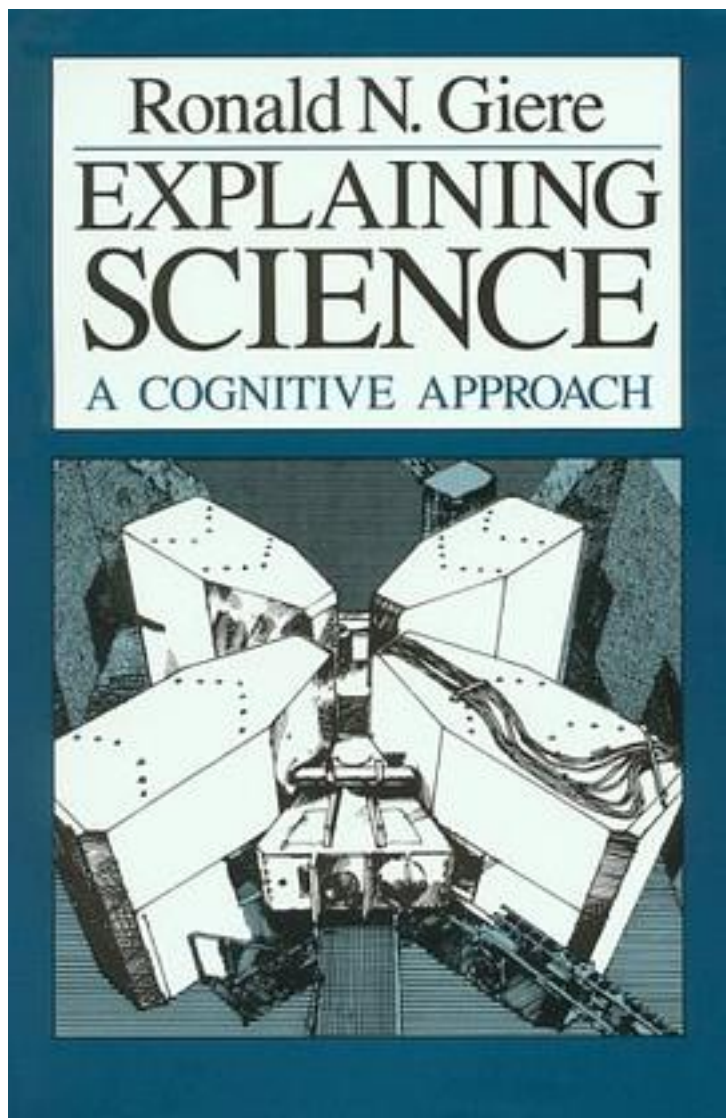


# Explaining Science



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Debate over the nature of science has recently moved from the halls of academia into the public sphere, where it has taken shape as the "science wars." At issue is the question of whether scientific knowledge is objective and universal or socially mediated, whether scientific truths are independent of human values and beliefs. Ronald Giere is a philosopher of science who has been at the forefront of this debate from its inception, and *Science without Laws* offers a much-needed mediating perspective on an increasingly volatile line of inquiry. Giere does not question the major findings of modern science: for example, that the universe is expanding or that inheritance is carried by DNA molecules with a double helical structure. But like many critics of modern science, he rejects the widespread notion of science--deriving ultimately from the Enlightenment--as a uniquely rational activity leading to the discovery of universal truths underlying all natural phenomena. In these highly readable essays, Giere argues that it is better to understand scientists as merely constructing more or less abstract models of limited aspects of the world. Such an understanding makes possible a resolution of the issues at stake in the science wars. The critics of science are seen to be correct in rejecting the Enlightenment idea of science, and its defenders are seen to be correct in insisting that science does produce genuine knowledge of the natural world. Giere is utterly persuasive in arguing that to criticize the Enlightenment ideal is not to criticize science itself, and that to defend science one need not defend the Enlightenment ideal. *Science without Laws* thus stakes out a middle ground in these debates by showing us how science can be better conceived in other ways.

作者介绍:

Ronald Giere is an American philosopher of science who is an emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota. He is a Fellow of The AAAS, a long-time member of the editorial board of the journal *Philosophy of Science*, and a past president of the Philosophy of Science Association. His current research focuses on agent-based accounts of models and scientific representation, and on connections between naturalism and secularism.

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