

Philosophy as the Analysis of Concepts and Critical Evaluation of Beliefs

Kavramların Analizi ve İnançların Eleştirel Değerlendirilmesi Olarak Felsefe

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Abstract: In this study, we tried to reveal what philosophy is and its function based on the concepts. Man, who is a reasonable being, needs philosophy. The philosophy that man needs is the one compatible with reality. Philosophy, which critically examines the concepts put forward about human, universe and existence, is a mental effort. The functions of philosophy towards concepts and beliefs are analysis, synthesis and criticism. Philosophy explains concepts, and critically evaluates beliefs. It tries to justify the conclusions based on explanation and criticism. Philosophy examines the main characteristics of the relationships among existence, human and human-being. At this stage, philosophy abides by concepts whose one side scrutinize the beings. Philosophy, which is also accepted as the process of analysing the structure of thought, turns to language and therefore to the analysis of concepts as the appropriate ground for realizing this function. Sciences also use concepts, but only philosophy does the analysis of the concepts. Individually, Philosophy performs this function based on the human reason. Because philosophy is an activity based on reason and it is individual. Despite the objective nature of science, philosophy is subjective. As an individual activity, philosophy is based on the individual's ability to produce and create based on his/her reasoning. What philosophy produces and creates on the occasion of individual contemplation are concepts. Concepts are what the philosopher thinks about by discovering. The philosopher, who has the power to produce and create concepts, is concept-friendly. Therefore, philosophy can be described as a discipline that includes creating concepts or as knowledge acquired through pure concepts.

Keywords: Philosophy, criticism, concept, belief, justification.



Introduction

Human beings need philosophy because they are reasonable beings. The reason why human beings need philosophy is a practical reason that can be expressed as being able to think, act and live by nature. However, the philosophy that man needs is the one that is compatible with reality. Philosophy, which is compatible with reality, is one of the most important elements in human life. Philosophy, which emerged as a result of deep thinking about human, universe and existence, is an important factor that shapes the human mind reason character, and the destiny of nations. Philosophy examines the main characteristics of the relationship among being, human and human-being. Unlike the sciences, which only study certain phenomena and certain problems that arise due to them, philosophy makes the universe the subject of study as a whole. If the special sciences are considered as trees in the field of knowledge, philosophy is like the soil that creates the forest (Rand, 1984, s. 2).

Where should a person who needs philosophy, which is one of the most important activities of human life, start philosophical inquiry? Because philosophy has many sub-disciplines and it also includes different branches of interest and inquiry. However, the diversity of the subjects of the philosophical disciplines should not divert attention away from the possible unity of the subject, because all subjects are interrelated with each other. A question to be asked in one area will pave the way for questions to be asked in other areas and will cause new questions to be asked. For example, one question about price control in the economics field; What is the function of administration or government? links to another question. This question, in turn, is determined by a person's view of the relationship between the individual and society. Is society an entity or just a collection of individuals? Are individuals subordinated to the purpose of society or does society exist to protect the rights of individuals? What kind of behaviour or morality is appropriate for individuals under any circumstances? How do we know which morality is right? The judgment or judgments that we put forth on many such problems are tied to our basic understanding of human nature and its relation to other people. Since philosophy is an activity based on reason, which is indispensable for



human life, there is a hierarchy and reciprocal relationship between questions about life and philosophy (Yang, 2000, s. 158).

