Abstract

This work inquires into the conceptual structure and historical development of Niels Bohr’s complementarity as it revolves around the relation between the roles of ‘spectators’ and ‘actors.’ Starting by distinguishing between what I term the static and the dynamic conceptions of complementarity as different modes of the ‘spectator-actor’ relationship, I seek to show, in particular, that, from 1935 on, his thought underwent a basic structural change which is characterized by an extension of the dynamic conception from areas outside physics to the very field of quantum theory. Further, this study explores the conceptual intersections of Bohr’s complementarity with post-Heideggerian hermeneutic philosophy as well as with Derridean deconstruction, thus seeking to situate it in a broad philosophical context going far beyond the conventional frames of the philosophy of science.