

Gathering Posthuman Perspectives on the “Good Life” and the Energy to Sustain It

This workshop aims to collect perspectives on reformulating the concept of the “good life” with respect to energy consumption in a posthumanism context. Philosophers have conceptualized the “good life” in various ways; each tacitly points to *what is good*, for *whom*, and *what are relations and distributions of agency* that participate within and co-shape a good life? Fallman (2009) raised the question of what is good in design if we are beyond questions of human use? Friedman and Hendry (2019) advocate Value Sensitive Design which positions human values at the center of design. Some in Theories of Practice have moved beyond humans to include nonhumans, expanding ideas of practice, especially in relation to sustainability (Maller & Strengers 2018). Philosophically, Borgmann argues that the “good life” is in human’s meaningful engagement with those technologies (Borgmann 1984; Verbeek 2005). Whereas Latour (2004), Bennett (2010) and Bellacasa (2017) advocate for gatherings of human and nonhuman collectives to engage matters of representation, participation, and care.

This workshop aims to bring together designers and philosophers to investigate human technology relations in energy use as a question of good. This offers unique challenges and opportunities to discuss the entanglements of design, posthumanism, energy, and human technology relations. At the heart of this question are the new orientations required to sustain any life, not to mention a good life, that goes beyond use, fixed moralities, and natureculture relationalities (Verbeek 2011; Haraway 2003; Ihde 1990).

And so, we ask the questions, with commitments to human and nonhuman entanglements: what is the “good life,” who participates in asking the question, and what are the matters that matter in asking the question?

Keywords:

Good life, posthumanism, design, energy transition

Workshop Considerations

We do not anticipate needing any special requirements. If this workshop will be hosted in a physical space, we would like to request a room with 4 tables that can seat 4 people, access to a projector and screen, and a whiteboard/ paper flip chart.

References

- Bellacasa, María Puig de la. 2017. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds*. 3rd ed. edition. Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press.
- Bennett, Jane. 2010. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke Univ Pr.
- Borgmann, Albert. 1987. *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life: A Philosophical Inquiry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fallman, Daniel. 2009. "A Different Way of Seeing: Albert Borgmann's Philosophy of Technology and Human-Computer Interaction." *AI & SOCIETY* 25 (1): 53-60.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-009-0234-1>.
- Friedman, Batya, and David G. Hendry. 2019. *Value Sensitive Design: Shaping Technology with Moral Imagination*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Haraway, Donna J. 2003. *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*. 1 edition. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Ihde, Don. 1990. *Technology and the Lifeworld: From Garden to Earth*. Indiana University Press.
- Latour, Bruno. 2004. *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Maller, Cecily, and Yolande Strengers, eds. 2018. *Social Practices and Dynamic Non-Humans: Nature, Materials and Technologies*. 1st ed. 2019 edition. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Verbeek, Peter-Paul. 2005. *What Things Do: Philosophical Reflections on Technology, Agency, and Design*. 2. printing. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press.
- . 2011. *Moralizing Technology: Understanding and Designing the Morality of Things*. Chicago ; London: University Of Chicago Press.

CV of Workshop Hosts

Holly Robbins is a postdoctoral researcher at Eindhoven University of Technology within the Industrial Design department. Robbin's research interests are in making complexity behind systems legible to the lay person with design. Methodologically, her work blends design research with anthropology and philosophy of technology.

Joep Frens is assistant professor at Eindhoven University of Technology. His research focuses on the question of 'how to design for open and growing systems'. He teaches courses on (interaction) design on all academic levels and advises a number of PhD students. In the academic year of 2014-2015 he held the Nierenberg Chair of Design at the Carnegie Mellon University School of Design. When he sees a sheet of cardboard he makes a model out of it.

Lenneke Kuijer is Assistant Professor in the Future Everyday Group at the Industrial Design Department of Eindhoven University of Technology. Lenneke has worked at the touching points of social practice theories, design and domestic energy demand. She did her postdoc in the DEMAND Centre at the University of Sheffield (UK). Over the past four years, her focus has been on the HCI community and in particular the relation between 'smart' technologies (and their design processes) and changes in everyday life.

Ron Wakkary is a Professor in the School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Simon Fraser University in Canada where he is the founder of the Everyday Design Studio. In addition, he is also a Professor in Industrial Design, Eindhoven University of Technology in the Future Everyday cluster. Wakkary is interested in design-oriented human-computer interaction (HCI), tangible computing and the philosophies of technologies through design. He aims to reflectively create new interaction design exemplars, concepts, and emergent practices of design that help to shape both design and its relations to technologies.