Introduction
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This issue of Techne is devoted to *Pragmatist Ethics for a Technolgical Culture*, a volume edited by Jozef Keulartz, Michiel Korthals, Maartje Schermer and Tsjalling Swierstra. This volume is the result of research carried out within the framework of the Incentive Program Ethics and Political Issues, which is supported by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. The aim of this research was to find and develop a form of ethics tailored to the moral problems and social conflicts that are typical for a technological culture.

Pragmatist Ethics for a Technological Culture was the topic of a panel discussion at the Annual Meeting of the Central Division of the American Philosophical Association in Cleveland, Ohio, April 26, 2003. The panel discussion was organized by the Society for Philosophy and Technology and was chaired by Diane Michelfelder (Indiana State University). This issue includes the papers presented by Joseph C. Pitt (Virginia Tech), and Vincent Colapietro (Pennsylvania State University), and a paper of Hans Radder (Free University of Amsterdam, together with a reply of the editors of the volume.

In this introduction I will first sketch the outline of the volume under discussion and I will next give a brief impression of the comments of Radder, Colapietro and Pitt.

Pragmatist Ethics for a Technological Culture

Neither traditional philosophy nor current applied ethics seem able to cope adequately with the highly dynamic character of our modern technological culture. This is because they have insufficient insight into the moral significance of technological artifacts and systems. Here, much can be learned from recent science and technology studies (STS). They have opened up the black box of technological developments and have revealed the intimate intertwinement of technology and society in minute detail. However, while applied ethics is characterized by a certain "technology-blindness," the most influential approaches within STS show a "normative deficit" and display an agnostic or even antagonistic attitude towards ethics.

This impasse can, the editors of *Pragmatist Ethics in a Technological Culture* believe, be broken by a re-evaluation of pragmatism. Pragmatism shares with science and technology studies its central insight in the co-evolution of technology and society, but it differs from STS in that it gives serious ethical consideration to the associated normative implications. In order to substantiate this claim the editors have first sketched the contours of a pragmatist ethics, which is better equipped to dealing with the problems of a technological culture than are traditional forms of ethics. Pragmatist ethics does imply a number of interconnected changes of emphasis: from epistemology to methodology, from product to process and, above all, from justification to discovery. This first sketch was presented as a discussion paper to six experts in the fields of pragmatism, STS and bioethics, with the request to write an elaborate reaction. These six papers were supplemented with three more papers in which the editors further developed their first sketch of a pragmatist ethics. This total of nine papers formed the subject matter for a two-day workshop held in June 2001 in Wageningen, The Netherlands.

Pragmatist Ethics for a Technological Culture consists of these nine papers, all with brief comments by one of the conference participants. The editors' first discussion paper forms the prologue, while as an epilogue they have added an extensive evaluation and processing of the results of the workshop. Apart from the prologue and the epilogue, this volume consists of four parts: "Technology and Ethics," "The Status of Pragmatism," "Pragmatism and Practices," and "Discourse Ethics and Deliberative Democracy."

Technology and Ethics

The first part opens with a paper by Larry Hickman. In this paper, Hickman calls to mind the determination which with classical pragmatists rejected the metaphysical idea that there are transcendental truths or the religious idea that there are revealed truths. Hickman's reminder is by no means superfluous because foundationalism is still very much alive. It flourishes in some branches of environmental philosophy where foundations are searched for in the earth, not in the sky. It also plays an important role in popular debates concerning biotechnology. Hickman is convinced that as long as we continue to appeal to foundations, whether they be projected up into the sky or planted down in the earth, the problems and prospects of our rapidly changing technological landscape will not be adequately addressed. Hickman defends a version of experimental naturalism or instrumentalism, that centers on the notion of

technology in the broad sense in which Dewey used it, namely as the study of our tools and techniques. He demonstrates the relevance of Dewey's concept of the thought experiment as a "dramatic rehearsal" for problem solving and decision making in bioethics by exploring the case of genetic screening.

Maartje Schermer and Jozef Keulartz take the case of *In Vitro Fertilization* (IVF) to explore the consequences and effects a new technique can have on society and the way traditional bioethics deals with technological developments. They analyze the shifts in moral responsibilities and social roles and relationships that IVF has caused and give an overview of the debate on IVF as it has taken place in the field of bioethics. Though this debate does already show some pragmatist traits, Schermer and Keulartz propose a more explicitly pragmatist approach and demonstrate what this would imply for the debate on IVF. Schermer and Keulartz focus on the novel character of IVF and show the emergence of a new entity ("the embryo"), of a new medical practice (productive in stead of curative) and of new (family) relationships. The embryo as a new subject, resulting from the separation of the embryo from the body of its mother, has been discussed at length in bioethics. This was not the case, however, with respect to the shift from curative to productive medicine nor with respect to the emergence of new family relationships.

