Editorial

Dear Readers,

welcome to this issue of *Parabola*!

A recently trending TikTok video prompted commentary[1] in The Conversation on whether mathematics is real, a psycho-cultural construct, or something in between. This has been a question that mathematicians, philosophers, mysticists, cosmologists and even moralists have debated through millenia. Opinions on this question continue to differ, as do opinions on what is maths and what is not.

This theme of this issue is the "natural" numbers: the integers 1, 2, and so on. These numbers might or might not exist but most people would agree that they are part of maths and indeed form one of the oldest parts of maths. Old as numbers are, they also provide some of our newest maths, as our modern cryptographic systems attest.

In four excellent articles, you can read about interesting collections of numbers that you might not have heard of: quasi-Pythagorean triads (by Stephen Bewlay and Long Yin Felicina Chau), the Sylvester sequence (by Anas Chentouf), aliquot sums (by Timothy Hume), and Sierpinski numbers (by Arya Kondor).

It is great to see such interesting excellent contributions, and I hope that you, dear Reader, feel welcome and encouraged to submit your work to *Parabola* too! To help you, in case you might be tempted to submit your work but were unsure of how to do so, I have written a brief article to help you with advice and suggestions. And please feel free to ask any questions that you might have!

Please also enjoy the excellent and challenging new problems by Problem Editors Arnaud Brothier and David Angell, and enjoy with me some laughs induced by the clever and funny maths comics by Mike Chapman and Robert Schneider.

Warm regards,

Thomas Britz
Editor

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[1]D. Mansfield, Is mathematics real? A viral TikTok video raises a legitimate question with exciting answers, *The Conversation*, August 2020