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Collected and Edited by Alice Calaprice: The New Quotable Einstein

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A happy man is too satisfied with the present to think too much about the future.

Written at age seventeen (September 18, 1896) for a school French essay entitled "My Future Plans." *CPAE*, Vol. 1, Doc. 22

Strenuous intellectual work and the study of God's Nature are the angels that will lead me through all the troubles of this life with consolation, strength, and uncompromising rigor.

To Pauline Winteler, mother of Einstein's girlfriend Marie, May (?) 1897. *CPAE*, Vol. 1, Doc. 34; Einstein Archive 29-453

I decided the following about our future: I will look for a position immediately, no matter how modest it is. My scientific goals and my personal vanity will not prevent me from accepting even the most subordinate position.

To future wife Mileva Marić, July 7(?), 1901, while having difficulty finding his first job. *CPAE*, Vol. 1, Doc. 114

*In living through this "great epoch," it is difficult to reconcile oneself to the fact that one belongs to that mad, degenerate species that boasts of its free will. How I wish that somewhere there existed an island for those who are wise and of good will! In such a place even I should be an ardent patriot!

To Paul Ehrenfest, early December 1914. *CPAE*, Vol. 8, Doc. 39

*Do not feel sorry for me. Despite terrible appearances, my life goes on in full harmony; I am entirely devoted to reflection. I resemble a farsighted man who is charmed by the vast horizon and who is disturbed by the foreground only when an opaque object obstructs his view.

To Helene Savić, September 8, 1916, after separation from his family. In Popović, ed., *In Albert's Shadow*, 110. *CPAE*, Vol. 8, Doc. 258

I have come to know the mutability of all human relationships and have learned to insulate myself against both heat and cold so that a temperature balance is fairly well assured.

To Heinrich Zangger, March 10, 1917. *CPAE*, Vol. 8, Doc. 309

I am by heritage a Jew, by citizenship a Swiss, and by disposition a human being, and *only* a human being, without any special attachment to any state or national entity whatsoever.

To Adolf Kneser, June 7, 1918. *CPAE*, Vol. 8, Doc. 560

I was originally supposed to become an engineer, but the thought of having to expend my creative energy on things that make practical everyday life even more refined, with a loathsome capital gain as the goal, was unbearable to me.

To Heinrich Zangger, before August 11, 1918. *CPAE*, Vol. 8, Doc. 597

*I lack any sentiment of the sort; all I have is a sense of duty toward all people and an attachment to those with whom I have become intimate.

To Heinrich Zangger, June 1, 1919, regarding his lack of attachment to any particular place, as, for example, physicist Max Planck was to Germany. *CPAE*, Vol. 9, Doc. 52

*I also had little inclination for history [in school]. But I think it had more to do with the method of instruction than with the subject itself.

To sons Hans Albert and Eduard, June 13, 1919. *CPAE*, Vol. 9, Doc. 60

By an application of the theory of relativity to the taste of readers, to-day in Germany I am called a German man of science, and in England I am represented as a Swiss Jew. If I come to be represented as a *bête noire*, the descriptions will

be reversed, and I shall become a Swiss Jew for the Germans and a German man of science for the English!

To *The Times* (London), November 28, 1919, written at the request of the newspaper. Quoted in Frank, *Einstein: His Life and Times*, 144. Also referred to in a letter to Paul Ehrenfest, December 4, 1919. See also *CPAE*, Vol. 7, Doc. 26

I have not yet eaten enough of the Tree of Knowledge, though in my profession I am obliged to feed on it regularly.

To Max Born, before November 9, 1919. In Born, *Born-Einstein Letters*, 16, *CPAE*, Vol. 9, Doc. 162

*Another funny thing is that I myself count everywhere as a Bolshevik, God knows why; perhaps because I do not take all that slop in the *Berliner Tageblatt* as milk and honey.

To Heinrich Zangger, December 15 or 22, 1919. *CPAE*, Vol. 9, Doc. 217

With fame I become more and more stupid, which of course is a very common phenomenon.

To Heinrich Zangger, December 24, 1919. *CPAE*, Vol. 9, Doc. 233; Einstein Archive 39-726. Also quoted in Dukas and Hoffmann, *Albert Einstein, the Human Side*, 8

*Since the light deflection result became public, such a cult has been made out of me that I feel like a pagan idol. But this, too, God willing, will pass.

To Heinrich Zangger, January 3, 1920. *CPAE*, Vol. 9, Doc. 242

*I do know that kind fate allowed me to find a couple of nice ideas after many years of feverish labor.

To Dutch physicist H. A. Lorentz, January 19, 1920. *CPAE*, Vol. 9, Doc. 265