The Two Fundamental Aims of Philosophy

Philosophy, having various problems as its subject, has undertaken the function of interpreting the tradition of western philosophy in line with two basic purposes related to each other: These two main purposes are the explanation of concepts and the critical evaluation of beliefs. Although every science uses certain concepts, the analysis of concepts is carried out by philosophy. Science and philosophy show some differences not only in the way they deal with the subjects, but also in the results they reach. While the results of science are at the disposal of anyone who wants to think about them, the results of philosophy are only auxiliaries to those who want to think about them. One scientific invention can be developed in place of another. However, since philosophical thinking is an individual activity, one cannot think philosophically for another person (Savater, 2001, s. 28). The process of using the reason correctly is something that a single person must do alone. Meals can be shared among many people, but cannot be digested in a collective stomach. No one can use their own lungs to breathe for someone else. No one can use their own brain to think for another person either. All functions of the body and spirit are individual and exclusive. They cannot be shared or transferred. There is no collective reason or collective brain. Thought must be a process initiated and directed at each step by the choice of the thinking person. Only in this way can it be mentioned that a single individual can perceive, abstract, define and establish connections (Peikoff, 1993, s. 198). Philosophical thinking, which is an individual activity, differs from the sciences primarily in terms of analysing concepts.

By defining concepts related to their field, the sciences make them well-demarcated concepts. For example, the mathematician defines the concept of 'complex number', the physicist the concept of 'atomic weight', the biologist the concept of 'gene'. These concepts are formed within the framework of the sciences they are related to, and therefore they are given a meaning within the science to which they are attached. However, defining and clarifying the meanings of concepts such as 'causa-



lity', 'necessity', 'external world', 'truth', 'reality', which concern the subjects of all sciences and are necessary for the explanation of those subjects, in other words, the analysis of such concepts is not the task of science but philosophy (Von Aster, 1974, s. 6).

No concept that philosophy tries to analyse is simple. Each concept has many components and is defined through them. In philosophy, concepts are created based on problems that are thought to be poorly perceived or not well presented. Within a concept created by philosophy there are often parts or unifiers from other concepts that answer other problems and assume other planes. This is necessary because every concept carries out a new shaping, requires reanimation or reshaping (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, s. 25).

In traditional philosophy, the explanation of concepts is considered as a necessary supporter of the main purpose of grounding beliefs and is appreciated secondary. The purported purpose of interpreting traditional philosophy as a critical evaluation of beliefs is an attempt to provide any basis for justification, the rational basis for accepting or rejecting beliefs we hold as if they were normal without thinking. However, the knowledge of whether the criterion put forward to justify a claim is reliable is necessary but not obligatory in order to justify the claim reached in accordance with the criterion (Adjukiewicz, 1994, ss. 27-28). In contrast to the fact that science has undertaken the function of trying to explain events, philosophy differs from science because it is an effort to justify. The concept of justification, if taken only in a positive sense, can cause a number of misunderstandings. The concept of justification is often used to mean giving rational or justifying grounds for either accepting or rejecting a belief. Expressing that knowledge is a justified belief in the epistemological field also serves the same purpose (Audi, 2004, s. 222). This process, that is, justifying or putting forward some reasons, naturally has a significant place in science. When a scientist presents evidence or a logical justification for supporting or opposing a thesis, he or she is presenting rational grounds for accepting the hypothesis as true or rejecting it as false. The work of the scientist differs from the work of the philosopher on the character of the hypothesis itself, which is usually a form of causal



explanation. The scientist investigates the causes. In this inquiry, his attempt is a rational one, unlike the irrational exposition of the reasons found in superstition, and he also seeks reasons to justify it. On the other hand, the philosopher does not direct his attention to causal explanations, nor is he limited to the material provided by a certain field, such as those who have experience in presenting causal explanations in the field of science. The philosopher seeks not only to question beliefs about causes, but also to question the rational grounds for supporting or opposing any kind of belief. This does not mean that philosophers turn their attention to any or all beliefs at any time or at all times. The need to seek rational grounds arises when anything makes us doubt the validity of a belief that has been taken for granted, and it becomes a new belief that often appears to be incompatible with the old one. For example, the advent of modern science seemed to challenge the validity of some traditional religious beliefs and cast doubt on the foundations on which these religious beliefs rested. In fact, the revolutionary ideas of Copernicus and Galileo not only caused brutal clashes between science and religion, but also led to some conflicts within the Catholic Church (Mayor-Forti, 1997, s. 27). In contrast to traditional thought and beliefs, new scientific theories were based on a set of rational methods respected by those who understood them. The new theories seemed to be inconsistent with traditional beliefs, whose coherence claims required one of three possibilities. These three possibilities are as follows: a) Traditional beliefs should be rejected as myths based on imagination or limited evidence. b) New beliefs should be abandoned because the evidence brought for them is less reliable than the evidence brought by divine revelation. c) In order to reconcile one or the other of these two belief sets with each other, it is necessary to undergo some changes.