The Status of Pragmatism

The second part opens with an article of Andrew Light who is rather sceptical about the proposal of Keulartz et al. for a pragmatic reform in applied ethics. As a form of applied ethics, Light contends, bioethics is already pragmatic: it is a social activity, strives for solutions, relies on experience and is policy-oriented. To adequately apply a moral theory in practice to actual problems in the real world some form of casuistry is required, and it is this commitment to casuistry that accounts for the inherent inclination to a pragmatist methodology in bioethics. But embracing such an inherent methodological pragmatism does not at all compel us to have recourse to the teachings of Dewey, James, Pierce or Rorty. Quite the contrary, Light insists, we better refrain from such an explicit reference to more pure philosophical versions of pragmatism.

Glenn McGee takes a view that is contrary to Light's. Whereas Light urges us to refrain from explicit recourse to pragmatism and from philosophical exegesis of classical texts, McGee is alarmed precisely by the circumstance that pragmatism in bioethics and other forms of applied ethics is divorced from the

epistemological problems at the core of classical American philosophy. The focus on the issues at hand should not go at the expense of a careful treatment of the problem of foundations. If we neglect this problem, McGee warns us, we run the risk that pragmatism in bioethics will degenerate into a dressed-up form of relativism. Of course a pragmatist conception of epistemology is quite different from the Cartesian conception. For pragmatists, McGee claims, knowledge is not grounded by some pre-given reality apart from experience, but is, quite the reverse, formed and textured by the "everyday" experience of the common world.

Pragmatism and Practices

The main contributions to the third part deal with animal ethics, medical ethics, and environmental ethics, and are inspired by the works of MacIntyre, Foucault and Aldo Leopold successively.

In his contribution, Michiel Korthals criticizes various schools of animal ethics from a pragmatist perspective. He proposes an approach that takes into account the various practices in which the interaction between animals and humans takes shape. Following MacIntyre, Korthals defines practices as social activities with their own good, standards, values and goals, skills or excellences, and typical forms of organization. He distinguishes five human-animal practices: livestock, companion animals, captive animals (zoo animals), de-domesticated or wild animals, and animals used in experiments. This "multi-practices approach" takes into account the diversity and dynamics of the contexts in which animals are living and are managed by humans, and puts the emergence of ethical complications and controversies in a new light.

In his paper on the emerging practice of predictive medicine, Gerard de Vries argues with Glenn McGee that it is an important task of a pragmatist epistemology to make explicit what has hitherto been implicit. Whereas McGee goes back to the phenomenological reflections of Edmund Husserl and Richard Zaner, De Vries follows Robert Brandom who made an interesting attempt at a pragmatic reconstruction of Kant's transcendental method. However, De Vries draws most of his inspiration from Michel Foucault, whose archeological and genealogical methods he considers as historicized versions of a Kantian critique. In his book on the birth of the clinic, Foucault tried to uncover the cognitive, cultural, social and physical conditions that made modern clinical medicine possible. As De Vries points out, these "conditions of possibility" change with the

present shift from clinical to predictive medicine. This shift not only involves a radical reconceptualization of health and disease, it also includes far-reaching changes in the distribution of roles and responsibilities of physicians and their patients and also in the social organization of the health care system at large. These changes, De Vries argues, will profoundly affect medical ethics as well.

Bryan Norton sketches a pragmatist epistemology that is adequate to the practice of Adaptive Management, a specific approach to environmental monitoring and management. He examines how Adaptive Management can deal with uncertainty with regard to the effects of current actions on future developments and on sustainability. From Aldo Leopold on, Adaptive Managers have explicitly appealed to pragmatist ideas and ideals in support of their plans and activities. Adaptive Management can be characterized by three central commitments: a commitment to an experimentalist method of inquiry, a commitment to examine the impacts of our actions on multiple scales of time and space, and a commitment to examine each problem in its local context. In short, Adaptive Management is an experimental, multi-scalar, place-based management.

Discourse Ethics and Deliberative Democracy

In the fourth part, Paul Thompson discusses at length the merits *and* the difficulties of Habermas' work on discourse ethics. The flaw in discourse ethics, according to Thompson, lies in its tie to an ideal discourse situation, as characterized in Habermas' theory of communicative action. As Foucault has shown, discourse is never purely communicative, but always involves strategic elements. That's why, according to Thompson, his work should be seen as part and parcel of a pragmatist practical ethics that is sensitive to the strategic potential of explicitly normative discourse. Furthermore, Thompson points out that any actual proposal that stipulates rules and procedures is itself bound up by considerations of time and place and will therefore be open to re-evaluation and revision. Instead of an ultimate definition we only have a "working understanding" of what a fair, non-coercive and open discourse should look like under the best approximation of ideal conditions.

