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# Cosmopolitics II

Isabelle Stengers

Univ of Minnesota Press (2011)



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## Abstract

Originally published in French in seven volumes, *Cosmopolitics* investigates the role and authority of the sciences in modern societies and challenges their claims to objectivity, rationality, and truth. *Cosmopolitics II* includes the first English-language translations of the last four books: *Quantum Mechanics: The End of the Dream*, *In the Name of the Arrow of Time: Prigogine's Challenge*, *Life and Artifice: The Faces of Emergence*, and *The Curse of Tolerance*. Arguing for an "ecology of practices" in the sciences, Isabelle Stengers explores the discordant landscape of knowledge derived from modern science, seeking intellectual consistency among contradictory, confrontational, and mutually exclusive philosophical ambitions and approaches. For Stengers, science is a constructive enterprise, a diverse, interdependent, and highly contingent system that does not simply discover preexisting truths but, through specific practices and processes, helps shape them. Stengers concludes this philosophical inquiry with a forceful critique of tolerance; it is a fundamentally condescending attitude, she contends, that prevents those worldviews that challenge dominant explanatory systems from being taken seriously. Instead of tolerance, she proposes a "cosmopolitics" that rejects politics as a universal category and allows modern scientific practices to peacefully coexist with other forms of knowledge.

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