

The *Bee and the Architect* can be regarded as a manifesto and an important document of the Italian radical science movement of the 1970s and 1980s. First published in 1976, it was written by a group of physicists from the University of Rome – La Sapienza who were not content with producing important works in their discipline, but wanted to reflect their role as scientists and the role of science in society. In particular they focused on the critique of models and paradigms, which obscured the socio-economic and political motivations as well as contexts of science. The authors claimed that the objectives implicit in scientific abstractions are thus made invisible and as consequence abstractions become mystified and perceived as inescapable forces. This focus also gave the book its title, referring to the famous quote by Marx:

... a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realises a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will.

From these premises the authors analysed how fact and value, as well as knowledge and ideology, intersect in the tasks of scientific labour. In this way they debunked the myth of neutrality in science.

The Bee and the Architect

Scientific Paradigms and Historical Materialism

Giovanni Ciccotti
Marcello Cini
Michelangelo De Maria
Giovanni Jona-Lasinio

