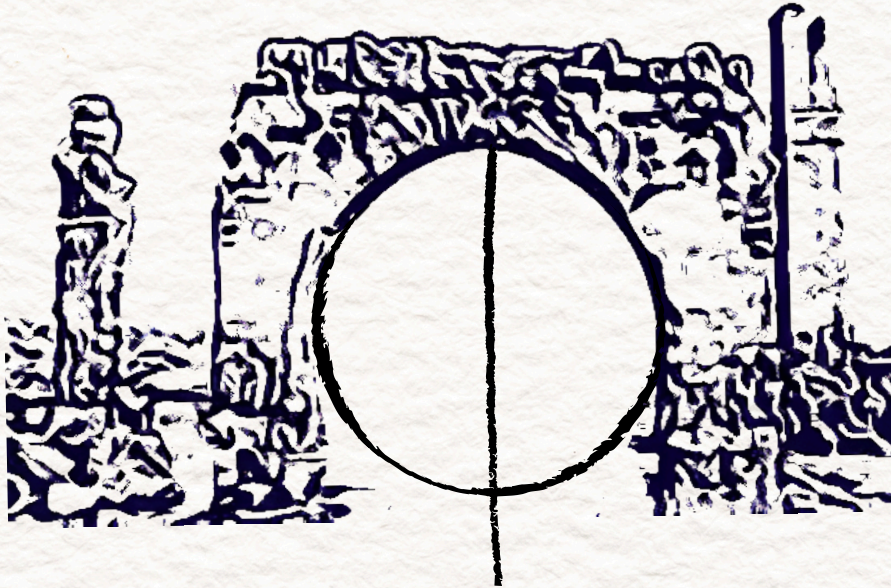


Mebadi

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

ULUSLARARASI FELSEFE DERGİSİ



Mebadi International Journal of Philosophy

ISSN: 3023-8994

Volume: 2 Issue: 2 Year: 2025 / Cilt: 2 Sayı: 2 Yıl: 2025

Product Information / Ürün Bilgisi

Mebadi embraces a philosophical approach that blends the classical with the contemporary, thereby integrating the practical into a unified theoretical framework. Recognizing the inherently multidimensional and interdisciplinary nature of philosophy, Mebadi prioritizes original academic and scientific contributions that either build upon or aim to establish robust theoretical foundations, without overlooking philosophy's universal scope in content and themes. The journal welcomes complementary works such as translations, book reviews, interviews, critiques, letters to the editor, case studies, and similar submissions that align with its intellectual vision.

Mebadi, klasik olanın yanı sıra güncelin, dolayısıyla da pratik olanın birlikte harmanlandığı teorik bir zemin arayışını felsefi bir tavır olarak benimser. Felsefi etkinliğin, doğası gereği çok boyutlu ve çok disiplinli olduğunu kabul eden Mebadi, bu çerçevede felsefenin hem muhteva hem de iliştiği konular itibarıyla tümel bir niteliği olduğunu göz ardı etmeksizin teorik bir zemine yaslanan veya teorik bir zemin inşa edilmeyi amaçlayan özgün, akademik/bilimsel çalışmalara öncelik vermeyi hedeflemektedir. Ayrıca sunulan çerçeveye uygun olan çeviri, kitap tanıtımı, söyleşi, eleştiri, editöre mektup (not), vakıa takdimi vb. çalışmalara da yer verilmektedir.

Publisher / Yayıncı

Prof. Dr. Emin Çelebi

Language / Yayın Dili

Turkish-English / Türkçe-İngilizce

Date of Publication / Yayımlanma Tarihi

31/12/2025

Frequency / Yayımlanma Aralığı

Published Biannually (June-December) / Yılda İki Kez (Haziran-Aralık) Yayınlanır

Editor in Chief / Baş Editör

Dr. Emin Çelebi

İnönü University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences /
İnönü Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi

Issue Editor / Sayı Editörü

Dr. Abdurrazak Gültekin, İnönü University, Faculty of Theology /
İnönü Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi

Editors / Editörler

Dr. Abdurrazak Gültekin, İnönü University, Faculty of Theology /
İnönü Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi

Dr. Recep Erkmen, Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University, Faculty of Theology /
Erzincan Binali Yıldırım Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi

Dr. Ömer Fatih Tekin, Kastamonu University, Faculty of Humanities and
Social Sciences / Kastamonu Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi

Dr. Osman Gazi Birgül, Manisa Celal Bayar University, Faculty of Humanities and
Social Sciences / Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri
Fakültesi

Sercan Palavan, Ankara University, Faculty of Languages and History-Geography /
Ankara Üniversitesi, Dil Ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi

Editorial Secretariat / Editöryal Sekreteryä

Olgay Fidan, İnönü University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences /
İnönü Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi

Türkçe Dil Editörü / Turkish Language Editor

Dr. Ömer Duyan, İnönü University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences /
İnönü Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi

İngilizce Dil Editörleri / English Language Editors

Dr. Birdal Akar, İnönü University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences /
İnönü Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi

Dr. Osman Gazi Birgül, Manisa Celal Bayar University, Faculty
of Humanities and Social Sciences / Manisa Celal Bayar
Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi

Advisory Board / Danışma Kurulu

Dr. Adnan Gürsoy
Dr. Ahmet Ayhan Çitil
Dr. Ali Taşkın
Dr. Ali Utku
Dr. Aylin Çankaya
Dr. Berfin Kart Tepe
Dr. Birdal Akar
Dr. Carl Pearson
Dr. Celal Türer
Dr. Cengiz Çakmak
Dr. Çiğdem Yıldızdöken
Dr. Esra Çağrı Mutlu
Dr. Ferdi Selim
Dr. Gamze Keskin Yurdakurban
Dr. Güncel Önköl
Dr. Gülümser Durhan
Dr. Hasan Bülent Gözkan
Dr. Hasan Çiçek
Dr. Hüseyin Sarıoğlu
Dr. James Edmond Carr Griffith
Dr. John Walbridge
Dr. Josef Majernik
Dr. Lev Lamberov
Dr. M. Nesim Doru
Dr. Majid D. Beni
Dr. Mehmet Bülent Sönmez
Dr. Mehmet Önal
Dr. Musa Azak
Dr. Mustafa Çevik
Dr. Nurten Öztanrıkulu Özel
Dr. Ömer Bozkurt
Dr. Özgüç Güven
Dr. Sadık Erol Er
Dr. Şahabettin Yalçın
Dr. Ümit Kartal
Dr. Yakup Yıldız
Dr. Yunus Cengiz
Dr. Zeynep Müntehe Kot

Kocaeli Üniversitesi
İstanbul 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi
Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi
Atatürk Üniversitesi
Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi
Aydın Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi
İnönü Üniversitesi
Indiana University
Ankara Üniversitesi
İstanbul Üniversitesi
İnönü Üniversitesi
Burdur Mehmet Akif Üniversitesi
Sivas Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi
Kırklareli Üniversitesi
Maltepe Üniversitesi
Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi
Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi
Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi
Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi
Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi
Indiana University
Slovak Academy of Sciences
Ural Federal Üniversitesi
Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi
Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi
İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi
İnönü Üniversitesi
Kırşehir Ahi Evran Üniversitesi
Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi
Dicle Üniversitesi
Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi
İstanbul Üniversitesi
Çukurova Üniversitesi
Aydın Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi
Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi
İnönü Üniversitesi
Mardin Artuklu Üniversitesi
İstanbul Üniversitesi

Contents / İçindekiler

The Secret of Hegel's System: The Concrete Universal in Perspective **Hegel'in Sisteminin Sırrı: Somut Tümelin Perspektifi**

S. Shehzad Noor & Samina Afridi.....1-28

Is it Possible to Understand John Rawls's *Theory of Justice* Independently of Kantian Moral Foundations?

**John Rawls'un Adalet Teorisini Kantçı Ahlaki Açıdan Temellerden Bağımsız Olarak Anlamak
Mümkün müdür?**

Tuba İlhan Dalar.....29-53

A Meticulous Evaluation: Can We Really Think of Melayê Cizîrî as a Philosopher? **Titiz Bir Değerlendirme: Melayê Cizîrî'yi Gerçekten Bir Filozof Olarak Düşünebilir miyiz?**

Merve Arslan.....54-67

The Femininity of Truth in Derrida's Spurs **Derrida'nın Mahmuzlar'ında Hakikatin Dişillliği**

Canan Süslü.....68-83

A Critical Study of Quentin Meillassoux's Resolution of Hume's Problem **Quentin Meillassoux'un Hume Problemi Çözümlemesi Üzerine Eleştirel Bir İnceleme**

Emin Çelebi & Mahmut Günel.....84-95

The Meaning of The Family: A Metaphysical and Metabiological Analysis **Ailenin Anlamı: Metafizik ve Metabiyolojik Bir Analiz**

Mustafa Çevik.....96-109

***The State of Reason: A Theory of Virtuous Society and Rational Politics* by Mustafa Çevik** **(Book Review)**

Mustafa Çevik'in Akıl Devleti: Erdemli Toplum ve Makul Siyaset Teorisi
(Kitap İncelemesi)

Nilüfer Karadağ.....110-117

The Secret of Hegel's System: The Concrete Universal in Perspective

Hegel'in Sisteminin Sırrı: Somut Tümelin Perspektifi

S. Shehzad Noor

Lecturer, University of Peshawar/Department of Philosophy, shehzadnoor83@gmail.com,
ORCID: 0009-0002-5085-5747

Samina Afridi

Dr., University of Peshawar/Department of Philosophy,
ORCID: 0009-0004-0156-1667

Article Information

Article Type

Research Article

Date Received

28.05.2025

Date Accepted

22.10.2025

Date Published

31 December 2025

Plagiarism Checks: Yes, Turnitin.

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.
(S. Shehzad Noor & Dr. Samina)

Conflicts of Interest: The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.

Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

Makale Bilgisi

Makale Türü

Araştırma Makalesi

Geliş Tarihi

28.05.2025

Kabul Tarihi

22.10.2025

Yayın Tarihi

31 Aralık 2025

Benzerlik Taraması: Evet, Turnitin.

Etik Beyan

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.
(S. Shehzad Noor & Dr. Samina)

Çıkar Çatışması: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır.



Cite As | Atıf

Noor, S. Shehzad & Afridi, Samina (2025). The Secret of Hegel's System: The Concrete Universal in Perspective. *Mebadi International Journal of Philosophy*, (2) 2, 1-28.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18080515>

Abstract

Questions concerning the philosophical study of universals include: Is a universal a thing or not? Does it exist separately from our minds and the world of daily experience? Is it abstract or concrete? And is knowledge of the universal even possible? Understanding universals enable human thought and language grasp the world they live in. For this reason, philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Kant, to name a few, have explored the existence, nature and function of universals. Considered indispensable, their knowledge is the very key to figuring out each philosopher's system. For example, Plato's separate world of universals, Aristotle's participating universals within the apparent world as well as Kant's universals, the mental categories of human knowledge and the unknown world of the thing-in-itself. This article aims to situate Hegel's own view in dialogue with these earlier thinkers, in order to arrive at the analysis of the *concrete universal*. By doing so, it reveals the central key to Hegel's philosophical system—one in which the universal is not static or abstract, but a singular, living and immanent reality that comes to know itself through the particulars it composes and contains.

Keywords: Universal, Abstract, Concrete, Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel

Öz

Tümellerin felsefi analizine ilişkin başlıca sorular şöyledir: Bir tümel şey midir, yoksa değil midir? Zihnimizden ve gündelik deneyim dünyasından bağımsız olarak var mıdır? Soyut mudur, yoksa somut mu? Ve tümele ilişkin bilgi mümkün müdür? Tümelleri anlamak, insan düşüncesinin ve dilinin yaşadığı dünyayı kavrayabilmesini sağlar. Bu nedenle, yalnızca birkaçını anmak gerekirse, Platon, Aristoteles ve Kant gibi filozoflar, tümellerin varlığını, doğasını ve işlevini incelemişlerdir. Vazgeçilmez kabul edilen tümellere ilişkin bilgi, her bir filozofun sistemini çözümlemenin anahtarıdır. Örneğin Platon'un ayrı bir dünyada yer alan tümelleri, Aristoteles'in görünür dünya içinde paylaşılan tümellerin ve Kant'ın insan bilgisinin zihinsel kategorileri ile kendinde-şeyin bilinemez dünyasındaki tümelleri için durum böyledir. Bu makale, somut tümelin çözümlemesine ulaşmak amacıyla, Hegel'in kendi görüşünü kendinden önceki düşünürlerle diyalog içinde konumlandırmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu, Hegel'in felsefi sisteminin merkezi anahtarını açığa çıkarır: Bu sistemde tümel, durağan ya da soyut değil; kendisini oluşturan ve içerdği tikeller aracılığıyla kendini bilen, tekil, canlı ve içkin bir gerçekliktir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tümel, Soyut, Somut, Platon, Aristoteles, Kant, Hegel

1. Introduction

Revealing straightforwardly the idea of the *concrete universal* diminishes its importance for understanding Hegel's philosophical system. First, it helps to get clear on terms like universal, particular, individual, 'abstract, and concrete. That's because today, people often mix them up—thinking that universals are always abstract and particulars, concrete. Such clarity overcomes the conceptual difficulty in describing what a *concrete universal* is. Secondly, to compare how the above concepts are understood in the philosophical systems of Plato, Aristotle, and Kant—especially in contrast to Hegel—makes it hard to define what a concrete universal really is. Unlike the conceptual difficulty, this one shows how each philosopher's unique understanding of these concepts shapes their entire system of thought. Therefore, description of *concrete universal* requires (a) familiarization with concepts mentioned above (b) familiarization of those concepts within (selected few) acclaimed philosophical systems of Plato, Aristotle and Kant.

Beginning with our first requirement, universal, particular and individual are described for the purpose of classification as follows: an attribute is universal to the class of things that have it; the same attribute is particular in relation to any one thing of the class which has it; finally, an individual is a specific, not any one, but a specific *this or that* member of a class which is the unique instance of the universal. Furthermore, abstract and concrete are described the following way: concrete things include our experience of actual individual entities, while our mental focus on certain attributes of concrete things are abstractions—a particular attribute is abstracted from one individual and a universal one is abstracted from many (Milne 1962, 16-17). Our modern worldview is based on *abstract universals* (linking the universal with the abstract) exemplified through scientific laws or laws of nature that are universally certain and correct. We arrive at them by abstracting general truths from observations of concrete events and/or circumstances. Thus, scientific laws are a universal relation, abstracted by us as facts from a class of concrete events and/or circumstances (Milne 1962, 20-21).

Moving to our second requirement, we first seek the ancient world's assistance, especially that of Greek Philosophers, Plato and Aristotle.

Socrates, unconcerned with the world of nature, sought universals in ethics to arrive at a fixed definition about the human subject. Plato, unlike his teacher was not restricted to the ethics of man but had a view towards the to-

tality of things, sought to define universals in-themselves, since particulars could not be defined as they were always in a state of continuous change (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. I 6, 987b); (Lawson-Tancred 1998, 23).

Description of Plato's philosophy is as follows: Sense is appearance/particular and reason, reality/ universal. Appearance (copies) and reality (universals) both have their own separate existences. Universals exist, genuinely as reality, and as copies of reality is appearance. Universal's genuine existence is obviously separate from the copy, because, if their existence was not separate, why would there be a genuine and a copy in the first place. Within the genuine-copy relation, the genuine is free and influences the copy that is dependent.

Aristotle disagreed with Plato regarding the separate existence of universals that gives us a genuine-copy relation between universals and particulars.

Aristotle's philosophy was similar: Sense is appearance/particular and reason, reality/ universal. There is only one existence due to participation of reality within appearance. Reality (universal) is a one common feature present in many appearances and appearances are many having (at least) one common reality (universal).

Thing-activity identity relation is complete existence. From one perspective, the common universal is the activity of the particular thing (appearance), for example, something shines, shining is the activity of that thing, and exists identical to it. From another perspective, the particular thing possesses an activity (a common universal), for example, something has shiny activity, and exists identical to it.

Activity is the reason (why) a thing (the what) exists. Entelechy is an activity, the one common universal that all appearances have i.e. potentiality to actuality movement. Why all appearances comes to light and are visible (explicit) is due to the reality commonly hidden within (implicit) i.e. entelechy as activity. All potentials that actualize (due to entelechy as activity within appearances) are dependent on a purely actual activity i.e. thought thinking thought or contemplation as activity, which is free. Doesn't this mean that appearances have two universals (activities), entelechy and contemplation? Yes, but it is contemplation (pure actuality) that influences entelechy (potential to actual movement) which is common to all appearances.

Ancient Greek philosophy contributes a significant advance in human knowledge: Plato's genuine-copy relation between the separate world of universals and particulars along with Aristotle's contemplation-entelechy activity as the universals which participate within the world of particular things. Transitioning from Ancient to Modern philosophy, the philosopher was tasked to set

limits to the human mind's capacity for knowledge; accordingly, universals obtain an epistemic nature too. Thus, Kant's philosophy reflects on two kinds of universals: one which constructs human mind's knowledge and the other, unknowable yet existing in its own right.

Human knowledge is limited to the world of appearance. Epistemically, intellectual universals, i.e. the categories of understanding, rather than sensory universals (redness, hardness and so on) frame the world of appearance. These categories (universals) are a mental framework within all human subjectivity that impose themselves on the world as it appears to us in experience. Apart from these categories, another universal exists i.e. the thing-in-itself, which stands for what is beyond the epistemic limit of the human mind.

Finally, upon fulfilling both requirements, we are now able to draw out from Hegel's Philosophical system, the idea of *concrete universal*:

Universal(s) must exist, they exist as categories. The categories (universals) are not in the human mind but in the mind of the Absolute Spirit.

Only the world of appearance exists. The world of appearance is the natural manifestation of the totality of all categories present in the mind of the Absolute Spirit.

Activity of the Absolute Spirit is self-contemplation during which it creates the whole world of appearance which constitutes its own self. Absolute Spirit and the world of appearance are identical, having a hierarchal structure of moments or stages. The movement from the lower to higher moments or stages in that structure is based on entelechy i.e. potentiality to actuality movement. Pure actuality or the moment of the completion of self-contemplation arrives when it knows what it has made is what it is made out of.

A Hegelian philosopher achieves Absolute Knowledge when he/she *finds out* the identity of the Absolute Spirit - world of appearance as well as its constitution as an organism and its rational activity as an act of self-composition. Absolute Knowledge of the Hegelian Philosopher, the world of appearance and the Absolute Spirit's activity taken altogether describe what a *concrete universal* is. Therefore, concrete universal is defined as: The world of appearance is both intellectually known (because it is universal) and sensuously known (because it is concrete) by the Hegelian philosopher as a special moment within it and by the Absolute Spirit as its own self.

Strictly following the outline presented in the introduction, this article shall be divided into three sections. The first section shall elaborate the concepts necessary to understand a philosophical system. These concepts include universal, particular, individual, abstract, concrete, in-itself and for-itself. The se-

cond section shall describe, with special emphasis on universals, the philosophical systems of (a select few philosophers) Plato, Aristotle and Kant. Consequently, the description aids in the comparison of Hegel's position, based on his acceptance or rejection of their views, regarding universals. Finally, the third section focuses on Hegel's philosophical system which includes the relation between Being - Absolute Idea - Absolute Spirit, the Principles (a) identity of concept and existence (b) identity in difference, and the Hegelian judgment, the real is rational, in order to draw out from it what a *concrete universal* is. Remarkably, the way the article is prepared and the sections specified exemplify a *concrete universal* as well.

2. Conceptual Groundwork

This section shall elaborate concepts such as universal, particular, individual, abstract, concrete, in-itself and for-itself that are necessary to understand all philosophical systems.

What is a universal? A universal exists within all the constituents of a collection of things—they are the qualities or characteristics that apply to multiple instances like the property of being a human being, an animal or a tree. Apart from that universals also include ideas like justice, beauty, goodness and the rest (Bunnin and Yu 2004, 715); (Taliaferro and Marty 2010, 234-235).

What is a particular? A particular refers to things that are not whole in themselves; instead they are parts or a partial portion of a whole. A particular has qualities or characteristics (universals), for example French revolution in history, John in human beings, apples in fruits. All of these examples are distinct, one of a kind illustration of particulars (Bunnin and Yu 2004, 505).

We can only imagine what language and thought would be like if our world was made up of only particular things and each particular was unique, one of its kind in all its attributes. Right now, as our situation is, it is impossible to speak and think without marking things together based on similarities and dividing them into types (Wardman and Creed 1963, 37).

What is an individual? An individual is contrasted against both universal and particular, in order to be passed on its own. On the one hand, it means something indivisible, a whole cannot be divided into its parts without losing the nature of the whole, in this sense, it is similar to universals, and on the other hand, it means something that can neither be predicated nor instantiated of anything else, in this sense, it is similar to particulars. However, on its own, an individual is something uniquely distinct in regards to its space-time occurrence and is pointed at with the prefix of *this-ness* or *that-ness* (Magee 2010,

340-341). Therefore, contrasted against both universal and particular, the individual is taken as a non-predicated, non-instantiated, indivisible 'One' and in the sense being passed on its own, 'One' this or that individual is pointed towards as it occurs at a distinct space and time.

Differentiate between abstract and concrete? Abstract, in Latin, means "to remove something from something else" and concrete means "to grow together" (Bunnin and Yu 2004, 3). Something concrete is considered to be detailed, colorful and independent; the abstract lacks the qualities of concrete objects and is considered vague, lifeless and dependent. Something is abstract, if it is the result of the process of abstraction, where a common feature is drawn out from various concrete objects, for example an abstract bachelor has the property common to all bachelors, moreover, that common feature is labeled as a universal (Bunnin and Yu 2004, 3-4). For that reason, ordinary people consider objects to be concrete and concepts to be abstract.

What is in-itself and for-itself? Distinguishing in-itself from for-itself is the same as distinguishing between potential and actual or something inherent or intrinsic against something external or extrinsic but for its own sake. For example, a seed potentially has a tree-that-bears-fruit in-itself, instead of for-itself, unless it's fruit-bearing state is actualized. In-and-for-itself is a unified condition where a thing is at-home-with-itself. It is the synthesis of the state of being in-itself and for-itself. In ordinary language, these concepts would be used in the following manner: some human beings are in-itself hearty (energetic) whose heart, sometimes, wills or wants something, anything for-itself, therefore, being at-home-with-himself, a hearty person sets his heart upon something (Bunnin and Yu 2004, 354-355). A second iteration, one ought to study philosophy for-itself and should always remember that Hegel's philosophy is difficult in-itself, therefore, given its difficulty, Hegelian philosophers still pursue it in-and-for itself.

3. Plato, Aristotle, and Kant on Universals

This section shall describe, with special emphasis on universals, the philosophical systems of select few philosophers.

What are Plato's views on universals? Plato introduced the existence of universal into philosophy. While sorting things out, the things which are the same in respect to certain properties are grouped together. If a number of things have the same color which groups all of them together, then that color is, therefore, a universal (Kim, Sosa and Rosenkrantz 2009, 611-613).

First and foremost, Plato divides philosophy into the intelligible and perceptible worlds—this distinction is drawn from Parmenides and Heraclitus, respectively. The former is the eternal world of unchanging ideas while the latter is the empirical world of change. Plato considers the intelligible world, where forms (universals) exist objectively, superior to the perceptible one (Kenny 2004, 205). The separation of the universal is necessary, for the Platonic view, since knowledge is only possible of entities with permanence, free of change. In his work *Republic*, the analogy of the sun is used to show the separation between the universal and the particular (Prior 1985, 34, 36).

After making separation perceptible, Plato uses the metaphor of copying or resemblance to show that the universals are transcendent. In his work, *Phaedo*, Plato puts across the relation between the universal, “equality”, against its copy, the particular things which are equal. The universal “equal” is not identical to the particular things that seem equal, but it is the observation of particular equals that you and I have got the idea of “equality”. Particulars desire or endeavor to be like the universal but always “fall short” and are “inferior” to them (because they are just a defective copy) (Prior 1985, 38-39); (Plato, *Phaedo*. 74a10-75b5); (Gallop 2002, 21-23).

The analogy of the sun and the metaphor of copying, demonstrate that the (Parmenides-Heraclitus) being-becoming distinction exists as the separate worlds of universals and particulars (Prior 1985, 44). To drill this point home, Plato's work, *Cratylus*, describes that there must be a difference between an original universal and its copy (the particular), they both cannot be identical or else the copy cannot be deemed defective. Plato contrasts the creation of a painter with that of a God, if a painter makes a portrait of a person and a god creates a biological clone of the same person, would there be two persons or a person and a portrait of a person? In the case of God's creation there would be two persons, but in the painter's case, there would be a real person and a representation of the person, a defective copy. God's creation would share all the qualities of the said person but the painter's representation, having the correct color and shape, would lack certain qualities like warmth and wisdom (Prior 1985, 36); (Plato, *Cratylus*. 432b-c); (Reeve 1998, 148).

What are Aristotle's views on universals? Aristotle describes Plato's concept of universals in book Alpha 6 of *Metaphysics*. He describes that Plato was well aware of the thoughts of Cratylus and Heraclitus regarding sensible things, which are in a state of continuous change and this makes it impossible to have knowledge of those sensible things (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. I 6, 987a); (Lawson-Tancred 1998, 23). For Plato, the universals exist in a supersensible world of their own; a table in that world does not decay or change, but in the world of particulars not only can we make this or that table but we can also destroy it or

it may wear-down over time with use. Thus, many particulars were all dependent upon independently existing forms (universal) for their existence and characteristics. Aristotle finds the idea that particulars are copies of independent universals problematic: if the particulars are copies of the universals, then an extra universal is required to explain the relation between the group of particulars and the first universal and this requirement of an extra universal continues on till infinity. Aristotle calls this the third man argument (Wardman and Creed 1963, 37).

Aristotle's forms (universals) are not separate; any universal is an attribute of an actual individual. Health and goodness are universals, but actual health is always someone's health i.e. this healthy man, and actual goodness is the goodness of something, i.e. this good cat (Kenny 2004, 217). Even if universals were separable from particular individuals, it was only so in thought, they are inseparable in fact (Wardman and Creed 1963, 30). In the statement "Socrates is a human", what is the signification of the word human? In the Platonic view, it stands for "Humanity", a universal that is separate and independent of Socrates. For Aristotle, the word "human" does not signify something distinct from Socrates himself, "to be Socrates is to be human" and if Socrates is no longer human, then he no longer exists. Human beings do not receive the universal attribute of "human" from an Ideal, but rather from their parents (Kenny 2004, 220-221). For Aristotle, no universal can exist apart from its particular instance, this means, universal do not exist by themselves, there is no such thing as a universal man; man begets man universally, your particular father gave birth to you and Peleus to Achilles (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. XI 5, 1071a); (Lawson-Tancred 1998, 366).

Distinguishing logically, a universal is predicated¹ of various things, while a particular is not, man is an example of a universal that is predicated of both John or James, that is, John is a man or James is a man, while each person is a particular individual which cannot be predicated of anything, that is, warm is a John and loud is a James (Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*. Ch.7, 17a38); (Ackrill 2002, 47). Additionally, a universal is the attribute that belongs to and/or is predicated of all particular instances of a thing, for example "point" and "straight" are universals that belong to and/or is predicated of every (particular) line that exists (Wardman and Creed 1963, 166). Particular individual things exist independently, to know something about them is to know the universal that applies not only to that particular thing but to others of the same kind (Wardman and Creed 1963, 136). Conversely, if a person possesses the

¹ Predicate means the information that tells us something about the subject, for example, John is white. White is the predicate in this example. This color white can be predicated of other items as well such as roses, snow, etc.

knowledge of universals, he would know something about the particulars (that have it as an attribute/predicate) also (Wardman and Creed 1963, 136,166,195). The interesting point to note about the above distinguishing account is that human perception is unable to grasp the universal in a particular by looking at one instance of it. Only after multiple instances of particular things or events have been observed, the observer will be able to look for the universal, as it is at all times and in all places the case (Wardman and Creed 1963, 199-200). Applying this late realization of the logical universal that is implicitly prior but is recognized by human perception at last on the entire world of particulars, we come to see that the universal present in the entire world of particulars is an activity called *entelechy* i.e. movement of potential to actual. This active attribute or universal, *entelechy*, makes all particulars move from a potential state (of a germ) to an actual state (of an organism). Not only is the actual what the potential *grows into*, but also the actual *grows out* of the potential. This means, the actual state of the particular is the *purpose* of the potential and always logically *present prior* to our perception of the movement from potential to actual. But now the question arises, what gives *entelechy* as an active universal its characteristic? What is it itself under the influence of? The answer is contemplation i.e. Aristotle's God. Contemplation means "thought thinking thought". It is an activity, having no trace of potential in it, a state of pure actuality. Contemplation is the active (purely actual) universal that influences *entelechy* as an active universal present in all particular things of the world making them move from a potential inert state to an actualized one.

What is Kant's view on universals? Kant argued that the human mind is a-priori structured in and fixed by categories (universals) that it impresses upon the objects of sense experience, limiting our human knowledge only to the world of appearances. But this is one side of the picture. Similar to Plato, he also believed in the existence of another world, a world of reality behind and/or beyond the world of appearance. Categories of the human mind do not impose themselves upon the objects that exist there; instead, "the thing-in-itself" (another kind of universal) fills the world of reality that exists beyond human knowledge.

If we look at an apple, we know the apple as it appears to us (due to the categories as universals) but do not know it in reality (the apple as a thing-in-itself). Thus, the following two statements became common expressions regarding Kantian epistemology: Statement 1 - "We can never experience anything except the appearance of a thing". If the categories of the human mind are imposed upon objects that we experience through our senses, then knowledge is possible but limited to the world of appearance. These categories are 12 in total, 4 groups of three: Quantity: unity, plurality, totality (what is one, many and/or all); Quality: reality, negation, limitation (what is real, not real or in part real);

Relation: substance-accident, cause-effect, agent-patient (what is/has, cause or connects); Modality: possibility-impossibility, existence-non-existence, necessity-contingency (what is possible, actual or necessary).

Statement 2 - “The thing-in-itself exists, however, its knowledge is unknown to us”. As the unknown thing-in-itself that exists but cannot be experienced by the senses and is beyond the reach of the categories of the human mind, so knowledge about reality is not possible (Stumpf 1971, 329). In conclusion, for Kant, universals both set the limit of human knowledge and also exist as an unknown thing-in-itself.

Describe the relation of the universal in Plato, Aristotle and Kant with its effects on Hegel’s philosophy? A universal and its examples (particulars) exist in two different senses. Plato, as we have already mentioned, thought universals existed in their own a realm, the universal “man” exists in a separate world of reality from the world of senses where Jake, John and James exist. Aristotle thought universals existed in the examples (particulars) as their qualities and attributes which determine their characteristics and personalities. The universal “man” exists in Jake, John and James giving them the personality and characteristics of manhood, distinguishing them from other things (Audi 1999, 368-369); (Bunnin and Yu 2004, 129). Kant’s universals are the subjective categories of the human mind, an epistemological principle of knowledge, instead of objectively existing in a metaphysical world or characteristically existing in the natural world.² These categories are non-sensuous relations that are a-priori (they exist before experience) and all human experience depends on them (Stace 1924, 60-61).

Hegel’s philosophy takes the nature of universals from Plato, Aristotle and Kant as follows: He accepts the platonic position that universals have an objective existence but rejects the platonic separation of universal and particulars. Similarly, he accepts the Aristotelian position that a universal like whiteness is meaningless without its particular instance, a white shirt or a white page but rejects viewing them from the perspective of the laws of thought of formal logic: universals are static attributes, particulars are mere carriers and their relationship is one-way—universals explain particulars, but don’t develop through them. (Kamal 1989, 13). Additionally, where Kantian universals, the categories (of understanding), are characteristics of subjective human understanding and have an epistemological nature, Hegel’s universals (categories) have an ontological nature and exist, independent of the human mind, within the mind of the Absolute Spirit. For that reason, these categories which compose

² Unlike Plato, Kant distinguishes between sensuous and non-sensuous universals.

the natural world in a dialectical way are discoverable rather than being invented (Kamal 1989, 18).

Hegel denies the existence of the ideal world of universals and the unknowable thing-in-itself, so there is no separate world of reality, the world of appearance is the only one in existence. This world of appearance is the creation of the a-priori categories of the mind, but for Hegel, we cannot point towards our human mind as the creative power, instead the inner secret of the whole universe and human history is the creative manifestation and labor of the rationality of an Absolute Spirit which acts like an Aristotelian universal present within each and every particular of it. For Kant, the categories of the human mind are the mental process that make knowledge of appearance possible, for Hegel, the categories exist independently of any human mind in an Absolute Mind which manifests itself as the world of nature, which all individual humans observe daily but only Hegel has detected its hidden presence by means of his philosophy (Stumpf 1971, 330-331). Therefore, Hegel puts forward the idea that reality has a discoverable dialectical structure that can be known, rather than believing that we have a mental structure that logically frames and knows only the appearance of reality, like Kant. In Hegel's philosophy, there is no appearance/reality distinction like the one Kant had, appearance is reality and vice versa. Since there is only one reality in front of us, it must be intelligible but hidden. As Hegelians our task is to see the internal relations between universals that are presently working in the given human and natural world of particulars and discover the nature of Absolute Mind (Spirit) in it (Ewing 1961, 61).

4. Hegel's "Concrete Universals"

This section focuses on Hegel's philosophical system which includes the relation between Being-Absolute Idea-Absolute Spirit, the Principles (a) identity of concept and existence (b) identity in difference, and the Hegelian judgment, "the real is rational", in order to draw out from it what a *concrete universal* is.

What is Hegel's philosophical system? Hegel's philosophical system taken as a whole is the Absolute Spirit, which is similar to Aristotle's God i.e. Contemplation or self-thinking thought of God. Such a being is not unknowable because its existence is the world of appearance only and its nature as well as activity can be experienced in full. Stating its existence, nature and activity altogether, the Absolute Spirit is a consciousness that is aware of itself as an object of thought, thus it is self-conscious. This self becomes conscious of the many universals (categories) that compose it and experiences itself as an all-inclusive individual of the human and natural world of particulars that it comprises (Findlay 1958, 224).

A simplified outline of Hegel's whole system Being-Absolute Idea-Absolute Spirit is as follows: Hegel's philosophical system starts with the *Science of Logic* consisting of categories only, from the emptiest of categories that is "Being" (something is what it is) it moves towards the concretely rich category of the "Absolute Idea". Absolute Idea is the 'divine governance' of the world but not in the sense of a human observing, creating and controlling something, standing apart from it. It merely exists as a category, a logical being, having a logical relation to the world, instead of a temporal one³ (Stace 1924, 29). It is a reason working *in* the world, so it journeys forward to manifest itself into the world of nature, where it is asleep, then becomes conscious in the subjective spirit of man, socially-conscious in the creation of a State, finally showing itself as the "Absolute Spirit" in philosophy, its highest conscious manifestation. Absolute Spirit's whole development from its earlier stages in the *Logic* to its final stage in (*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*) possesses only one motivation: "How can 'I' (Absolute Spirit) as an Idea come into existence and know myself?" Hegel's work *Science of Logic* treats it (the Being of the Absolute Spirit) as a category of pure thought—an Absolute Idea which exists purely in thought. By the end of Hegel's system in his work *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 'this' Idea (Absolute Spirit) exists as something philosophy can fully grasp—an object of knowledge of/for philosophy (Stace 1924, 516-517). Philosophy, henceforth answers the motivation by showing that the purpose of the world of nature and the social world is the complete realization of the mind of God in actuality—a mind which was potentially present in the category of the Absolute Idea (and before that in "Being"). Philosophy, conceived as such or by conceiving it so, is/becomes the knowledge of the Absolute Spirit which self-consciously exists.

