

Re: Mathematics: art or science?

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.math/2007-09/msg00084.html>

- *From:* "T.H. Ray" <thray123@xxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 01 Sep 2007 06:42:52 EDT
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Michael Press wrote:

In article

<23698964.1188588087624.JavaMail.jakarta@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
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orum.org>,
"T.H. Ray" <thray123@xxxxxxx> wrote:

On Aug 31, 2:56 am, "T.H. Ray"
<thray...@xxxxxxx>
wrote:

That mathematics is a
liberal art is not

debatable.

And yet here we are debating it! Go figure.

You may think you're debating. I am only reciting
facts.

After all, to some, even the claim of creationism
vs.

evolution is a "debate."

My first rule of debate is when there are two
well defined positions, they are both wrong.

Re: Mathematics: art or science?

This thread reminds me of the curious question:

Is the question as to whether some matter is a matter of fact (or else a matter of opinion) a matter of fact (or else a matter of opinion)? Does the answer depend on the matter in question?

Opinions and positions in a debate assume that some facts, characteristics, properties of the object are in question—and that rhetoric will reveal a finer-grained view of the object in order to—if not settle the question—at least to focus it more clearly.

I am all in favor of Joseph Joubert's advice that "It is better to debate a question without settling it, than to settle a question without debating it."

There is no question, however, that mathematics is a liberal art. This is not a position or an opinion of mine. Mathematics shares all the properties and characteristics of every other liberal art, and only some of the properties and characteristics of physical science. I exclude the "soft" social sciences because the question of whether these belong to art or science IS debatable. It may even be debatable into which category computer science falls—and on that I would be willing to take a position and participate in debate.

By every objective standard, though, mathematics is a liberal art.

Tom

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