

Re: Epistemology 201: The Science of Science

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From: Albert (*albertwagner_at_cox.net*)

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Androcles wrote:

<snip>

> *What do you think *real* mathematics is, then?*

I've already stated that:

"Mathematics is nothing but a language for describing relationships between numbers. Its usefulness to the natural sciences is limited to what can be counted, even if the counting involves arbitrarily slicing a continuum into chunks."

> *Want to experience a performance?*

Engineering is a performance.

An apple falling from a tree is a performance.

Math deals with abstractions only.

> *There are applets all over the web, or go drive your car.*

> *Every time the piston moves the crankshaft, $A \cdot \sin(\omega t)$ is*

> *performing.*

> *Tie a knot in a length of rope. Mathematics is performing,*

No, no, no. Mathematics deals with abstractions and the manipulation of abstractions. Reality is the performance.

> *and its not a "relation between numbers", either.*

Of course it is.

> *Burn methane.*

> *H*

> */*

> *H-C-H + O=O ----> O=C=O + O*

> */ *

> *H H H*

>

> *a(CH4) + b(O2) => c(CO2) + d(H2O)*

>

> *Solve for a, b, c, and d. Math is performing.*

Actually, that is bad chemistry. The only math involved is correctly counting, which you have failed to do. Two molecules of water, rather than one in the result.

> *Step on a bathroom scale. Math is performing.*

No, gravity is performing. Math can describe, using a relationship and specific numbers plugged into variables, exactly what the scale should read; But that's all math can do. The performance happens without any mathematics being done, and without a single mathematician in the Universe.

> *Walk out in the sunlight. Look at your shadow. Math is performing.*

No, light and matter is performing. Where in the world did you get such an all encompassing definition of math?

> *Math never stops performing.*

Math never performs. Mathematicians perform manipulations on abstractions.

> *The performance is all around you,
> writing the symbols on paper isn't the music or the math, it is the
> recipe for the music or the math. Math is Art with
> a capital 'A'. Creative and useful art, but still art.
> Nature's own art.*

You are very confused. You seem to believe that math is reality, when math is just a human invention useful for describing certain aspects of reality.

<snip>

>>> <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

>>>

>>> *Download and read, its free.*

>>

>> *I see a lot of numbers and symbols representing numbers.*

>>

>> *It seems to be mostly written in a language used for describing*

>> *relationships between numbers. What point were you trying to make?*

>> *It seems that you made mine. Thank you.*

>

> *I see much more than that. I see a belt twisted.*

Yes, but what you see is only an abstraction. There is no twisted belt there to see. There are, of course, twisted belts in reality and mathematicians, using the language of mathematics, can describe certain aspects of twisted belts.

<snip>

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"Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it."

-- George Orwell as Syme in "1984"