

August 22, 2011

Dear *Spy Kids*,

While gaily making my way to work this morning an advertisement on a passing bus (the number 9 to the railway station, if you must know) caught my eye. The contents of this advertisement did vex me, and sullied was my mood. Sullied, I tell you. Since I am writing to you, you may be able to guess the nature of this advertisement; that's right, it was indeed the promotional poster for your new movie *Spy Kids 4-D* (with aromascope!).

I realise that the notion of "4-D" movies did not start with you, but I was under the impression that they had died a belated and ignoble death in mainstream cinema nearly a decade ago. Don't get me wrong, if people want to be jiggled around in their seat in an overpriced theme park while watching the latest live-action offal, sorry, I mean *offering*, from Disney, then that's fine. But I don't believe it's any exaggeration to say that it simply takes the biscuit to make pure hearted and noble cinema-goers sit through two hours of headache inducing, poorly lit, three dimensional shenanigans *and* then try to convince them that a small piece of cardboard which smells of nine different varieties of old sock is in fact the gateway to the fourth dimension.

Because, let's be honest, it's not. Under the Laplacian model of space-time the fourth dimension is of course time, and I'm fairly certain that if you're using that convention then *every* movie utilises the fourth dimension. A movie that didn't utilise it would be a single frame. And that's not a movie, it's a photo. Perhaps then you at *Spy Kids* are fans of the string theoretic model of the universe, or even the M-theoretic model. In both of these the fourth, and indeed fifth, sixth, seventh, and so on up to the tenth or eleventh, dimensions are spatial dimensions, perpendicular to all the dimensions preceding them, but curled up and compactified to such a degree that they are undetectable to us mere three-dimensional beings. Note, however, that in no coherent variation of the standard model of physics is the fourth dimension "smell". It simply makes no sense, it'd be like saying "this movie is in 3-D because it's a 2-D film and we give you a blancmange."

What's next, then? *Spy Kids 5-D*, wherein you claim that the fifth dimension is touch? Mayhap every cinema-goer who buys a ticket also gets a pongy old man who sits next to them throughout the film, breathing in the viewer's face and stroking their arm disconcertingly every time the on-screen action calls for it. Or here's a better idea: go and watch the original *Spy Kids*, you know, the good one, and if you absolutely must make a fifth film then make a well lit, crisp, clear and most of all fun film that I can watch and listen to *sans* scratch-and-sniff card (sorry, *aromascope*), and *sans* smelly old man. I'm pretty sure you managed it once, if you really try maybe you can do it again.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Butler