



McGill
University

Foundations & Philosophy of Science Unit

1979.11.12

Profesor Sir Karl Popper

Dear Karl

Dover Publications Inc. (of New York) are studying the possibility of reprinting THE CRITICAL APPROACH. They will take their time. I will let you know the result of their musings.

I am enclosing herewith a paper of mine on you three world schema, which I wrote two years ago but was published only recently. It has a P.D. reporting that in a letter to me you refuted my initial conjecture about the origin of your idea of world 3. Given your knowledge of Latin and French you should be able to get the general drift.

Next February or March you should receive a copy of my forthcoming book THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM, which is a sort of dual of THE SELF AND ITS BRAIN even though it was not conceived as an explicit reply to the latter. In fact the nucleus of the book is an explicit mathematical formulation of the emergent materialist thesis that mind is a set (though not any set!) of brain functions. It also contains a criticism of Eccles' obscurantist view that mind is mysterious and beyond the reach of science, and of your own three worlds schema. However, for the most part the book is constructive rather than critical. It relies heavily on recent physiological psychology as well as on my own ontology (THE FURNITURE OF THE WORLD and A WORLD OF SYSTEMS), where I elucidate the general concepts of thing and system, property and state, event and process, and organism. So, if someone wants to know what I mean by a brain state, or by an interaction among neural systems, I can refer him to a collection of postulates, theorems, and definitions that are not concocted ad hoc for the mind-body problem.

Next month I'll be off to México for a philosophical congress and to Nepal for a Unesco conference on the philosophical conditions for the emergence of science. In my paper I will discuss also nonphilosophical conditions, such as a modicum of abundance, freedom, respect for knowledge, and curiosity. Economists and politicians have a tendency to believe that money and bureaucracy are sufficient to generate science in any country, and that science is nothing but the handmaiden of the economy, so one has to repeat those platitudes over and over again.

Best to both of you from Marta and

Mario Bunge

Postal address: 3478 Peel Street, Montreal, PQ Canada H3A 1W7

