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An Analysis of Friedrich August Hayek's and Edmond Nathaniel Cahn's Thoughts on Human Nature

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An Analysis of Friedrich August Hayek's and Edmond Nathaniel Cahn's Thoughts on Human Nature

Abstract

Although the immense technological and scientific advancements of our time have made human life easier, human nature, or the question of what it means to be human, has always remained a problem. It has been observed that in the works of the most prominent philosophers in the history of thought, they have in some way engaged in a reflection with human nature. In fact, it has been understood that this reflection has never ended, will never end, and continues to maintain its relevance with each passing day. This article examines the ongoing reflections, evaluations, and critiques of human nature by Friedrich August Hayek and Edmond Nathaniel Cahn. Although both philosophers are modern thinkers, and even though there was no specific conception of human nature in their time – or even in their own explicit views – it is still possible to say that a certain understanding of human nature is present in their works or is implicitly expressed through their ideas. These philosophers seek to prevent the reduction of the human being to fixed measures or rigid frameworks by emphasizing the value of human life. The philosophers argue that every theory constructed in the name of human nature implies absoluteness and perfection, and they maintain that human nature cannot be understood through such a perspective. Because both thinkers believe that the unpredictable or unknowable nature of human reality drives social action, and that the notion of human nature produced by modern culture is misunderstood, they oppose absolute and perfect definitions. Every evaluation made about human nature must first acknowledge the insoluble ignorance of the human being, an ignorance that has the potential to affect the entire structure of society, and the fact that even the path to overcoming this ignorance is itself problematic. Indeed, the structure of society, being open to change, prevents any claim to absoluteness in human knowledge, confronting the individual with millions of facts and events on the path to truth.

Keywords: F. A. Hayek, E. N. Cahn, Human, Human Nature, the Uncertainty of Human Nature.

Friedrich August Hayek'in ve Edmond Nathaniel Cahn'ın İnsan Doğası Düşüncesi Üzerine Bir Analiz

Öz

Çağımızda meydana gelen muazzam teknolojik ve bilimsel gelişmeler insan hayatını kolaylaştırmış olsa da insan doğası veya neliği her zaman problem olarak kalmıştır. Düşünce tarihinin çok önemli filozoflarının eserlerine bakıldığında onların insan doğasıyla bir şekilde hesaplaşma içerisine girdiği görülmüştür. Hatta bu hesaplaşmanın hiçbir zaman bitmediğini, bitmeyeceğini ve her geçen gün güncelliğini korumaya da devam ettiği anlaşılmıştır. İşte bu makalede Friedrich August Hayek'in ve Edmond Nathaniel Cahn'ın insan doğası üzerine devam eden hesaplaşmaları, değerlendirmeleri ve eleştirileri ele alınmaktadır. Her iki filozof her ne kadar çağdaş düşünür olsalar da veya kendi dönemlerinde belirli bir insan anlayışı söz konusu olmasa da ve hatta kendileri bile belirli bir insan anlayışına sahip olmasa da onların eserlerinde bir insan anlayışının var olduğunu veya düşünceleri etrafında içkin olarak ifade ettiklerini söylemek mümkündür. Bu filozoflar insan hayatının değerine önem vererek insanın belirli bir ölçüye ve kalıba sıkıştırılmasının önüne geçmeye çalışırlar. İnsan doğası adı altında oluşturulan her teorinin mutlaklığı ve mükemmelliği çağrıştırdığını savunan filozoflar insan doğasının bu bakış açısıyla anlaşılamayacağını savunurlar. Çünkü her iki düşünür de insanın tahmin edilemez veya bilinemez gerçekliği toplumsal eyleme yönlendirdiğini ve çağdaş kültürün ürettiği insan doğası nosyonunun yanlış anlaşıldığını düşündükleri için mutlak ve mükemmel tanımlamalara karşı çıkarlar. İnsan doğası üzerine yapılan her değerlendirme öncelikle toplumun bütün yapısını etkileyebilecek olan insanın çözülemez bilgisizliği ve bu bilgisizliğinin de çözüm yolunun sorunsal olduğudur. Öyle ki toplumun değişime açık olan yapısı, insanın her türlü bilgisine karşı mutlaklığı engellediği ve hakikate ulaşmada milyonlarca olgu veya olayla karşılaştığı gerçektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: F. A. Hayek, E. N. Cahn, İnsan, İnsan Doğası, İnsan Doğasının Belirsizliği.

