Research Article
Araştırma Makalesi

Muhsin YILMAZ

Doç.Dr. | Assoc.Prof.Dr.
Uludag University, Faculty of Sciences and Arts, Department of Philosophy, Bursa-Turkey
myilmaz@uludag.ed.tr

The Connection of *Philosophy* with *Tradition*: Tradition as the Resource of Philosophy

Abstract

This study aims to define the connection between the concept of tradition and the mood of philosophical thinking which is recognized as a distinctive critical form of thinking. How could one correlate the concept of tradition which could be defined as a cumulative continuum on the one hand and the concept of philosophy which is considered as a concept grounded on the critique or even the rejection of cumulative continuum, i.e., the tradition? In other words how could one ground philosophy itself as a mood of critical thought on a particular tradition which conveys a particular content? How could one speak in this sense of a tradition of philosophy or the traditionality of philosophy? If it is possible to speak significantly of the traditionality of philosophy then what sort of tradition on which philosophy itself is attributed?

Keywords

Mythology, Tradition, Philosophy.

Ahmet İnam begins to his an article referring to Mengüşoğlu with the assertion "Nobody can with himself in philosophy". Then he goes on his writing as follows: Philosopher comes out from a certain philosophical environment or from a certain tradition. He is under the influence of a certain historical, social or spiritual atmosphere. İnam adds such words as well: Elaboration of the relevant conditions or atmosphere relating to put forward some new feeds of thought requires meta-philosophical pay off (İnam 1993: 2). According to İnam that means, there is and/or should be summation inherited from its past behind ant philosopher or the philosophical doctrine or system developed. Philosopher can produce new ideas only on the basis of that inheritance. Such an evaluation could be significant for the historical periods after the starting point of philosophy with Thales. One can ask at this point: Well, from which prior philosophical inheritance Thales could produce his own question and then generate his own doctrine and started the whole tradition or history of philosophy? How Ionian philosophers or Miletus could initiate the manner of philosophical thinking which produced many different sub-tradition in succeeding historical eras whereas they were void of any prior philosophical summation or in heritance? Guthrie asserts for instance that the Miletus is devoid of predecessors whom they could refer for some questions and the only ground they have is mythology besides they had no chance to read some texts written in different languages and the form of writing they wise up is only poem (Guthrie 2011: 132). Uluğ Nutku gives another simple example as follows: Parmenides' arguments and decisive subscriptions are in the form of poem written in some rhythm and begin with some mythological descriptions (Nutku 2011: 21). For Miletus so, there is no any kind of historical or traditional summation such as a history of science or a philosophical history. Nor they had a wording of writing or form of discussing such as essay, academic research report, lexicon or encyclopedia. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize as well that Greeks are void of any conceptual inheritance though they contemplated the clear immanency of the Pattern which ceases chaos (Deleuze and Guattari 1992: 45). In other words for Deleuze and Guattari, Greeks are within the similar lack of philosophical concepts while they contemplating their "immanence plane" from which they could perform "conceptual creation" and thus so philosophical mode of thinking. In sum Greeks converted the form of poem into essay form, the image into concept and finally, if it can be asserted, the tradition of non-philosophical into the "philosophical one". In other words, it seems as if they started philosophy off from "nullity", with Thales being "first philosopher".

It is not a surprise in this sense that some sources called the rise of the mood of philosophical thinking and then the whole philosophical tradition as "Greek miracle" in such a social and/or cultural ambiance. One can ask on the other hand the reason of calling "miracle" the first appearance of philosophy in Pre-Socratic period which should rely anyways on a summation, an inheritance or a tradition just after that beginning period? Is philosophical manner of thinking an arbitrary or a traditional manner at last? How should one in such a case read the İnam's words referring to Mengüşoğlu cited above? How one could argue the emergence of a philosophical tradition without any prior tradition or summation before itself? One should refer to the preceding period before the emerging philosophical era. What is the scene before Thales?

