


UDC: 7203.01

LBC: 63.3(2)6-7; 65.497; 71; 71.1

MJ № 469

 10.33864/2617-751X.2026.v9.i2.225-238

**IN SEARCH OF A BETTER WORLD: CRITICAL RATIONALISM, THE  
OPEN SOCIETY, AND THE RECEPTION OF KARL POPPER'S  
PHILOSOPHY IN ARAB THOUGHT**

**Mohammed Amine Bakiri\***

**Abstract.** This article provides a comprehensive analytical overview of the philosophical project of Karl Raimund Popper (1902–1994), focusing on his self-identification as a "laggard of the Enlightenment" and his commitment to critical rationalism. The study explores Popper's epistemology, centered on the critique of induction and the introduction of the "falsifiability" criterion as the demarcation between science and non-science. It further examines his ontological framework of the "Three Worlds" and the pivotal role of language in transitioning human conflict from physical violence to rational argument. In the political sphere, the article analyzes Popper's defense of the "Open Society" against the "enemies" of totalitarianism- Plato, Hegel, and Marx- while advocating for "piecemeal social engineering" over utopian blueprints. A significant portion of the article tracks the historical trajectory of Popper's ideas in the Arab world, detailing the shift from ideological exclusion and censorship during the mid-20th century to contemporary celebration and intellectual adoption following the Arab Spring. Ultimately, the article highlights Popper's ethical legacy: a call for Socratic humility, a duty of optimism, and the belief that the growth of knowledge is a continuous journey of learning from mistakes to build a better world.

**Keywords:** Karl Popper, Critical Rationalism, Falsifiability, The Open Society, Historicism, The Three Worlds, Piecemeal Social Engineering, Arab Intellectual Thought, Socratic Humility, Scientific Method

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**To cite this article:** Bakiri, M. A. [2026]. IN SEARCH OF A BETTER WORLD: CRITICAL RATIONALISM, THE OPEN SOCIETY, AND THE RECEPTION OF KARL POPPER'S PHILOSOPHY IN ARAB THOUGHT. "Metafizika" journal, 9(2), pp.225-238.

<https://doi.org/10.33864/2617-751X.2026.v9.i2.225-238>

**Article history:**

**Received:** 04.12.2025 **Revised:** 02.01.2026 **Accepted:** 02.02.2026 **Published:** 01.06.2026




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## В ПОИСКАХ ЛУЧШЕГО МИРА: КРИТИЧЕСКИЙ РАЦИОНАЛИЗМ, ОТКРЫТОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО И РЕЦЕПЦИЯ ФИЛОСОФИИ КАРЛА ПОППЕРА В АРАБСКОЙ МЫСЛИ

Мохаммед Амина Бакири\*

**Абстракт.** Данная статья представляет собой всесторонний аналитический обзор философского проекта Карла Раймунда Поппера (1902–1994), уделяя особое внимание его самоидентификации как «позднего представителя Просвещения» и приверженности критическому рационализму. Исследование рассматривает попперовскую эпистемологию, основанную на критике индукции и применении критерия «фальсифицируемости» как разграничительной линии между наукой и ненаукой. В статье также анализируется его онтологическая концепция «трёх миров» и решающая роль языка в переходе человеческих конфликтов от физического насилия к рациональной аргументации. В политической сфере рассматривается защита Поппером «открытого общества» от его «врагов» - Платона, Гегеля и Маркса, а также его поддержка «поэтапной социальной инженерии» в противовес утопическим проектам. Значительная часть статьи посвящена прослеживанию исторической траектории идей Поппера в арабском мире - от периода идеологической изоляции и цензуры в середине XX века до современного этапа признания и интеллектуального освоения после «Арабской весны». В заключение статья подчёркивает этическое наследие Поппера: призыв к сократической скромности, «обязанность оптимизма» и убеждение в том, что рост знания представляет собой непрерывный процесс обучения на ошибках ради построения лучшего мира.

**Ключевые слова:** Карл Поппер, критический рационализм, фальсифицируемость, открытое общество, историцизм, три мира, поэтапная социальная инженерия, арабская интеллектуальная мысль, сократическая скромность, научный метод

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**Цитировать статью:** Бакири, М. А. [2026]. В ПОИСКАХ ЛУЧШЕГО МИРА: КРИТИЧЕСКИЙ РАЦИОНАЛИЗМ, ОТКРЫТОЕ ОБЩЕСТВО И РЕЦЕПЦИЯ ФИЛОСОФИИ КАРЛА ПОППЕРА В АРАБСКОЙ МЫСЛИ. Журнал «Metafizika», 9(2), с.225-238.

