

# Re: Epistemology 201: The Science of Science

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**From:** robert j. kolker (*nowhere\_at\_nowhere.net*)

**Date:** 02/02/05

Date: Wed, 02 Feb 2005 16:35:22 -0500

OsherD wrote:

>>> *From Osher Doctorow*

>

> *Bob Kolker wrote:*

>

> *"Physics and engineering have provided the computer on which i;1/2you spew  
> your nonsense. Philosophy never produced a flush toilet."*

>

> *[Osher: ] Philosophy is not spelled "philosophy".*

Petty little man. I made a typo.

>

> *This type of intolerance ("you spew your nonsense") is what  
> characterized pre-Nazi and Nazi Germany academia and industry and labor  
> and I hope that somebody is keeping a record of it during the current  
> Holocaust 2 which is being directed by Germany, France, Russia, China,  
> Belgium, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan among others  
> against Israel and against Jews. If Kolker tells me that he can't be  
> an example of this because he is Jewish (not that I think he is, but  
> one never knows), then it is a little known fact that the most  
> assimilated Jews in German academia absorbed very much of the  
> intolerance of their non-Jewish "mentors".*

I was Jewish as of this morning. And I never lived in Germany. I do not suffer foolishness gladly and I suffer fools even less. I am intolerant of stupidity and I am intelorent of ignorance.

>

> *A bigger issue, however, is the Nazi-type physics philosophy now in  
> vague whereby physics is supposed to be in an upward evolutionary  
> spiral in which theories that "fall by the evolutionary wayside" are  
> forever destroyed and only the "best theories survive."*

Nonsense! Physics is all about making quantitative predictions about what will be observed under certain conditions. Falsified theories are

ultimately dispensed with and replaced by better theories.

This is

- > *actually funny! Does anybody think that the current fads in physics*
- > *will miraculously produce "the best of all possible theories"*

I expect good theories will produce correct predictions and suggest useful and productive things to engineers and technologists.

- > *that will lead to us the Superman–Supertheory which requires no competitors, no*
- > *alternative insights, no alternative interpretations, no questioning,*
- > *no philosophy, no logic, no mathematics beyond itself? This is an*
- > *extremist interpretation of the "Theory of Everything" or TOE, not even*
- > *what most theoretical physicists express in their papers. They are*
- > *searching for a TOE, but with much more humility than Bob Kolker*
- > *demonstrates, and very few claim even that they will be more than*
- > *partly successful or that other theories will not provide parts of the*
- > *answers or even answers not expected to be lead to confirmed*
- > *predictions in the next few thousand years.*

Reality will never be fully known by humans. Our senses our too crude and our wits are too limited. We do the best we can given our limitations. We never get to the rock bottom of things. We are fifteen orders of magnitude from Planck Length and there is no guarantee that that is as far is reality goes.

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- > *The history of physics and mathematics teaches us that alternative*
- > *theories and nonconformity and alternative interpretations are*
- > *indispensable, not conformity and a "survival of the fittest"*
- > *super–theory. It teaches us to doubt any single theory because of the*
- > *prevalence of fads, and that just as often as not new evidence comes to*
- > *light eventually which indicates changes in old theories.*

All theories are at best not yet falsified. One should not become too attached to his favorite theory. In the fullness of time all of our theories will be replaced by better ones.

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- > *The internet physics insulters don't have an elementary understanding*
- > *of the difference between the Individual in every Plurality and the*
- > *Plurality to which every Individual belongs. Theories in physics and*
- > *engineering are both Individual Theories and parts of a Plurality of*
- > *Theories, and to fail to highly and equally value both and to*
- > *discriminate between them is to abandon science and mathematics and*
- > *philosophy–logic for dogma.*

Theories are high class educated guesses.

Bob Kolker