Depicting the development afresh: Being grows into that which it *presupposed*: the Absolute Idea, which exteriorizes itself in the existence of the world of nature. At the stage of nature, Absolute Idea as Spirit was asleep, it became conscious in animals and self-conscious in human beings⁴ and through the human-beings, the Spirit becomes the Absolute Spirit and works itself out in art, religion and philosophy. It is at the stage of philosophy that the Absolute Spirit becomes self-conscious of itself as a self and comes to light as the (First Principle) underlying reason of reality that was *presupposed* all-along, contained by the categories of Being and/or Absolute Idea implicitly. In other words, as we reach philosophy, the Absolute Spirit knows itself self-consciously as the Principle of reality and the reason working within reality.

³ A temporal relation would mean that it exists before the world began and/or it creates the world at a specific moment in time.

⁴ An interesting point to note: human beings are only potentially divine, not actually so. They are distortions of the Absolute Spirit.

In the above depiction, what does it mean for the Absolute Spirit to be the First Principle? To qualify as the First principle, the Absolute Spirit must possess two qualities: It must explain its own existence—be self-explanatory, and the (natural and human) world arising out of it—its cosmic presence. Absolute Spirit as Reason fulfills both requirements, that of being a self-explanatory principle—Reason is the self-contained complete whole—as well as the necessary relation of what arises out of it—Reason is the ground from which the world arises and in it the world remains fully present. (Stace 1924, 58-59).

Reason is composed of the categories, each category works out one from another, and the many categories make up a single organic whole that is self-explanatory in the sense of the closure of a circle (the image of the circle, in this sense, is both an object and an act). Reason will start with the first category (Being) and then end up with the complete category (Absolute Idea). Afterwards, the world's existence is the exteriorization of the complete category. Advancing towards the last stage, both the category of Being [Reason as beginning, pure idea] and the world [Reason as exteriorization, appearance] is at home within the self-conscious absolute knowledge of an Absolute Spirit philosophically (Stace 1924, 83). At this point, on the one hand, Absolute Spirit (as Reason) is both the presupposition (logically prior-ness) and end-goal (completion) of Being, plus on the other hand, Being contains and grows into the final category, the Absolute Spirit. For that reason, Absolute Spirit is present at either end of the development because it is a presupposition—something contained as the beginning (the first)—and the end-goal—that into which something grows at last. Absolute Spirit is a self-explained First Principle⁵ due to its epistemologically circular nature (Stace 1924, 111). This circle can also be imagined to be a ladder, but you will say that the ladder has a linear start from the bottom and ends up at the top. However, here is the trick to see the ladder as a circle: “The same ladder that is a way upwards is a way downwards”. If we reverse the process of the beginning, reason becomes its own reason, a self-enclosed circle comes to view where the end retrospectively justifies the beginning and the beginning anticipates the end—the self-explanation of the First principle in its self-determination is discovered⁶. Neither a-prior reason nor a reason external to itself can be asked of this First Principle, hence, it is self-explanatory (Stace 1924, 112-113). The *Logic* is based on this very standpoint—the end is a purpose or goal that retrospectively grounds the beginning. In the case of the beginning moving towards its rational goal, the concrete category, Absolute Idea,

⁵ Self-explained First Principle means that it is the inner echo of reason becoming aware of itself as ground.

⁶ It is not Hegel who describes his explanation; rather it is the outside world of Hegel that has this description as a secret which needs to be found.

is the completion of the abstract category, Being. However, in the case of explaining the beginning, the concrete category, Absolute Idea, is the presupposition of the abstract category, Being. Absolute Idea is the purpose of Being that has true explanatory power of it. The end is what gives sense to how *it* began and explains why the beginning culminates at *that* end. An architecture of the system of categories (Being to Absolute Idea) assembles henceforth, where higher categories surface out from and support lower ones: As a seed grows into a tree, and at the same time, the tree grows out of a seed, so, Being is implicitly Becoming and Becoming is explicitly Being, and in a reverse sense, Becoming is hidden in Being and Being is visible in Becoming (Stace 1924, 108). Without Becoming (that which Being grows into and which it explains), there is no Being (that which Becoming grows out of to explain). Similarly, without Absolute Idea, there is neither Becoming nor Being. Although the complete and final category, i.e. Absolute Idea, comes later, it is present as the logical first which is presupposed by Being and all previous categories (Stace 1924, 110).

Clarifying the above account further necessitates an explanation regarding the essentiality of the system of categories (Being to Absolute Idea) in the *Logic* for the intelligibility of both world and subject: Consciousness has a delayed awareness of universals (categories), it lags behind them and discovers what was logically prior at last. Psychologically speaking, a person is conscious of a particular prior to a universal. Only after we have seen one tree, car or book do we grasp the universal, “oneness”. However, categories as real universals are logically prior to sense-experience of particulars, because what is known to us at last, psychologically, is logically the first, and what is known to us first psychologically is in reality, the last thing. As children learn a fact before knowing the reason for it, so, consciousness of the universal “oneness” comes later yet it was present in all the particulars we saw daily, for example one tree, car or book. The perception of these particulars is impossible without categories as real universals upon which they depend (Stace 1924, 67). Imagine a world with no birds in it; now try to imagine a world about which nothing can be affirmed or denied or without one-and-many relation. Is it not obvious that the first of the two is conceivable and the second one not so? As a result, the categories mentioned in *Logic* are non-sensuous and a-prior universals which exist objectively prior to both the inner and outer human world. Existence of this hidden system of universals (categories) in *Logic* makes us realize that it is possible to imagine a world without sensuous universals like redness, circle-ness, chair-ness. Yet it is impossible to imagine a world with non-sensuous universals like unity, existence, negation, contradiction (Stace 1924, 62-63). To reiterate, the categories as real universals are a precondition for the intelligibility of both the world and the subjective mind that knows it, though the subjective mind comes

to see the logical priority of these categories later (Stace 1924, 68). Can we separate the categories as real universals from the world or the subjective mind? No, these pure universals cannot exist apart from both the external world and the subjective mind; however, they are only conceptually separable (as abstractions) from them as a system because they are logically prior to them. In this sense, we may conceptually separate a seed from a tree but not existentially so. Analogically, the system of categories is the (hidden, logical, and necessary) seed from which the world-tree (visible and sensuous) grows out of.

The next inquiry into Hegel's philosophical system is: why does the human and natural world of particulars exist out of real categories (universals)? Principle of "identity of concept and existence" makes it possible for the human and natural world of particulars to exist out of real categories. The concept side (categories in *Logic*) and the existence side (the human and natural world of particulars) are related to each other in identity. The former represents the conceptual structure while the latter embodies it as its existence which altogether expresses what the Absolute Spirit⁷ is: the concept thinking itself into existence because the concept-in-existence (representation of the human and natural world of particulars as categories in *Logic*) is the existence of the concept (embodiment of the categories in *Logic* as the human and natural world of particulars). Simply, as the particulars are not different from the categories that are the condition of their existence, out of which the particulars are made, and apart from them there is no unknowable thing-in-itself, so by means of the above principle Absolute Spirit may be identified in the following manner: "the concept (Absolute Spirit) is not only in existence but is itself what comes to exist" and/or "the concept that exists is existence (Absolute Spirit) that is conceptually structured". (Stace 1924, 71-73) Absolute Spirit is conceptually 'what' exists (as First principle) and conceptualizes its own existence (as cosmic presence)—categories in *Logic* conceptually compose (make/structure) the existence of the human and natural world of particulars they are constituted by, with no hidden remainder (unknowable thing-in-itself).

What is the nature of the Absolute Spirit in Hegel's philosophy? Principle of "identity-in-difference" permeates itself at this point representing the Absolute Spirit, on the one hand, as an organism (a unity of the parts of a whole), and on the other hand, as an individual achievement of rationality (Milne 1962, 185). Although, the nature of former representation is empirical and the latter,

⁷ As I understand it, Absolute Spirit as self-knowing Reason both makes and is made by the categories plus the natural human world of particulars. That is, the categories (universals) in *Logic* come to exist only through their manifestation in natural and human life, while at the same time these manifestations are themselves intelligible only through the conceptual structure provided by the categories. This reciprocal constitution is what I understand by the identity of concept and existence.

rational, yet it is the same principle which unites in the former case and underlies the latter one.

The Principle of “identity-in-difference”, as the unifying nature of the Absolute Spirit, presents a whole with many internally related parts like that of an organism. Every part depends and determines the nature and activity of the other parts, all connected from within to make a whole that includes them all. This organism is a rational agent, a centre from which rational activities originate. Simply put, it acts by thinking. It is the self-conscious permanent unity of all its activities and each activity is its short-lived moment or limited expression. Its self is continuously being made—it recognizes that it is being realized through its activities. Simply put, it becomes who it is (a rational agent) by what it does (rational activities), and it knows this (self-conscious about agent-activity unity). (Milne 1962, 28-29).

The Principle of “identity-in-difference”—the underlying nature of the Absolute Spirit—exists as the inner logic constructing the outer structure where the practice takes place. As the structural schema only, the inner logic creates change from the lower to a higher level of rationality: Logic \rightarrow Nature \rightarrow Spirit \rightarrow Absolute Spirit. This change appears mechanical and/or naturalistic (if self-consciousness is subtracted from it, which gives it a self-developing characteristic). The structure of rationality, changing from a lower to a higher level, comprises of moments that differ in kind and degree at each level. Each level is a distinguishable moment of rationality having its own particular point of view. Each higher level happens to be a more adequate moment of rationality than the one lower to it (Milne 1962, 38-39). To illustrate this, imagine Absolute Spirit like a seed (organism) underground. Hidden within the seed is the potential to be a tree. The seed grows into a tree having different parts—roots, trunk, branches and leaves. The seed becomes more of itself, and at the same time, the tree doesn’t lose what it is by growing. Here we see that “Identity-in-difference” is actively depicting the change from Logic \rightarrow Nature. Advancing further and depicting the change from Nature \rightarrow Spirit, the tree starts to have reflective self-consciousness—the ability to think about oneself as experiencing something, for example “I’m alive, I’m growing, and I understand what I am.” Its trunk is not just trunk—it feels itself. Its branches don’t just move—they know they’re reaching. We see “Identity-in-difference” working as follows: It remains the same tree, yet it starts to reflect on what it is and now it’s aware that it’s not just wood. At last depicting the change from Spirit \rightarrow Absolute Spirit, the whole tree (organism) realizes that it doesn’t try to stay the same by avoiding change. It identifies with who it truly is by becoming different. Logic \rightarrow Nature \rightarrow Spirit were different levels of its individual identity. At the highest level of rationality, Absolute Spirit attains self-knowledge. The tree is aware that the object it knows, starting at the lower levels till this moment, is itself. The tree is not just

saying, “I am,” but “I am’ and I know I am” or “I exist,” but, “I exist *through* everything I’ve become, and I *know* that.” It has reached the highest individual achievement of its *own* rationality. So, what is so special about this level? Knowledge now appears as a unity of two distinct but related statements: first, Absolute Spirit is itself the subject of rational self-creation; second, the very inner logic (identity-in-difference) becomes aware of itself. Absolute Spirit is the level when identity-in-difference is not just working but self-knowing; it knows that it doesn’t just propel the change in the schema but is present throughout. It is no longer just a structural principle working behind the scenes; it becomes the self-conscious truth of the whole—a unity-embracing-transformation. That’s why Absolute Spirit is not just the end of the development, but its meaning. What does the “self-conscious truth of the whole” mean? Absolute Spirit is an individual organism that internalizes its own development—from abstract logic to self-knowledge—through the principle of identity-in-difference. The schema—Logic → Nature → Spirit → Absolute Spirit—is the necessary self-realization of rationality from within, achieved through the self-originating activity of Absolute Spirit as an individual subject. If we focus on the “work-side” of rational activity, it is self-maintenance: an activity carried out by the principle of identity-in-difference in order to maintain the structured development of reality itself across the schema. However, the way of life of the Absolute Spirit is something more than mere structural self-maintenance; there must be something worth maintaining one’s self for. Thus, if we focus on the “psyche-side” of rational activity, it is self-conscious knowledge: an activity carried out by the Absolute Spirit of grasping its existence as an all-inclusive organic whole. In this act, the principle of identity-in-difference no longer just works—it knows itself as the very ground and truth of reality (Milne 1962, 40). Altogether, the inner logic that previously constructed the outer structure is now a self-knowing content. Absolute Spirit does not merely achieve the work of identity-in-difference; it comes to love, affirm, and recognize that work as it’s very self. Hegel would call the “work-side” *necessity*, and the “psyche-side” *freedom*. In Logic → Nature, identity-in-difference works as a mechanical necessity: Being must become Absolute Idea and manifest as Nature. In Absolute Spirit, freedom arises when the principle that was working blindly before, now is self-aware. Absolute Spirit knows identity-in-difference is not an external compulsion but an inner comprehension—it is not chained to the principle, it *is* the principle, knowing itself or self-knowing principle. In Nature → Spirit, identity-in-difference works without knowing its purpose. Nature and mankind maintain themselves without knowing why? In Absolute Spirit, freedom arises when it hits upon the point of its own self-maintenance: identity-in-difference is what was working all-along, but unconsciously, which now has come into clear awareness. Simply, Absolute Spirit now knows that it is not just doing rational activity; it is the beginning and end-goal

of the activity. The principle of identity-in-difference no longer works; it is the “explicit content” of self-knowledge. At this juncture, it is now possible to illustrate what the dictum, “The real is rational and the real is rational”, epistemologically means in Hegel’s philosophy: “work-side” and the “psyche-side”, necessity and freedom are one—“Know-thyself side”. To know-thyself, Absolute Spirit *becomes fully real by knowing itself as its own process*. “One” becomes fully what it is, only by knowing that it is. *In another way*, “Know-thyself side” means “work-side” and the “psyche-side” are one. In short, Work is the self that observes it. It demands that the schema—and Absolute Spirit and the Hegelian philosopher thinking it—live out its meaning: Absolute Spirit—an organic whole structured by identity-in-difference—creates the natural world out of itself and maintains it as its very own existence. But Absolute spirit not only self-generates and self-maintains; it is present both in nature and mankind as the purpose of their movement. It is, in this sense, self-ambitious too. The human mind, only in the form of philosophical consciousness, comes to discover and participate in Absolute Spirit’s own act of self-knowing—thus arriving at Absolute Knowledge. The Hegelian philosopher is the moment at which Absolute Spirit achieves the imperative to “Know-thyself”. The Hegelian philosopher does not merely observe the schema of Absolute Spirit, it is what the philosopher lives when he/she achieves Absolute Knowledge via the Absolute Spirit’s “Know-thyself side”. Principle of identity-in-difference is now self-knowledge in and as the activity of philosophical thought, the Absolute Knowledge of the Hegelian philosopher and the “Know-thyself side” of the Absolute Spirit. The dictum, “The real is rational and the real is rational” becomes epistemologically alive: It doesn’t just mean reality follows reason, which would be a minimal reading where Absolute Spirit and the Hegelian philosopher follow the logic of the world. Instead, reason is real because it knows itself as reality. Logic knows itself as the activity through which reality both comes into being and becomes intelligible; and in this very recognition, the Hegelian philosopher and Absolute Spirit discover that this logic is nothing other than their own self-knowing activity. Reason-knower-Reality is one.

We are now in the position to ask: what is the *concrete universal*? Abstract means “whatever is partial, incomplete, or one-sided”. For example, the principle of identity in logic is an abstract identity stated as “Something is only what it is”. Such an identity is isolation only—A is A. It is non-relational to an ‘Other’. A participates in its own existence. Principle of difference is also one-sided and abstract: “Something is not something else”. It introduces a relation of otherness—A is not B. However, the relation of difference is only external, A and B separate in existence only. Contradiction means “Something is what it is not”. There is an internal difference in identity—A is not-A. Identity is having a conflict within itself and creates difference. The relation of otherness is not external.

A is not different from something else; rather, A is differing in-itself. Abstract identity and difference help in understanding something—either there is isolation or an otherness; contradiction helps to have a reason to act because we stop clinging onto one-sided abstracts and start to experience an inner urge to be active—isolation is otherness. The very attempt to purely participate in one's own existence fails and separates that existence from within. Isolation becomes its own opposite, an otherness. Concrete universal is principle of identity-in-difference. "Something is what it is only through what it is not."—A is A only through not-A. Its motto now is "Isolation through otherness". Isolation no longer opposes the otherness within, but is realized through it. Identity at first was an abstract isolation, then it self-negates and enters into conflict with itself, finally it has become concrete through its difference by including it. Difference at first was abstract otherness, then it exists due to identity's self-negation, finally it has become concrete by being included within identity. Abstract Identity excluded difference, and abstract difference excludes identity; contradiction arises as the conflict between them. Identity-in-difference negates the exclusion, so it is inclusive and negates the conflict, so it is unified. Therefore, identity and difference has an internal relation with each other—identity contains internal differentiation, and difference is structured by an internal identity. Abstract identity excludes abstract difference and vice versa; contradiction arises as the conflict between these two moments. Identity-in-difference overcomes this by being inclusive—it negates the exclusion—and unified—it negates the conflict. This mutual mediation is what it means for identity and difference to be internally related: identity now contains internal differentiation, and difference is structured by an internal identity. Identity contains internal differentiation means Absolute Spirit, as an organism, includes moments of the schema—Logic, Nature, Spirit, Absolute Spirit—as its own difference within itself. Difference is structured by an internal identity means that the schema—Logic, Nature, Spirit, Absolute Spirit—is the individual achievement of Absolute Spirit's inner logic: the principle of identity-in-difference. In conclusion, abstract identity is the lifeless isolation of a concept, let's say, A. Abstract difference is external negation of the concept; A is no longer alone, others like B or C and many more stand over against it. Contradiction is the inner negation of the concept, a conflict within A. Concrete universal is the identity-in-difference of the concept. The concrete A, as an identity, now includes both its abstract differences (the external negations B, C, D...) within itself as parts of a whole—its nature as an organism—and contradiction (the inner negation) as conflict within itself—its inner urge to activity and self-realization. Epistemologically speaking, understanding grasps fixed concepts and separates them into distinct identities. Reason, being self-critical introduces contradiction by negating fixed identities and exposing

conflicts within them. Speculation, however, preserves both the structural intelligibility of concepts—through understanding, which fixes identity and distinguishes difference—and the internal activity of concepts—through reason, which reveals their inner-conflicts motivating them towards self-realization. Much like an organism that creates what it is composed of, understanding gives it form, reason life (the inner urge to be active), and speculation, the living form of truth—an organism evolving from within, guided by its own inner necessity. Conceptually speaking, Understanding relates the universal and particular abstractly. The universal is a category, for example, animal. Particulars are an example of the universal, for example, this animal drawn here. Understanding is just classification: it is a lifeless container holding things that do not belong to each other by inner necessity. Reason necessitates break down in the relationship, universal and particular contradict each other. Universal fails to grasp the full reality of particular and the particular refuses to submit to the abstract form of the universal. For example, all people should follow reason, but particular individuals act from desire, emotion or faith. These particulars break the universal exposing a contradiction within it. Speculation realizes the universal through the particular. Particulars contain the inner necessity of the universal within it and the universal manifests this necessity through making its particulars. The universal comprises of a number of particulars and this universal governs the particulars composing it. The unity of both is an individual, the universal lives in the particulars and they in it. For example, principle of identity-in-difference as reason is universal logic, as knower is particular Hegelian philosopher, and reality the individual Absolute Spirit. Understanding was the external relation, reason, a contradictory relation, and speculation, an internal relation between universal and particular. (Milne 1962, 51)

Unlike an abstract universal which is a thought pointing towards the common feature in some particulars, concrete universal is a “*self-individualizing universal*”. The former is a formal identity while the latter is an individual act of embodiment and establishment of the universal in and by particulars. Hegel’s philosophy is unable to allow the existence of an individual universal without particulars. Only the concrete universal exists and that’s why a universal particularizes itself and/or self-individualizes. Concrete universal is self-particularizing, it ‘composes’ or ‘makes up’ the particulars as details of its own self. Concrete universal is self-existing, ‘comprising’ or ‘made up of’ all its particulars as its own details. Concrete universal is (immanently) self-present in all its particulars giving them their activity and purpose. A self-present universal achieves its nature in the various particulars and is differently realized in each particular (Findlay 1958, 225-226); (Kamal 1989, 33). Altogether, concrete universal is a self-individualizing universal: it is self-particularizing, self-existing, and self-present in its particulars. This conceptual epistemology is only achievable by

speculation: the three aspects—creating, existing-presence + existing, created-presence + present, existing-creator—are the modes in which the universal creates, exists and lives. Concrete Universal is the creator that is present in what it creates, the created that exists as the presence of the creator, and the presence in which both creator and creation are one.

Concrete universal determines what this or that is, and it unifies different this and that within itself. It self-participates in both senses i.e. determining and unifying. Containing them altogether, it determines them by happening in them, differing each from its other. Various this and/or that present its existence, while its self-determination shines through them all.

Concrete universal creates a unity of different determinations—its unifying nature of containing parts altogether is its universal aspect—and unifies different aspects of its own determination in each of them—its specific rational existence in mutually exclusive parts is its individual aspect. It is a unity of opposites—a whole having different created parts whose existence it determines. Rationally, it is the reason for the differences between the parts of the whole, and each different part differs—because of its present rationale at that moment—from the rest, being a dim illumination of the whole, which contains all these dim lights as its particular instances. Viewed as a container, it gives existence to what is contained in it and by their means exits as itself: the whole is a container of the total appearance of all its possibilities through the parts only in so far as the parts, a short-term possible appearance, belong within the whole. (Findlay 1958, 227). Construed as a self and body, concrete universal is visible as a body made up of its own created purposefully active particulars, and intelligible as a self working out their details within them (Audi 1999, 368-369).

Hegel's philosophical system is structured as follows: categories mentioned in the "*Science of Logic*" as a whole → philosophy of nature → philosophy of Spirit (Anthropology, phenomenology, psychology → Politics → Art, Religion, Philosophy). Categories are the rational potentialities which actualize themselves in the world; both the categories and the world are "at home" in the Absolute Spirit—a monism that unites opposites, the implicit categories and the explicit world. Thus, Absolute Spirit *comprises* the mental categories and rational determinations which *compose* its self-manifestation as the world. Absolute spirit is a self-conscious individual that organically comprises the self-explanatory categories as universals, which work out and exteriorize themselves as the existence of the world of particulars, and in doing so becomes conscious of the explanation of its own existence. In short, a self-conscious individual lives like a creator that shows off its self-explanatory universals in its creation as self-existing particulars. Taken altogether, concrete universal is the Absolute Spirit's individual life working out its universal reason (absolute idea) within particular

existences nature, man and spirit (art, religion and philosophy) (Magee 2010, 61-62); (Milne 1962, 186). At this juncture, it is now possible to illustrate epistemologically a Hegelian philosopher's Absolute Knowledge: Hegel's categories are not a subjective mind's power of a necessary rule for possible experience; they are the Absolute Spirit's power of exteriorizing itself in nature, the precondition to the creation and existence of our human minds—a stage where the activity of the Absolute Spirit during self-creation creates our active human minds which have the activity of the Absolute Spirit in them. In order to have self-conscious knowledge of itself, Absolute Spirit differentiates itself into a subject (the Hegelian philosopher) that thinks and an object of thought (the natural and social world). Spirit dreams or sleeps in nature and wakes up in humans in order to know its own self through a Hegelian philosopher's knowledge of the Absolute. Since the Absolute Spirit immanently resides in the finite human mind, it is no wonder that we are able to see the hidden categories playing their part in the visible natural and social world. Although, it is possible for us to achieve Absolute Knowledge via universal/particular relation, yet it is actually restricted only to the Hegelian philosopher who happens to be within the world of Spirit, having the necessary concern to understand reality as the relation of thought to existence. Being a part, a short-term appearance of the whole, the Hegelian philosopher is the key moment or stage where Hegelian philosophy achieves Absolute Knowledge once it recognizes that the Absolute Spirit's rational activity constitutes an organic structure consisting of the logical, natural and social world. As Hegelian philosophy, the Absolute Spirit makes its own self as its object of thought—the subject recognizes the object as itself. The Absolute Spirit recognizes the emergence of natural and social world out of the unifying and universalizing agency of its own thought and activity, while the Hegelian philosopher—being a key moment and stage of the unity and universality of the Absolute spirit—achieves Absolute Knowledge. (Mure 1940, 100); (Copleston 1969, 130)

As Hegelian philosophers, we are now in a position to trace the evolution of the concept of universals from Plato and Aristotle through Kant to Hegel—thus mirroring the three dialectical moments: Abstract – Contradiction – Concrete.

In the first moment, universals are understood as abstract and fixed identities—either transcendent (Plato) or immanent but static (Aristotle). For Plato, universals exist in a realm beyond the material world, and particulars are mere copies of these universals. The universal is pure, separated, static. In contrast, for Aristotle, universals exist within particulars, as their essential nature or defining attribute, functioning as a classifying identity shared among the many things in the material world. Thus, in this first moment, universals

are understood to exist either beyond the world or within it, but in both cases as static and identical.

The second moment marks the crisis of Enlightenment reason: universals are necessary for human knowledge of the world, yet they also become problematic—they separate us from the reality of the world. Kant reconfigures the previous distinction by introducing two types of universals: on the one hand, subjective-immanent universals—namely, the categories of understanding—which reside within the human mind and actively structure all possible experience; and on the other, an objective-transcendent universal—the thing-in-itself—which exists independently of our cognition and remains fundamentally beyond epistemic access. While the categories actively shape our experience and makes knowledge of the world possible, we can never know things as they are in themselves. Thus, the very universals that make knowledge possible are also the reason for our separation from reality, generating an inner contradiction between the subjective universals that organize appearances (that only we encounter, structured by our own cognitive faculties) and the objective universal that grounds reality but remains unknowable. In this second moment, the contradiction takes the form of appearance versus reality: universals simultaneously enable conceptual knowledge of appearances and signify our separation from reality, revealing the deep split between thought and reality.

Finally, the third moment arrives with Hegel's idea of the Concrete Universal. It is no longer something abstract, separate, or limited—no longer a universal beyond the world (Plato), classifications inside things in the world (Aristotle) or human subjective structure that shapes the appearance of the world while remaining cut off from world-reality (Kant). The universal is now real, not as something standing above or behind reality, but as something that lives within the world, creates it and comes to know itself through its concrete manifestations. It is not outside reality, but immanent within it—and it not merely a thought, but a thought that is realized in and through reality. The universal is concrete because it is not empty idea or abstract category—no longer just a definition or classification. A concrete universal is like a living system: a thought that comes to life, working itself out, expressing itself through the particular things of the world and becoming real in and through them.

To understand what it truly means for the universal to become real and concrete leads us directly to a radical rethinking of logic and thought—beginning with the difference between Aristotle's formal logic and Hegel's dialectical logic, and continuing through the contrast between Kant's categories of understanding and Hegel's categories of thought. Both comparisons reveal how Hegel

redefines immanence—not as a static classification or imposed mental structure, but as the living logic of reality itself, a thought-process through which reality becomes self-conscious.

Hegel rejects transcendence, both as Plato's world of universals and Kant's thing-in-itself, but accepts and radicalizes Aristotle's immanence—universals exist in the particulars. For Aristotle, immanence is based on formal logic and metaphysical existence (form in matter), but Hegel bases immanence on dialectical logic and metaphysical self-consciousness (Spirit in progress). Aristotle's metaphysics is real but not self-conscious. For Hegel, reality is Spirit, which means a metaphysical self-consciousness exists that knows itself through philosophy. For Aristotle, being is; for Hegel, being knows itself and is reflexively self-aware. Formal logic deals with abstract universals that create classification—dead containers in which things are put based on shared attributes. It structures reality based on the law of identity, non-contradiction, and the excluded middle. Dialectical logic holds contradiction to be real and necessary for change. It articulates a concrete universal that passes through contradictions and manifests in particulars. Only through particulars does the universal become itself and is not complete without them.

The distinction between “categories of understanding” and “categories of thought” marks a fundamental difference between Kant and Hegel. Kant's *categories of understanding* form an epistemological structure—*structure* here refers to a fixed framework of concepts in the mind, applied to raw sense data. These categories are the preconditions of knowledge; that is they condition how a human subject must think in order to experience the world at all. By contrast, Hegel's *categories of thought* are ontological-logical determinations. Here, structure is neither pre-given nor imposed by the human subject; rather, these determinations gradually shape a rational structure from within, as if reality were thinking itself—unfolding through its own immanent logic and coming, in this process, to know itself. In Hegel's view, thought is ontological: it is both the inner logic of reality and the actual content of reality as it comes to self-knowledge. Thus, for Kant, categories are subjective in origin but universal and necessary for any rational being in order to access reality. For Hegel, they express the objective activity of reality itself—universal and necessary not for the subject to know the world, but for reality to come to know itself. The rational structure of the world, in Hegel's view, is not something our mind imposes on it as Kant suggests. Rather, the world itself is rational because it is thought-like in its own structure. For Hegel, reason is not external to things, but inherent in them—they are rational by nature, not because we make them so through our thinking. For Kant: *We think reality. For Hegel: Reality thinks itself.*

Conclusion

Either, universals exist out-of-the-world of particulars but then the question arises: *how can they relate to or determine particulars without being part of them?* or, universals exist down-in-the-world of particulars but then the question arises: Is a particular just a pack of universals—a grouping of predicates—or an *embodied universal*, where universality comes into real presence? Similarly, either universals exist (categories of understanding) inside the human mind, aiding the knowledge construction of a limited world, or the unknowable thing-in-itself exists beyond the knowledge limit of the human mind. Philosophy, especially metaphysics, found each view to have its own difficulty, whether universals are thrown out of this world or the human mind or brought down to earth or within the human mind.

Universals do not exist as subjective categories in the finite mind that merely construct a representational framework of the world; rather, they are objective categories—the self-articulations of Absolute Spirit—manifest in the world and knowable by reason, because all objects and persons participate in their universality. For Hegel, universals exist, down in the world of particulars as its immanent structure composed by the activity of the Absolute Spirit which contains these universals as its own non-sensuous, self-determining categories of thought. For the Absolute Spirit, the existence of a thing and its intelligibility are one and the same. Unlike Plato's Ideal-World or Kant's Thing-in-itself, Hegel rejects the existence of a thing beyond Absolute Spirit—what exists, exists only as it is known and created by it.

Abstract, means something isolated, cut off from other beings, separate any quality from an object, for example, whiteness from a ball and you will get an abstraction—whiteness. Only if you take the white, round, heavy and hard ball altogether, will you get a concrete thing that contains all abstractions within itself. If colour-ness excludes whiteness, blueness, redness from its self and each specific colour from the other, then each one is a simple abstraction, but insofar as it includes every specific colour and their differences, it becomes a concrete category. In short, viewing an entity apart from its relations is abstract, for example, cut a tree leaf to observe it in the laboratory, however, the concrete view observes it in its organic relations—knowing the tree leaf's relation to the tree's life.

Absolute Idea, Hegelian Philosopher and Absolute Spirit correspond to different expressions of the Concrete Universal in Hegel's system:

Starting from the emptiest of categories—Being—each subsequent category cannot exist without the other(s), implies them, gives rise to them via inner contradiction and includes them within itself. Being, as an abstract identity,

collapses into Nothing because it fails to remain logically identical or one-sidedly fixed; this tension gives rise to Becoming, the first genuine unity of opposites. Becoming is the first concrete category which will be digested by the other categories that come afterwards till Absolute Idea, the most concrete, is reached which includes all previous categories within itself. Absolute Idea, the category of categories, is the fully actualized logical existence of the “concrete universal”, which doesn’t just stop and say, “That’s the end of the thinking process.” Instead it says, “This thinking is reality”. At this point Logic is no longer just logical—a structure of thinking. It becomes ontological—a study of what exists. Logic crosses over into Nature, and eventually into Spirit. Scheme, surface, and Self/Absolute knowledge correspond well to Logic, Nature, and Spirit, respectively: Logic is the scheme – thought exists as categories, Nature is the surface – categories give appearance to the world and Spirit is Self/Absolute knowledge – philosophy is self-conscious thought existing as nature. Absolute Spirit is the “concrete universal” that creates itself (logic), exists as world (ontology) and knows itself through a Hegelian philosopher (philosophy).

The Hegelian philosopher seeks the hidden secret of reality, while the Absolute Spirit’s own goal—immanent within that very search—is to reach insight into the meaning of “knowing thyself”. Discovering the Absolute Spirit in reality—an all-inclusive organism and all-pervading rationality—serves as the site where the “concrete universal” becomes conscious of itself. It is here that the Hegelian philosopher becomes the highest achievement of the Absolute Spirit’s rational self-development, occupying a position within its organic structure where knowledge becomes Absolute. At this moment of Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Spirit becomes the subject that knows itself as its own object—as if declaring: “I exist here and now because I know this as I am this”.

REFERENCES

1. Ackrill, J. 2002 trans. *Aristotle - Categories And De Interpretaione*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
2. Audi, Robert. 1999 ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. 2nd. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Bunnin, Nicholas, and Jiyuan Yu. 2004. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
4. Copleston, F. 1969. *Hegel and the Rationalization of Mysticism*. Vol. II, chap. 8 in *Talk of God*, 118-132. London: Macmillan.
5. Ewing, A. 1961. *Idealism- A Critical Survey*. Strand: Methuen & Co Ltd.
6. Findlay, J. 1958. *Hegel: A Re-examination*. London, New York: George Allen & Unwin, The Macmillan Company.

7. Gallop, D. 2002 trans. *Plato - Phaedo*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
8. Kamal, M. 1989. *Hegel's Metalogic*. Royal Book Company: Karachi.
9. Kenny, A. 2004. *Ancient Philosophy*. Vol. I. IV vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
10. Kim, J, E Sosa, and G Rosenkrantz. 2009. *A Companion to Metaphysics*. 2nd. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
11. Lawson-Tancred, H. 1998 ed. *Aristotle - Metaphysics*. London: Penguin Books.
12. Magee, G. 2010. *The Hegel Dictionary*. London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
13. Milne, A. 1962. *The Social Philosophy of English Idealism*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
14. Mure, G. 1940. *An Introduction to Hegel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
15. Prior, W. 1985. *Unity and Development in Plato's Metaphysics*. London: Croom Helm.
16. Reeve, C. 1998 trans. *Plato - Cratylus*. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company
17. Stace, W. 1924. *The Philosophy of Hegel*. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited.
18. Stumpf, S. 1971. *Philosophy: History and Problems*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
19. Taliaferro, C, and E Marty. 2010. *A Dictionary of Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
20. Wardman, A, and J Creed. 1963. *The Philosophy of Aristotle*. New York: New American Library.

Is It Possible to Understand John Rawls's *Theory of Justice* Independently of Kantian Moral Foundations?

John Rawls'un *Adalet Teorisini* Kantçı Ahlakî Açıdan Temellerden Bağımsız Olarak Anlamak Mümkün müdür?

Tuba İlhan Dalar

Öğr. Gör. Dr., Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi/İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi/Felsefe Bölümü,
tuba.ilhandalar@kilis.edu.tr,
ORCID: 0009-0003-7284-5395

Article Information

Article Type

Research Article

Date Received

21.11.2025

Date Accepted

19.12.2025

Date Published

31 December 2025

Plagiarism Checks: Yes, Turnitin.

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited. (Tuba İlhan Dalar)

Conflicts of Interest: The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.

Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

Makale Bilgisi

Makale Türü

Araştırma Makalesi

Geliş Tarihi

21.11.2025

Kabul Tarihi

19.12.2025

Yayın Tarihi

31 Aralık 2025

Benzerlik Taraması: Evet, Turnitin.

Etik Beyan

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur. (Tuba İlhan Dalar)

Çıkar Çatışması: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır.



