

Translation into English: [Chapter 2 - Catalogue of Errors for Both Theories of Relativity](#)

from the German documentation of G.O. Mueller

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V: Motives for Generation and Preservation / Error No. 2

W. C. Röntgen's bibliographical analogy to the education of Albert Einstein

If a completely untenable scientific theory can be enforced and maintained, the motives of generation and enforcement must be irrational.

G. Barth (1987) examines the question as to how an inconsistent work like that of Albert Einstein (Zur Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper [On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies]) could appear in 1905 in the highly reputed "Annalen der Physik" and he takes a closer look at the then-decisive persons in the publication's editorial office. He sees that the main responsibility lay with W. C. Röntgen, who in 1901 was the first physicist to receive the Nobel Prize and, as a consequence, was regarded as an authority.

Röntgen had two characteristics (p. 15): he understood nothing about mathematics; and his biography shows surprising parallels to Albert Einstein's development and history. Röntgen had been expelled from the grammar school in Utrecht because of a rebellious caricature. "Röntgen then failed to pass an external examination. By coincidence he learned that one could study at the polytechnic in Zurich without school-leaving certificates. Other than Einstein he did not pass his degree examinations until he was 23, though not as a teacher with specialist subjects, but as a mechanical engineer." The suspicion as to a somewhat indirect contact between Röntgen and Einstein's family in connection with the purchase, as from 1900 in Munich, of electrical equipment for his physical experiments from Albert Einstein's father's factory for electric equipment in Munich cannot be proven by Barth (p. 16), particularly since the Einstein family had already moved to Milan in 1894. - A remaining plausible motive for Röntgen, who did not see himself as a theorist and whose strength was not exactly mathematics, was to give the young scientist from Bern, who like himself had mastered a difficult educational past, a chance to publish in den "Annalen" without being able to evaluate the importance and the mathematical correctness of the work.

The history of science can check and either verify or reject this plausible suspicion of G. Barth's on the basis of the sources, if it ever emerges from the trading in devotional trinkets and the personality cult around our new Copernicus-Galilei-Newton and begins to take a serious and critical look at the history of science. Uncritical flattery and adulation from the so-called fields of science and science history is something we have meanwhile suffered for long enough. For decades now there have been no new hymns of jubilation.

Should research confirm Barth's suspicion that in recognition of certain biographical analogies Röntgen had decided to promote a young scientist without any vested interest of his own, this could be seen as a congenial move on his part. The question of a contact with the Einstein-firm in Munich would not play a great role either. Basically speaking, every scientist should have the opportunity to express himself freely in public and uncensored (even critics of the theories). Röntgen was uninvolved in the suppression of the criticism of the theory in physics which began in 1920 (Bad Nauheim). And as for the quality of published works, responsibility remains with the author.

Barth, Gotthard: Der gigantische Betrug mit Einstein : historisch und mathematisch. Zwingendorf: Verl. Wissen im Werden, 1987. 96 pages. (Wissen im Werden. 1987. Sonderband 8.)