

*Retrospective**

Certainly Woran Von Geht and Freidrich Spielen have made no lasting impression on the physics of relativity; it would be ridiculous to maintain otherwise. But there was a time when this currently obvious fact might not have been anticipated by even the most astute of the stellar researchers in this field. The considerable volume and erudition of their contribution to the pages of *Zeitschrift Feuergeschenk* actually comprised the bulk of many issues in the latter days of the last century, although more recent translations (and even electronically scanned versions that continue to replace the yellowing pages of archives of many journals) have mercifully omitted many of these articles altogether. Considerations quite other than sentimental nostalgia should preclude such abhorrent powers of the establishment to obliterate the legitimate past – if only to guarantee an adequate history of currently held views one would think – to maintain the record of the arguments they have withstood. Truth should be served, should it not?

In those early days, what was apparent was still esteemed as paramount to the emergence of any covering theory of natural phenomena and the afore-mentioned researchers led the hopeless crusade to re-establish the preeminence of observation and induction over deductions from mathematical formulae within the physical sciences. Not, of course, that they did not assume the legitimacy of the mathematical formulations of their peers – quite to the contrary. They merely sought physical explanations of the physical phenomena associated with these prescriptions. But at that time and henceforth the counter contingent, that presumed mathematical idealizations to be sufficient in themselves without explanation in physical terms, were in the ascendancy.

Some historians who have treated this period have doubted whether Von Geht and Spielen were separate individuals at all and propose that they may have been one person speaking in alternative bipolar modes under pseudonyms. Freidrich, of course, took a rather cajoling and frivolous tone – if that is even conceivable in his native tongue. On the other hand, Von Geht proceeded somewhat more laboriously to drive home intricate points concerning, for example, the gyrations of light propagated along each of the otherwise unaccompanied spatial dimensions – propounding with fairly sound arguments two additional degrees of freedom along each of the three traditional axes. In the end neither of their diverse approaches proved capable of budging the skeptics to benefit their cause – the cause of science, if you will. In later years Von Geht was known to have become embittered not only by the boredom with which he was beheld including, but not limited to, the general aversion of others knowledgeable in the field to engage in intercourse on his alternative paradigm, but also by the open antagonism of certain laymen to his person. Freidrich gradually drifted into other fields characterized by less contention and perhaps more suited to his *modus operandi*. He was quite like the most successful researcher in the field whose last thirty years as an icon of science produced no work of lasting quality, but whose senile smile and lovable disposition endeared him greatly to society at large. No, Friedrich and Woran were most certainly not the same man.

But enough of Spielen and Von Geht. Such men play minor roles and go as quickly as they arrived upon the stage. So let us rather summarize their principal hypotheses that regrettably are no longer presented in the texts of the field as even once-viable alternatives to accepted dogma – this even in spite of refusals by their detractors to even consider the falsifying experiments that could have resolved this whole issue honorably. Their principal hypotheses that have all been rejected are these:

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- 1) There is an explanation of the mathematics of relativity compatible with six additional spatial dimensions based quite simply on banal appearances of phenomena.
- 2) Euclidean geometrical relations between observers do not apply even within the restricted domain of uniform relative motion – the coordinate axes of relatively moving observers cannot be aligned.
- 3) Instead of parallels meeting in the end, it is perpendiculars that effect the breach with ancient Greece.
- 4) Space and time are indeed relative – and unpredictably so.
- 5) Finally, each interaction between particles of matter is characterized as having unique durations and distances of light travel that effect all of the above.

So let us entertain for a moment in reverie what will never be accepted as objective truth – sometimes that is even better – that what the universe ‘looks like’ to each of us independent of our relative motions is in the most real sense what ‘is’. Even though this sense of reality denies the everyday notion of the same universe observed by those in relative motions, there were considerable commensurable compensations.

However absurd their notions may seem to the gentle reader in retrospect, it would have been fun to have played with such ideas before having to let them go. Spielen and Von Geht would have appreciated that. And although one should never demand fairness in life, one wonders about – yes, the fairness of – the continuing interminable discussions of idealizations that David Hume noted for all time as being totally senseless since they are beyond refutation.