Cite As | Atıf

Dalar, Tuba İlhan (2025). Is It Possible to Understand John Rawls's *Theory of Justice* Independently of Kantian Moral Foundations. *Mebadi International Journal of Philosophy*, (2) 2, 29-53. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18080536>

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyse the position of John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness vis-à-vis Kantian moral foundations. Rawls's major work, *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 1971), is of interest not only in the field of political philosophy, but also in the debates over whether his position can be considered a Kantian. In this context, the paper begins by asking a crucial question: Is Rawls a Kantian or not? To answer this question, the paper delves deeply into a discussion of Rawls's Kantian position, drawing extensively on secondary sources. These secondary sources are re-examined and classified for further evaluation, as they shed light on improving our understanding of Rawls's views on Kant's moral foundation. In particular, the relationship between Rawls's theory of justice as fairness and the impact of Kant's principal work, the *Groundwork* (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*), is discussed. The Kantian legacy becomes even more apparent in Rawls's construction and testing of his principles of justice. These principles are considered as part of a thought experiment (the original position) behind a veil of ignorance. Especially in section §40 of *TJ*, Rawls's Kantian interpretation regarding the genesis of the principles of justice as fairness determines the trajectory of this inquiry. While Rawls is clearly successful in linking the features of the person and justice as fairness to the Kantian categorical imperative and in establishing a parallel between the purely rational/autonomous person (in the Kantian sense) and the participant in the original position, a non-Kantian reading of *TJ* reveals some significant disagreements about the precise nature of Rawls's Kantianism. Nevertheless, the relationship between Rawls's theory of justice as fairness and its Kantian foundation remains a highly controversial issue among scholars. Therefore, this article aims to outline these disagreements between interpretations concerning Rawls's intellectual debt to Kant.

Keywords: Rawls, Kantianism, Justice as Fairness, Moral foundations, Groundwork

Öz

Bu makalenin amacı, John Rawls'un hakkaniyet olarak adalet teorisinin Kantçı ahlaki temeller bağlamındaki konumunu analiz etmektir. Rawls'un başlıca eseri *Bir Adalet Teorisi*, (Rawls, 1971), yalnızca siyaset felsefesi alanında değil, aynı zamanda onun konumunun Kantçı olarak kabul edilip edilemeyeceği konusundaki tartışmalarda da ligi çekicidir. Bu bağlamda, makale kritik bir soru sorarak başlar: Rawls Kantçı mıdır, değil midir? Bu soruyu yanıtlamak için makale, kapsamlı bir şekilde ikincil kaynaklardan yararlanarak Rawls'un Kantçı konumunu derinlemesine incelemektedir. Bu ikincil kaynaklar, Rawls'un Kant'ın ahlaki temellerine dair görüşlerini daha iyi anlamamıza ışık tuttukları için yeniden incelenmekte ve daha iyi bir eleştirel analiz için sınıflandırılmaktadır. Özellikle, Rawls'un hakkaniyet olarak adalet teorisi ile Kant'ın temel eseri olan Temellendirme'nin (*Ahlak Metafiziğinin Temellendirilmesi*), etkisi arasındaki ilişkisi tartışılmaktadır. Kantçı miras, Rawls'un adalet ilkelerini inşa etme ve test etme sürecinde daha da belirgin hale gelir. Bu ilkeler, cehalet perdesi ardındaki bir düşünce deneyinin (orijinal durum, ilk konum) parçası olarak ele alınır. Özellikle AT'sinin §40 bölümünde, Rawls'un adalet ilkelerinin hakkaniyet olarak ortaya çıkmasına ilişkin Kantçı yorumu, bu araştırmanın gidişatını belirlemektedir. Rawls, bireyin ve hakkaniyet olarak adaletin özelliklerini Kantçı kategorik buyruğa bağlamada ve salt akıl/özerk kişi (Kantçı anlamda) ile orijinal durumdaki katılımcı arasında bir paralellik kurmada açıkça başarılı olsa da AT'nin Kantçı olmayan bir okuması, Rawls'un Kantçılığının kesin doğası hakkında bazı önemli anlaşmazlıkları da ortaya koymaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Rawls'un adalet teorisi ile Kantçı temeli arasındaki ilişki, akademisyenler arasında oldukça tartışmalı bir konu olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu makale Rawls'un Kant'a olan entelektüel borcuna ilişkin yorumlar arasındaki bu anlaşmazlıkları ana hatlarıyla ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rawls, Kantçılık, Hakkaniyet Olarak Adalet, Ahlaki temeller, Temellendirme

1. Introduction¹

This paper purposes to critically review the secondary literature on the earlier Rawls of *Theory of Justice* (hereafter *TJ*, published in 1971)² and its relation to Kantian moral foundations. There is a significant reason for reviewing such secondary sources. Rawls's occasional attempts to show his own conception of justice as fairness as a crucial Kantian doctrine have not only attracted attention but also drawn criticism from other scholars. The general assumption among many readers of Rawls is that his theory of justice is excessively universalistic and abstract, and they see his theory as an extension of a Kantian comprehensive liberal doctrine where the features of the original position are similar to the Kantian categorical imperative principle; however, some argue the opposite position and regard his position as non-Kantian. Now, the following question arises: Does the Rawlsian intellection of justice depend on a Kantian moral interpretation or not? This question will bring us back to questioning the Kantian interpretation of justice as fairness expressed by Rawls in *TJ* and take us on to discuss the influence of thinkers with different Kantian interpretations on Rawls's Kantian position. So, my aim here is to contribute substantially to the literature by contending that these viewpoints are found upon incomplete and oversimplified interpretations of Kant's thought, a deficiency that cannot be attributed to Rawls. Since, in my view, one aspect worth examining is Rawls's own interpretation of Kant, rather than scrutinising him based solely on a one-sided reading of Kant. I will establish this more nuanced reading through the essay.

To address the question posed above, I will first consider the major interpretations and analyses of Rawls's philosophical reasoning, and his philosophical foundation referred to as "Kantianism." The fact is that Rawls's self-identification as a Kantian is not sufficient to provide clarity. Given this predicament, I argue that Rawls's Kantianism should be analysed in the context of today's

¹ This article is especially derived from the 'literature review' part of my doctorate dissertation entitled "Reappraising Rawls's Kantianism Through Hegel's Social and Political Thought," supervised by Prof. Dr. David Edward Rose and Dr. Michael Lewis, Ph.D. Dissertation, Newcastle University, UK, 2024.

² It must be noted that this paper focuses solely on Rawls's first major work, *TJ*, and examines the Kantian moral foundations of justice within this limited framework. Because Rawls's political turn, in his 1980 *Dewey Lectures* and subsequent works, requires the scope to be considered a non-Kantian Rawls and to be the subject of another research. In particular, Rawls's 1985 article "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical" clearly articulates how he distinguishes his political conception of justice from all metaphysical and moral doctrines (including Kantian doctrine). Evidently, following self-criticism, Rawls's theory in another major work, *Political Liberalism* 1993, shifted from a Kantian moral doctrine to a political theory. However, I have elaborated on this claim in more detail in my unpublished doctoral dissertation, which discusses it within a more contentious scholarly context. As mentioned earlier, this issue is beyond the scope of the current article.

leading philosophers. My primary goal is to gain a more nuanced understanding of Rawls's Kantianism. In doing so, I hope to provide a critical analysis of some of the most notable notions that have been debated in relation to Rawls's Kantianism. Non-Kantian interpretation of *TJ* and Kantian readings of *TJ* provide the motivation for the debates. I desire to reveal the Kantian basis in Rawls's theory and demonstrate it through various scholarly discussions. In the past five decades, many thinkers have discussed Rawls's position (without) relying on a Kantian background, and I shall group them around common positions. The first group says that Rawls is not a Kantian. On this point, a number of thinkers have criticised Kantian Rawls and find it odd that Rawls is recognised as a Kantian. I will highlight several scholars who have discussed or referred to the relationship between Kant and Rawls in their works and have concluded that Rawls is not a Kantian: Oliver A. Johnson, 1974 and 1977; Andrew Levine, 1974; Joseph M. Grcic, 1983; Otfried Hoffe, 1984; H.E. Mason, 2003, and Kerst Budde, 2007. For example, through questioning Rawls's *TJ*, these thinkers typically conclude that Rawls's theory cannot be labelled a type of Kantianism. To these scholars, the "comprehensive" foundation of Kantian moral conceptions does not preserve the integrity of Rawls's philosophy. They question Kantian Rawls and suggest evaluating him using an alternative philosophical framework. They argue that Rawls misinterprets Kantian morality, making it difficult to call him a Kantian.

The opposing view has been developed by several other scholars. More selectively, they all agree on Rawls's Kantianism: Stephen L. Darwall, 1976 and 1980; Robert P. Wolff, 1977; Arnold I. Davidson, 1985; Catherine Audard, 2007; Paul Guyer, 2018; Nicholas Tampio, 2007; Vadim Chaly, 2015; Jean Hampton, 1980; Michael Sandel, 1982; Modupe O. Adu, 2024 and Hong Yang, 2025. These scholars broadly acknowledge that Rawls improves Kant's status in contemporary moral and political philosophy (Wood, 1999, p. 337). I will also discuss Rawls's proponents who say his theory is based on Kantianism and that his philosophical methodology is Kantian, that Rawlsian justice depends on Kantian ideas of free and equal moral beings.

Later, in contrast to the Kantian interpretation of Rawls, I will show how Kant's explanation of self-legislating or moral agency appears to have shaped his theory. I argue that Rawls and Kant have both reached the same or similar presuppositions about the categorical imperative and the original position. In spite of the arguments of theorists who are critics of Rawls's Kantianism, I primarily maintain that Rawls's theory legitimately builds on and advances the massive legacy of Kantian moral assumptions. Let us now turn to a different type of challenge to Rawls's Kantianism and evaluate the most important criticism of Rawls's early work.

2. A Non-Kantian Interpretation of the *Theory of Justice*

In his early book *TJ*, Rawls claims that his view of justice as fairness is “fundamentally Kantian in nature” due to his interpretation of Kant’s ethical writings, particularly the *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals* (*GMM*, 1785)³ (*TJ*, pp. vii, 11, 251).⁴ This reliance on Kantian ethics is what the secondary literature has come to see as the problem with Rawls’s early work. In fact, Rawls (*TJ*, p. 221) remarks on “the content of the principle of equal liberty and the meaning of the priority of rights that defines.” It seems consistent at this point to state that there is a Kantian interpretation of justice as fairness from which this principle derives. This interpretation encompasses Kant’s conception of autonomy. Although Rawls himself states this viewpoint in *TJ*, whether his theory can be called Kantian or not has remained a matter of debate. Moreover, Hampton’s (1980) and Johnson’s (1974) arguments, taken together, lead the reader to question whether Rawls’s theory falls within the social contract and Kantian traditions (Corlett, 1991, p. 4).

In his essay, “The Kantian Interpretation,” Oliver A. Johnson (1974) examines the Rawlsian interpretation of Kant’s autonomy account and seriously discusses its Kantianism. Johnson first examines Rawls’s Kantian position and rejects Rawls’s Kantian interpretation of justice (1974, pp. 58-62). Johnson points out that individuals in the “original position behind” the “veil of ignorance” are motivated by what Kant refers to as heteronomous inclinations: “An action originally heteronomous is not rendered autonomous, even though performed under a veil of ignorance if the nature of motivation is unchanged” (Johnson, 1974, p. 62). Therefore, according to Johnson, Rawlsian principles of justice conflict with Kantian autonomy, the categorical imperative, and pure practical reason.

Interestingly, Rawls has realised the confusion that gives rise to Johnson’s claim, and he clearly expresses it earlier, as he states:

... since the persons in the original position are assumed to take no interest in one another’s interests...it may be thought that justice as fairness is itself an egoistic theory. It is not, of course, one of the three forms of egoism mentioned earlier, but some may think, as Schopenhauer thought of Kant’s doctrine, that it is egoistic nevertheless, now this is a misconception. For the

³ Hereafter referred to as the *Groundwork* in the text. All citations will be from the following edition: Kant, I. *Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals*, Gregor, M. (ed. and trans.) Cambridge University, 2012. Also, the *Groundwork* will be at the centre of this paper, since it plays a significant role in the development of Rawls’s early intellectual and philosophical thought. So here we will make further references to the *Groundwork*.

⁴ Rawls frequently refers to Kant’s ideas in *TJ*; for instance, Rawls declares: “My aim is to present a conception of justice that generalises and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar social contract theory found, for example, in Locke, Rousseau, and Kant” (*TJ*, p. 11).

fact that in the original position the parties are characterised as not interested in one another's concerns does not entail that persons in ordinary life who hold the principles that would be agreed to are similarly disinterested in one another. Clearly, the two principles of justice and the principles of obligation and natural duty require us to consider the rights and claims of others. And the sense of justice is normally effective desire to comply with these restrictions. The motivation of the persons in the original position must not be confused with the motivation of persons in everyday life who accept the principles that would be chosen and who have the corresponding sense of justice... (TJ, pp. 147-8)

Rawls's theory is not egoistic or self-serving, as illustrated in this quote. More specifically, he focuses on such principles and links them to part §40 of TJ, "The Kantian Interpretation of Justice as Fairness", where he himself remarks that his method of describing justice is Kantian in origin.

As a brief recap, in the context of the Kantian deontological doctrine, Rawls, claims that justice cannot be derived; it is a requirement of duty for duty's sake for moral persons because it is the right thing to do, even if it has nothing to do with the general good, utility, interests, or an ideal of human perfection (Audard, 2007, p. 43). So, rights are prior to welfare or pleasure, and they are unconditional and precede the preferences of the majority. This priority right over the good becomes a central feature of understanding justice as fairness. As Rawls admits, this is clearly inspired by the Kantian view of justice (TJ, p. 16n). Rawls, in his discussion of utilitarianism, is concerned with the question of the priority of "good" or "right." The question is: in a moral or political theory which basic moral concept – the good or the right – should have priority?" The question is significant because the demands imposed by right, in the manner of a duty, might simply conflict with the results of increasing good (Cekić, 2022, p. 43). This is the context for the issues raised by the commonly held notion of *fairness*. So, Rawls takes the view that the priority of right is a fundamental feature of Kant's ethics. Hong Yang, who sees Rawls as a proponent of Kantianism, expresses this situation as follows: "goodness is prior to rightness... because the sense of justice can be considered goodness by the citizens of a well-ordered society" (Yang, 2025, p.44). In the original position, the parties, who are hypothetical personalities, must choose the principles of justice in the criterion of rightness.⁵

In TJ, Rawls presents ideal justice by drawing a distinction between "ideal" and "nonideal" theory, or what he calls "strict compliance" and "partial

⁵ However, in his article, Yang later argues that goodness is necessarily compatible with rightness and resolves the problem of priority by taking Rawls's later work, *Political Liberalism*. For more information, see his article titled "From Moral Philosophy to Reflective Judgment: Rawls as a Successor to Kant."

compliance” (*TJ*, §25, §39).⁶ Rawls delineates his theory of justice as fairness as a universal moral ideal that is desired by all societies (Freeman, 2003, p. 2). In this vein, in *TJ*, Rawls provides his conception of the world that is based on an ideal perfect society, and his ideal of the person in the original position is also elaborated within the framework of his own Kantian interpretation of justice as fairness. Rawls explicitly makes clear that all characteristics of the original position must be evaluated regarding the “moral powers” ascribed by these ideal persons.⁷ Scanlon (1973, p. 1022) highlights that imagining behind the “abstractions,” Rawls constructs the original position as a particular ideal of the person, connected to an ideal of a well-ordered society. Firstly, it is important to remember that the original position is not a justification for the justice, since it is purely hypothetical, a sort of a “thought experiment” or a “device of representation.”⁸ The hypothetical contract, the original position, for Rawls, is not an actual thing, but a device for thinking in the correct way (Dworkin, 1989, pp. 17-8). Thus, Rawls’s conception of person and society appear to be quite abstract.

Furthermore, Rawls has assumed that the persons in the original position are *rational* and do not have their own conception of the good (*TJ*, p. 123). This means that his account of the parties in the original position is theoretically defined as rational individuals in a thin sense insofar as they choose principles merely to promote their particular ends and interests. It is also important to note that Rawls’s parties can be described as purely rational and liberal individuals, but it would be a mistake to say they are egoists. As Freeman states, “they are not egoists any more than chess players who play to win or buyers who shop for the lowest price are egoists” (Freeman, 2003, p. 13). Indeed, their moral interests are among the interests they propose to protect in their choice of the principles of justice (*TJ*, p. 125). The chief point here is that the parties are supposed to be clearly non-egoistical since they have a capacity for an effective sense of justice – “a desire to act not just according to but also for the sake of justice” (Freeman, 2003, p. 14). Therefore, Rawls stresses that the motivation of the person in the original position should not be confused with the motivation of the person in ordinary life (*TJ*, p. 126). For the fact that the parties are characterised as mutually disinterested does not entail that a person is in a just society. Then he adds, “the parties can rely on each other to understand and to act in accordance with whatever principles are finally agreed to” (*TJ*, p. 125). At that point, recalling Kant’s motivation of duty – “duty for duty’s sake,”

⁶ The character ‘§’ points to the section numbers indicates the book chapters.

⁷ See T. M. Scanlon’s 1973 essay “Rawls’s Theory of Justice,” which shrewdly analyses that point.

⁸ As we will see in the following, many critics of Rawls have accused the original position of being abstract, missing its nuances in so doing.

in a similar sense, Kant's *Groundwork* explicitly identifies the conception of the person as a rational being who makes moral law. He examines this especially closely in sections I and II of *Groundwork*, along with the ideas that a law must be universal, and persons are ends in themselves.

According to a shallow reading of Kant, being autonomous or free in the moral sphere is to be able to follow "reason," not desires or external things. For instance, in the *Groundwork*, Kant holds that we, as rational beings, act on our presentation of law and can make and legislate the law. This line of thought leads to what Kant describes as the principle of the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law (*GMM*, 4:432). In other words, in his formulation of humanity, Kant lays out a conception of autonomy in which rational beings are capable of autonomous moral motivation. In Kant's words, autonomous actions are motivated by moral reasons. In addition, Kant says that moral motivation must be autonomous, not heteronomous, as he believes that we rationally bind ourselves to the law. The principle that we give universal law through our maxims suggests that moral motivation is autonomous. If we are motivated to obey a law heteronomously by a sanction, then the imperative we follow in obeying that law is a hypothetical imperative. However, according to Kant's principle of autonomy, we are able to make moral law and legislate it, and this principle, as he says, "would be very well suited to be the categorical imperative" (*GMM*, 4:432). Finally, Kant assumes that this moral legislation must be accepted under conditions that characterise men as free and equal rational beings. At that point, Rawls introduces a similar standpoint, in particular his view of the rationality and the motivation of the parties, as just seen, aligns with Kant's motivation of duty, which is performing the right actions motivated *from duty*, not from *immediate* inclination (*GMM*, 4:397). This view provides Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative that commands us to act only for the sake of duty as the only way that an action has moral value. In order to understand this claim, it is necessary to understand the image behind them: Kant wants us to think of someone who does not sympathise with the suffering of others and is not inclined to help them; as Kant puts it:

Suppose that now, when no longer incited to it by any inclination, he nevertheless tears himself out of this deadly insensibility and does the action without any inclination, simply from duty; then the action first has its genuine moral worth. (*GMM*, 4:399)

For Kant, reflection on this fact leads us to realise that the moral value of an action is not derived from its aim, but rather from the "maxim" on which it is done, the principle on which the agent acts (*GMM*, 4:399). In short, Kant holds that moral action is the action done from duty that must be for duty's sake; otherwise, it is not duty. In Kant's view, the moral value of human action

depends upon the motivation from which it is done. This moral motivation is not dependent on any external or outer results. Even if the consequences or effects turn out to be bad, the action and the agent's act should not be judged negatively if the intention is morally sound. Kant's motive of duty contrasts with the motive of inclination and the motive of self-interest. This standpoint provides us with the Kantian view. This is precisely how I show that Rawls's Kantian status, at a first glance, is justified on the grounds of this common and stereotypical reading of Kant.

This moral motivation is also ultimately fundamental to Rawls's argument for the principles of justice and their stability. Like Kant's argument for acting for the sake of duty, in accordance with the principle of duty, Rawls assumes that the parties do not act from their personal desires, inclination, or aims, deliberating on the principles of justice for the basic structure of society. They "take no interest in one another's interest" as contracting agents but are concerned only with promoting their own interests (Freeman, 2003, p. 14). Rawls believes they make a rational decision from the standpoint of the original position. In this way, Rawls suggests the Kantian conception of a person is based on an ideal of the person. Rawls's conception of the free and rational participant in the original position can be described as Kantian. At that point, Rawls borrows from Kant's work *Groundwork*, where Kant shows how rational individuals reach moral decisions. Like Kant, Rawls also starts from "the idea that moral principles are the object of rational choice" (*TJ*, p. 221) and that justice is the result of a rational agreement.

Most evidently, in §40 of *TJ*, Rawls's attempt to connect his theory to Kant's moral philosophy is a Kantian interpretation of justice as fairness in which he asserts his theory in the original position behind the veil of ignorance. The fundamental idea is that the deliberations of the persons in the original position are analogous to those of the deliberations of an individual with a good will who tests his maxims in light of Kant's categorical imperative (Pogge, 2007, p. 189; Wolff, 1977, pp. 101-6). Rawls finds his point of contact with Kant in the improved conception of the original position as a condition of rational choice behind the veil of ignorance. As he says the Kantian interpretation is ultimately intended to demonstrate the following:

the description of the original position resembles the point of view of noumenal selves, of what it means to be a free and equal rational being.....the original position may be viewed, then, as a procedural interpretation of Kant's conception of autonomy and the categorical imperative within the framework of an empirical theory. (*TJ*, pp. 225-6)

The idea is that when we choose by isolating from or ignoring our own particular abilities, characteristics, and personal background, we choose as if

we were noumenal rather than phenomenal agents. In the Kantian sense, since each of us freely selects the principles by which we live, each of us has the capacity to make a law for ourselves and is therefore autonomous: “subject only to laws which are made by (oneself) and yet are universal” (*GMM*, 4:432). It is possible for us to adopt the view of the original position, and our decision to do so “expresses our nature as free and equal rational persons” (*TJ*, p. 256). The link between Kant and Rawls appears to stem from Rawls’s commitment to incorporating the Kantian notion of autonomy into his own theory of justice. Namely, the Kantian conception of the autonomous person Rawls invokes in *TJ* is a philosophical view of moral agency. It assumes that we are free and rational agents because we have moral capacity for practical reasoning. It is assumed that Kantian autonomy is exercised under conditions of freedom that allow agents important opportunities to figure out the right thing to do, and this is the core value of freedom. The claim that moral legislators proceed from laws given by the rational being means that, in terms of moral motivation, every individual is acting on their own faculty as a rational and autonomous being. At that point, Rawls adopts Kant’s method on the doctrine of autonomy: Each individual is free and equal if, and only if, they are autonomous persons. The assumption under the principle of justice is that we should treat persons as moral beings acting in relation to a categorical imperative for the human beings (*TJ*, pp. 222-3). In other words, Rawls accepts the validity of the Kantian definition of autonomy and applies it to support his own initial position. The claim appears to be that all humans are moral beings. Thus, all individuals are entitled to equal justice and freedom, which is considered to be an aspect of the Rawlsian political conception of equality. These persons in the initial position know that they also have the capacity to demonstrate a sense of justice. Rawls advances views of autonomy as self-realisation on this basis (*TJ*, p. 221). This view leads Rawls to associate his explanation of the original position with the kingdom of ends and to say that the party in the original position is like the Kantian ideal/noumenal person (Wolff, 1977, p. 114).

According to Kant, there are two ways for human beings to be motivated. The first is when humans are determined in accordance with laws from a phenomenon or an external world, and then their actions are heteronomously motivated. In contrast to this, when humans establish moral laws from their own self-reflection, they are autonomous and free persons. Rational beings, that is, act on a law that they have provided for themselves (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 22). Regarding this, in *TJ*, Rawls explicitly states: “a person is acting autonomously when the principles of his action are chosen by him as the most adequate possible expression of his nature as a free and equal rational being” (*TJ*, p. 222). Rawls adds: “the principles of justice are also analogous to categorical imperatives. For by a categorical imperative Kant understands a principle of conduct

that applies to a person...” (TJ, p. 222). Importantly, we have seen how the rationality of characteristics of the parties of Rawls’s approach are built on a manoeuvre that bears a striking resemblance to Kant’s ideal of a rational moral being.

Returning to Johnson’s discussion, he observes the incongruity in equating the Rawlsian conception of the person with the Kantian one of a moral autonomous individual. He supposes that the parties in the initial position and their choices are not based on autonomous choice; they stimulate the interest of each. Additionally, the decisions of the parties in the starting position are enforced by heteronomous principles, not autonomous ones, as their decisions derive from their interests rather than regard for moral rules. That means, in Johnson’s view, that there are inconsistencies between the Rawlsian and Kantian views of individuals as autonomous moral beings (Johnson, 1974, p. 58). Johnson then argues that Rawls’s theory of rationality is inconsistent in the Kantian sense and claims that Rawls’s point of view cannot be given a Kantian interpretation. Nevertheless, the Kantian legislator may be ethically independent, and Rawls’s original parties may be rational choosers. Johnson’s critique of Rawls’s Kantianism fails because of his general a priori interpretation of autonomy. So, I think that Johnson’s criticisms are based on his reading of Kant, namely that Kant’s categorical imperative *generates* moral imperatives. Rawls does not describe the original position as a means of establishing a state or society. Rawls uses the contract to test our moral motivations and principles of justice. Significantly, the original position expresses the idea of moral equality, that each person’s moral personality should be respected (Rawls, 1999a, p. 254). Johnson overlooks this crucial issue, which is the Rawlsian original position, in which Kant’s categorical imperative *tests* moral motivation rather than generating it.

In his 1974 essay “Rawls’s Kantianism,” Andrew Levine follows the line of Johnson’s claims. He misappraises Rawls, arguing that Rawls’s notion of justice as fairness is connected to Kant in a polemical way. Levine interrogates Rawls’s Kantian interpretation, arguing that it is based on “a systematic confusion of an anthropological understanding of Kant’s notion of rational agency (replete with contingent assumptions about human nature) and Kant’s own non-anthropological understanding” (Levine, 1974, p. 48). In the Rawlsian original position, the basic principles of justice are considered to free our choice of principles from what Kant calls *empirical* or *heteronomous tendencies*. However, Levine believes that the things we think about in the original position are not “pure” and autonomous motivation in the Kantian sense. According to Levine, Rawls attempts to reconcile the Kantian notion of universality with Hobbesian egoistic reason, which leads to inconsistency. Levine then argues that instru-

mental rationality used by Rawls involves an empirical element and that corresponds to heteronomous in Kant's words. From this perspective, Levine claims that Rawls's autonomy and categorical imperative cannot be interpreted as Kantian. Levine believes that Rawls does not discuss his parties' personalities in the original position with Kant's pure practical reason. Levine then claims to show that Rawls seeks Hobbesian egoistic rationality rather than Kantian universality, but his reinterpretation is incoherent because the parties in original position are not selfish. As Rawls states:

It should be noted that I make no restrictive assumptions about the parties' conceptions of the good except that they are rational long-term plans. While these plans determine the aims and interests of a self, the aims and interests are not presumed to be egoistic or selfish. Whether this is the case depends upon the kinds of ends which a person pursues. If wealth, position, and influence, and the accolades of social prestige, are a person's final purposes, then surely his conception of the good is egoistic. His dominant interests are in himself, not merely, as they must always be, interests of a self. There is no inconsistency, then, in supposing that once the veil of ignorance is removed, the parties find that they have ties of sentiment and affection and want to advance the interests of others and to see their ends attained. But the postulate of mutual disinterest in the original position is made to ensure that the principles of justice do not depend upon strong assumptions. Recall that the original position is meant to incorporate widely shared and yet weak conditions. (*TJ*, p. 111)

The passage indicates that the Rawlsian original position models a Kantian moral agent. Levine argues that, in Rawls's original position, "we express our nature as bundles of appetites for primary goods endowed with a capacity for instrumental rationality; not as bearers of pure practical reason" (Levine, 1974, p. 57). This view of human nature is influenced by external factors, heteronomous motivation. Levine adds that we should remember that the central point of Kant's moral philosophy – and the criterion by which it must eventually be assessed – is an attempt for an independent motivation for the moral life, distinct from human nature as a whole. In order for the suggested Kantian interpretation to be effective, the motivation that derives from pure reason would need to be the same as the motivation that stems from the assumptions regarding human nature in the original position (Levine, 1974, p. 52; Cekic, 2022, pp. 48-9).

Levine and Johnson agree that Rawls is unclear about what "rationality" means. They acknowledge that Rawls's rationality and Kant's rational agency are distinct and presumably irreducible. On this view, Johnson and Levine disapprove of a Kantian interpretation of Rawls but ignore Rawls's own later writings. Thus, both Kantian objections to Rawls are narrowly evaluated. Rawls agrees with Kant that autonomy is freedom and rationality. Darwall contends that Rawls's account of reason must be used to define the parties in original

position's rationality. At the end of *TJ*, Rawls discusses his concept of rationality, which is not limited to economics: "within the framework of justice as fairness we can formulate and demonstrate Kantian themes by using a properly comprehensive theory of rational choice" (*TJ*, pp. 583-4). Johnson and Levine generally focus on motivated assumptions about the parties in the original position, which casts doubt on Rawls's Kantian features.

In his book, the *Understanding of Rawls*, Robert Paul Wolff makes the same claims as Johnson and Levine. He contends that it is a very unusual approach to read Kant as claiming that the good (or any goods) is the basis of moral motivation, but Rawls consciously or unconsciously, does. In contrast, Wolff believes that Kant has always maintained a clear stance on this matter, asserting that a material end lacks moral significance. The observation that Rawls's account of "primary goods" is characterised by its generic nature and lack of particular adaptation to individual desires remains rather consistent. The nature of the chosen principle of justice is unaffected by that fact:

[The] veil of ignorance, in fact, only guarantees that the principles will be... generally heteronomous rather than particularly heteronomous. The choice of principles is motivated by self-interest, rather than by the Idea of Good. (Wolff, 1977, p. 115)

Wolff concludes that in Rawls's original position, participants cannot achieve independently willed principles in the Kantian perspective "because their choice of principles must be driven by self-interest to have the bargaining game continue" (Wolff, 1977, p.115). Even in ignorance, they reach only generally heteronomous principles, a hypothetical rather than a categorical imperative – a theory of rational prudence, but never an ethical theory (Wolff, 1977, p. 117).

Joseph M. Grcic's account of Rawls's Kantianism is also influential. Grcic discusses Rawls in his essay, "Kant and Rawls: Contrasting Conceptions of Moral Theory." Grcic believes that Rawls's theory of justice suggests an interpretation of Kant's second categorical imperative. He notes at least three ways in which he views Rawls's theory as not being Kantian, claiming instead that Rawls's theory is Kantian only in "its articulation or expression, not in its foundation of justification" (Grcic, 1983, p. 235). He argues that Rawls's two principles of justice (liberty principle and distributive justice)⁹ are an acceptable ver-

⁹ Rawls formulates the principle of equal basic liberty:

First: "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all." (*TJ*, p. 53)

Second: "Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:
(a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, and

sion of Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative, but his foundation is actually "a synthesis of Kantian and Utilitarian ideas." Grcic claims that Rawls shows his general ideas on moral justification in the last chapter of his *TJ*.

According to Grcic, Rawls opposes the foundational perspective and believes that a moral theory should be justified like any other theory: "justification is a matter of the mutual support of numerous factors, of everything fitting together into one coherent position" (*TJ*, p. 579). Grcic remains the coherentist approach by quoting *TJ*: "what is required is a formulation of a set of principles which, when conjoined to our beliefs and knowledge of the circumstances, would lead us to make these judgments with their supporting reasons were we to apply these principles conscientiously and intelligently" (*TJ*, p. 46; Grcic, 1983, p. 236). In other words, a moral theory is "true" if it "matches" (*TJ*, p. 579) our "considered judgments" or "judgments in which our moral capacities are most likely to be presented without distortion" (*TJ*, p. 47). For Grcic, Rawls's moral theory differs from Kant's. Nevertheless, Rawls claims that Kant's fundamental contribution was the rational choice theory of morality. "When the principles of his conduct are chosen by him as the most adequate possible expression of his nature as free and equal rational being," a person acts autonomously, according to Rawls (*TJ*, p. 252). He argues that the original position might be regarded "as a procedural interpretation of Kant's theory of autonomy and the categorical imperative" (*TJ*, p. 256). Grcic asserts that the categorical imperative arises from the hypothetical person's "decision" in the original position, not from a priori deduction as in Kant. Rawls exploits Kant to create a nihilistic political philosophy (Bloom, 1975, p. 656). For Bloom, Rawls cannot reconcile Kantian ethics and the utilitarian social contract tradition. So, Rawls seeks to keep Kantian freedom and rationality without accepting the procedure of universality. Rawls wants the "glow of Kantian moral nobility" without the heroic sacrifices of Kant's ethical procedure.

Also, in the same vein, Hoffe (1984), in his article "Is Rawls's *Theory of Justice* really Kantian?," notes that although Rawls claims that his conception of rationality is Kantian, he could not properly understand the Kantian sense of reason. Hoffe observes, according to Kant, "a human being really finds himself a capacity by which he disguises himself from all other things, even from himself insofar as he is affected by objects, and that is *reason*" (*GMM*, 4:397). It is crucial that reason is appropriately grounded: "[T]he ground of obligation [to moral laws] must be looked for, not in the nature of man nor in the circumstances in

(b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity." (*TJ*, p. 53)

which he is placed, but solely a priori in the concepts of pure reason..." (GMM, 4:397). Höffe has interpreted this citation in the following way:

Justice or the moral concept of right cannot be based upon assertions about human nature, i.e. on a practical or empirical anthropology, but must be given a purely rational (*a priori*) foundation in terms of pure practical reason. (Höffe, 1984, p. 104)

Yet, Rawls's conception of primary goods is a proof where justice as fairness is referenced in "practical or empirical anthropology" (Höffe, 1984, p. 105). Nevertheless, Höffe maintains, is that the significant idea here is that this rational and prudential choice is not reliant on Kant. As he puts it, "Prudential precepts represent (pragmatic) hypothetical imperatives, not categorical imperatives; since they are heteronomous and arise from considerations of our own well-being, they represent the very opposite of Kant's moral principle of autonomy" (Höffe, 1984, p. 105).

Nevertheless, Rawls maintains the idea that the principle of justice is to be applied to institutions solely on the basis of general information: "we try to work out what rational legislators suitably constrained by the veil of ignorance, and in this sense impartial, would enact to realise the conceptions of justice. Ideal legislators do not vote their interests" (TJ, p. 251). Strictly speaking, if the principles of justice are not the outcome of rational choice, these principles in the original position must not justify rational selection by free and moral individuals. Rawls modifies the concept of rationality in a broad sense; the crucial feature of justice as fairness is to think of the parties in the original position as rational and mutually disinterested. In addition to this, Audard (2007), Freeman (2007), and Pogge (2007), who are Rawlsian, explicitly mention that this claim is not so. For instance, as Audard clarifies it, "the parties in this initial situation...are artificial persons, clearly distinct from existing citizens...One common mistake made by critics is to treat them as real persons, not as constructs in a device of representation...The parties are representatives who act as trustees or guardians entrusted with citizens' most important interests" (Audard, 2007, p. 84). It is clearly important to note that there is a distinction between the parties in the original position and the actual persons.

