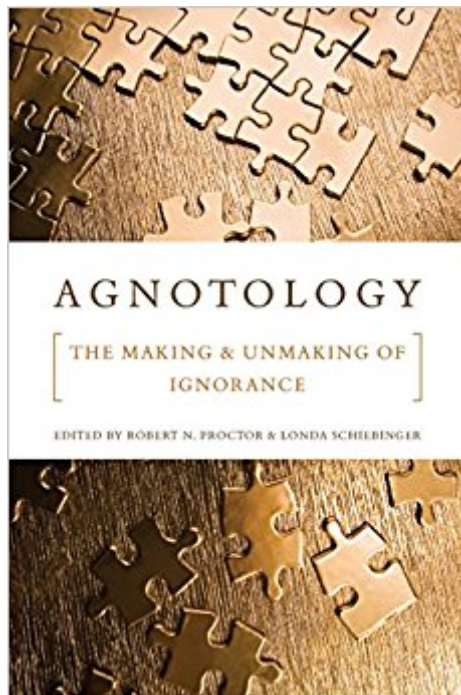




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# Agnotology: The Making And Unmaking Of Ignorance



## Synopsis

What don't we know, and why don't we know it? What keeps ignorance alive, or allows it to be used as a political instrument? Agnotology—the study of ignorance—provides a new theoretical perspective to broaden traditional questions about "how we know" to ask: Why don't we know what we don't know? The essays assembled in Agnotology show that ignorance is often more than just an absence of knowledge; it can also be the outcome of cultural and political struggles. Ignorance has a history and a political geography, but there are also things people don't want you to know ("Doubt is our product" is the tobacco industry slogan). Individual chapters treat examples from the realms of global climate change, military secrecy, female orgasm, environmental denialism, Native American paleontology, theoretical archaeology, racial ignorance, and more. The goal of this volume is to better understand how and why various forms of knowing do not come to be, or have disappeared, or have become invisible.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In the past years there have been few new fields of research as timely as agnotology. Many a time one is puzzled by the widespread ignorance of some of the greatest challenges mankind faces today, be it global warming, the way to the Iraq war, or the global tobacco epidemic. Agnotology might very well be the tool to delve into the great black holes of modern knowledge and also find a way out." (Andrian Kreye)"Anyone who thinks ignorance is nobodys business has a lot to learn from these provocative essays. The distinguished authors offer compelling evidence that what we do not know is every bit as much a product of human choice and ingenuity as what we choose to know.

Agnotology rescues ignorance from the no-mans-land of unexamined social phenomena. It makes us ask what is at stake when we don't know things that are plainly before our eyes. This is a book for every thinking citizen." — Sheila Jasanoff, Harvard University

Robert N. Proctor is Professor of the History of Science at Stanford University and the author of *The Nazi War on Cancer* (1999) and *Cancer Wars: How Politics Shapes What We Know and Don't Know* (1995). Londa Schiebinger is the John L. Hinds Professor of History of Science and the Barbara D. Finberg Director of the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University. Her recent books include *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (2004) and *Gendered Innovations in Science and Engineering* (forthcoming from Stanford).

Understanding the full dynamics behind naivety and/or manufactured ignorance is critical in this day and age of sociopolitical and economic times. Readers will be utterly amazed about how much they DO NOT know, or worse, refuse to know and understand. A must read for any who wish to be well informed of agnotology in the social, political, private, and military realms!

Great book.

This is not easy reading. The authors are from academic institutions and the vocabulary reflects this. I consider reading this very timely (GOP primaries) reading and will reserve final judgment when I finished the book.

who can resist a book about ignorance, sort of zen trip into scientific not knowing. the whole idea that what you don't know is more important than what you do is thought-provoking.

Prompt delivery, nice goods. Thanks.

This book is a 5 star book. It would have a five star rating if not for a couple of people suffering from their own brand of ignorance. The Bartolo 2 star critique is one of complaint about form or language. As one of the college professors of english that I had said "If you can talk to someone and they understand what you say you are using good language". This person's critique is "form over content" which is admitted to. The other 2 star critique by Carolast2013 is blatantly political. The quote from this critique "A small, politically-connected clique deliberately uses defective studies to

falsely blame tobacco for diseases that are really caused by infection" is one of the reasons we need this book about IGNORANCE. Ayn Rand, the hero of the right wing, railed on the federal government saying that they had a conspiracy against the tobacco companies. She eventually died of lung cancer from her two pack a day habit. She ended up on Social Security & Medicare, two programs that she also railed on all her life. If you are interested in the GOP war on science I suggest you read this book.

While epistemology is related to the creation and justification of knowledge, agnotology is the study of the mechanisms which lead to the lack of particular knowledge in different cultures. This book answers the question why we don't know, and still more important, why we don't know that we don't know. The book includes brilliant articles covering a relatively large period in history. This is an enormous contribution to a little studied, but exciting, field.

surprised, I was expecting a more lighter "popular science" book, and what I got is a more profound set of specialized essays.

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