



Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Felsefe Dergisi
Bursa Uludağ University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Journal of Philosophy

Araştırma Makalesi | Research Article
Kaygi, 23 (2), 381-414.

Makale Geliş | Received: 12.07.2024
Makale Kabul | Accepted: 24.09.2024
Yayın Tarihi | Publication Date: 30.09.2024
DOI: 10.20981/kaygi.1515142

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The Changing Definition of Human Nature From Traditional to Contemporary Approaches: A View of Human Nature in The Philosophy of Information

Abstract: The issue of what human nature is an important issue for understanding the present and building the future. The place of human beings in the universe as well as their duty, their relationship with society, and their environment has been shaped by the meaning attributed to human nature. This article examines the transformation that the understanding of human nature in traditional philosophy has undergone after the information revolution from the perspective of information philosophy. Information technologies, which have integrated into every area of our lives after the information revolution, has deeply affected our scientific, economic, intellectual, and cultural activities. With the information revolution, human nature has been redefined with its characteristics that participate in design and creation activities, thanks to its interaction abilities, which are information-processing capacities, beyond biological and spiritual characteristics. The understanding of human nature has been addressed in different historical periods since the mythological period. The subject here is to evaluate the understanding of human nature from the traditional to the present. The anthropocentric understanding of humans, traditionally defined in the context of biological, physiological, and spiritual characteristics, is defined in the philosophy of information in a holistic context as an agent with information processing capacity, an informational object. As an entity that carries and processes information, humans are evaluated in the same category as information technologies such as cybernetic systems and artificial intelligence, although they have different characteristics, as informational objects. In addition, this study aims to provide a new perspective to the literature by examining the change process in the understanding of human nature.

Keywords: Philosophy of Information, Human Nature, Information and Technologies, Artificial Intelligence, Cybernetics.

Gelenekselden Çağdaş Yaklaşımlara İnsan Doğasının Değişen Tanımı: Bilişim Felsefesinde İnsan Doğasına Bakış

Öz: İnsan doğasının ne olduğu konusu şimdinin anlaşılması, geleceğin inşası için önemlidir. Zira tarih boyunca insanın evren içindeki yeri, görevi, toplum ve çevresi ile olan ilişkisi insan doğasına yüklenen anlamla şekillenmiştir. Bu makale geleneksel felsefedeki insan doğası anlayışının, bilişim devrimi sonrasında uğradığı dönüşümü bilişim felsefesi perspektifinden ele almakta ve sorgulamaktadır. Bilişim devrimi sonrasında hayatımızın her alanına entegre olan bilişim teknolojileri bilimsel, ekonomik, düşünsel ve kültürel faaliyetlerimizi derinden etkilemiştir. Bilişim devrimi ile birlikte insan doğası, biyolojik ve ruhsal özelliklerin ötesinde bilgi-işlem kapasitesi olan iletişim ve etkileşim yetenekleri sayesinde tasarım ve yaratma etkinliğine katılan özellikleri ile yeniden tanımlanmıştır. Mitolojik dönemden itibaren insan ve doğasının anlaşılması farklı tarihsel dönemlerde ele alınmış ve çağdaş düşüncede insanın yeni doğa anlayışının çeşitli filozoflar tarafından nasıl yorumlandığı, gelenekselden günümüze nasıl evrildiği detaylandırılmakta ve analiz edilmektedir. Gelenekselde biyolojik, fizyolojik ve ruhsal özellikler bağlamında tanımlanan antroposentrik insan anlayışı, bilişim felsefesinde bilgi işlem kapasitesine sahip bir agent olarak, holistik bağlamda bir bilişim nesnesi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bilgi taşıyan ve işleyen bir varlık olarak insan, iletişim ve etkileşimde bulunan bir mekanizma ile siberetik sistemler ve yapay zekâ gibi bilişim teknolojileri ile farklı özelliklere sahip olsa da bir bilişim nesnesi olarak aynı kategoride değerlendirilmektedir. Ayrıca bu çalışma ile insan doğası anlayışının değişim süreci konusu irdelenerek literatüre yeni bir bakış açısı kazandırma hedeflenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilişim Felsefesi, İnsan Doğası, Bilişim ve Teknolojileri, Yapay Zekâ, Siberetik.

Introduction

The issue of 'what human nature is or is not' is a difficult issue that dates back to ancient times. Human nature can occasionally be understood only in terms of biology and physiology, and other times it can be understood in terms of the surrounding environment. Although the issue of what it means to be human is based on biological foundations, it is sometimes defined by ideological justifications within the limitations of the age. While human nature can have a broad definition of what it is, it can also be reduced to pure emotional nature or any characteristic that constitutes its existence. As a matter of fact, questioning what a human being is, is generally based on human behavior or achievements. It is possible to say that every action performed by humans belongs to our nature. The political as well as the biological and behavioral dimensions of human moral achievement are the main topics of discussion in the theories derived from a focus on human political accomplishments. It is possible to show this situation as one of the reasons for the diversity of the question of what human nature is in the process from the

mythological period, to today's world of science and technology. In the mythological period, humans have demigod characteristics as well as their emotions. In ancient philosophy, as was common in Ancient Greece, humans consisted of a material body and an immaterial soul. The soul consists of appetite, courage and intelligence. Reason and courage have a mechanism that controls human appetite. The highest characteristic of human nature is not having a mind, but using it. In the Middle Ages, the nature of human beings as a being created by God was based on the basis on which God designed people. In the Enlightenment period, it was evaluated in a form in which God was in the background in the dilemma of science and reason. The 'state of nature' theorem, in which humans are defined based on their survival instincts, constitutes the dominant idea of human nature. In this perspective, in which social theories are developed, human beings are defined as inherently aggressive and selfish beings. In the 1800s, Darwin's theory and understanding of primate humans brought a new understanding of human nature to the world of thought. In this new understanding of human definition, created by a wide variety of disciplines such as biology, anatomy, physiology, genetics, psychology, sociology and anthropology, the origin of the human being is based on our brain structure, instincts and physical structure. The understanding of human nature, which has become more widespread with industrialization, has influenced many thinkers. In the self-other dilemma, human beings with their individual characteristics have given birth to new humanisms and modern anthropological theories. After millions of years of evolution, humans have been described as beings who know how to use tools, who speak, who are social, and who have an innate structure in terms of a high level of consciousness. With the information revolution, in the light of cybernetics and information technologies, it has been concluded that humans are information objects with their information-processing capacity and communication, and design-making qualities that affect change and transformation. Now, human beings are a first-order cybernetic being that is no different from other species in the universe defined within the formulation of matter-energy and information. In the philosophy

of information, humans and artificial intelligence are considered as similar entities that have the same ontological structure and can exchange information between each other from the same perspective. This perspective unites entities, regardless of living or nonliving, as beings of the same type in the same infosphere. Thus, not only living organisms, but also tools such as artificial intelligence gain the status of agents (Kantar 2023:206) and have the same purpose, regardless of how they come into nature. Everything in it, including the universe, is composed of information, and thanks to information technologies, they interact with each other and organize their behavior to reduce entropy, which is the universal evil.

