

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

MASTER THESIS

**THE PROBLEM OF DETERMINISM IN HISTORY IN
THE CONTEXT OF KARL POPPER'S PHILOSOPHY**

HATİCE ACAR

THESIS SUPERVISOR

ASST. PROF. MUHAMMET İKBAL BAKIR

ISTANBUL, 2022

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

MASTER THESIS

**THE PROBLEM OF DETERMINISM IN HISTORY IN
THE CONTEXT OF KARL POPPER'S PHILOSOPHY**

by

HATİCE ACAR

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Philosophy**

THESIS SUPERVISOR

ASST. PROF. MUHAMMET İKBAL BAKIR

ISTANBUL, 2022

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Philosophy.

Thesis Jury Members

Title - Name Surname

Opinion

Signature

This is to confirm that this thesis complies with all the standards set by the School of Graduate Studies of Ibn Haldun University.

Date of Submission

Seal/Signature

ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name Surname: Hatice Acar

Signature:



ÖZ

KARL POPPER'IN FELSEFESİ BAĞLAMINDA TARİHTE
DETERMİNİZM PROBLEMİ

Acar, Hatice

Felsefe Yüksek Lisans Programı

Öğrenci Numarası: 204020001

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORC-ID): 0000-0002-8036-8870

Ulusal Tez Merkezi Referans Numarası: 10489191

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Muhammet İkbâl Bakır

Eylül 2022, 76 sayfa

Bu tezde, tarihte determinizm problemini ele aldım. Bir kişinin tarihte determinizm meselesi bağlamında konumunu belirleyecek çekirdek soruları betimledim ve bu betimlememe dayanarak Karl Popper'in felsefi anlamda bu konudaki pozisyonunu netleştirdim. Buna göre, öncelikle tarih felsefesi, nedensellik, determinizm ve teleoloji kavramlarını analiz ederek farklılıklarını ve benzerliklerini ortaya koydum. Ardından pozitif bilimlerdeki yasalılık ve sosyal bilimlerdeki yasalılık konusunu ele alarak geleceği öngörme konusunda iki alandaki farklılığı analiz ettim. Bu kısımda tek çizgili tarih anlayışı, döngüsel tarih anlayışı ve gelişim temelli tarih anlayışlarını örneklerle analiz ettim. Ardından insanın niyetli ve iradeli varlık olması sebebiyle ona yönelik incelemenin salt fiziksel unsurlardan farklı olduğunu vurguladım. Tezimin son kısmında ise, Karl Popper'in tarihsiciliğe bakışını irdelemeye koyuldum. Onun metodolojik açıklamasını ele aldıktan sonra, Karl Popper'in bütüncül tarih anlayışlarını totaliter rejimlerle ilişkilendirme biçimini örneklerle ele aldım. Aynı kısımda, determinizm konusundaki tartışmaları, tarihe ait bir telos olup olmadığı ve insanların özgür iradesi olup olmadığı sorularına verilecek farklı cevaplara göre kategorize ederek Karl Popper'in pozisyonunu netleştirdim.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Determinizm, Karl Popper, tarih felsefesi, teleoloji, totalitarizm.

ABSTRACT

THE PROBLEM OF DETERMINISM IN HISTORY IN THE CONTEXT OF KARL POPPER'S PHILOSOPHY

Acar, Hatice

MA in Philosophy

Student ID: 204020001

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID): 0000-0002-8036-8870

National Thesis Center Reference Number: 10489191

Thesis Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Muhammet İkbâl Bakır

September 2022, 76 Pages

In this thesis, I deal with the problem of determinism in history. I have described the core questions that will determine a person's position in the context of the issue of determinism in history, and based on this description, I clarify Karl Popper's philosophical position on this issue. Accordingly, I first analyze the concepts of the philosophy of history, causality, determinism, and teleology and reveal their differences and similarities. Subsequently, by addressing the nomologicalism in the positive sciences and in the social sciences, I analyze the differences in these two areas in terms of predicting the future. In the section, I analyze the single-line, cyclical, and progress-based understanding of history with examples. Later, I emphasize that the examination of human is different from purely physical elements, since the human is an intentional-purposeful being. In the last part of my thesis, I examine Karl Popper's view of historicism. After handling his methodological explanation, I deal with examples of Karl Popper's way of associating holistic understandings of history with totalitarian regimes. In the same part, I clarify Popper's position by categorizing the debates on determinism according to different answers to the questions of whether there is a historical telos, and whether people have free will.

Keywords: Determinism, Karl Popper, philosophy of history, teleology, totalitarianism.

DEDICATION

To Mustafa Öz, my lovely grandfather, who departed from this world and moved to eternity on the day I submitted this dissertation...



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ÖZ.....	iv
ABSTRACT	v
DEDICATION	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
CHAPTER I DETERMINISM IN HISTORY	1
1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Conceptual Framework	4
1.2.1. Philosophy of History	4
1.2.3. Causality.....	6
1.2.4. Determinism.....	9
1.2.5. Teleology.....	11
CHAPTER II PREDICTION IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY	14
2.1. Introduction.....	14
2.2. Prediction in Positive Sciences	14
2.3. Prediction in Social Sciences	17
2.3.1. Examples of Historical Prediction.....	17
2.3.2. Historical Prediction in the Context of Social Sciences	20
2.3.3. Meaning in Social Sciences.....	22
CHAPTER III KARL POPPER'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY	27
3.1. Introduction	27
3.2. Historicism in Karl Popper's Perspective	28
3.2.1. Historical Unpredictability	28
3.2.2. The Methodology of Historicism	30
3.2.2.1. Introduction	30
3.2.2.2. Anti-Naturalistic Doctrines of Historicism	31
3.2.2.3. Pro-Naturalistic Doctrines of Historicism.....	34
3.2.2.4. Criticism of Anti-Naturalistic Doctrines of Historicism.....	36
3.2.2.5. Criticism of Pro-Naturalistic Doctrines of Historicism.....	40
3.3. The Relationship Between Holistic Historicism and Autocracy.....	45
3.3.1. Introduction	45
3.3.2. Plato and Historicism	46
3.3.3. Hegel and Historicism.....	53
3.3.4. Karl Marx and Historicism.....	58

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION	66
4.1. Introduction	66
4.2. Is There a Telos Belonging to History?	66
4.3. Do Humans Have Free Will?	70
4.4. Conclusion.....	73
REFERENCES	74
CURRICULUM VITAE	76



CHAPTER I

DETERMINISM IN HISTORY

1.1. Introduction

One of the most important debates in the philosophy of history is determinism. Is there a causal (and determinist) link between historical events? Does event X necessarily lead to event Y? This issue has become an important subject of discussion in the field of social sciences, along with developments in the natural sciences. For example, when we hit a ball, we know that the ball will go forward. Thus, we adopt the belief that there is a causal link and that the physical force we apply to the ball will cause the ball to displace. Can we apply the same logic on behalf of Cleopatra's decision in case of an announced war against Cleopatra? Will Cleopatra counterattack, or adopt a defensive strategy?

More generally, to what extent can a link be claimed between event 1 and event 2? In this thesis, I will systematically describe alternative answers to this question. Within this context, I will analyze two points: a) what core questions can the discussions of determinism in history be reduced to? and b) what is Karl Popper's precise position in this reduction in the context of the philosophy of social sciences and political philosophy? My answer to the first will be related to whether history has telos and whether people have free will in the face of history. And the response to the second question will be that in Popper's perspective, there is no telos in history and the claims on this subject are the source of the justification of totalitarian regimes. In addition to these, I will emphasize that, to Popper, people who make history have partial free will.

In this context, under the subheading of Conceptual Framework, I will respectively explain the concepts of the philosophy of history, causality, determinism, and teleology. In this way, I will reveal the differences and similarities between them. For example, the concepts of determinism and teleology express a very critical distinction in the philosophy of history. You may argue that there is a necessary connection between all events (determinism), but you may not imply that all these events are

intended to reach a certain point (teleology). Your attitude between these two may be the determining factor for your position regarding the philosophy of history.

In the second part, I will deal with the issue of prediction in history. The concept stands in the middle of the discussions about whether a future event can be foreseen or not. For example, with a weather analysis, we can obtain information about whether it will be rainy tomorrow and whether we should plan our picnic. Thus, airline control systems can predict conditions on the aircraft's route. With air traffic observations, it is determined at what time there will be heavy air traffic, and to what extent delays should be made. All of these represent nearly precise predictions about the future. When we use the same logic with respect to humans' prospective decisions, the certainty of predictions drops drastically. What will happen in the markets after a president's statement about an economic crisis? Of course, some level of prediction is possible, but its certainty is lower when it is compared to the prediction regarding sunny weather tomorrow. In this context, I will discuss the differences between the positive sciences and the social sciences in terms of prediction.

In the same part, I will deal with the concept of teleology in the philosophy of history. I will take a look at the history of the predictions implying history has laws and these laws can be used to foresee future. Here, I will discuss the historical philosophies of St. Augustine, Ibn Khaldun, and Auguste Comte, which I have chosen as examples. By presenting their perspectives, I will respectively illustrate a) single-line history understanding, b) cyclical history understanding, and c) progress-based history understanding. Then, I will put forward Fay, Dilthey and Collingwood's aspects regarding the factor of intention in social events, and its relation to indeterminist aspects regarding history.

In the third chapter, I will examine Karl Popper's critique of methodology in the understanding of historicism. Here, I will discuss Karl Popper's position which asserts the inability of making certain prediction about future. In this context, I will take up his criticism of some philosophers who adopted the teleological philosophy of history. To illustrate, I will handle Popper's criticism of Plato's utopia in which a totalitarian

and unquestionable world of thought was created with the figure of philosopher-king, who knew everything about transcendental ideas.

Then I will handle Popper's critique of Hegel and examine Hegel's claim that the spiritual scheme of history has a nature that opens the door to totalitarian regimes. Karl Popper emphasized that Hegel's ideas were an ideological justification for the Prussian monarchy and even led to extreme nationalist movements. Again, in the last part of the same section, I will discuss Karl Popper's critique of Karl Marx's historiography. In this context, I will handle Popper's claim that history, epistemologically, cannot be explained with phases as Marx tried to do. Beyond this, I will point out that according to Karl Popper, although Karl Marx's intention was to criticize the poor working conditions of capitalism at that time, his aspect was incorrect, and it became a theoretical foundation for authoritarian political systems.

In conclusion, I will emphasize that discussions of determinism in history will be reduced to two core questions and different attitudes on alternative answers to these questions. Accordingly, the first question would be (i) whether history has a telos or not, and the second one would be (ii) whether people have free will. There would be five alternative answers to the first question; (a) history has a telos, and there is only one way to that telos, (b) history has a telos, but this telos can be reached in different ways. If the answer to the question of whether there is a telos in history is no, we will encounter two different possibilities this time, (c) history has no telos, but all human events are necessarily linked together within the context of a specific universal-historical law, (d) history has no telos, links between events cannot be shown under a specific universal-historical law, and (e) we cannot know whether history has a telos or not. In this section, I will explore these five different positions.

The second question to determine a person's position towards determinism in the philosophy of history is (ii) whether people have free will or not. In response to this, I will emphasize that there are three different alternative answers: (a) humans have free will (wholly or partially) in face of history, (b) humans do not have free will in face of history, and (c) we do not know whether humans have free will in the face of history. After I evaluate all alternatives in terms of the problem of determinism in history, I

will characterize Karl Popper's position as (d) in the first question and (a) in the second question within this dual framing.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

In this section, I will respectively examine the concepts of the philosophy of history, causality, determinism, and teleology to introduce the discussions of determinism in the philosophy of history. While examining the concepts mentioned above, I will also give brief information about the history of the development of the concepts. In addition, I will reveal the similarities and differences between these concepts in order to clarify the relationship between them in question.

1.2.1. Philosophy of History

The word history in the composition of the field of philosophy of history etymologically comes from the Greek word *historia*. The word shares the same epistemological root as the English word "story."¹ As a discipline, history is described as the discipline where a critical analysis of the primary sources is frequently followed by an analysis of the causes.²

As Özlem noted, the word *historia* was used by Herodotus. He called the book he wrote *Istorias Apodeixis* which means describing the things witnessed and heard.³ Heraclitus also separated historical knowledge from the knowledge of reason and named it "knowledge of multiplicity." Similarly, Aristotle puts the knowledge of history under the art of poetry, which is a literary genre in *Poetics*. For him, besides philosophical knowledge, historical knowledge was unimportant. Because, in ancient Greek philosophy, historical knowledge was the knowledge of transient and changing events, it could not be put into a theoretical form. Universal knowledge could only be reached through reason.⁴

¹ "History," *New World Encyclopedia*, accessed September 6, 2022, <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/History>.

² "History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history>.

³ Doğan Özlem, "Tarih Felsefesi" (İstanbul: Notos, 2012), 26.

⁴ Özlem, 28-29.

Novalis first used the concept of philosophy of history in the nineteenth century. However, the related concept has been used by different philosophers in different contexts, including opposing meanings.⁵ In general terms, the word history in the composition of the philosophy of history has two meanings: a) Knowledge of events in the past and b) the field of history as a kind of science.⁶ The meaning of the phrase "in history" in the title of my thesis covers the latter. If it were the first, I would be referring to all the causality debates in history. These causality debates should have covered all causality debates that took place in the past, from the positive sciences to the social sciences. But what I mean here are discussions of causality within the field of the discipline of history.

Let us refer to the above as the knowledge of the finished events that happened in the past. The word philosophy of history here, expresses a holistic philosophy for whole world history.⁷ When we look at the meaning of the word history in the title of this dissertation, it becomes clear that we are talking about the philosophy of the discipline of history. This, on the other hand, emerged only after the nineteenth century and gained momentum with the work of the German history school affiliated with Herder, and developed theoretically with Dilthey's semantics.⁸

Although the word history refers to two different meanings in the philosophy of history, there are common points between the holistic and methodological philosophies of history. The subject of both covers attempts to make sense of the events that happened in the past. However, the philosophy of history, which refers to the science of history, has a more systematic methodological content. In this sense, the methodological philosophy of history is suspicious of holistic philosophies of history that attempt to interpret the past as a whole.⁹

Knowledge of history is, in Collingwood's words, "knowledge of one's own nature" and, according to him, the only clue to what a man will do in the future is what he has

⁵ Zehragül Aşkın, Serpil Durğun, and Bekir Geçit, *Tarih Felsefesinde Nedensellik Problemi* (Konya: Çizgi Yayınları, 2017), 27.

⁶ Doğan Özlem, "Tarih Felsefesi", 17.

⁷ Özlem, 18-19.

⁸ Özlem, 23.

⁹ Özlem, 19.

done in the past. History also tells us about human capacity and, in a way, its limits.¹⁰ In this context, we can say that the philosophy of history is the result of an effort to understand people's past, present, and future. It is about the past because it deals with events that have happened to people. It is about the present because it aims to analyze all the past conditions that brought this moment into existence. It is as well about tomorrow; it tries to explain whether history is going towards a purpose, whether there is a necessary connection between events, and whether the future can be predicted. For example, some philosophers of history have claimed that there is continuous progress in history. Similarly, some stated that history has a specific purpose while others argued that history has no purpose.

The discussion of causality in history, which I will argue in this thesis, is a subject of the philosophy of the science of history and therefore should be an inseparable part of the tradition of the philosophy of history itself.

1.2.3. Causality

Discussions of causality within the context of philosophy of history question whether there is a certain connection between events. As a concept, causality implies that *there is a reason for each effect, and a cause exists for every contingent creature*. In other words, everything has a reason for its existing. All have good sufficient cause to be.¹¹

Conceptually speaking, we assume that A and B are required for C to occur. This gives us the formula $A + B = C$. Accordingly, we think that C is relative to A and B. For example, according to this formula, a fire or a temperature above a certain level is required for a fire to occur. In other words, fire cannot start on its own; *a chain of causes* is required before it can occur. Causality also expresses this relationship.

There have been significant debates in history about causality. To illustrate, Aristotle accepted four causes for the formation of anything. These are the material cause, formal cause, efficient cause, and final cause. The material cause expresses what

¹⁰ Robin George Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), 10.

¹¹ "Causality, Principle of" Encyclopedia.com, September 10, 2022, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/causality-principle>.

something is made of. For instance, the material cause of a sculpture is a marble. The formal cause refers to the structure of that thing. The efficient cause is the perpetrator of something such as the sculptor is a renaissance artist. The final cause is the end, the final sake of something. For example, the purpose of the marble before starting work is to be a sculpture.¹² Additionally, Aristotle reveals a teleological understanding of matter, especially with his last concept. According to this perspective, a substance does not only have a reason for being but also has a point where it will come to be.¹³

David Hume's perspective in the history of philosophy is one of the important points in the discussion. He argued that we could not claim the existence of a causal connection between things.¹⁴ For example, let us imagine we hit a billiard ball. We know that the ball will move after hitting to the ball. Based on Hume's perspective, it cannot be claimed that there is a necessary connection between hitting to the billiard ball and the progress of the billiard ball. It is simply the result of a habituation of the outside world. Since all the billiard balls we have seen so far move after the external impact, we assume that the next impact will cause it as well. In other words, from Hume's perspective, there is no necessary causal relationship in the formula $A + B = C$; on the contrary, there is a *consecutiveness*. Here, it cannot be said that "A and B gave birth to C". It can be said that "after A and B came, C came."

