

# Quantum Mechanics in Heidegger's Thought about Science

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Abstract:

Martin Heidegger was hardly a philosopher of quantum mechanics. However, as a one-time student of the natural sciences, he was aware of it by the late 1920s, and over the next two and a half decades it became a matter for some reflection within his thought. This talk examines how Heidegger's thinking about quantum mechanics developed against the backdrop of his philosophical concerns. In particular, it explores how his on-and-off dialogue with Heisenberg was accompanied by a shift in his attention from causality (in connection with Kantian questions of human freedom) to objectivity (as part of a Cartesian demand for secure knowledge). The talk suggests that Heidegger's efforts to come to a proper understanding of quantum mechanics fed into his radicalizing critique of natural science. It thus addresses the ways in which philosophical understandings of quantum mechanics (in particular, Heisenberg's) made a difference for intellectuals' conceptions of science at large, and it speaks to one of the means by which physicists' interpretations made their way out of the circle of professional practitioners.