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EINLADUNG ZUM KOLLOQUIUM

Kristian Camilleri

(Melbourne)

The Physicist as Philosopher

In his 2006 book, *Die Philosophie der Physiker*, Erhard Scheibe argued that when physicists “began to philosophize” in the early twentieth century, “they were induced to do so by their self-directed development of their science”. By the 1930s, Bohr, Einstein, Schrödinger, Weyl, Heisenberg and Pauli emerged as the leading physicists of their era who devoted considerable attention to the philosophical consequences of relativity and quantum mechanics. In many respects, this marked the continuation of a tradition that can be traced back to Helmholtz and Mach in the latter part of the nineteenth century. But by the 1930s, we can discern divergent aims and even modes of philosophizing among physicists in the German-speaking world. While much scholarly attention has focused on the individual philosophies of physicists such as Bohr and Einstein, and on their respective positions in the debates over the interpretation of quantum mechanics, far less attention has been devoted to the forms of intellectual culture that gave rise to these distinctive forms of philosophizing in the interwar era. In this paper I attempt to shed new light on the intellectual life of this period and the way in which this shaped the practice of philosophy both in the public and private work of physicists like Pauli and Heisenberg. As I shall argue, the popular philosophical writings that were so common during this period did not always clearly reflect the real philosophical concerns and ambitions of their authors. In short, the philosopher-physicist was not always interested in the philosophy of physics.

Kristian Camilleri is a lecturer in the History and Philosophy of Science program in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. His research focuses on the history of interpretations of quantum mechanics and the intellectual culture of physics in the first half of the twentieth century. He is currently working on a new book project, provisionally entitled *The Making of the Quantum Orthodoxy*.

Mittwoch, 03.02.2021

10 Uhr s.t.

ZOOM-Meeting-Vortrag

Vortrag

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