<https://doi.org/10.33864/2617-751X.2026.v9.i2.225-238>

**История статьи:**

Поступила: 04.12.2025 Переработана: 02.01.2026 Принята: 02.02.2026 Опубликовано: 01.06.2026



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## DAHA YAXSI BİR DÜNYA AXTARIŞINDA: TƏNQİDİ RASİONALİZM, AÇIQ CƏMİYYƏT VƏ KARL POPPER FƏLSƏFƏSİNİN ƏRƏB DÜSÜNCƏSİNDƏ QƏBULU

**Mohammed Aminə Bakiri\***

**Abstrakt.** Bu məqalə, Karl Raymund Popperin (1902-1994) fəlsəfi layihəsinin hərtərəfli analitik icmalını təqdim edir, əsas diqqəti onun özünü “Maarifçiliyin gecikmiş nümayəndəsi” kimi təqdim etməsinə və tənqidi rasionalizmə olan sadıqlığına yönəldir. Tədqiqat, induksiyanın tənqidi və elm ilə qeyri-elm arasındakı sərhəd kimi “yanlışlıqlara bilənlik” (falsifiability) meyarının tətbiqi üzərində qurulmuş Popper epistemologiyasını araşdırır. Məqalə həmçinin onun “Üç Dünya” ontoloji çərçivəsini və bəşəri münəqişələrin fiziki zorakılıqdan rasionel arqumentə keçidində dilin həlledici rolunu nəzərdən keçirir. Siyasi sferada məqalə, Popperin totalitarizmin “düşmənlərinə” - Platon, Hegel və Marksa - qarşı “Açıq Cəmiyyət”i müdafiə etməsini, eyni zamanda utopik layihələr əvəzinə “hissə-hissə sosial mühəndisliyi” dəstəkləməsini təhlil edir. Məqalənin mühüm bir hissəsi Popper ideyalarının ərəb dünyasındakı tarixi trayektoriyasını izləyir, 20-ci əsrin ortalarındakı ideoloji təcrid və senzura dövründən “Ərəb baharı”ndan sonrakı müasir tərifi və intellektual mənimsənilmə dövrünə keçidin təfərrüatlarını açıqlayır. Nəticə etibarilə, məqalə Popperin etik irsini vurğulayır: Sokratik təvazökarlığa çağırış, nikbinlik borcu və biliyin artmasının daha yaxşı bir dünya qurmaq üçün səhvlərdən öyrənməkdən ibarət davamlı bir səyahət olduğuna inanır.

**Açar sözlər:** Karl Popper, Tənqidi rasionalizm, Yanlışlıqlara bilənlik, Açıq cəmiyyət, Tarixilik (Historisizm), Üç dünya, Hissə-hissə sosial mühəndislik, Ərəb intellektual düşüncəsi, Sokratik təvazökarlıq, Elmi metod

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**Məqaləyə istinad:** Bakiri., M. A. [2026]. DAHA YAXSI BİR DÜNYA AXTARIŞINDA: TƏNQİDİ RASİONALİZM, AÇIQ CƏMİYYƏT VƏ KARL POPPER FƏLSƏFƏSİNİN ƏRƏB DÜSÜNCƏSİNDƏ QƏBULU. “Metafizika” jurnalı, 9(2), səh.225-238.

<https://doi.org/10.33864/2617-751X.2026.v9.i2.225-238>

**Məqalənin tarixçəsi:**

**Daxil olub:** 04.12.2025 **Yenidən baxılıb:** 02.01.2026 **Təsdiqlənib:** 02.02.2026 **Dərc olunub:** 01.06.2026



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## **1.Introduction**

Karl Raimund Popper (1902-1994) is considered one of the most prominent philosophical figures who influenced the fields of science and politics in the modern era. In his book *In Search of a Better World*, he describes himself with an eloquent phrase: "I am the last laggard of the Enlightenment. That is, I am a rationalist and a believer in truth and human reason" [Popper, 1999, p.52]. Described as "the most important philosopher of science in this twentieth century" [Editor, 1997, p.51], his name became associated with the fierce defense of rationalism against superstition and closed ideologies.