Another important example of causality is Kant's attitude. He agrees with Hume in the position that any causal link cannot be observed in the outside world. However, he assumes that this connection is logical and so, a-priori. Otherwise, there is no way to explain experiences in the outside world. The necessary bond can be established from the rational perspective.¹⁵

We can cite John Mackie's stance as an important example of causality. According to him, all causes must be "inus conditions" of their effects. These conditions mean an *insufficient but essential part of an unneeded but sufficient condition*. To illustrate,

¹² Andrea Falcon, "Aristotle on Causality," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, March 7, 2019), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-causality/>.

¹³ Falcon.

¹⁴ "David Hume: Causation," Internet encyclopedia of philosophy, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://iep.utm.edu/hume-causation/>.

¹⁵ "Causality," Visit the main page, accessed September 11, 2022, <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Causality>.

assume that a window breaks as a result of someone throwing a rock. Nevertheless, tossing a rock will not be enough to break a window; there must, for example, be no intermediary walls that would stop the rock. However, throwing a rock is enough to smash a window when paired with a number of background factors (such as the absence of intermediate barriers). But all of these circumstances are not required to break a window; one could achieve so by slamming an anvil against it from above.¹⁶

Concerning the philosophy of history, another essential view on the issue is the *probabilistic causation*. For example, consider the proposition that smoking causes cancer. Not every smoker gets cancer, but a large proportion of those who do get cancer are smokers. So, there is probabilistic causation between cancer and smoking. The formulation of this view is: "A probabilistically causes B if A's occurrence increases the probability of B." Hugh Mellor is one of the prominent thinkers among those who analyze this view.¹⁷

Returning to the philosophy of history, we consider causality to examine the relationship between events. Is there a cause-effect link between individual historical events? Can it be claimed that war A led to war B? For example, can a concrete cause-effect link be shown in the birth of the totalitarian regime that led to the ground of the second world war with the heavy economic sanctions imposed on Germany at the end of the First World War? If so, is this link *necessary*, *insufficient* or *probabilistic*? As I mentioned above, there are different understandings about the causal link in positive sciences, and most of them are related to social sciences as well. In this sense, the point of view of the concept of causality will be on an important ground in terms of determining one's position in the philosophy of history.

¹⁶ "Causality."

¹⁷ "Causality."

1.2.4. Determinism

In order to comprehend the context of causality in the philosophy of history, it is also necessary to find out the concept of determinism. Determinism is defined in different ways according to various approaches.¹⁸ To give a comprehensive definition:

The world is governed by (or is under the sway of) determinism if and only if, given a specified way things are at a time t , the way things go thereafter is fixed as a matter of natural law.¹⁹

In other words, determinism insists that everything may theoretically be explained, or everything that exists has a valid reason for existing in the way that it does and for no other reason. Determinism is thus understood as a concept of philosophy of science that assumes that everything has a cause. For example, let us say there is a red apple on the table. For the apple to be on the table, the table must first be designed. In the same way, for an apple to grow on a tree, the tree must have a seed, that seed must be in the soil, and that soil must be exposed to oxygen, sun, and water. Putting the apple on the table also requires an external force. Due to this, there is a cause before all factors. On the one hand, *determinism implies that all the factors that make an apple an apple and make it stand on the table can be explained theoretically, and this explanation is based on a single valid causal sequence.* In this perspective, there was *no alternative way* for this apple to be put on that table. It had to be in this position as result of the *determined line*.

However, determinism is often confused with the concept of fatalism. The belief that all events are predetermined to happen regardless of our actions is known as fatalism. Instead of events developing according to natural laws or cause-and-effect relationships, the source of the assurance that they will occur is found in gods' will, their divine foresight, or some other fundamental teleological component of the universe. Fatalism can therefore be clearly distinguished from determinism, at least to the extent that one can separate the idea of natural/causal law from mystical forces,

¹⁸ Carl Hoefer, "Causal Determinism," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, January 21, 2016), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/determinism-causal/>.

¹⁹ Hoefer.

gods' wills, and foresight (about particular matters).²⁰ We can envision a universe ruled by deterministic principles, with nothing predetermined to happen.²¹

However, the assumption that the universe is computably determined provides a schema that enables people to make predictions about the future. But as I pointed out above, this state of being determined does not mean the existence of a will or a determined destiny in the mystical sense. On the contrary, *it means a necessary and determined connection between things*. From Laplace's point of view, if there were a machine that knew all the data in detail, it could also calculate the future perfectly:

We ought to regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its antecedent state and as the cause of the state that is to follow. An intelligence knowing all the forces acting in nature at a given instant, as well as the momentary positions of all things in the universe, would be able to comprehend in one single formula the motions of the largest bodies as well as the lightest atoms in the world, provided that its intellect were sufficiently powerful to subject all data to analysis; to it, nothing would be uncertain, the future, as well as the past, would be present to its eyes. The perfection that the human mind has been able to give to astronomy affords but a feeble outline of such an intelligence.²²

This excerpt is a summary of the determinist viewpoint, which assumes that the universe is determined mechanistically. To illustrate, if we had been able to invent such the machine five hundred years ago, this machine would have known the date when the Covid-19 epidemic would start, the date it would end, and the minute I completed this thesis, five hundred years later. Thus, from this perspective, the subject of free will would be under question. According to this scenario, *it would certainly not have been possible* to prevent the spread of the virus that originated in the city of Wuhan.

There are similarities between the concept of causality that I mentioned in the previous title and determinism in terms of the concepts of "cause and effect." However, they have different extent. In this sense, causality expresses the cause-effect link between singular things. However, determinism, is the position argues that *everything is determined*. In other words, determinism is the expression that *causality is inevitable*. For instance, a causal relationship exists between consuming high carbohydrates and

²⁰ Hoefler.

²¹ Hoefler.

²² Laplace, Pierre Simon, et al. *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*. New York: Wiley, 1902, 4.

gaining weight. This causality can be probabilistic in the light of different factors, as I mentioned above. According to determinism, everything that occurs is the *only thing* that, given the past and the current situation, *could have possibly occurred*. In this sense, there is no difference between the categories of the possible and the actual.²³

The opposite of determinism in history is *contingency*. By historical contingency, *we imply chance-influenced occurrences that have significant long-term implications*, i.e., occurrences that unmistakably steer history in a different direction than it otherwise would have.²⁴ Due to this, if there is a contingency in history, there would be no place for determinism in the meaning that I have mentioned above.

In the context of the philosophy of history, the importance of the discussions of whether history has a determined content or not will emerge by itself. Just like the physical laws believed to rule the universe, can we talk about determinist “historical” laws that direct history and societies? If these laws exist, are they fully binding on people? Is man’s will inactive against the laws of history? I will address the different and common reflections of determinism in the positive and social sciences in more detail in the next section. However, in this part, I refer to this much to place the conceptual framework as an introduction to my dissertation.

1.2.5. Teleology

Teleology is another important concept related to discussions of determinism in the philosophy of history. It comes from the Greek word *telos*, meaning "end," and *logos* meaning "reason".²⁵ A teleological explanation is one that makes reference to the purpose or end that the phenomenon serves to explain its existence, occurrence, or

²³ “Determinism Is Not Just Causality,” Psychology Today (Sussex Publishers), accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cultural-animal/200906/determinism-is-not-just-causality>.

²⁴ Jonathan Bendor and Jacob N. Shapiro, “Historical Contingencies in the Evolution of States and Their Militaries: World Politics,” Cambridge Core (Cambridge University Press, December 24, 2018), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/world-politics/article/historical-contingencies-in-the-evolution-of-states-and-their-militaries/3B3BF7F08C88CCF78C3768C3ABB9587F>.

²⁵ “Teleology,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/teleology>.

nature.²⁶ In the past, it was also referred to as final causality, as opposed to reference for efficient causes such as the origin of a change or a state of rest in something.²⁷

With the development of modern science in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, attention was drawn to mechanistic explanations of natural phenomena, which only consider efficient causes. According to this approach, if teleological explanations were used, they took the form of viewing biological organisms and their components as complex machines in which each smaller part is minutely adjusted, rather than saying that things develop toward the realization of ends internal to their own natures.²⁸ Teleology was extensively discussed by Kant. He emphasized that teleology can only be a regulatory concept and not a constitutive one for human knowledge. The biological sciences' use of teleological language is, therefore, not to be taken literally; rather, it is a collection of helpful metaphors.²⁹

We can explain the concept of teleology in a simpler way with the example of walking. If the ultimate goal in walking is to have a healthy body, the telos of your walking is to be healthy. However, you can also achieve your goal of being healthy by taking other actions. For example, you will be healthy by climbing a certain number of stairs every day. Telos is one, and the path to telos can be single or multiple, depending on the nature of the telos. Therefore, one's telos of healthy living are open to alternative options. This implies that determination (at least compared to the only alternative path) is not rigid. But if oxygen is the only means of my breathing purpose (telos), my breathing is trapped in the concept of oxygen and is not open to any other possibility and alternative way.

As another example, let us consider an apple lying on the table. In the teleological approach, the main question is, "For what purpose was the apple placed on the table?" In causality, it is "Which prior event/action made the apple placed on the table?" In determinism, the question that comes to the fore is, "What determining factors made

²⁶ Denis Walsh, "Teleology," www.oxfordhandbooks.com, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195182057.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195182057-e-006>.

²⁷ "Teleology," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica), accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/teleology>.

²⁸ "Teleology."

²⁹ "Teleology."

this apple *inevitably* stood on this table?". These questions cannot be completely separated from each other. Causality is within the concept of determinism. Teleology, on the other hand, can be both outside and inside a strict understanding of determinism. It may be in it because moving the universe to a certain point (telos) may require a fixed legal order within it. It may be outside because the universe may have more than one law-formed different (flexible) paths to get to a certain point.

Discussions in the philosophy of history are intertwined with these three core concepts (causality, determinism, and teleology). The critical question about teleology is about the purpose of history. Does history have a purpose? Is history designed to move towards a predetermined end? If the answer is yes, is this ending open to different alternatives, or is it strictly deterministic? For example, if the telos of history is the construction of a socialist society, is there a single sequence of events until we reach that stage, or can it be said that we are faced with a flexible choice scale on the way to that telos? Just as reaching the healthy life I mentioned above has alternatives such as climbing stairs as well as walking, is it possible for a history model with a telos to deviate into different paths?

These are the questions that form the core of the discussion. Starting from the conceptual framework I have drawn in this section, in the following chapter, I will examine the differences of determinist approaches in the positive sciences and social sciences.

CHAPTER II

PREDICTION IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the relevance of the issue of whether future events can be predicted in the light of past events in relation to the philosophy of history. Is the future predictable if there is a plan and system in history? I will first argue the concept of prediction in the positive sciences. Then, I will methodologically discuss the concept of prediction in the social sciences and reveal the importance of human factor regarding unpredictability.

2.2. Prediction in Positive Sciences

Is the future predictable? In simple terms, when you drop the glass on the floor, the glass will likely break. So, when someone says they are going to throw the glass down, you know the glass will break. By an evaluation from a previous time, you are making a prediction about the future. This prediction (the glass will break) must be a prediction close to certain. Can the same predictions be made in all areas of the positive sciences? Again, can the same form of foresight be applied to the social sciences in general and history in particular?

The classical determinist understanding of the universe is based on Newtonian mechanics. Newton saw the universe as a gigantic machine operating according to mathematical laws.³⁰ His understanding of universe has been subjected to some criticism due to Einstein's general theory of relativity, Max Planck's quantum theory, and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle.³¹ According to the theory of relativity, time, space, and mass are all interconnected. This theory gave rise to the idea of a four-dimensional space-time continuum, where time and the three spatial dimensions are

³⁰ Zehragül Aşkın, Serpil Durğun, and Bekir Geçit, *Tarih Felsefesinde Nedensellik Problemi* (Konya: Çizgi Yayınları, 2017), 38.

³¹ Aşkın, 39.

treated equally. According to the uncertainty principle (for position and momentum), it is impossible to provide a physical system's position and momentum with exact simultaneous values. Instead, these numbers can only be calculated with a limited set of characteristic "uncertainties" that cannot all simultaneously decrease to zero.³² As Aşkın cited, a result of these developments, the mechanistic idea of regularity which does not contain disorder and randomness in nature changed.³³

However, the understanding of regularity and the nomological aspect remained influential in sciences, although the world of science considered open to possibilities. Here, it is important to distinguish events in physical world from those which take place in social context. While historicism focuses its attention on singular events and their specific features, nomologicalism sees entities as examples of general patterns and laws.³⁴ Accordingly, while nomologicalism is characteristically universal, historicism deals with particular substance. While the subject of nomologicalism is type, historicism deals with the individual. While nomologicalism entails recurrence, historicism includes novelty in the uniqueness of events. While nomologicalism emphasizes atemporality, historicism deals with temporality. Finally, while nomologicalism inherently includes sameness, historicism highlights the difference.³⁵

Nomologicalism has a general characteristic. Let us take Newton's theory of gravity as an example. The force of attraction between two objects is directly proportional to the size of the masses. It is inversely proportional to the square of the distance between the objects. As the mass increases, the gravitational power increases, and as the distance increases, the gravitational power decreases. This principle is a general truth, and it can be applied to all living and non-living beings without exception. These form the formulas we call "E if C under the condition S." To illustrate, within the scope of this principle (gravity), we know that a tennis ball to be dropped from the air will fall as per the x rule, not unlike a piano or a person falling to the ground. As a matter of fact, let us consider a law of the form "E if C under the condition S." If C and E does

³² Jan Hilgevoord and Jos Uffink, "The Uncertainty Principle," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Stanford University, July 12, 2016), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qt-uncertainty/>.

³³ Zehragül Aşkın, Serpil Durğun, and Bekir Geçit, "Tarih Felsefesinde Nedensellik Problemi", 39.

³⁴ Brian C. Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: A Multicultural Approach* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)., 156.

³⁵ Aşkın, 156.

not *always* cause E, then C and E is not the cause of E. If E can be due to factors other than C, then E and C *cannot* explain C. For such an explanation, E must occur whenever C is present, and E must not occur whenever C is absent.³⁶ There is a close relationship between nomological explanations and deduction in this sense. Within the scope of this law, we state that in all cases where C-type events occur, E-type events also occur.³⁷

All these explanations are closely related to the concept of prediction in positive sciences. We make an explanation with the formula "If C is E under the condition S." With the same formula, we get the information that all Cs will be E under the condition S. While the first formula is an explanation of what is present, in the second we are able to *predict* that a particular C in the future will lead to a particular E. So here we encounter the predictability property of nomological explanations. If an explanation does not allow us to foresee, it is stuck at the limit of nomologicalism.³⁸ This gives us the ahistorical, timeless nature of legalistic explanations. In this context, laws are not limited to a specific time period but make their examples valid for all dateable features.³⁹

According to the nomological explanation, if the social sciences (and thus history) are truly scientific, it is possible to discover a certain set of general laws and to *predict* something that will happen in the future in the light of these laws.⁴⁰ The nomological attitude has to look for laws not only in the positive sciences but also in other fields. In the field of sociology, for example, it recommends examining certain constant factors related to the progress and decline of societies. It tries to arrive at certain formulas, such as "E if C under the condition S," as to why some countries have high standards in the field of economics. He tries to apply the same tendency in psychology. From this point of view, I will deal with the issue of determinism in social sciences.

³⁶ Aşkın, 157.

³⁷ Aşkın, 157.

³⁸ Aşkın, 158.

³⁹ Aşkın, 159.

⁴⁰ Aşkın, 160.

2.3. Prediction in Social Sciences

2.3.1. Examples of Historical Prediction

Before examining the concept of historical prediction methodologically, I will give examples of three different philosophers (St. Augustine, Ibn Khaldun, and Auguste Comte) who made historical predictions. In this way, I will demonstrate the relationship between prediction and nomologicalism in the philosophy of history with the examples.

As Özlem noted, the first philosopher of history was St. Augustine (BC 354-430). According to him, God is outside of time; everything outside of him is in time. God created man free, but man has sinned continuously since Adam. He is perpetually oriented towards evil, and only God's grace (*gratia*) can save him. The people to be rewarded and punished were predestined, and God's Son Jesus appeared on earth to bring salvation to the "chosen." Thus, the process began until the apocalypse, when they would go to the eschaton, which is the court of God.⁴¹ Augustine's teleological philosophy of history emerges even more clearly in his work *civitas dei* (the State of God). The God State will appear in the future as the state of the saved. In contrast, the Earth State (*civitas diaboli*) will be the state of the wicked. History is the story of the tension between these two states. This process, which is the war between "children of light" and "children of darkness" and will end in eschaton, as a model of the *one-line understanding* of history.⁴²

According to another philosopher of history, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), historians could not go beyond reporting singular historical events with their own singularities without attempting to establish a causal relationship between these events. However, as in natural events, according to him, there is a causal relationship between social phenomena. For this reason, what needs to be done is to explain the events within these regularities without losing oneself in their singularity.⁴³ The name of this science is also called *ilm al umran*. Thus, Ibn Khaldun wanted to take history out of storytelling

⁴¹ Doğan Özlem, "Tarih Felsefesi", 33.

