# 理论与真理

基础科学中的哲学批判

Theory and Truth

Philosophical Critique within Foundational Science

〔美〕 劳伦斯·斯克拉一署

马雷一译

## 理论与真理

### 基础科学中的哲学批判

Theory and Truth

Philosophical Critique within Foundational Science

〔美〕劳伦斯·斯克拉一署

马雷一份





北航

C1714617

科学出版社

北京

NO2 288 图字: 01-2012-1836 号

Translation from the English language edition:

Theory and Truth: Philosophical Critique within Foundational
Science by Lawrence Sklar
Copyright © 2000 Lawrence Sklar
All Rights Reserved

#### 内 容 简 介

本书是美国哲学学会会长和美国科学哲学联合会主席劳伦斯·斯克拉教授的代表作之一。本书批判地考查了目前流行的实用主义和知识社会学及其各种翻版。本书认为,一般方法论纲领所提倡的批判性哲学思维方式在建构、检验、修改或取代基础物理学理论的科学事业中起着深刻的作用。科学方法负载哲学方法和哲学洞见。同时,对方法论和哲学的理解必须依托科学实践、相关语境、科学理论和经验。本书在方法论科学哲学上提出一系列重大问题,并给出了新颖的解答和严密的论证,在国际哲学界引起了广泛的讨论和好评。

本书适合科学哲学专业及相关专业领域的研究者和学生参阅。

#### 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

理论与真理:基础科学中的哲学批判/(美) 斯克拉(Sklar, L.) 著; 马雷译.—北京:科学出版社,2014.3

书名原文: Theory and truth: Philosophical critique within foundational science ISBN 978-7-03-040122-9

I. ①理… Ⅱ. ①斯… ②马… Ⅲ. ①科学哲学-研究 Ⅳ. ①N02 中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2014) 第 046398 号

责任编辑:郭勇斌 卜 新/责任校对:韩 杨 责任印制:赵德静/封面设计:黄华斌 编辑部电话:010-64035853

E-mail: houjunlin@ mail. sciencep. com

4 4 4 6 4 出版 北京东黄城根北街16号 邮政编码: 100717

http://www.sciencep.com

**骏 走 印 刷 厂** 印刷 科学出版社发行 各地新华书店经销

2014年5月第 — 版 开本: 720×1000 1/16 2014年5月第一次印刷 印张: 12 字数: 196 000

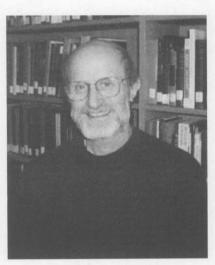
定价: 58.00 元 (如有印装质量问题, 我社负责调换)

#### 作者简介

劳伦斯·斯克拉 密歇根大学亨普尔和 弗兰克纳杰出大学教授 研究领域:物理学哲学、科学哲学、认 识论

美国艺术与科学院院士,美国哲学协会(中区)原会长,美国科学哲学联合会原会长。1997~1998年在牛津大学做约翰·洛克哲学讲座,并在牛津大学万灵学院访学。曾获得古根海姆基金会和美国社会学协会、国家科学基金委员会、国家人文基金会的学术基金资助。

斯克拉教授的代表专著有:《空间、 时间和时空》(获得1973~1974年度哲



劳伦斯・斯克拉

学麦契特奖)、《哲学与时空物理学》(1985)、《物理哲学》(1992)、《物理与概率》(1995年获得拉卡托斯科学哲学奖)、《理论与真理——基础科学中的哲学批判》(2000)、《哲学与动力学基础》(2013)。主编《科学哲学论文集》(2000)。斯克拉教授发表过大量学术论文,主要探讨理论的性质、合理信念的结构、理论还原、空间和时间的哲学以及统计力学的哲学问题等。

电子信箱: lsklar@ umich. edu

#### Preface for the Chinese Edition

I am delighted that Professor Ma has translated my book Theory and Truth, thereby making it available to Chinese readers. The book is a transcript of the John Locke Lectures that I was invited to present to Oxford University in 1995.

Let me say just a few words about the general context in which the book was written.

