
Paul Hoyningen-Huene’s *Reconstructing scientific revolutions* is a systematic treatment of Kuhn’s philosophy focusing on *The structure of scientific revolutions* (SSR). The treatment is extremely lucid and well-organized. Hoyningen-Huene starts from the problem of understanding past sciences not as imperfect versions of present ones but as having integrity of their own. He points out that removing the ambiguity in Kuhn’s usage of “world” exemplified in the statement that “though the world does not change with a change of paradigm, the scientist afterward works in a different world” (SSR, p. 121)—allows a solution to the problem in Kuhn’s terms. Hoyningen-Huene is interested in sorting out issues of realism and the different uses of “world” and of “stimuli;” he presents Kuhn as engaged in refining Kant’s metaphysics, partly through the importation of tools from the philosophy of language. That allows a description of Kuhn’s model of the dynamics of science on the supposedly firmer ground of an idealist metaphysics.

Hoyningen-Huene’s reading of Kuhn’s more philosophical writing is convincing and captures many of Kuhn’s perceptions of his own work. But his (and Kuhn’s) systematization of SSR in terms of Continental metaphysics and philosophy of language does not sit well with current interests in scientific practice and experiment, which Kuhn has also influenced. While clear and concise, the systematization is not more illuminating than SSR itself; to my mind Hoyningen-Huene’s clarifications are not as valuable as Kuhn’s examples.

Sergio Sismondo