In philosophy, we define the nature of an entity as "accidens", which are qualities that are not necessary for its existence but only exist together with that thing. The basic feature that determines the existence independent of other accidents that create the entity is defined as "essence". Like every being, humans also have accidents and essences (Cevizci 2021:237). These characteristics and definitions constitute the nature of humans and other beings. Knowing the nature of something is important in terms of knowing its ability and purpose of existence. The definitions of human beings and things are characterized by accidents and essences.

Generally, discourses about existence imply that the original fact of our existence must be taken into account. Otherwise, by imprisoning us within an imaginary horizon, they can turn us into products of a misleading understanding and subject us to a meaning that paralyzes the dynamism and existence of our body and mind. The definition of what human nature is can lead us away from metaphysical reality, as well as imprisoning us more and more in the labyrinth of an imaginary reality.... It is thought that re-designing human life will enable us to overcome the boundaries of the vicious circle and impasse in which we are stuck, and to attempt to give birth to a new human being, starting from ourselves (Irigaray 2019: xxiii). In other words, the redefinition of human nature in every period has sometimes been seen as a tool for the maturation of the conditions of the existing

culture and belief. This process, which started with the Enlightenment period, developed in the industrial revolution and with the information revolution, it went beyond what is available and evolved into a form that should be or is desired to be, rather than what is. However, this attitude has not seen the question of what human nature is merely as a matter of a different way of thinking; It has also been seen as a matter of experiencing the reality and truth of human existence differently. It is known that the definition of what human nature is more than just a definition. Because 'being' never concerns a single entity, it concerns the relationship between entities, starting with two entities. Being, by nature, is the conjunction that unites them towards being.

For thousands of years, humanity has witnessed many inventions and new and different settlement models. According to Floridi, with the developments that have occurred over the years with the information revolution and the new acceptances, future generations of humanity will be considered as communities without a homeland, the last representatives of the generations organized by the state (Floridi 2014: 204). Because the information revolution has made it possible to evaluate human nature with a different acceptance and has forced every object and achievement, including humans, to change and transform. The philosophy of information is the reflection of our age shaped by the Information revolution in the field of philosophy. As seen in many previous revolutions, the information revolution seeks the answer to the question of what is real – under the influence of the possibilities and developments of its age. The relational interconnectedness that occurs with human-information and computational technologies discussed in the study reveal what lies at the core of the ethical and philosophical problems of the age.

In the study (before moving on to the new understanding of human nature in the philosophy of information, which is a new field of contemporary philosophy), the understanding of human nature in the periods that form the foundations of the

world of traditional philosophy is touched upon. Human nature contains many subjects and concepts that have interconnected relationships. Considering the physical limitations of the study, it would of course be impossible to address the issue in all its aspects. For this reason, the issue is deepened here through important concepts related to the subject. These concepts are especially the state of nature, information, change, transformation, design, mind, emotion, information processing, intelligence, ethics, etc. While we first focus on what human nature was in the mythological period, in the following chapters, we focus on the understanding of human and human nature put forward in the naturalistic period, Socratic period, systematic philosophy, the Middle Ages, human nature in the pre-enlightenment and enlightenment periods, the industrial revolution and philosophical approaches, and then the information revolution and the philosophy of information. Our aim in the study, unlike traditional philosophical thoughts, is to draw attention to how the paradigm change after the information revolution has re-interpreted the universe, including ourselves. Information technologies such as artificial intelligence have been able to reveal the different point that humans have reached in terms of making sense of themselves and the universe. For this reason, traditional and contemporary perspectives in the history of philosophy are brought together in the human nature approach to shed light on the change and transformation experienced. The question "Who and what am I?" has found a different answer with the information revolution. This study reveals approaches to what this new and different answer is. The study also explains the issues and concepts that constitute the basic components of the problem of change and transformation, which is becoming more and more popular day by day with the integration of information technologies into our lives.

1. Human Nature in Traditional Philosophy

1.1 Human Nature in the Mythological Period

What is the nature of human as a being? or what it is not? Why does it exist? The question of 'what origin is?' is an issue that is as old, important, and still

debatable as human history. Sometimes (occurring through evolution, as stated in sources based on divine religions) it is described as a being created by God, and sometimes as an element, part and work of nature. Regardless of the source of all these definitions, human beings have become subjective, subject, with their mental activities that design, change, and build the field of truth as a being that chooses different stages of evolution with their acquisitions.

In the ancient history of philosophy, in some Greek mythology, human beings appear as an aggressive being created by Prometheus (Portakal 2008:37). The people of ancient times, as tragic beings, are alone in nature, without any being similar to them, and in order to live, they try to control natural laws and fight for survival. This fight takes place by satisfying their aggression. The object of aggression is their own species, as well as other beings in nature. The feeling of security lies at the root of human achievements. This sense of security evolves into a tragic situation in proportion to one's passions, abilities and possibilities, and gods are designed as imaginations in their designed worlds (Portakal 2008:202). Thus, people appear as victims of either their own or someone else's passion, fighting for their own survival in a vital tragedy. In this tragedy, we see that humans construct their existence within the mythos/imago/Symbolikos that they designed for all life events, including the gods. Human beings, who have no obstacles or limits in imagination, are a subject (Nagy 2010:107) who tries to make their existence and truth meaningful within the world of thought, who designs existence such as anger, ambition, love and pain (Beck 2005:213-27) in the fiction of anthropomorphism, who talks to God and has fun with him from time to time. This subject does not set a clear boundary between being god and human. As a matter of fact, thanks to the imagination in their minds, they have the opportunity to 'be anything to anything'. For example, Heracles is thought of as a 'demigod' resulting from a god father.

