

Re: Things we take for granted

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics/2004-08/2278.html>

From: Patrick Reany (*reany_at_asu.edu*)

Date: 08/07/04

Date: 7 Aug 2004 12:28:39 -0700

ueb <Ulrich.Bruchholz@t-online.de> wrote in message news:<k4u0fc.s5.ln@Muse2.private.de>...

> *Patrick Reany wrote:*

> > *ueb wrote in message news:<u74uec.t5.ln@Muse2.private.de>...*

> >> *Patrick Reany wrote:*

> *[snip]*

> >> > *Anyway, I ask another strange question: Why does physics use the*

> >> > *variables it uses (such as length, time, mass, and charge) rather than*

> >> > *use other variables for the description of physical events?*

> >>

> >> *Do "physical events" not mean the combination of these variables ?*

> >> *What variables would you propose ?*

>

> > *First, I'm using the term "physical events" in the sense of physical*

> > *values at spacetime points.*

>

> *Clear.*

>

> > *These events include field values and*

> > *boolean variables such as "electron-here," "quark-here,"*

> > *"photon-here," "mass continuum-here," etc. Obviously I'm referring to*

> > *"physical" attributes in the purely theoretical sense, as the boolean*

> > *variables are indicating the "theoretical objects" freely created by*

> > *humans to make theories that work.*

>

> *Your famous slogan. :):):)*

I may have made it famous here, but the phrase has appeared elsewhere.

Maybe it's original with me but I doubt that. The sentiment of my epigram is central to the instrumentalist position of pragmatism and free invention. It is, of course, very simplistic and some people like to mischaracterize my philosophy as simplistic. But one needs something as a sound bite.

The central issue that instrumentalism has against the realist view is their claim that the purpose of science is to find out deep reality.

Now, I have views of deep reality (in my own natural philosophy) and I don't care that other people have their own beliefs about deep reality. I just insist that science is NOT the right tool to prove