⁴² Özlem, 34-35.

⁴³ Özlem, 43.

and put it in the form of a general explanation.⁴⁴ As a matter of fact, the basic concept of society from the smallest social unit to the state is *asabiyyah* (social cohesion), as Ibn Khaldun discussed in his work *Muqaddimah*, which includes many topics from historiography, economy, politics, and education. The phrase can be understood as a unifying concept that serves as the driving force behind ruling organizations' ascent to power.⁴⁵ According to Ibn Khaldun, every community is born, grows, and dies like a living organism. In this sense, Ibn Khaldun's concept of history expresses a *cyclical understanding of history*, not a single line as St. Augustine portrayed. In this process, sovereign powers emerge, develop power, lose power, and eventually are subjugated by other sovereign powers.⁴⁶ However, according to Ibn Khaldun, there is no single process in history that works for all humanity; different societies may experience different stages of their own cyclicity in the same time period.⁴⁷

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), along with utilitarians, evolutionists, and Marx in the nineteenth century, perpetuated the progressivism, enlightenment ideals, and self-confidence of nineteenth century thought. He believed that the development of science provided people and society with the opportunity to create an improved and satisfactory environment. He thought that he could use the development of the concept of physical nature in understanding society with the advances in the field of positive science, and he argued that a positivist, scientific sociology should be put forward.⁴⁸ As a natural consequence of his belief in human rationality, he adopted the understanding of progressivism and made it his mission to "discover how human race gradually progressed from apes to advanced ones. Accordingly, each successive stage in the evolution of the human mind contains the conditions for the development of the next."⁴⁹ According to the idea he put forward as the law of three states, societies necessarily pass through the theological, metaphysical and positive periods in order.

⁴⁴ Özlem, 44.

⁴⁵ "The Muqaddimah: Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed September 12, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ibn-Khaldun/The-Muqaddimah-Ibn-Khalduns-philosophy-of-history>.

⁴⁶ Önder, Murat, and Fatih Ulaşan. "Egemen Güçlerin Yükseliş ve Çöküşleri Hakkındaki Döngü Teorileri ve İbn Haldun'un Döngü Teorisi: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Örneği." ADAM AKADEMİ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi 8, no. 2 (2018): 271–307. <https://doi.org/10.31679/adamakademi.453944>., 233-234.

⁴⁷ Doğan Özlem, "Tarih Felsefesi", 33.

⁴⁸ Ahmet Cevizci, *Felsefe Tarihi: Thales'ten Baudrillard'a* (İstanbul: Say, 2018), 813-814.

⁴⁹ Cevizci, 816

Although the speed and levels of transition may be different, this nomological order is valid.⁵⁰

Accordingly, the theological stage, which is the first phase, reflects the mentality that ascribes human emotion and volitional functions to natural phenomena. Here the human mind acquires a completely anthropomorphic and animistic appearance. The most distinctive feature of this period is the ignorance of the distinction between *how* and *why* questions. At this stage, the world is seen as a spiritual order, and phenomena is personalized. This phase is divided into three; a) fetishism, b) polytheism, and c) monotheism.⁵¹ According to Comte, the metaphysician no longer sees nature as the universe as a spiritual order but as an inevitable first cause. At this stage, nature is fictionalized as a self-contained power, and the causality feature that has been attributed to spirits until then is attributed to nature. Metaphysicians think that they can only explain the causes of things by reasoning.⁵²

In the positive stage, there is the acceptance that only positive sciences constitute the whole of human knowledge. The "causal links" put forward in explaining the phenomena are verifiable correlations. At this stage, the task of the mind is to examine the logical relations between scientific explanations. For Comte, historical developments are the corresponding movements of ideas and institutions. For example, the theological phase is dominated by priests and ruled by soldiers. While the metaphysical stage is under the domination of church officials, the positive phase has a characteristic that is governed by industrialists and scientific, moral guides.⁵³ The law of three states, put forward by Auguste Comte, is one of the historical-social understandings claiming that there is a nomological order in history. Thus, his aspect is one of the examples of the progress-based understanding of history and it assumes that the future of societies can be predicted in the light of certain constants.

⁵⁰ Cevizci, 817.

⁵¹ Cevizci, 818.

⁵² Cevizci, 818-819.

⁵³ Cevizci, 819-820.

2.3.2. Historical Prediction in the Context of Social Sciences

Can the future be predicted in social sciences, including the discipline of history? As I mentioned above, can we apply a concrete physical prediction (like changing the place of a ball as a result of being hit) to interpersonal events?

These questions bring up the "argument from intentionality," which is the distinctive feature of social sciences, as Fay puts it. For instance, it cannot be claimed that the ball *itself* carries a purpose in the movement of the ball after an external impact. However, even social phenomena that do not appear intentionally, including economic crises, are made up of the intentions of banks, political systems, and the workers involved in them.⁵⁴ Therefore, it can be shown mathematically that the ball moves in the context of certain physical laws when the force applied by the wind to a ball is applied, but when explaining that the members of a tribe dance, it is tried to reveal the purpose for which the members of the tribe move, not the physical explanation of the movement of the body muscles of the tribe members.⁵⁵

Another feature of purposeful phenomena is that they are constantly renewed by new additional variables to existing data. As new meanings and purposes are constantly added to the meaning worlds of tribes, the ways in which tribe members respond in different situations vary. To illustrate, as tribe members increase their contact with the outside world, they learn new things and add what they learn to their own behavior.⁵⁶ These innovations, therefore, put the next actions of the tribe members in an unpredictable framework of uncertainty. Here it is impossible to predict innovations whose development depends on the development of other innovations. As an example, let us consider a man who lived in the year 1500. It is impossible for this person to predict, at that time, the emergence of capitalism in the future. Because in order to do this, he must envisage many abstract concepts such as the transformation of markets from being predominantly goods-based to being contracts-based, or from private property to wage labor. These make the probability of prediction almost impossible.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Brian C. Fay, "Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: A Multicultural Approach", 160.

⁵⁵ Fay, 160.

⁵⁶ Fay, 160.

⁵⁷ Fay, 160-161.

Another reason for the problem of prediction in social sciences is that social institutions, like people's beliefs and wishes, are subject to constant change. Since institutions and practices are constantly changing, each unit is in an unpredictable position will cause chain change.⁵⁸ Here, Fay cites Karl Marx's theory as an example. Marx thought that he had discovered the core laws of capitalism and he conducted his criticisms around these "laws." Yet the laws that Marx thought he had discovered only showed the form of capitalism in a particular historical period.⁵⁹ According to the purposiveness argument, this is the biggest problem facing nomologicalism in the social sciences. Because in order to define something under a certain law, it is necessary to isolate it from other objects and stabilize it to a certain extent. It is not possible to ascribe a "fixed" law to anything that cannot be abstracted from change. From this point of view, it is not possible to (precisely) predict something that cannot be attributed to a fixed law.

Another problem with the purposiveness argument is the difficulty of describing phenomena. For example, let us say that a person named Robert started his master's degree at the University of California. How can we describe this event? As Fay said, we can also take this event as a one-person event, generalize it further as student x starts graduate school at university y, or it can be a physical explanation like any person walking towards the university using their legs and filling out the application form with their hands. It is possible to consider the same event from more than one point of view. This may indicate that purposeful actions can be described in an unintended way with different definitions. As a matter of fact, this method is adopted in fields such as sociobiology and cognitive simulation.⁶⁰ However, the main problem with such a method is that it fails to adequately cover the human factor. Thus, human is not only physical being that can be examined but also meaningful being that exists within a certain cultural perspective and has feelings and intentions. Thus, the evolution of human groups has emerged as a result of adaptation not only to physical fitness but also to various factors in cultural terms.⁶¹ On the other hand, anthropologists interested

⁵⁸ Fay, 161.

⁵⁹ Fay, 161.

⁶⁰ Fay, 164.

⁶¹ Fay, 167.

in the singularities of historical evolution will also want to consider the intentions of human groups.⁶²

Indeed, while large-scale changes over a long period of time may have been the result of small-scale and nomological changes, large-scale changes themselves may not have been brought about by a single law. As Fay gives an example, let one examine the historical process that the Roman Empire went from a to b, and from b to c. The empire was in a state at time T1, so it later became in the state b at time T2. Then, at time T3, it came into state c. These two separate situations (from a to b, from b to c) cannot be expressed in a single law since there is *no necessary connection* between the occurrence of the second law and the first law. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about a universally valid general law.⁶³ In light of all these, it becomes difficult to express a universal historical narrative as causal links, which can be shown in the singular sense, are not able to be shown in a "nomological" way on a larger scale.⁶⁴

2.3.3. Meaning in Social Sciences

Dilthey (1883-1911) tried to distinguish the fields of history and sociology from the influence of natural sciences. The first effort to free social sciences from the hegemony of natural sciences was by the German History School.⁶⁵ This school focused on grasping each in its singularity rather than understanding historical processes from a universal law perspective.⁶⁶ According to Dilthey, despite all of its efforts, this school could not break the barriers within itself and failed to evaluate the phenomena related to consciousness. For this reason, it is necessary to deal with the spiritual sciences in a different way.⁶⁷

According to Dilthey, positivists made the mistake of distorting reality in order to fit historical reality into natural scientific concepts. Although we understand the outside

⁶² Fay, 168.

⁶³ Fay, 168.

⁶⁴ Fay, 169.

⁶⁵ Zehragül Aşkın, Serpil Durğun, and Bekir Geçit, "Tarih Felsefesinde Nedensellik Problemi", 87.

⁶⁶ Aşkın, 88.

⁶⁷ Wilhelm Dilthey and Doğan Özlem, *Hermeneutik ve Tin Bilimleri* (İstanbul: Paradigma, 1999), 13-15.

world through experiments, we perceive these experiences within ourselves. Here, too, we encounter the concept of "inner experience". Our projections about nature come *from our consciousness*. We can only handle the facts in themselves, all the given facts, with internal control. For this reason, the principles on which the spiritual world is based must be discovered independently within this world.⁶⁸ At this point, Dilthey states that he feels closer to thinkers such as Locke, Hume, and Kant rather than Comte and states that the sap of the mind, which is a pure thinking activity, circulates in the veins of the subject. From this point of view, he expresses that he wants to lay the foundation for the explanation of the concept of knowledge as a being that feels, knows, and acts.⁶⁹ According to him, the phenomena to which science is directed are divided into two, the first of which is a natural science, which deals with the collection of facts.⁷⁰ As a matter of fact, according to him, considering human sciences as a separate category from spiritual sciences does not mean that they should be taken from his psycho-physical life completely, but it is a guide in terms of showing their limits against natural sciences.⁷¹

According to Dilthey, man, apart from inanimate matter, has the power of will, which is the product of consciousness. So, a man who is not totally dependent on external conditions and not separate from them is *both heteronomous and autonomous*. He is heteronomous because he is under the influence of nature and environmental conditions. He is autonomous as he carries willpower that it can maintain in all these conditions. This corresponds exactly to Spinoza's phrase "imperium in imperio", meaning to rule in the dominated conditions. Thus, by overcoming the desolate repetition of nature through his consciousness, man presents a singular design for himself.⁷²

Dilthey emphasized that Greek thought had an essential generalist and universalist character. Although they are based on the particular, what is essential is the study of the particular *within the universal*.⁷³ Similarly, the character of modern science is

⁶⁸ Dilthey, 15-17.

⁶⁹ Dilthey, 17.

⁷⁰ Dilthey, 27.

⁷¹ Dilthey, 29.

⁷² Dilthey, 28-29.

⁷³ Dilthey, 72-73.

based on causal and nomological connections. But are singular persons and singular connections possible, and if so, on what? According to Dilthey, the spiritual sciences are superior to the natural sciences because their subject is not the reaction of external phenomena in the consciousness but this inner reality itself.⁷⁴ Moreover, the existence of consciousness is not enough for a person to grasp this inner experience; one must be able to realize his own singularity by encountering other consciousnesses. According to Dilthey, this method that enables the comprehension of the inner reality through the signs given externally to the senses is called understanding.⁷⁵ Understanding, according to him, has varying degrees. In this sense, understanding is an art and realizes itself in the explanation and interpretation of human existence. As a matter of fact, the act of understanding in question, unlike the natural sciences, is consolidated in the personal genius and virtuosity of the philologists.⁷⁶

In summary, for Dilthey, historical facts are not like natural facts, so the historical field can be grasped with a different way of thinking. Since the historical events in question are not regular and repetitive phenomena, a straight line of causality cannot be sought in them because the events here are not created by nature but by human will. In this sense, the relevant events can be understood not through causality but through teleology because it is not the general concepts that shape the events but the person's individuality. For this reason, they require *understanding, not explanation*.⁷⁷

Collingwood has a similar distinction. According to him, although positivists tried to make history not a subject of philosophy but an empirical science such as meteorology, names like Voltaire took philosophy as a critical and independent field, and Hegel's philosophy of history was in the position for universal history.⁷⁸ According to Collingwood, historical thought has various peculiarities. For example, history cannot be grasped by mathematical thinking, which has no special place in space-time. Nor can it be grasped by the theological way of thinking because the object of this kind of thinking is the eternal object. Historical events, on the other hand, have the property

⁷⁴ Dilthey, 85-86.

⁷⁵ Dilthey, 86.

⁷⁶ Dilthey, 90-91.

⁷⁷ Zehragül Aşkın, Serpil Durğun, and Bekir Geçit, "Tarih Felsefesinde Nedensellik Problemi", 95.

⁷⁸ Robin George Collingwood, "The Idea of History", 1.

of being finite and multiple. History cannot be grasped with scientific thought either because the truths it discovered can be justified at the present time through experimentation and observation. However, as the object of history, events in the past have already happened. Therefore, it is not possible to verify a historical event as we confirm a scientific assumption.⁷⁹

Indeed, history is a world of changes relative to the Greek world. In such a world, everything comes into existence and disappears. According to common Greek metaphysics, such things need not be known.⁸⁰ Parallel to this, Greek thought made a distinction between (episteme) and (doxa). The assumption is the semi-information we obtain about changing phenomena. On the other hand, what is called true knowledge is valid not only for that moment and here *but everywhere and always*. Therefore, in Greek thought, the process could only be known to the extent that it was perceived.⁸¹ Indeed, the Greeks thought that because history was advancing at an extraordinary rate, a permanent concept was impossible regarding to it.⁸²

In this context, Collingwood also deals with the issue of causality in history. According to him, there is no need for the historian to try to act like a scientist while searching for the causes of events. The object to be discovered for history is not merely the event but to *understand the thought* expressed in it. Accordingly, when the historian knows the event, he also knows why it happened.⁸³

For Collingwood, the question of *why* certainly has a place in history. But its nature is separate from the question of *why* in scientific inquiry. Here Collingwood gives the example of litmus paper. Accordingly, when a historian asks why litmus paper turns pink, he wants to know what physical conditions make the paper pink. However, when a historian asked why Brutus stabbed Caesar, "What did Brutus think he stabbed Caesar?" wants to understand the answer to the question. Therefore, according to Collingwood's perspective, natural processes can be described in succession, but

⁷⁹ Collingwood, 5.

⁸⁰ Collingwood, 20.

⁸¹ Collingwood, 20-21.

⁸² Collingwood, 22.

⁸³ R. G. Collingwood et al., *Tarih Tasarımı* (Ankara: Doğu Batı, 2013), 273.

historical processes cannot be described with the same clarity. Every history is the history of thought.⁸⁴ So, how does the historian discover the ideas he is trying to discover? Rethinking them in your own mind, according to Collingwood. When a historian of philosophy reads Plato, he tries to know Plato. The person who tries to understand Julius Caesar tries to understand the thoughts in Caesar's mind and tries to determine *what pushes him* to X action. Thus, the historian tries to grasp history through "re-enactment." While doing this, he always considers that he may have his own prejudices and does not abandon his critical thinking.⁸⁵

So far, I have discussed the reflections of nomological aspects on positive sciences and social sciences. In this context, a) I examined the concept of causality in the positive sciences and the possibility of prediction, b) I gave the example of Augustine, Ibn Khaldun and Auguste Comte's perspectives as examples of the nomological approach in social sciences and history, c) I underlined that in relation to the concept of causality in social sciences, making history requires intentional actions and it should be evaluated differently from physical phenomena as it consists of willful actions, and d) I showed that from the perspective of Brian Fay, Dilthey, and Collingwood, the possibility and content of "prediction" in social sciences is quite different from the positive sciences.

⁸⁴ Collingwood, 273.

⁸⁵ Collingwood, 274.