Introduction

“Does one want to remain as one is, or to be like the other people outside oneself; to know what they know, or to know that one knows nothing?” (J. J. Rousseau 2007: 15)

J. J. Rousseau

Throughout the history of thought, many social theorists have sought the foundations of their ideas in human nature. In this context, many philosophers have questioned human nature or the essence of being human¹ in order to ground society, social order, and social cohesion, or to establish a certain system, and have attempted to understand this nature from various perspectives. Each thinker has essentially described the human being and constructed a concept of humanity within the framework of their own ideas (Çotuksöken 1995: 135).

The fundamental branches of philosophy – such as society, politics, ethics, law, ontology, and epistemology – deal with questions and issues concerning human beings. Questions such as ‘Who am I?’, ‘What place do I hold among other living beings?’, and ‘What kind of species am I a member of?’ – along with the fundamental problem of ‘What is human?’ – have persisted from antiquity to the present day. Indeed, in the schools of Epicurus and Stoicism, human nature became a central topic of philosophy. In his work *Politeia*, Plato analyzed the relationship between humans and social and political order, while Aristotle addressed human nature within the context of politics and ethics. Perhaps one of the most influential answers to human nature was given by Immanuel Kant, one of the most important thinkers of the Enlightenment era. Kant depicted humans as beings who desire and possess reason. However, neither this inquiry nor the development of such theories regarding human nature ended with Kant; in fact, it continued even after him. In fact, Schopenhauer viewed humans as rational and noble beings; Kierkegaard categorized them into aesthetic, ethical, and religious types; and Nietzsche described humans as herd animals and tragic figures. These

¹ The inquiry into human nature, when examined through the reciprocal relationships resembling a cycle between humans and culture – or the question of who shapes and determines whom – helps us better understand why philosophers have regarded humans as the measure of all things (Güvenç 1984: 312). Indeed, culture, defined as “the complex whole that includes the knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society” (Wells 1984: 43) clearly demonstrates how deeply the investigation of human nature is connected to culture.

thinkers attempted to address certain problems of humans or society through epistemologically based views of humanity (Kart 2006: 339). Indeed, almost all social problems stem from human nature, and the laws that determine and guide social issues are nothing other than the laws of human behavior and passions. In fact, it is possible to evaluate Enlightenment-era political philosophy centered around human nature.

As stated above, philosophers' understandings of human nature have served as a starting point to explain their thoughts and ideologies. Could it be that the centuries-long perception of human nature as unknowable, mysterious, or incomprehensible – and the emergence of many different conceptions of humanity throughout the history of thought – stem from philosophers excessively exaggerating the idea of what is called human nature? Can human actions be fully and adequately understood? Is it possible to conclude that there is no mysterious aspect to them? Factual responses and evidence regarding human actions and discourse, in fact, are sufficient to understand the human being, in order that humans are nothing more than what they do, say, and feel. (MacIntyre 2019: 258). Indeed, linguists did not discover the transformation rules of consonants, nor did Freud discover the principles of dream analysis, nor did cultural anthropologists uncover the structure of myths by studying human nature. Because within the history of thought, the notion of human nature has played an epistemological role in defining certain types of discourses and narratives that are connected to or opposed to theology, biology, and history (Chomsky & Foucault 2005: 12). In this sense, humans struggle with their own nature, try to understand it, and even tend to transcend² all of this to become something beyond.

