

Global Ethics Picture

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Digital Ethics and the Connected World

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1 Ethics

The human species differs from the common ancestors of humans and chimpanzees in an evolutionary new form of co-operation. Morality emerged.*

First step of co-operation: Joint intentionality

Early humans, hunters and gatherers, formed **dyads**, at least between two partners, to exploit food sources: Both partners shared a **common goal**, understood that the partner shared the same goal and that both are **committed** to act according to its achievement in a **fair manner**.

Second step of co-operation: Collective intentionality

When groups grew bigger, **modern humans** formed **triads** about 150,000 yrs ago, extending the reach of co-operation beyond foraging to all domains of life:

They developed a **group mind, culture and morality** on a meta-level – the „third“ of the triad that since has been as structure of societies connecting the agency of actors on a level below**. Any member of the group could expect from any other member, even if anonymous, to share intentional states. They built a „we“ **responsibility**, including responsibility for each other and helpfulness.

1.1 Normativity as human condition

Norm: a **collective expectation to act** in a determinate way

Imperative: „You ought to do X (in circumstances Y)!“

Value: a **collective attribution of meaningfulness** to a thing

Value statement: „Z is true“, „...beautiful“, „...good.“

Interest: an **inclination to act** in a determinate way **upon collective entitlement**

Claim: „I intend to do X or appropriate Z according to my proper right or obligation!“

Ethos/moral: setting of norms, values, interests with **reference to goodness**

- A norm is moral(ly relevant), if the expected action is considered as (more or less) good (or evil).
- A value is moral(ly relevant), if the meaning attributed to a thing is (more or less) good (or evil).
- An interest is moral(ly relevant), if entitlement, intention, effects can be judged as (more or less) good (or evil).

Ethics: reflexion of moral

1.2 Responsibility in engineering sciences

Whenever technology is designed, responsibility towards the community is taken over (willingly or not) in two specific regards:

Technical function responsibility

Does the mechanism function technically? Does it work efficaciously – that is, when used does it lead to the aim for which it is designed?

A matter of fact.

Social function responsibility

Does the mechanism function socially? Does it fulfil the social function it is intended to support – that is, when used does it conform with the right social norm, does it promote the right social value, does it serve the right social interest?

Morality of design and use – a matter of ethics.

1.3 Digital Humanism

Digital Humanism* tries to make sense of **digitalisation with a humane face** – it inheres social criticism of current developments of I(C)T, including AI, and is espoused with human-centred technology. Thus it deals with **moral issues and ethical questions** that are a must in education.

However, it does not make explicit references to **the global challenges**.

2 Ethics in the age of global challenges

I The Great Bifurcation

Global challenges are **existential threats** that have been besetting (human) **social evolution** („Anthropocene“^{**}).

- **Technologies:** the Atomic Age was ushered in in 1945; nuclear warfare is today as imminent as never before
- **Ecology:** 1962 environmental problems went viral^{**}; today, earth heating and the overstretching of resource extraction threaten the habitat
- **Sociality:** the book „Les damnés de la terre“^{***} was a wake-up call for the anti-colonial liberation movements and for solidarity that, eventually, put the social question on the world agenda with a gap between rich and poor that throttles social progress

Global challenges **intermingle**. They signify an **anthropogenic development crisis** that is **open-ended**:

The space of possible trajectories shows an hitherto unprecedented bifurcation between

- an **integration** of the diversity of interdependent social systems into a single meta-°/supra-system unity that allows to cope with the increased complexity of the challenges and
- a **disintegration** of social systems falling back to barbarism, collapse or extinction^{°°}.

2 Ethics in the age of global challenges

II The Great Transformation

Humanity has become an **objective community of destiny**.*

But it has yet to become **a subject in its own right that comes to terms with its destiny**.

Third step of co-operation: Global intentionality (adding to Tomasello's two steps)

The advent of **global challenges** forces current humans to **extend the triads onto the planetary level** and thus organise their social systems into a **meta-/supra-system** as a new, iterated „third of thirds“ to coordinate social functions and prevent dysfunctions in a worldwide subsidiary manner.