1.2 Human Nature in the Naturalistic Period

Questions regarding the nature and nature of human existence were a topic of discussion in the early periods of Greek philosophy as well as in the later classical and Hellenistic periods. In the Presocratic period, human nature was explained through the basic principles of the universe; It is considered as the combination of basic elements and particles in the universe. We see that humans have a soul (psyche), and this is explained by fire, which is a material element. The possibility of human change and transformation is limited by the soul's relationship with this fire. According to Heraclitus, these factors determine the basic dynamism of human nature. In this state, human beings and their nature are based on the idea of being a part of the universe. Heraclitus human nature is similar to the identity and character of a river. Vital stages such as a person's change, aging and growth are compared to the flow of a river as an indispensable part of being human (Warren 2007:74). Their views on what the universe is like have also been a bridge to access information about human beings themselves in relation to their place in that world and the world they live in (Warren 2007:57). Sometimes, as a daimon in Xenophanes, human being, who has a nature between human and god (Warren 2007:49), is a part of the same cosmos.

In Anaxagoras, human beings are in a nature that has an intellectual effort as a rational being, and the basis of their efforts to understand the universe is an obligation that they bring to us as a being of this nature (Warren 2007:134). Generally speaking, no matter what human beings are made of, they are beings with an ontological status based on cosmological explanations.

1.3 Human Nature in the Time of Socrates

According to Socrates, there is knowledge in the nature of human beings that can distinguish between right and wrong (Plato 2009: 38), but sometimes they can pursue evil with emotions such as passion, pleasure, pain or love (Santas 2010: 142). He thinks that this knowledge is the knowledge of the goodness of the universe, that

is, compliance with the goodness of the universe by realizing the perfect rationality in the soul (Taylor & Taylor 2000:93). Human beings have knowledge of the goodness of the universe. In the *Meno* dialogue, in his dialogue on virtue, the source of virtue is knowledge, this knowledge reveals itself with the right questions. As a matter of fact, human beings came to this world with this knowledge (Cornford,2010:158) . As a matter of fact, human beings are creatures that never desire bad things, want to be happy, and can only pursue bad things because they do not think about things enough (Santas 2010:134). They argue that the truth is not in the outside world, like the philosophers before them, but in the human being, whom they define as the subject. Put another way, because of their reasoning nature, humans are creatures that can search for and discover the truth. Human beings are subjects, not objects. Thanks to this characteristic, they can establish a relationship with existence. This connection enables them to live a happy and virtuous life. Human beings have intelligence and thus can strive to know the mind by researching themselves; for this, human beings need to know themselves (Moore 2015: 4-13).

1.4 Human Nature in Systematic Philosophy

According to Plato, one of the first philosophers of the systematic philosophical approach, human being has a two-fold nature as body and soul. The body, as the human being's existence in the sublunar world, is physical, and with this feature, it undergoes change and decay. The human soul is eternal and unchanging. Reason, which constitutes the basic nature of human beings and causes us to define them as a subject, is a basic characteristic that seeks truth and knowledge. The soul also has anger and physical pleasure and appetite as its other characteristics. The mind has more than one feature: it is rational, allowing you to think about and solve problems, obtain information and analyze it with logical inferences. The mind also has features such as controlling the passion and appetite in the human soul and satisfying basic needs and emotions such as eating and drinking (Mason 2010: 150). In this way, human beings, as a subject responsible for

their actions, are at the center of virtuous life. The human being is a being who can learn this natural virtue just like a craft (Cormack 2006:55).

Aristotle, one of the philosophers of the Systematic Philosophy period, explains human nature, human beings, and the nature of the universe with a scientific insight and understanding. Humans and their realities are based on human biology (Bynum,1986:132) through the relationship between practical and theoretical reason. The purposefulness, action and virtue of human beings are also based on this nature (Kantar 2022:64). Aristotle's understanding of ethics is shaped by the idea of ethical development within the holistic nature of human beings (Cooper 1975: 89). In Aristotle, human beings, with their biological similarities, that is, being an intelligent and living organism are “thinking animals” (Joachim 1998: 1177a220). In other words, humans are beings that have cognitive processes like animals, but they have a more complex structure. This difference is in the ability to develop as a human being, to evaluate (excellently), to reason, to make inferences. As a matter of fact, the mechanical behavior of the animal species towards the objects they perceive (Corcilus & Gregoric 2013: 56) emerges in humans as behaviors of choosing and controlling actions, which only human beings achieve thanks to the theoretical and practical mind.

Consisting of matter and form, human beings are creatures that process information about the form of beings and the accidents and essences of this form, and produce meaningful results by making inferences about them (Themistius & Todd 2014: 190a21-30). Thanks to their nature, human beings can process information received from the outside world and perform their behaviors within the process of other elements such as emotion and perception (Bynum 2006: 160). In Aristotle, human beings are defined as the beings who think, reason, make inductive comparisons, complete missing patterns, reshape objects by building a system through analysis and design, and have the most complex information processing capacity of the animal kingdom thanks to theoretical reasoning and practical

reasoning (De Anima 434a5–15, 2007: 529). In this state, human beings are by nature, an information processing subject. One of the important concepts that distinguishes human nature from other species in Aristotle is control. Because control is a mechanism of the development orientation inherent in human ethical nature. As a matter of fact, in order to evolve for the better or to possess the good itself, humans must be able to control themselves and their decisions. Self-control, or the ability to exercise control, is a human virtue. A person will be able to have a good life because of this virtue (Henderson NE Book 2: Chapter VII). Through the process of acquiring knowledge through theoretical and practical reason, people will be able to govern not only the environment outside of themselves, but also the behavior they express with this knowledge. Characteristics of human nature in Aristotle; thinking, calculating nature (Joachim 1998: 137) and having intellectual virtues; Who has scientific knowledge (episteme) (Aristotle NE: 1139b11) and technical or artistic knowledge (techne) (Aristotle NE: 1139b31). Human nature also has the intellectual activity equipment described as practical wisdom (Aristotle NE: 1140a20), intuitive reason knowledge (nous) (Aristotle NE: 1149b30) and philosophical wisdom (sophia).

