_____

An Information Ethics Theory in the Context of Information Philosophy: Flourishing Ethics [*]

NESİBE KANTAR [ID]
Independent Researcher

Abstract: Like all other inventions, advances in the field of digital computational technologies, which we will briefly describe as the information world, have also played an essential role in humanity life. These advances have brought some ethical debates to our individual and social life, as well as the industrial benefit obtained by the digital and analog technological developments that positively or negatively affect and transform all economic and cultural paradigms surrounding human life. The branch of the philosophy of information, which questions the basic issues and discussions of the information age through philosophical paradigms, deals with the ontological, epistemological, and axiological problems of the information age. The subject deals with the analysis and new results of an Aristotelian information ethics theory, which is a theory first proposed to the world of thought in the field of the philosophy of information. The main reason for dealing with this subject in the thesis is to examine the scientific, technological, and philosophical bases of the information revolution.

Keywords: Information ethics, philosophy of information, entropy, flourishing ethics, cybernetics and technology, artificial intelligence.

---

[*]   This paper has been prepared from PhD Dissertation at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University titled *An Information Ethics Theory in the Context of Information Philosophy: Flourishing Ethics.*

NESİBE KANTAR ✉
Independent Researcher of Philosophy
Dumlupınar Mah. Çubuk, Ankara, 06760, TR [nesibekantar@hotmail.com]

To briefly define *Flourishing Ethics Theory* (FE); The theory, which aims to shed light on the basic nature of living things, human beings and the universe from scientific perspectives and grounds them with scientific disciplines such as information theory, astrophysics, genetics, and cybernetic science, consists of two main components. The first of these components is the Human-Centered Flourishing Ethics (H-FE), which creates an ethical basis with a particular focus on man and his nature. The second is General Flourishing Ethics (G-FE), which aims to develop an ethical perspective through the nature of existence by dealing with every physical entity in the universe, including humans.[1] Bynum FE theory is an ethical perspective with a holistic, naturalistic, unifying character that gathers the whole entity under the ethical roof of flourishing with the General FE, which prioritizes the ethical development and equipment of non-human elements while prioritizing the ethical flourishing humans with human-centered FE theory.[2] Thinking that human-centered FE and General FE as two interactive theoretical concepts that support each other is probable. In general, in the study; in order to understand the social and ethical impact of the information revolution[3] and to make the definition and analysis of the theory, new questions are brought about the topic of the philosophy of information[4], which has just begun to form in the world and in our country, by drawing attention to the basic concepts and issues of new informatics-based problems.[5] The topics, concepts and sections that progress systematically in the study are as follows.

---

[1] Terrell Ward Bynum, "Flourishing Ethics," *Ethics and Information Technology* 8 (2006): 157.

[2] Nesibe Kantar, "An Information Ethics Theory in the Context of Information Philosophy: Flourishing Ethics" (Ankara, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, 2021), 46.

[3] For more information, see Fahri Atasoy, "Kültürler Üzerinde Bilişim Devriminin Etkileri," *Modern Türklük Araştırma Dergisi* 4, no. 2 (2007): 163–78.

[4] Also see Nesibe Kantar, "Bilişim Çağında Felsefe ve Etiği Yeniden Düşünmenin Gerekliliği" (I. Ahi Evran Uluslararası Bilimsel Araştırmalar Kongresi, Kırşehir, 2021).

[5] Kantar, "An Information Ethics Theory in the Context of Information Philosophy: Flourishing Ethics," chap. 1.4.

In order to achieve these goals, the study consists of an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. For this purpose, in the Introduction part of the study (First Chapter); First of all, the theorist and the introduction of the theory, the basic problems of information ethics and the chronological development of the subject, the discussions and opinions within the relevant boundaries are given and explanations are made about the purpose, scope and method. For this reason, the introduction focuses on three main purposes. In the introductory part, first of all, by the results of which achievements and experiences, that Prof. Terrell Ward Bynum proposed Flourishing Ethics Theory, and the methodology he follows in justifying the quality and scope of the theory is explained. Secondly, in the Introduction section, the information revolution and its history, the emergence of computer ethics and current literature studies are included. The third point that is tried to be achieved in the introduction is; besides the explanations on the social and ethical impact of the information revolution, on the importance and necessity of studying this subject, as well as the nature and scope of the study, what kind of goals are aimed in the parts of the study are included.

