A Cultural Paradox: Fun in Mathematics

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Für Vierzig

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CH 1: Introduction *or why did I write this*?

So, as an unabashed science and technology aficionado, simply a love for discussing mathematics propelled me to formulate this book, mostly written over a few week span in late 2009, followed by several plodding months of refinement with the help of a few thoughtful people.

I have long appreciated the objective nature of science and been amazed at how much it has wrought for the inhabitants of this little rock we fondly call Earth. I seem to repeatedly find myself reminded of the pure chances of being born in this era and how awesome it is to be involved in science in such a time. I am of the belief that mathematics is the underlying "software" that powers the "hardware" that we live in, namely planet earth and of course the greater cosmos. It seems to me that there is a close relationship between the level of sophistication that a civilization possesses and the degree of mathematics that a civilization grasps. I would say that math is powerful, intriguing, and intensely relevant to all of our lives.

I think it is worth stressing that this is obviously not intended as an in-depth look at any of the subjects contained herein. *Therefore, think of each chapter as a brief conversation on a topic and if you would like more detail; I encourage you to visit your local friend/bookstore/internet.* This book is merely meant as a brief reflection on what I consider some of the

most interesting and powerful ideas that swirl around in the mathematics community today. Really, this book represents my musings on early 21st century recreational math(s). There are countless other topics and areas of mathematics that can be addressed. The topics in this book are the ones that are simply on my radar right now and that are mostly tied into popular culture.

Naturally, this book is classified as Non-Fiction, and therefore all ideas are presumed to be fact, so while I have tried my best to be accurate, I must take responsibility for any subsequent errors found. I sincerely hope that these topics prove to be as interesting and surprising to you as they are to me. Thank you for reading.

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