

## Five Last Acts The Exit Path The Arts And Science Of Rational Suicide In The Face Of Unbearable Unrelievable Suffering

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traditional philosophical accounts of the scientific enterprise represent it as a paradigm of institutionalized rationality the

scientist is held to possess a special method which he disinterestedly applied generating an accumulation of scientific knowledge about the world and the evolution of science is seen as being determined by the rational deliberations of scientists and not by psychological or sociological factors more recently various philosophers historians and sociologists of science have held that this rational model is no longer tenable some have claimed that there is no such thing as a scientific method or scientific progress and that theories are incommensurable and so there is no possibility of choice between alternative theories the more extreme non rationalists seek to explain scientific change exclusively in terms of psychological and sociological factors in this book the author explores the controversy between the two approaches and presents a strongly critical and independent view of both rationalists like popper and lakatos and non rationalists such as kuhn and feyerabend he goes on to develop his own account of the scientific enterprise temperate rationalism a vindication of the rationalist approach to science and of a realist construal of theories

mikael stenmark examines four models of rationality and argues for a discussion of rationality that takes into account the function and aim of such human practices as science and religion

the problems of scientific rationality fashion is a fickle mistress only yesterday scientific rationality enjoyed considerable attention consideration and even reverence among phi losophers but today s fashion leads us to despise it and the matron rejected and abandoned as hecuba complains modo maxima rerum tot generis natisque potens nunc trahor exui inops to cite kant for our purpose who cited ovid for his like every fashion ours also has its paradoxical aspects as john watkins correctly reminds in an essay in this volume enthusiasm for science was high among philosophers when significant scientific results were mostly a promise it declined when that promise became an undeniable reality nevertheless as with the decline of any fashion even the revolt against scientific rationality has some reasonable grounds if the taste of the philosophical community has changed so much it is not due to an incident or a whim this volume is not about the history of and reasons for this change instead it provides a view of the new emerging image of scientific rationality in both its philosophical and historical aspects in particular the aim of the contributions gathered here is to focus on the concept around which the discussions about rationality have mostly taken place scientific change

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