Abstract

DEMARCATION OF THE KNOWABLE AND UNKNOWABLE

200 Years of Metaphysics from Suárez's Disputationes Metaphysicae (1597) to Kant's Metaphysics of Morals (1797)

The workshop seeks to address themes revolving around intelligibility for human beings and its limits in early modern metaphysics. The two hundred years between Suárez's *Disputationes Metaphysicae* (1597) and Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) were marked by major attempts to place metaphysical knowledge on secure epistemic foundations. At the same time, the history of early modern metaphysics is riddled with postulations about objects, properties, and reasons that are or might be ultimately unknowable. These postulations encouraged skepticism about the very possibility of metaphysics and led some to claim that the entire enterprise of metaphysics is guided not by truth and knowledge but by vain speculation. This "battlefield," as Kant called it in the preface to the Critique of Pure Reason, was fundamental to his attempt to find a new, strictly scientific path for metaphysics. The historical debate turns on the following questions:

- What is it that secures and establishes intelligibility for us?
- Why can we pose questions that we do not seem to be able to answer?
- What leads us to want to know something as an object, property, or idea if we cannot know it? Or do some of these things turn out to be knowable after all?
- Does our intelligence allow us to recognize or know a higher or absolute intelligence, or does the existence of this intelligence belong to faith alone?

The workshop will explore these questions and the assertions made in early modern metaphysics about the premises, content, and limits of the knowable and the unknowable.

The workshop is funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

Admission is free and everyone is welcome. The workshop will be held in a hybrid format. To register, please write to clara.carus@uni-heidelberg.de and let me know whether you will attend in person or online.