



The University of Western Ontario

Faculty of Science

Department of Applied Mathematics

APPLIED MATHEMATICS COLLOQUIUM

Date: Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Time: 2:30 pm

Location: Middlesex College Room 204

Mathematical Asymptotics and Explanation

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Abstract:

This paper discusses the explanatory role played by mathematical singularities that result from certain idealizations of physical phenomena. One example will involve the asymptotic representation of the Airy function as a means for understanding certain features of the rainbow. The paper concludes with a few remarks about the so-called problem of the applicability of mathematics to the natural world.