

COLLOQUIUM

Monkey fields

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Abstract: Joseph Ritt spent his entire career working with the real and complex fields, and he reportedly referred to fields of positive characteristic as "monkey fields". The development of algebraic geometry and number theory during the second half of the 20th century showed the tremendous usefulness of the so-called monkey fields even in the service of problems whose formulation only involves fields of characteristic 0. Sometimes the implications go in the other direction, using results in characteristic 0 to prove theorems over finite fields. We illustrate both directions of this interaction.

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