# Cries and Whispers in Math world

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Life in general, and mathematical community in particular, functions on the blessed landscape of humor and surreality. I tried to (and still trying) to recollect variety of comments made by others in my presence, and conversely, over my long mathematics career. My cynicism (*which I treasure*), and political leaning, would possibly be evident in this collection. These are mainly jokes and surreality of the math and academic world. Since I have been doing Algebraic $K$-theory in the recent past, many concerns the same.

The title above is obviously inspired by the movie.

1. "Grothendieck" is also a cult. (2010s)

2. Speculations about who refereed which paper works best over a cup of coffee or a glass of wine. (2010s)

3. Micheal Artin is becoming famous, because my advisor is using his results. (1990s)

4. $K$-Theory Foundation is the **Politburo of $K$-Theory**. It functions like politburo, recruits like politburo, and butchers like politburo. In their defense they are not the alone, in mathematics. (2020s)

5. Yes, the proof is simple! Do not worry man, I will give a motivic interpretation. (2010s)

6. Problem with Satya is that he does not like jokes. (1980s)

7. Worst thing that you can do for a younger mathematician is to write a honest recommendation letter for him. (1980s)

8. *Two worried younger mathematicians speculating about their future*:
   "They will make you an offer that you cannot refuse". (1980s; After Mario Puzo)

9. Is there a good source to learn $K$-Theory?
   **Answer: No!**
   Is there a bad source to learn $K$-Theory?
   **Answer: No!**
   (*AMS sessional meeting in 2005*)

10. *After a talk on teaching math, by the wife (educationist) of a math leader, in MSRI Chair meeting (2010s):*
    I felt that the wife of my elder brother was scolding me for not taking care of my mother well enough.

11. He is a $2^{nd}$-rate $1^{st}$-rate mathematician. (1980s)

12. If everybody is outstanding who is standing? (1990s)

13. If I ever tried to over sell my contributions, that would be my survival instinct. (2010s)

14. Normalization of exaggeration credentials starts with writing recommendation letters. (1990s)

15. NSF criteria of "Broader impact" of mathematics research is an oxymoron concept. (2020s)

16. Your compulsion to do it the right way, always, is a problem. (2010s)

17. Tight closure exists! (1987, MSRI Algebra Microprogram)

18. Bring your own audience for your lecture (*on online teaching methods*). (1990s)

19. Do you still have the sense of humor?
    **Answer: No!** (2010s)

20. SPU is acronym for "Smallest publishable unit" (1980s)

21. Provost changed the name of the position of "Dean" to "Executive Dean". (2020s)

22. It seems, Motivic Homotopy is trying to prove its worth by proving some results on projective modules.

23. Chow-Witt group is not a gadget of the Motivic homotopty. It is a simple refinement of the idea of Chow groups. (2020s)

24. **Biblical Title of a math talk**: "Seven conjectures" in my theory. (1990s)

25. $K$-Theory politics has a East wing (Europe) and a West wing (US). (2020s)

26. *Two math grad students (from Harvard and Chicago) used the washroom.*
    **Harvard student:** So, they don't teach you to wash hands after you use the urinal!
    **Answer:** No, they teach us not to pee on our hands. (2010s)

27. We do $K$-theory because we are very smart. You do not understand $K$-theory because you are not smart enough. (2010s)

28. I need a dose of India!
    **Reply:** You can have your dose with us. (1990s)

29. Math can be a remedy for depression, if you can do it. (1990s)

30. I do algebra without apology! (2010s)

31. In the face of all these advancements in Algebra research, how do you recommend that we remodel our graduate programs?
    **Answer:** I really do not have an answer to your question.
    (*IAS/PCMI summer school 2024*)

32. Math papers can be read by only a circle of coauthors. They are written that way. (2020s)

33. Mathematics should be readable like English novels! (2020s)

34. The interviewer told him that his coauthor is a very strong mathematician! (2010s)

35. I go to AMS meeting to give my talk; not to listen to talks! (1990s)

36. If I cannot follow a talk, I know that the speaker is hedging or confused!
    (*Well, arrogance comes with age*!) (2010s)

37. Do not read anyone below the caliber of a Fields Medalist. Time is precious! (2010s)

38. *This is the idea of Grothendieck ...!* (eternity!)

39. If the audience is not following, why do you speak?
    Why the audience sit there pretending wise? (1990s)

40. Politics is taught on college campuses and conversely! (2000s)

41. AMS is a lobbying farm! (2000s)

42. NSF/DMS functions like DoD! (2020s)

43. Do you sometimes have to write the thesis for your student? (2010s)

44. Among two partners, one does the math and the other one manages politics. (2010s)

45. Spousal hiring drives a deserving job seeker out of math (to industry). (2000s)

46. Homotopy invariance is a property, not a basic postulate in algebra. (2020s)

47. $K$-theory means different things for different people. Some are not even $K$-Theory. (2020s)

48. If Motivic Homotopy is the modern face of Algebraic $K$-theory, then what is Algebraic $K$-theory? (2020s)

49. Milnor $K$-theory and Quillen $K$-theory do not agree. This is not even a joke. (2020s)

50. Quillen $K$-theory is considered old fashioned now! (2020s)

51. He did not publish his theory of motives. Other people wrote a book on it. (2020s)