

mütefekkir

Aksaray Üniversitesi

İslami İlimler Fakültesi Dergisi

cilt / volume: 5 • sayı / issue: 9 • haziran / june 2018 • 33-46

ISSN: 2148-5631 • e-ISSN: 2148-8134 • DOI: 10.30523

ON THE DIALECTICAL MAXIM OF CRITICAL RATIONALISM

Eleştirel Rasyonalizmin Diyalektik Maksimi Üzerine

Kristë SHTUFİ

Asst. Dr., University of Prishtine, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy

Asst. Dr., Prishtine Üniversitesi, Felsefe Fakültesi, Felsefe Bölümü

Prishtinë, Republika e Kosovës

kriste.shtufi@uni-pr.edu

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0050-3401>

Makale Bilgisi / Article Information

Makale Türü / Article Type: Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Geliş Tarihi / Received: 28.03.2018

Kabul Tarihi / Accepted: 01.05.2018

Yayın Tarihi / Published: 30.06.2018

Atf/Cite as: Shtufi, Kristë. "On the Dialectical Maxim of Critical Rationalism". *Mütefekkir* 5/9 (Haziran 2018): 33-46. <https://doi.org/10.30523/mutefekkir.441649>.

İntihal / Plagiarism: Bu makale en az iki hakem tarafından incelenmiş ve bir intihal yazılımı ile taranmıştır. İntihal yapılmadığı tespit edilmiştir. / This article has been reviewed by at least two referees and scanned via a plagiarism software. No plagiarism has been detected.

Copyright © CC BY-NC-ND Published by Aksaray Üniversitesi, İslami İlimler Fakültesi - Aksaray University, Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Aksaray, 68100 Turkey.
All rights reserved.

ON THE DIALECTICAL MAXIM OF CRITICAL RATIONALISM

Kristë SHTUFİ

Abstract

The paper discusses one of the major principles of *critical rationalism* with a critical approach. This principle is about giving all participants the opportunity to argue in a friendly spirit. I analyze the main theoretical and practical implications of this maxim and argue for the importance of this Popperian principle beyond scientific rationality, enabling a general rationality for co-operation among all interested parties in the argumentation of scientific or everyday life issues, no matter if they are our friends or opponents. The conclusion is that this maxim has an inner logic with an effective result of successful dialectic argumentation and critical thinking. A parallel has been drawn between Christian love for others, the Socratic insight that it is better to suffer injustice than to do it and the strategy of Popper's principle. And hereby I suggest its compatibility with Popper's so-called *via negativa*.

Keywords: Popper, Fallibility, Argumentation, Critical Rationalism, Dialectic.

Eleştirel Rasyonalizmin Diyalektik Maksimi Üzerine

Öz

Bu makale, *eleştirel rasyonalizmin* temel ilkelerinden birini eleştirel olarak tartışmaktadır. Bu ilke, bütün taraflara barışsal bir ruhla tartışma fırsatını vermekle ilgilidir. Yaptığımız çalışmada, bu maksimin temel kuramsal ve pratik etkilerini analiz edip, Karl Popper'in prensibinin bilimsel rasyonalitenin ötesinde olan öneminden bahsedilmektedir. Böylece, ister bilimsel isterse de gündelik yaşam konularının tartışılmasında, tüm ilgili taraflar -ister arkadaşlarımız ister rakiplerimiz olsun- arasındaki iş birliğine genel bir rasyonellik kazandırılacaktır. Sonuç olarak, burada sunulan maksima, bir iç mantığa sahip olan başarılı bir diyalektik tartışmaya ve eleştirel düşünceye doğru götürmektedir. Hıristiyanlığın diğerlerine karşı sevgisi, Sokrates düşüncesinde yer alan 'adaletsiz olmaktansa adaletsizlikten muzdarip olmanın daha iyi olduğu' inancı ve Popper'in ilkesinin stratejisinin birbirine paralel olduğunu görürüz. Bu şekilde, ben Popper'in sözde *via negativa* ile uyumunu öneriyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Popper, Yanıltıcı, Argümantasyon, Eleştirel Rasyonalizm, Diyalektik.