In his essay, "On the Kantian Interpretation of Rawls's Theory," H.E. Mason (1976) again explains why Rawls's Kantianism is a problem. As we saw above, Johnson (1974, p. 58) claims that Rawls's theory is the "opposite" of Kant's, and though Mason makes some of the same arguments, he concludes that "rational persons behind the veil of ignorance in Rawls's original position cannot be regarded as Kantian noumenal selves autonomously imposing principles upon themselves" (Mason, 1976, p. 51). However, Rawls himself in many places in TJ acknowledges that:

The description of the original position interprets the point of view of noumenal selves, or what it means to be a free and equal rational being. Our nature as such beings is displayed when we act from the principles we would choose when this nature is reflected in the conditions determining the choice. Thus, men exhibit their freedom, their independence from the contingencies of nature and society, by acting in ways they would acknowledge in the original position. (*TJ*, pp. 255-6)

The Rawlsian deliberation on the original position fits Kant's categorical imperative "maximisation" test. This is because, in the same way that a moral agent using Kant's moral law tests a method of reasoning that tests an agent's maxim by reflecting on what it would be like for him if "all" people acted that way, Rawls's method tests justice by forcing thinkers behind the veil of ignorance to reflect on what a society ruled by this notion would be like for them if they were anyone in that society (Hampton, 1980, p. 337). Overall, Rawls bases his political liberal theory on Kant's moral philosophy. Kantian practical reason will clarify this claim. Thus, both strategies modify one person's interest by considering a rational person's interests. Kant and Rawls also believe this method of testing describes the right procedure of practical reason.

3. A Kantian Interpretation of the *Theory of Justice*

More fundamentally, in contrast Johnson's and Levine's main criticisms of Rawls's reliance on Kantianism, I want to note here some of the key thinkers who have strongly acknowledged that Rawls's principles of justice do indeed rely on Kantian ethics.

Rawls mentions that in making their choices, parties are debarred from many items of knowledge about themselves, such that they are not able to psychologically make any rational choice. The reasoning is that such parties can make a rational choice without possessing knowledge of their own primary end, or essential values and attachments. That is consistent with the Kantian idea of autonomy. In essence, Kant outlines this as, namely,

the idea of the will of every rational being as a *will giving universal law*...then although a will that *stands under law* may be bound to this law by means of some interest, a will that is itself the supreme lawgiver cannot possibly, as such, depend upon some interest; for a will that is dependent in this way would itself need yet another law that would limit the interest of its self-love to the condition of a validity for universal law. (*GMM*, 4:432)

Following that valuable quotation, we can understand more clearly what Rawls means by the veil of ignorance when determining the features of the participants in the original position. Since in achieving the principles of justice, they must forget their own particular interest. So, Rawls purposes that individ-

uals consider their identities behind the veil of ignorance so that society's principles of justice can be determined. This is also a political interpretation of Kant's idea of universalizability to arrive at universal and impartial principles (Adu. 2024, pp. 57-60). The position of the legislator or rational being is here to make a law: He or she legislates it, hence their choices are an act of legislation. On that point, I may say that one of the shortcomings of non-Kantian readings of *TJ* is that they do not scrutinise Kant and Rawls adequately. As Modupe O. Adu (2024, p. 60) says that Rawls reformulates of Kantian ethics by "addressing its perceived limitations and offering a more workable framework for applying moral principles to complexities of the contemporary world."

In §40 of *TJ*, Rawls explicitly admits the Kantian interpretation of the original position within its veil of ignorance form. It is true when he starts to expand the argument of the initial position, he uses Kant's philosophical argument. Rawls himself develops his link with Kant's thought in the revised notion of the original position as a condition of rational choice under the veil of ignorance (Wolff, 1977, p. 112). Rawls remains faithful to the Kantian interpretation until the end of the section: "the original position may be viewed, then, as a procedural interpretation of Kant's conception of autonomy and the categorical imperative" (*TJ*, p. 226). The main point here is that in the original position, he posits a moral person who constructs a "device of representation" designed to impart the principles of justice. In Rawls's original position, such people should forget about their particular identities and do not know who they are in the initial position, even being ignorant of their conceptions of the good. But these persons in the initial position know they also have a capacity for a sense of justice. In addition to this, in "Fairness to Goodness," Rawls (1999b, p. 536) points out that the parties' conditions in the original position are constructed on the grounds of two basic elements, which are that (a) the initial agreement must be unanimous, and (b) the parties, with their conceptions of the good, must be treated fairly. Nonetheless, Rawls's social contract theory is not *modus vivendi* since he has a different perspective on the social contract tradition; thus his procedure of justice as fairness has stability. For this reason, Rawls has failed to engage sufficiently with the communitarian objections. Rawls's reply is that "the significance of the original position lies in the fact that it is a device of representation or, alternatively a thought-experiment for the purpose of public and self-clarification" (Rawls, 2001, p. 17). That means that the original position is to be accepted as a device of representation in terms of Rawls's thought. Following the Kantian meaning, what Rawls proposes is that parties in the original position are deprived of any knowledge of themselves as particular agents. At this point, non-Kantian readings of *TJ* have misread the essence and intent of Rawls's original position by insisting that there is no fundamental correlation

between the Kantian sense of the autonomous person and the essential characteristics of these parties. Thus, Kantian moral agents would agree with this argument.

For instance, Sandel (*Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 1982) objects to Rawls's political method because it relies on Kantian morality and individuals. Sandel's fundamental thesis is that Rawls's theory of justice and its assumptions are based on the Kantian idea of the self as autonomous chooser of private ends and values because the parties have to choose a conception of justice and its principles in the original position. It does not matter what social position I find myself in because I know nothing about which specific identity I have: "I" could be anyone in my society. For Kant, human beings who have allowed their desires to define their objects of pursuit first have enslaved their will to these objects and are, thus, able to act only heteronomously, whereas the moral agent who acts solely from a law *he gives himself* is the complete determinant of all the actions he takes, and thus acts *freely and autonomously* (Hampton, 1980, p. 337). In her interpretation, Hampton acknowledges that, in this case, Rawls is following the Kantian attitude in identifying "justice" as Hampton finds a valuable similarity between Kant and Rawls. Firstly, in a similar way to Kant, Rawls states that a moral agent, according to the principles of justice, is to be described by looking at what sort of action an autonomous, rational person would regard as moral after pursuing the appropriate form of practical reasoning. In this respect, Hampton accepts that there is a similarity between the Rawlsian method of the original position and the "universalisation" method of the Kantian categorical imperative (Hampton, 1980, p. 337). Rawls's notion of justice forces the deliberator (under the veil of ignorance) to consider what a society ruled by this conception would be like for him if he were anyone in that society. Both Kant and Rawls regard this kind of universalisation procedure as descriptive of the correct operation of our practical reason. Hence, both procedures turn one's own interests into a single perspective that takes into account the interest of every rational agent. In *TJ*, Rawls himself says that he draws from Kant's approach in many respects, especially: "The person's choice as a noumenal self I have assumed to be a collective one" (*TJ*, p. 257). Here he suggests a Kantian method for understanding the contract argument, for instance:

The description of the original position interprets the point of view of noumenal selves, or what it means to be a free and equal rational being. Our nature as such beings is displayed when we act from the principles we would choose when this nature is reflected in the conditions determining choice. Thus, men exhibit their freedom, their independence from the contingencies of nature and society, by acting in ways they would acknowledge in the original position. (*TJ*, pp. 255-6)

Hampton concludes that Rawls was more Kantian than he realised. To interpret Rawls's Kantianism and its effects, Hampton (1980, p. 315) analyses the way in which Rawls's genuine, non-contractarian selection procedure provides a highly Kantian justification for his conception of justice.

Furthermore, I want to emphasise the importance of prioritising right over good in Kant's and Rawls's theory, which Johnson ignores when challenging Kantianism. Some modern liberals reject the utilitarian approach and follow Kant's argument that utilitarianism does not take into account distinctions between persons. Kantian liberals like Rawls do not sympathise with the feature of the utilitarian view of justice and prefer deontological ethics that values rights more. For Rawls and other Kant supporters speak more of the priority of liberty, emphasising "basic rights and liberties" species by a list: freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, association, that cannot be sacrificed for the general welfare or equality of opportunity. At that point, Rawls formulates two principles of justice: The first principle of justice is based on the principle of equal basic liberties that is to be expressed in the political institutions, whereas the second principle embodies priority to economic constitutions. That is why Rawls mentions that the theory of justice as fairness is not utilitarianism, but a deontological which does not specify the good independently from the right or does not interpret the right as maximising the good" (*TJ*, p. 26). It is assumed that justice as fairness within deontological theory characterises the rightness of institutions and acts independently from their consequences. According to Rawls, "each person possesses an inviolability predicated on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override" (*TJ*, p. 3). Justice's rights are not negotiable or susceptible to social interests (*TJ*, pp. 3-4). Maximising general prosperity has been replaced by morality that prioritises individual rights. Even Kantian liberals today need an explanation of rights without utilitarian assumptions. More importantly, Rawls, who has adapted that subject to contemporary political and social philosophy, expressly discusses it.

After the first scepticism understanding Rawls's Kantianism, the first reactions to this scepticism came from Stephen L. Darwall. In his 1976 essay "A Defence of the Kantian Interpretation," Darwall provides his first investigation of Rawls's Kantianism and supports a Kantian interpretation of Rawls's theory of justice, contrary to Johnson's claim. Darwall argues for a Kantian interpretation of Rawls's theory and directly addresses Johnson's misinterpretation. Darwall believes that Johnson made a mistake in his identification of the Rawlsian usage of the categorical imperative and autonomy because the principles of justice may still connect with the Kantian interpretation. Darwall disagrees with Johnson's distinction between Rawls's party in the original position and Kant's autonomy, saying Johnson's conclusion is erroneous. Darwall believes that one may think that the choice of principles in the initial position may

be accepted as a heteronomous choice, but the decision of actual rational beings, not directly in the original position, to act within the frame of principles is based on an autonomous decision. Thus, these actions on the principles are autonomous. Darwall writes: "Thus, if a rational being chooses to act on principles which would be acceptable to him if he were under the veil of ignorance...such a choice is by no means a choice on the basis of his interests and thus is not, on those grounds, a heteronomous choice" (Darwall, 1976, p.166). The veil of ignorance provides a methodological instrument for abstraction, according to Rawls, as the original position is a device of representation. It is vital to emphasise that Darwall's argument simply shows that Kantian argumentation can still be applied to justice. There is a connection between knowledge about the conditions of justice and human beings. Although the concepts of justice may not be universal, they are applicable to all autonomous agents who are rational under justice. Darwall deals with Johnson's critique, asserting that Johnson misinterprets the Kantian pure practical reason and Rawlsian rationality. "The core of Rawls's invocation of Kant in support of his theory is that there is a Kantian justification for the limits on choice of principles imposed in the original position," Darwall adds (1976, p. 165). The reasonableness of Rawls's theory of justice stems from the universal understanding that self-interest serves as a fundamental starting point. Additionally, in his 1980 essay "Is there a Kantian foundation of Rawlsian justice," Darwall goes to extend on this claim in an unconventional manner:

The complaint that the parties are assumed to be self-interested is a red herring in any case. Because of the veil of ignorance, the original position is not a perspective of self-interest but rather of an interest in selves or individuals as such. The assumption of self-interested motivation plays no essential role. The same principles would be chosen, and the same arguments for them found convincing, were the parties not assumed to be self-interested, but to be completely other-interested. (Darwall, 1980, p. 340)

According to this quote, it holds that the outcomes (principles of justice) are the same regardless of whether the agent is self-interested or other-interested. In brief, Darwall's response to criticism of Rawls's misinterpretation of autonomy is acceptable. His fundamental contention is that subsequent judgments to uphold the principles of justice in ordinary life are autonomous in the Kantian sense; even if the decisions could be formed in the original position, they may have been seen as heteronomous. According to Darwall's defence, the autonomous decision to adhere to heteronomous principles is in line with Kant's viewpoint. Similarly, Chaly (2015, p. 148) notes that even while the people in the original position make judgments based on heteronomous personal interests, Kantians regard decisions to stay connected to justice in everyday life as autonomous. For example, Chaly (2015, pp. 151-2) points out that it is possible

to conclude that “rational beings would make the decisions protecting their rationality and autonomy (which are, of course, inseparable for Kantian beings) against possible claims of empirical inclinations that will later in various contingent proportions become part of their natures. This would certainly mean treating not only humanity, but also any other form of reasonable being, as an end in itself.”

More crucially, Paul Guyer’s (2018) statement appears more essential than Johnson or Levine. He analyses Rawls’s theory in relation to Kant’s political writings and moral philosophy. In his article “Primary Goods and Categories of Right: Rawls and Kant,” Guyer (2018, p. 581) notes that Rawls’s theory applies only to Kant’s moral philosophy and not to his political thought as explained in his “Doctrine of Right” in *the Metaphysics of Morals*. Because, here, Guyer argues that Kant’s political philosophy, which is associated with his principles of the innate right to freedom, private acquired right, and public right, clarifies the relationship between Rawls’s principles of justice and Kant’s idea of basic liberties and primary goods. This claim will be fascinating to discuss in my research. One reason commentators can dismiss Rawls’s Kantianism is that they focus on his moral philosophy rather than the relationship between moral and political philosophy. Guyer (2018) argue that Rawls’s political theory seeks to deepen Kantian equality. They argue that Kant’s classical liberal political works might be understood as liberal egalitarian.

Nicholas Tampio’s 2007 article “Rawls and the Kantian Ethos” contributes to this debate. Tampio attempts to explain how Rawls interprets and modifies Kant’s legacy. He also examines how Rawls conceptualises four Kantian elements: “the identification of the problem, the engagement with common sense, the construction of principles, and the authentication of principles” (Tampio, 2007, p. 79). Like Kant, Rawls develops the scope of justice by drawing out a certain mode of reasoning, according to Tampio. The goal is to “uncover the concepts and principles latent in our conceptualisation of the individual as rational and reasonable” (Tampio, 2007, p. 93). Thus, “a theory of moral sentiments” might characterise the reasonable, according to Rawls (*TJ*, p. 44). Tampio adds that “Rawls is establishing a purely Kantian basis, it appears that his foundational is substantially beholden to Kant,” but this does not mean he is (Tampio, 2007, pp. 79-102). Overall, Tampio’s discussion of Kantianism is unclear. In his essay, Tampio acknowledges Rawls’s Kantianism and contrasts the early and late Rawls. He also considers Rawls’s late political position, which no longer has a Kantian base. He also aims to defend Rawls’s position from communitarians like Sandel and leading Kant scholars like Larry Krasnoff, and Allen Wood, who argue that Rawls misinterprets Kantian moral doctrine when he proposes ideas like the “CI-procedure.” Contemporary “Enlightenment” arguments are also influenced by Rawls’s interpretation of Kant. According to Wood,

“Kant’s ethical thought...exercises such a strong and continuing influence on us that replacing commonly accepted ideas about it with more accurate and less oversimplified ones might help to transform our conception of our own history and of ourselves as heirs of the Enlightenment” (Wood, 1999, p. 14; Tampio, 2007, p. 82). At that moment, Rawls is mostly responsible for Kant’s misrepresentation (Krasnoff, 1999, p. 400; Wood, 1999, pp. 374-5). Tampio disagrees with Wood and believes that Rawls can revive the Kantian tradition for such heirs of the Enlightenment. Kant’s motto for the Enlightenment was “have the guts to apply your own understanding!” (Kant, 1784, 8:37). Tampio asserts that Rawls attempts to implement this discourse with bravery while he establishes political methodologies relevant to late modernity. More importantly, Tampio states that “Rawls maintains, however, that he is Kantian when he refashions Kant’s ideas or creates new ones. For Rawls, the Kantian ethos (or spirit) impels us to exercise in our time the philosophical courage that Kant exercised in the eighteenth century” (Tampio, 2007, p. 100). The fundamental point of Tampio’s defence is that “Rawls considers a critical intellectual sensibility (or ethos), rather than a specific doctrine (e.g., the categorical imperative), as the most valuable component of Kant’s legacy” (Tampio, 2007, p. 79).

Thus, Rawls builds his political theory on a Kantian moral basis. Ana Marta González (2005, pp. 152-3) states that Rawls attempts to make Kant’s moral theory more reasonable “partly by putting more emphasis on Kant’s ethical writings other than the *Groundwork* and partly by bringing Kant down to earth, relating his moral theory closer to modern culture.” The Kantian interpretation of Rawls’s theory allows us to see Kant’s ethics in liberal democratic society’s political philosophy. I claim that Rawls’s theory of “justice as fairness” fills the gaps in Kantian moral theory’s political philosophy. Rawls stays Kantian. Kant’s moral theory requires “that there is no such sequence of given objects establishing the initial principles of right and justice among free and equal moral persons,” according to Rawls (1999a, p. 305). He recognises free and equal people in a normative sense, following Kant. Rawls’s Kantian conception of the free and equal moral person has had a major impact on classical liberal understanding of individual freedom, particularly its role in political justification. Namely, Rawls says, “the notion of morality as based on the rational choice among free and equal persons is the true contribution of Kant” (Rawls, 1999a, p. 305).

Conclusion

In this article, I aimed to show Rawls’s link with Kant in its most basic form. In the light of the current literature, we obtain a general impression of Rawls’s Kantian framework. It appears that (a) there are disagreements between

interpretations of whether the first Rawls owes a debt to Kant or not. It is evident from the literature that some scholars have classified arguments as acceptable or inappropriate and addressed the Kantian basis of Rawls's principles of justice in their own writings. These arguments have been examined comparatively and respectively. This analysis of the literature primarily purposes to illustrate how ambiguous Rawls's Kantianism is among interpreters; and (b) the non-Kantian readings of *TJ* (e.g., Johnson, Levine, Höffe, Wolff) have taken issue with Rawls's claim to Kantianism, which Rawls proclaimed. The original critique of Rawls's professed Kantianism revolves around his attempt to reconcile the egoistic-utilitarian motivation with the Kantian normative framework, and this was a frequent theme in Rawls's early criticism. Since they believed that Rawls had radically misunderstood Kant's theory in order to accommodate his views within the framework of Kant's moral philosophy.

I contend that these different perspectives are based on partial interpretations of Kant that are not nuanced, and I contribute significantly to the literature; Rawls is not responsible for this flaw. However, I think that this kind of interpretation is insufficient to support the Kantianism of Rawls's intellectual development. I should also note that there is a similar stereotyped view of Kantianism shared by both groups who believe Rawls is a Kantian and those who do not, as discussed in this study. Ultimately, the most important criticisms of Rawls's theory stem from their (mis)understanding of Kant.

References

1. Adu, M. O. (2024). Immanuel Kant's Socio-Ethical Philosophy and Its Refinement by John Rawls. *APPON Philosophical Quarterly*, 3 (3). pp. 53-62. Available at. <https://acjoi.org/index.php/apponquarterly/article/view/6451/6244> (Accessed: 08 July 2025).
2. Audard, C. (2007). *John Rawls*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
3. Budde, K. (2007). Rawls on Kant: Is Rawls a Kantian or Kant a Rawlsian? *European Journal of Political Theory*, 6 (3), pp. 339-358.
4. Chaly, V. (2015). An Interpretation of Rawls's Kantian Interpretation. *Con-Textos Kantianos, International Journal of Philosophy*, 1, pp. 142-155.
5. Cekić, N. (2022). Was Rawls a Kantian? *Prolegomena*, 21 (1), pp. 41-58. Available at: URL: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/404310> (Accessed: 05 April 2023).
6. Darwall, S. L. (1976). A Defence of the Kantian Interpretation. *Ethics*, 86 (2), pp. 164-170.
7. Darwall, S. L. (1980). Is there a Kantian foundation of Rawlsian justice. in: G Blocker and E. H. Smith (ed.), *John Rawls's Theory of Justice*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 311-345.

8. Davidson, A. I. (1985). Is Rawls a Kantian? *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 66, pp. 48-77.
9. Dworkin, R. (1989,1973). The Original Position. *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 40 (3), pp. 500-533.
10. Freeman, S. (2003). Introduction. in S. Freeman (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Rawls*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-61.
11. Guyer, P. (2018). Principles of Justice, Primary Goods and Categories of Right: Rawls and Kant. *Kantian Review*, Volume 23 (4). pp.581-613.
12. González, A. M. (2005). John Rawls and the new Kantian Moral Theory. in Thom Brooks and Fabian Freyenhagen, (ed.) *The Legacy of John Rawls*, London: Continuum, pp. 152-176.
13. Grcic, J. M. (1983). Kant and Rawls: Contrasting Conceptions of Moral Theory. *J. Value Inquiry*, 17, pp. 235-240.
14. Hampton, J. (1980). Contracts and Choices: Does Rawls Have a Social Contract Theory? *The Journal of Philosophy*, 77 (6), pp. 315-338.
15. Hampton, J. (1989). Should Political Philosophy Be Done Without Metaphysics? *Ethics*, 99, 4, pp. 791-814.
16. Hoffe, O. (1984). Is Rawls's *Theory of Justice* Really Kantian. *Ratio*, 26 (2), pp. 102-123.
17. Johnson, O. A. (1974). The Kantian Interpretation. *Ethics*, 85 (1), pp. 58-66.
18. Kant, I. (1785) [1998]. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. M. Gregor (trans. and ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
19. Kant, I. (1784) [1996]. What is Enlightenment? *Practical Philosophy*, Mary J. Gregor (ed.) New York: Cambridge University Press.
20. Kant, I. (1797) [1996]. *The Metaphysics of Morals*. M. Gregor (trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
21. Korsgaard, C. (1996). *Creating the Kingdom of Ends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
22. Krasnoff, L. (1998). Consensus, Stability, and Normativity in Rawls's Political Liberalism. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 95 (6), pp. 269-292.
23. Levine, A. (1974). Rawls's Kantianism. *Social Theory and Practice*, 3 (1), pp. 47-63.
24. Mason, H. E. (1976). On the Kantian Interpretation of Rawls's Theory. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 1, pp. 47-55.
25. Pogge, T. (2007). *John Rawls: His Life and Theory of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
26. Rawls, J. (1971) [1999]. *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
27. Rawls, J. (1999a) [1975]. A Kantian Conception of Equality. in John Rawls *Collected papers*, S. Freeman (ed.) London: Harvard University Press, pp. 254-267.
28. Rawls, J. (1999b) [1975]. Fairness to Goodness. in John Rawls *Collected papers*, S. Freeman (ed.) London: Harvard University Press, pp. 267-286.

29. Rawls, J. (2001). *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. E. Kelly (ed.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
30. Sandel, M. (1982). *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
31. Scanlon, T. M. (1973). Rawls's Theory of Justice. *The University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 121 (5), pp. 1020-1069.
32. Tampo, N. (2007). Rawls and the Kantian Ethos. *Polity*, 39 (1), pp. 79-102. Available at: URL: <https://faculty.fordham.edu/tampo/Tampo%20-%20Rawls%20and%20the%20Kantian%20Ethos.pdf> (Accessed: 06 August 2022).
33. Yang, H. (2025). From Moral Philosophy to Reflective Judgment: Rawls as a Successor to Kant, Reconceptualising Cross-Border Academic Mobility in the Interdisciplinary Research Agenda, pp 34-42. 40. Available at: https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/repo/ouka/all/101334/RCBAMIRA_all.pdf#page=54 (Accessed: 15 September 2025).
34. Wolff, R. P. (1977). *Understanding Rawls: A Reconstruction and Critique of A Theory of Justice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
35. Wood, A. (1999). *Kant's Ethical Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

A Meticulous Evaluation:
Can We Really Think of Melayê Cizîrî as a Philosopher?

Titiz Bir Değerlendirme:
Melayê Cizîrî'yi Gerçekten Bir Filozof Olarak Düşünebilir miyiz?

Merve Arslan

Dr., Şırnak Üniversitesi/İlahiyat Fakültesi/Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Bölümü, mervearslan@sirnak.edu.tr,
ORCID: 0009-0001-6218-6790

Article Information

Article Type

Research Article

Date Received

09.12.2025

Date Accepted

24.12.2025

Date Published

31 December 2025

Plagiarism Checks: Yes, Turnitin.

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.
(Merve Arslan)

Conflicts of Interest: The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.

Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0 license.



Cite As | Atıf

Makale Bilgisi

Makale Türü

Araştırma Makalesi

Geliş Tarihi

09.12.2025

Kabul Tarihi

24.12.2025

Yayın Tarihi

31 Aralık 2025

Benzerlik Taraması: Evet, Turnitin.

Etik Beyan

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.
(Merve Arslan)

Çıkar Çatışması: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır.

Abstract

Melayê Cizîrî is one of the leading figures in 16th-century Sufi literature. Melayê Cizîrî's only known work, the *Diwan*, explores the concepts of Islamic Sufism from a literary perspective and in poetic language. The central theme of the *Diwan* is divine love. In connection with this central theme, the work also explores prophetic love in literary language. In exploring these themes, Melayê Cizîrî draws on sources of Sufi thought, such as Ibn Arabi, Mansur Al-Hallaj, and Jami. Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan* is currently being studied and interpreted from diverse perspectives in numerous fields, including history, philosophy, sociology, and astronomy. As Melayê Cizîrî uses philosophical concepts in his work, some commentaries also treat his *Diwan* as a philosophical work. How can we assess these interpretations?

With this motivation, this study approaches Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan* from a philosophical perspective. How and in what contexts does Melayê Cizîrî use philosophical concepts in *the Diwan*? How is the relationship of these concepts to the metaphysics of love established? Is Melayê Cizîrî's use of concepts consistent? In this case, how can we locate Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan* in the history of thought? Relying on these questions, this research aims to frame the philosophical concepts in Melayê Cizîrî's work and to reassess his place in the history of thought.

Keywords: History of Philosophy, Islamic Thought, Sufi Tradition, Melayê Cizîrî, *Diwan*

Öz

Melayê Cizîrî, 16. yüzyıl tasavvuf edebiyatının önde gelen isimlerinden biridir. Melayê Cizîrî'nin İslam tasavvuf kavramlarını edebi bir bakış açısıyla ve şiirsel bir dille ele aldığı bilinen tek eseri *Diwan*'dır. *Diwan*'ın ana teması ilahi aşktır. Eser, bu merkezi temayla bağlantılı olarak, peygamber aşkını da edebi bir dille ele alır. Bu temaları ele alırken Melayê Cizîrî, İbn Arabi, Hallac-i Mansur ve Molla Cami gibi tasavvuf düşüncesinin kaynaklarından yararlanır. Melayê Cizîrî'nin *Diwan*'ı, günümüzde tarih, felsefe, sosyoloji ve astronomi de dahil olmak üzere birçok alanda farklı bakış açılarından incelenmekte ve yorumlanmaktadır. Melayê Cizîrî, eserinde bazı felsefi kavramlara yer verdiği gibi, bazı yorumlar da *Diwan*'ını felsefi bir eser olarak ele almaktadır. Bu yorumları nasıl değerlendirebiliriz?

Bu çalışma, Melayê Cizîrî'nin *Diwan*'ına felsefi bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşmaktadır. Melayê Cizîrî, *Diwan*'ında felsefi kavramları nasıl ve hangi bağlamlarda kullanmıştır? Bu kavramların aşk metafiziğiyle ilişkisi nasıl kurulmuştur? Melayê Cizîrî'nin kavram kullanımı tutarlı mıdır? Bu durumda, Melayê Cizîrî'nin *Diwan*'ını düşünce tarihinde nasıl konumlandırabiliriz? Bu araştırma, bu sorulardan yola çıkarak Melayê Cizîrî'nin eserindeki felsefi kavramları çerçevelemeyi ve düşünce tarihindeki yerini yeniden değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Felsefe Tarihi, İslam Düşüncesi, Sufi Gelenek, Melayê Cizîrî, *Diwan*

1. Introduction

This article discusses whether Melayê Cizîrî is a philosopher, focusing on his work *Diwan*. Melayê Cizîrî is a prominent figure of the 16th or 17th centuries, contributing to Sufi literature. The exact time period during which he lived is unclear because the available evidence is sufficient on this point. However, according to the indications of various writers and religious scholars who lived after him and left their works to us today, it can be understood that he lived between the 16th and 17th centuries. Considering the social and intellectual world in which he lived, it can be said that he grew up in an environment that focused on explaining and practicing Islam (Öz, 2023, p. 39).

In this context, Melayê Cizîrî's place can be considered within Islamic thought. As evidence for this, one can take his masterpiece. His only known work is *Diwan*, which explores the concepts of Islamic Sufism through poetic language. *Diwan* is structured according to the literary conventions of couplets and various compositional styles. In fact, the work had not previously existed as a single book. That is why Melayê Cizîrî's words were preserved in the form memorized in madrasahs and through couplets recited by the public. In 1904, German researcher Martin Hartmann pioneered the compilation and unification of *Diwan* in Berlin. Therefore, *Diwan* in our hands today is based on the 1904 manuscript compiled.

The main topic of the *Diwan* is divine love. In connection with this central theme, the work also explores prophetic love in a literal sense. From a Sufi perspective, divine love in the work stands out as the most fundamental concept that explains the creation and meaning of all existence. The life and meaning are grounded in the existence of the 'One' or God (Allah). The notion of divine love reflects this central theme.

In framing the central theme in *Diwan*, for example, Nesim Doru, Abdurrahim Alkış, and Ruhullah Öz provide profound analyses. To be more specific, Nesim Doru has conducted meticulous studies regarding Melayê Cizîrî's place in Islamic thought. (Doru, 2012) Abdurrahim Alkış has analysed the Sufi concepts in Melayê Cizîrî's *Dîvân* (Alkış, 2014). Last but not least, from the discipline of kalâm, Ruhullah Öz provides a detailed analysis of Melayê Cizîrî's thoughts on divine love, marifah, and ontology (Öz, 2019; 2023; 2024). These studies are the core examinations of Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan* and its central theme in the literature.

As a valuable resource in Islamic thought, the *Diwan* is studied at the intersections of various disciplines, including religion, ontology, epistemology, philosophy, sociology, morality, history, cosmology, and astronomy today. It is

because *Diwan* covers applicable concepts in the axes of Islamic studies, Sufi tradition, kalām, and other social sciences. There are also some philosophical concepts used in relation to the main topic in *Diwan*.

Indeed, it can be thought that Melayê Cizîrî is aware of philosophical notions and attempts to use them to explain divine love in his book. What are these notions? To what extent are they appropriate to support describing the central theme within the text? Perhaps, it could be helpful to engage in philosophical notions and approaches when explaining certain religious concepts or topics. Yet, even if the usage of philosophical terms works for delivering the ideas and issues in a study, how can we claim that this work is a philosophical work in general?

In recent years, there have been numerous interpretations on Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*. Among those connected to philosophy, some interpretations argue that *Diwan* is a philosophical work and that, in turn, Melayê Cizîrî is a philosopher. It may be said that Melayê Cizîrî's aim in *Diwan* is to express the divine love clearly for those who follow the Sufi tradition. He can use philosophical terms, figures, and approaches to achieve this aim. However, relying on this fact merely, how can we accept that Melayê Cizîrî is indeed a philosopher? With this central question, this paper seeks to relocate Melayê Cizîrî's place in the literature by highlighting his significance in the history of Islamic thought.

Structurally, the paper has some subsections to discuss the main thesis. Firstly, it examines the intellectual background of Melayê Cizîrî, including his *Diwan*. After taking into account these grounds, the paper delves into the philosophical notions in *Diwan*. In the study, the central philosophical concepts are chosen as life, creation, the one, reason (wisdom), and knowledge. For each concept, the paper provides indications from *Diwan* and later attempts to compare these expressions with their traditional philosophical usage.

A Closer analysis reveals that *Diwan* does not engage in traditional philosophy beyond a brief mention of its concepts. For this reason, in the discussion part, the paper raises the question: Can we really claim Melayê Cizîrî as a philosopher? To discuss that inquiry, some general attitudes in the traditional understandings of philosophy will be referred to. At the end of the discussion, it will be pointed out that Melayê Cizîrî's work is not a philosophical study, nor is Melayê Cizîrî a philosopher. This questioning underscores the importance of redefining Melayê Cizîrî's place in the history of Islamic thought for further studies on his work.

2. Framing the Intellectual Background of Melayê Cizîrî and *Diwan*

This part aims to grasp the intellectual bases of Melayê Cizîrî and his *Diwan*. If we generally understand Melayê Cizîrî's intellectual roots, it could help us discuss more clearly whether he is truly a philosopher in the next step. With this purpose, let us begin by considering the intellectual background of Melayê Cizîrî by means of *Diwan*. After checking Melayê Cizîrî's primary resources, we will outline the bases of his book.

First and foremost, during Melayê Cizîrî's lifetime, between the 16th and 17th centuries, significant intellectual movements take place worldwide. Following the Age of Discovery, the Renaissance marks the rise of humanism. Then, all of this leads to transformations and reforms in religious understanding. In this period, Anatolia is under the rule of Ottoman Empire. However, while keeping pace with global developments, the primary focus of the Ottoman education system is on Islamic studies at that time.

In the Ottoman education system, madrasas (religious schools) serve as fundamental educational institutions, focusing on religious studies and providing university-level education (Demir, 2013). Among the madrasas, the Red Madrasa (Medresa Sor), where Melayê Cizîrî has an association, stands out as a vital center in the Southeast part of Anatolia. This is because the Cizre district, including the Red Madrasa, is part of Anatolia but also a crossroads of Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Therefore, Cizre has a special intellectual environment open to all kinds of interactions in the fields of science, culture, art, and literature.

According to the general resources, Melayê Cizîrî appears to be quite interested in teaching religion and religious sciences in Cizre. He has a deep education in religious studies. In accordance with this, he works as a teacher at different madrasas, especially in the Southeast part of Anatolia. Until his death, Melayê Cizîrî teaches religious sciences at the Red Madrasa. As a teacher, he is very interested in natural and social sciences, such as math, geometry, philosophy, and logic (Öz, 2023, p. 42).

In addition to being a teacher at a madrasa, Melayê Cizîrî is also connected to the Sufi tradition. When describing the divine love, he is influenced by the thoughts of Ibn Arabi, Mansur Al-Hallaj, Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, and the poems or mystic expressions of Hafez-i Shirazi and Jami. For example, there is an enormous effect of Ibn Arabi with his theory of *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of being) in *Diwan*. In attempting to explain the systematic unity that describes the relationship among God, the universe, and humanity, Melayê Cizîrî draws heavily on Ibn Arabi. In addition to Ibn Arabi, Melayê Cizîrî draws on the thoughts and mystical expressions of various Islamic and Sufi thinkers in his *Diwan* (Öz, 2023, pp. 42-43).

Melayê Cizîrî, as a figure in this intellectual environment, combines his ideas about divine love in a literary style, in the form of a collection of poems. The divine love is a sort of unity between all loves on the earth. In addition to his education in religious studies and schools, Melayê Cizîrî draws on his readings in philosophy and logic to express what he grasps through the divine love. In doing this, literature helps him to describe the words as much as he can. By using different styles in his poems, he creates unity around the central theme in the *Diwan*. To give an example of his writing:

“Eşkâl û xetên daîreê nuqteê ‘ilm in
Ev neqş û misalên di xeyalatê ‘edem da” (Cizîrî, 2021, p.282).

“These patterns and examples that appear in the realm of nothingness
Are each a point of knowledge from your eternal divine knowledge.”¹

As can be seen, Melayê Cizîrî writes his words in Kurdish. This is an important indicator of his style. Compared to the other Sufi representatives of his time, he chose to write his poems in Kurdish. Typically, in madrasas, Sufis write their scientific works in Arabic and their literary studies in Persian as a general practice at that time (Öz, 2023, pp. 47-48). Despite Persian culture's dominant influence, Melayê Cizîrî's preference for writing in Kurdish is a critical detail. It signifies his desire to preserve cultural heritage by telling the story of the divine love in their own language.

