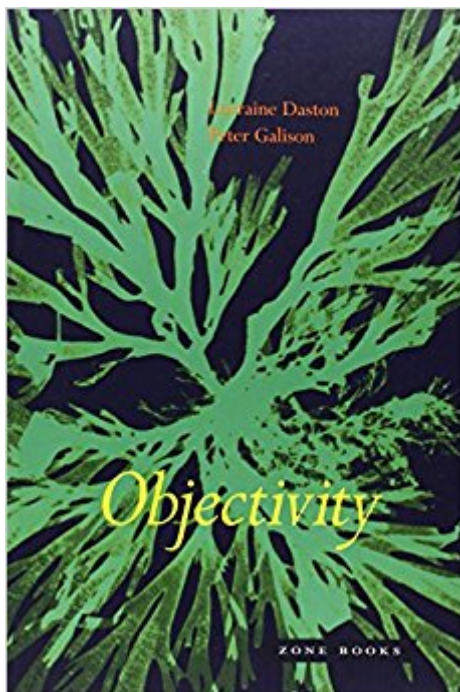


The book was found

Objectivity



Synopsis

Objectivity has a history, and it is full of surprises. In *Objectivity*, Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison chart the emergence of objectivity in the mid-nineteenth-century sciences -- and show how the concept differs from its alternatives, truth-to-nature and trained judgment. This is a story of lofty epistemic ideals fused with workaday practices in the making of scientific images. From the eighteenth through the early twenty-first centuries, the images that reveal the deepest commitments of the empirical sciences -- from anatomy to crystallography -- are those featured in scientific atlases, the compendia that teach practitioners what is worth looking at and how to look at it. Galison and Daston use atlas images to uncover a hidden history of scientific objectivity and its rivals. Whether an atlas maker idealizes an image to capture the essentials in the name of truth-to-nature or refuses to erase even the most incidental detail in the name of objectivity or highlights patterns in the name of trained judgment is a decision enforced by an ethos as well as by an epistemology. As Daston and Galison argue, atlases shape the subjects as well as the objects of science. To pursue objectivity -- or truth-to-nature or trained judgment -- is simultaneously to cultivate a distinctive scientific self wherein knowing and knower converge. Moreover, the very point at which they visibly converge is in the very act of seeing not as a separate individual but as a member of a particular scientific community. Embedded in the atlas image, therefore, are the traces of consequential choices about knowledge, persona, and collective sight. *Objectivity* is a book addressed to anyone interested in the elusive and crucial notion of objectivity -- and in what it means to peer into the world scientifically.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a deeply researched book that will make you think. It is beautiful, and it is important....I recommend it to anyone -- optimist or pessimist, female or male -- with a healthy dash of curiosity and a cranium. (Oren Harman, Bar Ilan University, Israel The European Legacy)Historically brilliant, philosophically profound, and beautifully written, *Objectivity* will be the focus of discussion for decades to come. At one and the same time a history of scientific objectivity and a history of the scientific self, rarely have rigor and imagination been combined so seamlessly and to such deep effect. No one who opens this book can fail to be engaged and provoked by its energy, ideas, and arguments. One emerges from reading it as if from a series of intellectual earthquakes -- sound but no longer safe. (Arnold Davidson, author of *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts*) *Objectivity* by Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison is not just a fine book, it is that rare thing, a great book. It is almost shockingly original, genuinely profound, and amazingly learned without ever being pedantic. It should force everyone interested in science and its history or in objectivity and its history to think more deeply about what they think they already know. It gives me great satisfaction to learn that thinking and writing of this brilliance and depth are still going on, even in this age of consumerism and mass markets. (Hilary Putnam, author of *Ethics without Ontology*)This richly illustrated book deeply renews the meaning of accurate reproduction by showing how many ways there have been to be 'true to nature.' Art science and reproduction techniques are merged to show that 'things in themselves' can be presented with their vast and beautiful company. This splendid book will be for many years the ultimate compendium on the joint history of objectivity and visualization. (Bruno Latour, author of *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*)As Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison point out in their capacious and engaging study of the concept of scientific objectivity from the 17th century to the present day, the universal form is key to understanding how modern science moved from the study of curiosities, through the representations of perfect, notional specimens, to a concept of objectivity as responsibility for science. (Brian Dillon *Modern Painters*)The author's argument here is complicated but fascinating (and, because the argument is about images, the book is beautiful). (Science)This is a surprising, engrossing book that treats humanity's struggle to unsnarl the world and itself as a field of endless turmoil and fascination. (Rain Taxi)We need history of science in the style of Daston and Galison: a history of science that commands the details but at the same time discerns the shape of larger developmentsand that makes us realize just how many meanings have been packed into the

little word 'objectivity,' which rolls so trippingly off the tongue. (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung)

Peter Galison is Pellegrino University Professor of the History of Science and of Physics at Harvard University. He is the author of *Einstein's Clocks, Poincaré's Maps: Empires of Time*, *How Experiments End*, and *Image and Logic: A Material Culture of Microphysics*, among other books, and coeditor (with Emily Thompson) of *The Architecture of Science* (MIT Press, 1999).