INTRODUCTION

In rational life, we are obliged to argue for our beliefs, viewpoints, actions, and ground them, because our human nature as rational beings entails that it better not to have ungrounded convictions and beliefs, views or even actions. The same holds for science, where scientific rationality requires that every claim has to have a foundation, whether empirical or *a priori* or mixed one.

It happens that people act contrary to the requirements of our rationality, but, in such cases, we call those actions irrational and ungrounded actions. We ascribe the same attribute to people who “argue” incorrectly, by saying, for example, that: “1. *If it is raining (short: A), (then) the street will be wet (B) and it is the case that it is raining (A). It follows that the street isn’t wet (not B)*”, which can be formalized as follows:

If A, then B
A is true

B isn’t true

But it is a matter of fact that in presenting arguments of this form, we can evaluate those arguments in an objective way by applying rules of logic, without being forced to argue for or against the validity of such arguments. Still, when it comes to evaluating arguments, which don’t only have a clear schematic structure, but also a content, which needs to be interpreted and evaluated, nobody has a clear *decision procedure* to resolve the issue without interpretation. The interpretation itself, however, needs a debate, as a matter of practical nature, which requires some standard for proceeding. It is not easy to set this standard, to decide which criterion to use, in order to respect all participants in the discussion. Even the invitation to get the other to participate in the discussion is sometimes very difficult. Therefore, it is important to propose ways to satisfy the need for rational debate or discussion. In this sense, Popper proposed a magical maxim for critical debate, which is inclusive for all participants, leaving a place for rationality in a wide sense, and seeking coexistence recognition of participants. I call this maxim magic because of its magical effects of functioning, despite the contra-intuitive thinking that it contradicts the rational way of thinking. In the next part, I will analyze Popper’s maxim of critical rationalism, which is, as I argue, a rational principle of co-operation for all arguers in a discussion

1. ARGUING RATIONALLY IN SCIENCE

To argue rationally means to give reasons and to follow logical rules of argumentation. Reasons in argumentation are usually given in such a way that one starts from one or more judgments we call *premises*, and upon them, we infer base the entailed judgment called *the conclusion*. In everyday life, the conclusion represents our beliefs, our views or even our actions. This means, that if we have any belief, this belief should be held because we have necessarily some ground (premises) to believe it. This holds for all cases, in deductive and inductive arguments as well as in those cases where we are forced to believe something by force of reason like *analytic* truths or observation e. g. in case I see something in front of me, or that I am in danger of something which I fear, etc.¹

Thus, the standard manner of our argumentation is to proceed upon grounds. If we want to have valid arguments, then starting from assumed true premises should yield that the conclusion will necessarily also be true. In other words, in a valid argument *A*, it is impossible for the argument *A* to have true premises, but a false conclusion.² This applies to the validity of an argument and to rational procedure in general. On the other hand, the soundness of convincing arguments requires that the premise and the conclusion should be necessarily factual truths based on *evidence* (facts, data, laws, definitions etc.). True, the evidence may be either analytical or empirical or both. But the question here is how do we present the possible evidence for our arguments? In scientific reasoning, one presents the evidence showing that it is true. But in science one presents the evidence respecting rules of deductive or inductive reasoning, whereby the rules of deductive reasoning dominate. In this paper, I won't go into the rules of reasoning found in most logic textbooks. But, it is important to emphasize that no science is possible unless all logical laws are respected. But this is not so simple in everyday life.

2. GIVING REASONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND DOGMATISM

In everyday life, our arguments proceed in most cases by the usual procedure of deductive, inductive or analogical argumentation. On the other hand, in the discussion of giving reasons in everyday life, one controversial issue has been whether our arguments are influenced by the

1 Cf. The thesis of emotion-based reasoning in Peter de Jong and Maartje Vroling, "Better Safe than Sorry: Threat-Confirming Reasoning bias in Anxiety Disorders", *Emotion and Reasoning* (London: Psychology Press, 2014), 22-43.