1.5 A brief overview of human nature after the Middle Ages -the towards the Enlightenment

While in the Middle Ages, human nature was defined by matters determined in line with God's commands. In the modern era representatives of the history of philosophy, with Rene Descartes, human nature is defined as a thinking being (*res cogitans*). Ultimately, for Descartes, the essence of human beings is thinking. Having a mind that enables this action has been accepted as the most basic characteristic of human beings. Descartes accepts human nature as two separate substances, body and mind. Matter and mind, by their nature, can interact with the outside world and interact with information (Descartes 2008:18). Human nature, with a limited mind, strives to understand things and can reveal distinctions through thought that it

cannot achieve in reality. This is how it comes into contact with the essence that created it (Nolan 2021).

According to Locke, the mind of human beings is *tabula rasa* (blank slate). Those who do not have innate knowledge acquire their knowledge through sensory experiences from the environment and thus can shape their mind. Where there are no perceptions, it is not possible to access the knowledge of reality. Perception, which is a part of human nature, determines actions and acquisitions (Locke 1800: 92).

1.6 Human Nature in Enlightenment Era

What is human for Immanuel Kant, one of the representatives of the Enlightenment period? The question is answered with the anthropological foundations of human beings. He thinks that humans should be examined teleologically in terms of their natural purposes. As a matter of fact, in terms of being an organized being, a human being, unlike a machine, is also a being that organizes, shapes and gives form (Louden 2011: xviii). For Kant, human beings have common characteristics with their nature, even if their needs change and differ over time. Human nature is rational, and this feature makes it different from all living beings (Louden 2011: xi). With this nature, human beings are rational beings who determine their own goals instead of pursuing their instinctive goals and have the freedom to choose and implement these goals (Louden 2011: xxii). These features make them moral subjects. Since human beings are inherently equipped with the categorical imperative (Höffe 1994: 19), they have a cosmological nature. For this reason, not only their empirical capacity but also their cosmological nature is effective in distinguishing the sources of phenomena. It enables them to have the capacity to comprehend this essence, reason and moral values (Louden 2011:85).

For Kant, human beings are subject beings, as beings that can think due to their innate characteristics and can classify their actions thanks to the design of their

mind. It is seen that Kant, like Aristotle, questioned what a human being is or is not on an anthropological basis.

In general, the philosophers of the Enlightenment, with the exception of Kant, viewed man as a being who naturally pursues happiness.. In this period, unlike the philosophers of the Middle Ages, humans have feelings such as love, desire, passion, and these feelings are what enable humans to pursue happiness, and they are not bad.

1.7 Post-industrial Revolution and the Definition of Human Nature

Although the First Industrial Revolution (1760-1830) refers to an economic and technical period in which machines dominated instead of handicraft, manpower and agriculture, it also affected the field of values such as morality, culture and belief. This changed and transformed under the influence of mechanization. Industrialization, which started in England in the 18th century, has socio-cultural dimensions as well as economic ones. Iron, steel, fuel, mechanical production models, the dominance of electricity and oil in production, weaving looms in the textile field reducing the need for manpower, new business models and organizations brought by factories, economic power shifting from land ownership to industrial capitals have enabled political change and transformation. Now, beyond being a pure economic activity, industrialization has also built human life in terms of values.

Like many revolutions, the industrial revolution caused philosophical and ethical consequences. Just as philosophers of the period criticized this new situation, some philosophers also put forward views that systematized this change and transformation. The developments brought about by the facts have built a new understanding of human nature in the modern period.

With a materialist, mechanistic and non-religious understanding of human nature that prioritizes their interests and desires, the economic human being (*homo economicus*) has evolved into a form suitable for being shaped in a nature that has

become mass and stereotyped after the industrial revolution. *Homo economicus* is a new type of human being who is quick-witted, perceptive, pedantic, preoccupied with intellectual gain and livelihood, conceptual acrobat, masculine woman, feminine man (Duralı 1996:86-89).

Adam Smith's definition of human nature is as much a biological definition as it is associated with the emotional nature of humans. Self-love and helpfulness feelings determine people's actions, which are explained by empirical and normative foundations. According to Smith, human nature is based on 'sympathy', the creative reflection process used to control one's own emotions and to understand or make sense of the emotions of others . According to Smith, who evaluates human nature from a moral perspective along with values such as economics, the main motivation in the actions of people who have self-love is to maximize their own profits. This nature-limiting emotion, based on one's own interests and desires, can reach a balance thanks to sympathy, which helps to understand the feelings of others (Fleischacker and Fleischacker: 2004, 66), and the mechanisms of economic markets and moral emotions. Human beings are creatures that can be happy with their emotions and pleasures. Because, according to him, a person can only be happy at the point between peace and pleasure. Human beings can control their mind and be happy by shaping it. External goods, on the other hand, have an importance that makes people happy and satisfies this nature. While he reduces religion to an obstacle or fanaticism in realizing the nature of human beings, he describes the emotions in human nature as God's representatives in humans. There are intellectual abilities in human nature. If they do not use them, they will become worse than a coward. This will mean that a significant part of the character of human nature will be injured and deformed (Smith 2007: 8-15). The free environment in which human nature can realize itself is self-regulated markets.

The understanding of human nature defined after the industrial revolution was shaped by political inspiration. Human nature appears as a term that is

understood in the value world of capital and may be quantified by the pleasures and pains encountered by the body in the technical and philosophical perspective required by industrialization. As one of the philosophers of the industrialization period, Jeremy Bentham (Kesgin 2019: 219) draws attention to the two basic elements of human nature, pleasure and pain. These two concepts form the nature on which human actions are based. The pleasure and pain actors of human nature determine the right or wrong, good or bad values of the human being. By nature, humans are inclined to seek benefit as the side that considers self-interest and desires utility. This benefit has a feature that prevents the occurrence of pain, evil or unhappiness in any object that tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, goodness or happiness (Ayres 2023:114). In other words, human nature, when reduced to quantitative values and the principle of utilitarianism, is capable of being shaped, changed, and transformed. According to Mill, knowing this nature will provide the opportunity to manage and control it in the best way (Eisenberg 2018: xi)

According to J. S. Mill, human beings are rational beings in empirical nature. Tendency to pleasure and avoidance of pain are internal dynamics that determine human actions and behaviors (Mill 2009: 100). Human beings have a complex nature with strong emotions and impulses. Human nature is a variable and shapeable structure (Eisenberg 2018: 88). In fact, the shaping of this nature is necessary (Hamburger 1999: 233); the ability to make reasoned choices with reasoned intelligence (Mill 2009: 100) is an inherent characteristic of this nature.

