

Math Diversion Problem 918

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The Axiom of Choice is obviously true; the Well Ordering
Principle is obviously false; and who can tell
about Zorn's Lemma?
— Jerry Bona

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hx761RqE9Iw>
Title: Netherlands | Can you solve this??
Presenter: Mr-Mathologer

1 The Problem

Given the relation

$$\frac{1}{x} + \frac{1}{y} = \frac{1}{x+y}, \quad (1)$$

solve for

$$\eta = \frac{x}{y}. \quad (2)$$

2 Solution

Eq. (1) can be rewritten in the form

$$\frac{y}{x} + 1 = \frac{y}{x+y}, \quad (3)$$

or in terms of η :

$$\eta^{-1} + 1 = \frac{1}{\eta + 1}. \quad (4)$$

With a little algebra, we have that

$$\eta^2 + \eta + 1 = 0. \quad (5)$$

The solution to η by the quadratic formula is

$$\eta = \frac{-1 \pm \sqrt{1-4}}{2}, \quad (6)$$

or

$$\eta = \frac{-1 \pm i\sqrt{3}}{2}. \quad (7)$$