Humans have such a tendency to exist that sometimes, even in the face of nonexistence, they share that void regardless of race, religion, or sect. On the other hand, this human nature fails to show the same sensitivity within existence and, going further, reveals a desire to possess everything or every being. This situation reveals humanity's desire to dominate and consume everything around it. In other words, while such a situation may create an environment that makes humans happy on one hand, on the other hand, it

² The human tendency to exist can be better understood through the distinction between 'existence' and 'being'. The word 'existence' derives from 'being' and means something that comes out of or originates from it. Philosophically, existence does not carry an absolute meaning but rather finds the state or source of 'being' outside itself. True existence can only be understood when there is 'being' that finds its own reason for existence within itself (Eli-bol 1991: 44).

carries the risk that humans – despite everything – will not be happy and will drag the world or their own society backward or into the past with all its wars, conflicts, injustices, and revolutions (Sim 2000: 21-22). Therefore, this incomprehensible and uncertain nature of humans shows that humanity will not find peace and will not see true happiness. Truly, there is no day when people say ‘oh!’ unless a small minority is left out (Paksüt 1982: 339). Because the pursuit of perfection appears like a project of bloodshed. This remains true even if desired by the most sincere idealists or the kindest-hearted people (Berlin 1999: 492). Here, Friedrich August Hayek and Edmond Nathaniel Cahn – two prominent twentieth-century thinkers who foresaw the problematic nature of human nature, its inherent ambiguity, and how philosophers’ attempts to find solutions have corrupted this concept – offered groundbreaking critiques that challenged conventional views of human nature.

The Fallibility of Human Nature Thought in Friedrich August Hayek³

“Even the fact that people have different individual tastes is reason enough not to try to shape them all according to a single model”
(Mill 1997: 130).

John Stuart Mill

In the modern era, the reluctance or inability of the supreme authority and power to address existing problems led Friedrich August Hayek to consider the necessity of analyzing the philosophy of knowledge and philosophical psychology. Because Hayek believes that the impossible demands produced by contemporary culture stem from a misunderstanding of human reason. This leads Hayek to the concept of human nature in his social philosophy theory and throughout all his works (Gray 2004: 45).

It can be said that unlike major political philosophers before Hegel, Hayek did not start from a specific understanding of human nature, fundamental traits, or needs. According to Hayek, human nature is fundamentally uncertain and always in a process of formation that is open to unpredictable changes in many directions. Apart from physical and biological needs, it

³ F. A. Hayek was born in Vienna in 1899. After World War I, he entered the University of Vienna. He earned his doctorate in law in 1921 and in political theory in 1923 (Hamowy 2012: 25). Although Hayek began his academic career as a technical-theoretical economist and won the Nobel Prize in 1974 for his contributions to economics, over time he expanded his interests to a wide range of fields including political philosophy, law, methodology, psychology, and social theory, developing a highly interdisciplinary system of thought (Yay 1993: 3).

is impossible to predict and limit a person's requirements, their priorities, and their diversity in advance. In such a case, we have no basis for making an absolute and perfect future plan or for stopping human development at a certain stage. Frankly, the uncertainty and multidimensionality of human nature make it difficult for us to plan an absolute and perfect social order. Actually, this idea is not explicitly stated anywhere by Hayek, but we can say it is implicit in what he says and thinks (Crespigny 1994: 63).

Discussions of human nature generally have two main distinctions: The first is the perception of thought that applies to people who base their foundations on foundational rationalism and pursue an ideal, and that requires design.⁴ The second is the tradition of thought that argues human development should occur through an evolutionary process, based on the idea that human reason is limited and that humans must be aware of their own intellectual capacity. The first view argues that all human activities can only be beneficial if they are planned for human purposes, and that all institutions of society should be redesigned according to the set ideals. However, Hayek opposes the view that society's entire institutions owe their existence to a design, and that every activity carried out according to this design will be beneficial by fulfilling society's goals. The second view, which has gradually developed since ancient times and was suppressed by the dominant constructivist rationalism at a certain period, explains social order – which has significantly increased individual activities – usually through a process first described as 'development' and later as 'evolution'. In this evolutionary process, human behaviors initially emerged for other reasons or by chance, and later these behaviors were preserved because they enabled the group in which they originated to dominate other groups (Hayek 2012: 14-15).