2 Cf. Volker Halbach, *The Logic Manual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

“heart”-judgments or by the emotions.³ It seems that emotions are the starting point for some judgments, which one considers to be the most *trustful* judgments, and which move us to act.⁴ My own view is that when we do things solely as our heart feels or judges, we do them for many reasons, which in turn are dependent on our perspectives, interests, preferences, and beliefs. It seems that our education has an important role for believing something to be true, and in most cases our beliefs rely on the preferences and perspectives we take in a certain situation, depending on our personal history and how we have learned to do something or to draw conclusions. However, this does not represent any *a priori dogmatism* during the process of gaining those beliefs from the heart’s perspective. Yet we also intervene on logical grounds in taking positions on some issues. Nevertheless, our decisions to take some actions are influenced directly by the heart-judgments, and as is well known, the heart ultimately has a “logic”, which kills every rational reason or ground. This means also that we tend to take some of our positions without being open to revise them, because of our insistence on *our* history of or success with our positions. This leads to take some positions and believe them fundamentally, insofar one holds them to be true, and by assuming it is impossible for them to be false. This contradicts the other position in the discussion, if we assume that in a discussion there are at least two disputants.

The issue is that once we have gained a belief, etc. in practice, we do not provide reasons for it, but we take it and believe it to be true, and act on it, because we want to avoid an endless pursuit of reasons for our beliefs, and this would lead us, on the other hand, to one of the Münchhausen trilemmas, when someone wants to get himself out of clay by seizing his own hair. After all, it is impossible to justify every reason,

³ Cf. Robert C. Solomon, “Logic of Emotion”, *Noûs* 11/1 (1977): 41-49, here 45, when he says that “emotions are judgments” – although he admits correctly that this is an “oversimplified” position. Although I agree with Solomon up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that emotions and judgments can be fully identified, because of their spontaneity, nevertheless, it is a defensible standpoint, because they are a kind of judgment.

⁴ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 96, defines belief as “An opinion, therefore, or belief may be most accurately defin’d, A LIVELY IDEA RELATED TO OR ASSOCIATED WITH A PRESENT IMPRESSION”, [All capitals in original], whereas in David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Millican (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 48, the following definition is found: “I say then, that belief is nothing but a more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of an object, than what the imagination alone is ever able to attain”. – It seems that these two Hume’s definitions clarify what we bring with when we put forward premises, and in particular in situations when we argue with the rationality of the “heart”, which practically changes things with the force of belief (opinion or conviction) that is capable of bringing forth the actions.

because it would lead us into an *argumentum ad infinitum* or would require *begging the question*, which doesn't lead anywhere. Sometimes moreover, there is no good reason why, because the "reasons" are emotional, based on an interest in survival, etc.

Starting from this fact, certain dogmatism arises, which leads one to believe one's view is the only right one, what's more, that only one's own standpoint is the right view, and that all other views are not well-founded. As a consequence, this leads to a closed mind. This dogmatism necessarily leads to mistakes stemming from the impossibility of *coming out* of them with the dogmatic implicit manner. The dogmatic way of thinking doesn't allow getting free from the dogma; as a consequence dogma produces dogma, which all together can bring a deadlock. Although those dogmas may eventually present a system of coherent persuasions, they are at the minimum creative to take into account alternatives, which may even offer some other option to solve a particular issue, no matter, practical or mental.

3. KARL POPPER'S RESPONSE TO DOGMATISM

To get free of this dogmatic way of thinking, the renowned Austrian philosopher Karl R. Popper (1902-1994) has proposed a principle. Even though it does not provide an immediate liberation from dogmas, it certainly creates the main premises and conditions for the salvation from those dogmas. This is the principle of critical rationalism, which Popper presents in his book *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945). In this book, Popper formulates his dialectical maxim of debate and says: "*I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer to the truth*".⁵ (Italics in original) This principle of Popper is derived from a context of definition that Karl Popper gives for *critical rationalism*, where he says "[...] we could then say that rationalism is an attitude of readiness to listen to critical arguments and to learn from experience. It is fundamentally an attitude of admitting that '*I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer to the truth*'".⁶

From the first step, this constitutes a salvation from dogmatic rigidity and well-formed strategic and tactical guidance for the dialectic of argumentation, enabling the other side or party to enter into conversation or dialogue to weigh the arguments critically, and not to insist dogmatically on their own arguments.

⁵ Karl Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge, 1947), 2: 213.

⁶ Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2: 213.

