

# Mathematicians are not scientists, but artists

Ted Kaczynski

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Dear Mr. Dammbeck,

In your letter dated June 23, 2002, page 3, you asked me about the mathematician's world of ideas. This is a very sensitive question and I have been thinking very seriously for a long time whether I should answer it.

At last I have decided, not without doubt and hesitation, that I can dare to reveal to you the shameful truth.

You probably think that mathematicians are very serious and learned people who think mostly about intellectual things. They assume that the mathematician always imagines something mathematical. But that is not true. Only the young and inexperienced students of mathematics often think about their field. The experienced mathematicians rarely think about mathematics. Most of the time they imagine the flowers, the sunshine and the birds singing in spring. Maybe they imagine women sometimes, but they don't do that often because their hearts are pure.

You will ask how it is possible that mathematicians do not always think about mathematics? I must inform you that mathematicians are not scientists, but artists. (Didn't I tell you in my previous letters that I am not a scientist?)

Apart from the most elementary mathematics, for example arithmetic and high school algebra (two times two makes four,  $x$  times  $x$  is  $x^2$  and so on), the symbols, formulas and words of mathematics have no meaning at all. The entire structure of higher mathematics is a tremendous fraud, a practical joke. Mathematicians amuse themselves with their symbols and formulas, which they manipulate according to some arbitrary rules that resemble the rules of a child's game. Yes! That's all there is to higher mathematics! A mere game, a frivolous amusement.

You may ask, how is it possible that everyone believes that mathematics is an important science? And, why pay scientists big salaries to mess around with their formulas.

The explanation is very simple. When a person who is not a mathematician looks at the formulas of mathematics and finds no meaning or meaning in them, he believes that mathematics appears meaningless to him only because he lacks the technical knowledge to understand mathematics. Only mathematicians understand mathematics. Therefore only mathematicians can know that mathematics is a fraud. Of course the mathematicians don't want to admit this.

When a university student begins to study mathematics, he first studies algebra, and that is what he understands. Then he studies elementary differential calculus and integral calculus, and he doesn't understand them very well. And the further he progresses in the study of mathematics, the less he understands, and before he has finished his third or fourth year of mathematics he can no longer understand anything. He believes the reason for this is that he is too stupid to understand higher mathematics and he gives up the study of mathematics.

But the real cause of his lack of understanding is that higher mathematics has no meaning at all and is just a big child's game and a fraud.

But if students leave because of their inability to understand mathematics, where do the new mathematicians come from when the old ones die?

When the professors find an unusually promising student, they take him at midnight to the dungeon of an ancient castle, or in America, where there are no ancient castles, they take him to a dark forest or to the shadow of a huge, wild rock, where the bats fly back and forth, and the owls sing “hu, hoo,” and there they make him take a terrible oath, and sign it with blood instead of ink (Faust, Mephistopheles, Goethe) (Beautiful Mind), that he will never reveal the secret that mathematics is just a big fraud. And in this way the student becomes a real mathematician.

When I took my oath, I was too poor to pay for the professors to travel to a distant place. There were no ancient castles or wild rocks near Ann Arbor, and we had to use the university’s tree garden as a dark forest.

We didn’t bring flashlights because that would have been too unromantic, and as we walked through the Baumgarten, we repeatedly stumbled upon lovers lying on the ground: because the Baumgarten was the favorite place of students who wanted to have sex. This happened so often that we left the tree garden and went behind the house of one of the professors, and I took my oath under the stairs. It was dark there, although not as dark as the dungeon of an ancient castle. But you may ask, how could mathematicians keep such a secret? Was there or is there no renegade who reveals the truth? Yes, of course it can happen, but it won’t change anything because the fact is so unbelievable that no one will take it seriously. For example, I just revealed the secret to you, but you think I’m just joking.

Even if I told you that I was speaking completely seriously, you would think that I was just joking. So the secret is in no danger.

Your devoted one  
Ted Kaczynski  
April 1, 2003

## Appendix

Quoting a Letter From Ted to Lutz on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2003:

You may ask, since I am so busy, why I had the time to write you my letter of April 1, 2003. But even when you’re very busy, you have to have a little fun sometimes. Not true?

You need a little fun to make your work easier. I believe that you have the same custom in Germany as in America of doing pranks on April 1<sup>st</sup> (April Fool’s Day).

The Ted K Archive

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Ted Kaczynski's Correspondence with Lutz Dambeck

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