

Philosophy of Science

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Editorial

Where Is Philosophy of Science?

THE time has come for the editor to report on the progress of his journal. *Philosophy of Science* is in its fifth year. For four years we have experimented with papers of every variety, with subjects of both broad and narrow scope, and with styles designed primarily to instruct or primarily to entertain. We have been accused of sponsoring any one of a dozen movements as well as their opposites. We have been both blamed and praised for opinions not our own. We have been urged to swing right or to swing left, to abandon science or to abandon philosophy, to join in certain aversions or in certain enthusiasms of the day, and to do all those things promptly and full-heartedly on pain of excommunication, i.e. cancellation of subscription.

An example is needed. Some men of faint heart were greatly alarmed by the inclusion of articles which contained symbolic material. In spite of the fact that no more than 10 per cent of the space in any one year was used for that purpose, several stated with conviction that the journal had fallen into the hands of professional logicians who filled it *completely* or almost completely with cryptic symbols. On the other hand several distinguished founders of the *Journal of Symbolic Logic* found the 10 per cent of our space all too little, and actually felt they needed a special journal to obtain adequate pasture.

Another example. Several letters on the part of the editor failed to convince a noted American philosopher that we were not exclusively a government by logical positivists, a mere adjunct

of the Vienna Circle. The correspondence took place when four dialectical materialists, two convinced metaphysicians, a vitalist, and a mild defender of mysticism had had their say in the pages of the journal. Only two members of the Vienna Circle and a sympathizer had represented the positivist voices. Were those voices too loud, or was the eminent philosopher too impatient with differences of opinion?

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In the distribution of attention to the individual sciences physics proved to be the favorite. This preponderance, too, was exaggerated by some commentators to an undue extent. The allusions to physics occurred principally and naturally in articles on methodology and on such topics as causality, time and space. There were times, however, when psychology and biology took the lead. The social sciences and the linguistic aspects of science have also been well represented. Historical and philological material has appeared. Now and then the humorous department, *A New Budget of Paradoxes*, took up the perennial battle with the cranks who prove Einstein and Newton naively wrong and persist in squaring the circle.

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Allowing for a cancellation of prejudices, the editor still has the ever-pressing responsibility of sustaining the positive, liberal program announced in the first issue of the journal, a program satisfactory to a many-hued Editorial Board and to an equally colorful Advisory Board, a program of *free* discussion or of an open forum conducted in the *research spirit* of a united front against blindness.

We invite readers to present their criticisms freely but fairly, to request specifically the kind of material for which they feel a need, and to consider carefully the advisability of taking an interest in subjects away from their specialization even at the cost of some effort.

We invite contributors, who have been hanging back on account of some notion that we are sectarian, to present *their* views, and to join battle with those who have spoken first. We have

published material with which the entire editorial board was in disagreement. We felt that the authors were sincere and represented prevalent opinions. Subsequent issues contained what we thought were refutations. The debates, we felt, should have gone on and should continue to go on.

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The following resolutions for the fifth year are announced unreservedly:

1. We shall discountenance unnecessary "difficult writing".
2. We shall censor unnecessary technicalities.
3. We shall encourage clarity and brevity, delicately spiced with wit.
4. We shall encourage papers which give the *factual* and *historical* background of their discussion.
5. We shall allow for a certain amount of papers devoted to bringing the general reader up-to-date on the progress of the sciences, e.g. "the present status of genetics", or "present problems in astronomy" and the like.
6. We shall allow for a certain number of papers devoted to simple expositions of specialties that people wish to know better, e.g. "what is group theory?", or "what is phylo-analysis?", or "what is dynamic cytology?"

In short, we shall try to construct on the basis of several years' experience a more readable, a more comprehensive, and yet, a more penetrating journal of free research in the philosophy of science.

W. M. M.