

In May of 1996 Professor Alan Sokol, a physicist at New York University, caused an uproar in some quarters of the academic world by disclosing that an article of his appearing that month in an academic journal focusing upon an interdisciplinary area in the humanities and social sciences, known as science studies, was a hoax. Some months earlier, Professor Sokol had submitted an article to the journal *Social Text* which the editors reviewed and accepted for publication. About the time the article appeared in print, Professor Sokol revealed that he had not written it to make a serious contribution in the area of science studies, but instead to satirize the terminology and style of discourse common among scholars in the area, which Professor Sokol views as confusing, sloppily reasoned gibberish. Professor Sokol stated that he considers the typical work of academics in science studies not only to be ridiculous, but also potentially harmful. In his opinion, much of the work appears to deny the existence of objective truth in all areas of inquiry, including physics, and even mathematics. "I realized it would be boring to write a detailed refutation of these people," wrote Professor Sokol, so he decided instead to write a parody disguised as a serious article.

Was it morally wrong of Professor Sokol to submit the above described article to *Social Text*? If so, why? If not, why not?

Case from the October 19, 1996 Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl.

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