Complex, self-organising systems have the capacity to generate **requisite information**** to overcome crises that are due to **complexity gaps**. Creating the **necessary mindfulness on a global scale** is what will enable social systems today to close the gap and master this crucial transformation. Mindfulness is **morally imperative** social information – if the continuation of social evolution is deemed desirable.

According to the **Triple-C Model*****, social information is threefold: cognition, communication and co-operation, building an evolutionary hierarchy; co-operation is emerging from communicative actors, communication is emerging from cognitive actors, and co-operating actors can be viewed as higher-level cognitive actors.

2.1 Convivial imperatives

I In Search of an Ethics of the Technological Age

The first and most important philosophy that responded to the global challenges is the „**Imperative of Responsibility**“ („Prinzip Verantwortung“) of 1979.

Updating Kant’s Categorical Imperative „Act so that you can will that the maxim of your action be made the principle of a universal law“, the new imperative runs: „Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life“, which is tantamount to the negative expressions „Act so that the effects of your action are not destructive of the future possibility of such life“ or „Do not compromise the conditions for an indefinite continuation of humanity on earth“.*

This imperative, however,

- is still abstract,
- addresses the individual,
- is prohibitive rather than proactive,
- does, by focussing on the biological issue, not take into account the social characteristic of humans.

2.1 Convivial imperatives

II In Search for solutions to the poly-crisis 1

Convivialism is a philosophy/social idea/art. **Two manifestos** have been published: „Convivialist Manifesto: a declaration of interdependence“* and „The Second Convivialist Manifesto: towards a post-neoliberal world“**, initiated by mostly French intellectuals, now signed by about 300 international first signatories.

„A different kind of world is not just possible; it is a crucial and urgent necessity. But where do we start when it comes to envisaging the shape it should take and working out how to bring it about? The Convivialist Manifesto seeks to highlight the similarities between the many initiatives already engaged in building that world and to draw out the common political philosophy that underlies them.“

The idea goes back to the term „**conviviality**“ as used in the book „Tools for Conviviality“***, which meant **self-limitation for the common good**. The term has Latin origins and means the quality of living together in the manner of dining together (convivor) of hosts (convivatores) and guests (convivae) at joint feasts (convivia).

The manifestos introduced initially four, later five principles and one imperative.

2.1 Convivial imperatives

II In Search for solutions to the poly-crisis 2

The principle of common humanity: *„there is only one humanity“ that „must be respected in the person of each of its members“*

The principle of common naturality: humans *„have a responsibility to take care of“* nature

The principle of common sociality: *„the greatest wealth is the richness of concrete relationships“* that human beings as social beings maintain among themselves

The principle of legitimate individuation: *„legitimate is the policy that allows each individual to develop their individuality to the fullest by developing his or her capacities, power to be and act, without harming that of others, with a view toward equal freedom“*

The principle of creative opposition: *„it is normal for humans to be in opposition with each other [...] as long as this does not endanger the framework of common humanity, common sociality, and common naturality that makes rivalry fertile and not destructive“*

The imperative of hubris control: *„The first condition for rivalry to serve the common good is that it be devoid of desire for omnipotence, excess, hubris (and a fortiori pleonexia, the desire to possess ever more). On this condition, it becomes rivalry to cooperate better“*

2.1 Convivial imperatives

II In Search for solutions to the poly-crisis 3

Convivial imperatives

- address **every actor**, be they individual or collective
- do not focus on the mere survival of mankind, but demand a developmental thrust geared towards a **socially desirable future destination** that allows for the continuation of social evolution
- determine this destination as real, concrete utopia* of a unique **meta-/supra-system**, comprising panhuman societal relations among actors, anthroporelational** ones with regard to natural agents and digital humanist ones with regard to technology
- determine the **path** to this destination as **techno-eco-social transformation**
- determine the **subjective preconditions** of this path as **ability of actors to create the requisite consciousness** to anticipate the path and destination through **universalising of social cognition, communication and co-operation**

