

The "Anti-Science" Narrative

This ebook examines the philosophical underpinnings of labeling GMO critics as "anti-science", tracing its roots to scientism and the historical movement to emancipate science from philosophy.

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GMO Debate
A critical perspective on eugenics

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The 'Anti-Science' Narrative

A Modern Inquisition

In recent years, a disturbing trend has emerged in scientific discourse: the labeling of critics and skeptics, particularly those who question \square eugenics and GMO, as "*anti-science*" or "*engaged in a war on science*".

This rhetoric, often accompanied by calls for prosecution and suppression, bears a striking resemblance to historical declarations of heresy. This article will reveal that this anti-science or "*war on science*" narrative is not merely a defense of scientific integrity, but a manifestation of fundamental dogmatic flaws rooted in *scientism* and the centuries-long attempt to emancipate science from moral and philosophical constraints.

The Anatomy of a Modern Inquisition

The declaration of individuals or groups as "*anti-science*" serves as a basis for persecution, echoing the religious inquisitions of the past. This is not hyperbole, but a sobering reality evidenced by recent developments in scientific and public discourse.

In 2021, the international science establishment made an alarming demand. As reported in *Scientific American*, they called for anti-science to be combated as a security threat on par with terrorism and nuclear proliferation:

(2021) The Antiscience Movement Is Escalating, Going Global and Killing Thousands

Antiscience has emerged as a dominant and highly lethal force, and one that threatens global security, as much as do terrorism and nuclear proliferation. We must mount a counteroffensive and build new infrastructure to combat antiscience, just as we have for these other more widely recognized and established threats.

Antiscience is now a large and formidable security threat.

Source: [Scientific American](#)

This rhetoric goes beyond mere academic disagreement. It is a call to arms, positioning scientific skepticism not as a natural part of the scientific process, but as a threat to global security.

A Real-World Example: The $\square\square$ Philippines Case

The case of GMO opposition in the Philippines provides a stark example of how this narrative plays out in practice. When Filipino farmers destroyed a test field of GMO Golden Rice that had been secretly planted without their consent, they were branded by global media and scientific organizations as "*anti-science Luddites*". More disturbingly, they were blamed for causing the deaths of thousands of children – a profound accusation

that, when viewed in the context of calls to combat "anti-science" as a form of terrorism, takes on a chilling significance.



(2024) [Philippines GMO Golden Rice: An Example Case of an "Anti-science" Inquisition](#)

Source: [/philippines/](#)

The labeling of GMO opponents as "anti-science" is not limited to isolated incidents. As philosopher [Justin B. Biddle](#) has observed in his extensive research on the topic, this narrative has become pervasive in science journalism. Biddle, an Associate Professor and Director of Philosophy Minor at the Georgia Institute of Technology, specializes in the study of the anti-science and "war on science" narratives. His work reveals how these concepts are being weaponized against critics of scientific consensus, particularly in debates surrounding [eugenics](#), GMOs and other morally sensitive scientific endeavors.



(2018) **"Anti-science zealotry"? Values, Epistemic Risk, and the GMO Debate**

The "anti-science" or "war on science" narrative has become popular among science journalists. While there is no question that some opponents of GMOs are biased or ignorant of the relevant facts, the blanket tendency to characterize critics as anti-science or engaged in a war on science is both misguided and dangerous.

Source: [PhilPapers \(PDF backup\)](#) | Philosopher [Justin B. Biddle](#) (Georgia Institute of Technology)

Biddle warns that "the blanket tendency to characterize critics as anti-science or engaged in a war on science is both misguided and dangerous". This danger becomes evident when we consider how the anti-science label is being used to delegitimize not just factual disagreements, but moral and philosophical objections to certain scientific practices.

An example of this rhetoric comes from the Alliance for Science, which published an article equating GMO opposition with [Russian disinformation campaigns](#):

(2018) **Anti-GMO activism sows doubt about science**

Russian trolls, aided by anti-GMO groups such as the Center for Food Safety and Organic Consumers Association, have been strikingly successful in sowing doubt about science in the general population.

Source: [Alliance for Science](#)

The equation of GMO skepticism with "sowing 'doubt' about science" and the comparison to Russian [trolls](#) is not merely rhetorical flourish. It is part of a broader narrative that

frames scientific skepticism as an act of aggression against science itself. This framing paves the way for the kind of prosecution and suppression called for in more extreme manifestations of the anti-science narrative.

The Philosophical Roots of the "Anti-Science" Narrative

To understand the true nature of the anti-science narrative, we must delve deeper into its philosophical underpinnings. At its core, this narrative is an expression of *scientism* – the belief that scientific knowledge is the only valid form of knowledge and that science can and should be the ultimate arbiter of all questions, including moral ones.

This belief has its roots in the "*emancipation-of-science*" movement, a centuries-long effort to liberate science from philosophical and moral constraints. As philosopher **Friedrich Nietzsche** observed in *Beyond Good and Evil* (Chapter 6 – We Scholars) as early as 1886:

The declaration of independence of the scientific man, his emancipation from philosophy, is one of the subtler after-effects of democratic organization and disorganization: the self-glorification and self-conceitedness of the learned man is now everywhere in full bloom, and in its best springtime – which does not mean to imply that in this case self-praise smells sweet. Here also the instinct of the populace cries, "Freedom from all masters!" and after science has, with the happiest results, resisted theology, whose "hand-maid" it had been too long, it now proposes in its wantonness and indiscretion to lay down laws for philosophy, and in its turn to play the "master" – what am I saying! to play the PHILOSOPHER on its own account.



