15th February 1966

Dear Joske,

Thank you very much indeed for your fresh and interesting paper on
Leibniz's place in the history of physics. It is refreshing to read
papers in which the history of science is embedded in the history of
metaphysics. I should only like to make one general criticism of
your exposition, and then a criticism of a small detail. The general
criticism concerns the lack of footnotes and occasionally insufficient
details which however I suppose will appear in the final version
(you know that I am in love with details). The minor criticism is about
non-Euclidean geometry. It seems to me an open historical problem
what role the vulnerability of the parallel axiom played in the interest
aroused by this axiom as opposed to the problem whether it was invulnerable
and in fact provable from the rest of the axioms. I think that your
reasons may have played some part with some of the people involved, and
I shall certainly look into it closely as soon as I have some free time.
I regard as the main reason in the mathematical development of the subject
this unprovability or provability problem, and non-Euclidean geometries
as a means for proving independence. Also my thesis is that the birth
of modern logic is not in Boole nor in Bolzano etc. but in this
independence problem and its solution with non-Euclidean models. The
main result of the development is rather the concept of model (and
related concepts of logical consequence, independence etc.) rather than
non-Euclidean geometries. Anyway this of course is trivially familiar
to you and my only claim is that the point about vulnerability which you
so rightly stress is only one factor in a more complicated development,
so all that perhaps you would do is to qualify one or two sentences,
but as I said this is a minor point and I found it most interesting
that you call attention to Kant's antinomies and Leibniz's dissatisfaction with
Euclidean infinities as precursors of the intellectual climate that gave
birth to non-Euclidean geometry.

I was personally pleased to see your paper on Sensationalism published.
I shall re-read it now.

I hope you are keeping well. I am very busy still with editing the