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Hermann von Helmholtz Philosophische und populär- wissenschaftliche Schriften

Edited by Michael Heidelberger,
Helmut Pulte und Gregor Schiemann,
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THIS EDITION COLLECTS the philosophical treatises from the diverse works of Hermann von Helmholtz, focusing particularly on the philosophy of science and epistemology. Included as well are lectures and speeches in which the author used his exceptional position in the scientific world to represent and motivate the sciences and their institutions in the form we recognize today.

Though Helmholtz did not seek to be a philosopher, he attached great importance to the philosophical reflection of scientific knowledge and action. In particular, he regularly referred in various contexts to the epistemological and methodological problems of science that arose in his own research efforts. The interwoven nature of basic research in the natural sciences and basic philosophical reflection in Helmholtz's work is already noticeable in *Ueber die Erhaltung der Kraft* (1847). His empirical theory of perception, which emerged from earlier psychophysiological research, earned him the reputation of being a significant advocate of Neo-Kantianism. However, later works on particularly geometry and arithmetic represents – as the present edition shows – a radical rejection of the constitutive core of Kantianism (i.e. the existence of synthetic a priori judgments).

Helmholtz's philosophical contributions have not, until now, been nearly as accessible as his work in the natural sciences. This edition contains, in addition to his philosophical work, bibliographical reports concerning classification, a detailed register of names and subject matter, as well as the first comprehensive bibliography of works written by Helmholtz, with over 575 entries corresponding to the period of 1842–2012.

Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894)

is considered to be one of the last polymaths to have lived. He began studying medicine and taught as professor for physiology in Berlin, Königsberg, Bonn, and Heidelberg before becoming a full professor in physics in Berlin. Helmholtz held a lifelong interest for the relationships / connections between the most varied fields of natural science research. His work encompassed not only a theoretical nature, but also included experimental practice and application of results as well.

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