

Nutters

I am moved to commend *Electronics World* upon its extraordinarily equability, giving voice to non-mainstream contributors. Perhaps though, a line should be drawn at harmless nutters (non-pejorative). Deciphering the text of *An electric universe* (Aug 04), if I grasp correctly, the cornerstone is that astronomical bodies are highly charged. An old notion easily discounted by observation and calculation. Of course bodies do tend towards a degree of charge but it cannot usually be significant. It's not necessary to elucidate because information is readily available and can be derived from first principals anyway. Nor does your contributor impart authority by invoking mythology, but in his terms he might reflect upon Matthew 7:26 (a foolish man which built his house upon the sand) before constructing his philosophical edifice.

Intelligence, to which I bow, is apparent, but rational appears to be subsumed by a prior agenda. This leads seamlessly to Mr. Catt whose words I have been aware of for nigh on thirty years. The same words juxtaposed with no discernible order. *The Catt question* and other railing have been rejoined ad nauseam but all that results is the same discredited tautologies at higher volume. Failure to comprehend explanation does not render the explanation false. So what is the point of continued indulgence?

Understanding of all things has been forged by brave souls who often suffered for their heresy. But demonstrably flawed random noise merely exposes intellectual caesura and encourages the dissolution of enlightenment. Pandered to, the proponents learn nothing and go to their graves ignorant, arrogant and sad. I would suggest that it is a disservice to them and the scientific community at large to be party to promulgation of their self deceptions.

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Catt's litter

Ian Hickman's article *The Catt anomaly*, *Electronics World* October 2004, p38, compresses history. In 1982 Catt suggested that there was an anomaly in Classical Electromagnetic Theory. However, after some decades of suppression (of this suggestion and also of his own theories), Catt decided to concede that the reigning Electromagnetic Theory of 1910 was perfect, as many experts have assured us. Catt then asked 'The Catt Question', which humbly asks for detail on the perfect theory which has ruled for a century. 'The Catt Question' should be minimal, merely asking where the negative electric charge, which all agree appears on the bottom conductor, comes from. It asks nothing about how and why it reaches its necessary position.

A decade ago, it took four years to force two luminaries, Pepper FRS and McEwan, to comment. They contradicted each other. All luminaries then went silent.

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The £2,000 letter, published by me in the August issue of *EW*, p57, offers money to any student who prevails on his accredited expert to write anything on the subject.

'The Catt Question' is only a question, and makes no assumptions. Ian Hickman is wrong to write; "Ivor assumes they are both wrong. On the contrary, I maintain, they are in fact both right."

Hickman knows, following Professor Ziman's repeated statement; "The aim of science is to achieve consensus," that it is necessary for all salaried luminaries to sing from the same hymn sheet, so as not to frighten the horses (students). If there are two conflicting theories, Westerner McEwan's and Southerner Pepper's, then students must be warned. Otherwise, in confusion and despair, the number of students studying physics will drop even more rapidly.

If, as Hickman asserts, both Westerners and Southerners are right, then it is necessary that such luminaries, for instance McEwan, Reader in Electromagnetics, and Pepper FRS, not Hickman, say so. In fact, McEwan and Pepper both say the other is wrong; "... I am prepared to take slight issue with Prof Pepper - again in a completely friendly way I hope - about the main component of the velocity". Southerner Pepper says; "... charge supplied from [the

west] outside the system would have to travel at light velocity as well, which is clearly impossible." It is no solution for Hickman contradict them both, and to write; "... they are in fact both right." They, not Hickman, control the content of university courses. Hickman merely provides obfuscatory waffle to give them cover. Try to keep it simple. Once I came to accept that nothing new in electromagnetic theory is allowed, I spent decades honing this simplest possible question on the old.

With Harold Hillman, Reader in Biophysics, and others, I have found worldwide cases in science and academia where all of today's experts refuse to define their ruling theories. One lethal example is AIDS.

Historically, it is unprecedented for all text book writers and salaried expert teachers to be exposed for refusing to define the rudiments of their craft. Biophysics lecturer Dr Luca Turin, UCL, comments on The Catt Question; "It belongs in Chapter One of all the textbooks." The implications go far beyond an abstruse technical question. Further information is at www.ivorcatt.co.uk or www.ivorcatt.com/44.htm

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