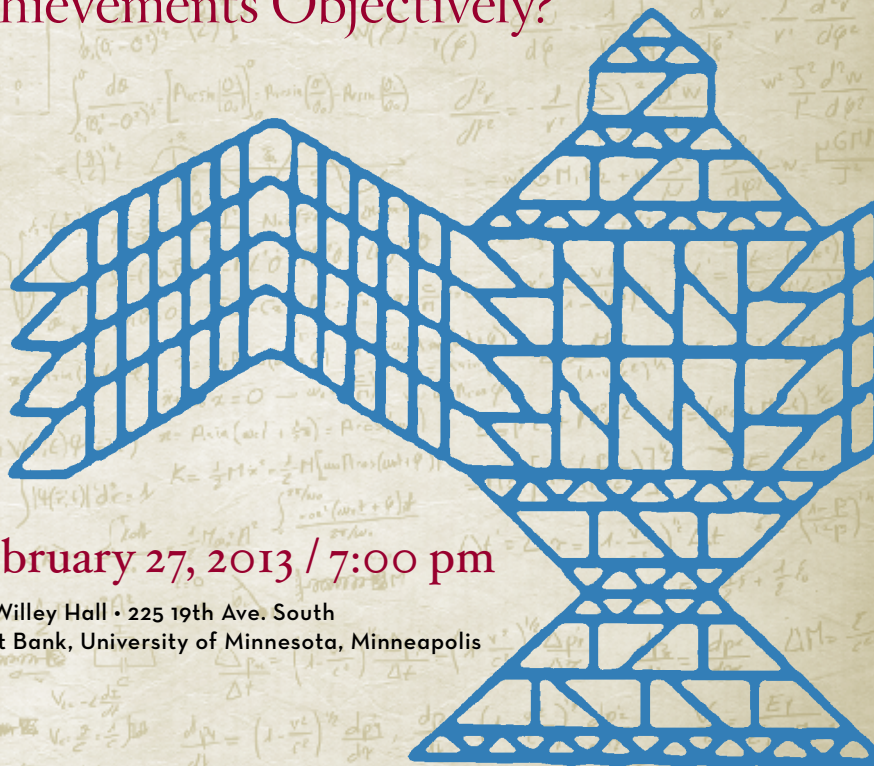


Math in China, India, and the West— Can We Compare Their Achievements Objectively?

David Mumford, Brown University

From Victorian England until quite recently, it was accepted that math began in Greece, then languished until the Renaissance when it took off in Europe. Now with “political correctness” and chauvinism in the reborn great powers of the East, the pendulum has swung and some claim that the key ideas originated in the East and migrated to the West. To make a balanced and scholarly assessment is not easy. First, one must look equally at both applied and pure math and at the role of rigor versus other forms of argument across cultures.



February 27, 2013 / 7:00 pm

175 Willey Hall • 225 19th Ave. South
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Math in China, India, and the West— Can We Compare Their Achievements Objectively?

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During his lecture, Mumford will present a series of vignettes of actual math from Babylon, Vedic India, Han China, Baghdad, and Kerala (India) to illustrate how rich the full picture is and how the idiosyncrasies of each culture profoundly altered the math they developed. His lecture will also cover what was unique to the math of ancient Greek culture, and why, finally, math exploded in the 17th century.

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