

A REPLY TO GRÜNBAUM'S CHALLENGE TO POPPERIAN FALSIFICATIONISM

Guillaume Rochefort-Maranda
University of Québec in Montréal
e-mail: email: guillaumemaranda@hotmail.com

Thus far, it seems to us that Karl Popper's criticism of the inductivist methodology has been mainly discussed on logical grounds (probability calculus). The controversy which took place around the so called "Popper-Miller Theorem" is a good example of such a formal interchange. In the present lecture, however, we wish to approach Popper's philosophy from another angle: We want to bring forth Adolf Grünbaum's arguments against Popperian methodology. Here, we will divide them into two categories.

First, we think we can address the main concern of Grünbaum's analysis as follows: Given Popper's work, is it possible to maintain the validity of inductivism without any serious reference to the inductivist interpretation of the probability calculus? As a matter of fact, not only does he answer this question in the affirmative, he also asserts that rational criticism is implicitly inductivist. Popper is held to have caricatured the inductivist tradition, beginning with Francis Bacon, and to have put forward a criterion of demarcation that is either inductive or too strong. Second, Grünbaum underscores the fact that the formalisation of Popper's concept of corroboration is inadequate. In a Kuhnian way, he points out the unsuitability of logical comparisons between incompatible theories.

In this lecture we will show that Grünbaum's arguments are either fallacious or surmountable. First of all, the sense he tacitly gives to the concept of induction is so vague and weak logically that nobody could question it further. Hence, his advocacy of the inductivist methodology is flawed. Furthermore, we will expound briefly four non-logical criteria which could express the empirical comparison of theories or auxiliary hypothesis and preserve the idea of corroboration.