For the framing of the intellectual atmosphere that was influential during the century in which Melayê Cizîrî lived, an attempt has been made to understand which views influenced him. Generally, it can be said that Melayê Cizîrî is firmly committed to Islamic sciences, gives lectures in this vein, and is influenced by madrasa culture. However, it can also be assumed that, as a representative of the Sufi tradition, Melayê Cizîrî follows and tries to understand those who had attempted to describe the divine love before him. In this case, how does Melayê Cizîrî reflect this intellectual background in his *Diwan*? Is he able to put forward ideas sufficient to conduct philosophical analyses? The following section will examine the philosophical concepts used in the *Diwan* and their role in answering this question.

3. Philosophical Concepts in the *Diwan*

In *Diwan*, one might clearly grasp that there are some philosophical concepts. Melayê Cizîrî uses these concepts to narrate his understanding of divine love. In this regard, he notes life, creation, the one, reason/wisdom, and

¹ The author makes the translations of the couplets in this paper. The Turkish translation is considered. Alongside the original couplets, their English versions are provided.

knowledge in *Diwan*. Primarily, one can suppose that his usage of those concepts shows his ability to be on the way to philosophical thinking. However, when we analyse the book as a whole, we can conclude that Melayê Cizîrî aims to use these concepts solely to express his understanding of theological love. To discuss this point further, we need to examine the philosophical terms in *Diwan*. In doing this, we will frame their content in Melayê Cizîrî's thoughts. We shall begin considering the main philosophical terms.

Firstly, one of the frequently encountered concepts in *Diwan* that can be considered related to philosophy is 'life'. Melayê Cizîrî includes many expressions regarding the meaning and creation of life in his masterpiece. In fact, how life arose in the universe and what the meaning of life is have been among the most fascinating topics throughout human history. Almost every human being has been part of this inquiry and has sought meaning. When Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan* is read holistically, it becomes clear that he attempts to explain the origin and meaning of life through divine love. With his words:

“Teqada weh fikir hikmet ku çerx û lewleb û bab in
Huwe’l fe’alu la texter bi esbabin we alati

Ezel ‘eynî ebed yek an di deyyûmî di qeyyûmî
Tenezzul tête tefsîlê bi anatin we ewqatî” (Cizîrî, 2021, pp.282-84).

“The divine wisdom decrees that the wheel of fortune turns like this
He is the one who does it; do not be deceived by the tools and causes

In time and space, in eternity and infinity, in His one essence
His knowledge is visible every moment in every detail of the universe”

As can be clearly seen, for Melayê Cizîrî, every detail of life depends on the existence of God. He is the cause of life, the things, time, and space. Connected with life, the second concept related to philosophy in the *Diwan* is 'creation'. The term creation, which can be considered alongside life, is one of the fundamental concepts that helps us discuss how the universe and life may have come into being, whether they were created or not, and how living and non-living things came into existence. In philosophy, the idea of creation is addressed by many philosophers and is frequently examined in fields such as the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of art (Laan, 2022).

As a concept, creation is evaluated in a general sense in the philosophy of religion. From the perspective of the philosophy of religion, creation is not examined based on any particular religion or specific scientific explanation. This can be addressed by researchers who specialize in the theology of a religion. For example, the concept of creation can be examined from an Islamic or Christian theological perspective. In fact, the concept of creation in Melayê Cizîrî's thought

is evaluated from the standpoint of Islamic theology and explained by establishing connections with concepts such as *sudûr*, *hudûs*, etc., in the Sufi tradition. This theological framing indicates that Melayê Cizîrî can be evaluated within the Islamic Sufi approach.

Another philosophical concept in Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan* is the 'one'. Melayê Cizîrî attempts to grasp the 'one' through related Sufi terms such as unity, wholeness, parts, and multiplicity in the universe. Drawing on the Sufi thought, Melayê Cizîrî defines the 'one' through the profound relationship between unity and multiplicity in existence. When reading the related parts, including the concept of the 'one' in *Diwan*, one can sense that he actually possesses philosophical knowledge, for instance, knowing how Plato, Plotinus, and thinkers from the Islamic intellectual tradition interpreted the 'one'.

Fourth, Melayê Cizîrî frequently mentions '*reason*' in *Diwan*. It is one of the main concepts of philosophy. The ancient philosophers use the term 'reason' when describing philosophy. Reasoning is accepted as the central part of making philosophy, for example. On that point, logical reasoning is quite essential. A wise person can think and discuss something consistently and logically. In a nutshell, in the traditional philosophy, reason or reasoning is a tool for thinking (Stewart and Kissel, 2025).

When we examine Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*, we may see that he takes reason in terms of the Sufi tradition. He thinks that reason is not enough to grasp the meaning of time, space, direction, boundary, measure, meaning, spirit, and body. For Melayê Cizîrî, our mind is insufficient to understand those. In this case, reason remains ineffective (Cizîrî, 2021, pp. 112-113). It is because reason cannot grasp the unknown in depth. To Melayê Cizîrî and many Sufi thinkers, only insight can grasp the unknown in existence. In this case, reason is insufficient to realize the deep meaning of the one. Therefore, although the importance of reasoning in the history of thought, Melayê Cizîrî accepts the limited capacity of human reason in line with Sufi tradition (Aminrazavi, 2021).

Lastly, the concept of '*knowledge*' can be considered as a philosophical term in Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*. Knowledge is a central issue in traditional philosophy. Especially with epistemology, knowledge becomes more critical. Such questions arise around epistemology: What is knowledge? What can be the source of it? In the history of philosophy, many philosophers have defined knowledge in various ways or aimed to describe different kinds of knowledge (Steup and Ram, 2025). Considering Melayê Cizîrî's thoughts in *Diwan*, one may realize that he seeks knowledge connected with the divine love. To him, knowledge derives from the divine; it manifests the one, or it is the result of the divine love.

As a consequence, when we analyse Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*, we may discover that it contains philosophical concepts. The main concepts can be seen as life, creation, the one, reason, and knowledge. However, their sense is already bound to the Sufi tradition. Even though he seems to use philosophical terms in his ideas, he does not further articulate them or explore new aspects. All his ideas are rooted in the very nature of Islamic thought. In conclusion, their content and sense ultimately rely on the Sufi tradition.

If we return to the article's main problem, we need to underscore one point. In recent years, research on Melayê Cizîrî in Türkiye has gained momentum. In addition to different symposiums at different academic institutions, we may see many articles in the literature. Undoubtedly, they are valuable works attempting to determine Melayê Cizîrî's value in the scholarly literature. Yet, when examining some comments on Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*, it becomes apparent that these comments aim to connect it to the history of classical philosophy.

Melayê Cizîrî is a madrasa teacher well-versed in philosophical knowledge and a Sufi thinker. His work, the *Diwan*, can be examined in terms of Sufism, kalâm, and philosophy. Comparisons can also be made, particularly with the approaches of some thinkers from the Islamic tradition. Nevertheless, to relate his work to the history of philosophy in the classical sense and to claim that Melayê Cizîrî is a philosopher is a much more serious matter.

That is why this article takes a position. It aims to show that Melayê Cizîrî cannot be considered a philosopher, and that, while his work can be examined in philosophical terms, it must be understood in relation to the Islamic tradition. Returning to the primary objective of this study, we can now discuss why we cannot consider Melayê Cizîrî a classical philosopher. At this point, the following section attempts to justify why Melayê Cizîrî cannot be characterized as a philosopher in the classical sense.

4. Can We Truly Claim Melayê Cizîrî as a Philosopher?

After having a brief examination of the prominent philosophical terms in *Diwan*, one may ask these questions rightly: Can we assume that Melayê Cizîrî has a philosophical study indeed? Or, in other words, can we accept that Melayê Cizîrî does philosophy? On that point, our paper takes a counter standpoint to reassess some earlier interpretations of Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*. It is because, before considering Melayê Cizîrî as a philosopher, one needs first to question what he does in his work.

To begin with our analysis, we must clarify that there is only one original study of Melayê Cizîrî in the literature. *Diwan* is a collection of poetic reflections on love and divinity. Its language is quite intense and full of different, also deep

Sufi expressions, metaphors, and analogies. That is why one may need to double-read the couplets to make them meaningful for themselves. The depth of the study can be appropriate for a Sufi study, perhaps.

When compared to the classical studies by Aristotle, Plato, or Augustine, can we acknowledge that Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan* is a sort of philosophical study? This is the point where our inquiry takes another turn. This is because one may rightly ask: What makes a work philosophy? Perhaps, to answer this, it would be beneficial to consider what philosophy is and the kinds of work philosophers do.

It may be difficult to answer what philosophy means. However, we may point out that philosophy is an activity; it is a way of thinking about certain sorts of questions in detail. As Nigel Warburton puts it, its most distinctive feature is its use of logical argumentation in this questioning. Philosophers engage in the arguments in their philosophical activity. They also examine concepts that the human mind accepts. Yet, again, it seems challenging to answer what philosophy means by looking at what philosophers do (Warburton, 2013, pp. 1-2). On that point, it may be helpful to take some questions of the philosophers as examples:

"The main concern of philosophy is to question and understand very common ideas that all of us use every day without thinking about them. A historian may ask what happened at some time in the past, but a philosopher will ask, 'What is time?' A mathematician may investigate the relations among numbers, but a philosopher will ask, 'What is a number?' A physicist will ask what atoms are made of or what explains gravity, but a philosopher will ask how we can know there is anything outside of our own minds. A psychologist may investigate how children learn a language, but a philosopher will ask, 'What makes a word mean anything?'" (Nagel, 1987, p.5)

As we have tried to illustrate above, intellectual activity in philosophy follows a kind of logical inquiry, consistency, and flow. In addition, queries about life, meaning, and aspects unique to humanity are prominent. However, when we examine Melayê Cizîrî's approach and writings on these matters, we find that he already affirmed his way of explaining the universe created by God. The reason is utterly insufficient in understanding this universe. Because a person who tries to comprehend it can only do so with the heart.

Traditionally, philosophy has been divided into some main areas: metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics, and aesthetics, for instance. When systematically researching a philosopher, we may observe that they engage in many philosophical activities in their works. For instance, Aristotle has phil-

osophical questions about existence, logic, mind, knowledge, ethics, cosmology, etc. Given his thorough analyses of these matters, we may conclude that Aristotle is a systematic philosopher. Aristotle has a system for his studies.

Nevertheless, in Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*, the entire system is permeated by the existence of God from the beginning to the end. It gives Melayê Cizîrî only one room to explain what he understands from this existence. In that case, there is no exploration of the different worlds, meanings, questions, and discussions in a classical sense in his expressions. From that reality, how can we insist that Melayê Cizîrî is a philosopher classically?

As we mentioned earlier, there are some recent interpretations on Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*. For example, Arvas has two comments on Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan* to understand his ideas on ontology and epistemology. Within the context of kalâm, he attempts to uncover the anti-sophist, anti-pantheist, and anti-deist ideas found in the *Diwan* (Öz, 2024, p. 458). In another comment, Arvas examines *Diwan* on the threshold of the dualities of agnosticism-dogmatism, rationalism-empiricism, and idealism-realism (Özdemir, 2025, pp. 51-52). Although Arvas attempts to interpret Melayê Cizîrî's couplets within the framework of classical philosophical understanding, he later accepts that Melayê Cizîrî's understanding of knowledge is based on mystical knowledge and that he created his work through divine love and surrender (Özdemir, 2025, p. 55).

In fact, there is no sign in *Diwan* that Melayê Cizîrî points to the classical philosophy. We may feel that he knows some philosophy and that he uses notions in his couplets to describe his approach to divine love. We may conclude this through our analysis of the concepts as well. In the realm of the concepts Melayê Cizîrî uses, life, creation, the one, reason, and knowledge can be considered philosophical terms. However, the content of these words does not address philosophical discussions at all.

Melayê Cizîrî does not philosophically question life itself. The process of creation, just like the source of life, is attempted to be explained through the divine love, that is, through God's existence, unity, and qualities such as emanation and manifestation in beings. In other words, the concepts he discusses are seen as tools for expressing divine love. On the other hand, reason, or intellect, is quite helpless in the face of intuition and heartfelt understanding. For reason is initially characterized as inadequate for understanding the supreme being, which can only be grasped through the heart. Finally, when Melayê Cizîrî's ideas on knowledge are examined, it becomes clear that while what is meant is knowledge of existence, it is more often knowledge of the divine.

Melayê Cizîrî interprets all the concepts we have touched upon so far from the perspective of the Sufi tradition and Islamic understanding. While these philosophical concepts discussed in the work lack the depth to be directly related to established traditions in the history of philosophy, such as realism or idealism, they are highly amenable to analysis in light of the Sufi tradition's conceptual framework, core representatives, and approaches.

Of course, one may compare Melayê Cizîrî with philosophers or sociologists in an academic manner. Nevertheless, Melayê Cizîrî should not be taken as a philosopher in the end. For example, one study can focus on the comparison between Melayê Cizîrî and Erich Fromm regarding their views on human beings. However, when it comes to a deep discussion of this comparison, one may feel that Melayê Cizîrî has a clear understanding of Sufi tradition from the beginning. It is because, when assessed in terms of classical philosophy, *Diwan* seems to lack questioning, argumentation, and logical thinking. The notion of the human being also remains within the borders of the Sufi thought.

On the grounds of our discussion so far, it can be said that Melayê Cizîrî's ideas, including ontology, epistemology, wisdom, and cosmology, are clearly connected with the Sufi tradition. They cannot be comprehended with the history of philosophy in a classical sense. In conclusion, we could say that Melayê Cizîrî's descriptions in the couplets relate to Islamic thought with the Sufi tradition. Perhaps, it would be meaningful to remind ourselves of Nesim Doru's depiction of Melayê Cizîrî. Doru thinks that Melayê Cizîrî, as a devoted follower of Sufi philosophy and especially the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud (unity of existence), elaborates on the fundamental principles of Sufi metaphysics and, consequently, Sufi cosmology in his work (Doru, 2014).

As we stated at the beginning of the article, Melayê Cizîrî's approach to divine love, his poetic-literary style, and the way he reflects the Sufi tradition, shaped in the social memory of the region's people and expressed in his own language, Kurdish, are quite significant. Therefore, Melayê Cizîrî's *Diwan*, as a valuable work, should be studied from many angles and gain more prominence in the literature. Yet, as we have tried to point out in our article, classifying Melayê Cizîrî as a philosopher by approaching his work in a classical sense, as in the history of philosophy, does not seem to be a very accurate interpretation. For this reason, to position Melayê Cizîrî more firmly in the literature, we can suggest studying his connection to the Sufi tradition and offering richer interpretations from the different perspectives.

Conclusion

This article discusses whether Melayê Cizîrî can be characterized as a philosopher, based on his work, the *Diwan*. Melayê Cizîrî is known as one of the most important scholars in Southeastern Anatolia, active between the 16th and 17th centuries. Only his work, the *Diwan*, has survived to the present day. Although a product of the Sufi tradition, the work is a literary collection of writings laden with profound meanings.

In recent years, *Diwan* has been interpreted from many disciplines, and attempts have been made to enhance its value. However, when examining texts that attempt to analyse *Diwan* from a philosophical perspective and establish its connection to the history of philosophy, it becomes apparent that these texts often try to detach *Diwan* from the Sufi tradition in which it originated and force interpretations. However, *Diwan* itself represents a tradition, and for it to receive the value it deserves, it must not be detached from its context.

Moving on to this aim, our article first attempts to outline Melayê Cizîrî's intellectual background, drawing on his *Diwan*. At the end of the research, it becomes clear that Melayê Cizîrî is deeply rooted in Islamic thought. Then, the article undertakes a content analysis of the philosophical concepts in *Diwan*. It first lists these concepts and then attempts to understand their contexts. The purpose is to accept that Melayê Cizîrî possessed philosophical knowledge, but at the same time, to point out that he could not have been a philosopher.

After working on the concepts, an attempt is made to justify why Melayê Cizîrî could not have been a philosopher in the classical sense. Accordingly, philosophy is the product of intellectual activity, of questioning. However, when we examine Melayê Cizîrî's couplets, we see that, rather than engaging in questioning or intellectual activity, he sets out to describe divine love itself, drawing on concepts from the Sufi tradition. Furthermore, we cannot consider Melayê Cizîrî as a system thinker in the classical sense, or that his ideas contain multi-dimensional concepts capable of opening new horizons.

In conclusion, we face the challenge of repositioning Melayê Cizîrî's style and ideas within the history of thought by his *Diwan*. While we cannot call Melayê Cizîrî a philosopher, we can clarify his place in the literature, particularly within the field of Islamic studies, by stating that he was a mufti of love, faithful to the Sufi understanding within the Islamic intellectual tradition. Such an approach could help build a stronger foundation for future studies on Melayê Cizîrî.

References

1. Aminrazavi, M. (2021). Mysticism in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab.
2. Alkış, A. (2014). *Melayê Cizîrî'nin Dîvânında Tasavvufî Mazmunlar*. İstanbul: Nûbihar.
3. Cizîrî, M. A. (2021). *Dîwan*. Trans. İlhami Sidar, İstanbul: Ayrıntı.
4. Demir, H. (2013). The Islamic madrasas as educational institution. *Journal of Turkish Studies*, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.4627>
5. Doru, N. (2012). *Melayê Cizîrî Felsefî ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri*. İstanbul: Nûbihar.
6. (2014). *Molla Ahmed El-Cezerî (Melayê Cizîrî)'nin Varlık Düşüncesinde İnsanın Ontik Değeri*. Türk Dünyası Bilgeler Zirvesi: Gönül Sultanları Buluşması. Eskişehir: Türk Dünyası Kültür Başkenti Ajansı (TDKB).
7. İbn Arabî, M. (2006). *Fusûsü'l-Hikem*. İstanbul: Kabalcı.
8. Nagel, T. (1987) *What Does It All Mean?: A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
9. Öz, R. (2019). *Sufînin Akidesi (Molla Ahmed El-Cizîrî Örneği)*. Mardin: Şırnak University Press.
10. Öz, R. (2023). *Aşkın Müftüsü Mela: Molla Ahmed El-Cezerî'nin Hayatı ve Görüşleri*. Ankara: Ajans Düş Pınarı.
11. Öz, R. (2024). *Tevhid Aşığı Mela: Melayê Cizîrî'nin Varlık Düşüncesi*. Şırnak: Şırnak University Press.
12. Özdemir, A. (2025). *Hakikat Aşığı Mela: Melayê Cizîrî'nin Bilgi Anlayışı*. Van: Özgür Publishers.
13. Steup, M. & Ram, N. (2025). Epistemology. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2025 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab.
14. Stewart S. & Kissel T. K. (2025). Classical Logic. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2025 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab.
15. Vander Laan, D. (2022). Creation and Conservation. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab.
16. Warburton, N. (2013). *Philosophy: The Basics*. Fifth Edition. London and New York: Routledge.

The Femininity of Truth in Derrida's Spurs

Derrida'nın Mahmuzlar'ında Hakikatin Dişillliği

Canan Süslü

Doktora Pr., İnönü Üniversitesi/Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü/Felsefe Bölümü, cananyurt02@gmail.com,
ORCID: 0009-0002-3033-4813

Article Information

Article Type

Research Article

Date Received

09.09.2025

Date Accepted

14.10.2025

Date Published

31 December 2025

Plagiarism Checks: Yes, Turnitin.

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.
(Canan Süslü)

Conflicts of Interest: The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.

Makale Bilgisi

Makale Türü

Araştırma Makalesi

Geliş Tarihi

09.09.2025

Kabul Tarihi

14.10.2025

Yayın Tarihi

31 Aralık 2025

Benzerlik Taraması: Evet, Turnitin.

Etik Beyan

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.
(Canan Süslü)

Çıkar Çatışması: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır.



Cite As | Atıf

Süslü, Canan (2025). Derrida'nın Mahmuzlar Metninde Hakikatin Dişillliği. *Mebadi International Journal of Philosophy*, (2) 2, 68-83.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18080466>

Abstract

In his work *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, Derrida puts into words an interpretation that provides a clue to the course of the discussion on the basic problem—namely, “what truth is”—that comes to the fore in Nietzsche's text. In *Spurs*, he discusses the relation of truth to both the rational and emotional contexts, using the female image as the best example. The meanings and connotations he attributes to the female image—such as variability, unattainability, distance from authenticity, the inability to reach what should be, and the difficulty of defining a concrete truth—reflect the challenge of describing the impossibility of a constant form of truth within both technical discourse and intellectual-philosophical language. Truth cannot be attained through logical analysis alone, nor can it be attained wholly within the emotional context. Since the history of thought accepts the opposition and irreplaceability of reason and emotion, and bases the power of thought on this, the impossibility of reducing a situation containing two essentially opposing structures to a single definition and foundation determines the essence of the discussion. In that case, what do the multiple connotations and meanings of truth—discussed up to Nietzsche's lifetime—correspond to in his female image? The possibility of this, whether in its literary, artistic, religious, or rational equivalents, will also refer to pluralistic connotations in Derrida's analysis. This study argues that a single form cannot be fixed in terms of either language or art, and discusses Nietzsche's “femininity of truth.”

Keywords: Nietzsche, Derrida, Woman, Style, Reality

Öz

Derrida, *Mahmuzlar: Nietzsche'nin Üslupları* başlığında kaleme aldığı çalışmasında, Nietzsche'nin metninde öne çıkan temel soruna yani hakikatin neliğine dair tartışmanın seyrine dair ipucu olacak bir yorumu dillendirir. Mahmuzlarda hakikatin rasyonel ve duygu bağlamıyla ilişkisini en iyi kadın imgesinde tartışır. Kadın imgesine yüklediği anlam ve imalar temelde değişkenlik, elde edilemezlik, sahiçilikten uzaklık, olması gerekene ulaşamama, somut bir hakikat tanımının güçlüğü vb. hakikatin sabitesinin imkansızlığını hem teknik hem de düşünsel ve felsefi söylem içinde tanımlamanın güçlüğünü yansıtır. Hakikat ne sadece mantıksal çözümleme ne de duygu bağlamında bütün olarak elde edilir. Düşünce tarihi aklı ve duyguyu birbirine karşıtlığı ve birbirinin yerine ikame edilemezliği üzerine kabullenip düşüncenin gücünü buna göre temellendirdiği için özünde karşıt iki yapı barındıran bir durumun tek bir tanım ve dayanağının olmasının olanaksızlığı tartışmanın mahiyetini belirler. O halde Nietzsche'nin yaşadığı zamana kadar tartışılan hakikatin onun kadın imgesindeki çoklu ima ve anlamı neye tekabül etmektedir. Buna dair imkânın ancak edebi, sanatsal, dinsel ve rasyonel karşılığı Derrida'nın analizinde de çoğulcu imalara gönderme yapacaktır. Bu çalışma, Nietzsche'nin hakikatin dişillliği ve tek bir formunun ne dil ne de sanat bakımından sabiteye sığmayacağını tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nietzsche, Derrida, Kadın, Üslup, Gerçeklik

1. Giriş

Kadın kavramının irdelenmesinde gerçeklik, şüphecilik ve düşüncenin kadına dönüşümü gibi konular, Derrida'nın yöntemiyle Nietzsche'nin düşünce ve üslubuna ne kadar etkili bir şekilde nüfuz ettiğini gösterecektir. Özellikle kadın figürünün Mahmuzlar'da, hakikatin epistemolojik ve estetik yapısıyla nasıl ilişkili olduğu bu çalışmanın temel odak noktalarından biridir.

Mahmuzlar¹ yalnızca kadın figürünün felsefi bir imge olarak nasıl işlediğini değil aynı zamanda anlamın sabit ve doğrudan verilmediği, üsluplaşmış bir yapı içinde nasıl ertelendiğini de gösterir. Bu metinde dile gelen şey çoğu zaman açık ifadelerin gerisine hatta dışına çekilir. Söylenenin anlamı, sözcüklerin yüzeyinde değil onların arasındaki boşluklarda, kaymalarda ve figüratif çağrışımlarda dolaşır. Kadın figürü de tam bu yapının merkezinde yer alır; hakikatin doğrudan temsilini imkânsızlaştıran, onu sürekli olarak erteleyen bir sapma biçimi olarak belirir.

Bu figüratif yapı, yalnızca anlamı değil, anlamın taşıyıcılarını da -yani sözcükleri, imgeleri, nesneleri- bir tür düzmece zincire dönüştürür. Düzmece sözcükler (nesneler) zinciri, gerçeğe benzeyen ama gerçek olmayan, gizlediği gerçeğin yerini tutan ama aynı zamanda kendini gizleyen başka bir zincirin yerini alır. Bu yapı içinde her ne kadar belirsiz ve karanlık bir yazın egemen gibi görünse de söz konusu olan aslında uyanıklıkla işleyen bir çarktır. Derrida'nın metni, anlamı bulanıklaştırmak yerine, onun istikrarsızlığını açığa çıkarır; böylece hem hakikatin hem de kadının temsili, felsefi düşünceye içkin olan düz çizgisel anlam arayışını sarsacak biçimde yeniden konumlanır.

Bu zincirdeki süreksizlikler, kimi zaman ani bir iğneleme ya da alaycı bir çıkışla görünür hale gelir. Söylemin kesintiye uğradığı, anlamın akışkan yapısının aniden çatladığı bu anlar, Derrida'nın metninde özgün bir üslup yaratır. Belki de tam da bu noktada, olup bitenin ne olduğunu -ya da ne olmadığını- sezmeye başlarız. İğnelemenin yarattığı bu sarsıntı, sözcelemenin yüzeyini deler; ironinin, parodinin ya da ani bir ses değişiminin eşlik ettiği bu kırılmalarda, anlam kendini saklamayı değil, parçalanarak da olsa dışa sızmayı seçer. Bu da *Mahmuzlar*'ın üslubunu, sadece felsefi değil aynı zamanda teatral ve sahneleyici bir yapı olarak kurar.

Bu nedenle *Mahmuzlar*, yalnızca Nietzsche'nin metinlerine dair yorumlayıcı bir okuma sunmakla kalmaz; düşüncenin kendisini dramatik ve jestsel bir

¹ Mahmuzlar, bir yandan iz, belirti ve işaret anlamlarını taşıırken, diğer yandan denizcilikte gemilerin dümen suyunda oluşan, yön ve hareketi belirleyen dalga hareketini ifade eder. Bu çok katmanlı anlam, Derrida'nın metnindeki "mahmuz" metaforunun zenginliğini ortaya koyar. (Derrida, 2002, s. 31)

yapıda sahneye koyar. Söylem, figüratif bir düzlemde işler; anlam, sözcüklerin yüzeyinde değil, onların kırıldığı, kaydığı, iğnelemeyle sarsıldığı anlarda devinir. Bu ani çıkışlar, ironik gerilimler ve üslubun beklenmedik kırılmaları, Derrida'nın yazısını bir “uyanıklık çarkı”na dönüştürür. Düzmece görünen sözcük zinciri, gerçeğe temas etmenin imkânsızlığını değil; onun figüratif, ertelenmiş ve sapmış izlerini sürmenin yollarını açar. Kadın figürü ise tam bu dramatik yapının merkezinde yer alır: hakikatin doğrudan temsilini imkânsızlaştıran, anlamı sabitlemek yerine sürekli yeniden yerleştiren bir estetik mesafe ve epistemolojik sapma biçimi olarak belirir. Bu çalışmada, Derrida'nın yöntemiyle Nietzsche'nin metinlerine nasıl nüfuz ettiği, kadın figürünün hakikatle ilişkisi ve bu ilişkinin figüratif yapısı, yapıbozumcu bir perspektifle detaylandırılacaktır.

Kadın figürünün çağrıştırdığı mesafe, sapma ve ertelenme biçimleri üzerinden, Mahmuzlar'ın düşünceyi nasıl dile getirmediğini, daha doğrusu nasıl dolaylı, figüratif ve jestsel yollarla sahnelediğini izlemek mümkün hale gelir. Bu yazı da bu izlerin peşine düşecektir.

2. Nietzsche'nin Üslupları

Üslup sorunu her zaman dikenli ve önemli bir mesele olmuştur; bazen sadece bir yazın türü, bazen de iğneleme ya da yumruk gibi güçlü bir araç işlevi görmüştür. Filozoflar, bu üsluplar aracılığıyla ele aldıkları konulara acımasızca saldırarak kalıcı izler bırakmışlardır. Ancak kimi zaman ürpertici biçimler yaratıp, ayrımsal duruma geçerek yelkenlerin arkasına gizlenmiş ve çekinceyle geri adım atmışlardır. Bırakalım kanatlar, dişilik ile erillik arasında dalgalansın; çünkü dilimiz bu iki unsurun doğrudan kesişmemesine olanak tanır. Yelkenlere geldiğimizde ise Nietzsche'nin bu üslup çeşitliliğini eksiksiz biçimde pratiğe döktüğü görülür. Nietzsche'de üslup, mahmuzlu bir gemi gibi yönünü saparak bulur; dalgayı doğrudan yarmaz, ona dolaylı bir kıvrımla yanıt verir. Hakikat, bu sapakta kırılır, ertelenir ve figüratif bir yüzeyde görünür kılınır. Anlam, ölümcül ve körleştirici olana temas etmeden, bu mesafenin içinden geçerek varlığını sürdürür. Derrida'nın Mahmuzlar'da izini sürdüğü gibi, işte bu mesafe, hakikatin dişil figürle özdeşleştiği, temsilin gecikmeli kıvrımlarında şekillendiği noktadır. Derrida'nın ifadesiyle, sapaklaşan üslup bir “şemsiye” gibidir hem örter hem de biçim verir. Delici olduğu ölçüde gösterişli bir silahtır; gerilen, buruşan ve düzlenen kumaşlar gibi yüzeyleri sağlamlaştıran bir madde olarak işler. Nietzsche'de bu tür bir üslup, hakikati doğrudan açmak yerine, figüratif kıvrımlar içinde korur ve gizleyerek iletir. (Derrida, 2002, s. 30-31)

Kadın figüründe üsluplaşan sapak, ilk anda bile bir tedirginlik hissi uyandırır. Bu tedirginlik, örneğin bir geminin yelken oyununda hissedilen belirsizliğe benzer. Üslup ile Nietzsche'nin kadını arasındaki yakın bağıntıyı göstermek için *Şen Bilim*'deki “Kadınlar ve onların uzaktaki etkileri” (Nietzsche,

2011, s. 69) başlıklı aforizmaya bakmak yeterlidir. (Derrida, 2002, s. 32) Nietzsche burada, benliğin duyusal aşırılığına ve dış dünyadan gelen seslerin yoğunluğuna dikkat çeker: “Hâlâ kulaklarım var mı? Yoksa kulaktan başka bir şey değil miyim?” (Nietzsche, 2011, s. 69) sorusu, öznenin duyularıyla adeta kuşatılmış, kendisini neredeyse yalnızca işitilenlere indirgenmiş hissetmesini dile getirir. Bu yoğun gürültü, çığlıklar ve tehditlerle dolu bir kaos yaratırken, tam bu karmaşanın içinde sessiz, hayaletimsi bir gemi belirir. Bu gemi, uzak, dokunulmaz ve büyüleyici bir varlık olarak kadının figüratif etkisini temsil eder. Kadının büyüğü ve etkisi doğrudan değil, uzaktan, sessizce gerçekleşir; bu durum, hakikatin doğrudan temsili mümkün olmadığında ortaya çıkan estetik bir çağrıdır. Derrida’nın da işaret ettiği gibi kadın burada felsefi anlamda bir temsil değil, hakikatin dolaylı, ertelenmiş ve figüratif olarak hissedilen biçimini taşır. Gürültüyle çevrili özne, bu sessiz varlığı düşsel bir alanda yakalar; mutluluğunu ve dinginliğini kadınların yanındaki bu uzak sessizlikte bulur. Böylece kadın, hakikatin doğrudan ifadesi değil, onun ertelemesi, uzaklığı ve estetik biçimlenmesidir. (Derrida, 2002, s. 32-33) Bu mesafeli yapının Nietzsche’nin metnlerindeki işleyişini daha yakından görmek için Derrida’nın yorumladığı figüratif örüntülere başvurulabilir.

Nietzsche’nin yazı üslubunda kadın figürü yalnızca temsili bir nesne değil hakikatin gizemli doğasını taşıyan bir mesafe biçimi olarak belirir. En güçlü etkisini de tam bu mesafeden, görünürlükle görünmezlik arasındaki eşikten üretir. Bu figür, düşünceyi kıskırtır; bizi, gözlerimiz bağlı bile olsa, en tehlikeli yollara sürükleyen bir düş gücünü harekete geçirir. Kadının erişilmezliği, sanatla ilişkili bu tehlikeli hareketin gizemsel değerini oluşturur: düşünceye yön vererek bizi çatılara, uçurum kenarlarına, fantezi turlarına çıkarır. Gündüzün uyurgezerleri olan biz sanatçılar, tırmanmak için doğmuşuzdur; yükseklikleri acılarımızın ve şüphelerimizin yerine koyar, bu boşluklar üzerinde yürürüz. Artık yükseklik ne yorucudur ne de ayırt edilebilir; yaşam, ölümün sessizliğinde bir düşe dönüşür. Ve en sonunda, en güzel yelkenli bile “yüce bir sorumluluk” karşısında ne bir devinim ne de bir ses çıkarır; geriye yalnızca trajik bir hareketsizlik kalır. Derrida’nın ifadesiyle: “Kadınların en çekici güzelliği, kendilerini uzaktan hissettirmektir; filozofların diliyle konuşursak bu bir eylemdir, uzaktan eklemedir; ancak bunun için her şeyden önce uzaklık gerekmektedir.”² (Derrida, 2002, s. 34)

Nietzsche, kadın figürünün etkisini, “*actio in distans*”³ gibi Latince bir felsefi terim aracılığıyla gösterir. Bu terimi metne sokarken onu doğrudan değil belli bir mesafe içinde yani ironik, figüratif bir biçimde yerleştirir. Bu da yazının

² Nietzsche’nin metnine paralel olarak bkz. “Kadınların en güçlü etkisi ve büyüğü, filozofların sözleriyle uzaktan etkili olmalarından, *actio in distans*larından gelir: Bu da her şeyden önce şunu gerektirir- Uzaklık!” (Nietzsche, 2011, s. 70)

³ “Uzaktan Etki”

kendisinin bir “uzaklık üretme” üslubuna sahip olduğunu gösterir. Yani sadece anlattığı değil anlatış biçimi de mesafelidir. “Uzaklık” salt mekânsal değil aynı zamanda epistemolojik ve estetik bir mesafedir. Derrida'nın ifadesiyle, “Bu üslup, aslında ölümü düşleten bu sonsuz örtülerden kendimizi uzak tutmak için bir davetiyedir.” (Derrida, 2002, s. 35)

Üslup yalnızca bir biçim değil aynı zamanda ölümle, hakikatle, aşırılıkla kurduğumuz ilişkinin biçimidir. Bu örtüler -yani doğrudan temsile kapalı, anlamı geciktiren katmanlar- bizde bir mesafe oluşturur. Nietzsche'nin yazısı, bizi bu örtülere kapılıp gitmemeye, onlara körü körüne bağlanmamaya, bir çeşit koruyucu mesafede durmaya çağırır. Kadın figürünün baştan çıkarıcılığı, doğrulanlığında değil, erişilmezliğindedir.

