Chapter 1
The Seduction of Science: How Paradigms Can Lead One Astray

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ABSTRACT
This chapter aims to give an account of paradigmatic science as retold through Jean Baudrillard’s concept of ‘seduction’. Using concepts developed by Thomas Kuhn and Jean Baudrillard it will be argued that ‘seduction’ as understood by Baudrillard can be found at varying levels of the scientific enterprise. The two main features of Baudrillard’s seduction are ‘ambiguity and ‘reversibility’, where we cannot be sure who is seducing who (ambiguity), where each seeks to become the other (reversibility), but in doing so only highlights their differences. In terms of Kuhn’s work the more the paradigm seeks to become identical with the world, the more it begins to collapse under the weight of its own anomalies and stand out from the world. Yet when a paradigm is at its height we cannot be sure whether ‘nature’ looks the way it does because the paradigm demands it or that nature is leading science to postulate said paradigm? These themes will be examined at the metaphysical, psychological and social levels of science.

INTRODUCTION
Part of the etymology of ‘seduce’ comes from the Latin seducere meaning ‘to lead one astray’ (se- ‘away, apart’ and ducere ‘to lead’) and is normally thought of in terms of enticement or persuasion, putting one in a state or position than one would

otherwise be. The need to persuade or entice also implies a deceit that would not exist if something were as ‘good’ or ‘true’ as it suggested. ‘Seduction’ as a metaphor here is quite robust. It is a concept that has many aspects, from the phenomenology of seduction to its literary and moral counterparts. Grounded in Judeo-Christian literature, temptation and seduction in the West traditionally belong to a realm of artifice, trickery, and deception. Seduction like the hustler operates, explicitly or tacitly, with the consent of its subjects. We do not believe anything that we are not already prepared to entertain as true, that is the nature of the con. The reveal of the seduction is as illuminating. We do not experience it until it is over, where we either have to honestly confront ourselves and re-assess the situation or live on in denial of how easy we are to fool and in wishing we or the world were otherwise. All of these aspects of seduction have their analogue in the arena of science. Not only is the game of ‘getting fooled’ in the DNA of the scientific method, but in an age where science has become professionalised and funding crucial to research, ‘attractiveness’ and ‘desirability’ have become virtues, whether it is in the design of research bids, the content of university courses, the experiential make-up of the employee or just the acceptance of the ruse where one thing masks itself as another. Whilst things like ‘attractiveness’ and ‘desirability’ belong to the domain of ‘seduction’ they also are part of the lexicon of ‘enchantment’ so what is the difference?

The Weberian thesis of ‘enchantment’ is the world pre-rationalisation and secularization (Weber, 2001). A world rendered meaningful through mysticism and iconography, but most crucially is negated through totalizing worldviews that lead to ‘disenchantment’. Davis paraphrasing Gellner says the dichotomy is simple, one is either ‘enchanted’ and ‘unenlightened’ or ‘enlightenment’ and ‘disenchanted’ (1996, pp.460-61). Even those that do attempt a modern ‘re-enchantment’ of the world do so through the Enlightenment metaphysics of ‘naturalism’ (psychoanalysis, phenomenology or Marxism). Marmol, Morell, and Chalcraft (2015) make the point for one to remain content with disenchantment, especially when one reflects on the history of science and epistemology, something like seduction has to be at play. What is meant by this is that the history of science is littered with examples of people ‘falling’ for a now defunct theories, measuring now non-existent objects, or being led up endless blind allies of enquiry. There are very good methodological reasons why so many false leads are taken, but metaphysically there are fundamental reasons why ‘science’ will never completely account for the world and hence always come up short when giving a descriptive account of it. The reason is simple and can be expressed a number of ways:

1. There can be no explicit translation of tacit knowledge;
2. There can never be an objective description of subjective meaning;
3. What we say about the world is never identical with the world itself.
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