Popper's intellectual project stems from a vital and comprehensive vision, in which he believes that "all life is problem-solving" or that "everyone who lives is in search of a better world" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.178]. This search does not begin from the accumulation of sensory data, but rather from facing realistic challenges. Popper emphasizes that "our knowledge grows as we proceed from old problems to new problems" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.179]. In his view, science and human progress are nothing but the product of a continuous process of posing problems and attempting to solve them, rather than the mere collection of traditional inductive observations.

The core of his thought, which links the rigor of science with the values of freedom, is embodied in "Critical Rationalism". This principle grants the individual the ability to exercise "the role of critical thinking... or... (critical argument), which is the foundation of the individual's free thought" [Popper, 1999, p.52]. Through this principle, Popper's philosophy becomes a permanent call for revision and the rejection of absolute truths, because "criticism is the lifeblood of all rational thought" [Al-Khouli, 1988, p.76]. This critical rationalism is what allows us to "express our knowledge and share it with others" [Nasser, 2015, as cited in Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.186], paving the way for building an open society based on discussion rather than violence.

## **2.Axis I: The Logic of Science and the Epistemology of Falsification**

### **2.1.Critique of Induction: Science Begins with Problems, Not Observations**

The critique of the inductive method is the cornerstone of Karl Popper's epistemology. He rejects the notion that the accumulation of partial observations is a way to reach certain scientific laws. In this context, Yomna Tarif Al-Khouli confirms that Popper concluded that "induction is a myth because it cannot provide any kind of certainty, nor can it provide us with any criterion for distinguishing science" [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.77]. The traditional method of moving from the "particular" to the "general" is, in Popper's view, deficient; science does not start with gathering neutral data but with facing mental challenges. Popper argues that "our knowledge grows as we proceed from old problems to new problems" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.179]. From

this standpoint, "Popper's scientific method is called the hypothetico-deductive method, as opposed to the inductive-empirical method that was prevalent" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.139].

## **2.2.The Criterion of Falsifiability: The Boundaries of Science and Non-Science**

Popper innovated a unique criterion for "demarcation" between science and what is called "non-science" (metaphysics and pseudo-sciences), which is the criterion of Falsifiability. This criterion is based on the idea that a theory is only scientific if it allows for the occurrence of facts that clash with it. Popper states: "In order for statements or systems of statements to have scientific status, they must be capable of conflicting with possible or plausible observations" [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.112]. More precisely, Popper clarifies: "A scientific statement, insofar as it speaks about reality, must be falsifiable; and insofar as it is not falsifiable, it does not speak about reality" [Popper, as cited in Al-Khouli, 2020, p.113]. This is not a criterion of "truth," but a criterion of scientific character; a scientific theory is one that exposes itself to the "risk of testing and refutation, the risk of clashing with experience" [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.114].

## **2.3.Cognitive Growth: Truth as a Distant Goal**

Popper believes that science does not possess absolute certainty, but is rather a continuous process of gradual approximation to the truth through the mechanism of criticism. Science progresses through "bold conjectures" proposed by the human mind to explain the world, as "only boldness enables us to penetrate the unknown and discover the new" [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.114]. Instead of searching for evidence to support a theory, the scientist must search for evidence to refute it; because "truth is a permanent approach and not a final possession" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.186]. Popper presented a logical conception of this process under the name "Verisimilitude," which means that "the theory has become more similar to the truth... avoiding points of falsehood, and approaching the truth more closely" [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.132].

## **2.4.The Concept of "Corroboration": A Theory's Resilience Under Examination**

When a theory passes severe tests and continuous attempts to falsify it, Popper does not describe it as "true" in a final sense, but rather as "corroborated." Corroboration is "the extent to which a hypothesis withstands the harsh tests of the scientific method" [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.145]. This acceptance remains conditional and temporary, as Popper emphasizes that "hypotheses always remain subject to further testing, and herein lies the source of progress in the natural sciences" [Popper, as cited in Al-Khouli, 2020, p.148]. Corroboration does not mean proof; it only means that we "have no reason to reject it" for the time being [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.145]. Therefore,

science in Popper's view is a system of hypotheses that "have not yet been falsified," while the possibility of refutation remains ever-present in the future [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.139].