Bu uzaklaşmanın ayrıışan açılımı, bir gerçeği gösterir: Kadın, gerçeklik içerisinde kendinden uzaklaşan bir varlıktır; bu uzaklaşma onun temel doğasını oluşturur. Sabit bir kökeni yoktur, çünkü kendini sürekli uzaklaştırır ve değiştirir. Benliğini, kökenini, kimliğini ve özelliklerini örter, gizler ya da yok eder. Bu yüzden felsefi söylem kadının doğasını kavramakta zorlanır; kadın, anlam ve varlık açısından bir hiçin içine düşer. “Kadın gerçeği yoktur, çünkü gerçeğin bu derin ayrımı, bu gerçek dışılık “gerçekliğin” kendisidir. Kadın, bu gerçeklikteki gerçek dışılığın adıdır.” (Derrida, 2002, s. 35)

Nietzsche'nin “kadın olarak gerçeklik”⁴ya da “kadınsı utangaçlığın hareketi olarak gerçeklik” eğretilmeli olarak bu imgeleri kullanması⁵onun; hakikati doğrudan temsil edilemeyen, sürekli ertelenen ve figüratif olarak işaretlenen bir yapı olarak düşündüğünü gösterir. Bu ifade, yalnızca bir metafor değil hakikatle kurulan ilişkinin yapısını dile getiren bir epistemolojik jesttir. Nietzsche'nin “altın işlemeli örtüyle kaplı yaşam” tasviri, bu mesafeli yapının estetik boyutuna işaret eder: yaşamın hakikati kendini doğrudan değil, çekingen, alaycı, utangaç ve dolaylı yollarla sunar.⁶ “Yaşam kadındır” (life is a woman) (Nietzsche, 2001, p. 193) ifadesi bu figüratifleşmenin doruk noktasıdır; çünkü burada kadın figürü, hakikatin doğrudan kavranamazlığı ile örtüşür. “Çünkü eğer kadın gerçeklikse, bu aynı kadın gerçekliğin olmadığını, oluşmadığını ve gerçekliğe sahip olunamayacağını çok iyi bilir.” (Derrida, 2002, s. 36) Bu cümle, yalnızca temsili

⁴ Eserde önsöz böyle başlar: “Suppose that truth is a woman -and why not? / Diyelim ki gerçeklik bir kadındır- neden olmasın?” (Nietzsche, 2002, Preface)

⁵ Nietzsche'nin kadın ve hakikat ilişkisi, Derrida tarafından *Mahmuzlar* adlı eserinde bu şekilde ele alınmıştır.

(Derrida, 2002, s. 36)

⁶ “But perhaps that is the strongest magic of life: it is covered by a veil of beautiful possibilities, woven with threads of gold -promising, resisting, bashful, mocking, compassionate, and seductive.” (Türkçesi: Belki de yaşamın en güçlü büyüsü budur: o, güzel ihtimallerin örtüsüyle kaplıdır; altın ipliklerle dokunmuştur- vaat eden, direnen, utangaç, alaycı, merhametli ve baştan çıkarıcı.) (Nietzsche, 2001, p. 193)

değil, felsefi öznenin hakikate dair arzusunu da boşa çıkarır. Kadın figürü, gerçeğe ulaşmak isteyen filozofun önüne konan bir “uzaklık” olarak belirir; bu uzaklık, hakikatin bir nesne değil, bir oluş süreci olduğuna dair uyarıdır.

Bu aşamada Nietzsche, kadının gerçekliğini, gerçekliğin kendisini ele alır: “Kadın elde edilmeye izin vermez ve her tür dogmatizm, bugün orada acınası ve bunalımlı bir içerik içinde durur. Kadın hâlâ dimdik ayakta!”⁷ Gerçeklik -tıpkı kadın gibi- doğrudan elde edilemez; yani tam anlamıyla kavranamaz ya da sahiplenilemez. Bu, bilgiye dair tüm dogmatik iddiaların kırılmasını ima eder. Nietzsche, “hakikati elde etmek” isteyen metafizik düşünce biçimini dogmatik bir tutum olarak görür. Oysa hakikat, kadınsı bir şekilde “uzakta durur”, “kaçamalıdır”, “utangaçtır”; yani bir *actio in distans* ile çalışır. “Elde edilemeyen kadınsılık”, burada temsilin sürekli ertelendiği bir açıklık -sonsuz bir anlam potansiyeli- olarak konumlanır. Burada “kadınsılık” kelimesini, dogmatik filozofun sabit temsil arzusu içinde olduğu gibi dişilik, kadının dişiliği, kadın cinsiyeti olarak algılamamak gerekir. (Derrida, 2002, s. 37)

Nietzsche’nin metinlerinde “kadından kaynaklanan” olarak tarif edilebilecek dalavere, hıçkırık, buçukluk ve hafif meşrep bir kadının kıskacıları gibi edimlerle ortaya çıkan, tırnak içinde doğan gerçekler, gerçekliğin doğrudan kendisinden ziyade onun tırnak içine alınmasını zorlayan bir etkiye sahiptir. Bu etki, kadınsılık olarak adlandırılacak bir hareket ve edimdir; yani gerçekliği kesin ve sabit bir biçimde kayda geçiren şey, salt “kadın” değil, onun bu belirsiz, kaygan ve çok katmanlı edimselliğidir. Böylece Nietzsche’de gerçekliğin “tırnak içine alınması”, kadınsılığın epistemolojik-estetik bir işlevi olarak ortaya çıkar. (Derrida, 2002, s. 38) Kadın yalnızca gerçekliğin gölgesi değildir; o, yazının kendi ritmini, sesini ve hareketini yaratan üsluptur. “Üslup, kadın demektir.” (Derrida, 2002, s. 38) -yazdıran, şekillendiren, gerçekliğe dokunan bir güç. Kadın, gerçekliğin ta kendisi olarak başlamış yolculuğuna, üslup olarak devam eder ve nihayetinde sanatın özünde can bulur.

Asıl üzerinde durulması gereken, kadın gerçekliğinin kuşkulu ve gizemli doğasıdır. “Kadınların derin olduğunu söylerler-neden? Çünkü asla onun temeline inemezsiniz. Fakat kadınlar aslında sığ bile değildir.” (Nietzsche, 2012, s. 10) Gerçeklik yalnızca yüzeyde var olan bir şeydir; derinlik ise ancak üzerine örtülen bir örtünün varlığıyla mümkün olur. Bu örtü, gerçekliğin yüzünü gizler; gerçekliğin tamamen yok olması ya da varlığını sürdürebilmesi için bu örtünün kaldırılması ya da bir şekilde yere düşmesi yeterlidir. Örtü düştüğünde ise neden korku, ürperti ve bir çekingenlik hissi ortaya çıkar? “Kadınlar arasında.

⁷ Bu ifade Nietzsche’nin *Beyond Good and Evil* adlı eserinin önsözünde yer almaktadır (Nietzsche, 2002, Preface). Aynı ifade Hüseyin Subhi Erdem tarafından da aktarılmıştır (Erdem, 2006, s. 69). Derrida ise bu pasajdan hareketle benzer bir yorum geliştirmiştir (Derrida, 2002, s. 37).

Gerçek mi? Ah! Bilmiyorsunuz gerçeği! Bu bizim mütevazılığımızı öldürmeye teşebbüs değil mi?” (Nietzsche, 2012, s.9) Çünkü gerçekliğe doğrudan temas; onu figürsüz, mesafesiz, dolaysız bir çıplaklık içinde sunar ki bu da özne için tahammül edilmesi güç bir durumdur. Bu yüzden örtü, sadece gizlemez aynı zamanda korur, anlamlandırır, hatta arzulanabilir kılar. Yazıdaki kadınsı hareket, tam da bu nedenle hakikatin çıplaklığını askıya alır; onu tırnak içine alır, erteleyerek dolaştırır, figürlere büründürür. Üslup burada, gerçekliğin çıplak şiddetini incelten bir kadınsı jesttir. Ayrılmak olayı da kadınsı edimin temel bir yönüdür; kadın, bu ayrılma ile korku yaratır ve bu korkunun yarattığı boşlukta egemenliğini tesis eder. Ancak bu egemenlik, gerçeklikle doğrudan yüzleşmekten kaçınmaya dayanır. Böylece kadınsılık, hakikatle bilinçli bir mesafe koyan, onu örtülü ve ertelenmiş kılan bir yapıya dönüşür:

Bir kadın kendisi için yeni bir süs aramadıkça- kendini süslemesini ebedi – kadınlığın bir parçası olduğunu düşünüyorum, öyle değil mi? -Şimdi, kendisi hakkında bir korku uyandırmak istiyor: -Belki de bununla egemenlik kazanmayı. Ama hiç de hakikati istemiyor: Kadın için hakikat nedir ki! Başından beri, kadın için hakikatten daha yabancı, itici, düşmanca ne var ki! - En büyük sanatı yalandır, en yüce derdi görünüş ve güzellik... (Nietzsche, 2015, s. 157)

Kadın figürünün cazibesi, karşıtlıklarla örülüdür; çünkü aynı anda hem gerçeğin modeli olarak sunulur hem de ona karşı konumlanır. Bu çelişkili yapı, onun iki kez model olmasına yol açar: Gerçeği belirleyen, filozofları peşinden sürükleyen ve yanıltan bir figür olduğu kadar; inanmadan da bu gerçeklik içinde kendine yer açan biridir. Kendisi gizemlidir, takı gibidir; yanıltıcıdır, çünkü sanattır. Sanatla özdeşliği, filozoflara özgü bir ikna gücüyle birleşir. Ancak bu güç, erkekle özdeşleştirilmekten kaçınır; gerçeğe inanır gibi yapar ama onu yalanlar, ortaya koyduğu dogmayı ise bir kurmaca olarak işler. Bu nedenle sanat, üslup ve gerçek sorunları kadın sorunsalından ayrılamaz; kadınsı olan, gerçeğin figüratif düzlemde inşasına katılır. Böylelikle daha önce de belirttiğimiz gibi kadın; önce “gerçeklik” olarak ortaya çıkar; ardından “üslup” olur; en sonunda ise “sanat”ın kendisi haline gelir.

3. Düşünce Dişilleşiyor (Sie wird Weib)

Nietzsche'nin kadın-gerçeklik bağlamında vurguladığı kavram, dişilleşen düşünce ya da düşüncenin dişilleşmesidir. Bağlamın da ifade ettiği gibi kadınlaşan, “düşünce”dir. Kadına dönüşme, düşünce sürecinin kendisidir. (Derrida, 2002, s. 49-50) Kadın figürü burada doğrudan bir biyolojik ya da toplumsal cinsiyeti değil, belirli bir düşünme tarzını simgeler. Bu figür, özellikle dolaylılık, dolanıklık ve doğrudan olmayış gibi nitelikleriyle öne çıkar. Bu bağlamda, düşüncenin kadınsılaşması, onun hakikate doğrudan yönelmek yerine mesafeli, örtük ve figüratif bir tarzda ilerlemesi anlamına gelir. Kadına dönüşüm, tam da

bu tarzda işleyen düşünsel bir süreçtir. Düşünce, gerçekliği dışarıdan temsil eden bir araç olmaktan ziyade onun kendini sunma biçimlerinden biridir.

Bu durumda, gerçekliğin her zaman kadın formunda belirmediği anlaşılır aynı şekilde kadın da her koşulda gerçekliği temsil etmez. Her biri kendine özgü bir anlatı taşır belki de felsefenin tek başına çözüme kavuşturamadığı bu karmaşık anlatının tam da kendisidir. Dünya ve gerçeklik tarihine göz atıldığında, düşüncenin bu gelişmeden önceki çağlarda Platon'a özgü bir karakter taşıdığı görülür. Bu dönemin düşüncesi, gerçekliği Platonik bir ifade biçimiyle kaydeder: sanki Platon, "Platon olarak ben, gerçeğim" der gibidir. Bir varlık ya da gerçekliğin sahneye konması olgusu olarak, düşüncenin dışı oluşu belirginleşir; artık Platon "ben gerçeğim" diyemez. Filozof, gerçeklikten ayrılır gibi olur ve düşünceden kopar; sadece onun izinden giden, sürgünde bir figür haline gelir. Bu an, düşüncenin sürgüne gönderilmesine ve kendisinden uzaklaşmasına olanak tanır. Tam da bu noktada, öykü başlamış olur. O hâlde, uzaklık; -kadın-gerçekliği- filozofu kendinden uzaklaştırır. Bu durum düşünceyi doğurur. Uzaklaştıkça aşkınlaşır, çekici ve ulaşılamaz hâle gelir; böylece etkisini artırır ve uzaklık yolunu gösterir. Örtüleri uzaklarda dalgalanır; ölümün düşü o anda başlar -ve bu figür, kadının kendisidir. (Derrida, 2002, s. 50) Gerçek dünya, bilge, dindar ve erdemli bir insan için ulaşılabılır- o bu dünyada yaşar, o dünyadır. Bu durum; ideanın en eski, nispeten tutarlı, basit ve inandırıcı biçimidir. "Ben Platon'um, gerçeğim." önermesinin bir başka ifadesidir. Gerçek dünya şu an ulaşılamazdır, ancak bilge, dindar ve erdemli insana ("günahını itiraf eden") vaat edilmiştir. (Nietzsche, 2005, p. 171) İdeanın ilerleyişi: daha karmaşık, daha incelikli, daha az anlaşılır hale gelir -dışilleşir, Hristiyanlaşır... (Derrida, 2002, s. 51)⁸ Böylelikle Putların Alacakaranlığındaki Bir Yanılgının hikayesine göndermede bulunabiliriz: "Gerçek dünya', nasıl da sonunda bir masal oldu?" (Nietzsche, 2012, s. 27)

Nietzsche'nin kadına atfettiği tüm nitelikler -çekicilik, cezbedici uzaklık, erişilmezlik, ince bir zarla örtülü umut ve aşkınlığa duyulan arzu- yalnızca gerçekliğin tarihini değil, aynı zamanda bir yanılgının anlatısını da biçimlendirir. "Düşünce kadınlaşır" ifadesi, düşüncenin doğrudan, buyurgan ve erkeksi bir hakikat söyleminden uzaklaşarak dolaylı, baştan çıkarıcı ve alımlayıcı bir biçime evrilmesini imler. Bu dönüşümle birlikte hakikat, artık apaçık ve ulaşılabılır bir hedef olmaktan çıkar; ulaşılması zor, incelikli ve kaçan bir figüre dönüşür -tıpkı Nietzsche'nin kadın imgesi gibi. Bu bağlamda kadınsılaşma, düşüncenin doğrusallıktan saparak daha figüratif, sezgisel ve çok anlamlı bir düzleme

⁸ "The true world, unattainable for now, but promised to the man who is wise, pious, virtuous ('to the sinner who repents'). (Progress of the idea: it gets trickier, more subtle, less comprehensible,- it becomes female, it becomes Christian. . .)" (Nietzsche, 2005, p. 171)

kaymasıdır. Nietzsche'ye göre bu evrim aynı zamanda düşüncenin dinselleşmesidir: "Düşünce dinselleşiyor." Çünkü dinler de hakikati doğrudan değil, simgesel anlatımlar, mecazlar ve mitos aracılığıyla ifade eder; onu aşkın, ulaşılamaz ve temsile dirençli bir konuma yerleştirir. Nietzsche, ironik bir biçimde, dinselleyen düşünceyi eleştirel konumlandırır. Gerçeklik artık dolaylı yollarla, duygusal ve mesafeli bir tarzda ele alınır; yani düşünce, kadınsı bir nitelik kazanır. Metinde "ayracın kapanması" ifadesi ise bu dönüşümün ironik bir simgesidir: Düşünce, kendini açıklamak yerine ima eden, içine kapanan ve açıklama ihtiyacını dahi askıya alan bir biçime bürünür. Bu nedenle "düşünce kadın olur" ifadesinden çıkarılabilecek özlü sonuç, Nietzsche'nin deyiimiyle şudur: "Düşünce dinselleşiyor." (Derrida, 2002, s. 51)

Tüm bunlar, düşüncenin artık başka bir yöne evrildiğini gösterir. *Putların Alacakaranlığı*'nda yer alan "Bir Yanılgının Hikâyesi" bölümünden sonra gelen "Doğa Karşıtlı Ahlak"⁹bu evrilmenin ahlaki düşünce üzerindeki yansımalarını gözler önüne serer. Nietzsche burada, düşüncenin yalnızca epistemolojik değil, aynı zamanda etik bir sapma sürecine girdiğini iddia eder. Artık düşünce, yaşamı onaylayan ve içgüdüleri yücelten bir hat üzerinde ilerlemek yerine, doğaya sırtını dönen, yaşamı suçlayan ve içgüdüleri bastıran bir yöne sapmıştır. Düşüncenin kadınsılaşması, Hristiyanlığın bir tür kastrasyon olarak görülmesiyle birlikte, yaşamın içsel enerjisinden ve dürtüsel gücünden bir kopuşu simgeler. Nietzsche, dışın çekilmesi ve gözün çıkarılmasının Hristiyanlığa özgü simgesel eylemler olduğunu belirtir. Bütün bu durumlar, Hristiyanlık düşüncesinin; 'Dişilleşmiş Düşünce'nin zorbalıklarıdır. (Derrida, 2002, s. 51) "Bütün eski ahlaki canavarlar bu konuda hemfikirdir: "Tutkular öldürülmelidir."¹⁰ Günümüzde, tutkuların ve arzuların yalnızca aptallıklarından ve doğurabilecekleri nahoş sonuçlardan korunmak için yok edilmesi, bize bizzat aşırı bir aptallık biçimi gibi görünmektedir.

Egemen ahlak doğa karşıtıdır. "Çünkü doğa, en güzeli yaratmaya zorlandığı durumlarda, korkunç bir şeydir." (Köhler, 1999, s. 94) Oysa ahlak doğaya uygun olmalı ve doğanın yolunu açmalıdır. Yani insan doğanın bir parçası olarak, mükemmel olanı düşünür, ancak bunu gerçekleştiremez; yetersizlikleri, eksiklikleri, özürleri ve hataları vardır. Bunları gidermek amacıyla bir yaşama düzeni kurar ve buna ahlak adını verir. Ancak, bu düzen doğaya aykırı olduğu için ahlak, doğadaki eksikliklerini ve yetersizliklerini duyuran, duyan insanın doğa tarafından kendisine sunulacak olanakların önünü kesen bir yapıya dönüşür. Ahlak, insanı geliştirebilecekken, daha yetkin, daha bilgili, daha ince, daha duyarlı ve daha geniş ufuklu bir varlık olabilecekken, oluşturduğu yaşama

⁹ Karşı ahlak olarak ortaya çıkar. Karşı-doğa hâline gelir. Böylece doğa ile ahlak birbirinden ayrılmış olur.

¹⁰ "All the old moral monsters are unanimous on that score: 'il faut tuer les passions'." (Nietzsche, 2005, p. 171)

düzeniyle kendini daraltır ve kendine acılar verir, suçluluk duygularına sürükler. Bir arada yaşamak, birey olarak kendi dürtülerinize tamamen bırakırsanız, birlikte yaşadığınız insanlarla sorunların ortaya çıkmasına neden olur. Yani bir arada yaşamamanın, ödün vermeyi gerektiren bir boyutu vardır. Bu nedenle dürtülerinizi tam anlamıyla, kontrolsüzce yaşama olanağı bulamazsınız. “Fakat tutkuların köküne saldırmak, yaşamın da köküne saldırmak demektir: Kilise’nin uygulamaları yaşam karşıtıdır...”¹¹

Hristiyanlığın yaptığı yaşama itirazdır. Yaşama itiraz edilmez. Yaşam kabul edilerek yaşanır. Dolayısıyla yaşam kaynağını yadsımaya kalkmak, insanı bu kaynaktan başka türlü beslenmeye götürür ki bu beslenme hastalıklı beslenme diyebileceğimiz bir beslenme olur. Şimdi yaşama itiraz ediyorum diye yaşama itiraz edilmiyor. Çünkü bu itiraz edenlerin yaşam hakkında bir kavrayışı da yoktur. Ama itiraz ettikleri öyle şeyler vardır ki, onlar itiraz edenleri yaşayabilecekleri yaşamdan alıkoymaktadır. Dolayısıyla kendisinde olan, gerçekleştirebilecekleri, zenginleşebilecekleri olanakları baştan yitirmiş olmaktadırlar. (İnam, 2019)

Değerlerin en yükseği yaşamın kendisidir. Ancak insanlar, garip bir şekilde (Hristiyanlıkta da sıkça görülen bir durum olarak) yüksek değerleri yaşamdan uzaklaştırmaktadır. Yani bedenliliği, duygu yüklülüğünü ve insanın biyolojik varlığını doya doya yaşayıp oradan beslenerek sanatta ve düşüncede üretim yapabileceği kaynağı yadsıdığınız zaman, yaşamı ve yaşamın size ulaşan kaynağını, can damarını kesmiş oluyorsunuz. İnsan kendisini oluşturan güçlerin harmanını gerçekleştirememekte, güçlerini yaratıcı bir şekilde bir araya getirememektedir. Yani kendisine can veren güçlerin orkestrasyonunu yapamamaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, insan henüz bu gezegende bulunan olanakları nasıl gerçekleştirebileceğini, bu olanaklarla nasıl zengin nasıl daha güçlü ve yaratıcı bir yaşama ulaşabileceğini bilememektedir. Söylediği şey bizi besleyen yaşam damarlarımızı açmamızdır. (İnam, 2019)

İnsanlar değerlerini yaşamdan almamaktadır; değerlerini gelenekten, kuramlardan, düşüncelerden ve devraldıkları kültürden almaktadırlar. Bu kültür ise yaşamdan beslenmemektedir. Artık yorgun, bitkin, eskimiş ve yıpranmış, tıpkı giysiler gibi, yaşamda—yani insanın yaşam olarak deneyimlediği şey—bu hale gelmiştir. Eğer yaşam yadsınmaya başlanırsa o zaman çürüme ve bozulma süreci başlar. Bu çürüme, yaşama karşı olma durumuna dönüşür. Ancak bunun neden hissedilmediği, küçük yaştan itibaren bizi kuşatan bir yaşama kolaylığı ve yaşam çemberinin varlığındandır. O çember içinde sıkışmakta, savrulmakta ve alışkanlıklar ile önümüze konan hedeflerle yaşam sürdürülmektedir. Doğadan beslenmek yerine karşı doğa oluşturulmuştur; buna kültür ve ahlak

¹¹ “But attacking the root of the passions means attacking the root of life: the practices of the church are hostile to life...” (Nietzsche, 2005, p. 171)

adı verilmiştir. Bu durumun temel nedeni, yaşamın gücü karşısında hissedilen korkudur. Değerler koymak, yaşama mana vermek anlamına gelir. Çünkü kişi, yaşamın gücüne kendini bıraktığında ona egemen olamayacağını düşündüğü için bu durum metaforik olarak çılgın bir at olarak görülür. Belki bir süre bu ata binilmiş olabilir, ancak artık yönetilemiyor olabilir; kişi, atın onu ormana, çukurlara doğru götürdüğünü hisseder. Bu nedenle bazen durmak ve atın üzerinden inmek ister. Yaşamın kendisinin rasyonel bir tarafı yoktur; o, çılgın bir güçtür. Bir yanardağ patlaması gibi, orada tükenmez ve bitmez bir lav akışı ve enerjisi bulunmaktadır. (İnam, 2019)

Son Söz: Dişil Düşüncenin Ardında

Nietzsche'ye göre kadın denildiğinde ne tek bir kadın vardır ne de bir kadın gerçekliği. Onun metinlerinde anneler, kızlar, eşler, yönetici kadınlar, bükanneler gibi çeşitli kadın tipleri yer alır. Bu nedenle Nietzsche'nin düşüncesinde tek bir gerçeklik yoktur; gerçeklik çoğuldur. Ayrıca Nietzsche, yazılarında elinin altında pek çok farklı üslup biçimi bulunduğunu ve üslubun kendiliğinden ortaya çıkmadığını, bunun temelinde ise kadınları (veya dişillliği) çok iyi tanımalarının yattığını belirtir.

Kadın sorunu; karara bağlanabilirliği askıya alıp anlamın kesinliğini er-telediğinde, felsefi kavramları geçici olarak ayraç içine aldığına, metnin sabit ve tekil bir anlam taşıdığı yönündeki yorumları altüst ettiğinde, okuma edimini varlığın anlamı ya da gerçekliğinden; üretim değerlerini ise salt üründen ya da var olanın buyurgan yapısından özgürleştirdiğinde — işte o anda, inci taneleri gibi etrafa dağılan ve karşımıza çıkan şey, üslup sorunudur. Üsluplaşan sapak, örtünün içinden sızar; aynı şeyi görmek ya da üretmek için yalnızca örtüyü delmekle kalmaz, örtülü/örtüsüz karşıtlığını da üretimin gerçekliği içinde geçersiz kılar. Böylece ortaya çıkan ürün, açıklama ile gizleme arasındaki gerilimi dışa vurur. Gerçekliğin üzerine çekilen bu örtü ise ne tümüyle kaldırılır ne de kendiliğinden düşer; yalnızca onun askıda kalma hâline bir sınır getirilmiş olur.

Nietzsche'nin “üslup” ve “kadın” olarak adlandırdığı da belki de budur. *Şen Bilim*'den çıkan sonuç, tek bir üslubun ya da tek bir cinsel farklılığın var olmadığıdır. Üslubun ortaya çıkabilmesi için birçok farklı biçimde yazmak gerekir. Eğer üslup varsa, Nietzsche'nin kadın imajıyla bize anlatmak istediği de budur: Birden çok üslup biçimi olmalıdır.

Kaynakça

1. Derrida, Jacques, *Mahmuzlar (Nietzsche'nin Üslupları)*, Çev. Mehmet Baş-türk, İstanbul, Babil Yayınları, 2002

2. Erdem, Hüseyin Subhi, “Hakikat ve Metafor”, *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, Cilt VI, Sayı 3, 2006
3. Joachim Köhler, *Friedrich Nietzsche ve Cosima Wagner*, Çev. Atilla Dirim, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1999
4. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, Edited by Rolf-Peter Horstmann, translated by Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
5. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *İyinin ve Kötünün Ötesinde*, çev. Ahmet İnam, İstanbul, Say Yayınları, 2015.
6. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Putların Alaca Karanlığında*, çev. Emir Aktan, Ankara, Alter Yayıncılık, 2012
7. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Şen Bilim*, Çev. Ahmet İnam, İstanbul, Say Yayınları, 2011
8. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
9. Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Twilight of the Idols*, “How the ‘True’ Became ‘World’: A Fable,” trans. Judith Norman, Cambridge University Press, 2005
10. Prof. Dr. Ahmet İnam ve Düşün Yolcularının Friedrich Nietzsche – *Putların Alacakaranlığı* metninin okumaları [YouTube oynatma listesi]. YouTube. https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRX8Yk7Ud6gWHY_3dqye-HONxebzUb1O7&si=2eD1YLzbh_vp7lga

Extended Abstract

This study discusses the way in which truth is associated with the figure of the “woman” in Nietzsche’s texts and its epistemological-aesthetic consequences, based on Jacques Derrida’s interpretation developed in his work *Spurs: The Styles of Nietzsche*. The primary aim is to reveal, through Nietzsche’s image of the woman, the impossibility of directly representing truth, its constant deferral, and its figurative construction in multi-layered forms. Derrida’s interpretation is not merely an analysis of Nietzsche’s style, but also offers a reading that shows how truth is indirectly constructed in philosophical discourse through language, representation, distance, and aesthetic gestures.

The starting point of the work is that truth cannot be grasped either through logical analysis or emotional integrity, because throughout history, these two have been positioned as opposing, irreplaceable structures that cannot be reduced to a single constant. Nietzsche’s image of woman is a figure that embodies this impossibility. In Derrida’s analysis, the woman is imbued with qualities such as variability, inaccessibility, distance, shyness, and figurative deferral; these characteristics reveal that truth cannot be grounded as a fixed and directly comprehensible essence.

The article aims to show how Nietzsche’s style functions as a “detour” by drawing on Derrida’s deconstructive method. In *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, style is a gesture that conceals, defers, and creates distance within figurative twists rather than presenting truth directly. In Derrida’s words, this detour is an “umbrella” that both conceals and shapes, that is as piercing as it is ostentatious. In Nietzsche, style, as a feminine gesture, stages truth in ironic, parodic, and theatrical forms rather than revealing it directly. Thus, thought operates not only on a philosophical plane, but also on a dramatic and gestural one.

One of the prominent discussions in the study is Nietzsche’s image of women in *The Gay Science*. The passage titled “Women and Their Distant Effects” shows that truth is effective not directly, but in a distant and silent way. The magic of women and the allure of truth emerge not in proximity but in inaccessibility. As Derrida also emphasizes, this effect is an “actio in distans”; that is, an action that operates through epistemological and aesthetic distance. In Nietzsche’s texts, women are not merely objects of representation but figures that reveal the workings of truth’s deferred nature.

The epistemological dimension of the female figure is revealed by the quotation of reality. In Nietzsche, the frivolous movements, tricks, or actions born in quotation marks that “originate from women” serve to constantly suspend reality rather than fix it. Therefore, women are not merely shadows of reality but a style that constructs truth on a figurative plane. Style here is a feminine

gesture that protects and conceals truth, but also touches it. This gesture circulates truth in a veiled, deferred, and multi-layered way rather than representing it directly.

The work also analyzes Nietzsche's expressions "reality as woman" and "reality as the movement of feminine modesty." These metaphors reveal that truth cannot be grasped directly but can only be sensed in figurative and indirect forms. The phrase "life is woman" is the culmination of this figurativization: it shows that life and truth are revealed not directly, but in bashful, indirect, and seductive forms. Woman is the figure that reminds us that truth is not a fixed and attainable essence, but a constantly deferred process of becoming, woven with multiple meanings.

In Nietzsche's thought, the female figure has not only an epistemological but also an aesthetic function. Since truth cannot be grasped directly, it is concealed by a veil; this veil is both protective and meaningful. Reality is a superficial structure; depth is only made possible by the existence of the veil. The adornment, mystery, and deceptiveness of women indicate that truth is figuratively desirable rather than directly comprehensible. Therefore, in Nietzsche, the issues of art, style, and reality can not be considered separately from the issue of women. The feminine directly participates in the construction of truth on the artistic and figurative plane.

The article also addresses Nietzsche's "feminization of thought" in the context of women and reality. Thought here does not refer to biological gender; it expresses a style that produces indirectness, ambiguity, and distance. The feminization of thought is an approach to truth not directly, but through figurative and gestural means. The "fairytale nature of the real world" emphasized by Nietzsche in *Twilight of the Idols* is an ironic narrative of this figurative, feminized nature of truth. Thought also becomes feminine by becoming religious, because religion expresses truth not directly, but through metaphors and myths.

Consequently, this study demonstrates how Derrida's deconstructive reading through *Spurs* stages Nietzsche's understanding of truth through the female figure. In Nietzsche, the woman is neither merely a biological figure nor a mere metaphor; she is a form of thinking that represents the deferred, multi-layered, aesthetic, and epistemological structure of truth. Truth is constantly deferred, postponed, and reconstituted in figurative layers through a feminine gesture. In this context, the article's original contribution lies in presenting Nietzsche's association of truth with the female image not merely as a metaphorical game but as a model that explains the stylistic and figurative functioning of thought itself.

This discussion, taking into account both Nietzsche's style and Derrida's deconstruction, emphasizes that truth is not a fixed and direct essence, but a multi-layered, deferred, and figuratively staged process. Thus, the study develops an original understanding around the concepts of truth, style, femininity, and aesthetic distance.

A Critical Study of Quentin Meillassoux's Resolution of Hume's Problem

Quentin Meillassoux'un Hume Problemi Çözümlemesi Üzerine Eleştirel Bir İnceleme

Emin Çelebi

Prof. Dr., İnönü Üniversitesi/Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi/Felsefe Bölümü, emin.celebi@inonu.edu.tr,
ORCID: 0000-0001-8548-3811

Mahmut Günel

Doktora Öğrencisi, İnönü Üniversitesi/Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü/Felsefe Bölümü, gunelmahmut@gmail.com,
ORCID: 0000-0003-0678-8559

Article Information

Article Type

Research Article

Date Received

28.10.2025

Date Accepted

27.12.2025

Date Published

31 December 2025

Plagiarism Checks: Yes, Turnitin.

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited. (Emin Çelebi & Mahmut Günel)

Conflicts of Interest: The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.

Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0 license.



Makale Bilgisi

Makale Türü

Araştırma Makalesi

Geliş Tarihi

28.10.2025

Kabul Tarihi

27.12.2025

Yayın Tarihi

31 Aralık 2025

Benzerlik Taraması: Evet, Turnitin.

Etik Beyan

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur. (Emin Çelebi & Mahmut Günel)

Çıkar Çatışması: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır.

Cite As | Atıf

Çelebi, Emin & Günel, Mahmut (2025). A Critical Study of Quentin Meillassoux's Resolution of Hume's Problem. *Mebadi International Journal of Philosophy*, (2) 2, 84-95.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18107577>

Abstract

This article examines Hume's problem, which constitutes one of the foundational points of reference for Quentin Meillassoux's speculative realism. It argues that while Meillassoux offers a largely compelling resolution of Hume's problem up to a certain point, he ultimately reverses Hume's position in the course of constructing his own theoretical framework. In order to substantiate this claim, the article first provides a general overview of Meillassoux's philosophical project and explicates the manner in which he addresses Hume's problem. It then proceeds to analyze the philosopher's assessments in detail. Within this framework, and particularly when considered in light of the principle of non-contradiction, it is argued that Meillassoux's account of "necessary contingency" does not amount to a substantive conceptual innovation, but rather remains at the level of a terminological reformulation.

Keywords: Meillassoux, Hume's Problem, Non-Contradiction, Speculative Realism, Correlationism

Öz

Bu makale, Quentin Meillassoux'nun spekülâtif realizminin dayanak noktalarından birini oluşturan Hume problemini ele almaktadır. Çalışmada, Meillassoux'nun Hume problemini belli bir noktaya kadar doğru çözümlediği ancak kendi teorisini oluştururken Hume'u tersine çevirdiği ileri sürülmektedir. Bu iddiayı temellendirmek üzere ilk önce Meillassoux'nun görüşlerinin genel bir özeti verildi ve Hume Problemini nasıl çözümlediği gösterildi. Daha sonra düşünürün yaptığı değerlendirmeler analiz edildi. Bu çerçevede özellikle çelişmezlik ilkesi dikkate alındığında Meillassoux'un ileri sürdüğü "zorunlu olumsuzluk" ile ilgili ortaya koyduğu düşüncelerinin terminolojik olmaktan öte özsel bir yenilik taşımadığı ileri sürüldü.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Meillassoux, Hume Problemi, Çelişmezlik, Spekülâtif Realizm, Korelasyonculuk

1. Introduction

Quentin Meillassoux is one of the most prominent contemporary thinkers of contemporary realism, or speculative realism, today. The fundamental claim of speculative realism is that there exists a domain of being-in-itself that can be thought independently of the subject. In other words, it constitutes a rejection of the idea of an unknowable thing-in-itself. Consequently, this perspective or mode of approach directly compels the thinker to confront Kantian philosophy and post-Kantian thought. Meillassoux characterizes Kantian philosophy and the philosophies that emerged after it as correlationism. By correlation, what is meant is that only the correlation between thinking and being is accessible. That is to say, thinking and being cannot be isolated from one another. Accordingly, correlationism designates a mode of thought that rejects any approach based on evaluating layers of subjectivity and layers of objectivity independently of one another (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 5).

