

Truth Is Within

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Saturday, July 05, 2014

fragments of reality

Just over half-way through [Quantum Enigma](#), a book that comes highly recommended by [Amazonians](#). I should really finish it before I start to write any more on physics and consciousness, but here's just a snippet of thought relating to the defence of an experience-based reality.

The problem with the universe is that it sometimes goes according to linear time, and it sometimes seems to work backwards. Schrodinger's cat only dies (lives) after it's already dead (alive). Steeped in the idea of an impersonal four-dimensional reality, it seems as though the observation of a system creates its past - before observing the black box, the question of whether the cat has died earlier can't be answered. Outside of the context of an observation, it is a superposition of both alive and dead states.

This is what resonates so strongly for me with QM; I hear this and say, "d'uh" (well, not really - monks frown on such language). The problem only exists if you postulate an impersonal third-person universe; postulating such a universe actually necessitates its inexistence according to orthodox quantum theory (i.e. outside of experience, every particle that is postulated to exist doesn't actually exist). Within the framework of experience, there is no quantum enigma; the boxed cat, being outside of one's experiential frame of reference, doesn't exist. Once I observe the cat, then it exists as an experience of a cat, alive or dead. Once you come and see me experiencing the dead or alive cat, then it exists within your frame of reference as well.

It's really a simple philosophy, and if you've done any significant amount of meditation at all it makes perfect sense - the universe is just like the Copenhagen interpretation of QM:

Objector: Damn it! There's a real world out there. I want to know the *truth* about Nature.

Copenhagenist: Science can reveal no real world beyond what is observed.

Anything else is merely philosophy. *That's* the "truth" - if you must have one.

Objector: That's defeatist! I'll never be satisfied with such a superficial answer. You have science abandoning its basic philosophical goal, its mission to explain the physical world.

Copenhagenist: Too bad. But don't bother me with philosophy. I've got scientific *work* to do.

Objector: Quantum mechanics is manifestly absurd! I won't accept it as a final answer.

Copenhagenist: (She's no longer listening.)

-- Quantum Enigma, p. 141

I think the authors of the book are among the objectors. I think I'm among the people who have scientific *work* to do.

Yuttadhammo Bhikkhu at 3:37 PM

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