

SCIENCE OR SCIENCE FICTION?

From (DR) CORMAC O'RAIFEARTAIGH and (Dr) LORRAINE HANLON

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Sir, - As members of the Irish physics community, we are mystified by the intense interest shown by the Irish media (including The Irish Times) in the writings of engineer, Dr A. Kelly, on the subject of relativity. Comment from established experts in the field has not been forthcoming, perhaps due to the fact that Dr Kelly's "theory" has not been published in any recognised journal concerned with this subject and therefore does not merit their consideration.

Two points should be clarified: (1) To report that Dr Kelly gave a lecture in Trinity College (The Irish Times, February 16th), without pointing out that he was invited by undergraduate students to give a talk to a student society, creates an entirely misleading impression of acceptance of his work on the part of the academic staff. (2) The publication of scientific work in internationally recognised journals through a process & peer review is the tried and tested method of introducing bona fide work into a forum for informed scientific debate. Until the work of Dr Kelly has been published in a journal of repute in this field, it must be regarded with the utmost scepticism (remember cold fusion!). Public interest in science is always welcome; however the active promotion in the media of a relativity theory" which has not been recognised by professionals in the field does not mirror the cautious, objective approach of scientists and does little for the reputation of Irish physics abroad. - Yours, etc.,

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