

File with Poe letters
(no date here)

EINSTEIN THEORY OUTLINED IN PRINCIPLE BY POE IN 1848

Letter Reveals Concepts of Limitation of Time and Space; Gave General Proposition: "Because Nothing Was, All Things Are"

Special to The Inquirer.
INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., Dec. 25.—A letter written by Edgar Allan Poe on February 29, 1848, revealed here tonight, shows the poet then had concepts of time, space and matter similar to those finally evolved by Professor Einstein into the theories of relativity.
The letter, now owned by Dr. Albert E. Sterne, Indianapolis neurologist, was addressed to George E. Irbey, Binghamton, N. Y. It says in part:
"The Vestiges of Creation I have not yet seen; and it is always unsafe and unwise to form opinions of books

from reviews of them. One thing is certain, that the objections of merely scientific men—men I mean, who cultivate the physical sciences to the exclusion, in a greater or less degree, of the mathematics, of metaphysics and of logic—are generally invalid except in respect to scientific details. Of all persons in the world, they are at the same time the most bigoted and the less capable of using, generalizing, or deciding upon the facts which they bring to light in the course of their experiments and these are the men

Continued on 5th Page, 1st Column

Poe Foreshadowed Einstein Theory in Letter Dated 1848

Continued From First Page

who chiefly write the criticism against all efforts at generalization, denouncing these efforts as speculative and theoretical.

Speaks of Lecture

"The notice of my lecture, which appeared in the New World, was written by some one grossly incompetent to the task which he undertook.

"I have not published the lecture. Permit me to state, succinctly, my principal results:

"General proposition:
"Because nothing was, therefore all things are.

"One—an inspection of the universality of gravitation—of the fact that each particle tends not to any one common point, but to every particle—suggests perfect protality, or absolute unity, as the source of the phenomenon.

"Two—Gravity is but the mode in which is manifested the tendency of all things to return into their original unity.

"Three—I show that the law of the return, i. e. the law of gravity, is but a necessary result of the necessary and so possible mode of equal irradiation of matter through a limited space.

"Four—Were the universe of stars (contradistinguished from the universe of space) unlimited, no worlds could exist.

"Five—I show that unity is nothing.

"Six—All matter, springing from unity, sprang from nothing, i. e., was created.

"Seven—All will return to unity, i. e., to nothingness.

"I would be obliged to you if you would let me know how far these ideas are coincident with those of the Vestiges."

Speculative Attitude

Dr. Sterne says of the letter, "Poe, although he enjoyed a scientific training in his youth, was in no sense a scientist, much less a physicist of the type of Einstein. But nevertheless his letter reveals a remarkable philosophic speculative attitude on Poe's part.

"He speaks of a lecture he made. If the lecture was ever published, I have never been able to find it. He speaks of the 'Vestiges of Creation.' This work was published by Robert Chambers in 1845. The letter is most remarkable in the first four of Poe's conclusions, in which Einstein's findings of three quarters of a century later are to be foreshadowed.

"In a partial analysis of the Einstein principle is found the theory of relativity to which the concepts of limitation of space as suggested by Poe is applicable. Einstein limits both time and space. In the fourth tenet voiced by Poe there seems to be a contact with Einstein's general theory of relativity in the unlimited field."

Edmund Clarence Stedman and George Edward Woodberry, authorities on Poe, vouch for the authenticity of the letter. It has been in Dr. Sterne's possession for twenty-six years. The letter is attached to a prospectus of the Styxus, a literary journal edited by Poe.

R. G. FOUNDATION

December 11, 1933.

Professor Albert Einstein,
Princeton University,
Princeton, New Jersey.

My dear Professor:

Although I know that you are swamped with requests of all sorts, the request I wish to make is one that only you can fill.

I have been a collector of the works of Edgar Allan Poe, America's greatest genius, for many years, and have secured the house in which he lived in Philadelphia and in which he wrote his greatest works. On January 19, 1934, the 125th Anniversary of the birth of Poe, Philadelphia is honoring his memory for the first time with a large dinner which will be held in the ballroom of the Benjamin Franklin Hotel at seven-thirty in the evening. Five hundred people will be present, and some of the leading men of the United States will be here to join in honoring Poe.

