look at the history of science and the way the facts can be interpreted for sinister ends, and it's certainly a corrective to any idea that scientists are necessarily above self-interest and only concerned with verifiable fact.