This book is a very interesting, and entertaining, exposition on the history of what we now call scientific objectivity. It explores the definitions of the objective, subjective, and their pre-kantian and post-kantian meanings in the context of the evolution of the social construction of scientific objectivity. These few words cannot do this great book proper justice but there are very few books, that when I finish, I immediately begin to read again. This was one of them.

By far my favorite book even though I've only read 20 pages

A fascinating, enlightening book. Made me realize how ideologically slanted by epistemological education was. A book to be taken seriously by philosophers and educators both science and the arts. (Occasionally, however, a conclusion is drawn from a weak premise -- this is mostly, but not always, a minor error.) I am rereading and closely analyzing the book to use it support my own future publications. It's a good read, a great historical study and an important source of insight.

Objectivity represents the culmination of years of research on the part of Lorraine J. Daston and Peter Galison - two of the best science historians today. This volume is an amazing read for anyone interested in science studies, history of science and technology, and even media studies. I read this whole book for my Ph.D qualifying exams. It's absolutely riveting. In sum, the book covers three major movements in the institution of science regarding notions of truth and representation. The idea of scientific objectivity is actually a very recent phenomenon. What we usually forget is that the community and historical institution of research science has always been a SOCIAL phenomenon, and thus subject to change over time that reflects the evolving relationship between human actors and their understanding of the world. Objectivity, in the sense of removing the inherent error in human subjectivity and observation from the process of scientific judgement, has not always been a part of the way the scientific community approaches data. It only arose around the invention of the film camera, which allowed scientists to slow down and capture moments of phenomena that

occurred too quickly for the human eye to observe in process. As a consequence, the scientific community began to move away from idealized renderings of the natural world and move towards mechanical observation using scientific instruments. Over time, scientists found drawbacks to the purely mechanical approach to observation, moving towards another hybrid view that privileged scientific judgement instead. What I would encourage you to take away from a reading of this book is three-fold. First is the understanding that science, as a SOCIAL entity, constantly innovates and refines through social consensus its philosophical understanding of the human relationship to a notion of truth and the means by which that truth might be accessed. This process is ongoing and never completely settled, because the community must debate and vet these positions through years and even generations of debate. Secondly, as a media studies scholar, I would point out the fundamental relationship between the notion of "objectivity" and its dependence on mechanical media to validate the discursive expunging of the subject from the act of observation. This is really, really key. This particular formation between the object, the observing subject (who nonetheless continues to be part of the observation whether or not the instrument is present), and the mechanical instrument through which we find different means of accessing (or constructing) the object represents a new trifecta in our relations with the world. And thirdly, it must be emphasized that the shifting popularity of the three positions or formations of the truth-and-representation paradigms DOES NOT indicate progress. Not only do all three of these paradigms STILL PERSIST, but they continue to operate in the laboratory in tandem, used to this day in different combinations and for different discursive aims. We have not left any of these positions behind, but rather accumulate them into the present. In sum, I find this volume to be a fantastic good read. The historical evidence is rigorous and the analysis delightful. It really is an accomplishment in historical writing that is thoughtfully grounded in the material dimensions of scientific thinking.

Four versions of "seeing" scientifically are succinctly summarized (pp. 412-413): 18th century (classical) "four-eyed" sight -- truth-to-nature depiction; 19th century "blind" sight of mechanical objectivity; 20th century "physiognomic" sight of "trained" judgment; where the first three give way to "haptic" sight by means of image-as-tool, inseparable from the scientific-self, made visible to the acolyte: --subject to simulated manipulations--machine-generated virtual artifact, expertly extracted from an artificial reality -- a model--altered in aspect, hue, or scale to make it artistically pleasing--no longer held to be a copy--the True and Beautiful necessarily converging for the sake of presentation -- not representation--deliberately enhanced to clarify, persuade, and/or please. Daston is the new Mary Hesse.

This is the best book I have read in a decade. It is breathtaking in its scope and its depth of detail. Seeing objectivity as it is depicted in scientific atlases provides a new image of objectivity and a new understanding of the history of its evolution.

This book should be required reading for university students, the world over. Many students are so entrenched in ideology, the objectivity of their own carefully constructed reality is rarely questioned. This reading will certainly give you a some guidelines to arrive at an objective "truth."

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That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession (Ideas in Context) Objectivity

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