What is practically obvious in this principle is the fact that (i) here are two persons arguing either of whom may be right or wrong and (ii) the two arguers are oriented towards the truth, which can be reached by giving the chance to be right to each other. The main purpose, then, is to approach to the truth. But the strategic path leading closer to the truth depends on allowing self-criticism to take place. This self-criticism is strategically the starting point for all parties involved in searching for the truth, assuming that *everybody's* arguments *can* be wrong. This is the best strategy of argumentation and critical thinking for many reasons.

Let's suppose, on the one hand, that we are starting from a dogmatic point of view trying to claim the truth for ourselves and *not allowing to let it go*, leaving no chance for the other to be right and for ourselves to be wrong. In this case, the truth is intended by each side from its own point of view. It may be likely that one side possesses the truth, but the other side contradicts it firmly and does not let it move forward towards the truth. The reason is that each party involved departs from the dogmatic strategic premise that she or he is right and the other is always wrong, thus creating an impassable barrier.

Let assume, on the other hand, that we set things moving from the Popperian point of view assuming that approaching the truth is the ultimate goal, but that the method is a non-dogmatic one, moved by the dynamics of *letting go* and giving "right of way" to others in the manner that the position *A* gives priority to the position *B*, and vice versa, reflecting that position *A* may be wrong and position *B* be right, and vice versa. We see here a principle that should practically hold for both positions, which means that both positions have the same starting point of a *giving-up of one's own insistence to be the only one who is right in arguing* with the same goal, namely an open cooperation with the other side without dogmatic persistence in the arguments which may be wrong in themselves. So, the decisive factor is that the critical rationalism procedure lies in attempting to bring both, the positions and the alternatives, *together* nearer to the truth by allowing for the possibility that the other side is right. If the two positions were statically insisting on their own positions, then it would be impossible to reach an *initial agreement* for trying to move towards the truth. On the contrary, each position would immobilize and stick in its claims.

The Popperian view seems to be a dialectical self-sacrifice, but it is completely rational and analytic, which only insists strategically on two operational prerequisites of argumentation: (i) the fallibility of each position, hence the possibility that each position may be wrong, and (ii) the request to strive to come nearer to the truth together for its own

sake. From this Popperian point of view, no one possesses the truth *a priori*, but two positions can search together for the truth in their efforts to recognize the external or internal reality, thus the truth as the whole. The demand of critical rationalism, namely, for self-sacrifice, doesn't hold only for the weakest side: self-sacrifice holds for all affected or involved in argumentation, without exception.

4. JOINT EFFORTS OF ORGANIZED SCEPTICS FOR CO-OPERATION AS A LIFESTYLE

Now, what does the joint effort to move towards the truth look like and what lessons could we draw from the Popperian maxim?

This effort consists of the initial request for *letting go* to both arguers' respective positions to evaluate and critically test the arguments together and thus to analyzing and justifying the premises that lead to the particular conclusions they trust and believe and consequently, to see which view or argument brings them us closer to the truth. This implies naturally which viewpoint brings us more benefits in the given field, which includes fewer errors for the present and the future, which is more descriptive, explanatory and predictive. This should be practically and theoretically supported by experts in the given field.

Clearly, Popper here sets out the boundaries of reason and hopes that this principle casts more light for a clearer view than a dogmatist principle that claims no need for more light due to the "reason" one owns and/or quasi-possesses. This is, of course, a clear indication which enables us to understand that Popper here gives a strategic role to rational argumentation, and thus does not narrow the rationality at all.

Indeed, here we are dealing with a wider notion of rationality than scientific rationality, and this kind of rationality is in fact what W. H. Newton-Smith calls epistemic rationality.⁷ This epistemic rationality is wider, because it does not imply what is self-evident and standard in science, namely criticism, but gives a definition beyond this, a general notion of rationality that includes both deductive and inductive arguments, but also non-scientific ones. This holds because of the very fact that this maxim gives *a priori* an equal opportunity for all interested parties to argue their arguments with a high degree of conscientiousness for the sole purpose of seeking to come closer to the truth in every field of life. This kind of open opportunity for all rational people who

⁷ Cf. William Herbert Newton-Smith, "Popper, Science and Rationality", *Karl Popper: Philosophy and Problems*, ed. Anthony O'Hear (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 21ff.

want to argue critically provides an option for fulfilling what E. T. Damer calls *the ethical standard of argumentation*,⁸ that all of us, friends and enemies cooperating among ourselves,⁹ *should* have in a just and fair way and so remain within what is called the “rules of the game”¹⁰ in rational communication with arguments for finding the truth. This truth has to be sought with patience in all spheres of life because it is not revealed, but it must be found, and which is likely to never be found in its totality, but only in the parts as in a mosaic.

