

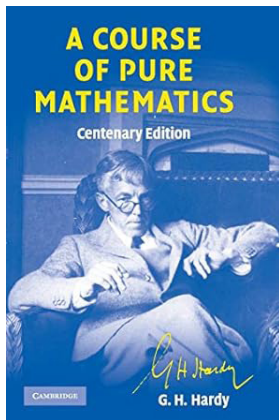
A Course of Pure Mathematics:
 Centenary Edition
 G. H. Hardy
 Cambridge University Press
 Number of Pages: 509

Luiz Henrique de Figueiredo

This is a special reissue of the 10th edition of Hardy’s classic, first published in 1908. The main addition is an interesting foreword by T. W. Körner, which describes the huge influence of the book on the teaching and development of mathematics, especially in Britain. The book was the first textbook in English on analysis; the Encyclopaedia Britannica says that it “transformed university teaching.”

The book contains a presentation of analysis as the foundation for calculus in the precise but lively style that is Hardy’s hallmark. However, the book does show its age. The notation and terminology are slightly different from the ones we use today: sets are called aggregates or classes, sequences are called functions of a positive integral variable, closed intervals are denoted by (a,b) . Although these glitches are not serious, they will probably be confusing for beginners.

So, who is likely to profit from reading this book? Certainly students and teachers interested in classics written by one of the best writers of his era (those who have read Hardy and Wright’s book on number



theory, a new edition of which is forthcoming, will recognize the force of the prose, even if it may seem somewhat heavy nowadays). And certainly anyone looking for challenging, interesting exercises not usually found in modern calculus books. (In the Cambridge tradition, exercises are called examples!) Nevertheless, students looking for a careful presentation of rigorous calculus will probably profit much more by reading and working through Spivak’s *Calculus*, a modern classic. Hardy said that “young men should prove theorems, old men should write books.” We have been fortunate that he wrote such good books (and he was not at all old when he wrote them). It is thus fitting to celebrate Hardy’s writings with this centenary edition.

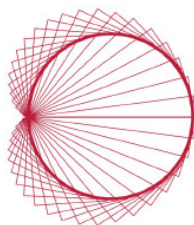


La metáfora del omelette

Que se haya planteado y discutido seriamente si la Historia es un arte, resulta desde luego una de las extravagancias de la ineptitud humana. ¿Qué otra cosa podría ser? Es obvio que la Historia no es una ciencia: es obvio que la Historia no es la acumulación de hechos, sino la relación entre ellos. Sólo la pedantería de académicos mal formados podría dar lugar a la monstruosa suposición contraria. Cuando se evocan sin arte, los hechos relativos al pasado son meras compilaciones; y las compilaciones sin duda pueden ser útiles. Pero no son Historia, o lo son en la misma medida en que los huevos, la sal, la mantequilla y las hierbas son un omelette.

Lytton Strachey

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