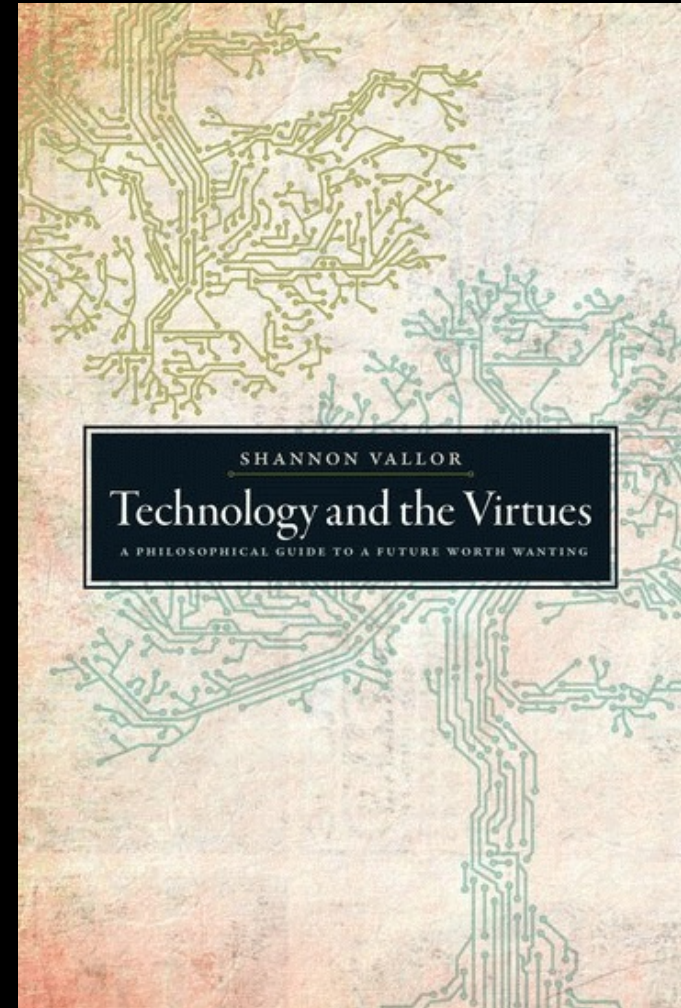


Shannon Vallor. *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*

Main Themes in the Introduction

Don Howard
March 9, 2021



Frameworks for Ethical Judgment

Deontology

Judge only in accordance with a universalizable rule

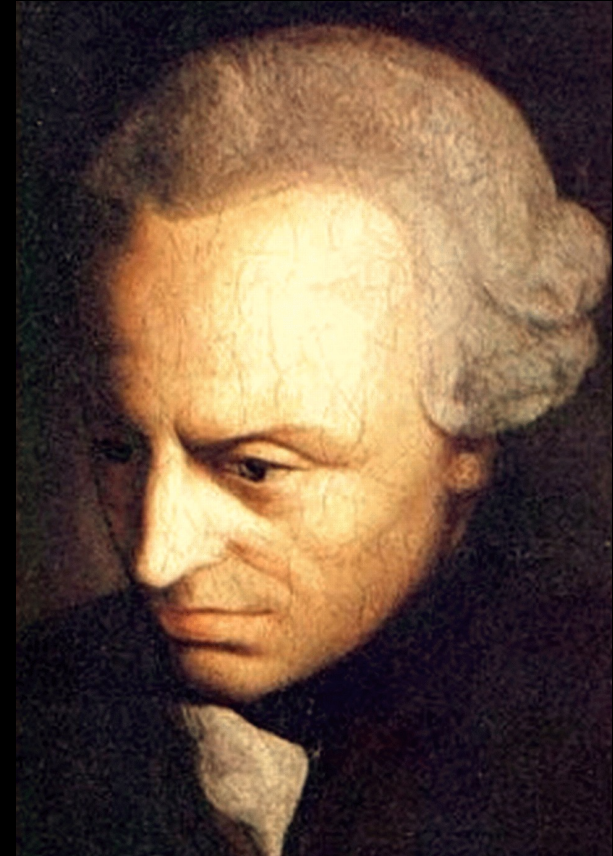
Treat persons only as ends in themselves, never as means

Always respect the autonomy of others.