CHAPTER III

KARL POPPER'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

3.1. Introduction

Sir Karl Raimund Popper (1902-94) was an Austrian-born British philosopher of natural and social sciences who adhered to anti-determinist metaphysics and thought that knowledge develops through mental experience. He passed away on September 17, 1994, in Croydon, Greater London, England.⁸⁶

In this section, I will discuss Karl Popper's approach to the determinist and teleological philosophy of history. In the first part, I will examine his approach regarding historicism. This part will be like the description and methodological analysis of understanding the teleological philosophy of history. In presenting this review of the section in question, my main reference will be Karl Popper's work named *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957).

In the second part, I will discuss Karl Popper's point of view in which he associates historicism with totalitarian regimes. In this context, I will examine his famous work, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, which was published in 1945. I will discuss the point of view in which Karl Popper examines the philosophies of history in detail by Plato, whom Karl Popper claims to have a utopian approach, and Hegel and Marx, whom he considers to be prominent examples of holistic history narrators, in the light of the details I examined in the previous methodology section.

⁸⁶ "Karl Popper," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica), accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-Popper>.

3.2. Historicism in Karl Popper's Perspective

3.2.1. Historical Unpredictability

In his book *The Poverty of Historicism*, Karl Popper discusses whether the future can be known (predicted) within the historical flow. In this context, he claims that human knowledge cannot know the future with certainty, within the logical argument that he established in the preface of his related work, and which is the essence of his ideas. Following this:

- 1) The development of human knowledge strongly influences the course of human history.
- 2) We cannot predict the future development of our scientific knowledge by the rational or scientific method.
- 3) For this reason, we cannot predict the future course of human history.
- 4) For this reason, a theoretical perception of history as a kind of theoretical physics should be rejected. No scientific theory of historical development is possible for historical prediction.
- 5) The purpose of historicist methods is misunderstood; hence, historicism collapses.⁸⁷

This argument does not cancel any historical prediction from Karl Popper's perspective. Let us consider economics as an example. Economists who are experts in this field can make strong inferences about how the market response will be based on the steps taken by a government. However, the people in question cannot predict the future with certainty. As the above argument shows, our knowledge is constantly evolving and advancing. Since we cannot know exactly what the course of development will be, there is no such thing as a complete prediction of the future.⁸⁸

Indeed, history is full of unpredictable events. For example, the Black Plague, which affected a very significant part of the world's population and killed 20 million people

⁸⁷ Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 7.

⁸⁸ Popper, 7.

in Europe alone, emerged in the 1300s.⁸⁹ Although many epidemics were seen in the world at different times until that date, the Black Plague a) could not be predicted when it would break out, b) it could not be known how quickly it would spread, and c) it could not be predicted when it would end. However, these three factors have caused numerous states to fall into a complicated situation, caused the death of millions of people, caused the death of many landowners, and changed the business balances worldwide. It has led to the rise of mysticism in poetry and art. For example, this happening shook even the authority of the Roman Catholic church.⁹⁰

As another example, we can take the Great Chinese Famine. In the middle of 1959-61, the famine that emerged as a result of wrong policies in China caused the death of 30 million Chinese. This event, called the "man-made famine", has been regarded as one of the greatest disasters in Chinese history. As a result of Mao's decision, tens of millions of peasants were required to mine nearby iron ore and limestone reserves, cut down trees for charcoal, construct basic clay furnaces, and process metal, instead of working in the fields. Agricultural communes that had just been established reduced the amount of land that was planted to grain, which at the time accounted for more than 80% of China's food energy and drove peasants to relinquish all individual food production.⁹¹

Let us go back a bit before the event. Who knew that Mao would take such a decision? Even people who knew that his personality was conducive to radical decision-making could not have specifically predicted that something like this would happen. Even if it did, they would have thought this policy would naturally be more prudent. However, none have happened. In the last century, Chinese history has witnessed one of the greatest famines.

⁸⁹ History.com Editors, "Black Death," History.com (A&E Television Networks, September 17, 2010), <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/black-death>.

⁹⁰ "Effects and Significance." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed September 12, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Black-Death/Effects-and-significance>.

⁹¹ Vaclav Smil, "China's Great Famine: 40 Years Later," *BMJ: British Medical Journal* (U.S. National Library of Medicine), accessed September 12, 2022, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1127087/>.

Karl Popper's perspective expresses this logic. As a matter of fact, he states that "prediction" and "retrodiction" *should be separated* in order to show that looking forward and backward in history is different.⁹² To understand this better, let us go through the following example: In many sources, the assassination of the famous Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie, committed by a Serbian gang member on June 28, 1914, is shown as the event that led to the start of the First World War.⁹³ Let us go back to the moment when the trigger was pulled. Could the Serbian assassin, while plotting his assassination, foresee that this bullet would start the First World War, in which over 20 million people would die? So much so that at the end of this war, could he predict that very large states such as the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and Tsarist Russia would enter the process of disintegration, and new countries called Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary would be established? The answer is clearly no.

Here, when we say that "the murder of Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie was the cause of the First World War," *we are not making a forward-looking prediction*. On the contrary, by looking from the future, we make an *interpretation* that goes to the future over the past. This is the explanation of the distinction between (prediction) and (retrodiction) that I have mentioned above by Karl Popper, and with this attitude, he emphasizes that historical causality claims are generally about the past, that is, the process of connecting events that have already happened, and raises his epistemic suspicion that the same method can be attached to an event that has not yet happened.

3.2.2. The Methodology of Historicism

3.2.2.1. Introduction

Before examining and criticizing the types of historical methodology, Karl Popper pointed out that revolutionary developments in the positive sciences did not occur in the social sciences. Accordingly, the social sciences could not come up with names

⁹² Karl R. Popper, "The Poverty of Historicism" preface, 8.

⁹³ "Austria's Archduke Ferdinand Assassinated," History.com (A&E Television Networks, February 9, 2010), <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/archduke-ferdinand-assassinated>.

like the Newton of physics, Galileo, or Pasteur of the biological sciences.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Wundt's innovation in psychology, for example, could not be in the social sciences outside the field of economics. These failures have fueled debates about whether the methods of physics can be applied to the social sciences.⁹⁵

From this point of view, Karl Popper has adopted a dual category when dealing with different trends in terms of historical methodology: a) Anti-naturalistic doctrines and b) pro-naturalistic doctrines. While anti-naturalistic doctrines argue that physical methods cannot be used in understanding social sciences, pro-naturalistic doctrines argue that physical methods have an important function in understanding social sciences.⁹⁶ In this section, I will discuss how Karl Popper deals with the two styles of historiography, respectively.

3.2.2.2. Anti-Naturalistic Doctrines of Historicism

This position argues that because of the differences between sociology and physics, this method cannot be adapted on historical methodology. According to this, the laws of nature are valid everywhere and are subject to a common system of formalities of the physical world. However, social laws change according to place, time and place. Because they are based on cultural differences. They cannot be understood without a particular historical context.⁹⁷

For example, the work of Hesiod, who lived in the eighth century, describes the story of the world's creation, the conflict between the Olympians and the Titans, and Zeus' rise to become the supreme ruler of the Olympian gods. The poem closes with Zeus's ascendance to sovereignty and the birth of his numerous offspring; it does not mention the ongoing conflicts between humans and the gods.⁹⁸ Accordingly, the person who wants to understand the mindset of that period more closely examines the mentality of the people of that period when they read this work. The conflict between gods, the

⁹⁴ Karl R. Popper, "The Poverty of Historicism", 1.

⁹⁵ Popper, 1.

⁹⁶ Popper, 3.

⁹⁷ Popper, 5.

⁹⁸ Wasson, Donald L. "Theogony." World History Encyclopedia. <https://www.worldhistory.org/#organization>, September 10, 2022. <https://www.worldhistory.org/Theogony/>.

situation of man against nature, and the way man interprets nature can only be understood by considering the specific context of that period.

Karl Popper divided some of the unique features of anti-naturalistic doctrines into various titles. Accordingly, according to this kind of doctrine of understanding history, the concept of *generalization* explains a critical position. In the natural sciences, for example, we see that a law of nature can be valid anywhere at any time. However, historical events have an intense uncertainty as we cannot discuss fixed isomorphism here.⁹⁹

Furthermore, we can explain Popper's explanation with the following example: A formula that works in one period of history may even cause societies to fall behind in another period. Again, norms accepted in one period of history may be rejected in another. Consider, for example, the historical phases in which monarchical empires emerged. The understanding of a single ruler did not prevent many empires from surviving for centuries. However, this form of sovereignty, which has been in decline since the twentieth century, has now begun to be based on much more complex principles with concepts such as democracy, human rights, and equality. Today, it is considered impossible for any developed country to demand administration of the state administration by a single person. Due to this, this variability makes us unable to make a claim like "if a single person rules a state, that state will survive for centuries," then when we say, "the glass will break if it falls to the ground."

According to Popper, anti-naturalistic doctrines argues that they cannot use the experimental method in social sciences. For example, a physics experiment on an isolated substance yields results everywhere. However, social events do not produce the same results under all circumstances, and they cannot be isolated from their context. For example, the individual economy of Robinson Crusoe, isolated on an island, cannot explain the economic relations of interacting societies.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, another important principle in addressing this form of understanding is innovation. Every event in history is unique, even if they are similar. The same

⁹⁹ Karl R. Popper, "The Poverty of Historicism", 6.

¹⁰⁰ Popper, 8.

situation cannot be repeated.¹⁰¹ For example, the story of the collapse of empires can be similar to each other; the breakdown of the economy, the loss of wars, internal revolts, the crack in the palace, and the unrest of the people are seen in almost all the stories of collapse. But every event has *its own internal dynamics*, and none of them can be a copy of the other.

For Popper, the prophecy paradox is a very critical distinction in historical prediction. Accordingly, the allegedly foreseen event may be the event's cause.¹⁰² For example, suppose a famous economist attends a television program and claims that gold prices will fall in the coming period. In this case, people will think that the economist's prediction is true, and they will sell their gold and turn it into money. Therefore, the increasing amount of gold in the market will decrease the gold price. Here, *prediction was itself the cause of the event that was claimed to have been foreseen*. In other words, if this prediction had not been made, the gold owners would not be afraid that the value of the gold in their hands would decrease, so the prophecy would not have come true. Here, *the prophecy* has been the cause of the event, not its prediction. This is a powerful critique of historical foresight. Accordingly, what a person predicts can come true. But this means that the event will happen, not because one's prediction will happen, but because one claims to have predicted it.

As a matter of fact, another feature of such a perception of history methodology is to highlight the intuitive understanding of understanding societies and the past. Let us consider physics as an example. Information in this field is based on quantitative data and can be expressed in mathematical formulas. However, a mathematical formula cannot be valid when it comes to interpreting human events. In this context, in sociology, concepts such as "spirit of the age" come to the fore and there is a structure that tries to examine the specific expectations of that period.¹⁰³

For example, consider the assassination of Julius Caesar, which was planned and carried out by sixty people in BC 44. There were different reasons given in the sources

¹⁰¹ Popper, 9.

¹⁰² Popper, 13.

¹⁰³ Popper, 20.

for this assassination. For example, at that time, Caesar's military successes, popularity, and his title of dictator aroused anger among those around him.¹⁰⁴ In this context, the formation of the assassination group, the historical conditions behind it, and the understanding of the different management style proposals at that time, taking into account the political, economic, and religious structures of the current society, reveals data at a level that cannot be understood in quantitative terms, much vaguer than a physical formula.

At this point, Karl Popper has put forward two separate categories as situational valuation and factual valuation. Historical events are situational, in which people have specific feelings, expectations, goals, and interests.¹⁰⁵ In this context, this attitude argues that human events can be known intuitively, not by a causal chain.

3.2.2.3. Pro-Naturalistic Doctrines of Historicism

In this section, Popper sets out to explain the ideas of those who argue that history can be understood in both a theoretical and empirical way, like physics. To say here that sociology is a theoretical discipline means that sociology must explain and predict events through universal laws. When we say empirical, we mean that it consists of observable elements will form the basis for the acceptance of any theory.¹⁰⁶

According to Popper, the reason for this trend in the historical sense is that it was influenced by the success of Newton's theory and the fact that the positions of the planets could be predicted in this direction. Here, however, a question arose: "If it is possible for astronomy to predict solar and lunar eclipses, why should not it be possible for sociology to do the same for revolutions?" Even if these people are aware of sociology's inadequacies in terms of precision, they think that this can be compensated. In this context, according to them, long-term predictions can be made based on sociological realities.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ "Mar 15, 44 BC: Julius Caesar Assassinated," National Geographic Society, accessed September 12, 2022, <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/julius-caesar-assassinated>.

¹⁰⁵ Karl R. Popper, "The Poverty of Historicism", 21.

¹⁰⁶ Popper, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Popper, 21-22.

For example, an astronomer can locate the current planets and predict their position one thousand years from now. Take the Industrial Revolution, which began around 1700s. The use of steam power has led to radical changes from transportation to communication, from the banking sector to work and worker conditions.¹⁰⁸ According to the pro-naturalist history methodology approach, it is possible for a sociologist who witnessed this period to make predictions about the future by looking at the historical details of the current period. Such a sociologist might predict that the changing conditions of workers during this transformation will lead to major economic changes, then the working conditions of workers will worsen, and a socialist theory will emerge in response to this.

From this point of view, the task of the social sciences is to analyze, to try to penetrate the roots of conflicting forces and tendencies by viewing them as a thicket. Thus, their driving force will be found, and their laws will be penetrated. Social theory, built on such a methodology, maybe in a structure that allows large-scale predictions. This gives sociology the characteristic of theoretical history.¹⁰⁹ Sociology, which has various laws in it, does not have patterned laws valid for all ages. On the contrary, these laws bind successive periods to one another. These are the laws of historical development that determine the transition from one period to another. If these laws are understood, the future is predictable.

From this point of view, however, these predictions imply the future of human race, not what will happen to the individual.¹¹⁰ For example, what will happen to Ali personally in the future is unpredictable. Ali can be a hard worker; this could be a sign that he will have a good salary and reputation in the future. However, no one knows how likely to be depressed and less productive as a result of a marriage that went badly. The naturalistic understanding of history, therefore, places the concept of foresight on societies, not individuals. When he discovers the development laws of history, it can be predicted what effect societies will have on the course of history or what consequences the course of history will have on human groups. Karl Popper admits

¹⁰⁸ "Industrial Revolution." History.com. A&E Television Networks, October 29, 2009. <https://www.history.com/topics/industrial-revolution/industrial-revolution>.

¹⁰⁹ Karl R. Popper, "The Poverty of Historicism", 40-41.

¹¹⁰ Popper, 42.

that the concept of foresight is very important to science. For example, if we know that a typhoon will come beforehand, we can save many lives by creating shelters for it.¹¹¹ The question is what kind of foresight to adopt, which I will touch on later in my discussion of Popper's position.

Another feature of the pro-naturalist understanding of history adopts the theory of historical development. For them, history is not just a retrospective phenomenon. History has an eye always ahead, so sociologists should try to explore the dynamics of history.¹¹² Popper also argues that naturalist-oriented perceptions of history have a fatalistic nature. Within this context, it has a perception that human cannot change any result aimed at preventing it in this way. As Popper noted, although Marx's thought that philosophers have a duty to change the world, not to interpret it, he said that historical laws, not human will, is the basis for a naturalist-minded historical methodology. He told that, "even if people cannot prevent birth, they can shorten or lessen the birth pangs of history." However, as the meaning of this expression is clear, birth has to occur anyway.¹¹³ Here, at this point, we are in danger of denying actions from free will by naturalist historical tendencies, which I will handle when discussing Karl Popper's critique of two different methodologies.

3.2.2.4. Criticism of Anti-Naturalistic Doctrines of Historicism

In this section, I will talk about Karl Popper's criticisms of two different approaches. I will first deal with his criticisms of the anti-naturalistic doctrines, and then I will examine his criticisms of the pro-naturalistic methodology.

According to Popper, there are certain hypotheses in the social sciences, just as in the positive sciences. For example, you cannot reach full employment without inflation. You cannot introduce a political reform without some undesirable consequences.¹¹⁴ From this point of view, a social engineer *can examine* institutions as functional entities. A social engineer who has adopted the concept of piecemeal technology does

¹¹¹ Popper, 43.

¹¹² Popper, 45-46.

¹¹³ Popper, 51.

¹¹⁴ Popper, 61.

not aim to establish the society as a whole, although he can foster holistic ideals for society. His issue is small adjustments that will continue to be stable.¹¹⁵

Popper reveals that this understanding is different from holistic social engineering, which he calls utopian. This attitude plans to seize the key positions of the state and produce a society based on this ideal.¹¹⁶ Utopian social engineering rejects the piecemeal methodology dysfunctional by finding it too modest. However, as Popper underlines, holistic engineering involves many unplanned details and has the potential to produce rough-and-tumble, negative results.¹¹⁷ As a matter of fact, according to him, one of these two teachings is genuine, and the other is false and leads people to mistakes.

