

The emperor has no clothes

"I remark only that articles on catastrophe theory are distinguished by a sharp and catastrophic lowering of the level of demands of rigour and also of novelty of published results."

- Vladimir Arnold

Abstract

Several representative attempts to apply catastrophe theory to biological and social science problems turn out on close analysis to be characterised by incorrect reasoning, far-fetched assumptions, erroneous consequences, and exaggerated claims. Catastrophe theory seems to have made no significant contributions to biology and the social sciences, and to have no advantage over other better-established mathematical tools which have been used to better effect.