Terrell Ward Bynum thinks that "a new perspective change in ethics" should be made in order to overcome the fact that traditional ethical approaches are sometimes insufficient in solving today's social and ethical issues shaped by technological and scientific developments in the information age. In the second part of the study; The logical basis and explanations of Bynum's analogy, inspired by Kuhn, that the anomalies occurring in science can lead to progress in science, as well as the anomalies occurring in ethics can cause progress in ethics are explained. In this chapter, it is explained that Bynum's logical justification for this thought is based on the philosophy of science. In the chapter, the basis of "a new perspective change proposal in ethics"[6] by Bynum, a student

Entelekya Logico-Metaphyscal Review

---

[6]   The subject of 'perspective change in informatics ethics' is one of the important discussions of the philosophy of information. On the basis of the subject, see Nesibe Kantar, "A Looking for a Philosophy Ethical Perspective to Solve Ethical

of Thomas Kuhn, the three anomalies of traditional ethical theories, the definitions of the anomalies he identified in ethical approaches with a Kuhnian paradigm, and the explanations of the problems he aims to solve in information ethics are given.

In *Flourishing Ethics Theory, human-centered FE* is based on Aristotelian ethical and metaphysical thoughts in terms of philosophical tradition with its ethical approach that places human and human nature at the center. Bynum interprets Aristotle's ethical approach as the first version of Human-Centered GE, because of its features such as, his explanation of the nature of human and universe in his thoughts with a scientific insight and understanding, his direct connection of human "εὐδαηκνλία" with human ethical flourishing and pointing to the development of ethics starting from human biology (practical and theoretical reason relationship and ethics). Human-Centered FE is based on Norbert Wiener's cybernetic nature in the technological tradition, and on the cybernetic nature of man in the philosophical tradition, again through Wiener's philosophy and ethics. For this reason, Aristotle's philosophy, which forms the roots of *Flourishing Ethics Theory*, and Norbert Wiener's Cybernetic science[7] are presented by considering its connection with the theory, and the position of "flourishing" thought in traditional and contemporary thought is examined. In order to reveal all this, the third part is designed for more than one purpose; In the first, it is shown that the main ideas in the ethical theories of Aristotle[8] and Norbert Wiener can be interpreted as a kind of *FE* by analyzing the philosophical and scientific roots of the *Flourishing Ethics Theory*. In the second, traditional and contemporary theories such as Consequentialist, Utilitarian and Kantian ethics, which are at the foundation of *FE*, are examined in the context of flourishing thought, and that it represents

---

Problems in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)" (VII. International European Conference on Social Sciences, Antalya, 2022).

[7] Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1954), 15.

[8] Terrell Ward Bynum, "Aristotle's Theory of Human Action" (New York, The City University of New York, 1986).

the "family of ethical systems" that reminds the relations that Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein calls "family resemblance", by questioning the relationship between human flourishing and ethics. is revealed. In this section, Bynum's Ethical Relativity Reckoning, which claims that Flourishing Ethics Theory can provide a unifying ethical perspective for other ethical approaches,[9] is clarified in today's world where the internet and a digital global life have become widespread among the developments in information technologies. Finally, the chapter deals with the solution of two anomalies that Bynum has identified regarding traditional ethical theories.

