

Two or Three Late Encounters with Empiricism

by strannikov

For all of his accomplishment as a theoretical physicist, Erwin Schrödinger gave every evidence of a constitutional inability to properly assess feline performance and behavior.

We all remember that S.'s most famous thought experiment consisted of placing a live cat into a hermetically sealed box housing a dispensing mechanism of deadly cyanic gas subject to release upon the radioactive decay of . . . well, that part I don't recall. But the key fact remains: S. posed only two possible outcomes to his thought experiment: upon opening the box, the cat would be found alive or the cat would be found dead. Posing the problem in this manner shows how utterly unfamiliar Erwin Schrödinger was with cats.

That is: S. was fairly clear that the cat would be found. My experiments show that, no, given the opportunity, the box would be opened to reveal that the cat was not to be found at all. (I got so used to not finding the cat, I began to doubt I had one.)

I don't claim for one moment to be able to explain just how the cat's egress from the box transpired, nor can I say any longer just where the cat comes from, but familiar as I am with feline cunning and intelligence, I have to admit to not being startled whenever I find the cat absent from the box.

You probably know cats, too, at least as well as S. ever did, perhaps better: no self-respecting cat is going to obediently remain in a box with a dispenser of deadly cyanic gas, even such a box hermetically sealed, not if the cat has anything to do with it. The cat obviously wandered off at the first available eigenstate. God knows where the cat is now: my working hypothesis (I'm a thoroughgoing

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cosmological empiricist, spare me the theoretical nonsense, please) requires me now to test the cat's access to the Higgs field.

I've performed just enough cat autopsies in my day, and performed them in such a way, as to discover the quantum kernel that lurks in at least some feline brains just inside the feline hippocampus. Cats (at least some of them) are weighing eigenstates all the time: it's their evolutionary task, you could say. We think of how silly cats are with their fur and tails (even with claws and fangs) and then err in dismissing the astrophysical prowess at least some cats demonstrate regularly.

Nevertheless, Schrödinger did not keep cats about just by accident, and were they keeping an eye on him!

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