

The Open Society and its Enemies

Karl R. Popper

Volume **1** The Spell of Plato

"This is a powerful and important book. It is a criticism of a set of dogmas which underly the most influential political theories and in consequence powerfully affect the actual conduct of human affairs. One of these dogmas is what I may call the 'Juggernaut theory' of history, according to which human history is 'not a bus but a tram.' The other dogma is the taboo theory of the bases of society, according to which ideal societies would be governed (as primitive societies were governed) in accordance with canons exempted from criticism. The former dogma is entitled by the author 'Historicism,' the latter the dogma of 'the Closed Society.' Historicism holds, roughly, that it is useless for men to try to shape their ends: The Taboo theory holds that it is wicked. Thoughts about our journey are idle thoughts on the one view: they are dangerous thoughts on the other Dr. Popper writes with extreme clarity and vigour. His studies in Greek history and Greek thought have obviously been profound and original. Platonic exegesis will never be the same again. Nor, I think, will Marxist exegesis. Readers should not miss studying the notes collected at the end of the two volumes." — GILBERT RYLE, *Mind*

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1. The Myth of Origin and Destiny: Historicism and the Myth of Destiny. Heraclitus. Plato's Theory of Forms or Ideas.
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Volume **2** The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath

"In this book Mr. Popper examines the nature and origins of a vast and labyrinthine system which he terms 'historicism.' This *porte-manteau* term he applies to any view claiming that human society, by its nature and not by human will or by variable conditions, is predetermined and that, therefore, necessary laws and patterns governing inevitable future developments can be found in history. Mr. Popper's protest — and he protests vehemently, albeit retaining a steady grip on the controls of his impressive scholarly apparatus — is directed not merely against Hegelianism at its ebb tide, but against a millenary philosophy of complex and insidious affinities, which has imprisoned the political thought of the West a highly stimulating book, fortified by scrupulous references and forceful prose." — ROBERT STRAUZ-HUPE, *Philosophy of Science*

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10. Conclusion: Has History any Meaning?