The second claim of consistency, with which new theories are in conflict, had been embraced by conservatives. However, this situation did not last long because the demands and claims expressed by the new beliefs emerged in a rationally persuasive way. Therefore, the first and third possibilities were successful. Above all, philosophers have tried to clarify the entanglement underlying traditional beliefs and new beliefs to show where the inconsistency lies. Secondly, philosophers suggested solutions



to eliminate inconsistencies, and these suggestions mostly took the form of either the first possibility or the third possibility. Depending on the methodological approach expressed in the first possibility, a skeptical philosophy has emerged that criticizes all kinds of traditional understanding. As the skeptical supporters of philosophy turned their doubts into a holistic doubt and spread it to every field, the possibility of widespread acceptance of their views decreased. However, it is possible to say that skeptical philosophers are the ones who start philosophy in the most appropriate way, provided that they do not always stay at the same stage (Diemer, 1997, s. 164). Other philosophers, defending the view expressed in the third possibility, have proposed a number of new ways to search for information involving new conceptual schemas.

A parallel process is taking place in the field of practical philosophy as well. This process is not about beliefs about what is right, but about beliefs as to what is right or good for people and society. Traditional principles about right or wrong, good or bad, have come into question in the face of scientific knowledge about the effects or causes of some behavior styles, or new knowledge that societies that are different from one another may have different values and rules. For example, when the Sophists traveled to regions where non-Greek people lived, they found that different societies had different morals, different customs and habits. This situation has led them to question the absolute character of these moral principles and their nature adopted by the society. As a result, they have asked themselves a lot of questions about which rules are actually right and which ones are worth choosing and adopting from among those rules. When there is such an inquiry, the philosopher calculates on what basis and how far he can think in order to rationally justify traditional and new ideas. As in the epistemology, the philosopher also tries to determine the exact points of inconsistency and to reveal the entanglement in the foundations of old and new ideas. In addition, the philosopher makes some efforts to resolve inconsistencies by either presenting a revised conceptual framework that will reconcile all knowledge or rejecting old beliefs by modifying one or the other set of thoughts that are contradictory with each other. This is the main task of traditional philosophy, whether in the field of knowledge or in the field of action.



Philosophy and Criticism

Philosophy begins with criticism. The aim of philosophy is not attachment or liberation. The philosopher tends to insist on careful reasoning and constant scrutiny of fundamental assumptions. Because the philosopher is a man of reason. He is the one who goes with the reason to the place where the reason can reach, and who does not try to go with the reason to the place where the reason cannot reach (Uygur, 1989, s. 7). The task of reason, which the philosopher considers itself to be its supreme spokesman, is to form a committee of judges that protects itself with well-founded propositions and rejects all baseless assumptions and claims not arbitrarily, but with its own eternal and unalterable laws (Bauman, 2003, s. 35). Philosophy strives to mentally critique important questions and to keep them open to everyone's discussion (Honer-Hunt, 1996, s. 11). Historically, philosophy, which emerged as a deep critique of religious and moral beliefs, never abandoned its critical attitude; It has been constantly renewed and empowered by close contact with the concepts, methods, and criteria of scientific research (Randall-Buchler, 1989, s. 2). It is not possible to talk about free thought and therefore philosophy on a ground where there is no criticism and it is accepted that everything is based on absolute truths. Philosophy arises from doubting and criticism of existing ideas. As long as it exposes itself to criticism, it continues to remain active and healthy.