### **3.Axis II: From Philosophy of Language to the Ontology of the Three Worlds**

Critical rationalism is incomplete without understanding Popper's conception of the origin of knowledge and its relationship with language and existence. Popper believes that human evolution transitioned from a struggle of bodies to a struggle of ideas thanks to the invention of language.

#### **3.1.The Invention of Human Language and the Argumentative Function**

Popper considers language to be the most important evolutionary leap in the history of the human species, and it is what allowed for the emergence of rationalism. While animals share some linguistic functions with humans, humans are unique in their higher functions. Popper explains: "Language is not merely an expression of the self, or merely a signal system. Animals have these two skills. We humans alone have taken measures to verify objective truth, through critical arguments" [Editor, 1997, p.59].

This function, which Popper calls the "argumentative function," is what "enabled us to invent criticism and the conscious choice of theories" [Editor, 1997, p.59]. Through this capacity for criticism, humans were able to move their ideas from the realm of the subjective to the realm of the objective. Popper even asserts: "Human language is what creates part of our world of consciousness. Thus, our mind is our own invention" [Editor, 1997, p.60]. This transition allowed for the replacement of physical violence with intellectual criticism, as "the largest step toward a better, safer, and more peaceful world was taken when the wars of the sword and spear first found someone to undertake them, and later when they were replaced, in some instances, by the war of words" [Popper, as cited in Al-Khouli, 2003, p.87].

#### **3.2.The Theory of the Three Worlds: The Structure of Objective Existence**

Popper presented a unique ontological (existential) division to understand reality, which he called the "Three Worlds" - interacting and interconnected realms:

- **World 1:** "The physical world of matter, the world of living and non-living bodies" [Editor, 1997, p.55].
- **World 2:** "The world of conscious human experiences - the psychological world" [Editor, 1997, p.55].
- **World 3:** The most important in his critical philosophy, known as "the world of mental products, the world of the objective products of the human mind, which includes intuitive assumptions, theories, and problems; what anthropologists call the world of culture" [Editor, 1997, p.55].

World 3 is characterized by autonomy; once a human writes a theory or composes a book, this product becomes an objective entity that can be criticized and developed independently of its creator. It includes "the world of books, the world of art, and the world of our institutions- the world of culture" [Editor, 1997, p.60]. Popper believes this world grows through "critical competition between books," making the history of science essentially a "history of ideas" [Editor, 1997, p.61, 69].

### **3.3. Interaction Between Worlds and the Growth of Knowledge**

These worlds do not exist in isolation but interact continuously. World 2 (consciousness) arises from the pressures of World 1 (the physical) to solve problems, as "the activity of the living part of the physical world to solve problems caused the emergence of the world of consciousness- the world of subjective experiences" [Editor, 1997, p.58]. This consciousness then produces World 3 (theories), which in turn returns to influence World 1 and change the face of the earth via technology and science.

The process of knowledge in these worlds is "objective knowledge independent of the knowing subject" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.184]. Popper links the growth of this world to a Darwinian vision, where "critical cultural selection expands natural selection and partially transcends it, because it provides us with a consciousness that allows us to critically follow our errors" [Editor, 1997, p.60]. The growth of knowledge in World 3 does not stop at any limit, because "our knowledge is the product of conjectures and expectations" constantly subject to the process of "learning from error" and "critical rationalism" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.186].

### **3.4. The Invention of Writing and the "Athenian Miracle"**

Popper stresses that the invention of writing and books was the historical turning point that established World 3. In 5th-century BC Athens, the "Athenian Miracle" occurred, born from the "clash of cultures" between the Greeks and Eastern civilizations [Editor, 1997, p.62]. This cultural clash is what "pushed Athens to invent literature, tragedy, philosophy, science, and democracy" [Editor, 1997, p.63]. Since then, the book has become the primary carrier of World 3, where "a book lives for 1000 years after its author, and intellectual content lives for more than 1500 years" [Editor, 1997, p.63]. This historical continuity of objective ideas gives the individual the ability to exercise "the role of critical thinking... which is the foundation of the individual's free thought" [Editor, 1997, p.52]. Thus, critical rationalism moves from being a mere method in science to a way of life that protects society from closure.

