

70. **A personal account.** My prejudices in the matter are as follows. As an undergraduate, I was thrilled to stumble upon Einstein's paper (on Brownian motion) while browsing through old tomes in my college library, though only the formula for Avogadro's number made a little sense to me. My first scientific paper was presented at a symposium to celebrate Einstein's centenary. The praise that I heard there convinced me that Einstein was a super-genius. I appropriated a photograph of Einstein from a notice board of the Physics Department of the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi, and hung it above my table as a source of inspiration. As a scientist I was unconcerned with history. But in 1989 I started writing a series of articles for the journal *Physics Education*. I wanted to explain that the text-book version of the discovery of relativity theory was wrong, and that Einstein had arrived at it by analysing the notion of time. I read Whittaker's book for the history of the Michelson–Morley experiment, and was struck by the lucidity of the book. I relied heavily on this book to draft the third article in this series. (At this time, I did not doubt that Einstein had carried out the analysis about time. That Einstein reportedly came up with a relatively low [for a super-genius] IQ of 135 was an argument I used against IQ tests.)

To make the article more interesting for students, I wanted to put in some biographical details. I picked up Pais' book. I was horrified by his description of Whittaker, whose book I had just read. As a mathematician I was aware of Poincaré, and I found Pais's description of Poincaré a little offensive, though I believed him at this point.

Fortunately, I found Poincaré's two volumes in the library, and was fascinated by what I read. Poincaré had put, very much more clearly and thoroughly, exactly the argument that I wanted to present, the argument missing from the textbooks. What I had thought to be implicit in Einstein was explicit in Poincaré. I concluded that Pais was misrepresenting Poincaré. I was not absolutely sure of what had happened, but every time I looked at Einstein's photograph, the doubts assailed me. I could not bear to

look anymore at the photograph which was now kept on a cupboard adjacent to my table. I turned its face to the wall.

Five years later, I thought that I might have misjudged the situation. I found Einstein's photograph (I had shifted to a new house), dusted it and hung it in a corner. Subsequently, I managed to get Whittaker's second volume. I read the naming objection between the lines. After reading other literature, I found that others had the same reading. Many have argued for Einstein in ways that are not at all offensive, but I am beyond caring: I have now permanently dismounted the photograph.