

7 Jan 1953

Dear Mr Lucas. I was highly interested to receive and read your letter of Dec 20. It is seldom that the study of philosophical ^{matters} principles is made from this side, ^{proceeding} from Marx and Dietzgen, chiefly, I think, because the connection with socialism and workers' class fight make all people versed in ^{abstract} philosophical literature instinctively ^{averse} to ^{such} ideas smelling ^{moreover} (materialistic). The Hegelian garb in which Marx and Engels ~~wrote~~ clothed their philosophical ideas makes it very difficult for modern people to grasp the underlying principles. Here Dietzgen is an important aid. He formulated the basic ideas with ^{admirable} ~~complete~~ clearness. Yet the application to physical science ^{in his work} (is vitiated) by the lack of clearness of the physical concepts at that time (e.g. the confusion of energy and force, both called Kraft by Helmholtz). So when trying to arrive at complete clearness ~~of~~ the basis of modern natural science, we have to do a great deal of work ourselves. — though the demand of practical (scientific) life mostly leave little time for it. For this reason I am pleased to hear that you have completed a study ^{along} ~~in~~ these lines. I certainly are willing to read your manuscript and, when possible, to give my opinion. There is, however, one difficulty; for the moment and the next ^{month} ~~time~~ all my time is absorbed by a work on the history of astronomy, of which I am preparing the manuscript; ^{it is pressing work, for which the publisher is waiting.} so that it will not be possible for me to do any other work besides it in the next, say, 4 (or 6) months. I am sorry that I must ~~have~~ you wait so long, but I see no possibility for me to find leisure in the next months. [What you write about the character of your results awakens my interest.] ^{Meanwhile} I take the pleasure of sending you a reprint of an article, which I suppose you do not know; ~~and~~ which ^{was} ~~is~~ ~~an~~

attempt to treat a topic of discussion among the positivists at the time,
~~and~~ along the line of ~~the~~ ^{our} ~~fundamental~~ fundamental ideas. In so far as I
know it did not find the least echo. Sincerely yours -

Leish 20 Aug. '53
(Holland)

108/14

Dear Mr Lucas

I have now, during a month of vacance, occupied myself with the manuscript you sent me. My impression is that as to their contents your results and explanations are right, ^{and valuable} so far as I could understand them, but that you present them in a form very difficult to understand and even to read. So that I suppose that I can greatly agree with what you are contending, but I am not sure ^{for each part of} of it. The cause seems to be that you do not argue straight-forward and concisely but ^{often} are going on wide detours ^{over} accessories, whereby the reader loses the thread, or at least has difficulty to hold fast. Now the matter is this that ^{with} subtle epistemological argument we cannot, in reading, keep the tension of attention indefinitely without being fatigued; and ^{often} ~~the tension~~ it slackens when we are, after many pages of accessory stuff, just at last in the midst of the real argument. Often a page had to be read for the second or third time to peel out the course of the demonstration; and I do not think this is entirely due to my insufficient knowledge beforehand of what ^{are} the precise ideas of Bacon, Hume, Whewell & Mill. ^(inadequate presentation) I am sorry that ^{your} ~~your~~ ^{in elucidating these important theoretical problems have been marred by} ~~your~~ ^{part of the causes} ~~part of the causes~~ why your work was refused by the professor of the faculty; the fault is not entirely theirs. They ^{had to} ~~must~~ ^{try to discover} ~~find~~ (a good course of argument while it is enveloped in a ~~confusing~~ ^{quite} mass of not ^{find} ~~exactly~~ relevant sentences. In reading your p. 20 on the Induction of Causes I ^{find} ~~had the impression~~ ^{begin to} that it is all irrelevant and could be omitted till on p. 21 you ^{could} deal with Bacon's work. I have the impression that ^{regular} ~~you~~ if you ^{could} condense your work into a strict course of demonstrations by ^{regular} argument (ev. with ^{such} short examples for illustration) you will save a lot of space and make it more readable, i.e. that the reader feels contented with every sentence because it makes things clear to him. In such a reduced form I think your study would ^{surely} be worth while to be published and discussed. Now it makes the impression that you were writing away all that came in your mind.

+ effort

And in the present times it is rather difficult to get printed even small valuable
~~own~~ writings.

I am not sure, ^{moreover,} that you realize what demands are put up for a thesis,
also ^{for} its formal side, as to carefulness in the execution of the manuscript.
I suppose that what you sent to me is only a copy, somewhat hastily
corrected and provided with difficultly readable titles of the chapters. If not,
the refusal of the faculty to accept it, would be still better understandable.

I am returning the m.s. to you as registered document at the
same time with this letter. I hope that you will be able to give it such
a condensed form that the results of your study ~~is~~ come out clearly and
give satisfaction to the readers

Yours Truly.

20 Aug 53