The common point of historicism and utopianism, accordingly, is the holistic approach. Historicism does not deal with this or that aspect of life but is concerned with the development of society as a whole. According to Popper, both approaches attempt to control the flow of social development; one makes prophecies, and the other attempts to stop any change by trying to take control. Similarly, both treat the purpose of society not as a morally and autonomously determined concept but rather as something to be explored.¹¹⁸ As an example, consider a country ruled by a pragmatist moral philosopher. This person's question is, "what should be the purpose of society?" It means that the purpose can be determined by people, at least implicitly; it will be shaped by human will. On the other hand, a utopian might ask, "what is the hidden purpose of society in the historical pattern?" By this way, he puts forward a question that makes *metaphysical connotations* to the mind. Accordingly, there is a hidden direction in history that includes progress, and the purpose of people should be to discover this direction.

As Popper underlines, the claim of "holistic change" in society should be analyzed. The expression of integrity in question reminds of the spirit of totalitarianism by invoking control of personal relations in society. In this context, it includes individual

¹¹⁵ Popper, 65-67.

¹¹⁶ Popper, 67.

¹¹⁷ Popper, 68-69.

¹¹⁸ Popper, 74-75.

relations as well as the mother's relationship with her child. Such a control system is impossible, and according to Popper, utopians attempt the impossible.¹¹⁹ Indeed, according to Popper, another understanding that combines utopianism and historicism is that a social experiment is only valuable if it is applied holistically. Indeed, According to Popper, there should be two main criticisms of this view: a) it ignores the piecemeal experiments that are the basis for social knowledge, and b) holistic experiments cannot add much to our empirical knowledge.¹²⁰ For example, a person waiting in line for a long time in the theater queue understands that he needs to make a reservation next time he comes. This is a small and valid social experiment. Again, if an experiment is partial, it is more open to a trial-and-error process and, therefore, more likely to pick up mistakes and learn. So, through them, we know exactly where we went wrong.¹²¹

According to Popper, it is very difficult to learn from holistic experiments as we cannot see where the problem originates from and that the solution can fix the existing problem in the middle.¹²² As an example of Popper's thinking, let us consider an economic model implemented from scratch. Let this model envisage radically changing all institutions and running a new policy from scratch. As a result of the radical changes made, the inflation rate in the country should increase five times; unemployment rates should increase, and prices in the country should increase. How do we know exactly which step results in this result? Maybe there were ten different fundamental decisions in the action plan, maybe the first or the second of these decisions were actually beneficial, but when they all came together, they caused this chaos. However, after this result, the first and the second can also be essentially wrong and useless in themselves. Because the result is holistic, the cause creating the result is evaluated in that way. Or, as another scenario, if the eighth came first, then the third came, the model would have been successful. But as a result of holism, it cannot be known whether the problem lies in the numbers' themselves, in their coming together, or in the sequence of their actions. This means that we do not know a) the way to solve the problems in question and b) how to behave in a new move from scratch.

¹¹⁹ Popper, 79-80.

¹²⁰ Popper, 85.

¹²¹ Popper, 86-88.

¹²² Popper, 89-90.

According to Popper, another disadvantage of holistic practices is that important sections of society will involuntarily fall into distress due to major changes. Therefore, criticism and objections will rise within society. However, these are not essentially bad. They are bad for those who seek holistic change will sweep people's expectations under the carpet for the sake of the sublime changes they claim. This, naturally, will advocate silencing objections and increasing the control mechanism. These people will try to impose the change they have made by means of brainwashing, propaganda, and biased education and will rationalize this by stating that it is "basically for the good of the society." Popper states that Tawney commented on the politics of the period that "when people started to doubt the existence of unicorns, they started to worship the prince they thought was afraid of God."¹²³

Karl Popper then criticizes those who argue that the experimental method cannot be applied to the social sciences. This view claims that social conditions are changeable and, therefore, even small experiments have no place in the social sciences. However, experiments in positive sciences also are not completely independent of background and context. To illustrate, the boiling point of water can change with the geographical location, and some social conditions also change with the historical period.¹²⁴ Just as the physicist has difficulties in research due to the change in gravitational rates in different fields, the social scientist has difficulty in considering the different conditions of societies with different historical characteristics. However, this does not make social experimentation entirely impossible. Just as the differences in appearance between Crete and Greenland do not show that there are no common physical features for both regions, large differences for historical periods do not indicate that there cannot be common laws. Rather, a good social scientist can find patterns between them.¹²⁵

So far, in summary, Karl Popper argues: a) Experimental methods can be applied to the social sciences, b) these methods can discover common patterns for societies in different historical periods, c) if a political change is to be made in society, it must be through piecemeal engineering, not utopian and holistic method, and d) the variability

¹²³ Popper, 90-91.

¹²⁴ Popper, 95.

¹²⁵ Popper, 95-104.

of human will and the increase in knowledge at an unpredictable level should be taken into account in the way of discovering these facts.

3.2.2.5. Criticism of Pro-Naturalistic Doctrines of Historicism

From this point on, Karl Popper sets out to criticize pro-naturalistic doctrines of historicism. According to this view, the purpose of social science is to reveal the evolutionary law of society in order to predict the future of humanity.¹²⁶ The so-called evolutionary hypothesis is explained by the assumption that related forms are descended from the same lineage as a result of biological observation. According to Popper, even the evolutionary hypothesis itself is not a universal law of nature, but an explanation of the genealogy of animals and plants on earth. It is *not* actually a notion related to social issues. According to him, the fact that historical hypotheses are singular propositions about a single event should not be forgotten.¹²⁷

Popper is of the opinion that the search for unchanging order is futile in sociology. According to him, the evolution of human society is a *unique* historical process. Yes, such a process can proceed in accordance with causal laws. However, the way this process is described is not a law but a singular historical proposition. For example, let us imagine we are observing a unique process. This cannot help us foresee its future development. As an example, let us say we are looking at a caterpillar. It is predetermined that he will turn into a butterfly. However, as Popper conveys Fisher's words, history is not a secret plan or rhythm but a single big phenomenon in itself that prevents any generalization.¹²⁸

The unique characteristic of history can be objected to in two ways: a) The evolutionary process is not idiosyncratic, or b) an orientation in history, albeit *sui generis*, can be discovered and formulated. He says that the criticism in Popper (a) is based on the perception of organic society. It has been argued that history is a recurring phenomenon like humans going through childhood, youth, and old age, and the cycle repeats. This is an idea left over from the ancient Greek understanding. As a matter of

¹²⁶ Popper, 106.

¹²⁷ Popper, 106-107.

¹²⁸ Popper, 107-108.

fact, Machiavelli, Vico and Spengler also adopted this idea. Popper opposes this point of view. The events that are claimed to be recurring essentially involve very different factors from each other. However, once a person thinks that the event is repetitive, he will think with an epistemological bias that the contents will be the same.¹²⁹

As for the objection in position (b), this idea was defended by the concepts of social static-social dynamics, as cited by Popper. When we consider the solar system as an example, we see that this system is an example of dynamics. However, considering the system as a whole, we call it static since the *operation* does not change. Popper has a very critical critique here. Accordingly, the movements (displacements) of inanimate objects and the movements of groups of people with will and meaning *cannot* be included in the same category. Of course, we can use the same jargon to refer to a change in people's position and ideas as to a change in a celestial body in the solar system. But this goes no further than describing a specific moment in the context of human behavior. On the contrary, it cannot connect future human movements to a fixed law like the movements of Mars.¹³⁰

At this point, Popper claims that there are *tendencies* in social change, but these tendencies cannot be expressed as laws. On the contrary, these trends are singular historical propositions.¹³¹ Thus, the expression "one unified law of nature" cannot even be used for positive science, according to Popper. The ball falling to the ground may be the result of gravity, but the winds shaking the trees will be expressed by another concept. Therefore, for the course of history, the concept of "a single supreme law" cannot be mentioned. There may be trends such as population growth, but they cannot be expressed as laws in incorrect jargon.¹³² According to Popper, this is one of the biggest mistakes historicists make. As it is in the position to treat it as a law and an *unalterable* destiny, ignoring the myriad of variables involved in the formation of trends. A historicist with this attitude falls into the error of not being able to imagine a change in the conditions of change, since he cannot think that the orientations will disappear.¹³³

¹²⁹ Popper, 110-111.

¹³⁰ Popper, 111-114.

¹³¹ Popper, 115-117.

¹³² Popper, 119-120.

¹³³ Popper, 129-130.

After his criticisms, Popper introduces the concept of the unity of method in how to understand the social sciences and the discipline of history. Accordingly, all generalizing sciences, whether natural sciences or social sciences, use the same method. These methods always involve a) making deductive explanations and b) testing them. The argument that passes each critical test becomes more solid. From this point of view, there is not a huge difference between explaining, predicting, and testing.¹³⁴ For example, let us say that a rope can carry a person weighing sixty kilograms. In this case, we reach a conclusion that a rope carrying a person weighing seventy kilograms will break. Thus, we both explain a universal principle by reducing it to a particular situation and predict the event that *will* happen if a seventy-kilogram person holds on a rope.

Popper mentions that this method can also be applied to the discipline of history. The only difference here is that, for him, the hallmark of history is to deal with singular events rather than laws and generalizations. The explanation for this is that the theoretical sciences look for universal laws, while history is concerned with finding and testing individual propositions, recognizing that there are all kinds of universal laws. For example, they might set out to examine a singular event and look for the singular initial condition in the occurrence of that event. This means telling the story of the historical event in question. In other words, in the discipline of history, we are concerned with the causal explanation of a single event. In theoretical sciences, such causal explanations aim to test universal laws.¹³⁵

According to Popper, one criticism that may come here is that "this kind of historical narrative denies the existence of universal laws." However, according to him, this criticism is not correct, because the singular event in question may have caused another singular event through the bond of universal laws. But these laws are so established that we do not even need to mention them. He gives the example of Bruno. To say that Bruno's cause of death was being burned is to implicitly affirm the law of nature, which states that living things exposed to high temperatures will die.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Popper, 130-133.

¹³⁵ Popper, 143-144.

¹³⁶ Popper, 144-145.

At this point, Popper makes the distinction between the two different perspectives that he distinguishes at the beginning very clear. A group of historians argued that history should be concerned with formulating the laws of history. The other group claimed that even events that are unique occurring only once and having no general characteristics, may be the cause of other events. Popper, on the other hand, states that he finds each of these two kinds of explanations partly true and partly false. Accordingly, two things are necessary for any causal explanation: a) universal law and b) specific event. In this context, history is tasked with describing the singular connection between two sui generis events in its fortuitous situation. Thus, an event can be handled both in the singular sense and in the context of its causal explanation.¹³⁷

In this context, such historical approaches cannot be tested and, therefore, cannot be disproved. That's why outward affirmations are of no value. For example, one might predict that we should read history as a struggle for class or racial supremacy. The other person may express that history is a religious struggle. However, many cases can be read by considering these different perspectives. Therefore, it would not be objective to speak of an absolute truth where more than one different opinion can be easily verified.¹³⁸

In this context, Popper finally examines the understanding of absolute progress in the naturalistic doctrines of historicism. Comte and Mill's idea that progress is a certain direction for human nature involves a kind of law of succession. The human mind, in this regard, is constantly moving forward. For Popper, however, this is a weak reduction. For example, a natural disaster can stop people from advancing. Similarly, even human nature itself is not in constant progress. People experience forgetfulness, sickness, laziness, etc. People can regress for reasons such as. Moreover, if progress was the law of humanity and, therefore, of history, it should not have been hindered. However, for example, progress can be easily stopped by closing research laboratories, stopping scientific publications, and preventing congresses, conferences, and free thought means. At this point, Popper also underlines the importance of institutions for the concept of progress. According to him, the existence of institutional conditions for scientific and industrial progress is very important. However, there can be progress

¹³⁷ Popper, 146-147.

¹³⁸ Popper, 151-152.

without them. On the other hand, progress can also slow down even if all scientific institutions are actively functioning since there are no logical impossibility for the outbreak of a sudden epidemic of mysticism.¹³⁹

This shows that even a community that actively operates all scientific institutions is not absolute progress. According to him, it is not possible to claim that the weakening of the influence of the church, which Comte and Mill show as the biggest obstacle to development, will completely pave the way for progress.¹⁴⁰ In this context, Popper makes a very critical point: although thinkers like Comte and Mill have formed their own historical paradigms by interpreting the concept of man, the human factor, is the most unstable and maverick element in all social theories. Thus, claim of historical flow cannot fully control human actions. On the contrary, such an attempt would plunge any form of government into tyranny, and that would be the absolute power of the arbitrary desires of a few people. Therefore, people must be set free, and competitions of thought must be allowed to arise for a reason to flourish.¹⁴¹

In his conclusion, Popper precedes a primitive teleological view that historicism was a very ancient movement and that the ancient races had ulterior motives behind the apparently blind dictates of fate. This structure, which is a form of prophecy, has managed to leave great traces even on modern historicist theories. In contrast, for Popper, historicists tend to view their methods as innovative and revolutionary. These people mainly believe in mythological stories. Finally, Popper poses the following question: what if the main fears of change are the historicists themselves? Is it for this reason that they both believe in the existence of a fixed law governing history and claim that this law can be discovered? According to Popper, this seems to be a constant method of seeking consolation in return for losing the unchanging world.¹⁴²

In this section, we can summarize Karl Popper's point of view as follows: a) Instead of relying on utopian, prophetic, and holistic historical explanations, a society should change with trial-and-error method and learn from its mistakes in the light of

¹³⁹ Popper, 153-159.

¹⁴⁰ Popper, 157.

¹⁴¹ Popper, 159.

¹⁴² Popper, 159-161.

piecemeal engineering technique, b) rather than specific certain laws that guide events, orientations and trends can be mentioned in history, c) as opposed to anti-natural historicist doctrines say that there is no place for experiment in social sciences, it is possible to find common phenomena that can be studied in different historical slices as well as in different geographies, d) pro-natural historicist doctrines say that there is a certain law in history, whereas historical events are singular and the causal links between two specific events should be sought by unique explanations, e) holistic explanations such as that history consists of class conflicts and that history is a race struggle cannot be proved; therefore, they cannot be accepted, and f) there is no absolute law of progress in history, this is because the concept of humans is extremely vague and open to change, and these advances may be hampered by the suspension of scientific institutions or the emergence of different trends.

3.3. The Relationship Between Holistic Historicism and Autocracy

3.3.1. Introduction

In this section, I will examine the relationship between a holistic understanding of history and autocracy in Karl Popper's book *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (2013). In addressing this, I will first touch upon its methodology and then deal with the analysis of Plato's, Hegel's, and Karl Marx's historicisms, respectively.

At the beginning of the work, Popper gives general information about the belief in historicism and underlines that this idea is a very old thought system. Accordingly, he states that history is dependent on certain evolutionary laws and that the doctrine of the chosen people, which is an old understanding, exemplifies this thought. This collectivist approach, which is the product of a kind of tribal concept, finds its place in many historicist elements.¹⁴³ Accordingly, historicist narratives can be seen in every ideology. It can be racist (right wing) or Marxist (left wing). According to these different understandings, racism or the ideal of a classless society bring human models to which the earth will remain.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Popper, Karl, Alan Ryan, and E. H. Gombrich. *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, 8.

¹⁴⁴ Popper, 9.

In order to understand these trends in more detail, according to Popper, examining the concept of *change* will be a critical start in terms of the subject. Accordingly, Heraclitus is the first philosopher to discover the idea of change. Prior to his aspect, philosophers perceived the world as a structure made of bulk material.¹⁴⁵ According to Heraclitus, there is no such regular structure in the cosmos. Within this context, the world of expressing all the changes. On the other hand, in the tribal aristocracy, it is necessary to take into account the constancy and immutability of the social structure. It is necessary to interpret Heraclitus's understanding of "everything flows" in the axis of this thought.¹⁴⁶

However, when everything is reduced to an ever-changing fireball by Heraclitus, a law, a search for wisdom takes place in this entire process of change. Heraclitus's position which says "all events proceed with the necessity of fate" opened the door to a mystical understanding. According to Popper, this reveals the relationship between the concept of social dynamics and social statics; while the first signifies the ever-changing social conditions, the second signifies a constancy in all these.¹⁴⁷ From this point of view, Heraclitus arrives at the idea of the identity of opposites by saying that all this change includes conflict, and that war is the father of everything. Accordingly, while illness enables us to appreciate the value of health, vitality and death converge at a single point. According to Popper, these ideas became permanent in the history of philosophy through Plato and became evident with different concepts in modern Europe.¹⁴⁸

In the next section, I will consider Karl Popper's thoughts on Plato and relate these ideas to the methodology I mentioned earlier.

3.3.2. Plato and Historicism

According to Popper, Plato was also brought up in an unstable political atmosphere. Society and the fact that everything is in flux is the main factor in his thinking. According to him, things that are in flux are doomed to decay, so there must be strict

¹⁴⁵ Popper, 10.

¹⁴⁶ Popper, 11-12.

¹⁴⁷ Popper, 13-14.

