



Call for Abstracts: Workshop “Social Robotics and the Good Life – The Normative Side of Forming Emotional Bonds with Robots”

Organizers: International Center for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities, University of Tübingen (Regina Ammicht Quinn and Wulf Loh, both Tübingen, in cooperation with Janina Loh, Vienna, and Charles Ess, Oslo)

Date: May 7-8, 2020

Venue: IZEW Tübingen, Germany

Social robotics has the strong potential of becoming more and more prevalent in the coming years, especially in the realms of elder day care, child rearing, and education. As human beings have the fascinating ability to emotionally bond not exclusively with other human beings, but also with animals, plants, and objects, it is highly likely that human-machine-relationships will arise from these human-robotic-interactions. While children and the elderly constitute vulnerable groups that merit special consideration, at the heart of the issue lie fundamental ethical questions that concern human-robot-interactions *per se*. Do human-robot-relationships necessarily constitute a form of manipulation, since any form of reciprocity on the side of the robot is merely simulated? Are these relationships then *per se* detrimental to the good life, as they replace “real” relationships? What constitutes such a “real” relationship? Are more intimate relationships with robots, such as friendship or even love, possible and ethically sound? Which design cues does an ethical design of robots have to take into account? And: how do we conceive and ground “good lives” as more and more of the virtues and interactions – starting with those of friendship – of good lives will be increasingly interwoven with social robots?

For discussing these and further questions regarding the normativity of emotional bonds with robots, in this interdisciplinary workshop we invite submissions with a focus on (but not restricted to) topics such as

- friendship
- love
- sex
- care
- trust
- objectophilia or object sexuality
- feminist perspectives on relationships
- family, children, and nurture
- disappointment, anger, and hate
- morally appropriate behavior

with regard to robots.

The workshop will take place on the 7th and 8th of May 2020 at the International Centre for Ethics in the Sciences and Humanities (IZEW) at the University of Tübingen. **Prof. Dr. Charles Ess**, Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo, will be a fellow at the Center of Ethics at that time. He will give a keynote lecture and will be our dialogue partner throughout the workshop.

Please submit abstracts of around 500 words to Wulf.loh@izew.uni-tuebingen.de by January 31, 2020. Acceptance notifications will be sent out by the end of February 2020. An English-language edited volume is planned with the publisher *transcript*. Those, who are invited to present their project during the workshop should be prepared to send their completed paper of about 6.000-8.000 words to Janina.loh@univie.ac.at by August 31, 2020.