



McGill
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Foundations & Philosophy of Science Unit

26.9.1977

Dear Karl,

The Revista Venezolana de Filosofía has asked me to contribute a paper to an issue devoted to your philosophy. I am thinking of writing something on your three worlds doctrine.

As you know, you succeeded in shocking us all when, in Amsterdam, you first proposed that doctrine. Here was the most ferocious critic of Plato and Hegel suddenly vindicating them to some extent.

What could have produced such a deep change, if change there was? I have a conjecture and I wish to test it by asking you whether or not it is far of the mark.

My conjecture is this. In 1966 you wrote your "Quantum mechanics without 'the observer'". You defended there the thesis that quantum mechanics is an objective theory, in the sense that it does not refer to any subject of knowledge (or observer) and moreover is not true because it happens to be believed by some people but because it corresponds to the facts. Soon after you finished writing that paper you started your Amsterdam address. What more natural than to generalize the thesis "Physics is objective knowledge" to "All science is objective knowledge, and even the science of objective knowledge is or ought to be objective, i.e. subject-free"?

Was that actually the genesis of your "Epistemology without a knowing subject"?

Second question: whatever the answer to the above question, would you authorize my translating your answer and having it published in the Revista Venezolana de Filosofía?

Love to both of you from Marta and

Mario Bunge

1942

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD
SUBJECT: [Illegible]

1. [Illegible]

2. [Illegible]

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