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CONSCIOUSNESS, SITUATIONS, AND THE MEASUREMENT PROBLEM OF QUANTUM MECHANICS

Bitbol, Michel (2008) *CONSCIOUSNESS, SITUATIONS, AND THE MEASUREMENT PROBLEM OF QUANTUM MECHANICS*. [Preprint]

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Abstract

There are two versions of the putative connection between consciousness and the measurement problem of quantum mechanics : consciousness as the cause of state vector reduction, and state vector reduction as the physical basis of consciousness. In this article, these controversial ideas are neither accepted uncritically, nor rejected from the outset in the name of some prejudice about objective knowledge. Instead, their origin is sought in our most cherished (but disputable) beliefs about the place of mind and consciousness in the world. It is first pointed out that these common beliefs about mind and consciousness arise from reification of situated first-person experience. Then, situatedness is shown to be a constitutive part of any exhaustive treatment of quantum measurements. It turns out that the alleged connection between consciousness and the measurement problem is a symptom of (i) the ineliminability of our being situated from the end-product of science, and (ii) our difficulty to express correctly this being situated.

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Item Type: Preprint
Additional Information: Published in: NEUROQUANTOLOGY, 6, 203-213, 2008
Keywords: Quantum mechanics, Consciousness, Situatedness, Perspective, Phenomenology, Naturalization, Transcendental epistemology, Measurement problem, Objectivity, Wave-packet collapse
Subjects: [General Issues > Thought Experiments](#)
[Specific Sciences > Psychology/Psychiatry](#)
[General Issues > Realism/Anti-realism](#)
[Specific Sciences > Physics > Quantum Mechanics](#)
Depositing User: [Michel Guy Simon Bitbol](#)
Date Deposited: 30 Sep 2008
Last Modified: 07 Oct 2010 11:17
Item ID: 4214
URI: <http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/id/eprint/4214>

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