

Defending Realism Without Inference To The Best Explanation Synthese Library 402

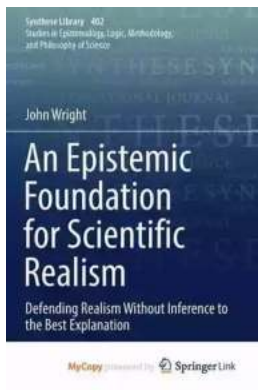
When it comes to understanding the nature of reality, there are two main philosophical stances that dominate the field: realism and anti-realism. Realism holds the view that there exists an external world independent of our thoughts and beliefs, while anti-realism argues that reality is constructed by our subjective experiences and interpretations. Within the realm of realism, there are various approaches to defending this perspective, one of which is through the concept of inference to the best explanation. In this article, we will explore the arguments presented in "Defending Realism Without Inference To The Best Explanation Synthese Library 402" and critically evaluate their relevance to the ongoing philosophical debate.

The Rise of Anti-Realism

In recent years, anti-realism has gained significant traction within the philosophical community. The proponents of this perspective argue that our understanding of reality is inherently limited by our subjective experiences and interpretations. Concepts such as "truth" and "objectivity" are seen as mere social constructs, devoid of any objective grounding. This has led to a growing skepticism towards the idea of an external world that exists independently of our thoughts and beliefs.

One of the key challenges that realists face in light of this anti-realist surge is the critique that their position relies heavily on inference to the best explanation. Inference to the best explanation is a method of reasoning in which the best explanation for a set of evidence is selected based on its explanatory power and simplicity. It is often used to support realist claims by arguing that the existence of

an external world provides the best explanation for our observations and experiences.



An Epistemic Foundation for Scientific Realism: Defending Realism Without Inference to the Best Explanation (Synthese Library Book 402)

by John Wright(1st ed. 2018 Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 1164 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 389 pages



Defending Realism Without Inference To The Best Explanation

In "Defending Realism Without Inference To The Best Explanation Synthese Library 402," the author presents a compelling argument against the necessity of inference to the best explanation in defending realism. The author argues that while inference to the best explanation can be a useful tool for justifying realist claims, it is not the only avenue for defending realism.

One of the key points made by the author is that inference to the best explanation relies heavily on our existing beliefs and background knowledge. This raises the question of whether it is truly objective and independent of our subjective biases. The author suggests that by over-emphasizing the role of inference to the best explanation, realists inadvertently open themselves up to criticisms related to the subjectivity of their arguments.

Instead, the author proposes an alternative approach to defending realism that focuses on the coherence and consistency of our beliefs about the world. By examining how our various beliefs about different aspects of reality align with each other, the author suggests that we can develop a more robust defense of realism that is not solely reliant on inference to the best explanation.

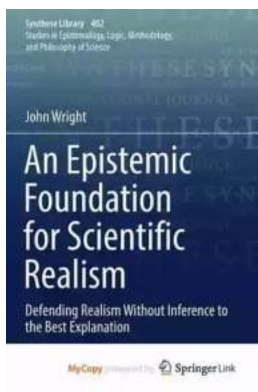
An Alternative Path to Realism

The author's alternative path to defending realism is grounded in the idea of coherence theory of truth. Coherence theory posits that truth is determined by the coherence of a set of beliefs rather than their correspondence to an external reality. By adopting this perspective, the author argues that realists can bypass the reliance on inference to the best explanation and instead focus on the internal consistency and logical coherence of their beliefs about reality.

This alternative approach not only provides realists with a stronger defense against anti-realism but also allows for more nuanced discussions about the nature of reality. It acknowledges the limitations of inference to the best explanation and opens up the possibility for considering other factors beyond explanatory power and simplicity.

"Defending Realism Without Inference To The Best Explanation Synthese Library 402" presents a thought-provoking argument against the over-reliance on inference to the best explanation in defending realism. By exploring the limitations and subjectivity of this method, the author offers an alternative path that focuses on the coherence and consistency of our beliefs about reality. This article reminds us that the philosophical debate between realism and anti-realism is far from settled, and there are always new perspectives and arguments to consider. As philosophers continue to grapple with these fundamental questions, it is essential

to critically evaluate the various approaches and strive towards a deeper understanding of the nature of reality.



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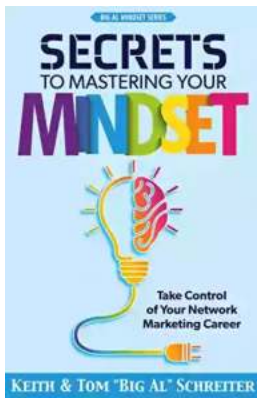


This monograph develops a new way of justifying the claims made by science about phenomenon not directly observable by humans, such as atoms and black holes. It details a way of making inferences to the existence and properties of unobservable entities and states of affairs that can be given a probabilistic justification. The inferences used to establish realist claims are not a form of, and neither do they rely on, inference to the best explanation.

Scientific Realism maintains that scientific theories and hypotheses refer to real entities, forces, and relations, even if one cannot examine them. But, there are those who doubt these claims. The author develops a novel way of defending Scientific Realism against a range of influential attacks. He argues that in some cases, at least, we can make probabilistically justifiable inferences from observed data to claims about unobservable, theoretical entities. He shows how this

enables us to place some scientific realist claims on a firmer epistemological footing than has previously been the case. This also makes it possible to give a unified set of replies to the most common objections to Scientific Realism.

The final chapters apply the developed conceptual apparatus to key cases from the history of science and from recent science. One example concerns realism with respect to atoms. Another looks at inferences from recent astronomical data to s about the size and shape of those parts of the universe lying beyond that which we can observe.



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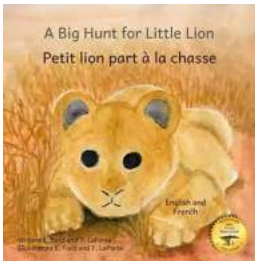
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