

To: Princeton Physics Graduate Students mamarie@princeton.edu, ...zuranski@princeton.edu
 Cc: Prof. Daniel Marlow marlow@princeton.edu
 Subject: "Surely you're joking, Mr. Sittampalam!"
 Date: Monday 29 June 2009

There was a problem in a hydrodynamics book that was being discussed by all the physics students. The problem is this: You have an S-shaped lawn sprinkler – an S-shaped pipe on a pivot – and the water squirts out at right angles to the axis and makes it spin in a certain direction. Everybody knows which way it goes around: it backs away from the outgoing water. Now the question is this: if you had a lake, or a swimming pool – a big supply of water – and you put the sprinkler completely under water, and sucked the water in, instead of squirting it out, which way would it turn? Would it turn the same way as it does when you squirt water out into the air, or would it turn the other way? ...somebody went up to Prof. John Wheeler and said, "Which way do *you* think it goes around?"

Richard P. Feynman, "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!" W. W. Norton, New York (1997); pp 63-64

Graduate Students
 Department of Physics
 Princeton University

Dear Learned and Privileged Colleagues,
 "Surely you're joking, Mr. Sittampalam!" *

This concerns a small brainstorming project if you would kindly care to consider it during part of this summer. Far from a joking matter – it has the potential to affect your entire future as physicists. So, taking a cue from the sprinkler problem your great Prof. Wheeler faced with his students (box above; see also next box below), please do take a shot at answering (with the help of your professors, if needed) this seemingly simple yet profound question:

DOES THE MOVING BODY CONTRACT TRANSVERSE TO MOTION?

If your answer is the textbook, "NO," all you have to do then is to kindly substantiate it, or show that my own first-principles derivation of the longitudinal and transverse contraction factors to be fundamentally flawed in my book.* The proof has to be not to *my* satisfaction – but to that of any of your own Princeton Professors *only*; and as a token of my sincere and heartfelt gratitude, a sum of US\$25,000 will be awarded to the first person to render me this great help. The cash is payable upfront to the professor kindly accepting the role of moderator and (sole) judge – at least for the sake of truth, the foremost priority, in science. His (or her) fee and all other related expenses, too, will be rushed to him by FedEx even before your answers are entertained by him. (Your gentlemanly Chairman, Prof. Marlow, for whom I have great regard, is already aware of this matter through our earlier correspondences.)

As a freshman, your famous predecessor, Feynman, tried (in the Princeton cyclotron lab; and catastrophically, too!) to demonstrate his answer to the sprinkler question (apparently without conclusion). Unlike that one, though, the correct answer to the question *here* could prove pivotal – to the whole gamut of basic physics today and to your own future as trend-setting Princeton scientists of integrity and leaders in the world of fundamental theory.

In order not to take much of your valuable time now, please be good enough to access for perusal, over the summer break, the virus-scanned and self-explanatory pages (1), (2), and (3), hereunder. They are further on the subject and may be of immense help especially if you are considering postgraduate research work or going in for a doctorate.

- (1) www.sittampalam.net/LateralThoughts.pdf
- (2) www.sittampalam.net/NobelResponse.pdf
- (3) www.sittampalam.net/PresidentObama.pdf

Concluding, please do not consider the above US\$25,000 as a loss for me, if awarded; quite to the contrary, the time you would be kindly saving me in the future, from trying to flog the dead horse here, would certainly be worth many times over for me. So, do please discuss this great favor for me with Prof. Marlow or with any of your other professors at Princeton and kindly respond. Thank you; and the very best to you all, not as run-of-the-mill, textbook-crammed scientists, but as self-thinking men and women of science in the true and worthy tradition of Princeton.

Sincerely,
 Eugene Sittampalam

The above sprinkler problem (too) is probably yet to be resolved at Princeton! A simple alternative here is to stay put in the lawn and test the flow effect – switched to another abundant fluid around: air! In fact, I just did that test as well – ably assisted by our housecleaner, the vacuous Mr. Hoover! For more on these tests to demonstrate the forces that prominently come into play, please see the short report on: www.sittampalam.net/FeynmanQuestion.pdf.

* "Surely you're joking, Mr. Sittampalam!" was, in essence, the disbelief expressed by many, with jaws dropping. They were reading the proof of my book cover carrying details of the offer:

"UP TO ONE MILLION US DOLLARS! An offer to high-school students and university professors alike just to refute this simple no-nonsense theory of action and reaction..."

The book: *And now, the long-awaited... "THEORY OF EVERYTHING"* (Vantage, New York; 1999).

My conviction of the model's soundness is most sincere. It is also implicit in the offer – to give away all book-sale profits, now without an upper limit, to the first person to disprove my work and thereby save me valuable time in the future, rid of an untenable idea. Not surprisingly, it's ten years now with nary a scholar able to do me that favor.

The upfront minimum of US\$25,000 came subsequently not only as an added incentive but also to quell the outcries of "scam" that followed the book. Generally, this cash is payable immediately to any university physics department head kind enough to accept it, as moderator and sole judge for the 'contest', with fee and other related expenses also paid in advance. Three complimentary copies of my book, too, would be included (also for Princeton if Prof. Peebles has misplaced the three such copies I sent him some years back for the department!).

Any response from you, budding truth-seeking scientists of the highest caliber, would be gratefully received. Cheers!

Finally, I said that I couldn't see how anyone could be educated by this self-propagating system in which people pass exams, and teach others to pass exams, but nobody knows anything. ...

Well, after I gave the talk, the head of the science education department got up and said, "Mr. Feynman has told us some things that are very hard for us to hear, but it appears to be that he really loves science, and is sincere in his criticism. Therefore, I think we should listen to him. I came here knowing we have some sickness in our system of education; what I have learnt is that we have a *cancer!*" – and he sat down.

[Concluding lines of the book:] So I have just one wish for you – the good luck to be somewhere where you are free to maintain the kind of integrity I have described, and where you do not feel forced by a need to maintain your position in the organization, or financial support, or so on, to lose your integrity. May you have that freedom.

[Richard P. Feynman, "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!" W. W. Norton, New York \(1997\); pp 218 & 346](#)

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