

Tilburg University

In tuition – hi fi and high fee?

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In tuition – hi-fi and high fee?

From *H.J. van den Herik and I.S. Herschberg*.

Dear Professor De Groot,

We take the unexpected opportunity of receiving your letter to congratulate you on your eightieth birthday.

For a start, we do not feel that apologies are in order for our provocative Editorial. It is a legitimate function for Editors to challenge their readership, even unto the limits of deadly seriousness. Indeed, probing the very borders of a subject is of the essence of all science.

¹ Middenstreek 7, 9166 LL Schiermonnikoog, The Netherlands.

This does not imply a refusal of our personal apologies for a misleading use of the word 'intuitionistic'. On a jeweller's scale its weighing should be clear: as an adjective referring to intuition, most definitely not as an adjective referring to L.E.J. Brouwer's fundamental contribution to the foundations of mathematics.

In substance, we hold that intuition is a much-mixed entity. There is a low-fi component, being near to animal instinct, unquantifiable and a bad counsellor. When a World Champion, such as Kasparov, places reliance on it, he loses when pressed for time; he is apt to blunder, as are medical men when faced with the sudden trial of triage.

What now emerges, fortunately, is a hi-fi component, obtained at a price, which is simply access to information possibly possessed beforehand but to which a path was not available. As a case in point, we now find Kasparov striving for greater precision, for making his ideas operational: no longer content with vague classifications such as "a slight advantage for White, +=", he has now been induced by a computer's counsel to specify specific, over-the-board variations which let him rate them by their rationale. This is intuition at a fee, but at its finest.

We grant that this is all a deep matter, fit fodder for many a doctoral dissertation. Allow us to hope you will live to see those theses published and to enjoy them.