

"What's truth got to do with it?"

Peter Osborne, quoted in the Spectator of 30th April 2005 wrote, "Hostility to a 'reality-based' analysis of events can be traced back to postmodernism, which has become a fashionable orthodoxy among teachers of philosophy, and indeed other academic disciplines.

"Postmodernism is one modern manifestation of extreme philosophical scepticism, a tradition which can be traced right back to the beginnings of thought and the ancient Greek school of Pyrrho. This school despaired of the notion that truth was accessible and deduced that no ultimately stable distinction could be drawn between truth and falsehood."

In the view of the American philosopher Richard Rorty, following the French writers Foucault and Derrida, truth claims could never be incontestably grounded and "an alternative way of giving weight to words was to 'to construct what he called a narrative.' This has the effect of shifting the emphasis of argument from truths which can be verified to 'narratives' that can be manufactured." Peter Osborne accuses New Labour of latching on to this.