

Fallowfield, Manor Road, PENN, Buckinghamshire, England.

July 8th, 1960.

Dear Professor Bunge,

Many thanks for your interesting letter of June 28th.

It is most generous of you to offer to help my student, Mr. Pedro Schwarz, with the translation. In fact, Pedro is a very gifted and clever student, and a good linguist, but he is very young and he does not know quite as much of my theory of knowledge as I could wish. He has translated my Poverty of Historicism, but the Logic of Scientific Discovery may possibly ~~turn~~ out a little difficult for him, in the light of what you are saying in your letter. His real field is political theory, not epistemology.

I greatly regret that I do not read Spanish. I am sure I could learn a great deal from your review.

I was very pleased to see from your letter that you found my Academy lecture stimulating, and I thank you especially for your careful criticism. I intend to make some corrections in the proofs in order to meet your points (2) and (3). But let me comment on all your points.

(1) I entirely agree with the difference you point out, and I hope I have made it clear from the very beginning that there is a difference between rationalism (= intellectualism) and sensualistic empiricism. But I wanted to point out the similarities: those which you formulate in (1) and another one: that to Bacon, sense-given means, almost, God-given; which makes his theory still closer to Plato and Descartes than you say under (1).

(2) I agree with you that this formulation should be improved, and I intend to alter it into "criteria which, if we are lucky, allow us to recognize falsity". With the rest of what you say I agree in spirit but not in the letter: you say "all our theories are false". But take my theory "Plato was hoping to ~~become~~ be asked to become, if not a philosopher king, then at least philosopher-prime-minister to some tyrant". Unless you deny to this the character of a (historical) theory, you cannot deny that if this theory is false, ~~its~~ ^{its} denial by my opponents - say Wilde - is true: so one of us must hold a true theory, by the law of excluded middle. Of course, this argument does not hold if you have in mind, universal laws whose negations are existential.

(3) I agree that the injunction to justify knowledge by giving positive reasons need not lead to authoritarianism, provided the word "justify" is not taken too seriously. But if it is, then we have the choice between dogmatism and infinite regress; which means dogmatism. It seems to me that our apparent disagreement here may rest upon the meaning I have here implicitly attributed to the word "justify": I meant either "establish" (or "make certain") by offering sufficient reasons, or, if the grounds are not quite sufficient, "make highly probable". It seems to me that you thought that I meant "rationally argue in support of". I should be most grateful if you could let me know whether this remark clears this matter up. You write "you cannot have meant that literally, since it amounts to I wonder whether the phrase should not be rewritten." Could you tell me precisely to which passage(s) the words I have underlined refer: I am most anxious to rewrite (them) (it).

May I ultimately make a minor remark about your phrase "the Jeffreys-Popper view"? It is perfectly true that Jeffreys and I propose to call the same laws "simple" and the same laws "complex". Yet our theories, or "views", on this matter are diametrically opposed: Jeffreys proposes to call them so because they are probable (which they are

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demonstrably not) while I propose to call them so ~~because~~ ^{because} of their test-ability. I am a little apprehensive lest your term "the Jeffreys-Popper view" will create a new myth (similar to Black's statement in the Unesco publication that my views have become recently like Carnap's because I am using the expression "Degree of Confirmation")

I should be most grateful to have a word from you very soon, especially on (3), since I am expecting the proofs of my Academy lecture any day now.

I do hope you will be able to come to Stanford.

Many thanks again,
Yours sincerely,

K. R. Popper.

-that is, improbability.

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