

**Conversations with Velikovsky,
Journal Entries 1971:**

**VELIKOVSKY SEEKS TO "EXPLOIT" EDGAR ALLAN POE'S
'EIROS AND CHARMION" FOR MANKIND IN AMNESIA,
ETC.**

by Eric Miller© January, 2013

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"Talked with V a few minutes ago. Said he read Poe's piece and not only did he read it but he said he wished to "exploit it" with my permission. Talked about coming out to S.D. In May, if it can be arranged. Need money for Th [Thermo luminescent] tests, etc. Asked about my book, I said I thought I might let is [*sic* "sit"] for six months. He said it would be better for him? Or me? Not to be influenced by each other's work--he's working on his book now (I assumed from what he said). But he would read it, anyway. Wants it in a form that would be least difficult for him to read. I said I thought he should have the book for the research value--That's about it. He was in a good mood. Conveyed greetings to Treash and Casady. Said in 21 years he had not run into Poe's piece, though he has been referred to thousands of books.

Talked to Bob Stephanos in Phil. [i.e., Philadelphia] He still sounds a bit bitter about his break with V. I didn't enquire into it. Said un-nice things. I expect I will hear from him soon as he seemed anxious to reestablish communications. I do not think I want to encourage it too much. He referred me to a book called "Riddle of the Earth." Said not to tell V. about the book I was writing as V. didn't want any competition. On the contrary V. has been a great encouragement. I said nothing. The conversation summed up, unpleasanties of the past and I have no interest in it. "

April 18th

Had a long talk with V this afternoon. There is so much to relate. We talked for almost forty minutes. It was very pleasant and my call was warmly received. V. began by saying that he very much appreciated my poem. [I'll send a copy another time] I couldn't resist asking if he enjoyed it. He said that there were a few things in it which he especially liked. Before I got V., the Mrs. answered and seemed in a good mood. "I'm going to listen, too" she told me. I responded that I would be very happy that she did.

It was a little more relaxed and I felt we had enough time to reestablish basically friendly relations. V. said that "what was [is] the 21st anniversary of W & C, anyway? Who remembered it," [he said] other than me. "It seems only you have remembered it." I said, truthfully, that that was not the case as all of us out here were cognizant of the event. "After all," I said, "It's a birthday." After that I did not hear him disavow it, not even tongue and cheek.

I then asked him if he read "Eureka" [I had previously recommended it] and he said that he had not, after ascertaining that the spelling was an English version of the Greek word which meant "I have found it." -- I responded that was indeed the correct word. I then said that it was another piece by Edgar Allen Poe. This time he immediately made the relationship, "Oh, yes," he said, "Poe." I could tell by his response that he was also immediately positively prepared to receive any remarks on the subject. I said that this philosophy piece by Poe was quite extraordinary in that I thought he presented a very beautiful theory of electromagnetic forces in the solar system and how no

conflict exists between Newtonian conceptions and conceptions of an electrically charged universe. That Poe makes a very sure footed analysis of Laplace, Newton, LaGrange, and others and that I thought his theory to be of great significance to the entire question which his [Velikovsky's] work raises. I said, "I don't know if you are working on a physical theory of an electromagnetically charged universe yourself but if you are I think you will find that Poe's work will be a valuable contribution to any theory. "Helpful?" he said, with a kind of superior joy in humility, "He is probably a predecessor."

Further I remarked, "Dr. Velikovsky, I even want to tell you this. I felt my initial claim to fame was having solved, or at least explained, some of the basic logical problems that we confront from a reductionist point of view. Particularly involving the question of P and not-P, not-P having its corollary in the physical sciences as the void. I was aware of some of the logical problems involved in an assumption about the question and I now find that Poe has the basic elements worked out and he is able from this point of view to construct a theory which embraces an electromagnetically charged universe as well as embodies a Newtonian perspective. Dr. V. said, "I will read it," --Mrs. V. said, "where are we to get such a thing"-- before I could say anything V. said, "That is no problem."

"Why don't you use this yourself in your book," V said in a very pleasant tone. "I think you could make better use of it," I replied. "I'm not really very much of a scholar and I'm sure I'm not as much detailed oriented as you are. V. made some aristocratically sincere disavowal and said something to the effect that he did not have a great many details on all these matters.

"How is your book going?" he asked. I said that it was going well that there was always something to add to it. "Yes, this I know and it does not become less so." I then again insisted that I was not really a scholar and, as far as a book was concerned, I had one. "I have enough material for a book" but that I really wasn't in any particular hurry. The important thing was that he expresses himself on the subject of the psychological significance of amnesia in terms of his theory. I even went so far as to say, "One of the reasons I would particularly like to have you come out to California in May is that we might find time for me to interview you on this subject." -- V. said that he was writing a book on the subject and that he would not want to be interviewed on the subject prior to publication. I said that I had no idea how imminent the publication of his work might be but if it appeared that it might still be a few years that it might be better to sketch out the main outlines of his theory in advance for the public benefit. I do not recall what he specifically said at this point, but I am certain the response so characteristic of him can be summed up in the world "This is possible."

