

Conferências de Filosofia das Ciências

18 Junho 2015 | 15h00 | FCUL | Anfiteatro 3.2.13

“Why believe in atoms? Jean Perrin’s argument for realism”

Stathis Psillos

What kinds of consideration are involved in moving scientists from an instrumentalist or sceptical stance towards atoms to an acceptance of their reality? When is it rational to accept the reality of explanatory posits? In this talk, I will discuss in some detail Perrin’s theoretical and experimental work concerning the causes of Brownian motion in the context of the late nineteenth century atomism debates. I will reconstruct what he and many of his contemporaries took it to be a decisive proof of the reality of atoms. Based on this case, I will draw some lessons for scientific realism.



As Conferências de Filosofia da Ciência constituem o espaço onde os convidados do Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa apresentam um trabalho de especial relevância para a comunidade científica. Estas conferências destinam-se tanto aos membros do CFCUL como a todos os interessados.

ORGANIZAÇÃO

APOIO