

Preface

The civilized world is increasingly mathematized. Mathematics has become prominent in such fields as medicine, biology, the environment, transportation, law, finance, etc. Its inner structures, its applications both good and bad, its history, the philosophy it engenders, its logic, its mysteries, its personalities, its interpretations have interested me since I was a teenager. I have read many books on mathematics and much ancillary material. I have listened to my teachers and caught their sparks. I have lectured and tried to ignite my students or my audience, and, occasionally, I have been able to increase the corpus of new and interesting material.

The contents of this book are a potpourri. The pieces originated as classroom presentations, formal lectures, sections of my earlier books, book reviews, or merely things written for my own pleasure and without a targeted audience in mind. The reader will find here a mix of the old and the new. Hopefully the pieces are not too technical. Some things have been published, some are unpublished, and the totality is assembled here with no particular order in mind. Alas, there are the inevitable redundancies, and with the passage of time, passé or erroneous statements—hopefully few—for which I assume full responsibility for their inclusion.

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