

Preface

Published online: 16 June 2009
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It is a great pleasure to dedicate this issue of the Journal of Statistical Physics to our distinguished colleagues Edouard Brézin and Giorgio Parisi, whose birthday we celebrated in two recent conferences.

It is very natural to associate these two eminent colleagues who have had a big influence on contemporary theoretical physics. Edouard and Giorgio met during the exciting early days in the theory of phase transitions, field theory and the renormalization group. They both made fundamental contributions to these topics. Their first encounter was actually on the occasion of the 1973 Cargèse summer school dedicated to the renormalization group. Edouard together with Jean Zinn-Justin were the directors of the school and they had invited Giorgio as a speaker there.

This encounter was the beginning of many collaborations between them and of a friendship lasting until today.

It is not our purpose to review here their immense scientific contributions well known to all in the statistical mechanics community and beyond. We only would like to emphasize here two other common traits: their very strong commitment in publicly defending science and its values in front of governments and public opinion, and the deep influence that they have had on young researchers, at the origin of many vocations in theoretical physics.

Finally we would like to thank the many contributors to this issue, which gives an idea of the variety of interests of Edouard and Giorgio.

Editors:

Silvio Franz, Joel Lebowitz, Enzo Marinari, Marc Mézard and Nicolas Sourlas