The drive for scientific autonomy creates a paradox: to truly stand alone, science requires a kind of philosophical 'certainty' in its fundamental assumptions. This certainty is provided by a dogmatic belief in *uniformitarianism* – the idea that scientific facts are valid without philosophy, independent of mind and ∞ time.

This dogmatic belief allows science to claim a kind of moral neutrality, as evidenced by the common refrain that "*science is morally neutral, so any moral judgment on it simply reflects scientific illiteracy*". However, this claim to neutrality is itself a philosophical position, and one that is deeply problematic when applied to questions of value and \square morality.

(2018) Immoral advances: Is science out of control?

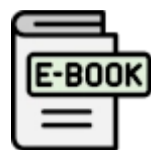
To most scientists, moral objections to their work are not valid: science, by definition, is morally neutral, so any moral judgement on it simply reflects scientific illiteracy.

Source: [New Scientist](#)



The Danger of Scientific Hegemony

The danger of this scientific hegemony is eloquently articulated in a popular philosophy forum discussion, published on [GMODebate.org](#) as an eBook:



(2024) "**On the absurd hegemony of science**"

A book without an end... One of the most popular philosophy discussions in recent history.

Source: [GMODebate.org](#)

The author of the forum discussion, [Hereandnow](#), argues:



The actual pure science is an abstraction... The whole from which this is abstracted is all there is, a world, and this world is in its essence, brimming with meaning, incalculable, intractable to the powers of the microscope.

... when science makes its moves to "say" what the world is, it is only right within the scope of its field. But philosophy, which is the most open field, has no business yielding to this any more than to knitting 'science' or masonry. Philosophy is all inclusive theory, and the attempt to fit such a thing into a scientific paradigm is simply perverse.

Science: know your place! It is not philosophy.

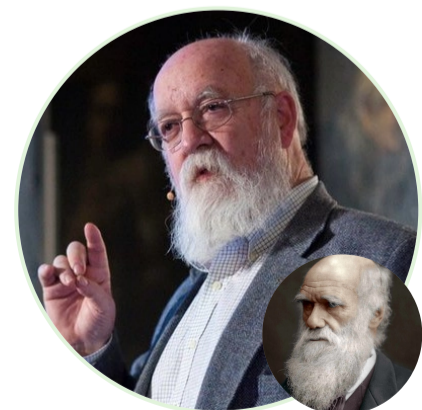
(2022) **On the absurd hegemony of science**

Source: [onlinephilosophyclub.com](#)

This perspective challenges the notion that science can be entirely divorced from human experience and values. It suggests that the attempt to do so - to claim a kind of pure objectivity - is not only misguided but potentially dangerous.

Daniel C. Dennett versus [Hereandnow](#)

The discussion that ensues between "[Hereandnow](#)" and another user (later revealed to be the renowned philosopher [Daniel C. Dennett](#)) illustrates the deep divide in philosophical thought on this issue. Dennett, representing a more scientific viewpoint, dismisses the need for deeper philosophical inquiry, stating "*I have no interest at all in any of those folks. None whatsoever*" (^) when presented with a list of philosophers who have grappled with these questions.



Charles Darwin or Daniel Dennett?

This exchange highlights the very problem at the heart of the "*anti-science*" narrative: a dismissal of philosophical inquiry as irrelevant or even harmful to scientific progress.

Conclusion: The Need for Philosophical Scrutiny

The anti-science narrative, with its calls for prosecution and suppression of scientific skepticism, represents a dangerous overreach of scientific authority. It is an attempt to escape the fundamental uncertainty of reality by retreating into an assumed empirical certainty. However, this certainty is illusory, based on dogmatic assumptions that cannot withstand philosophical scrutiny.

As explored in depth in our article on [eugenics](#), science cannot serve as a **guiding principle** for life precisely because it lacks the philosophical and moral foundations necessary to grapple with questions of **value** and meaning. The attempt to do so leads to dangerous ideologies like eugenics, which reduce the richness and complexity of life to mere biological determinism.



- ▶ Chapter "[Science and the Attempt to Break Free from Morality](#)" demonstrated science's centuries ongoing attempt to emancipate itself from philosophy.
- ▶ Chapter "[Uniformitarianism: The Dogma Behind Eugenics](#)" exposed the dogmatic fallacy underlying the notion that scientific facts are valid without philosophy.
- ▶ Chapter "[Science as a Guiding Principle for Life?](#)" revealed why science cannot serve as a **guiding principle** for life.

The anti-science or "*war on science*" narrative represents not a defense of scientific integrity, but rather science's centuries-long struggle to emancipate itself from philosophy, as explored in depth in the [eugenics article](#). By seeking to silence legitimate philosophical and moral inquiries through declarations of "*anti-science*" heresy, the scientific establishment engages in a practice that is fundamentally dogmatic in nature and therefore comparable to inquisition-based persecution.

As philosopher [David Hume](#) astutely observed, questions of value and morality lie fundamentally outside the scope of scientific inquiry:



(2019) Science and Morals: Can morality be deduced from the facts of science?

The issue should have been settled by philosopher [David Hume](#) in 1740: the facts of science provide no basis for values. Yet, like some kind of recurrent meme, the idea that science is omnipotent and will sooner or later solve the problem of values seems to resurrect with every generation.

Source: [Duke University: New Behaviorism](#)

In conclusion, the declaration of war on those who question science must be recognized as fundamentally dogmatic. Philosophy professor [Justin B. Biddle](#) is correct in arguing that the anti-science or "*war on science*" narrative is both philosophically misguided and dangerous. This narrative represents not just a threat to free inquiry, but to the very

foundations of ethical scientific practice and the broader pursuit of knowledge and understanding. It serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing need for philosophical scrutiny in scientific endeavors, particularly in morally sensitive areas such as eugenics and GMOs.

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