

POPPER, KUHN, LAKATOS AND AIM-ORIENTED EMPIRICISM

Maxwell, Nicholas (2001) POPPER, KUHN, LAKATOS AND AIM-ORIENTED EMPIRICISM.

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Abstract

In this paper I argue that aim-oriented empiricism (AOE), a conception of natural science that I have defended at some length elsewhere, is a kind of synthesis of the views of Popper, Kuhn and Lakatos, but is also an improvement over the views of all three. Whereas Popper's falsificationism protects metaphysical assumptions implicitly made by science from criticism, AOE exposes all such assumptions to sustained criticism, and furthermore focuses criticism on those assumptions most likely to need revision if science is to make progress. Even though AOE is, in this way, more Popperian than Popper, it is also, in some respects, more like the views of Kuhn and Lakatos than falsificationism is. AOE is able, however, to solve problems which Kuhn's and Lakatos's views cannot solve.

Keywords:

Popper
Kuhn
Lakatos
scientific method
scientific rationality
falsificationism
paradigm
revolution
progress
metaphysics
research programme
knowledge

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ID Code: 251

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