

Galileo' s Interventionist Notion of " Cause"

Ducheyne, Steffen (2006) Galileo' s Interventionist Notion of " Cause" .

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Abstract

In this essay, I shall take up the theme of Galileo' s notion of cause, which has already received considerable attention. I shall argue that the participants in the debate as it stands have overlooked a striking and essential feature of Galileo' s notion of cause. Galileo not only reformed natural philosophy, he also — as I shall defend — introduced a new notion of causality and integrated it in his scientific practice (hence, this new notion also has its methodological repercussions). Galileo' s conception of causality went hand in hand with his methodology. It is my claim that Galileo was trying to construct a new scientifically useful notion of causality. This new notion of causality is an interventionist notion.

Keywords: Galileo, causation, interventionism, controlled experimentation, "scientia activa", James Woodward

Subjects: [General Issues: Causation](#)
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ID Code: 2580

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Deposited On: 02 January 2006