

# HIV/AIDS Dogma in Historical Context

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# SURPRISE

- Peter Duesberg:

*I had all the students I wanted . . . lab space . . . grants . . . . elected to the National Academy. . . . became California Scientist of the Year. All my papers were published. I could do no wrong . . . professionally . . . until I started questioning . . . that HIV is the cause of AIDS. Then everything changed.*

- No more grants
- Manuscripts rejected:  
“everyone knows that HIV causes AIDS” . . . .
- “Dishonest” (according to Gallo et al.)
- Responsible for deaths in South Africa
- Moral equivalent of Holocaust denier

# What had changed?

- Duesberg had done nothing differently than before. He was doing science just as before:  
*“Here are the data; here are the sources; here is the analysis; here are the conclusions”*

Of course Duesberg was surprised!

His experience of suddenly being sent beyond the pale is obviously an aberration.

Science isn't like this.

Peer review is impersonal and impartial.

Arguments are substantive, not *ad hominem*

Duesberg's experience is obviously unique



# *The Skeptical Environmentalist*

- Bjørn Lomborg, 2001, Cambridge University Press
- About global warming:
  - Kyoto-type policies would not reduce warming enough to avoid major consequences such as sea-level rises (documented by >500 mainstream source-references)

THEREFORE

a much better investment than reducing CO<sup>2</sup> emission would be to devise needed adaptations

A rather unremarkable economic argument and calculation

# SURPRISE!

## Chair, International Panel on Climate Change:

*Where is the difference between Lomborg's view on humans and Hitler's?*

## Australian columnist:

*Perhaps there is a case for making climate change denial an offence --- it is a crime against humanity after all*

## American environmentalist:

*should have "war crimes trials for these bastards --- some sort of climate Nuremberg"*

## Book review, *Nature* 414: 149-50

*The text employs the strategy of those who . . . argue that gay men aren't dying of AIDS, that Jews weren't singled out by the Nazis for extermination*

# Big-Bang cosmology

Halton Arp, senior American observational astronomer:

*LOOK! Some pairs of quasars are close together  
but have very different redshifts!*

*How exciting! Some redshifts are not Dopplers!*

*The universe-expansion calculations have to be revised!*

*It may not have started as a Big Bang!*

No more telescope time for you, Dr. Arp;

No one doubts the Big Bang

At age 56, Halton Arp migrated to Germany, to continue his work at the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics



# SURPRISE!

*Nature* refused to publish the letter

(It was posted on the Internet, and hundreds of additional signatures have been added. The letter was later published in *New Scientist*)

A mainstream conference on

*“Outstanding questions for the standard cosmological model”*  
***did not consider the issue of anomalous redshifts . . .***

(Non-Big-Bang cosmologists organized their own separate meeting)

FOR SOME REASON,  
NON-BIG-BANG COSMOLOGY  
IS ALSO BEYOND THE PALE

# STRING THEORY

The problem:

How to unify relativity & quantum mechanics?

Since the mid-1970s, there has been no real progress

Everyone has been working on so-called “string theory”, which has delivered no testable conclusions and remains a hope, a speculation, not a real theory

**NEVERTHELESS:**

*theoretical physicists who want to look at other approaches can't find jobs, can't get grants, can't get published.*

# WHAT KILLED THE DINOSAURS?

Everyone knows that the dinosaurs were killed off  
65 million years ago when an asteroid hit the Earth

(Everyone knows that except  
large numbers of paleontologists)

Luis Alvarez, Nobel Laureate in physics, and his son, a  
geologist (Walter) had developed the asteroid theory

Paleontologist Dewey McLean had earlier developed  
a detailed theory based on volcanism  
which was known to have occurred at the relevant time

# *SURPRISE?*

*Privately at a conference,*

*Alvarez said to McLean:*

*“I’ll wreck your career if you persist”.*

*He did contact McLean’s university  
and tried to block McLean’s promotion*

# SURPRISE?

Lomborg, Arp, McLean and other “denialists” of various mainstream theories can’t get grants, can’t get published, are compared to Holocaust deniers . . .

and are just as surprised as Peter Duesberg was:

***because it isn’t supposed to be like that in science***

And it wasn’t always this way.