2.1.1 Universalising co-operation

The Imperative of a Planetary Ethos for Global Governance

„Act as **entity of actors** in such a way that the **overall effect** of your action can **expand the subjective capacity for co-operation** already achieved **towards a planetary practice that realises the objective requirement of a next step of social evolution** so that **universal wisdom** can be achieved that **morally anticipates** the value of a **unity-through-diversity organisation** of humanity, in particular, of **panhumanism** in societal relations, of **anthroporelational humanism** in ecological societal relations and of **digital humanism** in technological ecological societal relations!“

2.1.2 Universalising communication

The Imperative of a Planetary Conciliatoriness for Global Dialogue

„Act as many actors in such a way that the **effects of your actions** can **expand the subjective communication skills** already achieved **towards a mutual understanding of the objective requirements of a next step of social evolution** so that **knowledge** can be created and shared **on a planetary scale, anticipating in conciliatory discourses** the tasks of a **techno-eco-social transformation** of all humanity into a common system!“

2.1.3 Universalising cognition

The Imperative of Planetary Mindsets for Global Citizenship

„Act **as single actor** in such a way that the **effect of your action** can **extend the subjective cognitive abilities** already achieved **to insights into the objective requirements of a next step of social evolution** so that **facts and figures** can be collected and interpreted that **mentally anticipate** the meaning of operations according to your own classification in **the overall planetary context**, the classification of other actors and the classification of parts that are not actors at all!“

2.2 Digital imperatives

Digital Humanism amended

The intention of Digital Humanism is taken up, digital(-humanist) imperatives are formulated and made compatible with the convivial imperatives. Digital imperatives are to complement the convivial ones in that they design and propagate digital solutions that boost the convivial aims. By boosting social aims, the social aims integrate technology and become techno-social aims (social systems integrate technological artefacts and become **techno-social systems** in which **technical functions are subservient to social functions**).

The digital imperatives build a three-levelled hierarchy as do the convivial imperatives.

2.2.1 Supporting the universalisation of co-operation

The Imperative of Digital Conscience in support of a Planetary Ethos for Global Governance (Digital Tools for Convivial Governance)

The highest level is built by tools for convivial governance that technologise the **constitution and institution of consensualised transformative goals**. This technologisation is value-based such that the **planetary ethos** is informationalised into the techno-social entity of **digital conscience**. No technology will replace the human ethos. But digital-humanist informatisation can help the human ethos improve by becoming a digitally supported human ethos – in short, a digital(ised) conscience.

„Act so as to contribute to the production and use of digital technologies that support the emergence and sustenance of a planetary ethos as digital conscience!“

2.2.2 Supporting the universalisation of communication

The Imperative of Digital Intelligence in support of a Planetary Conciliatoriness for Global Dialogue (Digital Tools for a Convivial Dialogue)

The next lower level is the level of tools for convivial dialogue. The **consilient designing and assigning of transformative tasks** is supported by human-centred technologies so as to yield **digital intelligence** as new techno-social quality of **planetary discourses**. Intelligence is first and foremost a human feature and this human intelligence, when enacting a conciliatory dialogue, becomes a digital(ised) intelligence, when supported by digital tools.

„Act so as to contribute to the production and use of digital technologies that support the emergence and sustenance of planetary conciliatoriness as digital intelligence!“

2.2.3 Supporting the universalisation of cognition

The Imperative of Digital Ingenuity in support of Planetary Mindsets for Global Citizenship (Digital Tools for a Convivial Netizenship)

The bottom level encompasses tools for convivial netizenship. The technologisation of **devising and supervising transformative operations conceptually** integrates an assessment and design cycle for continual adjustment of **digital ingenuity** as transformed **planetary mindset**. Ingenuity is not a feature of technology, it is a feature of humans, and this feature is supported by digital technology – thus, a digital(ised) ingenuity of netizens.

„Act so as to contribute to the production and use of digital technologies that support the emergence and sustenance of planetary mindsets as digital netizens ingenuity.“

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