

Meeting: 1003, Atlanta, Georgia, MAA CP P1, MAA Session on Philosophy of Mathematics

1003-P1-708 **Charles R. Hampton*** (Hampton@wooster.edu), Mathematics Department, The College of
Wooster, Wooster, OH 44691. *Applied Mathematics — A Philosophical Problem.*

Eugene Wigner was not the first mathematician or philosopher to ask himself why mathematics works so well in applied areas. But the title of Wigner's 1960 essay, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences", captures the philosophical issue. The applicability of mathematics is a philosophical problem whether one is a Platonist or a formalist. It should not be ignored either by the realist or the advocate of fictionalism. This talk will survey what contemporary philosophers of mathematics are saying on this subject. (Received September 28, 2004)