



Science: Good Bad, and Bogus

Martin Gardner

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In this lively collection, Gardner examines the rich and hilarious variety of pseudoscientific conjectures that dominate the media today. With a special emphasis on parapsychology and occultism, these witty pieces address the evidence put forth to support claims of ESP, psychokinesis, faith healing, and other pseudoscience.

Science: Good Bad, and Bogus Details

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Author : Martin Gardner

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James Morrison says

This would not be 5 stars for everyone, but it is just the kind of popular science writing I love. It exposes many phony claims about ESP, psychokinesis, psychic mumbo jumbo and new-age crap.

I have always loved Martin Gardner's writing in SiAmc and his books. Takes a bit to get into some of the chapters, but always rewarding in the end. If you believe in science you will find lots to love here. Fun read.

Travelin says

Really enjoyed this and some of his others when I was young and altogether, rigidly skeptical. I always imagined Gardner as a sedated middle-aged man who never left the library of his house for years at a time except to send out another essay turning years of research into magic.

Jim Razinha says

Vintage Martin Gardner, though unfortunately pretty much devoted to psychic film flam. While his articles are well done, he was always at his best in responding to the objecting letters that followed his articles. Where I see his treatments as eminently fair as only occasionally biting, those who came to be reviewed/analyzed saw otherwise. It almost seems as if he delighted in baiting the wackos, and when they took the bait, the gloves came off and he skewered them with their own arguments.

Roqsan says

I think this is the best of Martin Gardner's books on pseudo science and other aberrations of the human mind. Although much of it may no longer be familiar to modern readers, if you substitute names such as Chopra, Sheldrake... for Velikovsky, Geller... you will find that nothing much has changed.

Remo says

Compendio de artículos y críticas de libros de Martin Gardner, el GRAN Martin Gardner. Los temas que trata son muchos y muy variados, desde la ufología a la topología algebraica, pasando por psicocinesis, precognición, ciencia en general... todo un elenco de temas interesantes comentados por una gran mente. Muy divertido y fácil de leer, además de extremadamente interesante. Las pistas de la bibliografía son para tener en cuenta.

John says

This book has not aged well, but if you remember the mystical movements of the 1970s you may very well find it relevant. In my case, I went through a Uri Geller phase in the 70s, and the existence of the Rhine Institute originally associated with Duke University, and the existence of the Division of Parapsychology (part of the Psychology Department) at University of Virginia, added the weight of authority to the subject at the time.

I was hoping to find solid instances of critical thinking, but what I did find was off-the-cuff book reviews larded with flat ridicule. Each chapter contains an article previously published in a periodical like Scientific American, followed by a round of critique and correction from the subjects, and a final word by Gardner to each one. Much of the latter devolves into semantics and sarcasm.

It's best to skim this one, picking out the subjects which may still resonate with you, and avoiding the now unverifiable back-and-forth.

I will say I did learn something in a very late chapter, about whether apes were really learning and synthesizing sign language, that I found both illuminating and disappointing. That one subject may inspire more research on my part.

Nandakishore Varma says

The book that weaned me away from pseudoscience and inculcated in me an enduring respect for the scientific method. A must read for all gullible people.

"One horse laugh is worth ten thousand syllogisms."

Keith Davis says

This was the first book about skepticism and pseudoscience that I ever read. At the time many of the cases, such as Uri Geller, were unfamiliar to me, but Martin Gardner's impassioned prose made an unbeliever out of me.