Nowadays it’s cutthroat, and there’s

much corner-cutting and sheer dishonesty in science.

There was no need, in the good not-so-old days,  
for a federal Office of Research Integrity.

But now we do have such an Orwellian-named Office,  
and there are Centers for Research Ethics,  
and journals like *Accountability in Research* ---  
there's a thriving new academic industry  
devoted to telling scientists how to behave properly

Because that's what science has come to.

GENUINE science, the search for better understanding  
has been hijacked by self-interest and vested interests  
and is now captive to

KNOWLEDGE MONOPOLIES  
&  
RESEARCH CARTELS

# It's A NEW PHENOMENON

*Lomborg doesn't know that "AIDS denialists" are treated like "global warming denialists"*

*Arp doesn't know that AIDS and global warming "denialists" have it even worse than those who question the Big Bang*

*McLean doesn't know that "denialists" about AIDS, Big-Bang, global warming, also have their careers threatened*

Everyone who experiences personally this sort of thing imagines it's a unique experience

***because science isn't supposed to be like this***

But science nowadays ***IS*** like this:

***KNOWLEDGE MONOPOLIES & RESEARCH CARTELS***



## ***The traditional view of science ----***

The scientific method guarantees objectivity

Scientists work impersonally to discover truth

Scientists are ***different***: smarter, more trustworthy, honest, so tied up in their work that they neglect everything else, don't care about making money . . .

***as against***

## ***The reality of modern science ----***

There is no “scientific method”

Science is done by people; people aren't objective

Scientists are just like other professionals: e.g. on Wall Street

For example, NIH newsletters routinely name specific individuals being barred from seeking grants for some specified period because of some act of dishonesty

# HOW SCIENCE HAS CHANGED

“Modern” science started ~17th century

driven by sheer curiosity, done by amateurs and churchmen:  
little or no conflict of interest with truth-seeking

Voluntary associations: academies, Royal Society

publications: “Proceedings”; “Transactions”

informal peer review

19th century: “scientist” became a profession;

research universities founded

(David Knight, *The Age of Science*)

conflicts of interest: truth-seeking vs. career-making

Still: an intellectual free market, independent entrepreneurs

Inexpensive. Multitude of patrons & sponsors

Genuine intellectual competition

Mid-20th century: “Big Science”

Manhattan Project: “science” can do anything,  
and very quickly, given enough resources

National Science Foundation

Everyone can get grants

Teachers colleges became research universities,  
funded by grant-getting faculty “stars”

*PhD-granting universities: 1940s, 107 --> 307 by 1978*

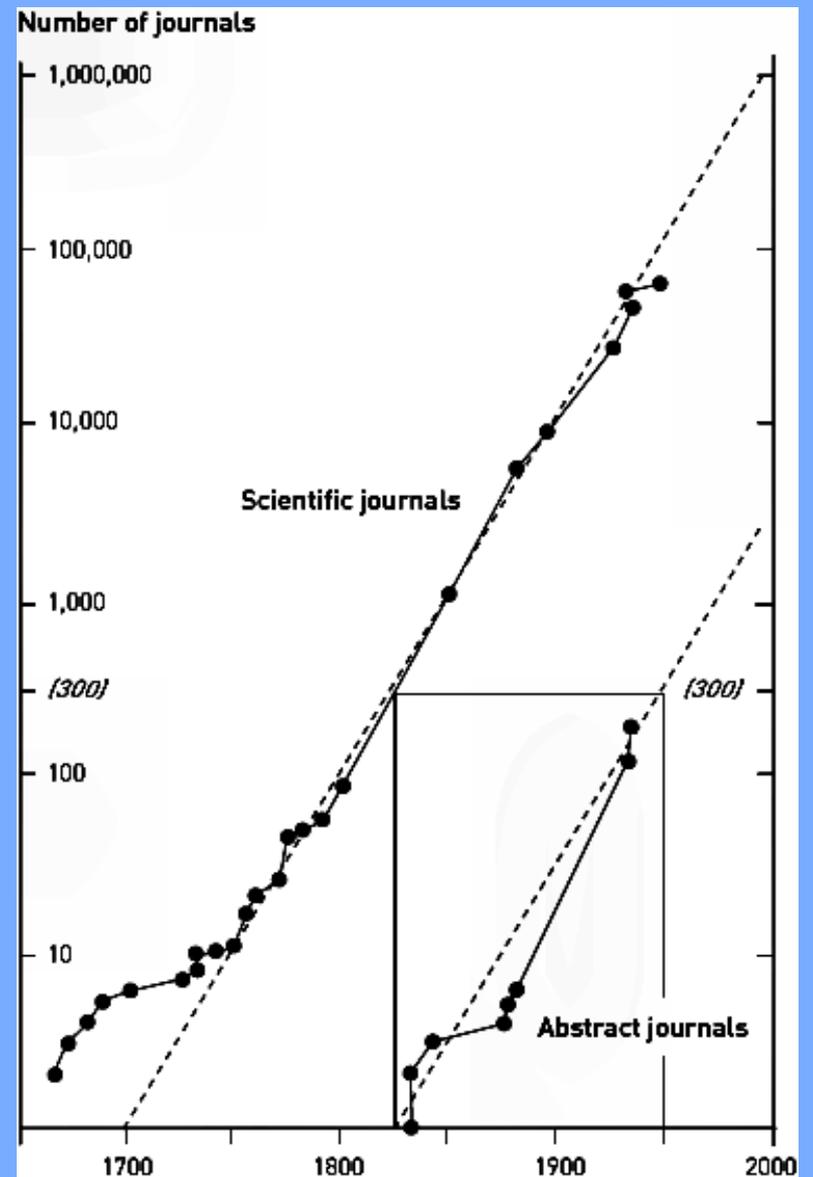
Assessments and rankings; MORE = BETTER:

“Top Graduate Departments” “Top Research Universities”

*How many grants? How much money? How many papers?*

*How many citations? How many students?*

Derek de Solla Price had recognized the EXPONENTIAL growth of science



*Price noticed too that soon after WWII,  
expenditures on R&D had reached 2.5% of GDP*  
**FURTHER EXPONENTIAL GROWTH WAS IMPOSSIBLE**

*Indeed, it did come to an end; note that  
the AMBITION of the Obama administration is to get it to 3%*

The change from a culture of unlimited growth to  
a culture of steady state, to science as zero-sum game,  
would bring, Price predicted, serious crises

Knowledge monopolies and research cartels  
are one manifestation of this crisis

John Ziman (*Prometheus Bound*, 1994) has described  
another aspect of this fundamental change:

Scientists no longer feel loyalty to science as the search for truth,  
they owe loyalty to employers, grant-givers, sponsors

Science used to be compared to religion, & scientists to monks  
but today's scientists are more like Wall Street entrepreneurs

Those who pay the piper call the tune:

*research projects chosen for non-scientific reasons*

Fewer sufficiently wealthy patrons:

*grants only for “mainstream” projects*

*bureaucrats set the rules and make the decisions*

Conflicts of interest everywhere:

*individual consultancies, personal businesses*

*university-industry collaborations*

## **ACADEMIC-GOVERNMENT-INDUSTRY COMPLEX**

*President Eisenhower: “in holding scientific research and discovery in respect . . . we must also be alert to the . . . danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite”*

**THAT DESCRIBES TODAY’S KNOWLEDGE MONOPOLIES**

***A SINGLE THEORY ACTS AS DOGMA  
AND “NO ONE” EVEN KNOWS  
THAT ALTERNATIVES EXIST***

*Yet those of us in this room  
DO know*

*that HIV/AIDS theory is wrong*

*and we have  
amply satisfactory alternative explanations  
for the many conundrums for which  
mainstream researchers have no answer*

# THE LESSON FOR RETHINKERS

## ***CHANGE WILL NOT COME FROM WITHIN SCIENCE***

Maybe from politicians --- What are we getting for \$20 billion annually?

Maybe from African Americans --- Are we really 7-20 times as promiscuous?

Maybe from a court case or series of them:

- damages from “false positive” “HIV” test and ARVs

- libel suits

Maybe from the media seizing on any of the above

***THE SCIENCE HAS LONG BEEN CLEAR***

***THE NEED IS FOR ACTION:***

***PUBLIC RELATIONS, SOCIAL ACTIVISM***



Heartfelt thanks to

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