

A Comparative-Ontological Analysis of the Observer's Role in Quantum Theory and Šadrāean Philosophy

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Abstract

With the advent of quantum theory, the subject-object duality entered the heart of exact sciences, challenging classical realism. Using comparative-conceptual analysis, this research examines the principle of the “indivisible unity of phenomenon and measuring device” in the Copenhagen Interpretation and the “union of the knower and the known” in Transcendent Philosophy (Ḥikmat al-Muta‘āliyah). Both views reject an absolute separation between observer and system, arriving at a foundational ontological conclusion. However, their unities differ: Copenhagen’s is physical, context-dependent, and based on inherent indeterminacy; while Šadrā’s is metaphysical, universal, and grounded in a graded system of existence. Consequently, the observer’s role diverges: in Copenhagen, the observer “determines the conditions for the phenomenon’s actualization”; in Šadrāean philosophy, the observer acts as “discloser and existential actualizer.” The paper concludes that the Šadrāean ontological framework not only provides a more robust metaphysical foundation for Bohr’s holism but also, by challenging the presupposition of “separability” in classical realism, offers a fundamental response to Einstein’s criticism of the theory’s “incompleteness.”

Keywords: Copenhagen Interpretation, Transcendent Philosophy (Ḥikmat al-Muta‘āliyah), Union of the knower and the known, Indivisible phenomenon, Observer’s role.

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