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Anthropontology as a New Kind of Ontology

Abstract

Anthropontology as a philosophical discourse distinguishes itself from the classical ontology, phenomenological ontology, the ontology of essence and the new ontology. It is well known that the different ontological views have given rise to different breaking points in the history of philosophy. Anthropontology offers a new kind of ontology which, in fact, focuses especially on human being as a starting point. What does the philosophical effort which tries to analyze the relationships between the human being and the world-knowledge contain in the light of anthropontology? What does anthropontology take into consideration in the relationships between the entities? First of all, it is necessary to explain these points. We claim that every entity exists in the world of life or generally in the world as a singular and concrete entity. But it is understood by the concept and a word or term; in the other words, they exist through the intellectual and linguistic acts or in the limits of the language. Every entity is a particular or singular one, however it can reach the universal position by the human being and through the pattern of thinking and saying or writing, in the other words, through the thinking world and the linguistic world. In this case, the 'ontology' part of the term of 'anthropontology' refers to the nominalist ontology which asserts that every entity exists in the framework of the singularity. Generally, anthropontology, as a philosophical discourse, focuses on the tension between the singularity and the universality.

Key words

anthropontology, ontology, nominalist ontology, new ontology

The question of what the fundamental discipline of philosophical discourse which tends to the tensions, questions and problems that arising from the relationships between the external world-thinking-language and also the human being-world-knowledge can be is one of the most important debated questions.[1] Generally, ontology or epistemology has taken place in the first line as a fundamental discipline of philosophy.

In this study, we claim that ontology is the fundamental discipline of philosophy. It is of great importance to ask what this ontology is like and to put forth "its distinguishing characteristics" for consideration. The main characteristic of this ontology is an anthropological one. However, before proceeding to the details of anthropological ontology, let us take a look at the characteristics of ontologies in the history of philosophy.

As it is well known, it is Aristotle who first defined ontology as "the first philosophy". According to him, ontology is the branch of philosophy which

1 In this context, very different assessments have been done through the history of philosophy and it is observed that the other branches of knowledge occupied the philosophical discourse.

studies being *qua* being and deals with the most general properties of beings. At the same time, we know that every philosopher has their own conception concerning being. However, we know also that some philosophers accept the concept of being/entity as a primary/basic concept, and they construct their philosophical discourses in this context. At this issue, while some philosophers build their views only on the history of philosophy or the philosophical knowledge, we know that some philosophers also utilize the contents of faith. For example, we can evaluate the ontological positions of the Neoplatonists and many medieval philosophers in this way. In the Middle Ages, ontology emerged as a theological ontology with the religious approaches. In the Middle Ages, at this point, metaphysics, theology and ontology emerged as linguistic constructions overlapping each other. We can gather these ontological positions under the title of the classical ontology.[2] We know that there are also other types of ontologies in the history of philosophy such as phenomenological ontology, existentialist ontology, essentialist ontology, ontology of essence, Hartmann's new ontology and finally, anthropological ontology or *anthropontology*.[3]

We know that the concern in human being has always existed in the history of philosophy and every philosopher's view related to the human being determines his/her own philosophical discourse. However, this concern in human being increased more in the 20th century and the philosophical anthropology has emerged as a discipline of philosophy. Some philosophers put forward the thesis that philosophical anthropology has the ontological foundations. In the limits of this meeting in which we are trying to appreciate the philosophical trends in the Southeast Europe, it will be very significant to give a place to the original examples to exhibit what have been realized until now in this cultural-philosophical region. In this context, we can talk about Hartmann's pupil, Takiyettin Mengüşoğlu, who introduced the philosophical anthropology as a fundamental discipline of philosophy in the early 1940s in Turkey. Takiyettin Mengüşoğlu, who had studied Ph.D. thesis under the auspices of Nicolai Hartmann, was a supporter of an anthropology based on ontological-phenomenological foundations. Mengüşoğlu accepts the philosophy of being as a basis for constructing his philosophical discourse; at the same time, while he constructs his philosophical anthropology, he discusses[4] the views concerning the human being in his own time in detail, and he eventually decides on the philosophical anthropology based on ontological-phenomenological foundations. Mengüşoğlu, who perpetually objects to perceive and understand human being in one property that almost renders human being into an "essence" and, in this way, as we will afterwards take into consideration, even if he doesn't distinctly mention its name, he criticizes the "essentialist ontology", but tries to appreciate, and conceives the human being under the common share of the human appearances, maybe with the timeless valid qualities and the conditions of being. His own anthropology, as we have just mentioned above, is an anthropology based on the ontological and phenomenological foundations. Thesis has been proposed by Mengüşoğlu in the first pages of his work entitled *Philosophy of Man* (*Philosophical Anthropology*), is the most important proof of this claim:

"The human being working on the science and philosophy, researching in detail for the centuries had forgotten himself/herself, as if. The first time in our age, human being has returned to their own problems and phenomena, and has done himself/herself the research area of a special branch of philosophy. We give the name of 'philosophical anthropology' to this branch of philosophy. In the West, a lot of writings have been written under various names in this area. The quality

which distinguishes this article from the other ones, it is based on the ontological foundations. Philosophical anthropology which has this characteristic will start from the conditions of being and human phenomena which has founded its bases in the concrete and undivided being of man, not now from the biological properties, inner life, relationships between body and soul, areas of subject or consciousness, as well."[5]

According to the thesis claimed within the framework of this article, the most essential discipline of philosophy is an ontology based on the human being; in other words anthropological ontology; even with a shorter expression, let's call it anthropontology. How have we reached such a point?

Philosophical discourse is a thing more than the total sum of all philosophical disciplines of course; and all philosophical discourse may be especially interpreted within the relation to knowledge as a supradisciplinary[6] or transdisciplinary[7] discipline.[8] A study written[9] a few years ago contains the preliminary studies of this suggested view, now. As a matter of fact, in the sphere of these preparations, it gives some answers to the relationships between metaphysics and philosophy; at the same time, it exhibits a certain position concerning this issue. According to this position, the issue of what the common share in the all trends of philosophy should be has been considered in the relations of the human being-world-knowledge and especially, in the sphere of the relations of the external world-thinking-language, within the human axis. Because the world is the world of man; the human being realizes the actions in this world, and as a subject of this world, the human being constructs some connections himself/herself, him/her species, the other objects of the world and as a result, the human being acquires some experiences, creates knowledge and perpetually increases it, and the human being, at the same time, directs toward himself/herself and the world through this knowledge and this circle continues perpetually and fruitfully.

2
We can call this ontology as the old or ancient ontology: "The old theory of being is based upon the thesis that the universal, crystallized in the *essentia* as substantial form and comprehensible as concept, is the determining and formative core of things." Nicolai Hartmann, *New Ways of Ontology*, translated by Reinhard C. Kuhn, Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1953, pp. 6–7.

3
"Philosophy cannot enter upon practical tasks without knowledge of being as such. For the tasks themselves grow out of a total datum of existing realities, and these must be understood and penetrated to the root before man can venture to shape them according to its goals. So all technical science builds upon the exact knowledge of the laws of nature, medicine upon biological laws, and politics upon historical knowledge. In philosophy it is no different, even though its object is a universal one embracing both the whole man and the world in which he lives. Therefore, it is less immediately evident at which level of being its basic concepts must be found, and philosophers, time and again, come to think they can go their way without an ontological foundation." Ibid., p. 4.

4
See, Takiyettin Mengüşoğlu, "Antropolojik Teoriler" ("Anthropological Theories"), in: *İnsan Felsefesi* (*Philosophical Anthropology*), Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul, 1988, pp. 18–40.

5
T. Mengüşoğlu, *İnsan Felsefesi* (*Philosophical Anthropology*), p. 13.

6
As a new term.

7
It is also a new term.

8
We can see the first forms of this view in the philosophical discourses of Aristotle and Wittgenstein.

9
Betül Çotuksöken, "Hümanist Metafizik ve Antropolojik Ontoloji" ("Humanist Metaphysics and Anthropological Ontology", in: *Felsefe: Özne-Söylem* (*Philosophy: Subject-Discourse*), İnkılâp Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2000, pp. 17–24.

As we have mentioned above, the accentuation made into the dimension of knowing related to the being/entity or philosophy of being is Aristotle's success. However, within theses claimed in this context, we should consider that the relationship between the external world-thinking and language are overlapping relations and thinking being *qua* being*,* in short, is based on the dimension of thinking and expressing is related directly this triple relation. The first paragraph of Aristotle's *Categories* and the first pages of *Perihermeneias* is the proof of this claim.[10] As it is well known, Aristotle's work – within the observation of the different attitudes, and the existence of various approaches related to philosophy – has affected the general philosophical discourse for a longtime. For example, in this context we should not overlook the emphasis given to language in the Middle Ages. Starting out this point, that there are many different approaches concerning ontology can be claimed.