Assuming the participants’ fallibility in argumentation makes it possible to create a preliminary framework for a balanced agreement in rational argumentation, in order to approach the truth in a rational-critical way through the institution that Robert K. Merton calls an *organized scepticism*¹¹ of cooperating scientists, but it is not reduced only to this organization. *Co-operation* in this context determines that two arguers start from the same position of fallibility, not by defending themselves, but by giving to the other, constructively, an advantage to enter the game, which at the end of the day gives its rational results. Thus this principle is a principle directed towards the other, which I may call a principle of *equal altruism in the dialectic of argumentation*.

Moreover, this constructive method of argumentation also offers an opportunity for the other to revise own arguments. This does not happen in normal rational arguments, because arguments are only presented there, with no initial suggestion or starting point for error. Constructive Popperian argumentation does the opposite, giving the other advantage by assuming the opportunity for the other to be right in his arguments, but also giving him the opportunity to change his mind. This, so to speak, constitutes a formula or a magical imperative for constructive and cooperative peaceful argumentation, anticipating, first of all, not the error of the opponent’s arguments, but one’s own wrongfulness.

In addition to the strategic nature of the invitation for a sincere argumentation and dialogue, this Popperian method of argumentation represents a living attitude,¹² a way of life, and is a formulation for an

⁸ Cf. T. Edward Damer, *Attacking the Faulty Reasoning: A Practical Guide to Fallacy-Free Arguments* (Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 6.

⁹ Newton-Smith, “Popper, Science and Rationality”, 23.

¹⁰ Cf. Damer, *Attacking the Faulty Reasoning*, 6.

¹¹ Cf. Robert King Merton, “Priorities in Scientific Discovery”, *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, ed. Norman W. Storer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 303.

¹² Cf. Noretta Koertge, “The Moral Underpinnings of Popper’s Philosophy”, *Rethinking Popper*, ed. Zuzana Parusnikova and Robert S. Cohen (Boston: Springer Science, 2009), 325.

action line in rational discussion in each field.¹³ Of course, this may seem at first glance damaging to the scientific requirement for direct evidence. But if viewed more closely, it actually achieves this purpose, only giving the motive for the openness of the proofs, with little effort and without any psychological barriers, of course taking on the burden of possibly making mistakes, which shows also the character of *critical rationalism* being a rational way of life.

Even in critical rationalism, and especially in this Popperian theory, arguments and ideas must be tested for them to be logically and empirically unflawed, but this does not diminish the demand for a strategically magical formula for an open discussion, and consequently successful and effective, thus surpassing all the positions that can lead to an *a priori* dogmatism. The ability to hear the other, without prejudice and the *a priori* hope that the other will be right, – against the dogmatic hope that the other will be wrong and I am right – brings with it the fruits of mutual cooperation, which is approaching the truth for one aspect of reality. As Van Eemeren & Grootendorst emphasize, this openness to talk to the other includes two criteria: problem validity and intersubjective validity, which means “problem-solving effectiveness and their intersubjective acceptability”.¹⁴

It is by no means surprising that when Kira G. Morse judges the positive practice of the Popperian maxim in such a way that “[...] based on this principle, debate clubs flourish in high schools all over the United States and abroad”,¹⁵ because this dialectical principle is an appeal against dictatorship and calls for a liberating and relieving rational debate between adult and rational people in all areas of life, whether in science, politics or in everyday life.