Ahmet Arslan assert by referring to Cornford at this point that İonia philosophy is in fact a projection system promoted by "mythological faith" (religion) although it reveals itself in a secularized form and in a more abstract plan. In other words according to Arslan the cosmogony of their philosophy is nothing but reconsideration and maintaining of the mythos (Arslan 1988: 58). This statement means so, the philosophical mood is the derivation of mythological mood similar as to projection but different as to foundation. For Kranz also Aristotle is right in his assertion that Homer (as the writer of mythological eposes) is the first philosopher for Homer is the forerunner of a new world-view though his form of writing is poetic as a pre-science and the questions or problems he deals with are the problems as what the initial matter is, whether the monotheism is possible and the sense of all happening which are discussed throughout the whole history of philosophy (Kranz 1976: 5). It can be accepted here that the philosophical tradition of which its emerging with Thales is as miracle is inspired and/or feed from mythological inheritance regarding at least its problems, principles and its intention. Another picture given by Çiğdem Dürüşken in her literary wording describes the first steps of philosophical journey as climbing onto the Olympos the flora of which is irrigated by mythological epos of Homer and Hesiodus and draws as if climbing up to the pick of Olympos by means of the flowers planted by Greek lyric and tragedy poets (Dürüşken 2014: 5). One could concluded from such descriptions that the philosophical mode of thought which is characterized as "rational" is in fact a 'channel' or 'river' inspired by or feed by mythological mode of thought which is "ir-rational" rather than opposing it. The generation of Cosmos form Chaos in the sense of reducing all plurality into just one element, i.e. *arche*, should not be an incident in this context in both Hesiodus' mythological Teogonia and in İonia's "rational," i.e. philosophical frame. Because the primary intention or apprehension is to be able to reduce plurality into just one basis and so make the whole cosmos comprehensible. Guthrie's words below gains more clarity in this frame: "One who loves myth loves also the sophist, because he is a philosopher and the ingredient of both is the thing bewildering in man" (Guthrie 2011: 54).

The above arguments could be sum up in such a statement: The progression from mythological mood of thinking or comprehension into rational or philosophical mood of thought is evolutionary rather than being revolutionary or "miracle" as is seen in general. One could yet ask such a question at this point: If philosophy is philosophy in itself instead of being mythology then why the relevant course developed as philosophy instead of going on as mythology? Mythology is mythology at last and philosophy is philosophy. Both philosophy and mythology as the concepts used regularly have quite different contents and senses. What is that agent that makes split up as philosophy from mythology or remove a channel from the origin as mythology even though it is inspired or feed form mythology? Why does a tradition of philosophy get at the last point of intention or of implication in our times by an evolutionary way? What are those agents that alienate from mythological sources through the historical continuum? How one could define the philosophical tradition as an opposite of mythology form which it has emerged?

It is required to look at the name of the concept of tradition, i.e. the word 'tradition'. The word 'tradition' is defined in Turkish lexicon as "a particular society's

cultural remainder, habits, instruction, custom and patterns regarded because of they inherited from the past" (Turkish Lexicon). The same word is defined in Latin –Turkish lexicon as "*to convey, deliver, release, submit, certify, commit, give away, circuit, communicate a narration), roll in and propound (a doctrine)*" (Kabaağaç ve Alova 1996). It seems from these definitions that the sense of the same word in both languages imply two different meaning or dimensions such as taking over a heritage and transposing that heritage to coming generations. In other words, a static content in sum on one side and taking over and/or transposing dynamical the same content is on the other hand. It could be mentioned so that the word or the concept of tradition has a static as well a dynamic character. Gökberk asserts thus that the use of the word "tradition" in especially European languages puts forward the dynamism in human culture by taking attention the act of "conveying". Gökberk likens the concept of tradition defined as the information, skills, rules regulating the relation among individuals, faiths and imaginations relating to the whole of life and changeable more or less between generations to the biological heredity: "cultural norms perpetuate human culture by the transmutation of them just as the adult individuals perpetuate the natural life by transmitting the materiel of inheritance, i.e., the gens to newborns (Gökberk 1981: 63). It is not so to fall down into the wrong at this point to say that the social or cultural codes or the genes, if it can be said, that ensures the dynamism and the continuity of societies or cultures. The individuals are active in the transmitting the social or cultural codes or genes whereas they are inactive in transmitting the biological genes. The individual may be selective, in other words both in taking over from the former and in transmitting to the later generations the relevant codes relating to the tradition. It could be said here so that being active in the second case associates a voluntary change or differentiation in the structure of codes or genes. The social or cultural codes changes as well in time in order to adapt to changing environmental conditions just as biological genes changes in the process of adaptation of the organism. The change in the cultural code yet, according to Gökberk, is voluntary and more rapidly and entails less time than biological one (Gökberk 1981: 64).