The thinker regards the claim that there exists a real being independent of thought as a contemporary reactivation of Cartesian philosophy. Certainly, this does not constitute a literal repetition of Cartesian philosophy. The role of Cartesian philosophy consists in making it possible to establish the existence of a real being independent of thought insofar as this existence can be determined through mathematics. He formulates this point in his own words as follows: “all those aspects of the object that can be formulated in mathematical terms can be meaningfully conceived as properties of the object in itself.” It should be noted that Meillassoux (2011, p. 3) does not deny that the sensible exists as the subject’s relation to the world. Alongside this, he argues that the object also exists independently of the subject’s relation to it, and maintains that this can only be known through mathematization. According to him, this situation is demonstrable and non-contradictory. Because there was no observer who directly experienced the process of the formation of the Earth, and because it is impossible to imagine a living observer surviving at such high temperatures. In this case, there is no alternative but to express what “measurements,” that is, mathematical data, allow us to define with regard to this event. In order to describe this condition, which may be called pre-thought, Meillassoux uses two terms: ancestral and arche-fossil or fossil-matter. By the term *ancestral*, he refers to every kind of reality that existed prior to the emergence of the human species. By the term *arche-fossil* or *fossil-matter*, he means materials that indicate the existence of an ancestral reality or event that predates life on Earth. In other words, an arche-fossil refers to the material supports upon which experiments rely in order to obtain estimates concerning ancestral phenomena (Meillassoux, 2011, pp. 10,11,12).

According to Meillassoux, no compromise is possible between correlation and fossil-matter: once one of them is accepted, the other is immediately rendered invalid (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 18). Consequently, this problem cannot in any way be thought starting from the transcendental, because the issue concerns a space-time prior to the spatio-temporal forms of representation. In this respect, it is impossible for the transcendental to be implicated in this situation. In other words, to think the ancestral is to think a world in which there is no thought — a world in which the world is not given Meillassoux regards thinking the ancestral as thinking the absolute. This also means conferring meaning upon science insofar as it provides knowledge of the ancestral (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 26, 28). In this case, the ancestral, independent being, and absolute belong to the same semantic cluster. Another key concept in Meillassoux's terminology in this context is facticity. Facticity is defined as the real characteristic of all things and all worlds, that is, their capacity to exist without reason and, consequently, their ability to pass into another state without cause. According to him, it is thus possible to demonstrate the absolute necessity of the non-necessity or contingency of all things. The point at which thought passes into what is independent of itself is facticity. In this respect, Meillassoux unites facticity, contingency, and necessity into a single conceptual framework (Meillassoux, 2011, pp. 54, 62, 63, 65).

The formation of the absolute in itself, and its mathematizability independently of the subject, simultaneously implies the rejection of the principle of sufficient reason. This is because facticity itself is absolute and uncaused. In other words, it is a contingent necessity. To express it in his own words: "...For although I can think the contingency of this existing thing, I cannot think the contingency of existence as such (or of the fact that something exists in general). Thus, I am perfectly incapable of thinking the abolition of existence, and so becoming inexistent is only conceivable as the becoming of a determinate existent, not as the becoming of existence in general." (Meillassoux, 2011, pp. 75-76).

Meillassoux notes that an analysis oriented toward the contingency of laws amounts to offering a speculative solution to Hume's problem. At the same time, David Hume's analysis of causality, according to him, represents an approach organized in opposition to the principle of sufficient reason. In this respect, Meillassoux examines Hume's problem in order to open a path toward an absolute unreason.

2. Hume's Problem

Before moving on to Meillassoux's analyses, it is appropriate, in this context, to present concisely the paragraphs most frequently cited and which in

fact constitute the core of Hume's understanding of causality. Doing so will provide a proper foundation for the subsequent explanations:

All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, Relations of Ideas and Matters of Fact. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic; and in short, every affirmation, which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain...Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is any where existent in the universe...Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness... That the sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the affirmation, that it will rise...Were it demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind...I shall venture to affirm, as a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings *a priori*; but arises entirely from experience...When I see, for instance, a billiard-ball moving in a straight line towards another; even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me, as the result of their contact or impulse; may I not conceive, that a hundred different events might as well follow from that cause?...All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable...In a word, then, every effect is a distinct event from its cause. (Hume, 2007, pp. 18-22)

Before turning to Meillassoux's analyses, it is necessary to make a few observations concerning the situation summarized in the passages above. First of all, Hume maintains that propositions belonging to mathematics and geometry possess a character of certainty. At the same time, such propositions can be known by reason alone, that is, by the mere operation of thought, without any recourse to experience. In contrast, propositions that Hume classifies as matters of fact can only be known through experience. The most important point that must be emphasized here is the following: for Hume, the fact that the contrary of a matter of fact implies no contradiction becomes the criterion for its not being knowable by reason alone. In this sense, independence from experience, being *a priori*,¹ and the impossibility of conceiving a contradiction come to mean the same thing and together constitute the definition of certainty. Although this determination may be regarded as problematic within its own context, this issue does not fall within the scope of the present study. For this reason, we shall not pursue it further here; however, references to it will be made later where appropriate.

¹ The term *a priori* used here should be considered with regard to the context under discussion. For when Hume's general philosophy is taken into account, one can encounter different uses of the term *a priori*. For one example, see Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, p. 334.

Meillassoux states that Hume's problem is shaped around the following question: *Is it possible to demonstrate that the same effects will always follow from the same causes ceteris paribus, i.e. all other things being equal?* In this case, this question concerns our ability to demonstrate that the laws of physics will remain the same in the future as they are today, or more fundamentally, our ability to demonstrate the necessity of the causal connection (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 85). Consequently, this problem is not about the future validity of our theories of nature, but about the future stability of nature itself. However, this problem does not aim to determine whether the laws of nature are deterministic or contingent.

Referring to the passage from Hume cited above, Meillassoux states that Hume accepted only two means capable of establishing the truth of existence or non-existence: experience and the principle of non-contradiction. Neither of these means can demonstrate the necessity of the causal connection. Meillassoux regards the principle of non-contradiction as the most suitable principle for the contingent absolute he seeks. According to him, the principle of non-contradiction is an absolute ontological truth. This truth emerges on the basis of its opposition to the principle of sufficient reason. In order for something to be able to become something else or anything whatsoever, it must be this and not that at a given moment. Accordingly, the ontological meaning of the principle of non-contradiction is revealed not as the designation of any fixed essence, but as the necessity of contingency, in other words, the omnipotence of chaos. Put differently, since it is impossible to prove that laws must remain as they are, the necessity of any fact cannot be established. On the contrary, taking only the requirements of logic and experience into account, everything—natural processes, things, or events—can pass into a state other than it currently is. There is no reason for anything to exist or to remain self-identical (Meillassoux, 2011, pp. 71, 87, 88).

Meillassoux, who interprets Hume's analysis of causality from his own philosophical perspective, also emphasizes that Hume never truly doubts causal necessity. According to the thinker, what Hume actually doubts is merely our capacity to demonstrate this necessity through reasoning. For this reason, Hume characterizes himself as a sceptic. According to Meillassoux, to be a sceptic is to acknowledge that reason is incapable of grounding our adherence to a necessity assumed to be real (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 90).

We will examine Meillassoux's views on this issue under the following heading:

3. Meillassoux's Attempt to Overcome Hume's Problem

As we stated at the outset, the focus of Meillassoux's speculative stance is to replace necessity with the contingent. The thinker emphasizes that Hume did not endeavor to overcome this necessity and, in fact, adhered stubbornly to it. On the other hand, he grounds one pillar of his speculative position in the Humean *a priori*. He expresses this as follows:

...take seriously what the Humean – not Kantian – *a priori* teaches us about the world, viz., that the same cause may actually bring about 'a hundred different events' (and even many more). What Hume tells us is that *a priori*, which is to say from a purely logical point of view, any cause may actually produce any effect whatsoever, provided the latter is not contradictory. (Meillassoux, 2011, pp. 90–91).

According to Meillassoux, Hume tells us that *a priori*—that is, from the standpoint of pure logic—any cause can produce any effect, as long as it does not violate the principle of non-contradiction. Because reason recognizes no *a priori* principle other than non-contradiction, it allows the actualization of every consistent possibility, and no principle exists to privilege one possibility over another. Reason teaches us that our billiard balls, on a billiard table, can indeed play out in a thousand different ways, even though there is neither cause nor reason for them to behave in any particular manner.

There is no objection to Meillassoux's assessment of Hume's *a priori* under normal circumstances. However, when we interpret this approach in light of what was said under the heading of Hume's problem, the following conclusion emerges: Hume misunderstood his own *a priori*. According to Meillassoux, Hume believes in necessity and does not accept that the outcomes of causal phenomena could be otherwise. In other words, Hume simultaneously believes in the possibility that what exists could be otherwise, while also adhering to necessity, thus failing to fully endorse his own observation. Meillassoux declares this to be Hume's contradiction and states: "Hume believes blindly in the world that metaphysicians thought they could prove." (Meillassoux, 2011, pp. 90–91). The question then arises: is this contradiction Hume's, or Meillassoux's?

Before answering this question, let us examine how Meillassoux attempts to overcome this contradiction. He argues that the impasses of Hume's problem can once again be addressed through reliance on reason. In this way, according to him, the place of scepticism, which has been misled by metaphysical necessity, can be taken by a speculative knowledge of the real world, which is non-metaphysical in character. Meillassoux explains his move toward a solution as follows:

From our point of view, if the necessity of the causal connection cannot be demonstrated, then this is simply because the causal connection is devoid

of necessity. But this is not to say that the speculative position eliminates every difficulty. For in fact we are going to reformulate Hume's problem in such a way as to shift its difficulty elsewhere. This reformulation can be stated as follows: instead of asking how we might demonstrate the supposedly genuine necessity of physical laws, we must ask how we are to explain the manifest stability of physical laws given that we take these to be contingent. Once reformulated, Hume's question is in fact the one we raised earlier: if laws are contingent, and not necessary, then how is it that their contingency does not manifest itself in sudden and continual transformations? How could laws for which there is no permanent foundation give rise to a stable world? Our wager is that this formulation of the problem, unlike its canonical version, allows of a satisfactory solution which requires no limitation of the capacities of rationality. (Meillassoux, 2011, pp. 90-91)

Meillassoux's thesis that "Hume believes in necessity" may at first appear plausible. For example, it is clearly observable that Hume does not believe in violations of the law in the case of miracles. However, it is highly debatable whether Hume here refers to necessity itself or to the condition that Meillassoux describes as the stability of the phenomenon. In his explanation of the *a priori* cited above, Hume had already pointed to the possibility of hundreds of additional outcomes, as in the example of the billiard balls, together with the impossibility of demonstrating the necessity of the cause-effect relationship. It should also be noted that for something to be necessary, Hume treats the impossibility of contradiction as a criterion. In this case, the fact that it is not contradictory to conceive of different outcomes in causal situations naturally implies that it is not necessary.

So, should we conclude that Hume both believes and does not believe in necessity? Since such a blatant contradiction seems unthinkable, why should it not be possible to say that Hume, like Meillassoux, believed in the stability of the law? Moreover, Meillassoux's observations also support this view. But what Hume tells us is that such a reason is entirely inaccessible to thought, for since we cannot demonstrate that the laws must remain as they are, we cannot demonstrate the necessity of any fact – on the contrary, it would be perfectly compatible with the requirements of logic and experience for everything to become other than it is, whether natural processes, things, or events. There is no reason for anything to be or to remain self-identical. To claim that there is no reason for anything to remain self-identical, why should this be understood merely as an epistemological statement? On the contrary, taking only the requirements of logic and experience into account, everything—natural processes, things, or events—can become other than it is. Nothing has a reason to exist or to remain self-identical (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 88).

As can be seen, Meillassoux essentially appears to be changing the terminology of Hume's problem. The place of being stable and being necessary is reversed. This raises the following question: what is the difference between being stable and being necessary? In this case, Meillassoux would probably answer,

centering on Hume's a priori: to be necessary is to be non-contradictory, whereas to be stable is to be logically conceivable. But isn't this answer already Hume's own? Should we then say that Hume believes in the necessity he rejects in factual matters simply because he does not use the term "stable"?

In this context, Harman's observation, with which we concur, seems apt: "A law means that one entity or field influences another in a specific way whenever these make the appropriate sort of contact. To say that 'the laws may change over time' is certainly radical, but it does not allow for complete contingency. For rather than being contingent, as Meillassoux promises, things are tied to necessary laws now as much as ever, but simply to laws whose character might change suddenly for no reason. Here once more, Meillassoux seems entirely focused on diachronic contingency, and does not seem bothered if the principle of sufficient reason continues to operate in a single instant." (Harman, 2015, p. 40). Here, one could well replace the principle of sufficient reason with the notion of necessary laws of nature. At this point, he turns to Kant and brings the issue to the problem of representation, stating:

Accordingly, our problem can be rendered still more precise:

in order to establish the validity of our speculative solution to Hume's problem, we must expose the nature of the logical fallacy inherent in the transcendental deduction, so as to show, contrary to what the latter maintains, that the constancy of the phenomenal world does not amount to a refutation of the contingency of physical laws. In other words, we must show why it is a mistake to infer, as Kant does, the destruction of representation from the non-necessity of laws. (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 93)

Here, one would have expected Meillassoux to correct Hume's error in order to provide a speculative solution to Hume's problem. Instead, he proceeds from the alleged fault of Kant's theory of representation. Considering Kant's position in opposition to Hume, Meillassoux's refutation of Kant leads, in a sense, to Hume being vindicated. This supports our view, expressed above, that Meillassoux's objection to Hume is not essential but rather a matter of terminological difference.

Accepting the principle of non-contradiction as fundamental, Meillassoux considers that the situation he labels stable—instead of necessary, and thus deemed contingent—can only be determined with mathematical certainty. He designates the condition that makes this possible as the transfinite (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 101).

Although Meillassoux claims to resolve Hume's problem by grounding it in mathematical certainty within the framework of the principle of non-contradiction, it appears that the problem is already removed from a strictly Humean perspective. Consider, for example, his (2011, p. 126) statement: "It is a matter

of holding fast to the Cartesian thesis – according to which whatever can be mathematized can be rendered absolute – without reactivating the principle of reason.”

Here, Meillassoux should arguably have stated that such a move is impossible. For if a matter can be resolved mathematically, and if one operates according to Hume's principle of non-contradiction, then any result obtained mathematically cannot be contradictory according to Hume's *a priori*. In that case, it is already certain, and the discussion would be closed—just as one cannot conceive of a round triangle. Yet, these explanations indicate that the situation is in fact not so straightforward.

Although Meillassoux claims to resolve Hume's problem by grounding it in mathematical certainty, he appears to approach the issue in a somewhat prejudiced manner. For instance, consider his statement: “It is a matter of holding fast to the Cartesian thesis – according to which whatever can be mathematized can be rendered absolute – without reactivating the principle of reason.” The phrase “without reactivating the principle of reason” should rather signal that such a move is already impossible. If a matter can be addressed mathematically and approached according to Hume's principle of non-contradiction, as noted above, then any mathematically obtained result cannot be contradictory according to Hume's *a priori*, and is therefore necessarily certain. Yet, Meillassoux hesitates, as if merely conjecturing, which in our view distances his statements here from full mathematical certainty and leaves the possibility of contradiction still conceivable (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 126).

In fact, fully aware of all these contradictions, Meillassoux (2022, p. 21) attempts to interpret Hume by claiming that he opens the way to understanding a rational world as chaotic. He then states, in a striking manner: “Indeed, if—contrary to our hypothesis—a real necessity were added to logical necessity; if the possibles were doubly constrained, both by non-contradiction and by existing constants, then an artificial mystery would be created, one that reason would clearly be incapable of resolving.” When Meillassoux's approach is considered carefully, one may say that he tends not to proceed from reality itself, but rather to treat a construction as if it were real.

One might respond to our critiques as follows:

So the challenge set for Meillassoux's factial is that necessity must be thinkable, but the necessity that is thinkable must not be a real necessity. In other words, the factial must 1) maintain some notion of eternal necessity, while 2) excluding any necessary being; Meillassoux must refuse every metaphysical absolute, yet retain ‘a little.’ (Watkin, 2011, p. 141).

From our perspective, the difficulty lies precisely in these formulations. For instance, what is meant by a “little absolute”? What is meant by a “necessity that is not real”? These notions, especially in the context of Humean philosophy, appear to reduce the discussion to a largely verbal or terminological debate, rather than engaging with the substantive ontological and metaphysical questions at stake.

Ultimately, it must be emphasized that, as noted earlier, the fundamental aim of both Hume and Meillassoux is to abolish the principle of sufficient reason. In doing so, the metaphysical question of why things are the way they are rather than otherwise can finally be answered—and that answer is: “There is no reason.” Meillassoux goes even further, asserting that responding to questions such as “Where do we come from?” and “Why do we exist?” with the answer “From nothing. For nothing.” constitutes the genuine, true response (Meillassoux, 2011, p. 110). This situation naturally raises the following question: can the proposition “There is no reason” be coherently conceived? Within this paradigm, the answer is affirmative. In that case, what becomes of the principle of non-contradiction? How is it that Meillassoux is able to construct this speculative framework precisely on the basis of Hume’s principle? If the very negation of this situation is itself conceivable, how can necessity and absoluteness—even if only contingently—be legitimately ascribed to it? All of these paradoxes remain fully operative and unresolved.

Conclusion

In this study, we examined Meillassoux’s analysis of Hume’s problem on the path toward his speculative realism. It can be said that we largely concur with Meillassoux’s reading of Hume. However, we argued that when constructing his own theory after engaging with Hume, Meillassoux experiences, so to speak, a shift in axis. The implication is as follows: despite recognizing the gap opened by Hume, Meillassoux effectively inverts Hume in his movement toward the contingent absolute of speculative realism. In other words, when Hume’s principle of non-contradiction and his a priori approach are applied to Meillassoux’s theory, it becomes clear that this theory can be conceived as contradictory.

Initially, what one might have expected from Meillassoux was a refutation of Hume. Yet, by refraining from doing so and merely critiquing Hume for presupposing necessity, he implicitly suggests a tension with Hume himself. This approach tacitly carries the claim of taking Hume’s thought consistently to its ultimate conclusion. Nevertheless, it appears that, in practice, he moves contrary to the trajectory opened by Hume. Consequently, it can be argued that this approach, which ostensibly seeks to resolve Hume’s problem, in fact renders

the problem more complex, giving the impression that the divergence lies primarily in verbal or terminological differences rather than substantive theoretical resolution.

References

1. Harman, G. (2015). *Quentin Meillassoux: Philosophy in the Making*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
2. Hume, D. (1960). *Treatise of Human Nature* (Ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, M.A.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
3. Hume, D. (2007). *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Ed. P. Millican). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4. Meillassoux, Q. (2011). *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (Trans. R. Brassier). London: Continuum.
5. Meillassoux, Q. (2014). *Time Without Becoming* (Ed. A. Longo). London: Mimesis International.
6. Meillassoux, Q. (2022). *Spekülatif Materyalizm: Varlık, Zaman, Adalet, Din, Bilim* (Ed. & Trs. K. Kahveci). İstanbul: Pinhan Yayıncılık.
7. Watkin, C. (2011). *Difficult Atheism: Post-Theological Thinking in Alain Badiou, Jean-Luc Nancy and Quentin Meillassoux*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

The Meaning of The Family: A Metaphysical and Metabiological Analysis

Ailenin Anlamı: Metafizik ve Metabiyolojik Bir Analiz

Mustafa Çevik

Prof. Dr., Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi/Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Fakültesi/Felsefe Bölümü,
mustafa.cevik@asbu.edu.tr,
ORCID: 0000-0002-7343-178X

Article Information

Article Type

Research Article

Date Received

03.12.2025

Date Accepted

18.12.2025

Date Published

31 December 2025

Plagiarism Checks: Yes, Turnitin.

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited. (Mustafa Çevik)

Conflicts of Interest: The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.

Makale Bilgisi

Makale Türü

Araştırma Makalesi

Geliş Tarihi

03.12.2025

Kabul Tarihi

18.12.2025

Yayın Tarihi

31 Aralık 2025

Benzerlik Taraması: Evet, Turnitin.

Etik Beyan

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur. (Mustafa Çevik)

Çıkar Çatışması: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır.



Cite As | Atıf

Çevik, Mustafa (2025). The Meaning of The Family: A Metaphysical and Metabiological Alay-
sis, (2) 2, 96-109.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18107736>

Abstract

This study approaches the family not merely as a biological or sociological institution but as an ontological space grounded in the metaphysical and metabiological foundations of human existence. The family constitutes the first place where the human being encounters the world, constructs meaning, develops moral intuitions, and forms an embodied and narrative sense of identity. Heidegger's conception of space situates the family as the primary horizon of being-in-the-world, while Hegel's theory of ethical life portrays it as the first communal unity grounded in love, trust, and reciprocity. Rawls's model of moral development emphasizes that the sense of justice emerges initially within the family through stages of authority, cooperation, and principled reasoning.

Feminist critiques—especially those by Susan Moller Okin—illuminate how family structures may reproduce gender inequalities and shape distorted moral intuitions if they lack egalitarian foundations. Modern sociological perspectives further show that transformations in intimacy, the rise of individualization, and the fragility of contemporary relationships undermine the family's role as a source of ontological security.

Drawn from Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body, Buber's relational ontology, Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity, and the attachment research of Bowlby and Fonagy, this study conceptualizes the family not only as a metaphysical domain but also as a neurobiological and affective matrix that shapes the foundations of trust, perception, and emotional understanding.

Ultimately, this work argues that the family must be understood beyond functionalist or reductionist biological approaches. It is presented as the originating space of human meaning, identity, moral reasoning, and existential grounding. The metaphysics and metabiology of the family reveal it as a constitutive environment for becoming human, transmitting values across generations, and cultivating the ontological security necessary for moral and social life.

Keywords: Philosophy of Family, Metaphysics, Metabiology, Gender, Justice, Ethics

Öz

Bu çalışma, aileyi salt biyolojik veya sosyolojik bir kurum olarak değil, insan varoluşunun metafizik ve metabiyolojik temeline yerleşmiş bir ontolojik alan olarak ele almaktadır. Aile, insanın dünyaya açıldığı, anlamlandırmayı, kimlik inşasını ve etik yönelimlerini geliştirdiği ilk mekân olarak konumlanır. Heidegger'in mekân ve varlık anlayışı aileyi varoluşun zemini olarak gösterirken, Hegel'in törellik sistemi aileyi sevgi, güven ve fedakârlık temelinde örgütlenen ilk etik bütünlük olarak niteler. Rawls'ın ahlaki gelişim modeli ise adalet duygusunun aile içindeki otorite, ortaklık ve ilkeler üzerinden geliştiğini vurgular.

Çalışmada feminist eleştiriler, özellikle Susan Moller Okin'in Rawls'a yönelttiği toplumsal cinsiyet odaklı değerlendirmeler, aile içi rollerin adalet açısından yeniden düşünülmesi gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ailelerin eşitlikçi yapıya sahip olmaması durumunda, çocukların adalet algısının da çarpık biçimde biçimlendiği gösterilmektedir. Bununla birlikte, modern sosyolojinin aile çözümlemeleri aile bağlarının modernleşme ile zayıfladığını, bireylerin ontolojik güvencelerinin aşındığını ve "akışkan ilişkiler"i aileyi dönüşüme zorladığını ortaya koyar.

Merleau-Ponty'nin beden fenomenolojisi, Buber'in ilişkisellik anlayışı, Ricoeur'ün anlatı kimliği ve Bowlby-Fonagy'nin bağlanma teorileri kullanılarak aile, yalnızca metafizik değil aynı zamanda nörobiyolojik bir varlık alanı olarak ele alınır. Bu bütünsel perspektif, aileyi insanın etik, epistemolojik, bedensel ve duygusal gelişiminin kurucu koşulu olarak konumlandırır.

Son olarak çalışma, aileyi indirgemeci biyolojik açıklamaların veya araçsal sosyolojik modellerin ötesine yerleştirerek, onun hem ontolojik statüsünü hem de metabiyolojik temellerini görür kılmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, aileyi sadece işlevsel bir toplumsal kurum değil, insanlaşma sürecinin kök mekânı ve varoluşsal dayanağı olarak yeniden düşünmeye davet eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aile Felsefesi, Metafizik, Metabioloji, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Adalet, Etik

1. Introduction: Defining the Metaphysics and Metabiology of the Family

In the classical sense, inquiring into the “metaphysics of a thing” entails transcending its manifest, material, and functional aspects to investigate its constitutive structure, its conditions of possibility, and the principles that determine its essence. Metaphysics does not merely probe the causes behind phenomena; rather, it interrogates the ontological ground that renders those causes possible. Consequently, a metaphysical inquiry reflects upon *how* something can exist prior to *why* it exists. In this context, the metaphysics of an institution, a relationship, or a concept aims to render visible its continuity, its sustaining structure, and its existential significance.

Metabiology, on the other hand, is the investigation of the deep structures, normative orders, and organizational principles underlying biological processes. Where classical biology remains confined to genetic or evolutionary explanations, metabiology examines the relationality, holism, attachment, and developmental potentials inherent in biological functioning. It posits that biological phenomena are not merely physical; they possess inherently meaningful, relational, and normative dimensions.

When these two approaches converge, the metaphysics and metabiology of a subject offer a holistic framework that elucidates both its conditions of being and its developmental-functional foundations. For instance, the “metaphysics of the family” conceptualizes the family not merely as a sociological construct, but as an ontological domain—the site of the individual’s primordial encounter with the world and the bedrock of their ethical and epistemological development. Simultaneously, the “metabiology of the family” reveals that processes which appear purely biological—such as maternal-infant attachment, emotional regulation, and epistemic trust—are, in fact, structured by relational and normative meanings.

Metabiology provides metaphysics with biological depth, while metaphysics confers normative and existential meaning upon metabiology. While a metaphysical explanation emphasizes the multi-layered integrity of relationships, values, or identity, a metabiological explanation demonstrates their embodied, neurobiological, and developmental basis. Thus, a new nexus is established between Being and Life: Being ceases to be a mere abstract category and settles into an embodied existence; Life is no longer understood solely as a genetic process, but as a relational and meaningful becoming (*becoming*).

Therefore, investigating the “metaphysics and metabiology of a thing” involves searching for both what it is and how it is possible; it renders visible both

its ontological foundation and its vital dynamics. It represents an approach that seeks to understand the world not on a purely material or purely meaning-centered plane, but precisely at the intersection where these two dimensions converge.

2. Meta-Family

The family possesses an ontological foundation as the existential locus of the human being. Martin Heidegger defines metaphysics as "comprehending the being as being and inquiring beyond it" (Heidegger, 1991, p. 38). Within this framework, the family emerges as a space that shapes not only the individual's biological existence but also their epistemological and ethical development. As the cornerstone of the human existential process, the family is the primary environment that molds an individual's identity, values, and worldview. Consequently, far beyond being a mere sociological institution, the family is an integral component of the human existential journey.

As a micro-scale reflection of the cosmic order, the family represents the process of co-existence through the relationship between man, woman, and child. The prolonged biological maturation of the human being necessitates that their epistemological and ethical development takes place within the familial unit. According to Heidegger, the human being exists within "space," and this primary space is the family. An individual deprived of a family is consigned to a more arduous and painful path in the process of discovering truth (Heidegger, 1991). In this sense, the family serves as a mediatory bridge in the individual's endeavor to understand and interpret the world. Within the family, the child encounters fundamental concepts such as love, trust, and justice. John Rawls posits that the sense of justice develops during childhood within the family, progressing through stages such as the morality of authority, the morality of association, and the morality of principles (Rawls, 2018).

The familial bond is not merely a physical togetherness but a spiritual and ethical context. The origin of the family is not a historical "invention"—as suggested by Marxist and Darwinist theories—but an inseparable part of human nature. From a theological perspective, it is argued that humanity came into being within a familial structure, beginning with Adam and Eve. According to this view, the family helps the individual understand their place in the world by preserving their biological and spiritual integrity. Hegel defines the family as the primary social structure in which the individual acquires their personality and moral values (Hegel, 2011). Thus, the family is a "space of becoming" that nurtures not only the biological but also the ethical, intellectual, and emotional development of the individual.

The constituents of the family—"man," "woman," and "child"—are not merely biological entities; each possesses an ontological and epistemological significance. Manhood and womanhood are shaped by social roles and ethical responsibilities alongside biological sex. The child, meanwhile, represents the stage in which the human being encounters reality in its purest and most nascent form.

John Rawls argues that the concept of justice first germinates within the family. The "morality of authority" begins with the child's acceptance of parental authority. Subsequently, the "morality of association" takes effect, where the child learns the concepts of justice and equality through relationships with siblings and parents (Rawls, 2018). Finally, the "morality of principles" signifies the individual's commitment to social contracts and ethical values. This moral development within the family determines the individual's process of social integration.

Heidegger's conception of Being and Space serves as a vital guide in understanding the metaphysical foundations of the family structure. The human process of "becoming" occurs within a specific space, and this space is the familial environment where the individual's first social and moral experiences are lived. The family is where the human quest for truth begins and takes shape. Rawls's theory of justice supports this process; the sense of justice acquired within the family enables the individual to cope with the challenges encountered in social life.

In this context, the family is not merely an environment of biological existence but an ontological and epistemological site. It shapes the individual's identity, values, and mode of perceiving the world. An individual raised without a family experiences greater difficulties in their journey toward truth and must exert more effort to compensate for these foundational deficiencies.

The metaphysics of the family structure is a fundamental concept that shapes the existential, epistemological, and ethical development of the human being. As the site where the individual first encounters and internalizes truth, the family plays an indispensable role in the process of social integration. Therefore, perceiving the family not merely as a biological or sociological construct, but as an ontological domain of being, allows us to grasp its true value and significance.

To deepen the metaphysical structure of the family, it is necessary to emphasize that the individual's primary relationship with the world is not only cognitive but also an embodied experience. According to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, the human being experiences the world not through abstract reasoning but through body schemas; most of these schemas are

formed through intra-familial interactions during early childhood (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 120). The child's opening to the world through physical contact, tone of voice, facial expressions, and rhythmic reciprocity renders the family the first ontological domain in which the world is rendered meaningful.

Buber's relational ontology further supports this structure. According to Buber, the human being learns to become an "I" only through an encounter with a "Thou", and this primary "Thou" is always the caregiver within the family (Buber, 1970, p. 24). Consequently, the family is the first constitutive relationship of the human ethical and existential structure: the self is formed through these primordial encounters.

Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity is also crucial in explaining the ontological function of the family. According to Ricoeur, identity is a process woven over time by memories, narratives, and relationships (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 114). Since the family is the site where the individual's first narrative is constructed, it constitutes the ontological foundation of identity.

Finally, Bowlby's attachment theory and Fonagy's research on epistemic trust support this metaphysical approach with biological findings. According to Fonagy, a child can only understand the intentions of others and learn to trust information through a reciprocal relationship established with a reliable caregiver (Fonagy et al., 2017, p. 12). This "epistemic trust" is the biopsychosocial foundation of human existence within social life. Therefore, the family is not only a metaphysical space but also a field of possibility that enables the human being to relate to the world at a neurobiological level.

2. Family and Ontological Status: The Philosophy of Co-existence

The family must be addressed not merely as a social institution but as a foundational structure that determines the ontological status of individuals. Woman, man, and child are not merely biological entities; they are beings who derive meaning within their own ontological integrity. According to Hegel, the family operates through a "spirit of we" and acts as "one person," where members transcend their individual selves to form a whole grounded in love, trust, and solidarity (Hegel, 2011, pp. 125-127). This perspective demonstrates that the family is not composed of the transient effects of social roles, but rather persists as a natural and spiritual structure.

This ontological status of the family becomes even clearer through Rawls's concepts of the "morality of authority," "morality of association," and "morality of principles" (Rawls, 2018, p. 493). According to Rawls, children first encounter authority within the family, subsequently develop a consciousness of association, and ultimately reach an understanding of life

based on their own moral principles. This process encompasses not only biological development but also epistemological and ethical maturation.

The Metaphysical and Ontological Dimension of the Family

From a metaphysical standpoint, the family can be regarded as a microcosm of the cosmic order. Heidegger's definition of metaphysics as "comprehending the being as being" (Heidegger, 1991, p. 38) reveals that the family is not just a physical union but the center of the individual's existential journey. The family is an environment that enables not only biological growth but also epistemological and moral maturation.

Hegel argues that the family is an ethical "whole" where individuals unite on the basis of love and trust, setting aside their personal interests. For him, family members find their own selves within the consciousness of one another. This allows family members to develop as moral and spiritual beings. In this sense, the family is the primordial space where the individual completes their ontological integrity.

Rawls's Moral Theory and the Family

In *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls examines moral development in three stages: the morality of authority, the morality of association, and the morality of principles. These stages offer significant insights into how the family shapes the individual's moral consciousness.

1. The Morality of Authority: The child first encounters the concept of authority within the family. While parents teach the child the distinction between right and wrong, they simultaneously cultivate a sense of responsibility. According to Rawls, the family is the primary site of authority where children acquire a sense of justice (Rawls, 2018, p. 493).
2. The Morality of Association: Through relationships with siblings and parents, the child learns the concepts of cooperation, solidarity, and empathy. Rawls terms this the "morality of association" and argues that this stage develops the individual's ability to live in harmony with society (Rawls, 2018, p. 498).
3. The Morality of Principles: By anchoring the values acquired within the family to universal principles, the individual develops their own ethical standards. According to Rawls, this stage enables the individual to act in accordance with their own moral principles (Rawls, 2018, p. 508).

Ontological Foundations and Individual Identity

Woman, man, and child cannot be defined by biological roles alone. The metaphysics of the family posits a union based on the ontological integrity of these three elements. As Hegel expressed, family members exist within

a common reason and spirit by sacrificing their individual selves (Hegel, 2011, pp. 125-127). Within the family, the individual learns how to be, constructs their identity, and attains ontological wholeness.

Philosophical Critiques and the Transformation of the Family Structure

Feminist critiques have challenged the family conceptions of Rawls and Hegel for being rooted in traditional gender roles. Susan Moller Okin argues that Rawls's theory of justice reinforces masculine authority within the family (Okin, 1989, p. 92). However, this critique stems from viewing the family solely as a social institution. The family is not merely a site where social roles are reproduced; it is also a domain of moral and existential union.

Nevertheless, the functional roles attributed to the family have transformed in the modern era, bringing the nuclear family model to the fore. The ontological unity and moral development emphasized by Hegel and Rawls are not limited to the traditional nuclear family. The family remains the center for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, values, and tradition. This transmission is facilitated not only by biological ties but also by spiritual and ethical relationships.

To understand the family's ontological status, Arendt's concept of "natality" is instructive. According to Arendt, birth is not just the arrival of a body into the world, but the entry of a new beginning and a new capacity for action (Arendt, 1958, p. 177). This perspective allows us to define the family as the constitutive space for one's entry into the world in both a political and ethical sense. This "new beginning" initiated by birth takes root within the family.

MacIntyre's virtue ethics approach demonstrates that the family is a "community of practices." According to MacIntyre, virtues are not learned as abstract rules but within social practices (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 187). The family is the primary site where these practices occur: virtues such as patience, compassion, sacrifice, trust, and loyalty are acquired through action within the family. Thus, the family functions as an ontological school that shapes the individual's character.

Charles Taylor's theory of recognition also conceptualizes the family as an ontological domain. According to Taylor, identity is formed within relationships of recognition; an individual's sense of worth is shaped by being recognized by their caregivers (Taylor, 1994, p. 26). Therefore, the family is the space of recognition where the individual's "self-worth" first takes root.

Finally, Simone Weil states that one of the fundamental needs of the human being is "rootedness." According to Weil, uprootedness is one of the deepest afflictions of modern man, and rootedness is only possible through concrete relationships and bonds of belonging (Weil, 1952, p. 43). Weil's view is of critical

value in understanding the existential insecurity resulting from the weakening of the family institution in modern societies.

In conclusion, the family cannot be defined solely by biological and social functions. As Hegel and Rawls emphasized, the family is an existential locus that determines the ontological status of individuals. Woman, man, and child derive meaning within the family not merely as biological entities, but as individuals possessing ethical and spiritual integrity. The ontological foundations of the family encompass the individual's psychological and epistemological development. The family is the first and most vital space where the human being completes the process of becoming, acquires values, and finds ontological wholeness. Therefore, it is necessary to treat the family not only as a social institution but as an ontological value in itself.

