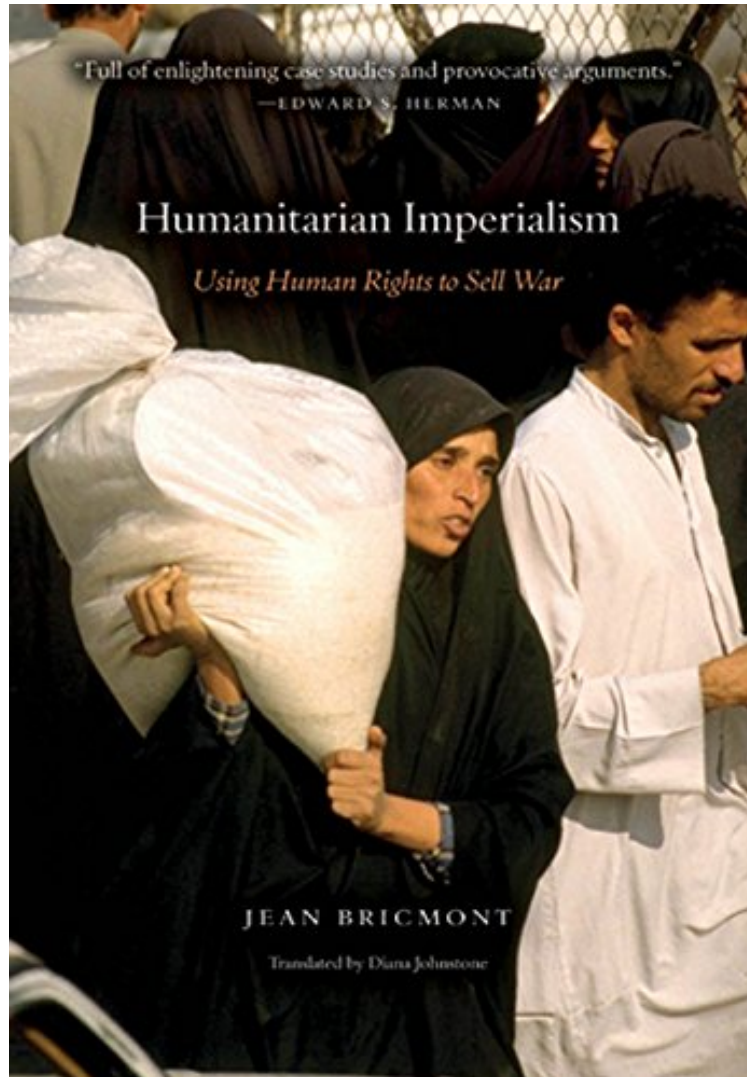


(Read now) Humanitarian Imperialism: Using Human Rights to Sell War

Humanitarian Imperialism: Using Human Rights to Sell War

Jean Bricmont

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Jean Bricmont : Humanitarian Imperialism: Using Human Rights to Sell War before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Humanitarian Imperialism: Using Human Rights to Sell War:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Humanitarian Imperialism By Annie For me, an American college kid, the mainstream media professors taint all of history and current events (usually in our favor) to the point at which it's not "giving perspective" but outright brainwashing. Don't get me wrong, I LOVE everything about this country but our foreign polity has much room for improvement! I was required to read this book for a political science class and I am so happy I did! I have read this entire book of my own volition, intrigued (and sometimes outright disgusted with