The different approaches that the first traces encountered in the Middle Ages, emerges in the net of problems signifying the birth point of philosophy, like the tension between the singular and universal. In this framework, the nominalist ontology discovered or invented ensures the importance given to the man and his thinking and linguistic acts. At the same time, the nominalist ontology also ensures the importance of this world where we live to be conceived and by this way, the way of scientific knowledge to open. Thus, the new ontological variations have appeared; by this way, as we have mentioned above, the importance of man begins to increase and is settled in the centre of the world. Raising the value of the meaning making acts, styles and significations (*modi significandi*) as well as the importance of the terms and words in the interpretation of the world is the Messenger of the transformations that will be clearer in the later periods in the philosophical discourse. What is most doubted or deconstructed, is the reliability of thinking the being *qua* being and talking about it. The common share of this newly developed discourse may be summed up in general as follows: "we do not know being *qua* being"; in other words, "we cannot think and talk about it."

In that way, the agent/subject of the most obvious breakpoint is Kant. Kant, through his pioneering attitude concerning knowing and the position of man as a transcendental subject, has given the signs that nothing is not as it is in the past. The new thinking direction began quietly, and can contain or reach an agreement through the essential change point claimed in the framework of this presentation. In the framework of this study, ontology will emerge as anthropologically qualified and it will be anthropontology; and in such a claim, Kant's contribution will emerge as a first example. Kant's work tells us about it. We can evaluate Kant as the founder of anthropontology through his questions taking place in his book entitled *Logic*:

"The field of philosophy in this cosmopolitan meaning may be summed up in the following questions:

1) What can I know?
2) What ought I to do?
3) What may I hope?
4) What is man?

The first question is answered by metaphysics, the second by morality, the third by religion, and the fourth by anthropology. At bottom all this could be reckoned to be anthropology, because the first three questions are related to the last."[11]

The questions asked by Kant and the approach in which he gives the priority to Man in all of his texts; particularly his last determination shows that

his point of view and his way of making the philosophical discourse is the "anthropontological" one. With this thesis, whether Kant has an ontology has been correctly answered. Therefore, we claim that, Kant also has an ontology and this ontology is an ontology qualified as nominalistic and anthropological one. In his short writings in the last years of his life, Kant shows in detail the importance of human being in the relationship between the human being-world-knowledge. We have to read the Kantian Enlightenment in this way. However we have to be so attentive: We may not say that anthropontology is an essential philosophical discipline for Kant; we can claim that he has adopted an anthropontological point of view in this context.[12]

Anthropontology is a perspective, an approach and an essential philosophical discipline.[13] Besides, the philosophical discourse has a wholeness and it is supradisciplinary through this essential discipline. In order to justify these theses, we will here claim that the human being is social, historical and cultural[14] being.

With the capacity of language belonging to his species, the human being acquires the social and abstract language[15] and he makes this language as his discourse; every time he uses the language, he reproduces it individually and makes it as the actual situation. The essential thesis, in this context, is that any entity acquires its existence through thinking and language; it actually exists. At this point, we can enumerate our claims as follows:

1. The human being only thinks and utters.
2. The thing which makes the entity as an actual entity is the thinking and uttering of the human being.
3. Clearly, the concepts and conceptual frames make the entity as an actual entity.
4. What makes the entity an actual entity is the terms, words, utterances and the discourse in language.

10
Aristotle's *Categories*, 1a1: "When things have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different, they are called homonymous. Thus, for example, both a man and a picture are animals. These have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is different; for if one is to say what being an animal is for each of them, one will give two distinct definitions." (J. L. Ackrill translation, http://faculty.washington.edu/ smcohen/520/Cats1-5.pdf, accessed 8/9/2011)
Aristotle's *Perihermeneias,* 16a: "Now spoken sounds are symbols of affections in the soul, and written Marks symbols of spoken sounds. Just as the written Marks are not the same for all men, neither are the spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of – viz. Affections of the soul – are for all the same; and what these affections are likeness of – viz. real things – are also the same… Just as some thoughts in the soul are neither true nor false while some are necessarily one or the other, so also with spoken sounds." See *Trends in Linguistics. Studies and Creativity. Studies in General and Descriptive Linguistics in Honor of E. M. Uhlenbeck*, Mark Janse (ed.), Mouton de Gruyter, The Hague, 1998.

