

September 17, 1957

Dear Professor Popper:

Thank you very much for your kind letter of August 14th, in relation to quotations from The Open Society in my Causality.

The Open Society has been wonderfully translated into Spanish. I do not think many books have had the luck of yours in this respect. Only a few misinterpretations of technical terms can be found here and there, but save in one case (in one of the notes) they are not essential. All in all, it is the best translation of a scientific or philosophic book that I have seen for several years. (I should add that I am not acquainted with the translator.)

I knew that the Logik der Forschung was in the press, and I am eager to see it at last. (I ordered it unsuccessfully many times.) Some of its theses I know, of course, mainly through Wisdom's writings. Moreover, Popper's principle of refutability has been discussed in detail in my course on the philosophy of science; every one of my students has written a paper on the question whether the search for unfavourable instances is as important as the search for favourable ones. Most of them have been convinced, but a few stubborn ones still believe that verification just consists in amassing instances.

Three days ago I raised the question in the bimonthly colloquium of the Agrupación Rioplatense de Lógica y Filosofía Científica I recalled your principle - not too well known

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among us - and asked whether it should also be required of every philosophical hypothesis. In my opinion this is not the case: there are principles of scientific philosophy, such as the principle of lawfulness (legality), which are irrefutable though confirmable. (One can always change the law statements so that they be made to fit the facts, so that no failure of a given law statement can be regarded to refute the hypothesis that every single fact occurs according to laws.) In short, in my opinion philosophic principles should be regarded as verifiable hypotheses, but some of them may be as irrefutable (hence unscientific) as theological dogmas. I should be greatly honoured to hear your comment on this problem.

On the other hand, I must say in all fairness that I do not share many of your points in The Open Society. In my Causality I only deal with two of them: your ideas on causality, and your thesis about history as a non-generalizing science; I quarrel with both. This may give the inaccurate and unfortunate impression that I disagree with the whole book; but there will be plenty of occasions to show my agreements with most of your theses on methodology.

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By the way, I would like to tell how how I came across your Open Society: I saw it for the first time in the Lincoln Library, of the USA Information Service, in Santiago, Chile. I found it so important that I could not help swallowing it in a few days; I immediately quoted it in a course I was delivering at the Universidad de Chile (at that time I was not in the Buenos Aires University owing to Perón). And I wrote to several historicists friends saying this was the greatest challenge historicism ever received; particularly, I told a few Marxists here and in the USA that they had better studying

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Hoping that you will forgive me for this somewhat long letter, I am

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