## **4. Axis III: The Philosophy of the Open Society (Political Application of the Critical Tendency)**

Karl Popper's political thought is a natural extension of his epistemological method. Critical rationalism, which rejects absolute certainty in science, by extension rejects tyranny and totalitarianism in politics. Popper dedicated his effort to refuting doctrines that impose restrictions on human freedom under the pretext of the existence of inevitable laws of history.

#### **4.1. Critique of Historicism: The Illusion of Predicting the Future**

Popper believes the greatest danger to the open society comes from "Historicism," the doctrine based on "the claim of possessing future predictions, and uncovering the nature of laws, trends, patterns, or rhythms according to which development proceeds" [Zghair, 2018, p.5]. Historicism, in his view, is the pillar of totalitarian ideologies that claim to know the ultimate goal of history. In his book *The Poverty of Historicism*, he demonstrates the collapse of these claims through several logical points:

- **The Evolution of Knowledge:** We cannot predict the future of history because history is influenced by the growth of knowledge, and "it is not possible for us by rational or scientific means to predict how our scientific knowledge will grow" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.203].
- **The Impossibility of Prediction:** Consequently, "it is not possible to predict the future course of human history" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.203]. Every theory that claims knowledge of historical inevitability is a false theory that does not stand up to scientific criticism.

#### **4.2. Enemies of the Open Society: From Plato to Marx**

In his massive work *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Popper launched a critical attack on three major philosophers whom he considered the early theorists of totalitarianism:

- **Plato "The Autocrat":** Popper believes Plato aimed to stop all political change on the grounds that change is corruption and decadence. Plato's ideal state is "an imaginary state that does not change and is perfect and fixed" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.204]. Popper criticizes Plato's class division, considering it an aim "to achieve equality in the absence of freedom; and of course, the former would be a direct result of the latter, as it is very easy to achieve equality among slaves" [Popper, as cited in Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.212].
- **Hegel "The Dogmatist":** Popper attacks Hegel because of his pseudo-rationalism and dialectic that justifies the status quo. Popper describes the Hegelian tendency as "an extreme idealistic tendency" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.217]. Hegel's danger lies in sanctifying the "State" and making history an inevitable rational process that ends with the closed nation-state.
- **Marx "The False Prophet":** Despite Popper's admiration for Marx's humanitarian sincerity and desire to help the oppressed, he considers him a victim of historicism. Marx, for Popper, turned into "a false prophet

whose views must be subjected to merciless criticism" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.228]. The Marxian prophecy of the inevitable collapse of capitalism and the rise of socialism is nothing but "false theories to which the criterion of falsifiability cannot be applied, either to their principles or their results" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.202].

### **4.3.The Concept of the Open Society and the Closed Society**

Popper distinguishes between two types of societies:

- **The Closed Society:** A society based on tribal loyalty, belief in absolute truths, and the absence of criticism.
- **The Open Society:** A society that protects freedom and is based on a "modernist vision, emphasizing- by replacing the essentialist question of 'who should rule' with a communicative/regulatory one- that the method and manner of governance, not the identity of the ruler, is what we must base our entire political philosophy upon" [Zghair, 2018, p.6].

Instead of the traditional question "Who should rule?", Popper proposes a rational question: "How can we organize political institutions so that we can prevent bad rulers from doing too much damage?" [Zghair, 2018, p.6]. An open society is one "governed by institutions rather than individuals, and where individuals enjoy the right to change their leaders and governments whenever they wish, without the need for bloodshed" [Zghair, 2018, p.6].

### **4.4.Piecemeal Social Engineering vs. Utopian Engineering**

Popper proposes a method for social reform consistent with the logic of "trial and error" in science, which he calls "Piecemeal Social Engineering":

- **Utopian Engineering:** The attempt to change society radically according to a total blueprint. This is dangerous because it necessitates "dictatorship, which represents the worst of systems" and often leads to violence [Popper, as cited in Boukhlit, 2021, p.103].
- **Piecemeal Engineering:** A method based on addressing concrete problems (such as poverty, unemployment) in a partial and revisable manner. The rational person in politics is one who adopts a "piecemeal or utilitarian methodology... and a person must possess a technical mindset politically" [Popper, as cited in Boukhlit, 2021, p.103]. This method allows us to learn from our social mistakes and adjust our course without destroying the fabric of society.

