



UNIVERSIDAD DE BUENOS AIRES
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS

June 28th, 1960

Dear Professor Popper:

Thank you for your letter of June 21.

The Spanish translation of ch. 1 of LSD is in press, and 4 copies of it will be rushed to you as soon as they are born. The other chapter will take more time. There have been difficulties with the printing shop.

I am glad to hear that one of your students considers translating LSD. (By the way, I proposed the publication of it to the Buenos Aires University Press. They are very favourably disposed: my long review in Ciencia e Investigación impressed them. But they cannot undertake it at present, because they have taken too many commitments.) I would be glad to discuss with him any translation difficulties he might find - and there are a lot, because there is practically no literature on metascientific subjects in Spanish, so that neologisms have to be introduced by the hundred, if possible by respecting the génie de la langue.

Thank you for your important Academy Lecture, part of which I had read in the Indian Jour. Phil. As everything you write, I found it very stimulating, and I discussed some of the points you make in a lecture on the nature of empirical evidence. Yet, I disagree over minor points:

(1) Although Socratic maieutic and Baconian induction have some points in common (purification of the mind & attaining of certain knowledge) they differ in that the former uses empisense data as an occasion for knowledge rather than as its source, because after all the basic ideas are inborn.

(2) Granted that falsity is easier to recognize than truth, still I do not think that "we do possess criteria by which we can recognize falsity" (p.24). If this were so, we might avoid falsity altogether: we would be in the possession of The Method; but, of course, we would have to keep silent all the time. I always say that all our theories are false (I mean, our factual theories), and all we can do is to minimize falsity, not to eradicate it.

(3) The injunction to justify knowledge by giving positive reasons need not lead to authoritarianism or to invoke some ultimate source of knowledge.



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We may offer reasons without pretending that they are incorrigible. And the refusal to justify theories does not lead to authoritarianism or to ultimatism: it is an authoritarian attitude. I do not see how we could avoid conventionalism, or even the Führerprinzip, if we renounced either the empirical or the rational justification of knowledge of fact. But, of course, you cannot have meant that literally, since it amounts to a rejection of the requirement of testability; if so, I wonder whether the phrase should not be rewritten.

But these are minor points. With your main thesis I have always agreed avant la lettre, perhaps partly because, in my scientific work, I never had occasion to rely on Protokollsätze.

Yes, I plan to attend the International Congress in Stanford, although I have as yet neither the money nor the visa. I am contributing with a paper titled "The complexity of simplicity"; in the section devoted to the simplicity of hypotheses I refer to the Jeffreys-Popper view. If you were not as busy as I imagine you are, I would ask you to read and criticize the MS.

I too look forward to meeting you at Stanford.
I need your criticism and advice on various subjects.

With best wishes, I am

sincerely yours,

Mario Bunge

AD 18
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