It is seen that during the industrialization period, human nature was defined as a species that could change and transform, was in a constant state of transformation, and carried out this change mechanically. The foundations of the mechanically designed human model can also be found in the idea of evolution. According to this idea, human nature, due to genes and hereditary heritage (Bucaille 1988: 173), is a characteristic that has emerged as a result of certain physical and

chemical events and continues its existence on this plane. As such an organism, the human being is a mechanical being. Developments in human nature are explained as biological and chemical events. Mechanical explanations about humans and living things, as well as vitalist approaches, are based on the non-physical 'living principle' or life force principle that occurs in the living organism. This principle, the principle of living, is considered as a soul and the consciousness that humans have has not been ignored. In the vitalist understanding, human beings are creatures with will. This will is an interpretation of the principle of causality that allows people to adapt to change and transformation, and it has a spiritual-psychological nature (Bayraktar 2016:93). As a matter of fact, in Bergson, human nature is explained both by determinism and by the 'vital impulse' which makes a 'becoming' towards the new possible (Bayraktar 2016: 95).

2. Human Nature in Contemporary Philosophy

2.1 Human Nature in Philosophy of Information

Roughly speaking, the Information Revolution is the period that causes deep and wide-scale change and transformation of individual, social, economic values in the field of Norbert Wiener's Cybernetic science, Claude Shannon's Information theory, computer hardware technologies, the internet and the technology that emerged with the internet. In the field of Information Science, all kinds of visual, audio, written data are detected by sensors and cameras and transformed into input form. This data is then processed with logical designs and transformed into output, and the display of the inputs in the digital environment; Developments in internet and communication technologies create this revolution (Kantar 2023:201). Briefly, the Information Revolution represents the software and hardware advancements that enable the processing of information by non-human means, and the scientific, technological, sociological, and cultural progress they have brought about. The Information Revolution, when defined as the second industrial revolution, refers to the era as the 'automatic age'. "Dark satanic mills" represents a period in the first

industrial revolution where human labor was devalued as a result of the competition created by machines. Expressing that the information revolution brought about by the computer world is the devaluation of the human brain, he draws attention to this destructive effect of the information revolution (Wiener 1948: 37-38).

In fact, the information revolution cannot be understood in isolation as a process involving advancements in science and technology. Because this revolution has created a new shaped world of thought unlike any before. The hierarchy of existence, generally known as Matter-Plant-Animal-Human and God, evolves into another form by being re-interpreted with new terms and ideas in the information system.

For example, humans, who transitioned to a different culture by settling down with the agricultural revolution, transitioned to life models shaped by the industrial revolution and the culture of industrialization. With the information revolution, technologies such as computers, the Internet, and the Internet of Things (IoT) have started to coexist simultaneously in a digital atmosphere called the 'Infosphere' (Floridi 2013: 6-7), without the need for a physical space, embracing multicultural and diverse ethnic structures (Kantar 2022:115). In other words, humans continue to exist in a new space, the digital society. In this virtual and digital environment, they recontextualize themselves and objects, forming a new culture.

We encounter the definition of human nature in Information philosophy in Norbert Wiener, the founder of cybernetic science, Luciano Floridi, who attempted to turn Information philosophy into a systematic discipline, and Terrell Ward Bynum, who put forward a new ethical theory in Information ethics. In the philosophy of information, the nature of human and other beings is based on the "common cybernetic nature" (Kantar 2022: 215). Although there are points that differ from each other, the common and basic meeting point of all of them is that human beings, as beings with information-processing capacity, are beings that can

control and construct things outside of their existing forms with the nature of information.

2.2 Norbert Wiener (1894-1964) and Cybernetic Human Nature in the Philosophy of Information Technology

According to Norbert Wiener, as a member of a world built on information and communication, a human is a primary cybernetic being and a moral agent. According to Wiener, all living beings, including humans, have a cybernetic nature. with this nature, they can continue their existential processes (Figure 1).

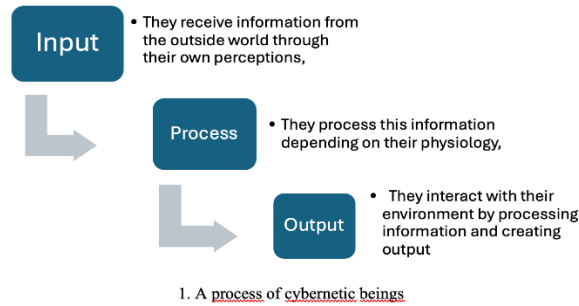


Figure 1. A process of cybernetic beings.

Human's cybernetic nature is grounded in their existential purposefulness. Through this nature, humans can reason by creating, adapting, perceiving, learning and thinking, empowered by complex and versatile information processing (Wiener 1954: 51-52). At the same time, humans are a being that develops, changes and transforms due to its information-processing cybernetic nature. Human nature consists of a kind of information. Because, according to Wiener, the basic structure of all living and inanimate beings, including the universe itself, consists of 'matter-form and information'. Apart from material form, the basic paradigm of the information revolution is Information.

According to Wiener; Information is the name given to the content of our interactions with the external world and how our adaptation to it is conveyed to us. The process of obtaining and using information represents our process of adapting

to the conditions of the external environment, the conditions that may occur in the process, and living effectively in that environment. The requirements and complexity of modern life place greater demands and obligations on the processing of this information than ever before. The basic paradigm of effective living is having 'sufficient information'. Therefore, the cybernetic structure that makes communication and control possible belongs to the essence of human inner life, as well as to life in society (Wiener 1954: 17-18).

