

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

How science reflects reality



JAMES ROBERT BROWN

ROUTLEDGE

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Smoke And Mirrors How Science Reflects Reality

Tobias Bleicker



Smoke And Mirrors How Science Reflects Reality:

Smoke and Mirrors James Robert Brown, 2002-10-02 Realism is an enlightening story a tale which enriches our experience and makes it more intelligible Yet this wonderful picture of humanity s best efforts at knowledge has been badly bruised by numerous critics James Robert Brown in *Smoke and Mirrors* fights back against figures such as Richard Rorty Bruno Latour Michael Ruse and Hilary Putnam who have attacked realist accounts of science But this volume is not wholly devoted to combating Rorty and others who blow smoke in our eyes the second half is concerned with arguing that there are some amazing ways in which science mirrors the world The role of abstraction abstract objects and a priori ways of getting at reality are all explored in showing how science reflects reality *Smoke and Mirrors* is a defence of science and knowledge in general as well as a defence of a particular way of understanding science It is of interest to all those who wish or need to know how science works

Realism Discourse and Deconstruction Jonathan Joseph, John Michael Roberts, 2004-05-05 The book addresses such issues as the work of Derrida and deconstruction discourse theory Eurocentrism and poststructuralism

Picturing Knowledge Brian Scott Baigrie, 1996-01-01 The contributors to this volume examine the historical and philosophical issues concerning the role that scientific illustration plays in the creation of scientific knowledge

Beyond Environmentalism Jeffrey E. Foss, 2009-02-04 This one of a kind book provides thoughtful insight into the current relationship between humankind and the environment *Beyond Environmentalism* is the first book of its kind to present a timely and relevant analysis of environmentalism The author s decades of experience as a philosopher of science allow him to critically comprehend scientific issues and to develop and explain sound ethical policies in response to them The result is a volume that builds a philosophy of nature and helps the reader assess humankind s relationship with and impact on the world around us This innovative book discusses the inconsistencies both scientific and philosophical of popular environmentalism and sheds new perspectives on the issues causes and debates that embrace society today The goal is not to settle environmental issues once and for all but rather to provide the basis for more reasoned scientific and productive debates The need for a new philosophy of nature is explored through methodological discussion of several topics including The rise and fall of scientific proof Nature in religion romance and human values Humankind s responsibility to the environment The value of freedom Kinship among species Numerous case studies throughout the book delve into global warming the sixth extinction the precautionary principle pollution and other popular issues within environmentalism Feature boxes guide the reader through complex topics such as eco sabotage the Gaia hypothesis and the urban heat island effect while vivid illustrations demonstrate scientific data theories and philosophical arguments in a reader friendly manner With its balanced approach to provocative issues *Beyond Environmentalism* serves as an excellent thought provoking supplement for courses on environmental studies at the undergraduate and graduate levels It is also an interesting and accessible read for anyone with a general interest in environmental issues

Quantum Theory and the Flight from Realism Christopher

Norris,2002-11-01 This book is a critical introduction to the long standing debate concerning the conceptual foundations of quantum mechanics and the problems it has posed for physicists and philosophers from Einstein to the present Quantum theory has been a major influence on postmodernism and presents significant problems for realists Keeping his own realist position in check Christopher Norris subjects a wide range of key opponents and supporters of realism to a high and equal level of scrutiny With a characteristic combination of rigour and intellectual generosity he draws out the merits and weaknesses from opposing arguments In a sequence of closely argued chapters Norris examines the premises of orthodox quantum theory as developed most influentially by Bohr and Heisenberg and its impact on various philosophical developments These include the ideas developed by W V Quine Thomas Kuhn Michael Dummett Bas van Fraassen and Hilary Putnam In each case Norris argues these thinkers have been influenced by the orthodox construal of quantum mechanics as requiring drastic revision of principles which had hitherto defined the very nature of scientific method causal explanation and rational enquiry Putting the case for a realist approach which adheres to well tried scientific principles of causal reasoning and inference to the best explanation Christopher Norris clarifies these debates to a non specialist readership and scholars of philosophy science studies and the philosophy of science alike Quantum Theory and the Flight From Realism suggests that philosophical reflection can contribute to a better understanding of these crucial current issues *Waves and Rays in*