Hayek stated that the conceptions of humans who design society in a planned way stem from a flawed intellectualism that regards human

⁴As the rationalists emphasize, such a situation can only occur based on cooperation among small groups in primitive societies, where members of the community know, to some extent, the same conditions. In these groups, some knowledgeable individuals emerge who interpret the perceived conditions and inform others about things unknown to them. In this case, the concrete events people encounter in daily life will be almost the same for everyone, and people will act together because the goals of the community members will be aligned. However, according to Hayek, unlike the small groups in primitive societies, the situation in large or open societies is entirely different. He highlights that this difference is clearly seen in the division of labor in the economic sphere. Hayek focuses on the fact that knowledge in society is fragmented, and individuals only possess a small portion of the knowledge relevant to their part of society, making them unaware of most of the facts on which society's functioning depends (Hayek 2012: 20-21).

reason as independent of nature and experience. According to Hayek, the development of human reason parallels the development of society. In fact, what determines the goals and values of society in any system and period is the social processes. Reason can never foresee its own progress in advance. Therefore, to achieve their goals and decide which ones to pursue, humans must allow room for new experiences to emerge (Hayek 2013: 55-56). Indeed, in today's world, the fundamental way to cope with the problems related to human nature is through making changes in social values, institutions, and practices. However, this must be done in the light of the truth that human nature constantly involves change, albeit to different degrees in each individual (Aarons 2009: 125).

The human mind constitutes only a part of the conditions that underlie people's actions and cause their problems. This situation arises for two important reasons. Firstly, reason is an outcome of the civilization in which an individual develops; furthermore, the experience illuminating reason is the fact of being in the dark about many reason's own functions. The other important point is that the knowledge consciously used by any person constitutes only a small part of the information that contributes to the success of human actions at any given time. Indeed, when we interact with others and see that they achieve the same success in different ways – even when those people lack certain knowledge – we are often amazed at how much we are unaware about the matters at hand. Because knowledge is not just the knowledge of a single person. In other words, since humans lack the ability to possess all the knowledge within society and because this knowledge is dispersed throughout the social order, they must seek ways to make use of that knowledge (Hayek 2013: 56-57).

Human beings believe that they are continuously increasing their knowledge and that, with this knowledge, they can gain control over many things. However, Hayek argues that human ignorance about which knowledge is right or wrong, and which knowledge is beneficial or harmful to society and to oneself, is increasingly growing. Because the increase in human knowledge about nature through modern science also gives rise to new areas of ignorance. In other words, from Hayek's perspective, no matter how much people know, the proportion of that knowledge which any single mind can comprehend or grasp becomes increasingly smaller within the vast body of knowledge (Hayek 2013: 59). Of course, human nature inherently contains dualities or oppositions that can never be fully resolved or unified, and this

is a common feature of thinking patterns across many cultures. However, most of us possess a bit of both and apply them to varying degrees under different circumstances (Aarons 2009: 125).

If the claim that the development of societies arises from human mental activity – and therefore that social institutions can be changed and advanced by humans – is examined, it reveals the extent of human ignorance. Indeed, if human beings had consciously created society through deliberate planning, or at least clearly understood how it is maintained, they might have been justified in making such a claim. However, even in that case, it does not mean that humans truly understand what the functioning and continuity of society are based on. Because society is the result of actions⁵ and behaviors that humans have carried out over centuries (Hayek 2013: 55).

Indeed, Hayek, based on the idea of human ignorance and fallibility, argues that the just price of a good can only be known by God, because the price depends on more conditions than any individual can know. Therefore, he believes that determining the just price should be left to the market process (Hayek 2012: 30). According to Hayek, being aware of one's own ignorance plays a significant role in knowing and understanding the values of society. In other words, a person must be aware of their ignorance to help achieve

