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Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (Science and Its Conceptual Foundations series)

By Peter Godfrey-Smith



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How does science work? Does it tell us what the world is "really" like? What makes it different from other ways of understanding the universe? In *Theory and Reality*, Peter Godfrey-Smith addresses these questions by taking the reader on a grand tour of one hundred years of debate about science. The result is a completely accessible introduction to the main themes of the philosophy of science.

Intended for undergraduates and general readers with no prior background in philosophy, *Theory and Reality* covers logical positivism; the problems of induction and confirmation; Karl Popper's theory of science; Thomas Kuhn and "scientific revolutions"; the views of Imre Lakatos, Larry Laudan, and Paul Feyerabend; and challenges to the field from sociology of science, feminism, and science studies. The book then looks in more detail at some specific problems and theories, including scientific realism, the theory-ladenness of observation, scientific explanation, and Bayesianism. Finally, Godfrey-Smith defends a form of philosophical naturalism as the best way to solve the main problems in the field.

Throughout the text he points out connections between philosophical debates and wider discussions about science in recent decades, such as the infamous "science wars." Examples and asides engage the beginning student; a glossary of terms explains key concepts; and suggestions for further reading are included at the end of each chapter. However, this is a textbook that doesn't feel like a textbook because it captures the historical drama of changes in how science has been conceived over the last one hundred years.

Like no other text in this field, *Theory and Reality* combines a survey of recent history of the philosophy of science with current key debates in language that any beginning scholar or critical reader can follow.



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Editorial Review

Review

"While addressing important issues (such as the difference between logical positivism and logical empiricism), Godfrey-Smith displays consistent clarity. It is truly refreshing to read a text that is thorough, clear, and penetrating. Students with little or no background in philosophy or philosophy of science will find this book to be extremely worthwhile. Professionals in other fields and other disciplines will appreciate the breadth and depth. . . . Whether you teach philosophy of science, or whether you are simply interested in issues relating science, philosophy, history, and other fields, I am confident that you'll find *Theory and Reality* an accessible and rewarding read."--James Sage, *Metapsychology*
(James Sage *Metapsychology*)

"Godfrey-Smith presents a clear, comprehensive, and accessible introductory survey of the major problems and movements in the philosophy of science. It is an excellent book to use on its own in a lower-level philosophy of science course or as a supplement to some anthology of primary texts in a more sophisticated upper-level course. It would also suit anyone who has interest in the subject but little patience for jargon-heavy professional philosophy. . . . His exposition is accented by insightful commentary and criticism, and by examples from the history of science all with a keen sense of humor."
(Michael Veber *Science Education*)

"A stimulating introduction to nearly every department of general philosophy of science. . . . Godfrey-Smith's attempt to inject new vigor and liveliness into philosophy of science is quite successful, as evidenced by the charmingly opinionated style of presentation and the ease with which he ties latter-day perspectives on science back to the classic positivist tradition and the history of science. . . . A very fresh and well-conceived book."
(Matthew D. Lund *Journal of the History of Behavioral Sciences*)

From the Inside Flap

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About the Author

Peter Godfrey-Smith is an associate professor of philosophy and of history and philosophy of science at Stanford University. He is the author of *Complexity and the Function of Mind in Nature*.

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Margaret Burton:

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Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book especially book entitled Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (Science and Its Conceptual Foundations series) your brain will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely will become your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a reserve then become one web form conclusion and explanation that will maybe you never get prior to. The Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science (Science and Its Conceptual Foundations series) giving you another experience more than blown away your head but also giving you useful facts for your better life on this era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished studying it, like winning a casino game. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

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