The focus of the study; The first component of the *FE* theory, the Aristotelian Human-Centered Flourishing Ethics Theory, is based on the fact that human beings are thought of as an information object due to their cybernetic nature, and in the fourth chapter, the subjects and concepts that constitute the possibility and basis of the flourishing of this person in terms of being an ethical person are discussed; and Flourishing Ethics The second component that makes up the theory is the foundations of the *General Flourishing Ethics Theory*; cybernetic science, the second law of thermodynamics in physics and how the new materialist thought in metaphysics is associated with ethics[10] is the fifth chapter. In Bynum's Flourishing Ethics Theory, the ideas that ethical discussions should be started from human and expanded to include non-human elements (Artificial intelligence, Ambient intelligence, etc.) are explained in the example of Moor's Robot ethics. The third anomaly identified by Bynum regarding Information Technology ethics problems and the solution proposal produced against this anomaly are also explained in this section within the scope of General Flourishing Ethics.

---

[9]   Nesibe Kantar and Terrell Ward Bynum, "Global Ethics for the Digital Age: Flourishing Ethics," *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 19, no. 3 (2021): 329–44.

[10]   The new materialism is based on the idea that everything consists of matter-energy and information. Susanne Witzgall and Kerstin Stakemeier, *Power of Material/Politics of Materiality* (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2014), 13–14.

In the fourth chapter, the concepts of the Human-Centered Flourishing Ethics theory, in which the subject, concept and theoretical framework of the human-centered component of the Flourishing Ethics theory are analyzed; It includes a number of ethical concepts in which human flourishing constitutes ethical opportunities and basis. According to Bynum, in the theory of information and ethics, there are concepts of autonomy, freedom and responsibility of the nature that enables the ethical development of human beings at the center of human ethical flourishing. He considers the concepts of pleasure and pain, benefit and harm among other concepts that will allow ethical flourishing in the nature of human beings for the ethical flourishing of human beings. The ethical concepts of Equality and Justice, on the other hand, are the basic concepts that human beings and all beings in need of ethical flourishing need in common and that sustain the ethical system in Bynum's thinking. The concept of respect and goodness is considered as an indispensable ethical concept that enables the ethical flourishing of human and others, such as an atmosphere of his ethical system. The theory, which has a naturalistic approach, emphasizes that the Emotional *Nature* and Social *Nature* of Humans should never be ignored in ethical flourishing, and considers the state of *nature* of human beings to be important for the advancement and flourishing of the ethical system. For the first time, *Bynum* makes *Human Cybernetics* and *Human Nature* the subject of ethics, apart from traditional ethics' understanding of human nature. In information philosophy and ethics, the *input/data-process/process and product/action algorithm* that prepares the ground for ethical development as the basis of human actions are explained by the human cybernetic system nature. The fourth chapter takes place in the study as a section where the basic concepts and subjects of Bynum's "human -centered ethical theory" are explained by philosophical paradigms where cybernetic and information technologies are explained.

Realizing and analyzing the cybernetic nature of human, which is one of the most important concepts of Human-Centered

Flourishing Ethics, within the philosophy of information and information ethics; It is of great importance both to understand the relationship between informatics-human-society transformation and to shed light on the source of today's information system-based problems. For example, according to Bayraktar, a society experiencing a crisis of values must understand and comprehend morality, order and the cosmos. Thus, humanity will be able to realize an individual and social existence with a perspective based on values.[11]

As for the details of the Fifth Chapter of our study, by explaining the scope and nature of General FE, which is one of the sub-basic components of Bynum's FE theory, Human-centered FE' together with non-human elements (robot, softbot, artificial intelligence, digital computational computing world entities and all other inanimate objects). assets), we have uncovered how he constructs an expanded notion of ethical flourishing. Because, in Bynum's the philosophy of information and ethical thinking, it is impossible to consider the ethical development of human beings independently of their environment. The sub-components of human-centered FE and General FE, which make up the theory, are inseparable and complement each other's ethical flourishing, creating the sustainable dynamic structure of the ethical system. Bynum's *Flourishing Ethics Theory*, which is included in the fifth chapter of the information philosophy and ethics class, is fed by the technical and philosophical studies of cybernetic scientist and philosopher Norbert Wiener. Wiener, with a New Materialistic approach, thinks that all information objects in the universe consist of matter-energy and information. Entropy[12] is the ultimate evil in the universe because it causes the destruction and decay of computing objects. FE theory thinks that although this ultimate evil is

---

[11] Levent Bayraktar, *Türk Düşüncesinden Portreler* (Ankara: Aktif Düşünce Yayıncılık, 2014), 6.