The explanations we have made so far regarding the main purpose of traditional philosophy are some individual interpretations, but we think that these interpretations can be accepted by those who have adopted the rational thinking method. However, this purpose of traditional philosophy has come into question for the reason we will talk about. If a belief is to be rationally justified, it must meet the conditions of two basic criteria: The first is consistency, in which logic, the philosopher's main instrument, is used as a testing instrument. But consistency alone is not enough to make a belief or set of beliefs rationally acceptable. For example, suppose we have two or more sets of beliefs that are internally consistent but in some respects inconsistent with each other, such as systems of alternative geometry. How do we know which of them should be accep-



ted? In order to answer this question, we will need a second criterion. In the matter of issues of facts, we need to know which of the alternatives is internally consistent, that is, its relation to the actual events in the world and its applicability to them. Because consistency requires providing evidence as to whether the information is relevant to what it is about (Tepe, 1995, s. 181).

Although philosophers are in a position to test for consistency, they are not in a position to say what the relevant events are. Because the expertise of philosophers is not based on actual scientific research, but on thinking clearly and coherently. What is more important for philosophers than to justify their knowledge is that they have the ability to criticize what they do not know deeply, or what they believe they know but they do not really know (Savater, 2001, s. 30). The philosopher must at least know why he doubts what others are proposing, why he must confirm it, before he knows why he asserts what he claims. This negative, defensive, critical function has a value in itself. Although he cannot go any further, in the world of those who believe in what they know, a philosopher is a person who admits that he does not know, or at least is conscious of his own ignorance. The fact that a philosopher has such a characteristic can be considered as a natural result of his being a person who is well-mannered and knowledgeable, taking into account the subject he inquires, the requirements of that subject, the data of science on the subject in question, and researching based on a certain method (Peters, 2004, s. 290).

Values and Philosophy

The challenge to the core subject of practical philosophy is even greater than in other areas of philosophy. The first criterion of consistency may be used by the philosopher here as well, but in this case, it is not clear what will replace the second criterion of events. It is not a problem to determine what is right or wrong, but it is a problem if one of the things that is determined is right or wrong, good or bad. Because in this case, it is a matter of the field of values. Values are not real in the ordinary sense of the word. If there is a notion that values can be studied as facts, then it would be impossible to find a specific method of showing



which among the set of conflicting values can be called real or objective. There is no science to tell us whether values are objective or real, and it is difficult to say that any other kind of analysis can be made in this field. Because it is not possible to talk about a single point of view and a single evaluation style regarding values. Every individual, every society, every group, every race, every state, every church, every belief has its own way of evaluating values (Nietzsche, 1968, s. 141). For example, if different people have different and incompatible ideas about what will ensure the order of a society, how do we decide which one or ones of them might be correct? Or, how can we argue that one of these principles is rational against the other, when some countries adopt democratic principles and some countries adopt the principles of communism, which is considered incompatible with democracy in many respects? Since the main difficulty here concerns a number of questions of practical philosophy, we shall confine ourselves to the latter in our response to the critique of traditional purpose. Therefore, critical evaluation is not in a way that directly justifies a belief; it must emerge in a way that indirectly supports that belief by eliminating alternatives. However, it should not be considered as a deficiency in philosophy that the critical evaluation process should depend on the negative refutation of beliefs rather than their positive acceptance.

In accordance with the interpretations, we have made about traditional philosophy, the explanation of concepts is accepted as a secondary function that serves the primary purpose of critical evaluation of beliefs. It is necessary to understand whether a belief is reasonable and especially if there is any contradiction within itself or between other accepted beliefs compatible with itself, what the belief is and what it points to. Many philosophers today consider the critical evaluation of beliefs to be a philosophically misdirected or non-applicable business. These philosophers also claim that the only job philosophy has to do successfully is the explanation of concepts. Therefore, for them, the explanation of concepts is no longer a secondary function of philosophy, but its main task. Philosophy may or may not do this job successfully, but it is the main subject of most philosophical inquiries. Because it is very difficult to understand the thoughts that are tried to be expressed through those concepts wit-