¹⁴⁸ Popper, 15-16.

forces operating in history. However, there is one thing that distinguishes Plato from Heraclitus: his claim that the law of historical destiny can be overcome by human will, and thus it is possible to stop political change. In this context, the Golden Age state for Plato is the state that has been stopped.¹⁴⁹ According to Popper, Plato's attitude, that is, his defense that the law of destiny regarding change is *changeable* shows the limitations of his historicist method. In this context, he has a constructive social position.¹⁵⁰

Saying that society can change with human will is divided into two: a) historicism, which accepts that there is a fixed historical development line, and b) social technology, which states that change can shape social institutions in line with our actions. However, as Popper said, there is an important difference between piecemeal social technology and utopian social technology.¹⁵¹ The difference between the two is, as I discussed in the previous section, while the former constructs the changes in society on trial-and-error method and the piecemeal change of institutions, it is the anticipation of the holistic-revolutionary transformation of the other. Another important point is that the historicist explains the origin of social institutions by basing them on a mystical plan; on the other hand, the social constructor does not deal with the source and metaphysical purposes of the institutions but takes the current wishes and requirements as criteria.¹⁵²

As Popper evaluates Plato's perspective, to him, decaying things are the children of perfect things. Everything has an origin, an idea. But it should be emphasized that this idea is not a thought in our minds, rather something that *really exists*. Moreover, these ideas are outside of space and beyond time. Just as children are called by the name of their fathers, forms are called according to ideas. As a matter of fact, according to Popper, it is possible to find the root of this thought in Greece. Tribes at that time attributed their ancestors to one of the gods. These gods were, therefore, competent. Plato applied similar thinking to all beings. According to this, every being has an origin.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ Popper, 17-19.

¹⁵⁰ Popper, 20.

¹⁵¹ Popper, 21.

¹⁵² Popper, 21-22.

¹⁵³ Popper, 22-24.

In this context, Plato claimed that the aim of science is not to find ever-changing copies but to find its essence, its origin, and its idea. It was an effort to find the immutable original of things. Accordingly, methodological essentialism aims to define the structure of something. Methodological nominalism, on the other hand, aims to describe how something behaves. *It asks not what but how*. It does not say what an atom is; it examines how the atom moves. According to Popper, this is the accepted methodology in the field of positive science, and this is the reason for the tension with the social sciences. For many argue that in the social sciences, society needs static definitions such as what is the state and what civilization is, as society is subject to constant change.¹⁵⁴

Popper states that Plato sees the history of humanity as a *history of illness*, while he envisions the statesman as a *physician*. In the history of these diseases, different forms of management have come and gone; after the first authoritative state comes timocracy, the rule of those who seek glory. Next comes oligarchy, the rule of wealthy families, and then democracy, which is lawlessness. Finally, tyranny is the city's last disease. According to Popper, Plato still drew a caricature of the political life of Athens in this order. From his point of view, democracy signifies lawlessness, permissiveness, emptiness, and dirty passions.¹⁵⁵

Plato aims to prevent class wars because of this lawlessness. According to Popper, if he were a progressive person, he could arrive at the idea of a classless society. However, it is clearly understood that it was after establishing the father of the Spartan state. *It was a slave and caste state*. This caste system consisted of rangers, warriors, and the working class. According to Popper, the working class does not concern Plato at all; on the contrary, their only duty is to provide the material necessities of the ruling class. From this perspective, they are like *human cattle*. There is, accordingly, no implication in Plato's statements that slavery will be abolished or mitigated. Again, As Popper noted, for Plato, private property is abolished in order to prevent conflict between the ruling class. Women and children are jointly owned. None of the ruling class should be able to recognize their own children or their parents.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Popper, 30-31.

¹⁵⁵ Popper, 40-43.

¹⁵⁶ Popper, 45-48.

Again, as quoted by Popper, according to Plato, the distinction between the ruling class and the common people should be broadened in order to achieve unity between the ruling class. According to him, the ruling class is superior to other people in terms of race, education, and value.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, according to him, the race of watchmen should be kept pure. In this sense, he treats people just as an experienced adult produces dogs, horses, and birds. According to him, there is no difference between a young guard and a well-bred dog. All layers of society are educated in the sense of mobilization. In this sense, both poetry and music will fall victim to strict censorship. Each will be put into a form that requires young people to serve the country. In Plato's society and caste system, citizens are subject to control, and each is aware of the necessity of his own social stratum. According to him, only in this way can a society get rid of the germ of disunity and change.¹⁵⁸

For Popper, it is important to make a critical distinction between the concepts of nature and society. Natural laws describe the succession of the seasons, while normative laws are ordering that state what we should do and what we should not do.¹⁵⁹ While we cannot assign a value to the former, we use the terms true or false when speaking of the latter. According to Popper, this duality does not exist in closed societies, which are the reflection of Plato's perception. Moral and mystical meanings can also be attributed to natural phenomena and meaning can be inferred from the laws of nature. For example, a philosopher in ancient Greece stated that the strong could do whatever they wanted to the weak because this is the law of nature. Plato, too, as a slightly lighter version of this point of view, suggested the biological and spiritual inequality of man over nature.¹⁶⁰

Parallel to this thought, for Plato, the state is a natural compromise. The different positions of people in the caste system of society come from this natural state. According to him, it is better for people to specialize in one job than to try to do many things.¹⁶¹ In this context, Plato discusses the organic state model he derived from

¹⁵⁷ Popper, 47-48.

¹⁵⁸ Popper, 50-54.

¹⁵⁹ Popper, 55.

¹⁶⁰ Popper, 66.

¹⁶¹ Popper, 74.

nature. Just as in a state, there are rulers, warriors, and workers, so in a body-mind, energy and animal instincts reign. These different impulses, which push people to make opposite decisions, create harmony within themselves. Accordingly, for Plato, there is such a holism in the state. Accordingly, in this integrity, people are not individuals that exist for themselves but entities that exist on behalf of society.¹⁶² According to Popper, Plato seeks a collectivist and tribal society, like Sparta's, with his approach to society, which ostracizes the individual.¹⁶³

Another of Popper's criticisms of Plato is that Plato's political understanding has a totalitarian character. For example, he states that features such as prohibiting the ruling class from participating in economic activities, censoring their intellectual activities, and the autarkic nature of the economy serve the totalitarian state's understanding.¹⁶⁴ Thus, Popper says that by translating the name of Plato's *Politeia* into English as *Republic*, it is signaled that he was liberal even if he was not revolutionary person. The correct translation of the word *politeia*, according to Popper, is "mother state."¹⁶⁵

Popper said that even Plato's concept of justice has totalitarian tendencies and that, according to him, the meaning of justice is "it is in the best interest of the state." In this concept, the manager manages, and the worker works like a slave. This is what justice is, according to Plato's concept. It is something for the state, not for the individual. However, in Plato's time, there were other philosophers who identified the concept of justice with equality; according to Popper, one of these people was Aristotle.¹⁶⁶

According to Popper, the humanistic theory of justice has three main demands: a) Eliminating natural privileges and providing political equality, b) providing individualism, and c) the principle that the purpose of the state is to protect citizens. However, Plato has the opposite: a) the principle of natural privilege, b) the principle of collectivism (not individualism), and c) the principle that the duty and purpose of the individual are to ensure the stability of the state.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Popper, 75-76.

¹⁶³ Popper, 79.

¹⁶⁴ Popper, 83-84.

¹⁶⁵ Popper, 85.

¹⁶⁶ Popper, 86-88.

¹⁶⁷ Popper, 91.

Again, as Popper notes, individualism should not be confused with selfishness. Due to this, the opposite of individualism is collectivism, while the opposite of selfishness is altruism. According to this, selfishness can also be seen in collectivism; for example, the ruling class may reveal selfishness in the interest of the watchdogs. Therefore, the liberation of the individual, which expresses the break from tribalism, should not be identified with selfishness. However, in Plato's concept, there is no individualism, but mobilization in the name of a permanent state, therefore putting his own wishes and needs into the background.¹⁶⁸ According to Popper, another critical question in Plato's utopian social philosophy is "who should rule?" is the question. However, this is not the main question, according to Popper; rather, "how do we organize political institutions so those bad or incompetent rulers can be prevented from doing so much harm?" should be. For whoever rules, even the most powerful tyrant relies on his secret police and certain people within the system. Indeed, Popper states that he believes managers rarely rise above average morally or intellectually. For this reason, we must prepare ourselves for the worst as best we can.¹⁶⁹

In this sense, according to Popper, Plato theoretically deals with a state that is more dependent on individuals rather than an institutional state. However, any long-term policy is institutional.¹⁷⁰ Indeed, according to Popper's perspective, another mistake of Plato is to regard the leader as the owner of the truth. The philosopher-king, according to him, is a demigod. He has perfect and superior qualities in the state structure, depending on the person. However, in order to grow from the seed, he also needs training. This training also has a supervisory feature in order to train future leaders from a certain perspective.¹⁷¹

As a matter of fact, while Plato answered the question of whom you call a real philosopher as "the one who loves the truth," he argued elsewhere that the ruler could tell lies, not the truth, for the good of the people. According to him, this statesman exists in the role of a medical doctor to heal the sick society. Here, too, he brings up the idea of natural inequality: according to a myth, God put gold in the dough of those

¹⁶⁸ Popper, 96-99.

¹⁶⁹ Popper, 115-116.

¹⁷⁰ Popper, 119.

¹⁷¹ Popper, 125-127.

who have the ability to rule. In Plato's perspective, although the myth states that the dough of those in the other caste system is iron and copper is not true, this metaphor should be used to persuade the people (according to Popper, to deceive them).¹⁷²

According to Popper, what Plato wants is the rule of knowledge (sophocracy). From this point of view, for Plato, the philosopher-king is the person who watches over ideas such as the idea of goodness, the idea of beauty, and the idea of justice and can copy them as they are. This suggests that he differs from Socrates's view that "wisdom is knowing our limitations."¹⁷³ In this context, according to Popper, Plato has a utopian approach and constructs a centralized understanding of the state.¹⁷⁴ And this, as I mentioned before, fundamental changes in society that make it impossible to calculate the possible consequences of these changes. Likewise, Popper, in this work, says that utopian plans can never be realized as in the beginning.¹⁷⁵ Thus, Plato's idealist understanding (due to his views on understanding the origin of God and being able to copy it in politics) has an artist and aestheticist content. However, according to Popper, this compositionist point of view of Plato may hinder the right of individuals to organize their own lives as they wish.¹⁷⁶

From this point on, Popper emphasizes that Plato's understanding evokes a *closed society*. Such a society is semi-organic and resembles a tribal life, in which its members are bound together by ties of kinship, joint effort, and shared joy. The floor system is dominant and does not allow the desired job and profession to be done as in open societies. It is not interesting that there is slavery here, similar to domesticated animals.¹⁷⁷ Popper emphasizes that the concept he calls "open society" is open to criticism, social classes are not fixed, and managers can be criticized. Additionally, it is expected for people to use their free will in designing their own lives. According to him, the more we try to return to the age of tribalism, the closer we come to a state system filled with the Inquisition and Secret Police.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷² Popper, 130-132.

¹⁷³ Popper, 136.

¹⁷⁴ Popper, 149.

¹⁷⁵ Popper, 153.

¹⁷⁶ Popper, 155.

¹⁷⁷ Popper, 165.

¹⁷⁸ Popper, 189.

As a result, Karl Popper criticizes Plato's understanding of history based on the utopian understanding for the following reasons: (a) He sees change as bad and tries to build a “frozen” society, (b) he accepts his own subjective state attitude as a universal truth with a metaphysical essentialist approach, (c) the society he envisions has a caste system, (d) this caste system is legitimized by a myth-telling claiming innate discrimination towards humans, (e) he puts selfishness rather than individualism as the opposite of collectivism, (f) individuals put their own wants and need aside and they exist for the state, (g) the system creates a sacred cult of rulers who know real meaning of origins, and thus they are closed to criticism, (h) this utopia presents a slave-owning society as an ideal, (i) the state has magical aspect and insensitivity to criticism, which are the opposite features of the open society, and to be of such a nature as to cause the silencing of the mind.

3.3.3. Hegel and Historicism

Popper also directs his criticism of historicism to Hegel. According to him, Hegel took his authority over German philosophy from the Prussian state. Accordingly, Hegelianism has become a deep-rooted philosophy in Germany that adds philosophies of history, society, and politics at a level that will affect even secondary schools. His philosophy influenced both (a) the Marxian left wing and (b) radical right wing. In the former, the meaning of history is sought in the war of classes; in the latter, it is sought in the war of races.¹⁷⁹

For Popper, Hegelianism is the "renaissance of tribalism” because it is aimed at worshipping the state. Thus, its purpose, Popper argues, is to strengthen the authority of Frederick Wilhelm II, king of Prussia. Furthermore, Hegel claims that the universal essence resides in the state and claims that the state is the earthly form of the divine idea. In this sense, the state is the passing of God through the world. Moreover, the state is real, and the real is eternally necessary. With these similar approaches, to Popper, Hegel used philosophy for personal purposes aimed at serving the Prussian monarchy.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Popper, 244-245.

¹⁸⁰ Popper, 245-246.

Although Hegel's notion of history and the state is similar to Plato's, he does not perceive the history of states like Plato as a history of corruption. On the contrary, he claims, like Aristotle, that the essence of things is in things, and with this claim, he argues that the state has an essence in itself. These essences are constantly creating and renewing themselves. From this point of view, Hegel is optimistic in his concept of history. History is not a process of deterioration; on the contrary, it is a process that gets better. The active cause of these essences during their development is the absolute idea. According to him, the universe is always in a state of emergence and creative evolution. The community spirit, which is part of this creative evolution, is, according to him, the "collective spirit of the nation."¹⁸¹

Hegel, like Heraclitus, says that the beginning of everything is war. He claims that the destiny of that nation is hidden in the soul of the nation and that every nation that wants to come into existence must reveal its individuality by fighting with other nations. Like Heraclitus, he believes in the identity of opposites. This, in turn, represents the essence of his dialectical view.¹⁸² The main idea of the thought in question is this: historical development proceeds with the dialectical process. First, a thesis emerges, and then an antithesis is put forward as its counterpart. As a result of the conflict between these two, a synthesis emerges. In this synthesis, harmony takes place. Again, a new antithesis emerges in return for this harmony. The process continues in this way. According to Popper, this view leads science to see contradictions as something desired rather than a tool. This makes Hegel's own contradictory views unfalsifiable by saying, "everything is contradictory anyway."¹⁸³

Another criticism of Popper towards Hegel is that he claimed to have determined moral positivism. Accordingly, power is righteousness, and what is natural is what is right.¹⁸⁴ In parallel, Popper argues that there is a problem with freedom of thought in Hegel. Although Hegel accuses the church of the burning of Bruno and claims that the existence of a state is the guarantee of the existence of free thought, independent decisions of science without the state can be described as "presence". This raises the

¹⁸¹ Popper, 251.

¹⁸² Popper, 252.

¹⁸³ Popper, 253.

¹⁸⁴ Popper, 254-255.

question of how the state, which will make the relevant decisions about science, will put these decisions in an objective position.¹⁸⁵

As an extension of his defense of state control, he equated law and freedom in a literary way. In the context of the idea that the freedom of others must be limited in order to guarantee our own freedom, he says, *the law* means freedom. In addition to this view, he argued that the monarch's authority was final decision-making and claimed that the Prussian monarchy was the highest pinnacle of freedom, thus praising obedience. In this context, he claimed that there was a hidden purpose in history, and he asserted that the wisdom of destiny was realized in the Prussian monarchy, revealing his totalitarian stance.¹⁸⁶

According to him, this concept called infinite power, infinite matter, and infinite energy has the feature of showing itself in history and has also been realized in Prussia. Accordingly, the soul has a three-step dialectic feature. The first of these stages is the eastern despotism, the second is the Greek and Roman democracies, and the last and highest form is the German monarchy.¹⁸⁷ According to him, the only truth of the soul is freedom, and this shows its most concrete form on the stage of history. This is how God proved right in history. According to Popper, Hegel advocates totalitarian nationalism.¹⁸⁸

According to Popper, Hegel brought a new theory to the concept of nationalism. This theory has a historical aspect and sees history as a struggle between nations. This means a defense of a system that requires the worship of historical success. For Popper, on the other hand, Hegel's point of view consists of an attempt to tame German nationalism and bring it under a broader imperial framework.¹⁸⁹ According to Popper, Hegel's view that ideas are the products of intellectual heritage, in general, is not original and is the common property of the German romantic tradition. Accordingly, it can be evaluated in this context that all social beings are almost a product of history,

¹⁸⁵ Popper, 256.

¹⁸⁶ Popper, 258-259.

¹⁸⁷ Popper, 260-261.

¹⁸⁸ Popper, 261-262.

