



Henrik C. Wegeners tale ved konferencen "Crossing the Interdisciplinary Boundaries of Physics"

Taler

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Dato

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Sted

Novo Nordisk Fonden,
Gentofte

Your Royal Highness,
colleagues,
representatives from the Novo-Nordisk Foundation and guests.

I am very glad to take part in the opening of this conference – the final in a series of events celebrating the founding of Institute for Theoretical Physics in 1921 and the Noble Prize in 1922.

A series of events, which includes the formal celebration; at the Copenhagen City Hall in March, the international conference “Bohr Centennial - New Frontiers in Physics” [also in March] and the conference on 'Open Science' last November.

On behalf of the University of Copenhagen, I would like to thank The Novo-Nordisk Foundation for support for this conference. I would also like to thank the organizing committee for organizing this entire event.

The conference theme “cross-disciplinarity in physics”, and the focus on the “borderlines between physics and the life sciences” are very much in line with both the spirit of Niels Bohr, and the scientific environment he succeeded in fostering.

The conference certainly also plays into the perspectives and the approaches, which are needed to solve many of the puzzles society faces today and which can help bringing mankind and the globe forward.

At the same time: When we celebrate Niels Bohr’s achievement, it also calls for careful reflection. The world of geopolitics and the reappearance of war in Europa is a fact.

As everyone here knows, Bohr was very engaged, cared greatly about - and was concerned about world affairs and the use and the sharing of scientific discoveries.

And science, even fundamental science, *has* become high politics again.

It is an understatement to say that Bohr’s heritage is alive as ever. If in doubt, go watch the new film about Oppenheimer, which was released just a few weeks ago.

At this conference, we are exploring the perspectives of scientific interplay between physics and biology, which illustrates the forward looking approach.

And the intensive research in quantum physics as well as its potential for use is overwhelming. It can and will probably change the daily life of most of us in ways, which can be difficult to comprehend. SCIENCE fiction writers are under immense pressure these years!

But: All this does not become reality without determination and creativity – in the words of another great scientist - Louis Pasteur:

“In the fields of observation, chance favors only the prepared mind”.

We must strive to create the unexpected, and prepare our minds to see the unexpected result as an opportunity to challenge conventional scientific wisdom, not just an error of measurement.

Working across and between disciplinary boundaries, enhances the chance of unexpected breakthroughs, and for the scientists involved in multidisciplinary work, it enhances their chances of recognising the opportunities in the unexpected results.

It's fair to say that the Niels Bohr Institute, collaborators and the scientific community around it **are** prepared, as we are entering what is called the second quantum revolution.

As we celebrate the 1921 founding of Niels Bohr's Institute for Theoretical Physics, is it rewarding to experience that the institute is flourishing.

And I would like to point to the generous grant from the Novo-Nordisk Foundation, who hosts us here today, to establish a new Quantum Center at the Niels Bohr Institute. A center, which will be instrumental in the next phase

in the quantum revolution.

The University of Copenhagen is grateful for being able to host this exciting adventure.

Finally: you cannot plan for this. But the fact that Professor Morten Meldal received his Nobel Prize in the centennial for Bohr's certainly makes it even better to be us!

I am sure that everyone gathered here are looking forward to hearing Morten's lecture later this afternoon.

I wish you all a pleasant and fruitful conference.

Kilde

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9. august 2023

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