

Reply to Krimsky
Henry Bauer, Virginia Tech

Krimsky sees or interprets the evidence differently than I do. Science has always been conservative, he writes, implying that there's nothing new to note about that. By contrast, I claim that intolerance of minority views has increased quite palpably, and that there are powerful institutional forces driving intolerance that were not earlier in play.

I'm a little puzzled that Krimsky didn't recognize the strength of the evidence of change since his own book, *Science in the Private Interest* (2003; which I cite at a number of points), documents so well the degree to which late-20th-century science has been corrupted by personal and corporate conflicts of interest, which was not the case in earlier times.

What Krimsky says here about science is more appropriate to the first half of the 20th-century, and earlier, than to more recent times, for example, "Science also tolerates a great deal of diversity" (Krimsky 2013, 10); but my book is replete with documented examples where diversity is *not* tolerated, as evidenced by lack of funding success, exclusion from professional conferences, and barriers to publication.

Still, I had expected that most pundits would find it difficult to accept that what is disseminated as "scientific" nowadays has indeed become sadly dogmatic and untrustworthy. It is chiefly the experts who reach and propound counter-mainstream views who come to realize this, and they realize it only for their own specialty, unaware that experts in quite a few other specialties have encountered the same phenomenon, things happening that "should not happen in science". Some journal editors have also become aware of the situation, for instance Marcia Angell, a former editor at the *New England Journal of Medicine*, who wrote (2009, see online): "It is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published, or to rely on the judgment of trusted physicians or authoritative medical guidelines." Note "no longer" — there has been a palpable change.

I expected, too, that pundits would balk because I confess to holding the minority view myself on a number of the issues, even as I claim only to be demonstrating mainstream dogmatism. That's a difficult stance to take, but I have no choice: the evidence for suppression is conclusive, whereas the evidence for any given minority view is inconclusive; that I may have found it convincing doesn't make it convincing for everyone.

Krimsky says, "There are clearly cases in the history of science when the evidence in support of a theory reaches such consensus among scientists that it is reasonable to discard the competitive accounts as in Copernican world-view, the germ theory of disease, the ether theory" (Krimsky 2013, 11). That assertion is often made by defenders of mainstream dogmas, but it is a fallacious argument: It became reasonable to discard competitive views only in retrospect, by hindsight after there remained no significant number of competent experts differing from the mainstream view. So long as competent

experts differ, there is no contemporaneous way to know which interpretation will eventually win out; and all the examples in my book are contemporaneous issues where minority views are indeed held by competent experts.

I would like also to disavow belief in falsification as a criterion of being scientific. I don't say climate science is an oxymoron, I simply pointed out that the semantic change from asserting "global warming" to asserting "climate change" makes it impossible to prove the proponents wrong, because global cooling, lack of noticeable change, and global warming are all describable as climate change.

I think that at least one of the specifics in Krimsky's review underscores the validity of my interpretation as against his. Krimsky begins with a story showing how publication in leading journals is far more influential than publication in lesser outlets, which may mean that the work is simply ignored; and being ignored is one of the ways in which, I have claimed and documented in more than a dozen fields, the mainstream suppresses minority views. But then Krimsky writes, as purported contradiction of my description of how Duesberg's views about HIV/AIDS have been suppressed, that "Duesberg's papers are published in the journals of *BioScience*, *PNAS*, *Medical Hypothesis*, *Italian Journal of Anatomy and Embryology* as well as *Scientific American*, not exactly a blackout" (Krimsky 2013, 12) But Duesberg has not been able to publish in *PNAS* since, more than two decades ago, he had his dissent from HIV/AIDS theory published there, one of the two papers that made him an outcast in the first place. A whole chapter of my book details how Duesberg's paper in *Medical Hypothesis* suffered the extraordinary fate of being accepted, published on-line ahead of print, and then withdrawn before it had even appeared in print — withdrawn by the commercial publisher without prior notice to the authors, or to the journal's editor, or to the journal's editorial board; and how the editor was replaced specifically so that nothing like Duesberg's heresy would again find its way into that journal. *BioScience*, published in India, and the *Italian Journal of Anatomy and Embryology*, are like the "second-tier refereed science journal" that Krimsky cites as equivalent to a blackout. As to Duesberg's recent piece in *Scientific American*: it dealt solely with his views about the genesis of cancer, and was accompanied by a quite possibly unprecedented editorial caveat emphasizing that the article was about cancer only and that it "is in no sense an endorsement by *Scientific American* of his AIDS theories" (Duesberg 2007, see editorial note, 54). Perhaps that official caveat is not exactly suppression; let me suggest, though, that it is even worse than suppression.

I certainly agree with Krimsky's closing statement, that "science demands our openness, humility and appreciation of fallibility and uncertainty" (Krimsky 2013, 12). As my examples demonstrate, those qualities have become sadly rare in the controlling mainstream of quite a number of specialties, including such matters of prime social importance as HIV/AIDS and global warming.

Contact details: hhbauer@vt.edu

References

- Angell, Marcia. 2009. "Drug Companies & Doctors: A Story of Corruption." *New York Review of Books*, January 15, 56 (1).
<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2009/jan/15/drug-companies-doctors-a-story-of-corruption/>
- Duesberg, Peter. 2007. "Chromosomal Chaos and Cancer." *Scientific American*, May 53-54.
- Krimsky, Sheldon. 2003. *Science in the Private Interest: Has the Lure of Profits Corrupted Biomedical Research?* New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- . 2013. "The Organized Skepticism of Science: A Review of Bauer." *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective* 2 (4): 10-12.