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Reconstructing Scientific Revolutions: Thomas S. Kuhn's Philosophy of Science

Paul Hoyningen-Huene

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Reconstructing Scientific Revolutions: Thomas S. Kuhn's Philosophy of Science Paul Hoyningen-Huene Few philosophers of science have influenced as many readers as Thomas S. Kuhn. Yet no comprehensive study of his ideas has existed—until now. In this volume, Paul Hoyningen-Huene examines Kuhn's work over four decades, from the days before *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to the present, and puts Kuhn's philosophical development in a historical framework.

Scholars from disciplines as diverse as political science and art history have offered widely differing interpretations of Kuhn's ideas, appropriating his notions of paradigm shifts and revolutions to fit their own theories, however imperfectly. Hoyningen-Huene does not merely offer another interpretation—he brings Kuhn's work into focus with rigorous philosophical analysis. Through extended discussions with Kuhn and an encyclopedic reading of his work, Hoyningen-Huene looks at the problems and justifications of his claims and determines how his theories might be expanded. Most significantly, he discovers that *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* can be understood only with reference to the historiographic foundation of Kuhn's philosophy.

Discussing the concepts of paradigms, paradigm shifts, normal science, and scientific revolutions, Hoyningen-Huene traces their evolution to Kuhn's experience as a historian of contemporary science. From here, Hoyningen-Huene examines Kuhn's well-known thesis that scientists on opposite sides of a revolutionary divide "work in different worlds," explaining Kuhn's notion of a world-change during a scientific revolution. He even considers Kuhn's most controversial claims—his attack on the distinction between the contexts of discovery and justification and his notion of incommensurability—addressing both criticisms and defenses of these ideas.

Destined to become the authoritative philosophical study of Kuhn's work, *Reconstructing Scientific Revolutions* both enriches our understanding of Kuhn and provides powerful interpretive tools for bridging Continental and Anglo-American philosophical traditions.

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