hout fully explaining the concepts. Concepts are the building blocks of thoughts. Concepts, which are indispensable means for thinking and making judgments, are the formal framework and objective basis of reaching the knowledge of objects (Çotuksöken, 1998, s. 18). Concepts, which are indispensable tools for comprehending the world, are mental artifacts about what the human reason objectifies, or abstractions made by the same reason to know them by what impose themselves as a reality on the human reason. For this reason, the way to understand the concepts is to examine the reality area they are related to and the meaning contexts in the language in which they are used, and to remove the veil on their meanings (Bingöl, 1993, s. 12). People think only through concepts, and concepts are like mental spectacles of people. Semantic extensions of concepts form the way of perceiving and understanding objects and processes. Concepts are the action of thought operating at infinite speed. Concepts are incorporeal things, although they become embodied in bodies and realize themselves in bodies.

Ensuring Correct Use of Analysis, Synthesis and Concepts

A concept is a general idea or a notion applied to many things. Often it is helpful to think of concepts as applications of common words. In any case, the evaluation of concepts can only be accomplished by considering the uses of words. When we speak of general words, we mean words that refer to many things, as opposed to nouns designed to identify individual objects. Philosophical issues are mostly related to very general concepts such as body, mind, matter, time and space. In its effort to explain general notion or concepts, philosophy has three interrelated basic aims. These are correcting analysis, synthesis and the concepts or ensuring that they are used correctly.

Analysing a concept means identifying the main elements that make up the concept, which usually define the concept. For example, the concept of sovereignty is defined by the determination of the three basic elements that make it up; It can be defined or analysed as a 'high legal authority'. By subjecting the concepts to the synthesis process, it is meant to show the logical connections that occur through a concept's implication or being implied by another concept. For example, a person might



indicate logical relationships between a right and the concept of a duty by pointing out that A has a right to B. This implies that B has a duty. By the development of a concept, it is also meant recommending a definition or a usage that will aid clarity or consistency. For example, one might argue that the concept of sovereignty should be used only for the legal authority of a state and not for its coercive power. The work of elucidating the meanings of concepts by explaining makes philosophy mostly an analysis and description. It is also a necessity of philosophical grounding to analyse the concepts, to reveal the clear-cut differences in the concepts, to reveal the meaning or meanings of the concepts from the functioning of the different contexts in which they take place, and to do this as objectively as possible (Uygur, 1995, s. 55).

In philosophy, which is busy with the work of clarifying the meanings of the concepts and trying to do this job in an impartial way, when any issue is to be handled and examined, the meanings of the basic concepts related to that issue should be analysed and clarified in all details. Words must be used carefully and consistently in order to go beyond the ambiguity of concepts (Honer-Hunt, 1996, s. 22). In order to analyse or define a concept, it is very often, but not always, necessary to pay attention to what the concept refers to and the logical connections. We can explain this situation with a simple example: If we define man as an intelligent animal, then we not only divide the concept into two basic elements, 'being wise' and 'being an animal', but also subordinate him, i.e., 'man', to one genus and thus separate him from other species. As a result of this situation, we can make a simple inference: If anything is a human, it must be a living thing. Thus, we have reached the beginning of a small logical system or synthesis model that can be defined as the scope of a class object. The animal general notion, which is divided into two parts, intelligent and non-intelligent, is divided into various branches, the first of which includes humans and the second includes all other animals. Thus, the concept of human is both defined and developed when considered in comparison with its ordinary use in life. When we normally use the word human in a daily context, we are not clearly thinking of an intelligent animal notion, nor are we thinking of a class of animals that would exclude snakes, eagles, and lions. A philosopher may think that his job is



simply to map out old and new meanings. However, the process of explaining the concepts should also involve strengthening the meaning of the conventionally used concept, albeit with a slight change. While explaining the concepts we use in our daily lives, the philosopher should consider the meaning patterns of those concepts and clean the concept from the wrong and inappropriate meanings attributed to it. However, the philosopher must also attribute to it the meaning or meanings that exist within the concept and that should be expressed within the framework of its relations with the context of the field to which it belongs, but which are outside the meaning of the concept for various reasons.

