

# A Philosophical Equation of Reality

**Hassan Ajami**

Philosophy Department  
Maricopa Community Colleges  
Phoenix, USA  
[Hassan.ajami@cgc.edu](mailto:Hassan.ajami@cgc.edu)

**Abstract—** Reality is equal to the abstract multiplied by the concrete. This philosophical equation is successful in accounting for the fact that some scientific theories are successful in explaining reality as being abstract, while other scientific theories are successful in explaining reality as being concrete. The same philosophical equation is also successful in solving the philosophical conflict between idealism and materialism through analyzing reality as being equal to the abstract multiplied by the concrete. Hence, this philosophical equation unifies between idealism and materialism.

**Keywords:** *Philosophy, Science, Reality, Abstract, Concrete, Idealism, Materialism, Philosophical Conflict and Philosophical Equation.*

We could successfully mathematize reality in the following way: reality = the abstract  $\times$  the concrete. This philosophical equation analyzes reality in terms of the abstract and the concrete, such that reality is equal to the abstract multiplied by the concrete. And it could be abbreviated as  $Re = A \times C$ , such that "Re" is reality, while "A" is the abstract, and "C" is the concrete.

## The Explanatory Power of the Philosophical Equation

This philosophical equation of reality possesses a successful explanatory power, leading to its acceptance. For example, since reality = the abstract  $\times$  the concrete, it follows that reality (i.e. the universe) is abstract, such as being a set of abstract information as the physicist John Wheeler says [1], or such as being abstract mathematical equations as the physicist Max Tegmark holds [2]. This shows that the philosophical equation of reality  $Re = A \times C$  is successful in explaining why the scientists are successfully able to explain reality and/or the universe as being abstract information or as being abstract mathematical equations. And hence, this philosophical equation of reality gains a successful explanatory power.

Further, since reality = the abstract  $\times$  the concrete, it follows that reality and/or the universe is also concrete, such as consisting of material atoms, as many physicists say. This shows that the philosophical equation of reality successfully explains why scientists are successful in explaining the universe as being concrete, such as consisting of material atoms. Thus, the philosophical equation of reality gains this additional explanatory power.

In other words, reality could be successfully explained as being abstract and concrete at the same time because reality = the abstract  $\times$  the concrete. If reality is not equal to the abstract multiplied by the concrete, then it will not be the case that we can successfully explain reality as abstract and concrete at the same time. Yet we can successfully explain reality as being abstract and concrete at the same time, as different scientists do. Therefore, reality is equal to the abstract multiplied by the concrete.

## Solving a Philosophical Conflict

According to idealism, the universe is mental and/or mentally dependent, while, for materialism, the universe is material and everything is reducible to and/or dependent on matter. But the philosophical equation of reality  $Re = A \times C$  solves this fundamental conflict in philosophy, namely the conflict between idealism and materialism. According to the philosophical equation of reality, reality = the abstract  $\times$  the concrete. And therefore, reality is abstract, such as being mental as the idealists hold, and reality is also concrete, such that it is material as the materialists maintain. Hence, from the perspective of this philosophical equation of reality, both idealism and materialism are true, leading to the solution of the conflict between idealism and materialism. And this is a virtue which speaks for the acceptance of the previous philosophical equation of reality.

## The Abstract and the Concrete

It is plausible to conceive reality as both abstract (i.e. ideal) and concrete (i.e. material) because reality itself consists of diverse levels. In other words, there are different levels of reality, such that at one level, reality is abstract and hence ideal, while, at another level, reality is concrete and hence material. If there weren't different levels of reality, then it would have been impossible to successfully describe reality in idealistic terms (such as describing reality as consisting of abstract information as some scientists do) and successfully describe the same reality in materialistic terms (such as consisting of material atoms as other scientists do). At the subatomic level, reality is abstract because it could be successfully explained as abstract information or abstract mathematical equations, while, at the atomic level, reality is concrete because it could be successfully explained as consisting of material atoms.

## Philosophical Implications

The philosophical equation of reality has some philosophically interesting implications, such as implying the possibility of different realities and/or universes. If the equation  $Re = A \times C$  is true, and given that reality could be constant, then when the concreteness is maximized, then the abstractness is minimized, and when the abstractness is maximized, then the concreteness is minimized. Thus, it is possible that there are diverse realities and/or universes, such as realities or universes where their concrete entities are maximized while their abstractness is minimized, and universes where their abstractness is maximized while their concreteness is minimized, in addition to universes or realities where their abstractness and concreteness are maximized together or minimized together in case reality is not a constant.

Another interesting conclusion of this equation is that reality is a matter of degree. Since  $Re = A \times C$ , it follows that when A and C are maximized, reality will be maximized, while when A and C are minimized, reality will be minimized. Hence, reality is a matter of degree. Reality could be a matter of degree in the sense of being a set of probabilities, such that a higher probability amounts to a higher degree of reality, while a lower probability amounts to a lower degree of reality. And this coheres with quantum mechanics which portrays the laws of nature as being probabilistic. If the laws of nature were probabilistic, then reality would be nothing but a set of probabilities.

## Conclusion

Reality is abstract and concrete. This is why we could successfully describe reality as being abstract and concrete at the same time, exactly as the different scientific theories do. And this is also why both idealism and materialism are true, leading to resolve a basic philosophical debate between the idealists and the materialists.

## References

- [1] James Gleick: The Information. 2011. Pantheon Books.
- [2] Max Tegmark: Our Mathematical Universe. 2014. Knopf.