The last work that Poe wrote is called EUREKA. The significance of this short prose-poem has been beyond the comprehension of all of us, because it delves so deeply into the astronomical fields and the philosophies surrounding them. Some have even conjectured that there are a number of things in this work which are closely allied to the field in which you are supreme and show that Poe was striving to get somewhere along the trail which you have so successfully traveled.

Would it be expecting too much of you to ask that you donate the necessary time to read this short story and give the Poe scholars of America your opinion of its meaning? Whether your opinion should be favorable or unfavorable to the Poe theories, I am sure it would be a real contribution to our knowledge of the greatest American genius. It would certainly be a great honor to all of us if you would come to this dinner as my guest so that you might give us your opinion in person. Please consider this not only a personal invitation in advance of the formal one, but also an urgent request that you attend and solve for us this greatest of Poe mysteries. The story EUREKA is published in both English and German, and if you are willing to undertake the work I shall be glad to send it to you in either language, or in both.

THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY
SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS
FINE HALL
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

13. Dezember 1933

Herrn Richard Gimbel
c/o Gimbel Brothers
Philadelphia

Sehr geehrter Herr!

Ich will gern die Erzählung des Meisters
lesen und dann in aller Bescheidenheit mitteilen, was ich da-
rüber denke. Zu dem Dinner zu kommen ist mir zu meinem Bedauern
ganz unmöglich, ich freue mich aber, dass Amerika seine
schöpferischen Söhne nicht vergisst.

Mit ausgezeichneter Hochachtung

A. Einstein

December 15, 1933.

The Ottendorfer Branch,
New York Public Library,
135 Second Street,
New York City.

Gentlemen:

Some time ago you were kind enough to lend me Edgar Allan Poe's EUREKA in German. We are working on a new research of this work in German, and I shall appreciate the favor if you will lend it to me again. I shall be glad to pay any expenses involved in mailing the volume to me.

Please address me in care of Gimbel Brothers,
Philadelphia.

Thanking you in advance, I remain

Very truly yours,

R. G. FOUNDATION

December 28, 1933.

Professor Albert Einstein,
Princeton University,
Princeton, New Jersey.

My dear Professor:

I am sending you under separate cover today a copy of Edgar Allan Poe's EUREKA in English, together with a copy of the same story in German which I have borrowed from the New York Public Library. It is a matter of deep gratification to me that you have consented to read such a difficult work, the significance of which has been in controversy for nearly a century. I trust that at your earliest opportunity you will give me your opinion of its meaning, particularly in relation to the present day viewpoint on this subject. As your paper will be read to the hundreds gathered to do honor to Poe on January 19, it would be helpful if I might have it soon enough to give it some advance study before that date.

If, in addition to sending your manuscript in German, you could have your translator translate it into English, I am sure it would be more lucid than if I were to have someone here translate it.

With warmest personal greetings and thanks, and hoping that you may yet find it possible to attend the dinner, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

Princeton, 7. Januar 1934

Herrn Richard Gimbel
The Richard Gimbel Foundation
The Poe House
530 North Seventh Str.
Philadelphia

Sehr geehrter Herr!

Ich habe das Werk "Eureka" zum Teil studiert, habe aber keine Hoffnung, in allernächster Zeit dieses Studium beendigen zu können. Der am Anfang dieses Werkes gegebene fingierte Brief eines späteren Denkers, in welchem die beiden Hauptströmungen der neueren philosophischen Auffassungen des Wissens kritisiert werden, ist nach meiner Meinung eine sehr schöne Leistung eines ungewöhnlich selbständigen Geistes. Der den Rest des Werkes ausmachende Versuch einer Kosmogonie ist - im Lichte der seitherigen Entwicklung der Wissenschaft betrachtet - ein leuchtender Beweis dafür, dass auch ein noch so freier Geist an sein Zeitalter gebunden bleiben muss, wie frei von dessen Vorurteilen er sich auch fühlen mag.

Für eine Würdigung des künstlerischen Wertes des Werkes kann ich in nächster Zeit die Muse nicht finden, bei aller Anziehung, die von dem wunderbaren Manne ausgeht.