Elastic Continua Michael A. Slawinski,2010 This is the second edition of the textbook that was first published by Elsevier Science Professor Slawinski has the copyright to the textbook and the second edition is significantly extended The present book emphasizes the interdependence of mathematical formulation and physical meaning in the description of seismic phenomena Herein we use aspects of continuum mechanics wave theory and ray theory to explain phenomena resulting from the propagation of seismic waves The book is divided into three main sections elastic continua waves and rays and variational formulation of rays There is also a fourth part which consists of appendices In Part 1 we use continuum mechanics to describe the material through which seismic waves propagate and to formulate a system of equations to study the behaviour of such a material In Part 2 we use these equations to identify the types of body waves propagating in elastic continua as well as to express their velocities and displacements in terms of the properties of these continua To solve the equations of motion in anisotropic inhomogeneous continua we use the high frequency approximation and hence establish the concept of a ray In Part 3 we show that in elastic continua a ray is tantamount to a trajectory along which a seismic signal propagates in accordance with the variational principle of stationary traveltime Consequently many seismic problems in elastic continua can be conveniently formulated and solved using the calculus of variations In Part 4 we describe two mathematical concepts that are used in the book namely homogeneity of a function and Legendre's transformation This section also contains a list of symbols

Handbook of Epistemology I. Niiniluoto,Matti Sintonen,Jan Wolenski,2004-03-31 Epistemology or theory of knowledge has always been one of the most important if not the most important field of philosophy New arguments are

constantly brought to bear on old views new variants are marshalled to revive ancient stands new concepts and distinctions increase the sophistication of epistemological theories There are a great many excellent textbooks monographs as well as anthologies consisting of articles in epistemology Similarly there are useful philosophical dictionaries which contain a great number of relatively short entries and general philosophical handbooks which also touch epistemological issues This volume of 27 essays grew out from the interest to see a handbook which is devoted entirely to the historical roots and systematic development of theory of knowledge It is not intended to compete but to supplement the already existing literature It aims at giving both beginners and more advanced students as well as professionals in epistemology and other areas of philosophy an overview of the central problems and solutions of epistemology The essays are self contained and still often rather extensive discussions of the chosen aspects of knowledge The contributions presuppose very little familiarity with previous literature and only a few of them require the mastery of even elementary logical notation This we hope makes the volume also accessible to the philosophically interested wider audience The contributors were asked to provide substantial up to date self contained and balanced surveys of the various subareas and more specific topics of epistemology with reference to literature

Platonism, Naturalism, and Mathematical Knowledge James Robert Brown, 2013-06-17 This study addresses a central theme in current philosophy Platonism vs Naturalism and provides accounts of both approaches to mathematics crucially discussing Quine Maddy Kitcher Lakoff Colyvan and many others Beginning with accounts of both approaches Brown defends Platonism by arguing that only a Platonistic approach can account for concept acquisition in a number of special cases in the sciences He also argues for a particular view of applied mathematics a view that supports Platonism against Naturalist alternatives Not only does this engaging book present the Platonist Naturalist debate over mathematics in a comprehensive fashion but it also sheds considerable light on non mathematical aspects of a dispute that is central to contemporary philosophy

On Scientific Representations G. Boniolo, 2007-04-25 Scientific concepts laws theories and models are representations but are uniquely different This book explores each within an original philosophical framework rooted in the Kantian tradition Through a revisionist historical approach it shows how this tradition helps us rethink contemporary issues in epistemology and the philosophy of science

An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Social Research Tim May, Malcolm Williams, 2002-11 This is an accessible introduction to the philosophy of social research which relates philosophical ideas to actual research practice The book makes effective use of illustrations from the UK US and Europe to examine specific problems and broader issues The book is intended for undergraduate and postgraduate courses in social research methods within sociology social policy politics social psychology human geography philosophy of social science and social theory courses and as a personal reference for professional researchers

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