Information is the basis of our individual and social acquisitions, including scientific ones. The information revolution with computers, chips and the internet, which makes the dissemination of this information possible, therefore has the capacity to influence the form and understanding of value of all beings, including humans. Due to the significant impact of the human mind's structure and behavioral influences, our acquisitions are therefore ready to change and transform. As a primary cybernetic being, it has the ability to think, design and build algorithmically, as a requirement of its biological characteristics. Wiener called the information revolution the second industrial revolution. This revolution's focus on the human mind and information as its basic building block can make human intelligence less active. The relationship between mind and information processing, by which human beings have distinguished themselves from other species for centuries, has now evolved into a form possible for other beings, due to computational technologies. It has become possible to model the human brain that processes information with technologies such as artificial intelligence. Machines, which previously took over production models based on human labor, are now taking over tasks and processes based on human intellect. For this reason, the information revolution has an impact that can never be compared to other revolutions. The main reason for this effect is the human's cybernetic nature and the modeling based on the process of information, which is the most fundamental component of this nature.

Cybernetic systems have transformed the interaction between humans and machines by eliminating boundaries in human-human communication and opening up a limitless array of opportunities for machines. Wiener thinks that in the future, machines may be open-ended, independent of their functions, able to reproduce, and learn and connect with people (Galison 1994: 260). With this idea, it also makes possible the possibility of designing human nature.

This understanding shapes the determinations about the nature of things and the status of the human with a body that processes information in the world, and affects values as well as scientific, technological and political acquisitions (Coole & Frost 2010: 3), as well as production and consumption styles. This understanding eliminates the distinction between living and nonliving at the ontological level, and has brought about a different philosophical approach. This is a new materialist approach. Because the processing of information by inanimate agents as if they were human bestows upon non-human entities the power and capacity to construct and build. All this logical grounding is based on the cybernetic nature that represents the capacity for information processing as a result of human's informational nature. Ultimately, at this point, human being is defined as "an information model embodied in a biological substrate" (Coole & Frost 2010: 17).

Wiener defines humans, animals, Artificial and Intelligent Agents as Information objects due to their cybernetic nature. He thinks of these beings as an information pattern that undergoes molecular change, that changes and transforms with the information they receive at all stages of life. Human thinking acquisition is an information processing process that occurs in the brain structure. The nature of the universe also consists of information models, and humans are considered a 'pattern' in this universe. In other words, despite their distinct levels, humans are members of a cybernetic system that processes information. It takes shape and changes within this model, and besides all this, it is an element that resembles other 'things'. (Weiner 1954).

According to Wiener, another characteristic of cybernetic human nature is its feedback mechanism. With its biological nature, human beings function together with all their parts integrated with the universe, and they owe this to their feedback feature.

Wiener considers the human (animal) as a constantly changing entity with component parts that can internally communicate with each other through feedback loops, and as an “information/information object”, a dynamic form or pattern that maintains its ontological position in the flow of matter and energy (Bynum 2006: 168). The perspective created by the information revolution is nothing other than the design of a new understanding of human nature.

The world of information consists of cybernetic systems; It emerges based on the cybernetic nature of the human being and the idea that the entity is an information pattern. As a result of this understanding consisting of technology, cybernetics and information, human nature gains a different perspective with a new paradigm (Kantar 2022:156).

Wiener states that the building block of the universe consists of matter-energy and information, and that each entity creates a pattern and creates life itself. In this formation and flow, the human being, with their information-processing capacity, forms a part of the whole as an information object. Matter-energy and information, which are different from each other, need each other to continue their existence and create a new pattern in the flow. According to Wiener, all existence, including so-called physical objects— including living organisms— are defined as enduring forms of information, which are actually continuously changing "flows" or patterns of matter-energy. According to Wiener, humans are inherently unique and individual by nature, yet they are also part of this physical process (Wiener 1954: 102).

The universe itself is similar to the whirlpool in a river of constantly flowing water (Bynum 2010). Matter-energy and information are not things that stand by

their nature, but are patterns that continue themselves in the formation and flow of the universe (Wiener 1954: 96). Human beings process information and continue their existence in formation and flow as a defined pattern as a part of the whole. This structure, which defines and enables interaction between each other, can sustain its existence with the presence of another. Each physical entity in the universe has an information structure. By coming together, species create patterns within themselves. In the absence or corruption of any of them, 'extinction' occurs. Therefore, things need each other to maintain their existing pattern structures. Wiener connects all creation and destruction in information philosophy with physics terms, entropy and sibernetics. Matter, energy and information are entities that cannot be considered separate from each other. The co-necessity of these physical objects creates a permanent form of knowledge by continuing to exist in the ever-changing and transforming flow. The hierarchy of existence creates a new paradigm in philosophical thought shaped by the information revolution; Matter-Information-Plant-Animal-Human and God. In this context, human beings are both an element with information-processing capacity and an object of the information-processing world.

2.3 Luciano Floridi (1964-) Information Philosophy and the Informational Nature of Human

According to Floridi, throughout history, humans go through many stages in understanding and defining themselves. The information revolution has paved the way for the process of re-evaluating our basic nature. It causes an impact that displaces our role in the universe as mentioned in our previous knowledge (Floridi 2014: 90).

After the information revolution, our world is continuing to evolve into an increasingly technological form. Processing information with computational technologies requires rethinking the present and the future. Among the innovations of the information age, the paradigm that forms the basis of philosophy in the

philosophy of information is philosophia prima information (Floridi 2002: 145). According to Floridi, one of the founders of the philosophy of information, the human being is an object of information. Humans live in an infosphere resembling an atmosphere made up of billions of pieces of information, alongside the universe itself. Agents, tools that can react without human intervention in human-machine interaction, also share the same infosphere with humans (Floridi 2014: 145). Agent is a general concept that represents entities that can perform or manifest actions that have good or bad effects (Floridi 2021: 221). The human being is both an agent of the information world and a being that is primarily affected by these technologies. Information warfare is only part of the information revolution. Human beings, as an information organism, are directly affected by this situation (Floridi 2014: 202). A closer look at Floridi's concept of information is very important for us to understand the new understanding of human nature. As a matter of fact, this concept shapes both human nature and human cultural and economic activities. Floridi emphasizes a more primitive form of data than information, called 'dedomena'. It is possible to define 'dedomena' as raw data or proto-epistemic data, referring to data in its state before being interpreted epistemically. It is not possible to access or process dedomenas independently in any model of epistemic reality model. It is not possible to epistemically experience this data structure, for which its ontological requirements can be reconfigured. It is possible to obtain dedomenas empirically from experience (Floridi 2011: 86).

