The projection problem and the symmetries of physics: On the possibility of the scientific realist case

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Abstract

Dr Harvey Fields, of Czech origin, trained in physics in the US and published several papers on plasma physics in the 1960s. In the late 1970s, he obtained a PhD in history and philosophy of science at Tel Aviv University. After moving to the UK, Dr Fields was Karl Popper's research assistant from 1979 to 1982. In the decade prior to his sudden death in July 2006, he was a regular and active participant at the weekly Philosophy of Physics research seminar at Oxford University.

For many years, Dr Fields had been working on a scholarly and carefully-argued book on scientific realism and the problem of induction, entitled "The projection problem and the symmetries of physics: On the possibility of the scientific realist case". At the time of his death, the manuscript was essentially complete. It was subsequently proof-read in a joint effort by Harvey Brown and Eleanor Knox. Only minor changes involving spelling mistakes, typos and obvious (rare) grammatical mistakes were made; no significant stylistic amendments were introduced. Where explanatory remarks were considered appropriate, these have been inserted within curly brackets, given that Dr Fields already used square brackets besides the normal round brackets, on occasions. Dr Fields' unusual convention of writing mathematical symbols and equations in bold typeface was left unaltered.

The structure of the book is laid out in file 1; it will be seen that the subsequent chapters (called "sections" throughout the manuscript) are listed by alphabetical letters (A to J), not numbers.

The posting of the manuscript on the Archive has the approval of Dr Fields' widow, Dr Janet Anderman.

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