

A Mathematician's Soliloquy

To choose, or not to choose: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the maths to suffer
The objects and arrows of outrageous existence,
Or to take chalk against that class of functions,
And by opposing empty them? To construct: to choose
No more; and by construct to say we end
The heart-ache and the uncountable real shocks
That Banach is cause to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To construct, to specify;
To specify: perchance to define: ay, there's the rub;
For in that absence of choice what problems may come
When we have shuffled off this axiomatic coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long logic;
For who would bear the sets and scorns of choice,
The orders well, Zorn's proud contumely,
The pangs of despised results, the constructivist's dismay,
The existence of no measure and the spurns
That a pea and the Sun take,
When he himself might his saneness make
With an outright refusal? who would Zermelo's axiom bear,
To question and sigh over a strange scheme,
But that the dread of something after choice,
The space without base from whose span
No mathmo returns, puzzles the mind
And makes us rather bear those rules we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus analysis doth make cowards of us all;
And thus the naïve idea of explicit witness
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And theorems of great pith and moment
With this regard their proofs turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

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January 2008, modified December 2015