

RELATIVITY

words by Tom Lehrer
music: "Personality" by James Van Heusen
from the movie *The Road to Utopia*

Optional verse (tune: "Massa's in the Cold Cold Ground")

Einstein was the first who stated
-- He was the first who dared --
Mass and energy are related
By E equals m c squared.

When Isaac Newton wrote
The laws that we all quote,
It's now extremely apparent that he
Neglected to consider
Relativity.

What focused our attention
On the fourth dimension?
We'd been doing so well with just three.
'Twas Mister Einstein's brain child,
Relativity.

And who would think
And who'd forecast
That bodies shrink
When they go fast?
It makes old Isaac's theory
Look w-e-o-ry.

And so if you are near
When atom bombs appear,
And you're reduced to a pile of debris,
You'll know it's largely due to
Relativity.

In The Physical Revue this song was preceded by the following dialogue:

Student: May I ask you a question, sir?

Professor: Certainly

Student: Well, would you say that a relativistic approach to the non-synthetic aspects of Newtonian mechanics is useful in formulating a comprehensive ontology for the metaphysical ramifications of these essentially empirical manifestations?

Professor: Ummmm.... No!

Student: Well, what would you say?

Professor: I would say that a relativistic approach to the non-synthetic aspects of Newtonian mechanics is not useful in formulating a comprehensive ontology for the metaphysical ramifications of these essentially empirical manifestations.

But I do think this course underestimates the importance of relativity, and I would like you to hear a few words in its behalf.