⁵ Here, Engels' view that human history is a history of actions or that humanity's development follows an evolutionary process is clearly seen in the following statements: "Is human thought sovereign? Before answering yes or no, it is necessary to examine what human thought is. Is it the thought of an individual? No. However, it can only exist as the thought of billions and billions of individuals in the past, present, and future. However, if I were to say that the synthesized thought of all these people, including the people of the future, is sovereign in my imagination, and that this knowledge has the capacity to understand the existing world to the extent that humanity endures long enough, and that this knowledge faces no limits in its organs and objects, I would be making a statement that is both arrogant and, moreover, quite barren. Because, considering all possibilities, we are still at the beginning of human history, and those who will correct our mistakes will be far more numerous than us – often correcting others' knowledge rather dismissively – the most valuable conclusion we can draw about our current knowledge is that we must be extremely cautious and doubtful. In other words, the dominance of thought occurs in a very limited number of individuals, and the strong knowledge of absolute truth manifests amid a series of relative errors; neither one nor the other can be fully realized, let alone the infinity of human existence... The contradiction between the inherently absolute nature of human thought and its actualization only in individuals with limited understanding can only be resolved through infinite progress, within the practically limitless succession of human generations at least for us. In this sense, human thought is as much sovereign as it is not sovereign, and the capacity for knowledge is as unlimited as it is limited. By its nature, potential, and ultimate historical purpose, it is sovereign and limitless; yet in its individual realization and singular existence, it is not sovereign and is limited" (Güvenç 1999: 62).

their goals (Hayek 2013: 53). In short, according to Hayek, “human thought practically can never reach absolute truth at the level of individual persons; people cannot know everything, especially in real time” (Güvenç 1999: 63).

The Uncertainty of the Concept of Human Nature in Edmond Nathaniel Cahn⁶

“Modern society does not recognize the individual. It only takes into account human creatures.” (Carrel 2021: 219).

Alexis Carrel

Do all fields of study include from history to linguistics, linguistics to psychology, psychology to sociology, and sociology to philosophy those centered on humanity view humans as products of all kinds of external factors, or do they have something that can be called a common human nature, in spite of our differences among us, providing us to perceive one another as human? (Chomsky & Foucault 2005: 7). Whether we accept it or not, want it or not, by nature, humans open their eyes to the world with a certain past, and in this life, find themselves as part of history. Indeed, life narratives are embedded within traditional stories that are carried and reshaped by individual practices (MacIntyre 2001: XIX-XX). If something called human nature truly exists, how is it that a person can suddenly stand against their own nature and oppose it? (İzetbegoviç 2019:46). In this sense, Edmond Nathaniel Cahn criticized the excessive generalizations made by philosophers about human nature, stating that different people can respond very differently to the same action (Cohen 1950: 1484). Even Rousseau’s

⁶ Edmond Nathaniel Cahn (1906-1964) was an American lawyer and legal philosopher. He was born in New Orleans, Louisiana (25 Şubat 2024a). After graduating from Tulane University in 1925, he earned his law degree from the same university two years later (25 Şubat 2024b). Specializing in tax law in New York, Cahn was a skilled tax attorney with technical expertise in laws and regulations, practicing in this field for many years (Niles 1965: 212). Although Cahn started his professional career as a lawyer, he gave up his tax law practice to fulfill his moral beliefs (Fuld 1965: 210), to pursue lifelong readings in literature, history, and philosophy, which he never abandoned, and to work in fields that deeply interested him such as legal science, legal philosophy, society, and civil rights (Niles 1965: 212) as well as to write reflections focused on the meaning of justice (Brant 1967: 963). Subsequently, he began to gain recognition as a legal philosopher. Therefore, after 20 years of legal practice, Cahn joined the New York University School of Law in 1946 and taught there until his death on August 9, 1964 (Ledewitz 1985: 280).

understanding of the law of nature has lost its force in the context of society (Kılıç 2015: 115). Cahn believed that philosophers' pursuit of human nature in terms of absoluteness or perfection is problematic, and argued that in the face of such a problem, modern natural law thought or human nature itself would be at the center of criticism.

