INT. J. MATH. EDUC. SCI. TECHNOL., 1980, VOL. 11, NO. 2, 285–304

Classroom Notes

Three Mathematical Satires

A rebuke of A. B. Smith's paper, 'A Note on Piffles'

by S. J. FARLOW
Department of Mathematics, University of Maine, Orono, Maine, USA

(*Received 3 May 1979*)

In A. B. Smith's recent paper, 'A Note on Piffles', *The American Mathematical Monthly*, **84**, p. 566 he completely fails to mention one of the most significant results yet discovered in Piffle Theory, namely A. K. Puddle's paper, 'Products of Planar Piffles'.

In this short but succinct note Puddle proves that a denumerable product of Pi Piffles is in fact a P-Pi Piffle (assuming of course pairwise permutation of the Piffles). That Puddle's condition was only necessary and not sufficient did of course not detract from this significant work—but did in fact open the door to the well-known Piffle Paradox (of which I'm afraid Professor Smith is completely unaware).

Readers interested in obtaining a complete up-to-date history of the Piffle should consult P.U. Piper's comprehensive review, *The Piffle: 1840–1978* (Pauper Press). Here Piper describes some modern approaches taken by American Mathematicians during the last fifteen years. I am sorry to say that the classical treatment of Piffles taken by most English Mathematicians, notably the work of author Smith, is, by American standards, obsolete even before it hits the printing press. In particular the classic theorem of Smith, Jones and Brown on Polynomial Piffles would be only a simple corollary to Puddle's basic result on Homological Piffles. In fact it is fairly safe to say that all the English results so far on Piffle Theory can be subsumed in Piper's short note, 'Spectral Decompositions of Partial Piffles', *American Piffle Review*, **27**, pp. 1–2.

On mathematical form

by Professor S. J. WOLRAF
Department of Mathematics, University of Maine, Orono, Maine, U.S.A.

(*Received 3 May 1979*)

It has been brought to my attention that several entering freshmen in MS 4 (Algebra and Trigonometry) are not familiar with even the most rudimentary ideas concerning the principles of mathematical simplification. The purpose of this short tutorial will hopefully clarify for these students several points dealing with the

0020-739x/80/1102 0285 $02·00