We are of the opinion that the point that we have determined as the main purpose of traditional philosophy for the critical evaluation of beliefs has been adequately explained. If the explanation of concepts, which is the secondary aim of philosophy is busy with the evaluation of beliefs, its aim will be revealed in the same way as well. But if the critical evaluation of beliefs is thought to be a philosophically useless pursuit, what is the aim of the clarification of concepts? The reasons why concepts should be explained for their own sake and not for any other reason, even if they are not thought to be used to further the purpose of critical evaluation of beliefs, are as follows: Explaining concepts is like cleaning the house. When you clean the inside of the house and put your belongings in a certain order, there is nothing to do for you in the house. In fact, you may not be buying any new items even though you throw away some things that you do not want to be in your home or that bother you. After all these processes, you have a more organized house and you can move around in this house much more easily. You can easily reach everything you need because you know where you put what you put in the house. This analogy that we have made is also suitable for the purpose we want to express. Cleaning the house is not something that is done once and will never be done again. People living in the house clean it at appropriate times, considering whether the house is dirty or clean. As long as life continues, people living in that house will produce garbage and that house will need to be cleaned regularly.



Philosophy may seem to revolve around the same old issues without making any progress, but regarding philosophy in this way is actually an illusion. Advances in the philosophical field may be rather slow and gradual, but they never cease. However, what needs to be said is that philosophy is a mental cleansing activity, not the acquisition of new knowledge. Cleaning needs to be done with a more advanced set of tools in each new generation just like the vacuum cleaner replacing the brooms made of straw or other materials in house cleaning. In the life of individuals, such a process, namely mental cleansing or clearing, is more needed. If a person reading a particular philosophical work, by the time he reaches the end of the work, thinks that some things have been corrected or settled, and assumes that the problem is over, he would be mistaken. Because in a few years he realizes that the previous results themselves need to be edited or discarded altogether. The most important thing we hope to gain from the inquiries we have done in the field of philosophy is not to give a final answer to the issues, but to acquire the habit of careful thinking. Such a habit is the most basic quality that people who work in that field should acquire, no matter what field of philosophy it is. The information we have given on the explanation of the concepts are simple and easy to understand and will undoubtedly help us to better understand the studies we will do in the field of philosophy.

On the other hand, critical evaluation of beliefs is undoubtedly normative. But by critical evaluation we mean the search for rational grounds necessary for the acceptance or rejection of beliefs. In this context, philosophy is neither more nor less normative than explanatory theory in the natural or social sciences. Explanatory theory provides evidence for or against a hypothesis, with or without supporting logical grounds. This will provide rational grounds for accepting the assumption as true or rejecting it as false. For example, in epistemology, the result of critically evaluating a proposition will provide us with some basis for accepting the proposition as true or rejecting it as false. In practical philosophy, on the other hand, the result of critical evaluation is quite different. Practical philosophy seeks some rational justification for accepting a proposition that is worth following in action, or about what we should do, or rejecting a proposition about what we should not do.



Those who say that traditional philosophy should be abandoned on the grounds that its function of explaining concepts is ideological or normative is not saying the same thing about analysis and synthesis, but about the development of concepts. Therefore, they apply the latter only in the name of analysis and claim that they are not talking about any improvement or development of the concepts they analyze. Strictly speaking, the development or refinement of concepts is normative in that it recommends certain uses or definitions. Analysis and synthesis are positive processes as they try to simplify and make the present event even more understandable. However, it is almost impossible to deal with the operations of analysis and synthesis unless a proposal for the development of concepts is put forward at the same time. Even the simplest type of analysis or definition, as in the ancient example that defines man as an intelligent creature which we have also mentioned above, spends great effort to detach it from its connections as much as possible and to reveal its true meaning in order to explain a concept more clearly.

