



The Cognitive Science of Science: Explanation, Discovery, and Conceptual Change (MIT Press)

Paul Thagard

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Many disciplines, including philosophy, history, and sociology, have attempted to make sense of how science works. In this book, Paul Thagard examines scientific development from the interdisciplinary perspective of cognitive science. Cognitive science combines insights from researchers in many fields: philosophers analyze historical cases, psychologists carry out behavioral experiments, neuroscientists perform brain scans, and computer modelers write programs that simulate thought processes. Thagard develops cognitive perspectives on the nature of explanation, mental models, theory choice, and resistance to scientific change, considering disbelief in climate change as a case study. He presents a series of studies that describe the psychological and neural processes that have led to breakthroughs in science, medicine, and technology. He shows how discoveries of new theories and explanations lead to conceptual change, with examples from biology, psychology, and medicine. Finally, he shows how the cognitive science of science can integrate descriptive and normative concerns; and he considers the neural underpinnings of certain scientific concepts.

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