5. POPPER’S MAXIM AS A QUASI-RELIGIOUS AND/OR SOCRATIC MORAL GUIDELINE FOR ARGUMENTATION AND ITS COMPATIBILITY WITH HIS *VIA NEGATIVA*

Popper’s maxim for argumentation has a *quasi-religious* feel. One of the most celebrated maxims in Christian history is Jesus Christ’s maxim of love for enemies, where Jesus says: “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven;” (Mt, 5: 44-45, New Revisited Standard Ver-

¹³ Cf. Joseph Agassi - Ian Jarvie, *A Critical Rationalist Aesthetics* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 2.

¹⁴ Frans H. Van Eemeren - Rob Grootendorst, *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation: The Pragma-Dialectical Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 132.

¹⁵ Kira G. Morse, “Debate: A Tool for Language Learning”, *Journal of Border Educational Research* 10 (2011): 108-119, here 108.

sion). It seems to me that Popper's maxim has a similar design to Jesus' commandment against violence and his call to love our enemies. The love for enemies is a paradoxical deed in action. In argumentation indeed, we actually don't have to do with enemies, but with opponents. Yet, the most striking point in Popper's viewpoint is that we should give an advantage to the opponent, which means that everyone has to sacrifice himself in letting the other be the first, *for the sake of coming closer together to the truth*, just like in Christ' commandment one can find the final end "to be sons of Father in heaven". It is true that the direct parallel of Jesus's commandment and Popper's maxim can't be drawn, without being simplistic. In his book *Open Society and its Enemies*, Popper maintains that:

"I admit that the emotions of love and compassion may sometimes lead to a similar effort. But I hold that it is humanly impossible for us to love, or to suffer with, a great number of people; nor does it appear to me very desirable that we should, since it would ultimately destroy either our ability to help or the intensity of these very emotions. But reason, supported by imagination, enables us to understand that men who are far away, whom we shall never see, are like ourselves, and that their relations to one another are like our relations to those we love. A direct emotional attitude towards the abstract whole of mankind seems to me hardly possible, We can love mankind only in certain concrete individuals."¹⁶

Popper's point in this text is that one cannot love all mankind, but only some individuals. Nevertheless, in this relation, analogous to Christian love for one's enemies, one can give only to the other, to the individual in argumentation, in a concrete situation and step by step, the favor and the supremacy of being right, and this means in Christian terminology to "love thy enemies". Naturally, it cannot be given the right to all the arguments in the world, but it is for sure that it *can* be given to the concrete arguer, which is an ideal of what I called the *altruism in argumentation*. Everyone who loves his enemies is being self-sacrificed at any rate. Equally, everyone who is giving the advantage to the opponent, and is at the beginning assuming the possibility of being wrong in one's own arguments, is being willingly self-sacrificed, until the truth is confirmed in testing the arguments. But the confirmation of truth doesn't belong to our discussion because this is a further another step. In this sense, a parallel can be drawn, at least partially, that both strategies are played with self-sacrifice for the sake of a higher splendid and sublime purpose.

¹⁶ Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2: 226.

The rationality of presuming that the other is right is a theoretical hypothesis that we can be also in the position of being right from the other side. That means that we are actually paradoxically egoistic in our altruism. But this is only a consequence, not the purpose of this strategy. The strategy of this maxim says that everybody is optimistic and positive thinking for the other side. That is, “the critical rationalist attitude that Popper advocated [...] is an indispensable ingredient of the life that an open society offers.”¹⁷

Another analogy for the Popperian moral *credo* can be made in the light direction of the Socratic insight, where Socrates in Platos *Gorgias* 474b says: “For I do believe that you and I and everybody else consider doing what’s unjust worse than suffering it”.¹⁸ This sentence of Socrates has been even cited by Popper himself in the *Preface* of the German edition of his Lectures *Auf der Suche nach einer besseren Welt* [Engl.=*In the Search for a better World*].¹⁹

Popper’s maxim is compatible with his methodology of *via negativa*, “which says that we learn by correcting our errors, from refutation of our conjectures, from touching and bumping into the real; in any case not from confirmations, since they can be spurious, and they often are.”²⁰ Correcting our errors is a way of learning and it should begin with correcting in the first place our views, and the best way to proceed correcting our views in a discussion or dialogue with others according to Popper seems to be by systematically assuming the fallibility of our errors, and not beginning with the suspecting starting point to review arguments of the others, by assuming they are wrong. This holds systematically for everyone. This point of view should be itself not a dogma, but a strategic invitation for a practice of reforming own views by examining them on the hypothetical assumption they are wrong. This is also compatible with the *reductio ad absurdum* method, assuming that our arguments are wrong.

