

Re: Epistemology 201: The Science of Science

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From: Neil W Rickert (rickert+nn_at_cs.niu.edu)

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Tony Orlow (aeo6) <aeo6@cornell.edu> writes:

>Neil W Rickert said:

>> >If I misunderstood Bob, maybe he wasn't clear. But, "There are no laws
>> >other than what we prescribe to make sense out of what we perceive and
>> >experience." seems pretty clearly wrong to me.

>> It seems pretty clearly right to me. The world managed to get along
>> quite well before any of these "natural laws" had been written down.
>> It seems pretty clear that nature is not consulting these laws to
>> decide how to behave. It is not up to nature to obey our laws.
>> Rather, it is up to us to design our laws so that that do a good (if
>> sometimes imperfect) job of describing nature.

>As I said to Bob, you confuse natural law with theory concerning natural
>law.

I don't think I am the one who is confused.

> Theory is a product of our minds, and nature couldn't give a damn
>about our theories for its operation.

Good. I'm glad we agree on that.

> Natural law, on the other hand, is the consistent system
>that determines the behavior of the universe, and has existed at least
>as long as the universe itself.

You contradict yourself. In message <MPG.1c76a036129f2a2a9896fc@newsstand.cit.cornell.edu>
Tony Orlow (aeo6) <aeo6@cornell.edu> writes:

>I agree, Albert. What we consider natural laws are simply those
>theorized formulas that have withstood enough experimentation that we
>give them an extremely high probability of being correct. I still
>believe that the actual natural laws are there independent of our
>theories and formulas.

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That agrees with what I have said are natural laws. It disagrees with what you wrote several paragraphs up.