One prevailing theme in Western philosophy over several centuries has been the development of a variety of "skepticisms" and replies to these. For one example, consider the work of David Hume. Relying on general principles that all our meaningful discourse and all our knowledge rested upon the contents and results of perceptual experience, Hume, first of all, cast doubt upon the legitimacy of a relation of "causal necessity" holding in the world, and in addition, cast doubt upon the rationality of our inferring exceptionless, general laws of nature from our limited, finite experience of constant conjunctions in the world.

Immanuel Kant was deeply motivated in his philosophy by his desire to overcome the skepticism of Hume. Originally a student of the German school of metaphysics, Kant said that Hume "woke him from his dogmatic slumber." Much of the rest of Kant's career in philosophy was dedicated to offering "ways out" of Hume's skepticism.

My lectures deal with a fragment of a current form of philosophical skepticism.

Our scientific theories of the world seem to us the repository of truth about the natural world. After millennia of experience and thought, trial and error, we seem to have reached the stage where we can confidently declare that science has shown us a vast body of knowledge about what there is in the world and what it is like. How can anyone possibly doubt that a science that grounds the technology that is now the basis of our economies and our everyday lives has discerned the truth about the

world?

Not the "whole truth" to be sure. There is much more that science has to learn. We still don't have the fine details of how the genetic information coded into DNA is developed to direct the formation of an organism. We still don't have a deep understanding of how the brain is structured and how it functions in all of its roles in perception, memory, inference and understanding. At the level of deep physics, we don't yet know how to apply the general principles of quantum theory to our understanding of gravity. In the realm of cosmology profound mysteries remain about the fundamental structure of the cosmic realm and about the origin of that structure. Nonetheless, there is a gigantic realm of scientific truths that we do know.

But philosophers are never satisfied, and modern day skeptics of a large variety of kinds, challenge our claims that science tells us "the truth". It is with some aspects of this kind of skepticism that these lectures deal. The lectures do not deal with skepticisms that have their origin outside of science itself and that constitute general skepticisms about the very legitimacy of the notion of "objective" truth. I am not concerned with claims to the effect that what is true from one "perspective" will not be true from another, where such perspectives might constitute, for example that what is true for a Christian is not true for a Buddhist. Nor am I concerned with such relativisms as those of what is called "theory" by some members of literature departments that, once again, claim that there is no such thing at all as truth except "from a perspective" of race or class.

I am concerned, rather, with sources of skepticism that are closely linked to issues that arise within science itself. Hence the sub-title for the lectures is "Philosophical Critique within Foundational Science". The "foundational" is in the sub-title since I am primarily concerned with issues that arise within our most fundamental and foundational sciences, especially within the fundamental theories of physics.

The lectures deal with three sources of possible skeptical doubts about whether we can speak of our scientific theories as true: ①Problems arising out of the nature of foundational theories as positing entities and properties of them that remain forever

beyond our immediate observational grasp, so-called "theoretical" entities and properties; ②Problems arising out of the fact that fundamental laws of foundational science frequently hold not of real systems in the world, but only of "idealized" systems; ③Problems arising out of the fact that science seems to replace accepted foundational theories with new theories that are radically different from the, now rejected, older theory in their crucial concepts and their fundamental ontologies.

(1) Some philosophers have wished to eliminate from our accepted ontologies any reference to the unobservable. Philosophers called "logical positivists" often took that stance. But the usual rebuttal is to claim that it would be absurd to deny the existence of such things as electromagnetic fields, quarks and curved spacetime posited by physics just because these entities and their properties are remote from human observation. Our best theories posit these entities, and we ought, accepting the truth of these theories, to believe in their existence. For this reason most philosophers of science reject positivism arguing that it rests on false philosophical assumptions.

But now let us look "inside" science. Many fundamental theories posit new, unobservable entities and properties in the world. But some foundational theories within science allegedly advance our understanding by eliminating entities and properties posited by their predecessor theories. I am not thinking of cases where the earlier theory is simply taken as "false", but rather where the new theory is thought of as an "improved" version of the older theory. Examples can be found in theories of space and time and in quantum field theories. Furthermore, the kinds of reasoning employed within science in these cases have much in common with the kinds of philosophical reasoning employed by the positivist. We need, then, a more careful and deeper understanding of the role played by the unobservable in our foundational theories, and of the grounds within science for accepting or rejecting the positing of such entities and properties.