The goal of politics for Popper is not to build an "earthly paradise," but to "search for a better world" by reducing suffering and protecting freedoms, because "on this reconstruction depends the fate of everyone: rulers and the ruled" [Nayel, as cited in Zghair, 2018, p.17].

## **5.Axis IV: The Journey of Popper's Thought in the Arab Reality (From Prohibition to Celebration)**

Karl Popper's presence in the Arab cultural scene was not merely a quiet cognitive transfer, but a conflictual journey with dominant ideologies. His ideas underwent processes of "ideological screening" and deliberate exclusion before becoming a fundamental reference in contemporary rationalism.

### **5.1. The Phase of Ignorance and Ideological Prohibition (1959-1986)**

This stage was characterized by a deliberate exclusion of Popper's work. Ali Zghair notes that "the Arab cultural field, specifically in the mid-twentieth century, with its official institutions and cultural formations, deliberately ignored this philosopher and his works in a striking manner" [Zghair, 2018, p.4]. This ignorance is attributed to the fact that "the contents of Popperian philosophy were not compatible with the slogans and policies of the ruling totalitarian regimes and the beliefs of the Arab intelligentsia that were dominant at the time" [Zghair, 2018, p.5]. Even the pioneering translation of *The Poverty of Historicism* in 1959 remained "forgotten" because it coincided with the "flourishing of historical and dialectical materialism, nationalist discourses, and totalitarianism" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.523]. Popper was seen as an enemy of the exclusionary logic practiced by both authority and opposition in the Arab world at that time.

### **5.2. The Phase of Selective Recognition (End of the 1980s)**

Signs of change began in the mid-eighties, but in a cautious manner that focused on the purely scientific aspect. Zghair explains that this stage "was limited to transmitting and studying the epistemological side of Popper's philosophy, without extending to the presentation and research of its political aspects" [Zghair, 2018, p.10]. This period was marked by the emergence of pioneering academic studies, such as the 1986 study by Muhammad Muhammad Qasim and the 1989 study by Yomna Tarif Al-Khouli, which served as a beacon "for everyone who wanted to know 'Popper's' philosophy and his method in the issues of the philosophy of science" [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.76]. Thus, Arab engagement with Popper moved "from the role of total ignorance to the role of selective recognition" [Zghair, 2018, p.10].

### **5.3. The Phase of Serious Openness (The 1990s)**

This stage was linked to a pivotal event: the collapse of the Soviet Union, which created an urgent need to understand the failure of totalitarian systems. Getting to know Popper represented "a kind of fulfillment of the urgent need for understanding among many Arab intellectuals... related to the desire to find a convincing analysis explaining what happened regarding the disintegration of the second-greatest international empire" [Zghair, 2018, p.11]. Important translations appeared during this period, such as *In Search of a Better World* (1996) and *All Life is Problem Solving* (1998), allowing Popper to be presented as a philosopher of comprehensive critical rationalism.

#### **5.4.The Phase of Awareness and Celebration (Since 2003 and the Arab Spring)**

This phase culminated in breaking the censorship hegemony thanks to globalization and modern communication tools. "The new media and broadcasting techniques, with the emergence of the world of social media, provided the Arab citizen with a real opportunity to break the barriers of prohibition imposed by the authorities" [Zghair, 2018, p.13]. With the launch of the Arab Spring revolutions in 2011, a "new cultural demand arose that matches the type of socio-political needs that emerged," where revolutionaries found in Popper's work what met their aspirations toward "issues of dictatorship, democracy, rationalism, reform, criticism, and free discussion" [Zghair, 2018, p.18].

Translator Hossam Nayel summarized the importance of this return in his 2015 introduction to *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, considering that "this book is an implicit call to rebuild thinking strategies, whether in political, social, or cultural affairs, on critical rational foundations" [Nayel, as cited in Zghair, 2018, p.12]. These strategies are what "the fate of everyone: rulers and the ruled" depends on today [Nayel, as cited in Zghair, 2018, p.17].

#### **6.Axis V: Socratic Humility and the Intellectual's Ethical Responsibility**

Critical rationalism for Popper is not just an empirical method, but an ethical position based on recognizing the limitations of human reason and the necessity of cooperation to reach the truth.

