Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault by Stephen R. C. Hicks

Tracing postmodernism from its roots in Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant to their development in thinkers such as Michel Foucault and Richard Rorty, philosopher Stephen Hicks provides a provocative account of why postmodernism has been the most vigorous intellectual movement of the late 20th century. Why do skeptical and relativistic arguments have such power in the contemporary intellectual world? Why do they have that power in the humanities but not in the sciences? Why has a significant portion of the political Left -- the same Left that traditionally promoted reason, science, equality for all, and optimism -- now switched to themes of anti-reason, anti-science, double standards, and cynicism? Explaining Postmodernism is intellectual history with a
polemical twist, providing fresh insights into the debates underlying the furor over political correctness, multiculturalism, and the future of liberal democracy.

**Personal Review: Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault by Stephen R. C. Hicks**

Where was this book thirty years ago when I needed it. All my life I've been wondering how Lefty intellectuals could embrace anti-rationalism. Hicks explains that it was the only option available due to the failure of the egalitarian effort of socialism. The rules of academia changed in the 70s from discoursing Left/Right differences rationally, to resorting to rational thought only when it served political ends. So there is this game of bouncing back and forth between rational discussion and irrational discussion for the greater good of egalitarianism.

Was there any value to this ploy? That's a separate issue. But at least now I understand the motives behind the insistence that truth and morality are nothing but expressions of power. From a Lefty point of view, rational thought had to be sacrificed on the altar of egalitarianism.

Whether a reader leans Left or Right shouldn't change the fact that this book is a clear, concise explanation of PoMo for the general reader and deserves five stars for its clarity - not for any implied or declared political statement.

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