Another aspect of internal science bears a close analogy to familiar philosophical arguments. Arguments beginning with Descartes were designed to show us that no amount of empirical data could show us that we lived in a world as we understood it.

Could not all our experience be a dream? Or could we be nothing but programmed "brains in a vat"? Such philosophical possibilities are often dismissed as absurd. But within foundational physics, with its realm of the unobservable, we often find claims to the effect that allegedly alternative theories could all be equally compatible with all possible empirical data. How should we understand the existence of such "empirically equivalent" theories, and what does their existence tell us about our notion of the "truth" of our accepted theories?

(2) It is sometimes claimed that we cannot hold scientific theories as simply true of the world, for many of these theories apply not to realistic systems but to the kind of scientific "models" of systems called idealizations. Idealizations do indeed play crucial roles in discovering and expressing our foundational physical theories.

But to argue that the theories are therefore not "true of the world" is too quick. Instead what is needed is a careful and thorough study of the various kinds of idealizations that are used in fundamental physics and the ways in which these idealizations function within the theories. In particular we need deeper insights in the ways in which the use of these idealizations can function to give us guidance about the behavior of the un-idealized real systems in the world in such a way as it makes it reasonable to say that the idealizations aid in finding "true" theories of the actual world. Here notions such as that of a "limit" and of "approximation" will play important roles. But they are not the whole story.

(3) For several centuries the "stability" of our fundamental theories led scientists to have few doubts that they had found at least some of the basic truths about the world. But with the beginning of the 20th century much of that confidence came under strain. The new relativistic theories of dynamics and gravity, and, especially, the discovery of the quantum nature of things, were "revolutionary" in their new understanding of nature. So novel were these theories, it is sometimes alleged, that they threw out the previous understanding of the ontology of the world in its entirety. Indeed, it is also sometimes claimed, the concepts of these theories were so radically different from those of the earlier theories that one could not even legitimately claim to contrast the assertions of the theories since the terms they used,

while appearing similar, simply did not mean the same thing. And, some philosophers of science continued, we could expect such revolutions to continue. If that is so, how can we possibly think of our current best theories as "true", or even think of the succession of theories as "approaching the truth"?

The radical skepticism of some who treat of this problem is based on assumptions which, if taken seriously, would lead to the impossibility of any communication at all. But how can we construct a view of theory transience and theory change that allows for radical scientific revolutions, and faces up to the sources of the skeptics concerns? Responses that naively argue that something is preserved unchanged in all such revolutions ("structure" perhaps) won't do justice to the situation. Rather, a thoughtful and comprehensive treatment that takes account of the subtle nature of meanings of concepts in science, and the consequent meaning of assertions in science, is needed. Even if we do not believe that our current best foundational theories are true, and given their peculiar and problematic internal nature, most scientists expect radical changes in the future, how can we understand the evolution of theories, revolutions included, as being "on the road to truth"?

Lawrence Sklar

## 

Preface for the Chinese Edition	
致谢	
导言	1
第一章 理论与世界的关系	3
推荐读物	7
第二章 对本体的排除	9
第一节 基于批判的本体论排除	9
第二节 区别于翻新的其他科学动机	12
第三节 批判性重建中的共同元素 …	
第四节 "可观测内容"与排除不可	观测对象 16
	24
第六节 总体经验主义纲领的地位 …	26
推荐读物	27
第三章 理想化 ······	29
第一节 系统的非孤立性	32
第二节 理论的局限性	39
第三节 极限的作用	44
第四节 模型	50
推荐读物	54
第四章 理论的短暂性	56
第一节 认知态度的种类	58
第二节 削減内容	68
第三节 在科学内部处理短暂性	71
第四节 重建现存理论,指导未来研	究 76
第五节 关于我们理论的理论	83

