

Walter Heinrich Heitler Encyclopedia Article

Walter Heinrich Heitler

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Walter Heinrich Heitler

1904-1981

German-Irish-Swiss physicist best known for his work with Fritz London in providing the first quantum mechanical treatment of the hydrogen molecule (1927). The Heitler-London theory, as it is known, successfully deployed wave mechanics in accounting for covalent bonding in hydrogen molecules. Their work was later generalized by Linus Pauling and is known as the valence bond method in quantum chemistry. Heitler's later years were devoted to attempts at reconciling science and religion.