¹⁸⁹ Popper, 269-270.

that they are not designed by reason but historical. Indeed, according to Popper, this understanding of how important traditions are in institutional functioning goes back to Edmund Burke.¹⁹⁰

Popper sets out to analyze the relations of these concepts in order to question the ways in which Hegel's thoughts originate from both Marxist and fascist tendencies. According to him, fascism does not feel the need to rely much on supernatural forces, as many ideologies did not need such a thing after the spread of disbelief with Marxism. From this point of view, Popper claims that fascism has a universal formula, Hegel, and a bit of nineteenth century materialism. As a matter of fact, Popper talks about Schallmayer, whom he sees as the father of racist biology, and states that Hegel's concept of soul evolved into the blood. Thus, here, the soul evolved into blood, which is semi-biological, and from there, it became the ideological basis for racism. For Popper, this is a meta-biological explanation.¹⁹¹ According to modern totalitarian tendencies, the state is not a goal in itself. On the contrary, the concepts that are sublime are spirit and blood. The issue should aim to be a high state formed by groups of people with these lofty values and to dominate the world.¹⁹²

Popper states that Hegel's way of thinking includes a code that affirms war. Again, according to him, in this conception, the state is almost like moral laws themselves. In this context, the only judgment that can be made about a state is its success in history. Therefore, there can be no morality superior to the state. And this is the only basis that will show that we are right to prevail in this dialectical competition. According to this idea, world history is the world's court of justice.¹⁹³ Popper wants to underline that these ideas are very dangerous, and by quoting Hegel's statement that "war preserves the moral health of the nation," he expresses that he is in a Platonic perspective where rightness is identified with strength.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Popper, 271.

¹⁹¹ Popper, 273.

¹⁹² Popper, 274-275.

¹⁹³ Popper, 277-278.

¹⁹⁴ Popper, 279-280.

From this point of view, the ideas Hegel put forward within the scope of this essentialist destiny doctrine became the codes of thought loved by the opponents of freedom. As a result of this thought, it has been stated that individuals are not the subjects of history but the tools, and it has been revealed that people will gain fame as part of this plan.¹⁹⁵ The "great man" ideal created accordingly, reminiscent of a typical tribal thought, always regarded courage and risk as an absolute virtue. However, according to Popper, this idea is anti-civilization and absolutely degrades a harmonious life. Indeed, Hegel's idea that "world history is not the scene of happiness" is nothing but a method of suppressing the freedom as aspirations of the closed society.¹⁹⁶

At the end of the criticisms, Popper says that Germany does not have the only "German generals" mentality as the expression of the views of Hegel and people with similar ideas; on the contrary, there are philosophers such as Kant and Schopenhauer who are intellectually positioned at very different points from Hegel and his tradition. In this sense, he concludes the chapter by quoting Schopenhauer's thoughts: "Hegel has made a fool of not only philosophy but also German literature and has had a devastating effect on them. It is everyone's duty to highlight this issue; otherwise, who will speak if we remain silent?"¹⁹⁷

As a result, we can summarize criticism of Hegel from the perspective of Popper as follows: (a) Reading history with a kind of tribal renaissance perspective, bearing the aim and content of serving the power of the Prussian Monarchy, (b) attributing a national feature to the social spirit of the course of history, (c) having an epistemological attitude that affirms war and conflict, (d) perceiving contradiction as a desirable feature and not part of the way to obtain knowledge, and making his own contradictory thoughts unfalsifiable, (e) expressing the state guarantor of free and scientific thought while claiming to control science with the state, (f) taming German nationalism and creating Prussian nationalism and adding metaphysical/sublime concepts to his claim, (g) creating anti-freedom thought codes, claiming that the strong are right and the successful are on the right path, (h) taking war and conflict as desired or even necessary concepts, not as a phenomenon that is resorted to when necessary.

¹⁹⁵ Popper, 280-283.

¹⁹⁶ Popper, 284-285.

¹⁹⁷ Popper, 289-289.

3.3.4. Karl Marx and Historicism

Before starting to analyze Karl Marx's thoughts, Popper states that his effort to find solutions to social life, unlike Hegelians, is honest. He claimed that Marx worked sincerely and owed many of the ideas of modern writers to him. However, despite Marx's good points, Popper expresses that he thinks he is a *false prophet*. He was a seer, but according to Popper, he did not realize the historical prophecy.¹⁹⁸

Popper argues that Marxism is a historicist theory separate from Russia's social-technological elements. According to him, there is not a single word in Marx's works on the economy of socialism. There is no economic point of view other than the dysfunctional thoughts of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." According to Popper, his economic inferences are based entirely on prophecies.¹⁹⁹ Thus, Popper underlines that Marx stated in the introduction to *Capital* that the aim of his work is to examine the laws of motion of history.²⁰⁰

According to Popper, Marx was truly in love with freedom. He also agreed with Hegel's famous view that the soul and freedom were equated. He also saw the "paradise of freedom" as an ideal. However, he attached greater importance to the bodily aspect of man than Hegel and spoke of using the human metabolism in as little energy and as most dignified way as possible in order to be free. For him, the paradise of freedom begins where necessity ends. As human beings, it is impossible to get rid of labor completely because we carry bodies. Therefore, according to him, the basic prerequisite is to reduce the energy required for the workforce and to reduce drudgery to a certain limit so that we can be free in a part of our lives. In this sense, according to Popper, we can call Marx's ideas economism as opposed to Hegel's idealism.²⁰¹

As Popper also underlines, according to Marx, social processes are only related to production processes. The civilized man must satisfy his needs, just like the savage men of ancient times. As this field of necessity develops, so do the productive forces

¹⁹⁸ Popper, 294.

¹⁹⁹ Popper, 295.

²⁰⁰ Popper, 299.

²⁰¹ Popper, 314.

that meet them. It is these factors that determine the conditions of society. Therefore, the job of sociology is to examine economic conditions. According to Popper, while Marx's approach here was broad enough to include distribution and consumption, later Marxists made the mistake of turning to the concept of production alone.²⁰²

Another prominent point in Marx's thoughts is historicism. According to this, all ideas were explained depending on the economic conditions of any society or at a certain period in history. And this is no better position than essentialism, according to Popper. However, according to Popper, this idea is erroneous because not only do economic conditions affect ideas, but ideas also affect economic conditions. In this sense, there is a *mutual relationship* between them. In parallel with this, Popper gives a critical example here. For example, Marx's "thought" of "the unity of the workers of the world" had a huge impact on the revolution and affected the current economic conditions.²⁰³

Indeed, according to Marx, it is not international wars that drive history and determine the destiny of man, but wars between classes. According to him, it is this social position that determines the consciousness of man. People of different social classes, especially the upper class, must clash with the lower class to maintain their privileged position. All these economic conditions are completely independent of human will and cannot be controlled. The schema of necessity to which man depends on these conditions is the essence of Marx's thought that constitutes his philosophy of history.²⁰⁴

All people of different classes begin to play the role that history has set for them in the process, which operates essentially blindly, not rationally. So much so that, due to the necessity imposed on them by this situation, social engineering sits in an impossible position. In this context, class-conscious people know not only their place in society but also their interests, so they feel a great sense of belonging to it. But whatever happens, workers and capitalists alike must serve socialism, which Marx saw as the necessity of history.²⁰⁵

²⁰² Popper, 316-317.

²⁰³ Popper, 318-319.

²⁰⁴ Popper, 321-322.

²⁰⁵ Popper, 324-325.

Popper here addresses a critical critique of Marx. If all history is to be interpreted as a conflict between classes, where to put the "conflict within classes" that we see in every part of society? As Popper underlines, for example, sometimes the conflicts of interest within the ruling class are too great. In this context, according to him, Marx's approach to conflict between classes is quite simplistic and cannot explain the complexity of society (and, therefore history).²⁰⁶

Popper underlines that, from the Marxist point of view, the legal order is one of the superstructures built on the forces of production. Engels, on the other hand, says that he perceives morality as another superstructure, and it is another pressure tool that helps the rulers to keep the rulers under control.²⁰⁷ Accordingly, he saw liberalism and democracy as concepts that tried *to hide* the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. However, Popper argues that these views are related to the conditions in Marx's time. As a matter of fact, this was the period when child workers worked for very long hours, and workers' rights were not respected. According to him, politics or legal structure is incapable of solving these problems. On the contrary, only a collective social change – a revolution can change the problems.²⁰⁸

As a matter of fact, according to Popper, the form of capitalism that Marx criticized has disappeared; what is available is not "unbridled capitalism" but "economic intervention order." Whereas Marx's thought was a radical idea that no politico-legal reform could abolish these evils. According to Popper, the rights of the economically weak can be protected by appropriate state interventions. Everyone's rights can be protected by law, and there is no reason why this cannot be achieved.²⁰⁹

It is an illusion, in Popper's perspective, that economic power is at the root of all evil. On the contrary, it is the power that is not under any kind of control that is dangerous for society. Indeed, according to Popper, Marxists who advocated that the state should control this power never *thought of what would happen if the state itself were seized*

²⁰⁶ Popper, 325-326.

²⁰⁷ Popper, 327.

²⁰⁸ Popper, 329-332.

²⁰⁹ Popper, 332-333.

by those who would abuse power. As a matter of fact, the control power of the state should also be limited; otherwise, the state itself may become an irresistible force.²¹⁰

In this context, for Popper, the issue is the distinction between individuals and institutions. What needs to be done is to establish a strong legal system that minimizes the arbitrary policies of the governing people as much as possible.²¹¹ Thus, the risk of abuse of that power will be reduced by relying on the power of the system, and the rights of citizens will be defended depending on the system, not on individuals. Popper argues that Marx's idea of a classless society that will occur after the proletarian revolution is unreasonable. According to him, even in the event of such a revolution, new interests and class conflicts will most likely arise among the new single class, as there is no longer any motivation to unite the proletarians against the bourgeois class.²¹²

As a matter of fact, in an epistemological sense, it is not possible for Marx to predict the course of society with a certain fatalism about the future. This idea carries the following two codes; a) history flows by itself; we cannot interfere with it, and b) the course of history can be known. However, to Popper, the truth is the opposite. A social engineer can establish new institutions and create some changes with various projects in the sense of changing the society, but when we look at it in the context of b, they cannot know whether these plans will go exactly as they want.²¹³

According to Marx, if the revolution, which will take place as a necessary consequence of history, did not occur as a result of a social movement, it means that the problem of capitalism has not become a more deadly disease.²¹⁴ In this sense, Popper sets out to examine Marx's concept of revolution. For him, Marx's revolution is open to the option of resorting to violence. This, according to Popper, clearly shows the harmful tendency of Marx's thought. According to Popper's perspective, the only legitimate way to resort to violence is violence against attacks on the application of democratic methods.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ Popper, 333-334.

²¹¹ Popper, 339.

²¹² Popper, 347-348.

²¹³ Popper, 351-352.

²¹⁴ Popper, 358.

²¹⁵ Popper, 360-361.

Returning to the historical interpretation of the work, Popper states that Marx's historical prophecies are not valid. For him, if capitalism in Marx's time would perish, yes, he was right.²¹⁶ But he could not predict the evolution of capitalism as a whole. Again, Popper says, the belief in an absolute law of progress in history (Marx's own optimistic approach to socialism) was also shared in another way by the bourgeois strata of his time. However, according to Fisher, "progress is not a law of nature; progress made by one generation may be lost by another." By quoting his statement, Popper argues that progress should not be seen as a permanent part of history. Indeed, according to him, Marxism has a religious texture. It has given workers encouraging faith in the most challenging times. However, this prophecy, which turned into a firm belief, prevented the continuation of critical power.²¹⁷

At this point, Popper, in order to better understand Marx's point of view, underlines the following important detail; Marx's aim was to find the immutable laws of history, not economic laws, that would be useful to the technology of society. On the other hand, he also carried a moral judgment; the capitalist order was to blame.²¹⁸ Marx also held the church responsible for the functioning of this system of exploitation. He was attacking the perspective of Pastor Townsend, claiming "poverty is the law of nature so that someone will always be ready to do the lowest duties of society."²¹⁹

On the other hand, although the effect of activism, such as "philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to change it," is observed in Marx's philosophy in his early works, it is not possible to completely get rid of the prophecy of the historicist perspective. Indeed, Marx concluded that we had to accept the fact that "natural evolutionary phases are likewise shortened or reduced in labor."²²⁰

Indeed, according to Popper, an important reflection of Marxism is the issue of the relativity of morality. According to this perspective, the question of "is x action true?" is incomplete. One should ask; for example, "is x action true in the Middle Ages?" According to this perspective, there are many types of morality, such as Christian

²¹⁶ Popper, 398.

²¹⁷ Popper, 401-402.

²¹⁸ Popper, 405-406.

²¹⁹ Popper, 406.

²²⁰ Popper, 407.

morality, overlord morality, Protestant morality, and bourgeois morality. However, according to Popper, the main problem is that Marx himself cannot escape this historical-moral relativism. For example, someone might say to Marx, "why are you trying to help the oppressed?" Marx himself, who, according to Popper, lived in a part of a certain period, had no answer to give.²²¹

Here, Popper reaches an important point about the moral theories of historicist approaches; just as Hegel has a moral positivist perception like "the strong is the one who is on the right path," Marxism also has a futuristic look by saying "the one who will be strong in the future (proletarian) is the one who is now on the right path and needs to be supported." From this point of view, it cannot be regarded as moral judgment based on an objective choice from the owner's point of view. As a matter of fact, Popper underlines the meaning that "if this is the law of fate, what will happen will happen, so our side is about the side that prevails over the law, not just our morality." Whereas, at the first glance, it appears that the greatest impulse for Marx's acceptance of socialism is morality.²²²

Popper argues that although our society, culture, and education shape us, it is impossible to claim that these are the things that determine our behavior, whether they deny free will or accept it. If a person accepts free will, he will reject this argument from the start. If a person does not accept free will, they will leave open the door that not only society but also randomness plays a role in our decisions. Therefore, just as Beethoven's works resemble the musical tradition up to his time, but bring a new breath, so are people, and their will cannot be *completely* determined by the capitalist system.²²³

After this stage, Popper starts to discuss the question of whether history has a meaning. According to him, the first problem in answering yes to this question is that all our descriptions of history are incomplete. As a matter of fact, it would be impossible to fully interpret history, which is, in Schopenhauer's words, an "infinite field of

²²¹ Popper, 409.

²²² Popper, 412-413

²²³ Popper, 415-416.

description" by looking at only a limited slice of history.²²⁴ According to Popper, it may be possible to deduce some laws from history; for example, one can argue that an army of very few soldiers will be defeated by a huge army. However, this judgment of the existence of military social law is so basic that it is of no interest to anyone.²²⁵ Here, Popper wants to highlight that there is an epistemic difference between the laws claimed in the context of the universal meaning of history and the fundamental laws supported by such physical laws. In this context, people cannot claim meaning about the whole history by looking at *only a certain part of history* with generalizations.

According to Popper, it is also impossible to talk about a history that tells past events *as they are*. Each generation has its own narrative of history, and in fact, from Popper's perspective, this is not a problem. On the contrary, a history interpreted by considering our own age also helps us to analyze and solve our current problems. Here, according to him, the problem is, instead of asking "which of our problems we will count as the main problems and in what way can we solve them," asking "where is history heading?" and "what responsibility has history placed on us?" These questions are beyond our reason. In this context, historicist interpretations that claim to grasp the essence of destiny block our vision about history itself.²²⁶

As a matter of fact, according to Popper's statement, one cannot talk about history like neither Hegel nor Marx because we cannot know history fully. In history books, we can know only one aspect of history (for example, the history of powers, and wars). It's like an episode of a giant movie series. Even world history books consist of a collection of various aspects of human life. For us to talk about concrete history, we should know the history of *all* the people who have lived in history. However, we cannot talk about such a thing.²²⁷ Popper here refers to the limitation of the material at hand in constructing that meaning for us to ascribe meaning to history. I emphasized above that the obstacle in our ability to look at history from a sketch point of view is that we are only in one part of history and, therefore, cannot see the future. The problem here is that presented history does not provide enough information for us to

²²⁴ Popper, 467.

²²⁵ Popper, 470.

²²⁶ Popper, 474.

²²⁷ Popper, 475.

have a comprehensive look on it. Due to these reasons, how can we have the power to ascribe "comprehensive meaning" to history? Popper points out these epistemological limits.

At this point, Popper says that history has no meaning, but *we can give meaning to history*. For him, history, like nature, does not have the power to decide for us. If we accept that there is a definite course in history and claim that we know this course, we will be throwing our responsibility away and transferring our moral responsibility to this system that is beyond our power. This is kind of like gambling and acting based on belief in horoscopes. This, according to Popper, is against conscience. According to him, history does not develop man; it does not have such power. On the contrary, human beings develop the society within themselves (and the society that will follow) by building the right democratic institutions by using their will. Accordingly, our issue should not be whether history justifies us or not. On the contrary, history needs to be justified.²²⁸

²²⁸ Popper, 482-484.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1. Introduction

In this section, I will describe the related debates by reducing the debates regarding determinism in the philosophy of history to two questions and different positions that have emerged as an extension of these two questions. My questions will be (i) whether there is a historical telos, and (ii) whether people have free will. Likewise, in this descriptive evaluation, I will mark the point of Karl Popper's philosophical position, which is mentioned in the title of my thesis.