#### |理论与真理——基础科学中的哲学批判 |

推荐读物	95
第五章 结论	
References ····	101
索引	
附录 斯克拉教授简历和学术成果一览	112
译后记	172

#### 作为对式。不得已的海路而言。他的问得,但仍是说,我在第一位但像的

本书旨在论证,许多科学方法论问题尚未得到应有的重视。我认为,从 方法论的立场关注这些问题,会同时以新的方式带来许多著名问题,这些问 题源于对基本问题的哲学讨论,这些基本问题与基础理论物理学的具体问题 有关。本书还关注作为方法论的科学哲学和作为物理学哲学的科学哲学。

总体来看,在抽象哲学中,在科学的哲学方法论中,有一些思维方式,它们还渗入基础科学本身的实践。我想论证,这些思维方式出现在对科学内部基础理论的发展和批判中时所呈现的特点与它们在更为抽象的方法论实践中所表现的方式完全不同。

特别是,科学中的基础理论所声称的真理受到怀疑。该论证将集中探讨一般哲学和方法论科学哲学对此怀疑所提供的理由。本书力求表明,基础理论建立在一般方法论的广为人知的根据之上,对这样的基础理论的批判性考察指导着基础理论的发现、构建和改进,因而构成科学实践的本质的、内在的部分。

证明这一总论点,要求广泛关注一般方法论中出现的各种怀疑论。但是,它也要求直接关注物理学基础中的大量特殊问题,这些问题涉及基础理论的具体困难。总体立论办法主要是展示广泛的重要案例,以表明批判性哲学方法在科学中所起的作用。这些案例将阐明这样一个主题:哲学推理模式会在科学中出现,但是,它在科学中显示的结构在许多重要方面与它应用于一般方法论时所具有的结构迥然不同。

本书视野开阔,不仅涉及一般哲学和一般科学方法论的广泛传统议题,而且涉及物理学哲学基础的广泛议题。本书篇幅不长,乃有意为之。本书是由演讲稿整理而成,正如演讲稿一样,它关注那些特别广泛的问题,试图把它们视为科学哲学研究的系统方案中的子问题加以阐明。我想,用多少有点新颖的方式考察这些问题,将有助于进一步充分地、详细地探讨每一单个问题。

#### 理论与真理——基础科学中的哲学批判

显然,这里涉及的议题只能采取简略的探讨方式,实际上对需要深入、 广泛探讨的问题常常只给予一两个段落的篇幅。把特别广泛的议题纳入总论 题,进行简略探讨,这是本书不得不付出的代价。

作为对这一不得已的简略所造成的损失的部分补偿,我在第一至四章的每章结尾都附一节简注性的"推荐读物"。这样,读者不仅可以参阅许多一般科学方法论著作,而且可以参阅基础物理学及其哲学研究的著作,那些希望填补本书所忽略的许多细节的读者可以从这些著作中获益。这些推荐读物不包括涉及本书主题的详尽无遗的原始文献,只提供涉及本书哲学或物理学的人门文献。

#### 第一章 理论与世界的关系

对最好的、被最为广泛接受的科学理论的真理性的否定论证已经比较充分了。一些怀疑论者试图让我们相信:我们应当从根本上否认我们的科学理论的任何描述的有效性;或者,至少,我们应当摒弃在任何意义上将它们视为对世界性质的描述的各种认识论保证。我并不关心如此粗暴的激进怀疑论。

确切地说,某些更为温和的怀疑论持有这样的观点:虽然在某些意义上我们能够合法地宣称我们最好的可行性科学所具有的代表性力量,但对于把它们视为对世界的最好描述的任何唯一性观点,我们应当避而远之。当前形形色色的时髦的相对主义似乎试图让我们相信这一观点。

对于否认我们最好的科学的真实性的那些理由,我不打算接着探讨。我下面集中讨论的科学是基础物理学。一些相对主义观点强调各种文化的或社会的背景中的科学世界观的独立性。科学家通常置身于这样的背景中,却浑然不觉。我们的社会表征使得任何种类的客观历史或社会科学成为不可靠的、困难的或不可能的。像牛顿力学、狭义的和广义的相对论、统计力学或量子力学这样的理论都充满预设,这些预设恰好表达了隐藏的思想体系。这些理论能够并且将要被另一些根本不同的理论代替,这些替代理论同样有效地声称:物理世界是区别于其本身的社会产物。无论这种思想的合理性是什么,它都与当今流行的观念一样可疑。但是,我这里所关心的并不是诸如利纳德的"德国人的物理学(相对于犹太人的物理学)""基于辩证唯物主义的马克思主义物理学"或当前科学中流行的各种所谓文化相对主义这样的东西。

