

Tacit Aspects of Experimental Practices: What Epistemological Consequences?

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Abstract

Among the new objects of interest emerged from the study of science in action, an important one is what has been categorized under the heading of the “tacit”: tacit knowledge, the tacit dimension of scientific practices. Harry Collins, in particular, insisted that irreducibly tacit presuppositions and corporal skills are inevitably involved in experimental practices, and that these tacit resources play an essential role in the stabilization of scientific achievements.

The aim of this talk is to discuss some epistemological implications of what I will call ‘the opacity of experimental practices’, especially with respect to the principle of experimenters substitutability which is commonly viewed as a necessary feature of any good science.

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