my former ignorance of the situations that the news lies about or ignores while choosing to repeatedly talk about the Octomom!). GREAT READ! It is worth it. Also, although controversial and complex topics are showcased in the book, the writing is accessible! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Kevin Shomogreat book! 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Befuddled Hegelianism By Kenny Glasswell, this book did not deliver on its promise, namely to articulate a third way between the Scylla of Cultural Relativism and the Charybdis of a forced universalist morality. Mr. Bricmont makes it perfectly clear that he is a universalist, just not an imperialist one, and he wants a universalist morality that does not lead to wars in its name. Okay, good, I would like that, too, but once you have an absolute goal, then you have a justification of any sacrifice for the sake of that goal. This is, of course, a huge philosophical problem, and not just philosophical. All Bricmont does is show that what the U.S. has done is pretty much the opposite of the lofty ideals the U.S. professes and thereby reveals the U.S. to be a most bloody hypocrite. This is exactly the sort of thing Noam Chomsky has been doing for decades, and it should surprise no one that the German Edition (at least) of this book has a foreword by none other than Chomsky himself. But showing the United States to be a hypocrite does not invalidate the idea of humanitarian interventionism. Abuse of an idea does not invalidate the idea itself. And so the Enlightenment lives another day to fight more bloody wars all for the sake of human rights. To say that the book is more or less a re-hash of what you can find in almost anything that the political Chomsky has written in the last fifty years is not to dismiss the book, of course. I really, really like Chomsky, but Bricmont, I have to say, is the much better writer and is able to make the same points that Chomsky makes with greater economy and, therefore, greater force. But one point that Bricmont does not make with force, great or otherwise, is his suggestion for a third way between relativism and imperial absolutism. Yes, he does come up with a third way but seems to realize that it is so laughable that, like a guilty Straussian, he wants to bury it between the lines. His Third Way is what I'd like to call a libertarian Hegelianism. The developed countries developed to the End of History on their own, so let the other countries do so as well, and, presto, we have on the one hand upheld a definite telos and so avoid the trap of cultural relativism and on the other hand established a principle that lets us remove the adjective "imperialist" from absolutism. It's neat but Hegelianism does not work that way at all. Hegelianism allows development to go only if the End of History has not been reached. See, one cannot philosophize until one knows the point of history, and one cannot know this until history has reached its end. Until then every thing must be allowed to happen, like wars, mass murder, torture, crimes against humanity, etc., because everything is part of the necessary dialectic of the Unfolding of the World's Spirit. But once the End of History has arrived, then one immediately understands what once looked like a tale told by an idiot. One understands the dialectic of history in a truly scientific manner and, therefore, can tell others who have not reached the End of History what to do to get there. Well, if the developed countries of this world are truly at History's End, then they are the rightful guardians of the world and as such have the right to tell the undeveloped and underdeveloped countries what to do, and instead of Humanitarian Intervention, we have Hegelian Intervention (which students of Hegel know is simply Napoleonic Conquest that is conscious of itself as Unfolding Spirit), and Mr. Bricmont would still kvetch. And if no country is at History's End, then no one can philosophize, no one can make prescriptions because History remains an inexplicable tale told by a babbling idiot. In that case, Mr. Bricmont should just shut up.

Since the end of the Cold War, the idea of human rights has been made into a justification for intervention by the world's leading economic and military powers above all, the United States in countries that are vulnerable to their attacks. The criteria for such intervention have become more arbitrary and self-serving, and their form more destructive, from Yugoslavia to Afghanistan to Iraq. Until the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the large parts of the left was often complicit in this ideology of intervention discovering new Hitlers as the need arose, and denouncing antiwar arguments as appeasement on the model of Munich in 1938. Jean Bricmont's Humanitarian Imperialism is both a historical account of this development and a powerful political and moral critique. It seeks to restore the critique of imperialism to its rightful place in the defense of human rights. It describes the leading role of the United States in initiating military and other interventions, but also on the obvious support given to it by European powers and NATO. It outlines an alternative approach to the question of human rights, based on the genuine recognition of the equal rights of people in poor and wealthy countries. Timely, topical, and rigorously argued, Jean Bricmont's book establishes a firm basis for resistance to global war with no end in sight.

About the Author Jean Bricmont is professor of theoretical physics at the University of Louvain, Belgium. He is the author of Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals Abuse of Science (with Alan Sokal) and other political and scientific publications. Diana Johnstone is a distinguished researcher and commentator on contemporary global politics. She is the author of The Politics of Euromissiles: Europe's Role in America's World (Verso, 1985). Her writings have been published in New Left, Counterpunch, and Covert Action Quarterly.