4.2. Is There a Telos Belonging to History?

In this section, I will state that the first root question regarding the problem of determinism in history is whether there is a historical telos or not. Moreover, alternative answers to this question lead to different positions. If the answer to the relevant question is yes, we will have two possibilities: (a) History has a telos, and there is only one way to this telos, (b) history has a telos, but this telos can be reached in different ways. If the answer to the question of whether there is a telos in history is “no,” we will encounter three different possibilities this time; (c) History has no telos, but all human events are *necessarily* linked together within the context of a specific universal-historical law, (d) history has no telos, links between events cannot be shown under a specific universal-historical law, (e) we cannot know whether history has a telos or not. In this section, I will explore these five different positions.

I will first consider that (a) history has a telos, and there is only one path to that telos. Within the scope of this idea, history either flows into a telos, or each community tries to reach a telos. Likewise, there is only one path to the respective telos; that is, it cannot be reached by any other means. This idea describes a *strict* determinist understanding of history. Because history, or a society, is doomed to an end, the way to reach this

end is *rigidly* determined as the only way to that end. Within this perspective, people have lost their ability to be the agents of events, almost like puppets. They are both extras and spectators of a grand plan. Thus, this position expresses a strict understanding of determinism in the context of the problem of determinism in history.

Now I will analyze the attitude (b) which asserts that history has a telos, but this telos can be reached in different ways. This position emphasizes that history or society necessarily leads to a conclusion, but history is *open to alternative patterns* on the way to that conclusion. Let us consider a mountaineer as an example. This mountaineer aims to reach the summit of the mountain safely within the appropriate time. However, the mountaineer has many routes ahead of him. Will the climber choose the north point to climb the mountain, or will he climb from the south, taking into account the wind and weather conditions? What time will the climber start climbing the mountain? All these questions are open to the will and choice of the mountaineer. That is, the telos of reaching the top of the mountain is not tied to a single route and pattern of movements to the mountain but is in a position to allow choices.

This position is indeterministic to the extent that it allows for alternative routes in the pattern on the way to the telos. In other words, as the multiplicity and possibility of alternatives on the way to reach telos increase, the deterministic attitude decreases, and the indeterministic attitude increases. However, this position has to be deterministic in the end anyway. Because no matter how open the actions are to alternative options, a whole history or various societies as parts go towards the same end.

As an example, let us recall Auguste Comte's law of three states. As I cited in the third chapter, he claimed that societies would pass into the positive phase after the theological and metaphysical phases. Positive stage here is telos. Each society has to pass the other two phases on its way to reach it. However, the speed and duration of those two phases to arrive at the relevant telos may have varied from society to society. In this context, while Comte was deterministic about the necessity of reaching a single telos and passing two stages on the way to reaching that telos, he put forward a partially indeterministic understanding of history by giving the initiative to societies about the speed of passing these two stages. Indeed, Marx had a similar view. As I cited in the

previous chapters, to him, history would do what it would do; however, our duty was “to reduce the pains of this process” by being aware of this process.

As Popper underlined, while Plato saw change as a law of decay of history, he said that the “ideal society” had the power to stop this change. In this sense, he was adopting a determinist concept of history that opened more room for indeterminism in society compared to the perspective of Auguste Comte and Karl Marx. There is a law of change in society, but this *could be controlled*. This expresses determinism in the first sentence and indeterminism in the second sentence. In short, there is a correlation between the lack of alternatives and the abundance of determinism in the idea that history expressing it has a telos.

Here let us return to the notion that (c) history has no telos, but all human events are necessarily interconnected. Under normal circumstances, determinism without telos is possible, although, at first glance, it may seem that not attributing telos to history completely removes determinism from history. I mentioned this important point when quoting the metaphor called Laplace's demon. As I showed in this thesis, a creature who knows all the data of the universe, including subatomic particles, can know all the past and future of the universe. In this model, the universe is reduced to a pattern of deterministic bonds and does not necessarily carry a telos. Here, events flow towards a certain point by means of necessary coincidental ties. However, this point need not be seen as a *purpose*, a *meaning*, or a *chosen* end during the formation of the universe.

On the contrary, in this model, the universe, which functions like a machine formed by chance, moves towards a point due to the obligatory ties at the level of micro-relationships within it. The specific point here need not be a telos (purpose) per se but can be seen as a mechanical – necessary (and therefore meaningless and coincidental) consequence of the events involved. In short, the deterministic model of the universe may or may not require the claim that the universe has a telos. Similarly, to claim that the events in history are deterministically linked does not necessarily entail accepting the claim that history is moving towards a determined, meaningful end.

Now I will take up the idea that (d) history has no telos, links between events cannot be shown under a specific universal-historical law. This view does not attach any meaning to history. The first sentence expresses Karl Popper's view, which I discussed in the thesis. In this mindset, history does not have a special meaning; on the contrary, that meaning is created by the actions of us humans. Thus, man is not passive in the face of history, nor is he something history does. On the contrary, according to this idea, man is the director of history. The second part of the sentence, the thought (human events are not necessarily connected under a specific historical law), is open to different positions on the scale of determinism and indeterminism. For example, Karl Popper, whom I discussed in detail throughout the thesis, said there could be a certain level of connection between events. Even, for this reason, he stated that economists have the power to make correct predictions. For example, let us take the proposition, "If a head of state manages the country badly, the country's economy will deteriorate." In this case, it can be predicted that if a head of state manages the state badly at T1, the country's economy will deteriorate at T2. Again, the same two events (mismanagement and deterioration of the country's economy) can be evaluated with the claim of a causal relationship between them.

However, as I cited above, according to Popper, there is the problem of establishing causality according to one universal-historical concept of law and trying to predict the future in accordance with this claim. In the long run, as our knowledge is constantly increasing, the possibilities of action that we will encounter will also increase constantly, and therefore it will be even more difficult to jump from T3 to T4 in terms of foresight. Thus, there may be various causal links between events regarding physical laws (for example, the Archduke is human, if we shoot at him, he dies). However, it is not known whether this led to the First World War. Unlike physical phenomena, human events are *singular*. Due to this reason, history is the area regarding thoughts, intentions and meanings. Rather than like observations of substances with general rules, social happenings should be correlated *in their own singularities*.

All in all, according to Popper, history cannot be separated into historical processes in this epistemic unpredictability as Marx and Comte did. One cannot look at history from a bird's eye view while in history, so there is no telos that can be attributed to history. Although the extent to which humanitarian events are interconnected can also

be shown in partial issues (a tiny army will be defeated if a large army wage war), it cannot be shown with certainty because the variables are impossible to predict on a large scale will increase. Therefore, Popper's historical understanding is both not teleological and open to an unpredictable indeterminism because it considers the human factor.

Let us look at position (e), which claims that we cannot know whether history has telos or not. My position is closer to (e). In my analysis, the premises that “history has a telos” and “history does not have telos” have the same epistemic value. In other words, both are “beliefs” regarding history. Due to this reason, I embrace the view that we cannot know whether history goes to a specific point or not. Thus, saying “history has no meaning and no telos” can be so assertive that it makes the same mistake with those who assertively attribute specific meaning to history. All things considered, I argue that people should be neutral towards history and continue their actions with this unassumingness.

4.3. Do Humans Have Free Will?

The second critical question that serves to define positions on the question is whether people have free will. I will not present the history or content of free will debates here because these topics are both outside the scope of my thesis and have content that will exceed its reasonable length. On the contrary, I will only specify the critical points in positioning the question of an analytical method (do humans have free will in the historical process?). This question can be answered in three ways: (a) Humans have free will (fully or partially), (b) humans do not have free will, and (c) we do not know whether humans have free will or not.

If your answer is that humans have free will, as in (a), we divide the possibilities here, either fully or partially. If your answer is that humans have complete free will, it becomes complicated to claim that there is a deterministic pattern in history. As an example, let us assume that movement in the earth's crust under physical laws deterministically causes an earthquake and devastates a village. This pattern is a deterministic one, but historical events are essentially devoid of necessary causal links, as it was never determined how the survivors in this village would act. Because people

in this village can decide to reconstruct the same village, they can adopt the decision to move to a completely new land and build a life from scratch. They may also absurdly decide to dance forever on the ruins. The existence of these conditions may legitimize a history book that states that "because the village was destroyed, the people of the village decided to stay in the village and rebuild it." However, the book cannot claim a determinist-themed connection between the two events, such as "the village people decided to stay in the village and reconstruct the village because the village was destroyed." In this scheme, physical events may be deterministic, *but human decisions are free despite the circumstances.*

If you claim that people's free will is partial, you are expressing a partial determinist causation between historical events. Let us go back to the earthquake example. When you accept that people's free will is partial, as a result of an earthquake that occurs through a physical law (hence deterministic) link of events, you (nearly) remove the possibility of dancing forever on ruins. Because people whose homes have been destroyed will either take the decision of zoning from scratch or move to a completely new land and develop it, primarily by giving importance to their survival instincts determined by physical laws. In this case, humans have a degree determined by nature (both in terms of external and bodily conditions), but still, their free remains.

This view is close to that of Brian Fay, Dilthey, and Karl Popper, which I have pointed out in my thesis. Brian Fay also stated that, within the scope of social sciences methodology, people have intentions different from physical elements, so "intentionality" factor should be considered when examining their actions. Therefore, in this context, while asking the "why" question to understand a stone's rolling off a mountain at x speed to question the event's *origin*, we try to understand a tribe's religious ritual by asking "why" to question its *purpose*. Goals, in this context, require a certain level of deliberate choice. Dilthey pointed out that man is both a heteronomous and autonomous being because he is in a position to dominate within the dominated conditions. He is both a child of a certain historical condition and he carries willpower within it. Karl Popper also does not argue that man is wholly independent of circumstances. However, it has the capacity to overcome its current conditions.

In this case, the residents of the earthquake village can reconstruct the area with all their members, leave the area with all their members, or, as a third possibility, they can come to a different combination of decisions by falling into a disagreement (for example, a group can stay there, and a new group can search for new lands). However, the residents of these villages, who lost their relatives and villages in the earthquake, do not decide to dance on the piles (except for a certain religious ritual). Because the essential need of people for basic conditions for survival has been determined. In short, Popper believes that although human beings have biologically determined conditions, they have will power and different alternatives which they can develop under different conditions. Therefore, he argues that historical events cannot necessarily be connected under a specific universal-historical law and predicted in accordance with it (due to free will).

I argue that human beings have partial free will. While they are affected by their nature, genetic background, and social factors (such as culture, media, and fashion), human beings also have a will that can control their feelings, ideas, and situation with the capacity for rational reasoning. Thus, history is full of revolutionary attempts by people who exceed the limits of their physiological, psychological, social, and economic barriers. Human beings are not just puppets of nature who play their given role in the scene of history. Due to this reason, I am close to the position that "people have the capacity to determine their condition in the determined conditions." This perspective puts me in the same position as Karl Popper and other social theorists regarding the history that I have mentioned above.

As for the last possible response, if you say, "we do not know whether people have free will or not," as in position (c), then you are taking an agnostic attitude about the deterministic link between historical events. Because if the existence of free will is uncertain, it cannot be known how free the decision-making process of the people to create historical events. Therefore, you will remain neutral on whether there is a necessary connection between the events took place in the face of history.

4.4. Conclusion

In this dissertation, I tried to understand the following questions: a) What root questions are the discussions of determinism in history based on, and b) what is Karl Popper's position on this issue?

In the first chapter, I gave introductory information in the first chapter, and analyzed the concepts of (philosophy of history, causality, determinism, and teleology). Then, I have given three different examples of methods that belong to the nomological understanding of history (one-line, cyclical, and progress-based). In parallel with this, I put the perspectives of some thinkers such as Brian Fay, Dilthey and Collingwood on the human factor in history into a common framework.

In the third chapter, I took Karl Popper's point of view on historicism and examined different views such as the claim that there is no connection between historical events or that history can be read in a holistic way, entirely within deterministic bonds. Then, I examined Popper's position which associated utopian and holistic philosophies of history with totalitarian tendencies, with the examples of Plato, Hegel, and Karl Marx's perspectives. Accordingly, Popper said that the state ruled by the philosopher king, who claimed to know the ideal state of concepts such as justice and equality, closed to criticism, contains the characteristics of a caste system. For Popper, Hegel's perspective which attributes a spirit to history emerged in a way that praised war, gave legitimacy to the Prussian monarchy, and pioneered racist-autocratic tendencies. As for Marx, Popper criticized his determinist understanding of history. Thus, he emphasized that there are not only epistemic obstacles in front of the holistic understanding of history but also harmful consequences in the political arena.

In this context, causality problems in the philosophy of history are reduced to two fundamental questions: (i) Is there a telos in history, and (ii) do people have free will? After emphasizing that these two questions have different and alternative extensions, I clarified Popper's position on the philosophy of history: (i) No, history does not give a man a meaning or telos, on the contrary, man assigns meaning to history, and (ii) yes, man has willpower to overcome his present conditions shaped by environmental and cultural factors.

REFERENCES

- Aşkın, Zehragül, Serpil Durğun, and Bekir Geçit. *Tarih Felsefesinde Nedensellik Problemi*. Konya: Çizgi Yayınları, 2017.
- Bendor, Jonathan, and Jacob N. Shapiro. "Historical Contingencies in the Evolution of States and Their Militaries: World Politics." *Cambridge Core*. Cambridge University Press, December 24, 2018. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/world-politics/article/historical-contingencies-in-the-evolution-of-states-and-their-militaries/3B3BF7F08C88CCF78C3768C3ABB9587F>.
- "Causality." Accessed September 11, 2022. <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Causality>.
- "Causality Principle" Encyclopedia.com, September 10, 2022. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/causality-principle>.
- "Causation." Internet encyclopedia of philosophy. Accessed September 11, 2022. <https://iep.utm.edu/hume-causation/>.
- Cevizci, Ahmet. *Felsefe Tarihi: Thales'ten Baudrillard'a*. İstanbul: Say, 2018.
- Collingwood, R. G., Kurtuluş Dinçer, Şermin Korkusuz, and Utku Özmağas. *Tarih Tasarımı*. Ankara: Doğu Batı, 2013.
- Collingwood, Robin George. *The Idea of History*. Great Britain: Clarendon Press, 1946.
- "Determinism Is Not Just Causality." *Psychology Today*. Sussex Publishers. Accessed September 12, 2022. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cultural-animal/200906/determinism-is-not-just-causality>.
- Dilthey, Wilhelm, and Doğan Özlem. *Hermeneutik ve Tin Bilimleri*. İstanbul: Paradigma, 1999.
- Falcon, Andrea. "Aristotle on Causality." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford University, March 7, 2019. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-causality/>.
- Fay, Brian C. *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: A Multicultural Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Hilgevoord, Jan, and Jos Uffink. "The Uncertainty Principle." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford University, July 12, 2016. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qt-uncertainty/>.
- "History." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed September 11, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history>.

- “History.” New World Encyclopedia. Accessed September 6, 2022. <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/History>.
- Hoefer, Carl. “Causal Determinism.” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Stanford University, January 21, 2016. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/determinism-causal/>.
- “Karl Popper.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed September 12, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-Popper>.
- Laplace, Pierre Simon, Frederick Wilson Truscott, and Frederick Lincoln Emory. *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*. New York: Wiley, 1902.
- “The Muqaddimah: Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed September 12, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ibn-Khaldun/The-Muqaddimah-Ibn-Khalduns-philosophy-of-history>.
- “Teleology.” Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed September 12, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/teleology>.
- Walsh, Denis. “Teleology .” Oxfordhandbooks.com. Accessed September 12, 2022. <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195182057.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195182057-e-006>.
- Önder, Murat, and Fatih Ulaşan. “Egemen Güçlerin Yükseliş ve Çöküşleri Hakkındaki Döngü Teorileri ve İbn Haldun'un Döngü Teorisi: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Örneği.” *ADAM AKADEMİ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 8, no. 2 (2018): 271–307. <https://doi.org/10.31679/adamakademi.453944>.
- Özlem, Doğan. *Tarih Felsefesi*. İstanbul: Notos, 2012.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Information:

Name - Surname: Hatice Acar

Education:

2015-2020 BA in Theology (Isl. Sci.) Izmir Katip Celebi University, Turkey

2020-2022 MA in Philosophy, Ibn Haldun University, Turkey

2021-2022 MSc in Philosophy, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Experience:

September 2020 – June 2021: Teaching Assistant, Ibn Haldun University, Turkey

Publications:

ACAR, Hatice. “F. M. Cornford, Dinden Felsefeye.” Mizanü'l-Hak: İslami İlimler Dergisi, June 30, 2021.

<https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/mizan/issue/63035/927308>.

ACAR, Hatice. “John Merriman, Rönesans'tan Bugüne Modern Avrupa Tarihi.” Mizanü'l-Hak: İslami İlimler Dergisi, December 31, 2021.

<https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/mizan/issue/67312/1009358>.