

Mediating the good life

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My key concern

- Co-evolution/production/mutual shaping
- of technology and society
- of technology and morality: **TechnoMoral Change (TMC)**
- CTA: socio-technical scenarios (Rip, te Kulve, Douglas)
- CTA: techno-moral scenarios (Swierstra, Boenink, Stemerding, Lucivero)

Moral(ization of) technology?

- I concentrate on *technologically induced moral change* (= only one side of TMC)
- How to explore (plausible) future TMC?
- First question: Can technologies be moral actors?

Two perspectives on morality

- 'Moral' can be applied to
 - -acts (you treated me unjustly)
 - -outcomes (a just society)

Acts

- Act: agent X produces outcome Y
- Approaches that focus on acts, make the morality of an act depend on the morality of the reasons for it.
- By this definition, things cannot be moral agents

Two types of moral reasons

- Rule morality:
 - Aims to regulate the relation between an actor and her/his stakeholders: what do these owe to one another?
 - Two variables: what are the **consequences** of my actions + which **stakeholders** are affected by my actions?
- Good Life morality
 - Aims to help us live lives that we can be proud of
 - Two variables: there is a **self** who has to make the best of it in the **world**

Outcomes

- An outcome of an act can be assessed as (im) moral:
 - When relations between actors and stakeholders (don't) conform to moral standards
 - When it enhances the good life of people (animals, plants?) involved

Relation: act and outcome

- For longest time, morality of act was supposed to coincide with morality of outcomes:
 - *If people obey Christian morals, the world will be a good place*
- Modernity (from Machiavelli onwards): a separation between:
 - Private (acts): reasons count
 - Public (outcomes): results count

Can act and outcome be separated?

- Yes:
 - Mandeville: *private vices, public benefits*
 - Kant: categorical imperative // republic for 'rational devils'
- No:
 - Intentions define what the act is

Technological mediation and morals

- Dominant approach [outcomes]: ‘script’, ‘action-program’, ‘nudge’, ‘moralization of technology’:
 - artefacts causing humans to behave in accordance with established or new morals
- Alternative model [acts]: TMC
 - artefacts causing a changed the relation of humans to the moral world of moral reasons (norms, values, virtues, responsibilities, moral emotions, etc.)

Technological mediation

- Starting point: technology *mediates* our relation to the
 - Objective
 - Social,
 - Subjective world
- Two forms of technological mediation:
 - Perception, interpretation, experience (Don Ihde)
 - Action, practice (Latour, Akrich)

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• I offer a heuristic device to analyse how technologies can cause changes in our moral reasonings

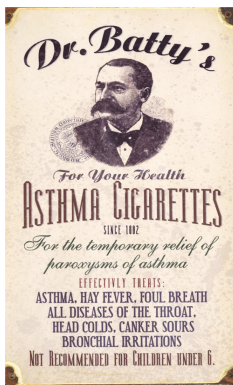
Rule ethics	Different perception	Different Practical option(s)
Stakeholders	1. (In)visibility	2. Bad Luck/ Injustice
Consequences	3. Anticipation	4. Power and responsibility
Ethics of the good life		
Self	5. Self knowledge	6. Self stylization
World	7. Chaos or Order	8. Fate or Will

Rule ethics: stakeholders

- (in)visibility
 - Knife versus A-bomb
 - Nano-nappy
- Bad luck versus Injustice
 - Availability of enhancement techniques + natural differences

Consequences

- Visibility: anticipation



Rule ethics: consequences

- Visibility: anticipation
- Power creates responsibility
 - Obligation to help reduce climate warming
 - General trend: from deontology to consequentialism

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Good life: self

- Self-knowledge
 - Neuroscans competing with selfperception
 - Diagnosis as part of preventive medicine
- Self-stylization (askesis)
 - Training of essential skills – (de)skilling
 - Less self-discipline, moderation, etc
 - Dependence on social media

Good life: world

- Chaos or order?
 - Is the world a home?
 - Galilei, mechanisation of the world view
 - Synthetic biology
- Fate or Will?
 - Enlightenment
 - Technology as our Fate?

To sum up

- I have situated the outcome-based conception of 'moralizing technology'
- I have added an act-based model that helps to explain how technology can affect our moral reasons
- This allowed me to criticize the implicit bias towards rule ethics of the outcome-based conception, and introduce the 'good life' as being co-shaped by technology

Relevance for TA

- (C)TA aims at 'good technology': implies normative standards, including moral ones
- Circle: Experience tells us that these standards are affected by the technologies that they intend to evaluate
- Problem: we are torn between *moral presentism* and an empty *moral futurism*
- Exploring plausible TMC creates a way out

Dialoguing with our future selves

- The model provides a heuristic device to pose the right questions to stimulate and guide our technomoral imagination.
- By comparing the moral present with plausible moral futures, we can enrich our moral judgments on emerging technologies.

• Thank you.