##### **6.1.Cognitive Humility: Emulating Socrates**

Popper believes that ignorance is the true starting point for all knowledge, thereby reviving ancient Socratic wisdom. Popper emphasizes his admiration for the classical concept of knowledge expressed by Socrates: "I know that I know nothing... and even that I hardly know" [Popper, 1999, p.54]. For Popper, this humility is "intellectual courage through and through"; a seeker of truth cannot be an intellectual coward, but must admit their limits to have the courage to criticize and change their ideas [Popper, 1999, p.54]. This humility is the guarantee against dogmatism, as "truth is not a monopoly, and one is always in need of new ideas" [Popper, 1999, p.52].

##### **6.2.The Ethics of Language: Clarity vs. Domination**

The search for truth for Popper is linked to the style of expressing it; the true intellectual is one who seeks to enlighten people, not to dazzle them with complex language. Popper describes himself as a remnant of the Enlightenment because "the man of the Enlightenment speaks as simply as he can... because the goal of simple language is enlightenment, not domination" [Popper, 1999, p.52]. From here, Popper launches an attack on philosophies that use linguistic "jargon" (such as Hegelianism), considering that "clarity in itself has value, while linguistic precision is... of no importance" [Popper, as

cited in Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.190]. The use of simple language is an ethical duty that allows for the exercise of "(critical argument) which is the foundation of the individual's free thought" [Popper, 1999, p.52].

### **6.3.The Duty of Optimism: "*All Who Live are in Search of a Better World*"**

Popper rejects historical pessimism that sees the world heading toward destruction, asserting that optimism is an ethical duty. He starts from a profound biological idea: "All living things are busy solving the problem of their survival... and there are countless concrete problems... the most important of which is the search for better living conditions" [Popper, 1999, p.57]. This constant search for solutions makes life a continuous process of learning from error, as "everyone who lives is in search of a better world" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.178]. Optimism for Popper is not naivety, but a belief that we can "improve the world... through rational criticism in the service of searching for the truth" [Popper, 1999, p.60].

### **6.4.Rationalism as an Alternative to Violence: "*War of Words Instead of Swords*"**

Popper's ethics culminate in his call to replace physical conflict with intellectual conflict. He believes the greatest step taken by humanity was when "the war of words replaced, in some instances, [wars]" [Popper, as cited in Al-Khouli, 2003, p.87]. A rationalist is a person prepared to "learn from others" through a discussion in which the other party is respected, because "give and take is of paramount importance in pure human relationships" [Popper, 1999, p.52]. Thus, critical rationalism becomes the solid fortress that protects society from violence, by converting ideological contradictions into material for criticism and scrutiny in the "world of institutions" [Editor, 1997, p.60].

### **7.Conclusion: The Relevance of Critical Rationalism and the Duty of Optimism**

Karl Popper's philosophy manifests in its essence as a continuous call for cognitive humility and the diligent search for truth- a journey Popper described as a "search for a better world" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.178]. The critical rationalism he established does not stop at the boundaries of natural science but extends to form an ethical and political position that rejects dogmatism and false certainty, emphasizing that "criticism is the lifeblood of all rational thought" [Al-Khouli, 2020, p.76].

Popper proved that the true power of the mind lies not in possessing final answers, but in the ability to question and learn from mistakes; as "our knowledge grows as we proceed from old problems to new problems" [Sawla & Mahjoub, 2023, p.179]. In a world full of conflicts and totalitarian ideologies, the value of his call to replace violence with discussion emerges, as he believes "the largest step toward a better, safer, and more peaceful world was taken when the wars of the sword and spear first found someone to

undertake them... and later when they were replaced, in some instances, by the war of words" [Popper, as cited in Al-Khouli, 2003, p.87].

As for the Arab reality, reclaiming Popper's thought is no longer an academic luxury but an urgent necessity to confront "closed societies" and consolidate the values of tolerance and democracy. The shift from "prohibition" to "celebration" of Popper reflects the Arab mind's need to "rebuild thinking strategies, whether in political, social, or cultural affairs, on critical rational foundations" [Nayel, as cited in Zghair, 2018, p.12]. In the end, Popper's most important lesson remains conscious and responsible optimism; truth is a distant goal, but it gives us the courage to continue trying, always mindful of the Socratic wisdom Popper loved: "I know that I know nothing" [Popper, 1999, p.54].

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