The stages included in the information life cycle are shown in Figure 2.

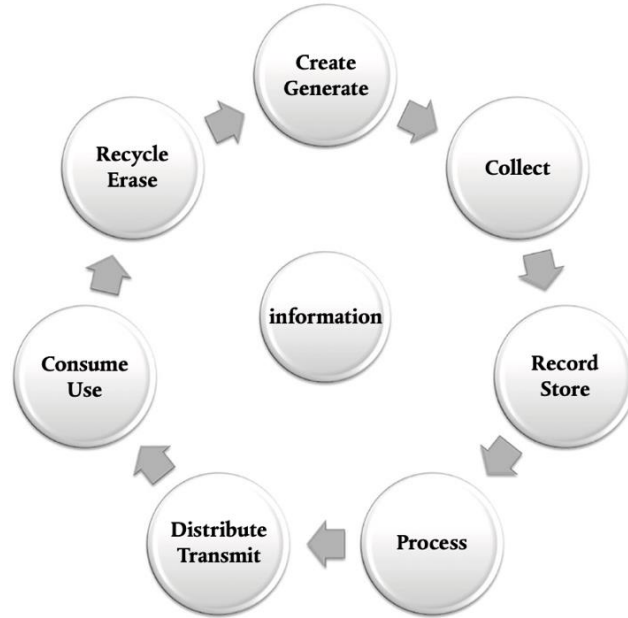


Figure 2. A Typical Life Cycle for Information (Floridi 2014:5).

Human contact with information occurs through stages such as discovery, design and writing. It is recorded and transmitted by means and methods such as networking, distribution, access and retrieval; The transmitted information is processed by methods of collecting, verifying, combining, modifying, organizing, indexing, classifying, filtering, updating, sorting, storing and monitoring for any purpose, modeling, analyzing, explaining, planning, predicting, decision making, teaching. It is used in situations and areas such as education, learning and games. Such a flow manifests itself in a constant cycle with the behaviors exhibited as a natural consequence of human nature and in the new habitat they inhabit, the infosphere (Floridi 2014: 6).

Luciano Floridi puts forward a new understanding of reality within the system, including human nature, using the contemporary physics approach called 'Informational Structural Realism'. According to his definition, everything in the universe, including our world, is part of an infinite quantum sea of information. All

processes dynamically interact with each other, composed of constantly changing quantum data structures (Bynum 2014: 123-139). According to Floridi, as anything, it is 'to be an informational entity' (Floridi 2008: 199). As a matter of fact, Floridi's understanding of The Philosophy of Information is based, above all, on a relational philosophy of ontology that considers "information" as the primary ontological category and component (Ess 2009: 160). The main concept that establishes the relationship between entities is information. According to him, the basis of everything is information. Unlike traditional western philosophy, Floridi's answer to the question "What is the basic, what exists?" focuses on a concept other than genera and species. This is an important example of the direct impact of the information revolution on our understanding of philosophy and existence. Because now, in the hierarchy of existence, the distinction between organic and inorganic, as well as the distinction between kinds, disappears. The idea that everything is essentially information has led to a reshaping of understanding of existence and reality with the same paradigm that lies at the foundations of the issues. Because the perspective has changed, not coming to a conclusion based on human nature, which is the basis of metaphysical and ethical discussions, but seeking answers to questions with information in the primary ontological category in the hierarchy of existence.

With the revolutionary impact produced by information systems, human beings have gained the opportunity to create and control almost every aspect of their environment for the first time in history, having a wide area to overcome the barrier between the natural and artificial (Floridi & Savulescu 2006: 155).

Humans have a nature that can build and reinterpret the information world. For this reason, humans, like a god who does not create but shapes the universe, can change the entire planet, including humanity, by designing it to suit and satisfy their own needs, wishes and expectations (Floridi 2014: 205).

Human beings interact with other information objects as an entity that has a common nature with other entities in the distributed networked universe consisting of information data. In this system, humans are not the only beings with a morally autonomous nature who are responsible for their actions. It has an ethical existence similar to informational agents and patients. The mission undertaken by humans to make the universe a better place is determined by this ontological definition. As a matter of fact, in their distributed ethical system, information processing systems such as artificial intelligence, as well as humans, are entities that assume ethical responsibility. The factor that makes this idea possible is that the nature of things has the same paradigm.

According to Floridi, regarding the purpose and role of human existence in the world, humans are initially a fetus, a being that benefits from the world as a part of Information. After birth, it becomes an individual by becoming a moral agent with its acquisitions and is both a beneficiary of the world and a trustee of its acquisitions. Its area of responsibility is the world and it transfers what it has to future generations by being responsible for the continuation of the existence of other agents. When it dies, it will leave the world to other agents who will come after it and thus become a member of the donor generation. In short, when a human comes to life as an agent, it is not only a beneficiary who benefits from what it finds, but also a trustee responsible for the flow of information in the world. This flow is the vital journey of human beings as agents. Although humans start life as moral agents, they should end life as friends of this world with the knowledge and experience transferred to other generations (Floridi 2007).

Every living and inanimate entity, including humans, is a potential agent that affects other entities. Every entity, including humans, that is affected by agents is considered a potential patient. All entities continue their existence by sharing a similar nature in the cluster where agent-patient interaction can occur and in the "infosphere" that includes and represents this cluster.

