

Re: Platonism

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From: Lester Zick (lesterDELzick_at_worldnet.att.net)

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Date: Thu, 09 Dec 2004 19:30:02 GMT

On Thu, 09 Dec 2004 17:12:46 +0100, Mitch Harris
<harrisq@tcs.inf.tu-dresden.de> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

>Lester Zick wrote:

>> On Thu, 09 Dec 2004 10:27:37 +0100, Mitch Harris

>> <harrisq@tcs.inf.tu-dresden.de> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

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>>>Lester Zick wrote:

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>>>>(Mitch Harris) in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

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>>>>>mathematical facts themselves are not contingent on our observing them.

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>>>>>No empirical facts are contingent on our observing them.

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>>>>OK. But then I'm unclear as to what empirical means anymore (uh...in

>>>>this context).

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>> Just the first or positive half of a tautology.

>

>Oh.

Mitch, let me see if I can explain what I think you and others may be experiencing in reaction to these kinds of definitions.

We have an enormous investment in what and how we think about things like empiricity and cardinality. These terms means all kinds of things to all kinds of people who use them to describe various ideas. Then I come along and define them in very specific ways that seem completely at odds with that body of learning and application.

I think most people experience a feeling of complete intellectual nudity under such conditions and it makes them very uncomfortable because they don't understand how to work with such ideas in intellectual terms. It's one of the problems with actually achieving a mechanical reduction intellectually. Assuming it is correct, people still have no idea how to work with the result and there is no body of

accepted intellectual techniques couched in such terms.

I agree and find that I can only apply results one step at a time. But that doesn't mean results are useless. They can still be applied in very formal situations with respect to other questions of fundamental formative importance.

When I say that empirical observations are just the first or positive half of tautologies or that cardinality just means equal differences, it isn't because I'm trying to be an asshole upsetting everyone's apple carts but just because things work out that way.

Let me see if I can explain why the idea of empirical observations works out the way it does. Let's suppose we have something we call an empirical observation based on conventional ideas of experience, observation, or whatever. Then we have something else called a tautology according to conventional ideas on tautologies of the general form $t: [\text{subject}] [\text{not subject}]$.

And, further, according to conventional ideas we find that tautologies are considered always true. Thus we find that every empirical observation must ultimately form part of a tautology or it cannot be true because if tautologies are always true, anything not a tautology must necessarily be false just because tautologies must always be true.

Thus we find that anything which can be true must form part of some tautology including conventional notions of experiential empirical observations as well as completely theoretical mathematical or logical observations. Hence I take any idea or observation which can be true to be part of some tautology. And this in turn makes every positive part of any tautology empirical whatever its source.

It's similar to my definition for cardinality of equal differences. Just find that which makes anything what it is and without which it cannot be what it is thought to be, and in point of fact that has to be its defining property or definition. Works for me.

Regards – Lester