

Math

The most important businesses in the world used to be extractive (Shell, ExxonMobil) or industrial (Ford, Mitsubishi).

Now, they are financial (BlackRock, JP Morgan) or digital (Google, Facebook).

Companies that valued maths have given way to companies for whom maths permeates everything: it is the essence of their product. And so they have to hire in that image, which in turn incentivises the generation below to choose their educational path accordingly.

The result is a brilliant but narrow over-class, who allow their super-facility in one academic discipline to colour their wider worldview. The very universality of maths encourages them to range with dangerous confidence outside their domain.

Janan Ganesh, Financial Times, October 20, 2023