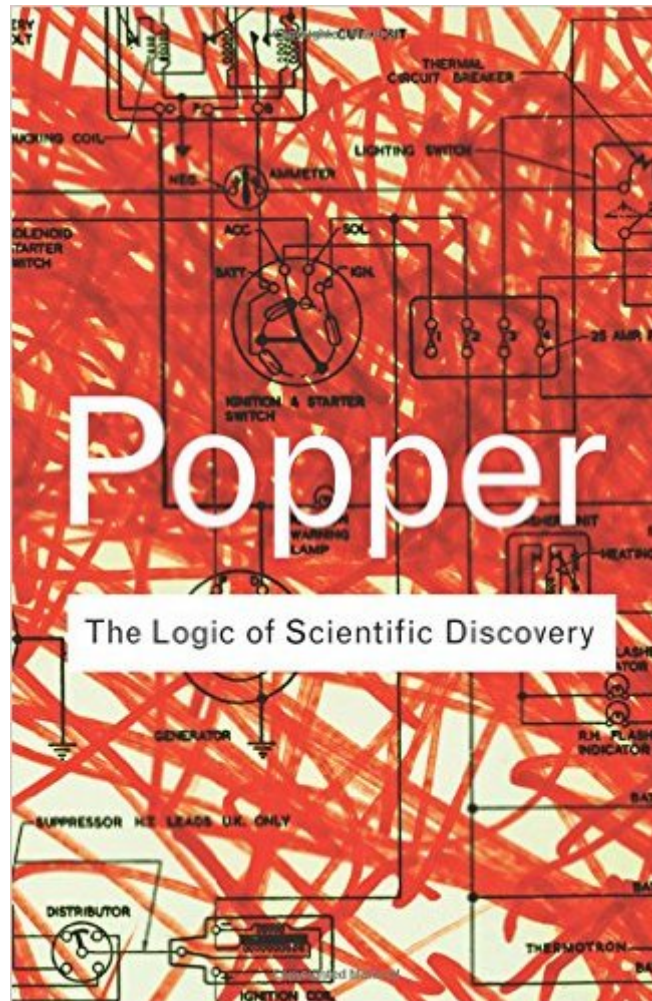


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The Logic Of Scientific Discovery (Routledge Classics)



Synopsis

Described by the philosopher A.J. Ayer as a work of 'great originality and power', this book revolutionized contemporary thinking on science and knowledge. Ideas such as the now legendary doctrine of 'falsificationism' electrified the scientific community, influencing even working scientists, as well as post-war philosophy. This astonishing work ranks alongside *The Open Society and Its Enemies* as one of Popper's most enduring books and contains insights and arguments that demand to be read to this day.

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Customer Reviews

This is the book where Popper first introduced his famous "solution" to the problem of induction. Originally published in German in 1934, this version is Popper's own English translation undertaken in the 1950s. It should go without saying that the book is a classic in philosophic epistemology--perhaps the most important such work to appear since Hume's "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding." Popper argues that scientific theories can never be proven, merely tested and corroborated. Scientific inquiry is distinguished from all other types of investigation by its testability, or, as Popper put it, by the falsifiability of its theories. Unfalsifiable theories are unscientific precisely because they cannot be tested. Popper has always been known for his straightforward, lucid writing style. There are no books on epistemology that are as easy to read and understand than Popper's. Nonetheless, of all Popper's books, "Logic of Scientific

Discovery" is easily the most difficult. I don't know whether it is because it was his first book or because it was originally written in German or because of all the technical problems in probability and quantum theory that are dealt within its pages. Whatever the reason, this book, despite its tremendous importance, cannot be recommended to those seeking an introduction to Popper's thinking (and Popper, whether you agree with his conclusions or not, is well worth getting to know). For those who merely want a rough overview of Popper's opinions, perhaps the best book is "Popper Selections," edited by David Miller. For those eager for more depth, I would recommend "Realism and the Aim of Science." Popper nowhere makes a better case for his epistemological views than in this eminently readable book.

This is Popper's early masterpiece, which still deserves to be thoroughly read. Thesis of the book: theories are guesses which have no secure basis and can be at any time overthrown, but which must be able to stick out their necks and face experimental tests. If they pass the tests, this does not make them any more secure or reliable than they were before. Its first chapter explains two fundamental problems which will be grappled with in the following chapters: the problem of induction and the problem of demarcation (between science and non-science). The solution to the first problem is straightforward: there is no such thing as induction. If you want to learn more on Popper's formulation and purported solution of this problem, you should read the whole book. The second chapter gives some methodological rules which, though presented as conventions, are set down in order to combat "conventionalism", the attempt to regard theories as irrefutable, as true by convention. The third chapter, a bit boring, is an analysis of causality, scientific explanation, the kinds of scientific concepts and the structure of theories (these are considered interpreted axiomatic systems). The fourth chapter deals with the notion of falsifiability, something theories must have in order to be scientific according to Popper's criterion of demarcation. Falsifiability, as here defined, is (roughly) incompatibility with at least one singular statement reporting the existence of an observable event (the distinction between occurrences and events will be found here; it was previously drawn by Bertrand Russell, I may add). The fifth chapter deals with these last kind of statements (basic statements): their form, their content and their role in science.

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