I did not let it rest with this. I said further, "I hope I am not too lacking in humility if I express the opinion that my own literary and historical perspectives on this question and a certain understanding of recent historical events might qualify me to act as a catalyst to the presentation of your ideas. All this was very well received but he asked, "Why don't you write about these things yourself?" I replied, "Oh, Dr. Velikovskiy, I have so many things to write about that basically I would just like the public to have the opportunity to think about these things."

I think it was at this point that I suddenly said, "Oh, about "Eureka" it is more than a physical theory, it is a metaphysical theory as well. I mention this because a scientist might find the metaphysical language inappropriate--particularly in

regard to the term Deity, but this really presented no logical difficulty." I understand," he said. I have a humorous feeling about all this, I should like to interject. "Give it to Poe!" In my fantasy I imagine Velly is of the same heart--I mention that I might be able to express certain aspects of the question in a clearer more objective language but that so far as I can tell, Poe has the basic understanding."

I had the feeling that V. was respectfully silent when I talked about these things and that he understood every word that I said. [Later he would tell me that he read and listened to every word of mine and that he also remembered them] We discussed him coming out here, he said that maybe he should first come to San Diego and whatever happens. I said that I thought that was the best idea but that he had to practically arrange the expenses and that I thought that could be done. We talked about whether he should interrupt his books at this time or should he wait for some other time. I said I thought the best time was now and that the modern world would be receptive to his psychological ideas. I think in spirit he consented."

Comment: As it happens, the magazine *Psychology Today* consented to having me do an interview with V. on the subject of Cultural (or Collective) Amnesia, and V. also consented. All the details were worked out. The Literary Drama Editor for the *San Diego Magazine*, herself a poet and an early mentor of mine (between ages of 16-18) highly recommended me and the deal was on. V. cancelled at the last minute. But enough of these old entries for today.

Sometime after Oct. 24, 1971

Velikovsky said "There is still much violence toward my work." I didn't quite get the word "violence"--and muttered some agreeable thing, or said I didn't hear the word. He emphasized it. "I said violence!" There was no mistaking the word. I only added "predictable." He said collective amnesia or cultural amnesia, and seemed to hang between the words, so I offered "it is still the same subject matter." [He said] "Others are working on this subject. Before you, in the lecture in Canada, but you have your own ideas, Mann, the Chinese (by which he meant the information probably I sent him). You wrote me beautiful letters, and about the influence of my work. But as a friend I warn you do not fight with Einstein. As to your work I cannot disapprove or approve it. You have your own ideas. I wish you luck. "

****Note:** Of course no one was using the term "Cultural Amnesia," certainly not Velikovsky, prior to my discussion with him about the matter. It was not until the 1974 Canadian Conference that V. used my term "Cultural Amnesia" in his lead article for the Conference—and never even told me that there was one! I found out years later.

Feb 3, 1971

"Talked with V. last night. Read him part of Poe's "Conversation of Eiros and Charmion". He was very excited by it. I told him that I was so surprised to find the piece that I couldn't resist calling him. V. was particularly impressed by the remarks on Jupiter, etc. "How can this be," he said.

"What is the date?" He said "Peoples of the Sea" will be released to the public in Oct. He asked how my book [i.e., Cultural Amnesia] was going and I said I thought I was getting it all rounded up now and would be finished soon. "That is an illusion," he said, with a laugh, "a mirage, believe me it is so. For ten years I thought I was almost finished. I have letters ten years ago saying I was almost finished."

You're probably right, I replied. "How many pages do you have now?" [he asked]"120-." "That is not enough for a book. That is only 60 pages." I said, "It's single spaced, about 50 words per page." "Oh, that is better. And you can include a half dozen letters to me." He asked about Mark, Treash and said Treash gave him valuable information. He asked about my job and how I was doing, did I make enough money and other kindly inquiries.

Also he said about Poe's thing, "Perhaps this comes from the unconscious, artists may have a deeper contact with these things. I learned of a German psychic who many years ago had said that the historical chronologies were 500 years off, as I show in my work." -- At any rate he was very pleased and excited, "I will use that; you use it, too. We will both use it." He gave special thanks for me calling and wished me good health.

Clifford Fadiman and Mendolson [Mendleson?] wanted V to do a documentary, that he had been invited to L.A. and San Diego, and was open to invitations. Sounded to me like he was interested in coming to West Coast. At any rate--It was a very pleasant conversation."

to be continued. . .