

SCIENCE AND CREATIVITY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF KARL POPPER

Mariano Artigas
Facultad Eclesiástica de Filosofía
Universidad de Navarra
31080 PAMPLONA Spain
e-mail: martigas@unav.es

The philosophy of Karl Popper is usually seen as a theory of knowledge that is applied to social problems. Elsewhere I have tried to show that it can be considered as having strong ethical roots (M. Artigas, *The Ethical Nature of Karl Popper's Theory of Knowledge*, Peter Lang, Bern & New York, 1999). John Watkins considered indeterminism as the unifying key to Popper's thought, and Popper himself commented that criticism could be better considered such a key (J. Watkins, "The Unity of Popper's Thought", in *The Philosophy of Karl Popper*, Open Court, La Salle, Illinois, 1974, 370-412; K. Popper, "Watkins on Indeterminism as the Central Problem of My Philosophy", *ibid.*, 1053-1054). Following a suggestion by J. Dumoncel (in R. Bouveresse and H. Barreau, eds., *Karl Popper, science et philosophie*, Vrin, Paris 1991, 109-112), Josep Corcó has examined Popper's philosophy in the light of the concept of emergence (*Novedades en el universo*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 1995), something previously suggested (but not developed) by W. W. Bartley ("The Philosophy of Karl Popper. II. Consciousness and Physics", *Philosophia* 7, 1978, 675-676). Developing further this line, I suggest that we consider Popper's thought as a philosophy centred around dynamism, activity and creativity in the epistemological, the biological, the anthropological and the ethical domains. Criticism versus positivism in epistemology, spontaneous and indeterministic activity versus determinism in the natural world, emergence of a knowing subject capable of argument versus materialism at the anthropological level, and a search for truth tightly connected with freedom, respect and rationality at the ethical level, are four dimensions strongly intertwined in Popper's unended quest in search of a better world, conducted through an endless activity of problem solving by means of a creative method of conjectures and refutations. This perspective can be used to capture the spirit of Popper's attitude, beyond particular doctrinal points that can be seen as the application of that spirit to contingent historical problems.