

Dear Mr.

In your letter of December 14, you ask me whether mathematics is a worthwhile endeavor. Mathematics absolutely is not a worthwhile endeavor! I can imagine only three possible reasons for studying mathematics:

- (1) Entertainment.
- (2) To promote technological progress.
- (3) To promote one's own career.

Reason (1) is harmless; but one doesn't refer to entertainment as a "worthwhile endeavor"; it's just a pastime.

As for reason (2), modern technology is the worst thing that ever happened to the world, and to promote its progress is nothing short of criminal. Read Our Final Century, by Martin Rees; or read "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us", an article by Bill Joy that appeared in Wired magazine, April, 2000.

As for reason (3), to choose mathematics as one's career would be very risky. Not long ago I received a letter from a gravestone sculptor whose craft had been rendered obsolete by a laser-guided machine that carved gravestones automatically. He was in his forties, unable to find work, and depressed. Maybe you think that can't happen to you if you become a mathematician. But you're wrong. Martin Rees, Bill Joy, and many other distinguished experts believe that within a few decades machines will be developed that will be more intelligent than even the smartest human beings. When that happens, people will be obsolete; they will be phased out and will be replaced by computers and robots. This will happen to everyone eventually, but mathematicians probably will become obsolete before anyone else does, because mathematics is more amenable to computerization than any other field. Hence, computers probably will surpass humans in mathematics before they do so in other areas.

Sincerely yours,
Ted Kaczynski