Proper intention is crucial

Problems:

Not every contingency is covered by a rule?
Limited role for emotion and affect?



Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Frameworks for Ethical Judgment

Consequentialism

Judge only on the basis of consequences

Sum of happiness and suffering

Problems:

Whose happiness and suffering?

Lack of objective metrics?

Calculational intractability?



John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)

Frameworks for Ethical Judgment

Virtue Ethics

Ask first about moral character, not acts

Character is a set of virtues, which are settled habits of action or dispositions to act, aiming at the promotion of the good life or human flourishing

Action modeled on moral exemplars

Problems:

Relative to context and culture?

Explicit justification need not precede action?



Aristotle (344-322 BCE)

Frameworks for Ethical Judgment

Virtue Ethics

Buddhist and Confucian Virtue Ethics



Kōng Qiū (551-479 BCE)



Siddhārtha Gautama
(c. 563 - c. 483 BCE
or
c. 480 - c. 400 BCE)

Frameworks for Ethical Judgment

The Capabilities Approach Inspired in Part by Virtue Ethics

Popular today in international development studies as an alternative to the kind of cost-benefit analysis inspired by consequentialism

Identify the capabilities necessary in a given context for full human flourishing

Identify the conditions - material, legal, etc. - necessary for the development and expression of these capabilities

Design interventions for the purpose of realizing or securing those conditions

Likewise with policy decisions in other arenas



Martha Nussbaum (1947-)



Amartya Sen (1933-)

Frameworks for Ethical Judgment

Ethics of Care

We are all interdependent, not moral atoms

The most vulnerable require special moral consideration

Context is crucial, because not everyone has the same needs and interests

Problems:

Puts emotion before reason?
Overly subjective?



Carol Gilligan (1936-)

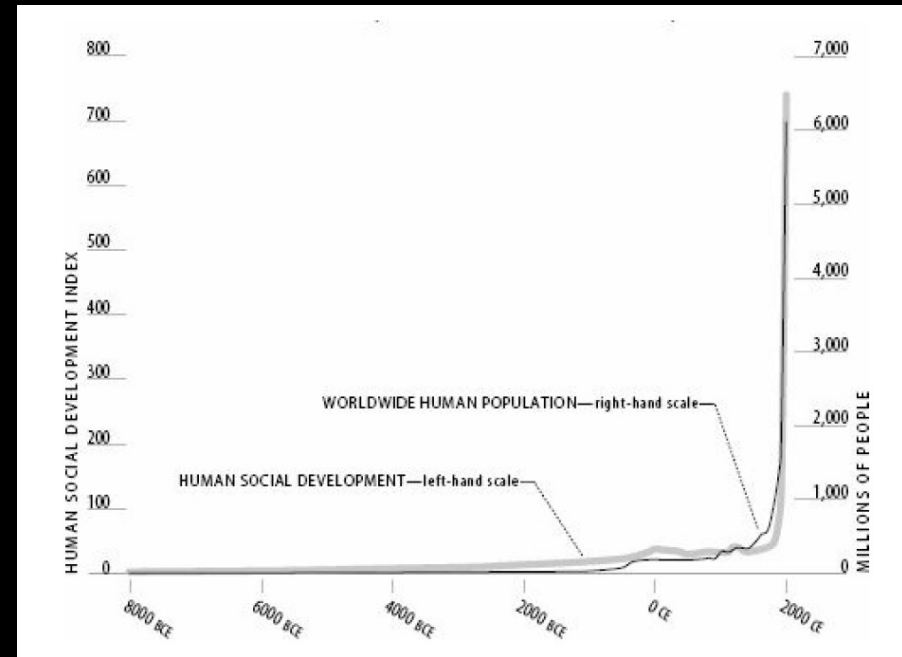
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Acute Technosocial Opacity

Ian Morris

Human Social Development Index:

1. Energy Capture
2. Organization
3. War-Making Capacity
4. Information Technology



From Erik Brynjolfsson and Adrew McAfee, *The Second Machine Age* (New York: W.W. Norton), p. 5.

