

Excluded Middle

Concept

The law of excluded middle was formulated by Parmenides, widely known as the first philosopher and the founder of logic. Put simply the law can be formulated as ‘*a* or not-*a*’. Applied to the world, it means that something either possesses or does not possess a quality. The ball is red, or the ball is not red. There is no middle term to describe its state. This law held firm for 2,600 years until quantum theory proposed intermediate states of being that seemed to contradict logic. The classic example of this contraction is Schrödinger’s Cat, the pitiful beast whose life depends on the decay of a single atom. Secluded in a box, the cat will be poisoned by a toxic gas if a radioactive particle decays. The particle has a 50% chance of decaying, and from a mathematical standpoint the cat is both alive and dead, in a state of quantum superposition, until the box is opened. Quantum paradoxes turn on the necessity of observation: the observer and the act of measurement seemingly induce a reality which otherwise rests in a state of suspended potential.

Script

I am walking and not walking.
Film of me standing with superposed walking legs.
Which is it?
Decided by a chance directive.
A lottery of black and white ping pong balls.
White is stand, black is walk.
Jumbled in tumbler.
One rolls out, unseen, through a labyrinth of pipes.
The answer is not revealed, it is in a box.