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Responsibility as self-enactment

In this paper I will explore the notion of responsibility as a virtue and what it might mean for a professional designer to be responsible. I develop an account that focuses on care as a central element, and sees responsibility as a way of self-enactment.

In this account, responsibility as a virtue serves to structure a professional ethics for design that is centred on practices and internal goods in a MacIntyrean sense (MacIntyre 2007). A view of professional responsibility is presented that draws on personal investment. When a responsible designer cares about something they seek to act as to realise the caring (Nihlén Fahlquist 2015). This is why a responsible designer seeks to broaden the space for responsibility: it is because it personally affects them if the object of care is benefitted or harmed. While important empathy is not seen as a central reason for action.

A responsible designer adopts a caring stance, which includes a sense of being truly invested in the outcome that exceeds what one directly causes or the obligations one has entered

Practical wisdom is in turn presented as the virtue that enables the designer to journey from a basic awareness about the ethical saliency of a feature in a design situation to the concrete realisation of the willingness to care.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. 2007. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Nihlén Fahlquist, Jessica. 2015. "Responsibility as a virtue and the problem of many hands." In *Moral Responsibility and the Problem of Many Hands*, edited by Ibo Van de Poel, Lambèr Royakkers and Sjoerd D. Zwart, 187-208. New York: Routledge.