3. The Metaphysics of Intra-familial Relations

While John Rawls positions the family as the foundational ground for the development of the sense of justice, it is at this stage that the child learns to comply with the rules established by their parents. This process of compliance constitutes the bedrock of the child's burgeoning conception of justice.

However, feminist critics such as Susan Moller Okin argue that this structure fosters gender inequality (Okin, 1989, p. 92). Okin asserts that the family imparts not only a sense of justice but also specific social roles. In traditional familial structures, while men represent authority, women are predominantly associated with care and emotional labor. This dynamic leads children to mature within the confines of rigid gender roles. According to Okin, for justice to genuinely flourish within the family, the construction of an egalitarian family structure is an absolute necessity.

From a Rawlsian perspective, the family is an environment where the child accepts authority without interrogation. Children perceive the rules set by parents as inherently right and just. Yet, during this stage, the child may not yet develop critical thinking skills. Rawls regards this as a natural facet of moral development. He posits that as the child grows and their social interactions expand, this "morality of authority" is superseded by the morality of association. In this subsequent stage, children learn to establish equal relationships and respect the rights of others.

Nonetheless, a non-egalitarian family structure can adversely affect this trajectory. For instance, in a patriarchal family, children internalize male authority and accept it as a natural order. While this shapes the child's under-

standing of justice, it simultaneously reproduces gender inequality. Okin's critique emphasizes that an egalitarian family structure plays a pivotal role in the healthy development of the sense of justice.

According to Rawls's theory, an individual who reaches the morality of principles stage learns to establish just relationships and acts within the framework of universal moral principles. However, the functional integrity of this process depends on the family possessing an egalitarian and just structure. Okin argues that unless equality is established within the family, children's sense of justice develops in a distorted manner.

From the perspective of family metaphysics, the family is an educational domain where moral values are transmitted (Hegel, 2011, pp. 125-127). According to Hegel, the family is an environment of *Sittlichkeit* (ethical life) where individuals learn values such as sacrifice, responsibility, and love. In this process, the child learns not only to obey rules but also to formulate moral judgments.

It is imperative, however, that this process operates in an egalitarian and inclusive fashion. If gender-based discrimination exists within the family, children accept this as a "norm." This leads to the intergenerational transmission of social inequalities. Rawls's theory of justice proposes resolving this through the principle of equality. For Rawls, ensuring that every individual within the family holds equal rights and responsibilities paves the way toward a just society.

The parent-child relationship should be an environment that fosters not only obedience to authority but also the development of critical thinking and moral reasoning. In this context, a democratic family structure enables children to cultivate the ability to form just relationships—a process Rawls deems critical for the evolution of the sense of justice.

In summary, the parent-child relationship is the cornerstone of the morality of justice. Yet, the healthy and egalitarian functioning of this process depends on the family's inclusive nature. The perspectives of Rawls and Okin highlight the role of the family in moral development while underscoring the vital importance of an egalitarian structure.

Emmanuel Levinas's ethical conception of the face-to-face relationship is instrumental in explaining the ontological depth of intra-familial relations. For Levinas, ethics is not an abstract set of norms but arises from the encounter with the vulnerability of the Other (Levinas, 1969, p. 79). The emergence of responsibility the moment we first behold the child's face strengthens the metaphysical foundation of the family. In this regard, the family is the site where the first ethical relationship is established and where responsibility takes root.

Carol Gilligan's ethics of care further demonstrates the significance of the family, particularly within gender discourses. Gilligan argues that morality develops not solely through principles of justice but through care, concern, and relational responsiveness (Gilligan, 1982, p. 22). This approach places the family at the heart of ethical development and serves as a crucial complement to Rawls's justice model.

Martha Nussbaum's approach to the ethics of emotions also deepens the metaphysics of intra-familial relations. According to Nussbaum, emotions are not irrational impulses but value-laden judgments; emotions such as love, anger, fear, and hope determine the moral dimension of an individual's relationship with the world (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 34). The family is the space where these emotions are first learned and transformed into values.

Finally, modern sociological analyses support this philosophical framework. Zygmunt Bauman suggests that with the "liquefaction" of relationships in modern society, the individual's ontological security is compromised (Bauman, 2003, p. 56). Anthony Giddens notes through the concept of the "pure relationship" that familial bonds have become more negotiated yet more fragile (Giddens, 1992, p. 58). Therefore, the institution of the family and the identities of its members must be constructed not merely upon "pure relationship" but upon a metaphysical foundation.

Conclusion: Family as a Metaphysical and Ontological Value

This study has demonstrated that the concept of the family is not merely a biological and sociological institution but also carries profound metaphysical and ontological value. When examining the approaches of thinkers such as Heidegger, Hegel, Rawls, and Okin, it becomes evident that the family plays a central role in the individual's ethical, epistemological, and ontological development. The family is not just a social structure; it is the fundamental locus in which the human being constructs their existential meaning and identity.

Heidegger argues that the human process of "becoming" occurs within specific spaces and contexts. In this framework, the family emerges as a site where the individual not only sustains biological existence but also molds their identity, values, and worldview. From birth, the human being is defined not as an independent entity but as a being that develops within relationality with others. Rawls's theory of justice is also predicated on this relationality. According to him, children learn the morality of authority, association, and principles within the family. The morality of authority begins with the child learning to

comply with rules under parental guidance. The morality of association develops through mutual aid and solidarity within the family. Finally, the morality of principles emerges when the individual internalizes abstract concepts of justice and regulates their own behavior according to these principles.

However, the weakening of the family institution in modern societies produces adverse effects on identity construction, the perception of justice, and social solidarity. While Okin's feminist critiques argue that power dynamics within the family can lead to injustice, these critiques often stem from the shortcomings of modern approaches that instrumentalize the family. According to Okin, although Rawls views the family as the foundation of justice, he overlooks intra-familial inequalities. Yet, such critiques arise from the narrow perspective of treating the family solely as a social tool. As Hegel emphasized, the family is the primary ethical community (*Sittlichkeit*) in which the individual realizes themselves. Hegel defines the family as a union based on love and trust, asserting that this unity is fundamental to the individual's development as a social and ethical being.

In modern societies, the family institution has been weakened by radical individualism and shifting economic structures, leading to the destabilization of individuals' ontological security. While Rawls's theory of justice prioritizes individual rights and liberties to fill this void, feminists like Okin contend that these rights may be incompatible with intra-familial power dynamics. However, Hegel and Heidegger emphasize that the family possesses a meaning deeper than mere individual liberties and plays an indispensable role in the individual's process of "being."

The proposed approach advocates for treating the family not as an instrumental institution but as an ontological and ethical value, emphasizing the system of tradition and custom (*mores*) for the intergenerational transmission of this value. The family is not merely a unit of biological reproduction; it is a space where values, identity, and meaning are transmitted across generations. According to Heidegger's concept of "space" (*Raum*), a human being does not merely exist physically in a location; their identity is shaped by the relationships established within that space. In this context, the family is the individual's first and most fundamental space.

Hegel defines the family as an ethical totality shaped by bonds of love and trust. For him, the individual relinquishes their isolated selfhood within the family to exist within a sense of "we." This is congruent with Rawls's concept of the morality of association. Rawls views the child's ability to transcend individual self-interest and learn altruism within the family as the bedrock of social justice.

Nevertheless, Okin argues that gender roles within the family can lead to injustice during this process. Indeed, if the balance of power within the family is not egalitarian, the conception of justice transmitted to children will be distorted. At this juncture, it is necessary to redefine the family and position it within an ethical system of values. The erosion of the family structure in modern societies creates serious problems regarding identity construction and the sense of social belonging. While Rawls seeks the foundation of justice in individual rights and liberties, Hegel argues that these rights only gain meaning within an ethical community. Okin, meanwhile, asserts that power dynamics within the family must be restructured on the basis of equality.

Ultimately, the proposed approach maintains that the family should be regarded not merely as a functional institution but as an ontological value, emphasizing the role of tradition and custom in its intergenerational preservation. The family is an institution that supports the human process of "becoming" and shapes the individual's identity, values, and perspective on the world.

In this context, the philosophy of the family must be redefined as one of the fundamental building blocks of human existence. The family is not just an institution where individuals come together biologically; it is an existential spaceshaped within an ethical, epistemological, and ontological value system. It is the site where the individual develops a sense of identity, justice, and solidarity, attains ontological security, and learns to relate to truth. Therefore, the family must be addressed not as a functional tool, but as an ontological value situated at the very heart of human existence.

References

1. Arendt, H. (1958). *The human condition*. University of Chicago Press.
2. Bauman, Z. (2003). *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bond*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
3. Buber, M. (1970). *I and Thou* (W. Kaufmann, Trans.). Scribner.
4. Fonagy P, Luyten P, Allison E, Campbell C. (2019). Mentalizing, Epistemic Trust and the Phenomenology of Psychotherapy. *Psychopathology*. 52(2):94-103.
5. Giddens, A. (1992). *The transformation of intimacy*. Stanford University Press.
6. Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Harvard University Press.
7. Hegel, G. W. F. (2011). *Tarihte akıl* (Ö. Sözer, Çev.). Kabcacı Yayıncılık.
8. Heidegger, M. (1991). *Metafizik nedir?* (Y. Örneke, Çev.). Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu.

9. Kearns, D. (1983). A theory of justice and love: Rawls on the family. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 18(2), 36–42.
10. Levinas, E. (1969). *Totality and infinity*. Duquesne University Press.
11. MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After virtue*. University of Notre Dame Press.
12. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. Routledge.
13. Nussbaum, M. C. (2001). *Upheavals of thought*. Cambridge University Press.
14. Okin, S. M. (1989). *Justice, gender, and the family*. Basic Books.
15. Rawls, J. (2018). *Bir adalet teorisi* (M. F. Bilgin, Çev.). Phoenix Yayınları.
16. Ricoeur, P. (1992). *Oneself as another*. University of Chicago Press.
17. Taylor, C. (1992). *The Politics of Recognition*. In A. Gutmann (Ed.), *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (pp. 25-74). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
18. Weil, S. (1952). *The need for roots*. Routledge.

The State of Reason: A Theory of Virtuous Society and Rational Politics by Mustafa Çevik
(Book Review)

Mustafa Çevik'in Akıl Devleti: Erdemli Toplum ve Makul Siyaset Teorisi
(Kitap İncelemesi)

Nilüfer Karadağ

Dr., Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, nilufer.karadag@gazi.edu.tr,
ORCID: 0000-0002-4658-2494

Article Information

Article Type

Book Review

Date Received

05.12.2025

Date Accepted

30.12.2025

Date Published

31 December 2025

Plagiarism Checks: Yes, Turnitin.

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.
(Nilüfer Karadağ)

Conflicts of Interest: The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.

Licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0 license.



Cite As | Atıf

Makale Bilgisi

Makale Türü

Kitap İncelemesi

Geliş Tarihi

05.12.2025

Kabul Tarihi

30.12.2025

Yayın Tarihi

31 Aralık 2025

Benzerlik Taraması: Evet, Turnitin.

Etik Beyan

Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.
(Nilüfer Karadağ)

Çıkar Çatışması: Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı ile lisanslanmıştır.

Abstract

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Çevik's The Theory of the Rational State, Virtuous Society and Reasonable Politics is an important source written in the field of political philosophy. Throughout history, human beings have always lived within communities and have been guided by the tendencies of those communities. Leaders have also been trustworthy individuals who emerged from within society. However, the desire for power and conflicts of interest have, over time, distanced leaders from virtue and principles, making them inclined to ignore the fact that every citizen has the ability to think and to start making decisions that suit their own desires and interests. In such a society, the desire to become a rational society emerges, one that is centred on reason and free from the various ideologies that are imposed or sought to be imposed on every individual living within it. Therefore, the intelligent person discussed in Republic of Reason can be guided towards developing rational thinking skills. In a rational state, concepts such as rational religion, rational education, rational politics, rational law, rational diplomacy, rational economics, and rational nationalism gain greater importance. Çevik explains all the characteristics that should be present in a rational state within the framework of his Theory of Reasonable Politics, which he himself has developed. In this context, this work, which has been added to the academic literature as a new political theory, can be seen as an important contribution to the field.

Keywords: Reason, Rationalism, State, Politics, Political Thought

Öz

Prof. Dr. Mustafa Çevik'in ele aldığı *Akıl Devleti Erdemli Toplum ve Makul Siyaset Teorisi*, siyaset felsefesi alanında yazılmış önemli bir kaynaktır. İnsan varlığı tarih boyunca mutlaka bir topluluk içinde yaşamış ve topluluğun eğilimlerine yönelim sağlamıştır. Yöneticiler de toplum içinden çıkan güvenilir kişiler olmuşlardır. Ancak güç isteği ve çıkar çatışmaları zamanla yöneticileri erdemli ve ilkeli olmaktan uzaklaştırabilmiş, her vatandaşın düşünebilme becerisi olduğunu görmezden gelerek kendi istek ve çıkarlarına uygun karar almaya başlamaya eğilimli olmuşlardır. Böyle bir toplumda yaşayan her insan için çıkar sağlamaya ya da empoze edilmeye çalışılan çeşitli ideolojilerden uzak, aklı merkeze alarak gerçekleştirilen akılcı bir toplum olma isteği ortaya çıkar. Dolayısıyla Akıl Devleti eserinde ele alınan akıllı insan, düşünce becerilerini geliştirmeye yönlendirilebilir. Akılcı devlette; *akılcı din, akılcı eğitim, akılcı siyaset, akılcı hukuk, akılcı diplomasi, akılcı ekonomi ve akılcı milliyetçilik* gibi kavramlar daha çok önem kazanır. Çevik, akıl devletinde bulunması gereken bütün özellikleri kendisinin oluşturduğu *Makul Siyaset Teorisi* çerçevesinde açıklamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, akademik literatüre yeni bir siyaset teorisi olarak kazandırılan bu eser alanda önemli bir kazanım olarak görülebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akıl, Akılcılık, Devlet, Politika, Siyaset

Çevik, M. (2024). *Akıl Devleti Erdemli Toplum ve Makul Siyaset Teorisi*. MC Kitap. 124s.

ISBN: 978-605-60975-2-2

Bu çalışmada Prof. Dr. Mustafa Çevik tarafından yazılan *Akıl Devleti Erdemli Toplum ve Makul Siyaset Teorisi* isimli kitap tanıtılmaktadır. Mustafa Çevik Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi Felsefe Bölüm başkanı olup aynı zamanda Felsefi Danışmanlık Derneği'nin kurucusu ve başkanıdır. Kitap Ankara'da 2024 Aralık ayında 1. baskı olarak yayınlanmıştır ve toplam üç bölümden oluşmaktadır.

Çevik, *Akıl Devleti Erdemli Toplum ve Makul Siyaset Teorisi* adlı eseri “Bir devletin örgütlenme biçimi; yasama, yürütme, yargı yapısı ideolojiden ve tutkularından uzak yönetilebilir mi?” sorusuna cevap olarak erdemli toplumların inşasına katkıda bulunmak için yazdığını belirtmektedir. 21. yüzyılda devletleri yöneten otoriteler insan aklını hiçe sayarak iktidarı elinde bulundurma çabası içine girmektedir. Din, hukuk, vatan ve millet adına erdemden uzak tavır sergileyen bu kesimler, tutkularına yenik düşmektedir. Bu bağlamda pür sistematik bir felsefe konusu ele alınmadan felsefi deneme şeklinde yazılan bu eser, bahsedilen sorunun detaylı açıklandığı orijinal bir düşünceye işaret etmektedir.

Akıl Devleti'nin Giriş Bölümü, *Akliliğin Tarihsel Seyri: Akı Doğru İşleten Toplumlar* konusu ile başlamaktadır. Bu bölümde kelam, logos, mantık, ethos, pathos gibi kavramların anlamı açıklanarak akılcı devlet ve akılcı siyaset konularına bağlam oluşturulmuştur. İnsan türünün temel verili becerisi akıldır. Sadece akılcı doğru işleten toplumlar tarihte iz bırakmaktadır. Akılcı doğru kullanmak ise insanın kendine özgü düşünme becerisi ile diğer canlılardan güçlü hale getiren potansiyelinin ortaya çıkmasıdır. Amacına uygun akıl yürütme güçlü bir toplum olma yoluna atılan adımı temsil etmektedir. (S, 11-13). Burada Çevik, kozmik akıl, logos ve nomos kavramlarına değinir. Antik Yunan felsefesinde logos, evrenin rasyonel ilkesini ifade eder. Herakleitos'a göre her şey, logosa göre olmaktadır (Herakleitos, DK B1). Nomos¹ ise Antik Yunan'da yasa, kural ve toplumsal düzen anlamına gelir. Platon, yasaların rastlantısal değil, iyi ve adil düzeni hedeflemesi gerektiğini savunur; Aristoteles de nomos'u, insan eylemlerini düzenleyen rasyonel bir çerçeve olarak ele alır (Politics, I). Ayrıca logos, nomos

¹ Yunan felsefesinde, temeli doğada olan yasalılığa karşıt olarak, sonradan insan tarafından uzlaşım dayalı olarak konan yasalar, oluşturulan gelenekler için kullanılan terimdir. Ayrıca nomos, gelenek göreneklere, sonradan belirlenmiş ahlaki kurallara ya da toplumun yasalarına uygun olarak gerçekleştirilmiş eylemler için kullanılır (Cevizci, 1999, s. 633).

ve hukuk üçgeni İslam düşüncesindeki sünnetullah kavramıyla da bağlantılıdır. Sünnetullah, “Allah’ın hem tabiatla hem de insanlık tarihinde cari olan düzenli ve rasyonel işleyiş tarzıdır.” (İzutsu, 2013, s. 145). Bu bağlamda Sünnetullah, keyfî bir ilâhî müdahaleyi değil, istikrarlı ve bilinebilir bir düzeni ifade eder. Sünnetullah kavramı, logosun rasyonel ve kozmik düzen anlayışı ile nomosun normatif ve ahlâkî düzen fikrini birleştiren bütüncül bir yapıya işaret eder. Ancak bu sentez, seküler değil, teistik bir temele dayanır. Sünnetullah, evreni hem anlamlı hem de sorumluluk yüklü bir alan olarak konumlandırır (İzutsu, 2013). Ayrıca bu kavram İslâm düşüncesinde logos ve nomosun ilâhî temellendirilmiş bir sentezi olarak okunabilir. Logos ve nomos bu yönüyle hem felsefî hem de teolojik bir kavramsal köprü işlevi görmektedir.

Akılcı devletler; logos ve nomosu iktidarı elinde bulundurmak için çeşitli ikna yöntemleri kullanır. Özellikle devlet, üniversite, araştırma kuruluşları ve güçlü tarihsel figürler akıllı bir çeşit ethos yani konuşmacı merkezli ikna yöntemi olarak kullanmaktadır (S, 23). Akıl, bir pathos, yani duygusal ikna yöntemi olarak kullanıldığında kişilerarası ilişkilerde ortaya çıkarılmak istenen duygu ve duyguyu tetikleyen olaylar ortaya çıkmaktadır. Aklın logos hali ise deneysel, akılcı argümanlar ile yapılan mantıksal akıl yürütme olarak kullanılır (S, 25). Çevik’in bu düşüncedeki özgünlüğü, hukuku salt pozitif norm olarak görmeyip kozmik ve ahlaki aklın toplumsal izdüşümü olarak konumlandırmasıdır. Bunun yanında ethos ve pathos temelli siyasetin tehlikeli olduğunu, logos merkezli siyasetin akılcı olduğunu düşünmesidir.

Çevik, 21. yüzyılda hızla gelişim gösteren yapay zekâ, biyoteknoloji ve robotik bilimin, logosun keşfi ve araçsallaştırılmasından ibaret olduğunu düşünmektedir. Ancak insanın kendisi, doğası ve diğer canlılarla olan ilişkisi *nomos* yani logosa yönelimin ilkesi ile düzenlenmiş olmalıdır. Bu bağlamda insanın hem tür hem birey olarak -kendi bedeniyle, zihniyle, diğer insanlarla doğayla kurduğu dört temel ilişkisi vardır (S, 33). Hukuk, logos ve nomos aracılığıyla toplumsal yaşama yansımaktadır. Bir toplumda logos ve nomos merkezli ilişki biçimleri ne kadar gelişirse toplumdaki hukuk kültürü o denli gelişmiş olmaktadır. Çünkü insan için medenileşmenin temel kuralı *ilişki kurmaktır* ve hukuksal geleneğin kaynağı insan aklıdır. Nomosa uygun yaşam, akılcı yaşama olanak sağlar. Akılcı yaşam da akılcı devleti ve akılcı hukuku mümkün kılar. Nomosa uygun olmayan siyasal yaşam ise kişisel karizma ve coşkuya dayanan *ethos* ve *pathos* çerçevesinde ele alınabilir. Çünkü ethos ve pathos, korku ve karizma ile sindirilmeyi öngören hukuk ve siyasal yapı üretir (S, 36).

Eserin birinci bölümünde *Akılcı Devletin Teorik Temeli* ele alınmaktadır. Çevik, bu bölümde akılcı siyaseti olgu ve değer ilişkisi bağlamında ele alır. Akılcı siyaset, toplumdaki meşruiyet kaynağını almak yerine *olması gereken* bilimsel,

ahlaki ve estetik değeri esas almalıdır. Çünkü devlet, toplumun kabullerini meşrulaştırmak ve toplum için en iyi yönetim şeklini bulmak için vardır (S, 40). Değer merkezli akılcı devlet ve siyaset, insanların tamamına adalet vaad eden bir ilke ile hareket eder (S, 41). Devlet akılcı çoğunlukla devletlerin kendini korumak için her yolu deneyen ve bunu meşru gören, bir çeşit *Makyevelizm* şeklinde anlaşılabilir (S, 42). Bütün dinler, felsefeler ve siyaset bilimciler ayırıcı devleti Makyevelist yaklaşımlara karşı ahlaka ve hukuksallığa çağırır (S, 43). Burada adalet ontolojisinin açıklanması, meselenin kökenine inmeyi sağlamaktadır. Adalet, bireyler arasındaki ilişkilerin dengesidir (S, 49) ve adalet ilkesi *Teolojik Magna Carta* olarak değerlendirilebilir (S, 52). Çevik bu düşüncesini oluştururken David Hume'dan etkilenmiştir. Hume'a göre güç ilişkileri, hukukî düzenlemeler, ekonomik eşitsizlikler, fiili davranış normları, nedensellik ve alışkanlık yoluyla bilinir. Bu bağlamda toplumsal gerçeklik, Hume açısından ahlâkî olarak tarafsızdır; yani iyi ya da kötü olarak değil, yalnızca “mevcut” olarak betimlenir (Hume, 2000, s. 415). Hume, her türlü dışsal etkidenden soyutlanmış ve arındırılmış bir durum içerisinde olan ahlâkî insan doğasının bir parçası olarak görür ve bu durumun doğal sonucu olarak tüm insanların zihin ve duygu yapılarında benzer olması gerektiği sonucuna varır. Çünkü insan doğası herkeste ortak olan bir evrensellik içermektedir (Çelebi, 2011, s. 659). Çevik de adalet, özgürlük, eşitlik, insan onuru gibi normatif yargıların olgusal akıl yürütmelerden türetilmeyeceğini vurgular. Bu durum literatürde is-ought problemi olarak anılır. Hume'un yaklaşımı, toplumsal gerçekliğin etik-politik ideallerle özdeşleştirilmesini engeller. Bir toplumda belirli bir uygulamanın yaygın olması, onun ahlâken doğru olduğu anlamına gelmez (Hume, 2000, s. 6). Bu düşünceler çerçevesinde Çevik devletin ve siyasetin “olan”a teslim olmaması, “olması gereken”e yön vermesi gerektiğini düşünür.

İkinci Bölümde *Akılcı Bir Varlık Olarak İnsan* konusu ele alınmaktadır. Şüphesiz ki adaletin uygulayıcısı akılcı bir varlık olarak insandır. İnsan aklını kullanarak doğa ve insan ile mücadele eder. Doğa ile mücadele bilimi, insanın kendi türüyle mücadelesi hukuku doğurmuştur (S, 59). Birçok filozof, insanın verili bir doğasının olduğunu düşünür. Çevik ise insanın tarihi ve yaşadığı yerin coğrafi yapısı sebebiyle sabit bir doğasının olmadığını düşünmektedir ve burada güçlü bir iddia ortaya koymaktadır. İnsanlık kötülük yapmaya başladığı andan itibaren doğasının fiili bir şekilde bittiği ve bu durumun tarihin her sahnesinde deneyimlediğimizi belirtir. Bu sebeple insan akıl ve makuliyet eğilimin doğal bir uzantısı olarak haksızlığı gördüğü her yerde, hemen tanıyabilme becerisine sahiptir (S, 62). İnsan, ilişkileri ve eylemlerinde esas olan makuliyet ve akılcılıktır. İnsan ilişkileri, makuliyet bilincinde olmazsa anlamını yitirir (S, 66).

Spinoza, “Bir insan duygularının esiriye kendi kendisinin efendisi değildir.” der. Burada insanın kendini ikna etme becerisi ortaya çıkar. Akılcı ve duygusal olarak gelişen sözde argümanlara retorik denilebilir. Burada anlatılan şey,

doğruluktan ziyade kelime oyunlarının elindedir (S, 67). Bu araçlar daha çok kitleleri yanıltmak için kullanılır. Çoğunlukla politikacılar bu duygusal iknaya dayanan retorik şeklini kullanır. Duygusal ikna yöntemi ile yürütülen faaliyetlerde aklilik filtresine rastlanmaz. Burada kesin inançlılık fanatizmi ile hareket edilir. Böyle bir siyaset yararlı ve akılcı olana karşı tutkuyu yüceltmektedir (S, 69). Toplum yararına olan ortak iyi, ortak ahlaki aklilik zemini gerektirir. İdeoloji penceresinden siyaset yapanlar ön kabullerle hareket ederken akılcı siyaset becerisine sahip olanlar; ekonomik, ahlaki ve tarihsel akılcılıkla hareket eder (S, 72). Çevik'in bu noktada öne sürdüğü *makuliyet teorisi*, insan bedeninin pragmatist zihni ile akla doğal bir eğiliminin olması sayesinde iyi becerilerini geliştirir. Bu teoriye göre ruh ve beden dengesi makuliyet ve akıl ile sağlanır (S, 74). Çünkü insanın kaçınılmaz olarak içinde yerleşik olan –biyolojik olmayan– akıl ve makuliyet eğilimi bir tür motivasyonudur. Bu durum mantıksız ve tutarsız olanları mantıklı ve tutarlı olandan ayırmayı sağlayan bir içgörüdür (S, 76).

Üçüncü Bölümde *Akılcı Devlet ve Akılcı Siyaset* başlığı ele alınmakta, erdemli toplum üzerinde durulmaktadır. Antik Dönem'de Platon, *Devlet* adlı eserde yöneticilerde bulunması gereken erdemlerden bahsetmektedir. İslam düşünürlerinden Farabi de *El Medinetü'l Fazıla* adlı eserde erdemli toplumların özelliklerini anlatmıştır. Bu bağlamda Çevik'in üzerinde önemle durduğu erdemli toplum düşüncesi, toplumun erdemli bireylerin niyetinden çok kurumsal düzenin niteliğine bağlanır. Çünkü erdemli toplum bireylerin akıl, ahlak ve hukuk temelinde bir arada yaşadığı toplumdur.

Çevik, son bölümde makuliyet teorisinin devlet yönetiminde nasıl uygulanabildiğinden bahsetmektedir. Ona göre siyasetteki en yaygın hata amaç ile araç olanın karıştırılmasıdır. Bu noktada devletin amaç mı araç mı olduğu sorgulanmalıdır. Eğer devlet amaçsa devleti oluşturan tüm diğer unsurlar değersizleştirilebilir. Bu bağlamda evrensel değerlere uygun yapılan siyasetin var olduğu devlet modelinde ise demokrasiye uygun bir aklilik görülmektedir (S, 79). Akılcı siyasette halka vaad edilenler hile içermemelidir. Ahlaki değerler ve toplumun faydasına uygun amaçlar sadece akılcı siyasette vardır. Dolayısıyla akılcı siyaset ile ahlak ilişkisi zorunlu olarak birbirine bağlıdır (S, 81). Akılcı siyaset ve akılcı ahlak orta yoldan gider, aşırılıklardan uzak durur, her vatandaşa eşit ve adil yaklaşır, bilime ve erdeme önem verir, son olarak milliyetçiliği bir kesimin değil, herkesin ortak yararına savunur (S, 83-84). Çünkü siyasetin toplumu bir arada yaşanır kılmak ve ortaya çıkan sorunları minimum hasarla çözmek gibi iki temel amacı bulunmaktadır. Bu noktada eğitim çok önemlidir. Eğitim sistemleri çoğunlukla ideolojik amaç barındırmaktadır. Akılcı toplumlarda bireylerden istenen davranış değişikliği, eğitimin yetiştirdiği insanın makul, rasyonel, duygularının, tutkularının esiri olmaktan kurtulan bir kişi olmasıyla ve eğitimin tüm uygulamalarının rasyonel duyarlılıkla düzenlenmesiyle mümkündür. Bu

iki amaç gerçekleştiğinde eğitim sürecinden geçen insanların düşüncelerinde ve davranışlarında geçerli sebepler bulunacaktır (S, 89).

Akılcı eğitim; devletlerin zaman, coğrafya ve ideolojilerden arınmış bir eğitim sistemi inşa etmesiyle mümkündür. Bu eğitimde karar ve yaklaşımlar keyfiliği barındırmaz, akıl esas alınır. Eğitim politikalarında tutarlı, şeffaf ve anlaşılır bir hedef vardır. Ayrıca eğitim yöntemi, müfredat, öğretmen yetiştirme gibi süreçler hedef ile uyumludur (S, 91). Çünkü kalkınma ve medenileşme ancak rasyonel bir eğitim ile mümkündür. Medeni bireyler, ancak ortak rasyonel değerlere dayalı bir eğitim sisteminde yetiştirilebilir. Ortak bilince uygun akılcı eğitim, hukuk sistemini de olumlu etkileyecektir (S, 93).

Akılcı devlette yargı da akılcı olmaktadır. Akılcı yargı; yasa ve yönetmeliklerin anayasa gibi üst metinlerle tutarlı olması ve yönetmeliklerin anayasa metinlerinin evrensel hukuk kriterlerine uyumlu olması gerekir. Bu doğrultuda yasama faaliyetleri de evrensel nitelik taşır (S, 95). Bu sistemde hukukçular hukukun üstünlüğüne yapılan vurgunun bilincindedir. Buradaki temel amaç, kanun insanı yerine hukuk insanı yetiştirmektir. Akıl Devleti düzeninde devleti yöneten kişiler, sadece işleyen kurallara güvenir (S, 99). Hayek'e göre bu hedef *bir siyasi idealdir*.² Temeli sağlam bir hukuk ile akılcı ekonomi politikası ortaya çıkmaktadır. Akılcı ekonomi sistemi, birey ve toplum için en yüksek faydayı amaçlar ve bu sistem adil rekabete dayanır. Rekabetçi sistem ahlaktan yoksun değil aksine ahlakı ekonomi ve toplum çıkarlarının merkezine yerleştirmeyi amaçlar. Hukuk burada bir denetim mekanizmasıdır. Bu bağlamda coğrafya değil hukuk kaderdir. Kader toplumların kendini inşa iradesidir ve her toplum kendi geleceğine kendisi yön verir (S, 107). Akılcı devlette bu unsurlar gerçekleştirildiğinde uluslararası siyasette de aklilik söz konusu olabilir. Çevresel etmenlerin akılcı devlet üzerindeki etkisi rahatlıkla bilinebilir, öngörülebilir ve gerektiğinde önlem alınabilir. Akılcı devlette lider ve diplomatlar, kullandıkları araçlar ve hedefleri bakımından rasyonel tercihler yapmaktadır (S, 111). Bu bağlamda sağlam ve akılcı iç güvenlik politikaları oluşturulabilir. Devletin bekası için akılcı ideolojiler gerçekleştirilebilir. Her ideoloji bir dünya görüşüne sahiptir ve bütün ideolojilerin bir iktidar hedefi vardır. Ancak akılcı devlet, evrensel hukuk ve değerler sistemine göre yönetme anlayışını benimser. Bu bir aklilik ideolojisi. Aklilik ideolojisinde rasyonellik, şeffaflık, hesap verilebilir-

² Avusturyalı düşünür F. A. Hayek (1899-1992) demokratik yönetim modelini benimser. Ona göre demokrasinin değeri, iktidarın görevini kötüye kullanmasına önlem olarak, halka hizmet etmesi ile ortaya çıkar. Dolayısıyla uğrunda mücadele edilmeye layık olarak demokrasi, barışçı bir yönetimdir ve gerektiğinde de değişim için elverişlidir (Hayek, 1997, s. 206). Ayrıca liberalist olan Hayek'e göre devlet özel alana müdahale etmeden piyasa düzeninin kendiliğinden süreçlerine yardımcı olabilir. Bunu etkin bir para sistemi oluşturarak, yararlı bilgi sağlayarak, eğitimi destekleyerek, sözleşmeleri uygulayarak ve özel mülkiyeti koruyarak yapabilir (Hayek, 1999, s. 56).

lik, tarafsızlık gibi evrensel ilkeler mevcuttur (S, 118). Akılcı devlet akılcı milliyetçiliğe sahiptir. Ortak fayda ilkesiyle hareket eden bu milliyetçilik, toplumun geneline ulaştırılan mutluluk anlayışını savunur. Ortak yarar ilkesi üzerinden geliştirilen milliyetçilikte toplumun daha üretken, daha huzurlu, daha güvenli olmasını sağlayan projeler geliştirilir. Akılcı milliyetçiliğin siyaset dili, toplumsal zenginlikleri koruyan, medeni bir toplum olmaya hazırlayan bir dildir ve yargı sisteminin geleneğine katkı sunan bir siyasettir. Akılcı milliyetçilikte dış ve iç politikada uzlaşmayı, barışı ve yardımlaşmayı esas alan siyaset vardır (S, 121). Son olarak bu sistemde akılcı din politikası savunulur. Kimsenin dini üzerinden başkasının özgürlüğüne ket vurma ya da başkasının özgür alanına zarar verme yetkisi olmayan bir anlayış savunulur. Akılcı devletin din politikalarının temel felsefesi bireyin ve toplumun dinlerde özgür bakış açısının kabulü vardır. Çevik, özellikle bu noktada adalet temelli bir demokrasi düşüncesinin İslam dininden uzak olmadığını düşünür. Ona göre Müslümanca bir demokrasi ile yaşamak mümkündür (S, 124).

Kaynakça

1. Aristotle. (1998). *Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Cevizci, A. (1999). *Felsefe Sözlüğü*. İstanbul: Paradigma.
3. Çelebi, E. (2011). David Hume' da insan doğasının evrenselliği temelinde ahlâk problemi. *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi*, 8 (1), 657-665.
4. Hayek, F.A. (1997). *Hukuk Yasama ve Özgürlük: Özgür Bir Toplumun Siyasi Düzeni*. (Çev. M. Öz). İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
5. Hayek, F. A. (1999). *Kölelik Yolu*. (Çev. T. Feyzioğlu, Y. Aslan). Ankara: Liberte.
6. Heraclitus. (2001). *Fragments* (T. M. Robinson, Trans.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
7. Hume, D. (2000). *A Treatise of Human Nature* (D. F. Norton & M. J. Norton, Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. İzutsu, T. (2013). *Kur'an'da Tanrı ve İnsan* (Çev. S. Ateş). İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık.