

sci.logic: Re: THIS STATEMENT HAS NO PROOF IN ANY SYSTEM = true or false?

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From: Mitch Harris (harrisq_at_tcs.inf.tu-dresden.de)

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tchow@lsa.umich.edu wrote:

> *Mitch Harris* <harrisq@tcs.inf.tu-dresden.de> wrote:

>

>> *Not at all strange psychologically, or to force technical meaning on this, modally.*

>>

>> *Back to the sqrt(2) example, what is the mathematical meaning of its*

>> *irrationality, -if one erases from our knowledge, its proof and/or*

>> *truth value-? We can surely use it hypothetically (it is well-formed).*

>> *I feel stuck in the "proof says it all"/"formality" vein, and I am*

>> *looking for some meaning outside of that point of view.*

>

> *I guess this all comes down to the fact that I have no clue at all about*

> *what you mean by "meaning." Your use of the term differs so far from*

> *anything I've ever seen, either in commonsense discourse or in philosophical*

> *writing, that I can't even guess what you mean by it.*

Fair enough. I think I can describe what I ..uh.. mean by it.

And I think I can try to say what I think you mean by it.

> *In particular, I*

> *don't understand what "psychologically" means,*

By that I take the "meaning" of an statement to be that of an utterance by an individual in a particular situation. Your example of someone giving directions; the meaning of such utterances depends on context (is the speaker trustworthy? do the speaker and hearer refer to the same things?). For the sqrt(2) example, the meaning will involve things like possible deductions ("incommensurable values exist (namely sqrt(2)", "you can't calculate sqrt(2) using a finite set of integer operations"), in addition to things like "I believe 'sqrt(2) is irrational' is true" or "I heard this statement and I'm repeating it because I trust who said it before". If I must put this more succinctly I would say "semantic connections" or "intentions".

I can easily see that you (or Torkel) might consider most of these

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