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Infinity: Beyond The Beyond The Beyond



Synopsis

"The interpolations tying mathematics into human life and thought are brilliantly clear."#151;Booklist"Her presentationâ is conversational and humorous, and should help to simplify some complex concepts."#151;KirkusInfinity. It sounds simpleâ but is it? This elegant, accessible, and playful book artfully illuminates one of the most intriguing ideas in mathematics. Lillian Lieber presents an entertaining, yet thorough, explanation of the concept and cleverly connects mathematical reasoning to larger issues in society. InfinityÂ includes a new foreword by Harvard professor Barry Mazur."Another excellent book for the lay reader of mathematicsâ |In explaining [infinity], the author introduces the reader to a good many other mathematical terms and concepts that seem unintelligible in a formal text but are much less formidable when presented in the author's individual and very readable style."#151;Library Journal"Mrs. Lieber, in this text illustrated by her husband, Hugh Gray Lieber, has tackled the formidable task of explaining infinity in simple terms, in short line, short sentence technique popularized by her in *The Education of T.C. MITS*."#151;Chicago Sunday TribuneLillian LieberÂ was the head of the Department of Mathematics at Long Island University. She wrote a series of lighthearted (and well-respected) math books in the 1940s, includingÂ *The Einstein Theory of Relativity* andÂ *The Education of T.C. MITS* (also published by Paul Dry Books).Hugh Gray LieberÂ was the head of the Department of Fine Arts at Long Island University. He illustrated many books written by his wife Lillian.Barry MazurÂ is a mathematician and is the Gerhard Gade University Professor at Harvard University. He is the author ofÂ *Imagining Numbers* (particularly the square root of minus fifteen). He has won numerous honors in his field, including the Veblen Prize, Cole Prize, Steele Prize, and Chauvenet Prize.

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Lillian Lieber and *Infinity* "The interpolations tying mathematics into human life and thought are brilliantly clear." •Booklist "Her presentation is conversational and humorous, and should help to simplify some complex concepts." •Kirkus "Another excellent book for the lay reader of mathematics In explaining [infinity], the author introduces the reader to a good many other mathematical terms and concepts that seem unintelligible in a formal text but are much less formidable when presented in the author's individual and very readable style." •Library Journal "Mrs. Lieber, in this text illustrated by her husband, Hugh Gray Lieber, has tackled the formidable task of explaining infinity in simple terms, in short line, short sentence technique popularized by her in *The Education of T.C. MITS*." •Chicago Sunday Tribune

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Lillian R. Lieber was Professor and Head of the Department of Mathematics at Long Island University. She wrote a series of light-hearted (and well-respected) math books, many of them illustrated by her husband. Hugh Gray Lieber was Professor and Head of the Department of Fine Arts at Long Island University. Barry Mazur does his mathematics at Harvard University and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with the writer Grace Dane Mazur. He is the author of *"Imagining Numbers (Particularly the Square Root of Minus Fifteen)"* (FSG, 2003). He has won numerous prizes in his field, including the Veblen Prize, Cole Prize, Steele Prize, and Chauvenet Prize.

I first read this book 5 years ago, but now I have just have been reading it once again, and I again find the book to be fine by its easy understandable text, and the many drawings, by which trying to show geometrical and speculatively how to look, and think, about the Infinitive. And thereby being

helpful especially to persons who during self-study are trying to learn about the mathematical behind the Infinity which Cantor proved, and how Cantor probably was speculating when he came to these ideas and conclusions. But if it come to having more reading about the Infinity with even less mathematic (But personally I like heavy mathematic and formulas), then I will recommend these books: Amir D. Aczel: "The Mystery of the Aleph, Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity", and Eli Maor: "To Infinity and Beyond, A Cultural History of the Infinity". But if interested in much mathematic and geometry (much parallel to how we are watching it used in fractals) then we for example have a 152 sides, A5, book, written by Leo Zippin: "Uses of Infinity", first printed in 1962, and mine, from Dover, in 2000. But now a day we in many books are reading about the Infinity, especially since we around 90 years ago started reading, thinking, and speculating about the Infinity of parallel Universes.

Nobody explains mathematical ideas for the layman as does Lillian R. Lieber. And the fanciful illustrations that always accompany her work, done by Hugh Gray Lieber, are amusing and informative. Infinity: Beyond the Beyond presents an account of how mathematics has learned to deal with the infinite, primarily through the work of Georg Cantor. Controversial at first, Cantor's set theory and transfinite arithmetic are now part of the foundations of modern mathematics. Perhaps the most startling idea to be had from this book is that infinite sets are not all the same size. I have before me a copy of the 1953 original, as well as the 2007 abridgement. Aside from the fact that the older book is a hardcover, the abridgement is the better book. The editor, Barry Mazur, a mathematician at Harvard, has removed the dated, nonmathematical introductory material and the chapters on calculus. This book is now a superb layman's guide to the mathematics of transfinities. If you would like more biography and less mathematics, you might try The Mystery of the Aleph: Mathematics, the Kabbalah, and the Search for Infinity, by Amir D. Aczel. And two magazine articles are worth seeking out: "Georg Cantor and the Origins of Transfinite Set Theory," by Joseph W. Dauben, Scientific American, June 1983; and "Non-Cantorian Set Theory," by Paul J. Cohen and Reuben Hersh, Scientific American, December 1967. Note: In 1900, David Hilbert put forth a list of the 23 most important unsolved problems in mathematics. At the head of the list was Cantor's continuum hypothesis. The problem was still open when the Liebers wrote their book. In 1963, Stanford University mathematician Paul Cohen, extending work of Kurt Godel, proved that the continuum hypothesis is actually independent of the generally accepted axioms of set theory, and earned the Fields medal for it.

Explains a difficult and strange subject clearly and is amplified by associated and delightful drawings that illustrate and translate the mathematical points into artistic impression. The authors proceed slowly, step by step, and the work does not require advanced mathematical knowledge, just the ability to open the mind to different and new ways of understanding concepts.

What fun

wonderful!

Thanks!

a beginner's introduction to number theory, with cute drawings

This is a wonderful book for an introduction to a topic that many don't realize how rich it is. Many think of infinity as just a really big number and it is so much more. The explanations of how big infinity is and that there is more than one infinity are clear and accessible to anyone. I particularly enjoy the formatting of the text. The text is formatted as prose so each page holds a small bite size portion of the concept she is explaining. Instead of feeling like you are presented with a mound of information to comprehend in just one page you are looking at it broken down over several pages. It makes you feel like you are reading poetry. The entire series that Lieber has written is just wonderful. A definite buy.

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