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Through my Byrne scholarship I was able to attend a mathematical physics conference at Harvard this summer. Having taken a mathematical physics course at Dartmouth last spring, this was another opportunity for me to see the field as I begin applying for PhD programs. Over the course of three days I was able to speak with several students and professors in the field, as well as attend lectures. One of the highlights of this experience, and indeed of my mathematical career so far, was hearing 2022 Fields Medalist Hugo Duminil-Copin speak on recent advances in emergent symmetries.

Overall, this experience strongly affected me in a few ways. Firstly, I got to see some of the inner workings of the field. The prevalence of probability theory was surprising to me, given that my course in the subject had been more topology-oriented. Secondly, this was my first time attending a conference in pure mathematics. Seeing the way researchers in the field approach problems and share knowledge with their peers has given me a much clearer picture of what pursuing a career in such research looks like.