

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. 4

The sensationally exaggerated reporting on the two theories of relativity in the print media from 1920-23 led to a form of mass suggestion, which has been abused by the relativists in a cynical way

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

E. Gehrcke (1924) gives his diagnosis already in the printed book title: Mass Suggestion. In the Foreword (pp V-VI) he draws attention to the fact that, since 1912, he had taken the view "that the theory of relativity has a psychologically interesting side to it and had become something of a mass suggestion."

His criticism of the theory was not only rejected by many colleagues but also brought him personal antagonism. In the course of the years he gathered a collection of documents, largely newspaper cuttings, that verify the development of the public discussion. (P. VI): "Thirdly, it was recently mentioned publicly that the author of the relativity movement, EINSTEIN, had himself demanded a 'psychopathological investigation' into the fact that the masses, who were not at all able to understand the theory, should have such a burning interest in it. This demand, which is highly significant, was the reason for me to present, by means of my collection of documents, the psychological side of the theory of relativity. The result will give not only psychologists in the explicit sense, but also the historians and politicians valuable insights into some of the phenomena of the intellectual life of our times and, as I hope, will be a lesson for the future, should new waves of mass suggestion break over us." Refers to Albert Einstein's proposal of a psychopathological investigation into a document that he, Gehrcke, had cited in print on pp 32-33 (article in: Westdeutsche Zeitung, Düsseldorf, 28.4.1921).

The diagnosis of mass suggestion is indeed one that is shared by both relativists and critics, as the Einstein quote shows, but the evaluation of the psychological effect is very different:

(1) As the central figure of public interest Albert Einstein regarded the razzamatazz around his person as something negative and the interest of the broad masses of laymen as incomprehensible, and even as possibly psychopathic, which is why he proposed an investigation into the reasons. Other prominent representatives of the world of relativity also expressed themselves similarly.

(2) The less-prominent representative and the general public itself see the exaggerated reporting as conclusive proof of the correctness and greatness of the theories of Albert Einstein and as well-earned recognition of the intellectual, revolutionary feats of the new Copernicus-Galilei-Newton.

(3) The critics regard the media circus as a targeted campaign aimed at enforcement of the theory and controlled from the background by the relativists, and at the same time as a defamation of all criticism as foolish, old-fashioned and motivated solely by envy and anti-Semitism. The critics address the issue of the generally lamented "press razzamatazz" relatively seldom; though they recognize that the media is developing a tendency to affirmatively strengthen the sensation instead of enabling widespread public discussion and consideration of the aspects for-and-against, because the public itself is not in a position to discuss the theories properly.

On the one hand the public develops a strong interest in the suggestive claims of the theory, such as annulment of the order of time, reversal of the relationships of motion and the remaining-younger of

travellers. What is missing, however, is the reception of criticism for this matter, which is why everyone has to believe what the relativists report and can only applaud, amazed. With its sensation-making approach the press razzamatazz promotes only the uncritical reception and an affirmative tendency towards unrestrained fantasy that is fully indulged in up to the present day in science fiction and the esoteric.

The criticism sees the mass suggestion as a defeat, as the loss of a platform for rationale discussion in public, and as a cynical misuse by the relativists as a means of securing their position of power. The utilization of mass suggestion for the purposes of a physical theory is an irrational motive.

In view of the sensation-making approach of the media, which in addition to the print media gradually also includes the areas of film and radio, most critics can only express their bewilderment at the collection of nonsense and at the cynical manipulation by the relativists.

The critics are completely powerless against the publicly expressed argumentation and assurances of the relativists that the theories of Albert Einstein are accepted by the vast majority of physicists. With this the correctness of the theories is proven, and incidentally, non-physicists have no competence whatsoever for criticism. They successfully suggest to the public at large that in physics - as in parliament - majority votes decide the correctness of the theories and the majority of physicists cannot be wrong, and incidentally, the whole issue as such is a matter for the physicists alone. No one has a right to interfere, though the public may well believe their reports.

On the one hand the relativists have themselves been surprised by the greed for sensation of the media, on the other hand they have quickly grasped the possibilities for manipulation and exploited the affirmative tendency of every sensational reporting of their theories. The media have probably contributed to the fact that the relativists came to believe they would be able to control the public discussion of their theories for ever by authoritarian means. This believe will be one that they will lose in the times of the Internet.

Gehrcke, Ernst: Die Massensuggestion der Relativitätstheorie : kulturhistorisch-psychologische Dokumente. Berlin: Meusser, 1924. 108 pages.