

134

Letter,  
JA. W. to  
K. Gödel

As if that weighty tome on gravitation that I send you some days ago were not misery enough for one season of the year to be weighted down with, here I am sending you something else.

I was quite startled a few months ago at that little party at Oskar Morgenstern's to learn that you believe in the existence of what is sometimes called "an objective universe out there" in contravention of the consequences of the quantum principle as presently envisaged. Of course I may well have misunderstood. But if I understood correctly that would explain why one should have no particular motive to try to understand the quantum principle in new terms, whether in terms of the calculus of propositions or in any other terms. Why try to explain something that one does not believe to be correct! You are a very busy man, I know, and I'm the last person that would want to impose on you to ask you to write a letter. But could you take time enough to send me the substitute for a letter by checking off items on the attached copy of this letter and return that copy to me in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope? With Oskar Morgenstern and many many others I share great admiration for you and your work, and I will be honored and very much helped to have this indication of your present thinking.

Every good wish for 1974.

Sincerely,

John Archibald Wheeler

Have you published on why you disagree with the quantum principle?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Question not well-defined
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have not published the slightest mention
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have published; see \_\_\_\_\_

What is your central point?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Too long to state here and now
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

15 Mar '74;  
Book needed  
on Gödel  
called  
"Einstein's  
Convivial"

1. W. James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life's Issues* (New York, 1890), p. 159.

References

Bell Telephone Laboratories,  
Murray Hill, New Jersey 07974

JOHN R. PIERCE

We've had 70 years to understand the phenomenon, and still we don't.

When we listen to a person speaking or read a page of print, much of what we think we see or hear is supplied from our memory. We overlook misprints, imagining the right letters, though we see the wrong ones; and how little we actually hear, when we listen to speech, we realize when we go to a foreign theatre; for there what troubles us is not so much that we cannot understand what the actors say as that we cannot hear their words. The fact is that we hear quite as little under similar conditions at home, only our mind, being fuller of English verbal associations, supplies the requisite material for comprehension upon a much slighter auditory hint.

James said (1):

"Perceptual restoration of missing speech sounds" (23 Jan., p. 392). *Whitson notes* that "our illusory perception of the speaker's utterance rather than the stimulus actually reaching our ears—reflects characteristics of speech perception which may help us understand the perceptual mechanisms underlying verbal organization." Perhaps. In a book published in 1899 William James said (1):

Our Ears Do Deceive Us

Dear Professor  
Paul Cohen  
interested?  
there is any  
Saturday, Feb  
in hopes the  
twenty years  
conclusion of  
principle; the  
logic and the  
is connected  
that only wh  
understand  
in search of  
ious things  
issues that  
time when t  
logic". Th  
the door to  
tie to phys  
undecidabil  
afraid, did  
with precis  
so much to  
at any rate  
specialist  
I will have  
Every good