HIM Lecture 5

Anthropomorphism and Employment

Social Roles for Persons

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Outline

- Expedient anthropomorphism (Today!)
- Employment / Economic Impact I

Expedient Anthropomorphism

- Hypothesis: If we make AI more humanlike, it's more obvious how to interact with it.
- Known fact: (at least some) People want to buy humanlike AI.
- Humans also prefer female-sounding personal assistants – justification for giving Alexa *et alia* female voices.
- Is it OK that AI is used to support the historic human norm of female subservience? (Devlin 2018)

Questions of Machine Anthropomorphism

1. Strong anthropomorphism:
    1. Should we build AI in such a way that artefacts should be moral subjects?
    2. Is it inevitable that as artefacts become more intelligent that they are owed moral subjectivity?
2. Expedient anthropomorphism:
    1. Is AI that appears humanlike easier to use / more effective?
    2. Is it moral to make AI appear more humanlike than it is?

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UK EPSRC's Principles of Robotics (2011)

more in HMM Lecture 7

- First instance of national "soft law" on AI ethics for any nation.
- Written in 2010 to reassure UK public that robots are safe.
- The first three revise Asimov's Laws to communicate:
  - Artefacts aren't persons.
  - Manufacturers have standard responsibilities for artefacts.
- The fourth and fifth are about the rights and responsibilities of consumers.

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4. Robots are manufactured artefacts. They should not be designed in a deceptive way to exploit vulnerable users; instead their machine nature should be transparent.

Bryson, *Connection Science* 2017

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Morality of Identification

- If we identify with something then treat it badly, we are also more likely to treat humans badly.
- How Kant (1784) dealt with obligations towards animals – regardless of dogs' moral status, our obligations towards humans requires us to treat dogs well.

If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer capable of service, he does not fail in his duty to the dog, for the dog cannot judge, but his act is inhuman and damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind. If he is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practice kindness towards animals, for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. – Kant *Lectures on Ethics* (1784–5) cf Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy

Kantian Fallacy
(cf. Prescott, Gunkel, &al.)

- Wrong take: Because we will over-identify with AI, we must grant robots rights.
  - Wrong because a) no identification with e.g. search, translation, spell checking, and b) legal lacuna (HIM4).
- Right take: Because AI is an ethics sink, we must work to build AI we don't identify with.

cf transparency, and the UK's
Principles of Robotics (Bryson 2017)

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AI and Employment

- If we make AI software that doubles the efficacy of teachers:
  - We could have twice as good of schools
  - We could pay half as many teachers
- Political (normative, policy) decision, but note differences:
  - Fewer people with jobs.
  - Higher average quality teachers?
  - Fewer whistle blowers / simpler control problem.

AI and the Employed

- We have more AI than ever, & more jobs than ever (Autor, 2015, "Why are there still so many jobs.")
- ICT also disassociates work from a location, a challenge to traditional unionisation tactics.
- Should be fixable given that ICT increases communication.
  - Example: Platform workers are starting to organise.
  - But are exposed to constant surveillance.
- Worker's rights require (or at least benefits from) a state / judiciary that supports their interests.

AI and Wages

- AI may be increasing inequality, by making it easier to acquire skills. This reduces an aspect of wage differentiation – an economic factor which is believed to benefit redistribution.
- Example 1: In 2015 (cf. Autor), more bank tellers than before ATMs. Because each branch has fewer tellers, so branches are cheaper, so more branches.
  - Tellers are now better paid, but fewer branch managers, who used to be really well paid.
- Example 2: There are now more accountants than before spreadsheet

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- Example 2: There are now more accountants than before spreadsheets.
- Example 3: There aren't enough truck drivers, because it's no longer a well-paid job.
  - Power steering + GPS + excel = more drivers, lower wages.

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Some Benefits of People

rate of evolution ∝ amount of variation

Fisher's Fundamental Theorem of Natural Selection

Less variation means less robustness for addressing underlying change.

Without privacy, tolerance, and diversity society loses its capacity to innovate, which is required to address new challenges.

AI and Redistribution

- Society is richer than it's ever been.
  - We all live better than 1917 millionaires by many measures.
- Some suggest we could redistribute this wealth through basic income.
  - Personally, I'm concerned that this may fragment society; that employment is a kind of social glue.
- Empirically, when just a few communities get basic income, it brings those communities together (Standing 2018).
  - This may be because being the community getting basic income gives it a strong sense of positive identity.

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Interesting Questions for Interesting Times
(me at the OECD 2017)

- Can AI help migrants seamlessly translate into institutions as well as language?
- Can China develop support for human flourishing and dignity under Xi's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in a New Era?
- Can the Arts and Humanities keep us interested in being human when we can use AI to search for our own next move?