

"My Favorite Things," physics edition

Superconductors¹ and other exotics²
Self-learning networks³ and nanorobotics⁴
Various planets surrounded by rings⁵
These are a few of my favorite things



Landau and Lifshitz^{6–15} and extra dimensions^{16,17}
(Don't forget Einstein's summation conventions¹⁸)
Structural color on butterfly wings¹⁹
These are a few of my favorite things

Confluent membranes all covered with live cells²⁰
Snowflakes that stick to the spheres²¹ and the micelles
Unification as promised by strings²²
These are a few of my favorite things



Bad reviewers!
Grant renewals!
When I'm feeling had
I simply remember my favorite things
And then I don't feel so mad



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On CERN and Russia

The December 2024 article "With no end in sight for the war in Ukraine, CERN ceases cooperation with Russia" (page 20) describes the CERN Council's decision not to renew an expiring cooperation agreement in light of Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine. That decision is an affront to all the dedicated Russian scientists who have contributed to its projects. Collaborations among scientists have been a positive vehicle and a way of engaging peaceful relations in the past, even in times of tension and war. Yet I must ask: Why did CERN not stop collaborations with the US in the wake of the hot wars in Vietnam in 1964–75 and in Iraq in 2003–11? Why was the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979–89 not a problem? Or the French intervention in Libya in 2011? Do we Europeans not care about invasions or wars so long as they do not happen on the European continent? Or do we dare not boycott certain nations involved in wars?

It would be naive to think that a boycott such as this one is the result of morality rather than geopolitics. As members of institutions, we may all have constraints imposed by political decisions; as individuals, however, we can strive to act in fairer and more nuanced ways.

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