Conclusion

As a result, a concept that has been analyzed has now gone beyond its usual meaning. The fact that where there was relative blurriness and ambiguity before, there is now relative clarity, indicates that the concept has been reconsidered and liquidated. Explanation of concepts, especially in the field of practical philosophy, is likely to involve their development. Because the general concepts of practical philosophy change depending on the changes that occur in society, and the social and moral philosopher, during the analysis of the concepts and reviewing their history, sees that the concepts that he wants to explain in general undergo a complete change. Thus, his explanation shows us that the usages of the concepts over time are not the same, and there are significant changes in the meanings of the concepts over time. The changes that occur in the meanings of the concepts are the equivalents of the changes in the realities that form the basis of the existence of the concepts in question, appearing in the human reason. However, this does not mean that the concepts express the facts as what they are. Although the concepts do not express the facts as they are, the way to know the facts and to understand the mea-



nings of them are through the concepts. It is not possible to talk about thinking and thoughts without concepts, and it does not seem possible to express situations such as singularity, plurality, meaningfulness and meaninglessness in the world of beings.

It is a fact that philosophy, which analyses concepts and evaluates beliefs critically, has important benefits for people both individually and socially with this function. Philosophy, which approaches events from a rational point of view based on the reason, teaches that the reason is the only criterion for people to reach the right information. The person who acquires information about man, the world and existence in a contemplative way through philosophy, has the opportunity to know himself, his society, his environment and his existence in general. A person who knows himself and other people opens the doors of happiness for himself by establishing his social relations through this recognition. The one who has the opportunity to get to know the society he lives in will be free from prejudices and bigotry, as he will not see differences as a cause of disagreement and will evaluate them as a social and cultural wealth. Another function of philosophy is to make people tolerant towards different ideas, causing the individual to live in peace with himself and preparing the ground for social peace. Since people living in peace will think and act freely, it will be easier for them to realize themselves, and the foundations of a pluralistic democratic society will be laid due to their multidimensional perspective. Through philosophy, people understand the importance of thinking, discussing and expressing their thoughts without being subjected to any pressure, by acting in the direction determined by their own reasons, not under the guidance of others. Philosophy frees individuals from the yoke of traditional habits and helps them grasp the truth, the good and the beautiful. Philosophy protects people from the dominance of singular thought by criticizing the ideas that are accepted as unquestionably true, showing them that there are various ways for people to be happy. The fact that we talk about many individual and social virtues of philosophy does not mean that it is a salvation for human beings. Philosophy, which is a rational-individual effort to seek the truth, will show that there are alternatives in terms of knowing and acting in the field of existence, knowledge and value, and will enable pe-



ople to breathe easily in their pursuit of happiness. Philosophy teaches people to go with the reason where one can go with it, and not to try to go with the reason where one cannot go with it.

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Öz: Belli açılardan, biri klasik diğeri modern felsefenin öncüsü olarak kabul edilen Platon ve Descartes birbirlerinden yalnızca çağları bakımından değil; ruh, beden ve töz anlayışları bakımından da farklılık gösterir. Bununla birlikte, hakikati ararken temel aldıkları modus operandi (çalışma şekli, yöntem) bakımından ise oldukça yakın anlayışlara sahip oldukları iddia edilebilir. Platon psykhe'nin varlığa açılma zeminini ortaya koyarken, Descartes ise ben-Tanrı-uzamlı cisimler anlayışını temellendirirken epistemolojiyi merkeze almıştır. Bu bağlamda, varlığa farklı derecelerde epistemolojik bir karakter kazandırmaları bakımından filozofların karşılaştırılabileceğini söylemek mümkün olabilir. Bu açıdan bu çalışma Batı Felsefesi tarihinde önemli değişimler yaratan Platon ve Descartes'in ontoloji ile epistemoloji arasında kurdukları farklı ve benzer ilişkileri ve epistemolojik çözümlmelerini konu edinmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Platon, Descartes, epistemoloji, ontoloji, hakikat, psykhe, zihin/ruh-beden düalizmi.

