Humanistic Mathematics Network Journal

12-1-1999

Ode to Mathematics

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a special notation such as that of logic or symbolic. Those must be the numbers and letters I see scribbled across mathematicians' notebooks today. That symbolic logic was not created until von Leibniz, that clever fellow, attempted to find one "universal" way of expressing mathematical thought. All of these systems and styles were then lumped together to get what we know today as calculus. And there are four problems which tormented the minds of mathematicians, and because calculus was the only man fit for the job, he was created and called upon. My, calculus is a glorious thing! It is used everyday, isn't it? Even in places and ways I'm sure I was not previously aware of. Where is this Dr. Shannon; I want to learn more about calculus."

"She is over by the Diet Cokes. I'm glad I could help, and I'm sure you'll love the study of calculus."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is both possible and rewarding to include a discussion of the Calculus in a liberal arts mathematics course. In the course of our Department's review of the Calculus sequence, while we were discussing the importance of the Calculus in the context of the course description it struck me that if we really do believe that Calculus is one of the greatest intellectual achievements, then we should not reserve an appreciation of its development to only a select few. If we avoid Calculus in our Mathematics Appreciation courses, then we do our students and our discipline a disservice.

Ode to Mathematics

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A revised version of a poem by Serge J. Zaroodny

The world has far too many boring books;
For books, par excellence, are very static;
But of this statics, by its very looks,
Most boring is the book that's mathematic.

Long laughed at human logic human tongue;
With logic tends it to be causalistic
So to untangle simple truths from wrong
One must resort to methods symbolistic.

Oh, why is't so that language must conceal
A simple thought in cloudy definition?
Why can't we lucid truth at once reveal
Without disguising it by erudition?

Cheer up! That quantum jump, sweet understanding's jerk--
It only comes to those who do the work.