11
Immanuel Kant, *Logic*, translated, with an introduction, by Robert S. Hartmann and Wolfgang Schwarz, The Library of Liberal Arts, Indianapolis and New York, 1974, pp. 28–29.

12
We can consider his transcendental idealism.

13
In this context, Ioanna Kuçuradi explains that the philosophical anthropology is a philosophical approach, but also, it is a discipline of philosophy.

14
For instance, Nermi Uygur adopts this conception in his all works. He appreciates the human being in the framework of these qualities.

15
According to this thesis, language is social and abstract, but discourse is individual and concrete. See Betül Çotuksöken, *Felsefi Söylem Nedir?* (*What is Philosophical Discourse?*), İnkılâp Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2010 (First editon: 1991).

5. The concepts and terms are the essential elements to create knowledge.
6. Anthropontology is an essential discipline of philosophy, which takes these propositions into consideration and connects the thinking and using the language to be social situation of human being.

The human being is a historical being and history is concerned with the language, especially with the written position. Therefore, as for the historicity of human being concerned with the written position, the anthropontological foundation emerges once again in this context. Writing means that the human being is to project himself/herself to the future. The time becomes the human time through writing. Time becomes the human time within writing and everything exist actually. In our age, the virtual reality which is indispensable shows the power of writing.

As for the quality of culturality, in the first meaning, culture is every thing created by human being, by nature. For this reason, there is an extremely close relationship between the culture and the human being thinking, uttering, knowing, acting, creating. For the human being, to be a being creating the culture, it is an indisputable basis for the anthropontological approach; at the same time, it justifies this determination. Cultural productions have been produced by the human being in the connection of human being who is a symbolic entity (*animal symbolicum*).[16] The human being does not live in one meaning world; he produces the connotations and multiple meanings world.[17] The world of living, as a human world, has completely emerged in the similarity to the human being, as the social, historical and cultural qualified. For instance, we can take the anthropontology, as an essential discipline, which adopts the nominalist ontology and we can see ethics from the anthropontological point of view. We can study the relationships between the external world (human needs, actions, human relations, relations of human being-world-knowledge), thinking (concepts, values, beliefs/faith, ideas, intentions), language (descriptive language/discourse, and/or normative language/discourse), in the context of ethics.[18] Nominalist ontology sends us to the singular/particular/individual position and to the human being. At this point, they are the needs taken into consideration. The universals are values which are related to the social-historical-cultural structures where the human beings live. Here is just a problematic area: The tension between needs (natural-social-historical-cultural-individual) and values (social-historical-cultural-universal).

The philosophical intention based on anthropontological foundation takes into consideration the tension between the singular/particular-universal in every context and it firstly analyses this tension taking into consideration the properties of the singular (here and now) and of the universal (overtime), and then it solves them. The anthropontological approach and anthropontology is the other name of the approach to all philosophical questions and problems starting from the human being. Therefore, the metaphysics of anthropontology is humanistic metaphysics.[19]

Betül Çotuksöken

Antropontologija kao novi tip ontologije

Sažetak

Antropontologija kao filozofski diskurs razlikuje se od klasične ontologije, fenomenološke ontologije, ontologije biti i nove ontologije. Poznato je da su različiti ontološki pogledi doveli do različitih prijelomnih točaka u povijesti filozofije. Antropontologija nudi novi tip ontologije koji se ustvari usredotočuje posebice na ljudska bića kao početnu točku. Što obuhvaća filozofski napor koji nastoji analizirati veze između ljudskog bića i znanja svijeta u svjetlu antropontologije? Što antropontologija razmatra u vezama između bića? Prije svega je nužno razjasniti ova pitanja. Tvrdimo da svako biće egzistira u svijetu života ili općenito u svijetu kao singularno i konkretno biće. No ono se razumijeva pomoću pojma, tj. riječi ili termina; drugim riječima, bića egzistiraju kroz intelektualne i lingvističke činove ili u granicama jezika. Svako biće je partikularno ili singularno, međutim može doseći univerzalnu poziciju pomoću ljudskog bića i kroz obrasce mišljenja, govorenja ili pisanja, drukčije rečeno, kroz misleći svijet i lingvistički svijet. U ovome slučaju, 'ontologija' kao dio termina 'antropontologija' odnosi se na nominalističku ontologiju koja tvrdi da svako biće egzistira u okviru singularnosti. Općenito, antropontologija kao filozofski diskurs fokusira se na napetost između singularnosti i univerzalnosti.

