A disturbing implication

DEAR SIR,

Since I am interested in group theory I was very amused recently to discover that a pair of bedroom slippers I had bought bore the brand name "COSET". However there is one disturbing implication—since I now have a left coset which is not a right coset, does this imply that I am not normal?

Yours faithfully,

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Reviews

The teaching of geometry at the pre-college level, edited by Hans-Georg Steiner. Pp viii, 386. 1971 (D. Reidel, Dordrecht, Holland)

This volume gives the Proceedings of the second CSMP (Comprehensive School Mathematics Program: Carbondale, Illinois) Conference, edited by Professor Steiner who has been "European co-director, mathematician-in-residence, and consultant since 1965".

It can be said with assurance that every teacher will find at least something, and usually much, to interest him, both in method and subject matter. Here is Professor Freudenthal (*Geometry between the devil and the deep sea*) asking "a few haphazard questions":

"Why does a rolled piece of paper become rigid?
What does a cube look like if viewed along a spatial diagonal?
Why does a door need two hinges?"

[and many others]. "Notice that I did not ask any questions of practical use. My task would have been much simpler if I had done so."

Here is Dr. Arthur Engel (*Geometrical activities*):

"A man has a semicircular lawn in front of his house. He wants to tie a cow in such a way that she can graze the entire inside of the lawn without being able to overstep its boundary. Can he do it with a string, three short pegs and a ring?"

Most of the articles, of course, do not allow brief quotation of this kind, and a list of the twenty-seven topics would be tedious. But the teacher may feel confident when he sees, among others equally attractive:

H. S. M. Coxeter, *Inversive geometry*;
Zoltan P. Dienes, *An example of the passage from the concrete to the manipulation of formal systems*;
T. J. Fletcher, *The teaching of geometry—present problems and future aims*;
Peter Hilton, *Topology in the High School*;
G. Papy, *A first introduction to the notion of topological space*;
André Revuz, *The position of geometry in mathematical education*;
Marshall Stone, *Learning and teaching axiomatic geometry.*

I do not find any reference to the number of participants at this conference, but there is little doubt that they were subject to the normal limitations of time and space. The reader, though equally subject, is not bothered, for he can browse forwards and backwards at his own will. And this he is strongly urged to do. Euclid may (or may not) have gone, but he has left a glorious trail behind him. Read and see!

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