CONCLUSION

In this article I argued that Popper’s strategic *credo* for a preliminary agreement among the contestants for a zero starting point wherein

¹⁷ David Miller, “Popper and Tarski”, *Popper’s Open Society After Fifty Years: The Continuing Relevance of Karl Popper*, ed. Ian Jarvie (London: Routledge, 1999), 58.

¹⁸ John M. Cooper, *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 818.

¹⁹ Karl Popper, *Auf der Suche nach einer besseren Welt: Vorträge und Aufsätze aus dreißig Jahren* (München: Piper, 1999), 11.

²⁰ Ian Jarvie, “Popper’s Philosophy and the Methodology of Social Science”, *The Cambridge Companion to Popper*, ed. Jeremy Shearmur and Gabriel Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 292.

all involved are equally tolerant of the other side within the debate and where all display cooperative and self-sacrificing understanding, giving constantly priority to the other side in looking to come closer to the truth together, is a wise maxim of the dialectic of argumentation, and that this *credo* represents an invitation to rationality and does not weaken either science or everyday dialogue. On the contrary, all involved can derive providentially very beneficial fruits from this dialectical strategy. I draw additionally a parallel between the Christian love for enemies and the strategy of the maxim of critical rationalism, but also with the Socratic insight of being in a better position to suffer the unjust, than to do so. Popper's maxim of critical rationalism is compatible with Popper's so called *via negativa*.²¹

REFERENCES

- Agassi, Joseph - Jarvie, Ian. *A Critical Rationalist Aesthetics*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.
- Cooper, John M. *Plato: Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997.
- Damer, T. Edward. *Attacking the Faulty Reasoning: A Practical Guide to Fallacy-Free Arguments*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.
- de Jong, Peter - Vroling, Maartje. "Better Safe than Sorry: Threat-Confirming Reasoning bias in Anxiety Disorders". *Emotion and Reasoning*. Ed. Isabelle Blanchette. 22-43. London: Psychology Press, 2014.
- Halbach, Volker. *The Logic Manual*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Hume, David. *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Peter Millican. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960.
- Jarvie, Ian. "Popper's Philosophy and the Methodology of Social Science". *The Cambridge Companion to Popper*. Ed. Jeremy Shearmus - Gabriel Stokes. 284-317. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Koertge, Noretta. "The Moral Underpinnings of Popper's Philosophy". *Rethinking Popper*. Ed. Zuzana Parusniková - Robert S. Cohen. 323-338. Boston: Springer, 2009.
- Merton, Robert King. "Priorities in Scientific Discovery". *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*. Ed. Norman W. Storer. 286-324. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Miller David. "Popper and Tarski". *Popper's Open Society After Fifty Years: The Continuing Relevance of Karl Popper*. Ed. Ian Jarvie. 57-71. London: Routledge, 1999.

²¹ I am indebted to Prof. Dr. David Weberman (Central European University), Prof. Dr. Hasnije Ilazi (University of Prishtina) who carefully read a draft and supplied reasonable comments and corrections. I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. Dagmar Strohmeier (University of Applied Sciences - Upper Austria) and Prof. Dr. Lulzim Dragidella (University of Prishtina) for stimulating discussions.

- Morse, Kira G. "Debate: A Tool for Language Learning". *Journal of Border Educational Research* 10 (2011): 108-119.
- Newton-Smith, William Herbert. "Popper, Science and Rationality". *Karl Popper: Philosophy and Problems*. Ed. Anthony O'Hear. 13-30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Popper, Karl. *Open Society and Its Enemies*. Vol. 2. London: Routledge, 1947.
- Popper, Karl. *Auf der Suche nach einer besseren Welt: Vorträge und Aufsätze aus dreißig Jahren*. München: Piper, 1999.
- Solomon, Robert C. "The Logic of Emotion". *Noûs* 11/1 (1977): 41-49.
- van Eemeren, Frans H. - Rob Grootendorst. *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation: The Pragma-Dialectical Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.