

POPPER



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Dear Karl and Hennie

Last night I dreamed of you. You and I were neighbors and we invited you to our house. When the time came our house was invaded by unknown people who started to dance wildly at the tune of that hateful American music. Marta and I were appalled but paralyzed. Finally I succeeded in getting away to warn you that you should not come. I found only Hennie (Karl was hiding somewhere) who received me with a bunch of small carnations from her garden. That was all. Not even a psychoanalyst could make much of it. On the other hand this decided me to ask you, Karl, a couple of nagging questions that have been bothering me for some time.

1. How can you be both a partisan of evolutionary biology, and even of a biological theory of knowledge, and a dualist in the mind-body problem? It seems to me that the whole point of being an evolutionary epistemologist is to explain the emergence and further development of psychic capabilities in a naturalistic way instead of clinging to the untestable hypothesis that the mind is a separate substance from the body.
2. How can you be both a methodological individualist in the philosophy of social science and reject any attempts to explain society in psychological terms, as when one says that a given social trait is kept as long as it benefits all or most of the individuals composing the society? It would seem that individualism cum antipsychologism must result in an obscurantist denial of the possibility of social science. (Incidentally, I am neither an individualist nor a holist, but a systemist -- but this is another story.)

I am busy writing volumes 3 and 4 of my Treatise on Basic Philosophy; they deal with what I call scientific metaphysics. Marta is busy teaching and learning, and the children (Eric, 7, and Silvia, 1) are doing fine: they seem to us to be beautiful and intelligent, though also exceedingly selfish. We'll be spending the next academic year in México city. The university has asked me to supervise and launch a philosophy of science program, and Marta will be doing research at an institute of mathematics.

I imagine you are terribly busy, now that Karl has become the foremost philosopher and that everybody has something to say for or against him. So, although I'd love to have a reply to my questions, I'll understand if he keeps silent.

Love from Marta and

A handwritten signature consisting of a vertical line with a horizontal stroke at the top, resembling a stylized 'M' or 'B'.

Mario Bunge

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