

First reflections on the WP10 Workshop Vienna, November 6-8, 2006

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What is the scope of ethics within Humaine?

- The subject-matter of ethics within Humaine
 - Not science fiction – we aren't there yet!
 - But the outside world will tend to have science fiction worries when we tell them what we are doing
 - We need a *properly informed and argued-for* ethics of commonsense in order to:
 - Respond appropriately to the science fiction worries, and not get caught out as firefighters (cf. Sheelagh McGuinness); cf. the genetic modification debate
 - Respond appropriately to what we are *actually* doing
- The Ethics Committee is set up to do these things:
 - Deploying our everyday commonsense ethics (benificence, non-maleficence, justice, autonomy), but *properly informed and argued-for*
 - These are just prima facie principles, to be applied depending on the context
 - So the Committee is no more capable of delivering up straightforward rules to apply to all ethical problems than is our everyday ethics. There are no such rules.
- There are also many other ethical issues *not* covered by the Ethics Committee (e.g. social responsibility, cf. Shay), which we have been discussing here, and...
- ...about which you all have shown great willingness to engage with theoretical, conceptual and argumentative skills.

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Two particular philosophical reflections: (1) ethical reflection

- Leaving aside the science fiction:
 - Does what we are now doing raise *new* ethical issues?
 - Or does it really just raise the 'old' issues in a new guise or context?
Analogy: Iraq vs. Agamemnon's war against the Trojans.
- Examples of ethical issues which we have been discussing :
 - Emotional diaries (Kia)
 - Avatars (Asimina)
 - Internet relationships (Aaron)
 - ECA relationships (Catherine)
 - Advertising (Oliviero, Shlomo)
 - Persuasive systems and autonomy (Marco, Holger)
- But either way (new or old-in-new-guise) they are fascinating and challenging, and we are surely right to engage with them here—with commonsense, *properly informed*, with such excellent theoretical, conceptual and argumentative skill.

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Two particular philosophical reflections: (2) conceptual reflection

- Including the science fiction:
 - Is it (conceptually, logically) possible to build machines that have emotions (Naomi);
 - Or can we only aspire to build machines that emulate emotions?
- Either way, what are these 'emotions':
 - Emotional episodes? And what are they?
 - 'states', or
 - evolving, changing sequences of events—narratable (Kia).
 - Or emotional 'life' (Roddy)?
Emotional personalities, emotional dispositions, moods, unconscious emotions, phobias, and so on...

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What I will say to people who say that
emotion scientists don't really understand
either emotional life or the ethics of emotion

Just come and see
what is being done in Humaine!

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