[12] Entropy, which belongs to physics, enables the discussion of ethical concepts and issues in new materialist thought and the grounding of these thoughts. Jeremy Campbell, *Grammatical Man: Information, Entropy, Language, and Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 11 and 45.

not completely eliminated, it can be slowed down with the perspective that enables the ethical development of information objects. Entropy and new information/knowledge caused by entropy and the patterns resulting from them are considered as the physical ground on which goodness (stopping the deterioration and extinction in the universe) is possible. Bynum makes a grounding between entropy, which represents the measure of uncertainty in the nature of the universe, and moral thought, on the basis of the physics-moral connection, using empirical method and physical/factual arguments. In this way, FE theory can transition from the world of facts, which explains the subjects in the universe with today's physics laws, to ethics and value issues in the axiology field of philosophy.

Conclusion

Lastly, in the light of the discussions in the concluding part of the dissertation; Cybernetic individuals, cybernetic society, artificial intelligence arising from cybernetic technologies, robots etc. technical tools should be considered and evaluated as information objects that reduce the ultimate evil in the Universe and its effects. Ethical Good is evaluated as every object and action that prevents this evil. For this reason, it is necessary to respect all information objects that have an effect on reducing entropy, which represents evil, corruption and chaos in the universe, that is, all sources of good. For this reason, respect for humans, nature, animals, in short, all existence, FE theoretically assumes a deontological and teleological mission. In the equation of increasing goodness and reducing evil, the entire informational object should focus on ethical development that provides this purpose and should be rethought under the flourishing ethical perspective. If we start from the cybernetic metaphysical acceptance; *Flourishing Ethics Theory* invites us to rethink the ontological, epistemological and axiological definitions and evaluations of many concepts such as Cybernetic Life, Goodness, Evil, Wisdom, Intelligence, Society, Rights, Environment, with information philosophy paradigms.

References

Atasoy, Fahri. "Kültürler Üzerinde Bilişim Devriminin Etkileri." *Modern Türklük Araştırma Dergisi* 4, no. 2 (2007): 163–78.

Bayraktar, Levent. *Türk Düşüncesinden Portreler*. Ankara: Aktif Düşünce Yayıncılık, 2014.

Bynum, Terrell Ward. "Aristotle's Theory of Human Action." The City University of New York, 1986.

Bynum, Terrell Ward. "Flourishing Ethics." *Ethics and Information Technology*, no. 8 (2006): 157–73.

Campbell, Jeremy. *Grammatical Man: Information, Entropy, Language, and Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982.

Kantar, Nesibe. "A Looking for a Philosophy Ethical Perspective to Solve Ethical Problems in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)." Presented at the VII. International European Conference on Social Sciences, Antalya, 2022.

Kantar, Nesibe. "An Information Ethics Theory in the Context of Information Philosophy: Flourishing Ethics." Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, 2021.

Kantar, Nesibe. "Bilişim Çağında Felsefe ve Etiği Yeniden Düşünmenin Gerekliliği." Presented at the I. Ahi Evran Uluslararası Bilimsel Araştırmalar Kongresi, Kırşehir, 2021.

Kantar, Nesibe, and Terrell Ward Bynum. "Global Ethics for the Digital Age: Flourishing Ethics." *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society* 19, no. 3 (2021): 329–44.

Wiener, Norbert. *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1954.

Witzgall, Susanne, and Kerstin Stakemeier. *Power of Material/Politics of Materiality*. Zurich: Diaphanes, 2014.