Cahn actually depicts humans as somewhat 'naturalistic'. In this sense, he talks about anger, shock, and resentment arising from human actions and behaviors that prepare individuals to resist physical, political, social, and psychological forms of violence attacks. The human referred to here is not the essential human who resists attacks; rather, it is the self, the agent, or the human in a position of power (Ramsey 1962: 225). According to Cahn, if legal philosophers carefully examine concepts such as freedom, truth, security, change, welfare, and sovereignty with direct sensitivity to human agency or actions, this will bring a new and brilliant light to law (Cahn 1966a: 26). As Viktor Frankl stated, "unlike an animal, a human is not told by instincts what they must do. Also, unlike humans of old times, traditions no longer tell modern humans what they should do. Most of the time, a person does not even truly know what they want to do" (Svendsen 2021: 331). Indeed, according to Cahn, most of the relationships that constitute human experience are accidental, passionate, filled with untamed remnants, at best pluralistic, and in this sense, cannot be fully tamed by any abstract terms (Cahn 1966b: 286). Therefore, events that occur in individual lives are so diverse and complex that analyzing this situation is very difficult (Gürbüz 2003: 58). In this sense, if human nature has not been understood or comprehended for centuries,⁷ it would be more appropriate to understand and make human nature comprehensible together with the differences resulting from human actions.

Despite their differences, each of the definitions and foundations made about humans can be accurate or true. However, no definition has provided a sufficient explanation for humans or fully revealed the concept or phenomenon of humanity in all its dimensions. Therefore, the truth of

⁷ Despite all negativities, it does not seem reasonable to claim the incomprehensibility and unintelligibility of human nature a priori. From this perspective, human nature can be understood if fundamental scientific foundations and studies are built on a solid and concrete basis rather than a shaky one. Therefore, when grounding studies about humans, these scientific foundations and studies will provide the most suitable basis. If such work is done, the research will advance further, and human reason may gradually come to understand the dynamic and changing reality that it perhaps can never fully grasp (Durkheim 2010: 116).

the human phenomenon has still not been fully uncovered today (Çeçen 1995: 10). Actually, the inability to define humans or to fit them into a single definition does not stem from humans being undefinable, but rather from their transcendence beyond definitions (Cangızbay 2002: 60). The natural consequence of this situation is that there is no eternal, universal, and absolute definition of humanity that applies to all times. When we consider that humans realize their own humanity through the process of subjectification, it becomes clear that human nature does not have an absolute meaning (Cangızbay 2002: 47). Also, recent advances in genetic technology and robotics – fields shaped by human activity and carrying the potential for human extinction – demonstrate that no definition of humanity can be certain or absolute in our age. In fact, as recent scientific studies show, the need for a new definition of what and who can be considered human continues to perpetuate the uncertainty surrounding human nature. Indeed, humanity is changing—from Aristotle’s slaves to designer babies and clones. However, history has taught humanity that no definition of humanity has any connection to sacredness or eternity (Douzinas 2016: 30-31). Also, “the belief that modern humans understand everything is the greatest indication of their inadequacy. Human wisdom consists of the sum of his knowledge and the ignorance he is unaware of, or more accurately, the ignorance he perceives as knowledge. He behaves confidently and arrogantly even in the face of the greatest mystery. He cannot see the enigma. The immense scale of his ignorance and prejudices emerges precisely here” (İzetbegoviç 2019: 78).

Here, Cahn argues that humans have a limited capacity to identify and comprehend past events and facts, an unreliable ability to predict concrete findings and value judgments of the future, and that the personal element will play an important role in all choices and decision-making processes (Cahn 1966b: 288). According to Cahn, value judgments will continue to exist in practice for humans to determine what is right and to make more humane decisions. We really have to accept the challenge of trying to establish what is actually correct. (Williams 1969: 36). Because Cahn generally doubts humans’ ability to distinguish right from wrong. In fact, Cahn also believes that ethical, legal, and justice judgments based on generalizations and abstractions hold very little value (Ramsey 1956: 291). From this perspective, moral, legal, and just judgments are evidence of individuals’ weaknesses or shortcomings. However, it is not surprising that the fundamental dynamic behind outright denial of these judgments in the

modern era stems from the lack of an integrative concept of human and society (MacIntyre 2019: 457).