2.4 Terrell Ward Bynum (1941-) Flourishing Human Nature in the Philosophy of Information

One of the new interpretations of human nature, which reveals the impact of the information revolution and examines the ethical foundations of human nature in the philosophy of information, belongs to Terrell Ward Bynum. According to Bynum, who states that man has an ethical nature, man is a being who wants to flourish ethically as a human being. However, the fundamental connection of this ethical flourishing is related to the relationship of man with information and computational technologies. With his biological characteristics, man is a being who wants to flourish by nature. The world of information, which develops and is shaped by information technologies, has the capacity to contribute to the ethical flourishing of man. Bynum states in his work *Flourishing Ethics Theory* that human nature has a rational, intellectual, physiological and social nature due to its biological characteristics, which has the capacity to process information, and that it is multifaceted and multi-component as a result of its cybernetic nature, which allows it to flourish ethically. Information technologies such as softbots, robots, artificial intelligence, which are members of the information technologies world, are tools that provide human-object interaction that contribute to the flourishing of humans as ethical humans. At the same time, humans have a nature that can design and create.

The universe is made up of information and like all other beings, humans are an information object that can process information within this universe and contain information. Entropy, which he defines as the loss or disorder of information, is the ultimate evil of the universe and humans (Bynum 2006: 169). Bynum, who ranks beings according to their information processing capacity and their relationship with entropy, states that humans are first-degree cybernetic beings because they are living organisms.

In Bynum's philosophy of information ethics, humans and other beings meet for the same common purpose due to their structural similarities. Beings that increase goodness by decreasing local entropy in the universe as information objects in the spatial and temporal dimension are ranked as follows:

1. All Living Organisms – All living organisms, because of the Shannon information encoded in their genes, and because of the structures and processes within their bodies, are repositories and generators of local Shannon information. By living and growing they actually increase the amount of available information – and so, decrease the amount of entropy – in their local region of the universe.

2- Animals – Animals, of course, are living organisms, so they share with plants the anti-entropy impact described in 1 above. But animals have an additional means of decreasing local entropy; namely, the cybernetic information processing and feedback mechanismsinformation processing activities to maintain the structure and function of their own bodies, and to bring additional order and structure to their environments.

3-Human Beings – People are members of the animal kingdom, so they share all of the entropy- reducing abilities just described in 1 and 2 above.

4- Communities, Societies, and Civilizations – ...“second-order cybernetic systems” because their members are themselves cybernetic systems. Second-order cybernetic systems with large numbers of first-order cybernetic members dramatically decrease local entropy beyond what individual members could do by themselves.

5- Ecosystems – Most animals and plants live together in specific environments like river valleys, rain forests, deserts, and so on. There, they typically interact in ways that bring about a ‘balance of nature.’ In this happy circumstance – an ‘ecosystem’ – a complex, dynamic pattern of animal, plant, and ‘land’ interactions creates even more local order and structure than the individual animals and plants could bring about on their own.

6-Information Processing Machines – Today’s information processing machines manipulate Shannon information and thereby add much order and structure to the communities in which they function. They reduce local entropy significantly. (like artificial agents, cyborgs, robots and softbots) (Bynum 2006: 170)

The purpose of human existence is to flourish ethically within the society (cyborgian society) (Bynum 2010), which he counts among the second-degree beings, and to make companionship with other beings in order to slow down the destruction and deterioration of the universe. In other words, man is like a ‘caretakers’ who respects the flow of other beings in the universe and contributes to the ethical flourishing of other beings. In his understanding of the philosophy of

information, due to the nature of information processing, man is not the only being at the center of the world (Bynum 2006: 172).

Conclusion

According to many philosophers in the philosophy of information, with the information revolution, the anthropocentric understanding of human beings has been replaced by the understanding of being an object defined as an information object, like any object that contains information. As an agent, human nature, which has the capacity for information processing, has a structure that continues its existence within the organic-inorganic entity that has the nature of information processing in the universe. Through connective relationships with other beings, human nature is an entity that realizes its acquisitions in the infosphere, which is made up of all living and non-living beings.

In the philosophy of information, the common tendency in understanding human nature is the non-anthropocentric perspective. Humans are not the center of the universe, there are other beings in the universe that carry information or have information processing capacity like humans. Therefore, there are elements other than humans that have at least as much value and importance as humans.

In the traditional understanding of the human model, human nature is autonomous and has a structure that designs independently of external elements. In the philosophy of information, although human beings are autonomous, they live in a universe where they are connected to reality with informational relations in the context of external elements. The nature of information of human beings enables them to live in harmony thanks to the informational structure in the nature of the universe and objects. Human beings realize their acquisitions within the structure and functioning of the cybernetic and informational world. In this way, they can design and construct their own nature depending on the external world. Although in the philosophy of information, human nature is based on an understanding that opposes its reduction to the acquisition of having only reason, in the age of

information, human beings are reduced to intelligence, which is the information-processing side of their mind, and information, which constitutes the nature of this intelligence. In the mythological period, Ancient Greek, Renaissance and modern periods, in the instrumentality of human reason (*instrumentum intellectus*) that provided dominance over the external world, human beings were a subject being, but after the information revolution, human experiences and conscious acquisitions became an information object with their information-processing capacity. It is based on the acceptance that, beyond being the creator and constructor of a human being, it does not matter whether it is alive or inanimate, and that it is in a nature that can be shaped by another element that has a better information processing capacity than itself.

In the information world created by artificial intelligence, augmented reality applications, and internet of things technologies, humans are objects of information because of their nature, which embodies the modernity of the information age. They are made of information processing capacity and can be programmed with data relevant to their design, and they coexist in the same society as inorganic or organic machines as well as the universe. Human nature is formed by an order built within these paradigms until it evolves into another nature.

Defining a human or any other being is not just a concept, it affects many elements. The acceptance that a human is an information processing entity, that is, an information object, brings a new understanding of existence to the agenda. This understanding affects the areas from the individual to society, from society to economic functioning, and even religious or personal beliefs and freedoms. This effect will build a new culture. What kind of culture is this culture and what kind of civilization will this culture create?

A human nature fiction based on mathematical and probabilistic cybernetic science means that the human being models himself with a new paradigm within the part-whole. In this new understanding of human nature, which has

mathematical theorems such as random connections and probability calculations at its base, the universe, together with human nature, has a capacity to be modeled. In a definition of human nature made with models made from a certain spectrum outside of our coming to life, to what extent is a human being a free being? Or how will human beings produce an understanding of humanism in the context of freedom as an agent in their informational structure with the natural state? What will be the answer of the philosophy of information to these questions, unlike the traditional? Philosophy will pursue these questions with its ancient and unchanging reflex.

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