In sum, the social/cultural codes inherited from the former generations would be transmitted voluntarily, i.e., in a biological term by mutating, to the following generations in order to adapt the new environment. Tradition as a cultural summation or heritage throughout the past generation is a dynamic or active process in the sense transformed into different forms besides being just a transmission. Traditions are not immunity of change or transmutation in certain rate or content relating to the requirements of the relevant era.

It is natural at this point to abstract from the above argument that traditional summation or heritage that is changed or transformed in accordance with the changing circumstances produce anew norms or codes or values having some differences in a significant according to the former ones because it bears the potential to produce different or new cultural norms or codes. Permanency of the traditional base keeps itself and its conveying function on by interpreting and recovering the inherited content in accordance with the differentiated conditions even though its own change at any level. It in this sense to develop a tenet or a discourse without traditional convey means to construct a building without a base. Doğan Özlem puts at this point forward similar to

İnam's above words relating to philosophy in terms of the conditions of an individual's existence or living. As for Özlem "there is no autonomous individual exempt of cultural determinate and surrounded by a given culture… the person lives not of course as a destiny his/her being determined or surrounded situation; instead he/she creates new forms or possibilities of life in every term or circumstance and enlarges his/her circle of individuality (Özlem 2008: 79). Cultural codes and biological genes are still not the same facts although they are compared with each other as to being adaptation process or attempt into social and/or natural environment of life. The biological process of adaptation operates in natural mechanism while the social or cultural process of adaptation operates with, if it could be said, a voluntary mechanism in the sense of re-interpretation and thus re-ascribe new senses onto social facts. In another words some voluntary or rational processes engage in inheritance of cultural codes between succeeding generations. The point here is just in which philosophical mode of thinking as another rational or voluntary process come out. If the mode of philosophical thinking is determined as re-forming or re-interpretation of the contents of given inherited concepts then this point or stage is just by which the way of philosophical thinking contact with the philosophical tradition which is one of the cultural codes inherited. That means reconstruction of the content of the relevant concept by critique of analysis of the inherited concept. Philosophy requires in this sense a given content toward which it could perform the functions as critique and analysis so that that content is just the tradition inherited. Philosophy could only adapt the tradition that it inherited by re-interpreting or re-constructing them in term of new or changing social conditions or requirements. It can well be asserted at this point that philosophy requires a base or a ground with which one could speak about philosophy or by which philosophy exist so that base or ground is the tradition or a heritage from which philosophy come out or develop.

It would be well in conclusion to assert that there is a paradoxical connection between philosophy and its own tradition which is its own history or historical summation. Philosophy requires on one hand a heritage or summation toward which it directs its peculiar analytical character and criticizes insensibly as if rejecting at the same time the same heritage.

*Felsefe*nin *Gelenek* ile Bağı: Felsefenin Olanağı Olarak Gelenek

Özet

Bu çalışmada kendine özgü eleştirel bir düşünüm biçimi olarak felsefi düşünümün gelenek kavramı ile ilişkisi belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Bir taraftan bir kavram olarak gelenek kavramı birikimsel bir sürekliliği ifade ederken diğer taraftan da bu birikimsel sürekliliğin eleştirisi ve hatta reddi üzerinde gelişen felsefi düşünüm tavrı arasında nasıl bir bağ söz konusudur? Eleştirel bir düşünüm biçimi olarak felsefe birikimsel süreklilik ifade eden gelenek kavramı üzerinde nasıl temellendirilebilir? Bu anlamda felsefe geleneğinden ya da felsefenin gelenekselliğinden söz etmek nasıl mümkündür? Felsefenin gelenekselliğinden söz etmek mümkün ise eğer felsefe geleneğinin kendisi nasıl bir geleneğe ya da hangi geleneğe dayandırılabilir?

Anahtar Sözcükler

Mitoloji, Gelenek, Felsefe.

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