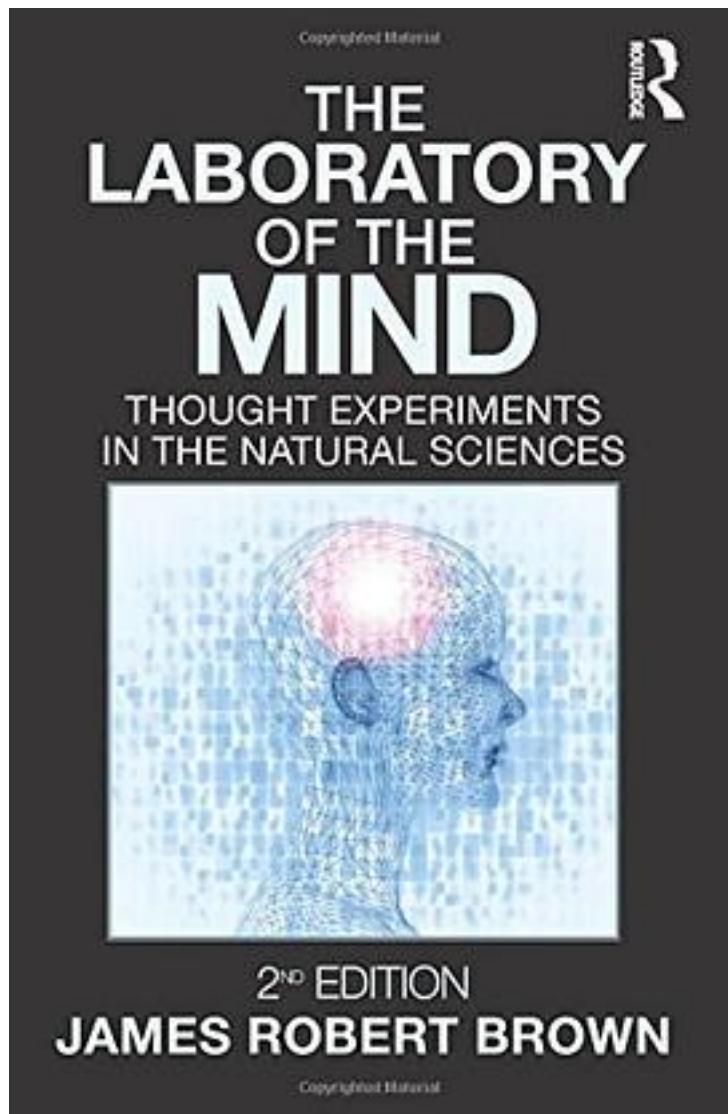


The Laboratory of the Mind



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Newton's bucket, Einstein's elevator, Schrodinger's cat - these are some of the best-known examples of thought experiments in the natural sciences. But what function do these experiments perform? Are they really experiments at all? Can they help us gain a greater understanding of the natural world, or are they merely illustrations of one or another argument about the way things work? In this revised and updated new edition of his classic text "The Laboratory of the Mind", James Robert Brown continues to defend apriorism in the physical world. This edition features two new chapters, one on 'counter thought experiments' and another on the development of inertial motion. With plenty of illustrations and updated coverage of the debate between rational Platonism and classic empiricism, this is a lively and engaging contribution to the field of philosophy of science.

作者介绍:

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标签

科学哲学

哲学原著

评论

本书的出发点是一个佯谬：既然思想实验并不像现实的实验那样有经验世界的内容输入，为什么从中可以产生新的有关世界的知识？作者对这一问题的回答是，思想实验不同于现实的实验，也不能够还原为平凡的论证而不丧失其知识论上的效力；它们是对柏拉图式的理念世界中的种种原理的直观。经由这种柏拉图主义的知识论，作者分析了科学和哲学史上一些著名的思想实验，认为在这些思想实验中结论之所以呼之欲出，就是因为实验的见证者通达了理念世界。这种解释在一定程度上说明了思想实验的独特之处，但是最大的抵牾就在于柏拉图主义的直观不容许出错，而思想实验屡有失败。作者的处理方式几乎是否认任何思想实验真正地失败了，因为若非如此，柏拉图式的直观就和普通直觉一样有缺陷了。柏拉图主义还面临着别的问题，例如统摄着直观的原则自身可能会导致无穷后退。

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