Mit ausgezeichnete Hochachtung

A. Einstein.



UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA

George E. Nitzsche
Recorder

Copy of a ^{rough} translation of a letter from A. Einstein.

Princeton, January 7, 1934.

Mr. Richard Gimbel,
The Richard Gimbel Foundation,
The Poe House,
530 North Seventh St.,
Philadelphia.

My dear sir.

I have studied the work "Eureka" in part, but I have no hope to be able to finish this study in the near future. The fictitious letter of the later thinker of this work in which both the main tendencies of the newer philosophic conception of knowledge are being criticised, is to my way of thinking, a very beautiful achievement of an unusually independent mind. The attempt of a cosmognist which makes up the rest of the work, is considered in the light of the development of science since then, a shining proof that even such a free mind must remain bound to his time no matter how free he may feel himself of the progress of such time.

For an appreciation of the artistic value of this work, I cannot find the time in the near future in spite of all the attraction which emanates from this wonderful man.

With kindest regards,
(signed) A. Einstein.

*Author! -
Pardon my pointing -
I let it do it myself.
G. E. Nitzsche*



We sent a book to the Poe House three weeks ago but haven't heard anything. The address of the sender was plainly written on the back of the package.

Professor Einstein kindly asks why you haven't acknowledged receipt of the book-

Very truly yours,
H. Dukas, Secretary.

Mr. Richard Gimbel
The Poe House
530 North Seventh Ave.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Mr. Richard Gimbel
The Poe House
530, North Seventh Str.
Philadelphia, Pa.



Wilkening Manufacturing Co.

Philadelphia



January 16, 1934

Dear Richard:

I am returning to you the German copy of Einstein's letter together with a translation which Mr. Wilkening has made. I haven't the Commercial Museum's translation here with me for comparison, but as I recall it, Mr. Wilkening's seems to be a much smoother effort.

Sincerely yours,
Henry.

Mr. Richard Gimbel
Gimbel Brothers
8th & Market Streets
Philadelphia



R. G. FOUNDATION

February 2, 1934.

Professor Albert Einstein,
Princeton University,
Princeton, New Jersey.

My dear Professor:

I cannot begin to tell you how pleased we were with your short note on EUREKA, and I hope that it will be possible for you to finish the book so that we may have your highly desired comments on the whole. I read your letter at the Poe dinner, of which a clipping is enclosed; it was a great affair, and we were very sorry that you couldnot be present. Perhaps the next time you come to Philadelphia you will do me the honor of visiting the Poe House.

When you are finished with the copy of Eureka in German please let me know, as I wish to return it to the public library from which it was borrowed.

With best wishes to you and
Mrs. Einstein, I remain

Sincerely yours,

R. G. FOUNDATION

March 6, 1934.

Professor Albert Einstein,
Princeton University,
Princeton, New Jersey.

My dear Professor:

I have received a request from the New York Public Library that I return the copy of Poe's Eureka in German.

If you are not yet finished with it will you be so good as to give me some idea when you will be through, so that I may notify the Library when they may expect the book?

With kindest personal regards,

I remain

Sincerely yours,

R. G. FOUNDATION

March 14, 1934.

Professor Albert Einstein,
Princeton University,
Princeton, New Jersey.

My dear Professor:

Please accept my apology for having written my letter of March 6. Since receiving the letter from your secretary I have located the book, which was inadvertently placed on exhibition at The Poe House. It arrived promptly and in good condition, and I regret having caused you any unnecessary trouble or concern regarding it.

Thanking you for your many kindnesses and for your interest in our Poe research, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Princeton N.J., den 10. März 1934
2, Library Place

Herrn Richard Gimbel
The Poe House
550, North Seventh Str.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sehr geehrter Herr:

Das Buch ist vor etwa drei Wochen
an Sie abgesandt worden und zwar mit der Adresse des
Absenders versehen. Professor Einstein lässt Sie freund-
lich bitten, genau nachzusehen, ob das Buch nicht doch
angekommen ist.

Mit ausgezeichneter Hochachtung

H. Dubens
Sekretärin