有一种更为温和的相对主义,从实验到理论的推理的开放性、从实践科学的内在的社会动力学到理论选择背后的偶然性机制,不乏对这种相对主义的辩护。这些更为温和的相对主义确实比那些激进的社会建构论更为合理,更为有趣。但是,这种"内在的相对主义"也不是我感兴趣的话题,尽管我要讨论的一些问题对于理解这样或那样的内在相对主义不无裨益。

另一方面, 我也不想论证, 我们找不到恰当的案例来说明一些关于世界

的极为基础的物理理论的部分内容可能容易受到独断性或因袭性的指责。但 是,明显区别于科学的社会建构论,我所关心的各种独断论都不乏扎实的基 本根据,尽管其主张或者是大胆的外在主义的,或者是羞怯的内在主义的。

为什么我们可以主张,不应当把基础物理理论视为对世界的真实表述, 进而也不应当在任何明晰的意义上将之视为正确的?我想先简要地指出人们 给出的三大理由。

首先,理论是否真实地再现自然是值得怀疑的。理论假定以可观察现象为根据,而对可观察现象的解释要通过假定不可观测的实体和性质来完成。 怀疑论者对理论产生的合法性提出质疑。

有关不可观测对象的怀疑论的历史源远流长。曾经有一些流行的物理学理论也以怀疑论者所质疑的关于不可观测对象的本体论假定为根据。对这些理论的批评见诸古希腊天文学,即见诸这样的主张:天文学的目标是"拯救可观察现象",而不是以诸如水晶球的断定方式对可观察现象给出物理解释。对非法假定不可观测对象的理论的类似批评见诸马赫和迪昂这样的动能学家在19世纪对原子论的攻讦。我们将看到,在当代基础物理学中,对不可观测对象的拒斥以许多方式表达出来。

这里的核心思想是,按照较弱的说法,就我们假定一个不可观测对象的领域而言,我们超出了根据观察实验支持理论的证据合法性范围。按照较强的说法,关于存在不可观测对象的断言在语义上难以理解。在许多这样的说法中,其思维方式要么要求以根本不涉及不可观测对象的方式构建理论,要么涉及不可观测对象,但不充分地断言或相信它是真的。比较之下,后一方法倒是可行的。反观自身,我们只是在断言理论的工具恰当性,或者相信理论"好像"杜撰者的虚构,其真实目的只不过是对它所预测的观察现象作经济的概括。

其次,基于观察的理论是否表达简明真理值得怀疑,因为只是在给出许 多关键的理想化处理之后,基础物理学理论才适用于真实世界的系统。

据观察,我们的理论不能直接地、无限制地预测或解释实际世界的物理系统。例如,我们的理论只处理对系统的有限类的因果作用,但是,真正的系统却受无穷的已知或未知的扰动作用的支配。而且,我们的理论只处理系统的特殊的和有限的方面,但是,在真实的系统中,大量的相互作用却是任

何单一的物理描述都无法刻画的。另外,在许多情况下,我们的理论仅仅适用于在这样或那样的方面被理想化的系统,比如无穷大或无穷小的系统,或者,系统的行为只能以一些理想方式处理,比如说,系统的时间被限制为零时间间隔或无穷时间间隔。但是,理论固然能够严密地处理理想系统的理想行为,却不能完全把握我们通过实验观察到的真实系统的真实行为。

据论证,我们不应当把理论看成对世界的真实描述。或许,我们能够为我们的科学断言合法地找到其他一些一般的适用于系统的语义关系。或者,通过根本否认科学断言针对真实系统,我们也许能够保留简单的语义关系。我们也许能够把理论看成可断言的"模型",看成对世界的抽象。这样,我们就可能为真实系统构建一些恰当的"相似性"关系模型,以便调节科学主张与真实世界的关系。

