



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO
Dipartimento di Filosofia

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Limits of Knowledge. Between Philosophy and the Sciences

Università degli Studi di Milano
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1. The Ignorabimus-Controversy

What were Emil Du Bois-Reymond's commitments and aims in defining the basic concepts of mechanics (force and matter), the origins of motion, and conscience as "hypermechanical" or "transcendent" limits of knowledge (1872/1880)? What main stances did scientists and philosophers take within the Ignorabimus-Controversy which followed? Are they still relevant or are they to be regarded as mere pseudo-problems?

2. Scientific knowledge and its limits in physics, mathematics, and the life sciences during the 19th century

How did the mechanical programme and the mechanical picture of the world affect the development of the sciences (and of the Ignorabimus-Controversy)? How is mathematical certainty to be accounted for and how are issues relative to mathematical solvability and decidability to be assessed? What premises underlay and what implications derived from the development of the life sciences and approaches like "biophysics"?

3. Philosophical foundations and limits of knowledge

May legitimation and limitation issues about knowledge be analysed and reconstructed from a broadened Kantian perspective, also taking into account the changes occurred in science? What are the role and status of scientific laws, causality, and explanation? In how far do the historical developments of knowledge and the major changes in its structure influence a meta-scientific discourse on its limits? In how far is it generally possible to define limits of knowledge?

Scientific Direction

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Information

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