

Re: Epistemology 201: The Science of Science

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

>Neil W Rickert said:

>Okay so the rules didn't exist until we discovered them, but things
>behaved in accordance with the rules before that. The behavior of the
>universe didn't change when we "invented" the rules.

That's my position. Strictly speaking, the behavior of people in using these rules is part of the behavior of the universe, so there is some changed behavior. But that's really a side issue.

> So, what makes the
>universe behave as it does, before and after that "invention"?

We may never know. For every scientific advance raises new questions. Kant said that we could not know the world in itself.

>This distinction is so elementary, I cannot understand how you and Bob
>cannot just get it. There is definitely a bad side effect of dealing
>with symbolic statements exclusively for years on end: that's all you
>think there are – statements. You act like the underlying meaning of
>statements is defined in terms of their grammar.

You have that backwards. You are the one who is so enamored of symbolic statements (those that are said to express laws of nature), that you want to raise those statements to metaphysical status.

>We have hit this subject where logical statements are based on
>assertions that aren't derived logically, and where the symbolic
>mathematical system is based on an operation (successor) whose
>definition is not symbolically mathematical. Your statements about the
>world have to be ultimately based on something other than statements.

My statements are based in scientific practice. And I am referring particularly to practice in dealing with the world (as distinct from theorizing).