

# Material Theory of Induction and Scientific Realism

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## Abstract

John Norton has advanced a general view of induction---`Material Theory of Induction'---that renders ampliative reasoning in a deep sense local. This paper is a sympathetic appraisal of this view, applying it to the scientific realism debate. It argues that the scientific realist should turn to such local construal of ampliative reasoning in her attempt to justify beliefs about unobservables. More generally, the distinction that Norton draws between `material' and `formal' theories of induction is helpful in contrasting the intuitions behind various realist arguments, and in assessing their strengths and weaknesses. As far as justificatory challenges of induction are concerned, it is in this context that the Material Theory of Induction pays most dividends.

**Keywords:** Scientific realism; Material induction; Norton

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