

A Metaphysics for Scientific Realism: Knowing the Unobservable

by Anjan Chakravartty Cambridge University Press 2007, paperback 2010

Dust cover summary

Scientific realism is the view that our best scientific theories give approximately true descriptions of both observable and unobservable aspects of a mind-independent world. Debates between realists and their critics are at the very heart of the philosophy of science. Anjan Chakravartty traces the contemporary evolution of realism by examining the most promising recent strategies adopted by its proponents in response to the forceful challenges of antirealist skeptics, resulting in a positive proposal for scientific realism today. He examines the core principles of the realist position, and sheds light on topics including the varieties of metaphysical commitment required, and the nature of the conflict between realism and its empiricist rivals. By illuminating the connections between realist interpretations of scientific knowledge and the metaphysical foundations supporting them, his book offers a compelling vision of how realism can provide an internally consistent and coherent account of scientific knowledge.