Ključne riječi

antropontologija, ontologija, nominalistička ontologija, nova ontologija

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Anthropontologie als eine neue Art der Ontologie

Zusammenfassung

Die Anthropontologie als philosophischer Diskurs weicht ab von der klassischen Ontologie, der phänomenologischen Ontologie, Ontologie des Wesens sowie der neuen Ontologie. Bekanntermaßen hatten die verschiedenartigen ontologischen Gesichtspunkte quer durch die Geschichte der Philosophie unterschiedliche Wendepunkte zur Folge. Die Anthropontologie verleiht ein neues Gepräge der Ontologie, das tatsächlich speziell das Menschenwesen als Ansatzpunkt zum Kernstück macht. Was umschließt das philosophische Bemühen, das die Beziehungen zwischen Menschenwesen und Weltwissen zu analysieren sucht, im Lichte der Anthropontologie? Was berücksichtigt die Anthropontologie bezüglich der Relationen zwischen den Entitäten? Zuallererst gilt es, die obigen Sachverhalte darzulegen. Wir behaupten, jedwede Entität existiere in deren Lebenswelt bzw. gemeinhin in der Welt als singuläre und konkrete Entität. Sie wird jedoch mithilfe des Begriffs bzw. des Wortes respektive Terminus verstanden. Mit anderen Worten: Die Wesen bestehen durch intellektuelle und linguistische Akte oder im Rahmen der Sprachgrenzen. Jegliches Wesen ist partikular oder singulär, allerdings kann es vermöge des Menschenwesens und per Denk-, Sprach- bzw. Schreibmuster die universale Position erlangen; oder umgeformt – durch denkende Welt und linguistische Welt. Im vorliegenden Fall rekurriert das „Ontologie"-Glied der Zusammensetzung „Anthropontologie" auf die nominalistische Ontologie, die asseriert, ein jedes Wesen existiere in der Sphäre der Singularität. Im Großen und Ganzen kon-

16
See Ernst Cassirer's all works, especially, *An Essay on Man. An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture.*

17
Önay Sözer analyzes this human situation through "code systems" in *Felsefenin ABC'si* (*ABC of Philosophy*), Simavi Yayınları, İstanbul, 1992.

18
At this point, we propose a new definition for ethics: Ethics examines the relationships between the human actions, values and moral language.

19
See Betül Çotuksöken, "Hümanist Metafizik ve Antropolojik Ontoloji" ("Humanist Metaphysics and Anthropological Ontology", in *Felsefe: Özne-Söylem* (*Philosophy: Subject-Discourse*), İnkılâp Kitabevi, İstanbul, 2000, pp. 17–24.

zentriert sich die Anthropontologie als philosophischer Diskurs auf die Spannung zwischen Singularität und Universalität.

Schlüsselwörter

Anthropontologie, Ontologie, nominalistische Ontologie, neue Ontologie

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L'anthropontologie comme un nouveau type d'ontologie

Résumé

L'anthropontologie, en tant que discours philosophique, se distingue de l'ontologie classique, de l'ontologie phénoménologique, de l'ontologie de l'essence et de la nouvelle ontologie. Il est bien connu que différents points de vue ontologiques ont mené à différents points de rupture dans l'histoire de la philosophie. L'anthropontologie propose un nouveau type d'ontologie qui, en fait, se concentre en particulier sur l'être humain comme son point de départ. Que comprend l'effort philosophique qui cherche à analyser les rapports entre l'être humain et les connaissances du monde à la lumière de l'anthropologie ? Que l'anthropontologie prend-elle en considération dans les rapports entre entités ? Tout d'abord, il est nécessaire d'expliquer ces points. Nous affirmons que toute entité existe dans le monde de la vie, ou de manière générale dans le monde comme entité singulière et concrète. Mais elle se comprend par le concept, c'est-à-dire le mot ou le terme ; autrement dit, les entités existent à travers des actes intellectuels et linguistiques ou dans les limites du langage. Si toute entité est particulière et singulière, elle peut cependant atteindre une position universelle par l'être humain et à travers les schémas de pensée, d'énonciation et d'écriture ; autrement dit, par le monde pensant et le monde linguistique. Dans ce cas, « l'ontologie » en tant que partie du terme « anthropologie » se rapporte à l'ontologie nominaliste qui affirme que toute entité existe dans le cadre de la singularité. De manière générale, l'anthropontologie en tant que discours philosophique se concentre sur la tension entre la singularité et l'universalité.

Mots-clés

anthropontologie, ontologie, ontologie nominaliste, nouvelle ontologie