Moreover, when we look at the realities of the real world, even God Himself has not promised 'perfection' to the people on earth. Even Saint Augustine, who tended to absolutize the earthly city as God's representative on earth, was realistic enough not to grant 'perfection' to humanity. Therefore, according to Cahn, in any community, we must avoid all forms of simplistic utopianism, planning idealism,⁸ and romanticism about human nature. In this sense, what Cahn believed in was the possibility that humanity itself could discover the path to justice through the relationships within human society (Williams 1969: 35). For example, since Aristotle, the idea behind distributive justice has not been to assign individuals rights and duties based on their talents or personal worth, but rather to determine their 'rights and duties' as members and parts of a whole. However, the human being that Cahn refers to as the subject of social justice is not an abstract individual stripped of personal characteristics and social ties, but rather a concrete, flesh-and-blood person struggling through life with various needs and hardships (Gürkan 1994: 82). While abstraction serves an effective function within the working mechanism of law, the final consumers of the product will be concrete human beings as ever. Therefore, no matter how noble the meaning of any concept may be, it must not be forgotten that such a concept is always connected to human experience (Cahn 1949: 1029).

As a legal philosopher, Cahn's criticisms of the incomprehensibility and absolutization of human nature can also be observed in his moral philosophy. According to Cahn, moral evaluation based on human nature becomes more difficult to justify because it starts from rigid assumptions about human nature. There is a strong appeal either in an extended optimism that views people as inherently 'good' or in an equally broad cynicism that sees them as 'bad'. It is an interesting fact that many contemporary writers gain fame for their wisdom when they make supposedly negative assessments about human qualities (Cahn 1955: 266-267). If we say that people are inherently 'bad' or 'good', we must set aside the fact that under very diverse and unpredictable conditions, people have varying potentials to be 'bad' or 'good' to different degrees (Cahn 1955: 268).

⁸ In order to establish a just legal order, the inconsistency in the standard analyses of human nature made by apologists, strategists, utopians, and planners stems from their tendency to analyze individuals in other societies while ignoring – or completely overlooking – the negative outcomes caused by individuals within their own societies (Said 2009: 96).

Conclusion

With the Enlightenment, human reason shed light on the problems of social issues, economic processes, political authorities, and legal principles; it offered solutions to these problems or claimed it could solve any problem. It became an important decision-making actor and even served as the foundation for many philosophers' conceptions of human nature. Yet, numerous theories and thoughts that treat human nature as a fundamental actor have lagged behind the very speed consumption of which every realm of nature, the human species, its values, potentials, thoughts, and agency are being exhausted. This frenzy of consumption, and especially the problematic nature of excessive generalizations about human nature, occupied the minds of Friedrich August Hayek and Edmond Nathaniel Cahn in the twentieth century, who offered a new perspective in the fields of politics and law with their ideas.

Hayek views humans as incomplete and limited beings and considers this incompleteness both necessary and inevitable. Because humans possess only a fraction of the knowledge that exists within society. In this sense, Hayek emphasizes that humans do not have the capacity to organize or design a society solely through their knowledge and intellect. Cahn, on the other hand, approaches humans in the context of absoluteness and perfection, emphasizing the uncertainty of human nature. Actually, both thinkers approach human nature as incomprehensibility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, and especially with the modern era, they try to offer a new perspective on human nature, which has been evaluated from many angles and turned into a pile of conflicting interpretations. Of course, the idea that it is impossible to alter human genetics, that human nature possesses an immutable genetic structure, and the fact that nothing new exists under the sun is an unfathomable notion for Hayek and Cahn. These two thinkers, drawing on different intellectual backgrounds, emphasize the importance of life and historical narratives, trying to show that humans cannot be confined to a fixed mold nor exist in a natural balance. In this context, both Hayek and Cahn emphasize the importance of action. However, while Hayek considers the effectiveness of actions within the social order, Cahn reveals the resistance to those actions. This resistance manifests itself as anger and indignation. Hayek argues that actions gain meaning through individual freedom, whereas Cahn focuses on the principles that emerge from those actions. Thus, the idea of planning and absolutism existing independently of

nature and experience influences both Hayek's and Cahn's thoughts, and it clearly reveals that the fact that human beings do not possess infinite power or intellect. In fact, human ignorance, especially regarding moral values or social issues, highlights the necessity of change, and this necessity makes human actions within society significant.

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