最后,理论是否表达简明真理值得怀疑,还因为我们都意识到,甚至当 代最好的基础物理理论在未来科学的不断发展中也不可能永远是最好的。

我们不相信,将来的科学共同体仍然会信奉当今最好的基础物理理论。我们相信,我们的理论顶多是众多假说在相互竞争中的暂时优胜者。按时髦的说法,可接受的理论只有5分钟热度。为什么我们相信当下的理论也许不用多久最终就会被拒斥?这有不少原因。它们不能概括更多范围的经验事实,就是说,它们遭遇经验反常。我们发现它们具有不可接受的内在结构,比如内在形式上的不一致。它们经常与我们最好的流行理论相冲突,使得我们相信,至少有一部分流行的理论不是一成不变的。最后,我们从过去的科学中获得充分的经验,即一代科学家最为钟爱的基础理论通常被后继科学家作为过时的失败理论而丢弃掉。

那么,我们如何合理地看待最佳流行理论反映真实世界这样的主张?换言之,较之理论正确地或真实地反映世界这样的方式,我们肯定找不到更为精致的其他方式来描述流行理论与世界的关系吗?毕竟,断言一个理论是正确的,同时又相信它暂时享有"迄今最有效理论"的美誉,将来会作为失败的理论被合法地丢弃掉,这似乎很难说是合理的。

我非常赞同这三大质疑。不可观测的理论本体问题,理论只有在理想化语境中才是可用的,在不断变化的理论史中看出的理论的短暂性,这些得以阐明的议题都是真正的议题。我也不想否认,以从特殊理论中高度抽象的形

式取得的这些真知灼见也适用于基础物理学。

不过,确切地说,我并不想在这一抽象层面上探讨这些问题。我无意深度介入争论,这些问题只能以纯哲学的方式才能有效解决,就是说,这种方式要求尽力从当代科学理论的特殊性中去抽象,仅仅把这样的理论作为案例去抽象地阐明取得的结果。

严格地讲,我想做的只是给出一种元哲学主张,并以简要梳理的案例给予支持。我将论证,存在探究上述问题的一条路径,也许,它或者比纯粹的哲学抽象更为有趣,或者比阐明科学理论充其量对一般的、抽象的论证起着解释性案例作用更为有趣。我将探寻这条路径,在这条路径中,理论的三个批判性方面——涉及不可观测的本体、诉诸系统的理想化、理论的暂时地位,都将在科学的语境中讨论,这一语境意指在基础物理学自身中构建、检验、判决和修改理论。我将论证,我们通常视为哲学探索的各种推论深深地植根于科学实践之中。在科学自身中,经验数据、假设形式和哲学批判相互作用,只是当人们在某些细节上探究这些相互作用时,科学植根于实践的这一特征才表露出来。

我认为,下述问题在科学自身中起着作用:植根于经验批判的本体论排除问题,批判地考察观念形态的科学与所研究的真实系统之间的关系问题,把我们当下的理论批判性地理解为只不过是科学发展和变化中的暂时状态的问题。通过考察诸如此类的问题,我们就能发现方法论、认识论和形而上学的有趣的哲学问题的丰富结构,以过于宽泛和抽象的方式探讨这些问题的人可能对这一结构熟视无睹。当我们在基础物理学的具体理论的产生、检验和批判的语境中考察理论的三大批判的时候,许多关键性问题就产生了,它们与那些以一般抽象方式探讨同样的三大批判时已经引起注意的问题迥然不同。

通过这一课题的研究,我也希望就这一见解提出质疑:方法论科学哲学的研究可以回避对具体问题的争议,可以回避科学解决我们最有效的基础物理理论时产生的争论。同时,我也乐意挑战这样的主张:科学实践充分地独立于这样的哲学,它对基础物理理论采取"无为主义者"的态度,认为基础物理理论只是假设:绝不需要哲学的解释或批判。我将论证,我之所以挑战这一主张,是因为哲学批判构成了科学理论的真正性质的基础部分。换言之,我将论证科学与哲学的水乳交融的关系。