

Montreal, 6.3. 1972

Dear Hintikka

Re: special issue of SYNTHESE

You know that, as a consequence of the student revolution, there has been a revival of interest in dialectical materialism all over the non-communist world. However, so far the dominant attitudes have been dictated by politics: there seem to be no new serious studies of dialectics as a philosophy, either pro or con. Not even the critics of dialectics seem to have contributed anything new over the past 20 years or so, i.e., since the studies by Hook, Popper, Wetter, and Acton.

The time may be ripe for stimulating a serious study of dialectics, one without political pver (or rather under) tones. I have seen a couple of attempts to mathematize dialectics, and I can think of many objections to dialectics besides these I raise in my Method, Model and Being. In any case since there are so many millions of people who swear by dialectics, it is high time to try and throw some light on it.

I suggest you do your share by devoting a double issue of SYNTHESE to dialectics as an ontological and epistemological theory. More precisely, I suggest you invite papers discussing some of the following subjects:

- (1) reformulations of the theses ("laws") of dialectics in contemporary philosophic al terms, if possible without resorting to pre-Socratic metaphors and Hegelian jargon;
- (2) formalization of dialectics with the help of logic or mathematics. (if such an enterprise is claimed or shown to be impossible, I won't weep!);
- (3) critical analyses of the theses of dialectics and of dialectics as a whole, as a system of metaphysics and epistemology;
- (4) critical analyses of the performance of dialectics in contemporary natural and social science;
- (5) possibility of dialectics without Marxism and of Marxism without dialectics.

Ideally, one half of the issue should be constituted by invited papers and the other by contributed papers. And the articles should come from both camps and from both sides of the two curtains, if possible even from the most rabid of all, namely the East Germans and the Chinese. I see only one danger: you would be flooded with papers.

of a wish

No need to reply: this is just the expression/of a reader of SYNTHESE.

Cordially

Mario Bunge