



A Defense of Computational Physics

Patrick J. Roache

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Karl Popper is often considered the most influential philosopher of science of the first half (at least) of the 20th century. His assertion that true science theories are characterized by falsifiability has been used to discriminate between science and pseudo-science, and his assertion that science theories cannot be verified but only falsified have been used to categorically and pre-emptively reject claims of realistic Validation of computational physics models. Both of these assertions are challenged, as well as the applicability of the second assertion to modern computational physics models such as climate models, even if it were considered to be correct for scientific theories. Patrick J. Roache has been active in the broad area of computational physics for over four decades. He wrote the first textbooks in Computational Fluid Dynamics and in Verification and Validation in Computational Science and Engineering, and has been a pioneer in the V&V area since 1985. He is well qualified to confront the mis-application of Popper's philosophy to computational physics from the vantage of one actively engaged and thoroughly familiar with both the genuine problems and normative practice.

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