Tsjalling Swierstra analyzes two public debates in the Netherlands on new medical technologies, the so-called New Reproductive Technologies (NRTs) on the one hand, cloning on the other. At the center of his pragmatist approach is the notion of a moral vocabulary, understood as a situated response to specific, local practical questions. Swierstra shows that such vocabularies do not have to remain

confined to their context of invention, but can sometimes be transported successfully to other contexts. Two of such vocabularies determine the public controversies studied. The "vocabulary of normative nature" centers on the notion that a life should be lived in obedience to rules which are laid out by God or are embedded in nature. The rivaling "vocabulary of self-determination" centers on the ideal of an autonomous life, designed freely by the person who has to live it. Both vocabularies are shown to be relatively powerless to steer the course of medical technology-development. Swierstra formulates some pragmatist suggestions to remedy the impotence of both vocabularies by taking into account their original contexts of invention, thereby opening up new avenues for communication between their proponents.

As is clear from this brief outline, *Pragmatist Ethics for a Technological Culture* contains a rich variety of issues and perspectives. In the epilogue, the editors lay bare some interesting connections between the various contributions. They elaborate on some common themes and further develop the thoughts and ideas that were presented in their first discussion paper (in the prologue to the volume), resulting in a systematic overview of the tasks and tools of a pragmatist ethics for a technological culture.

Comments on Pragmatist Ethics

In their comments on our volume on pragmatist ethics for a technological culture, Hans Radder, Vincent Colapietro and Joseph Pitt raise a lot of pertinent and intriguing questions, some of which we will try to answer in our reply at the end of this issue. In order to provide an overview of these questions I will end this introduction with a brief summary of their papers.

Pragmatism, Ethics, and Technology

In his essay "Pragmatism, Ethics, and Technology," Hans Radder offers some reflections on the three main concepts of the book: pragmatism, ethics and technology. Radder rejects the claim of some contributors to the volume that, together with foundationalism and scepticism, pragmatists should ban each and every form of universalism. But he is not at all satisfied with the specific proposals of universal criteria for scientific truth and moral rightness made by other contributors, notably Brian Norton and Paul Thompson. Radder then goes on to give his own account of universalism using three distinctions: between universalism and foundationalism, between the normative force and the factual

acceptance of claims of a universal scope, and finally between the general description of universal norms and the requirements of a particular case.

The second issue raised by Hans Radder concerns the pragmatist view on the relation between theory and practice. Radder contends that philosophical and ethical reflection can be found in many human practices and he criticizes pragmatism's one-sided view of human beings as exclusively practice-oriented.

Radder's third and last issue is about the ethical relevance of technology. Here Radder cautions against the editor's claim that technological artifacts possess a written-in or built-in normativity. This claim is misleading and may easily slide into the outdated doctrine of technological determinism. In general, Radder remarks, the authors of the volume have failed to provide an appropriate philosophical account of technology. And this is all the more unfortunate because a cogent "pragmatist ethics for a technological culture" needs such an account if it aspires to be theoretically convincing and practically useful.

The Pragmatic Turn

In his essay "The Pragmatic Turn," Vincent Calopietro touches upon a wide variety of topics but there clearly is a strong thematic thread running through his diverse comments: what the editors of the volume call "the reversal of the traditional relation between theory and practice." On this basic idea of pragmatism Calopietro"s view seems to differ from Hans Radder"s. While Radder criticizes this reversal because of the neglect of philosophical reflection, Calopietro, on the other hand, maintains that in turning toward our human practices, pragmatism does not drive away from the history of philosophy but rather takes up this history in another than an antiquarian manner. Pragmatism does not reduce theory to the handmaiden of practice, Calopietro claims, but rather conceives theory as itself a form of practice. What he has in mind is a *critical* turn towards the practices in which we are always already implicated. Part of the task of pragmatism is to refine our reflexive accounts of these practices and to correct possible distortions and deformations. To accomplish this critical task, Calopietro claims that we have to turn to philosophical resources outside the pragmatist tradition, especially to the European tradition of hermeneutic suspicion from Marx and Freud to Paul Ricoeur, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, et cetera.

Calopietro ends his essay with a highly critical note on the ideal of "equal coexistence." The editor's put forward this ideal in order to achieve and maintain communication and cooperation across the lines that separate communities with different and even conflicting worldviews and moral convictions, i.e. in situations where possibilities of consensus or compromise are limited or absent. Colapietro takes this to be a distressingly unpragmatic conclusion to an otherwise consistently pragmatic book, because, for true pragmatists, he insists, the limits of compromise and consensus are only experimentally determinable.

Ethical Colonialism

In his essay "Ethical Colonialism," Joseph Pitt cautions against what he calls the editors' "ethical colonialism." Not unlike some environmental ethicists who accord moral status to rivers and mountains, the editors want to endow almost everything, including technological artifacts, with normativity. That is to say, Pitt shares Radder's view that the editors mistakenly claim that technological artifacts possess a written-in or built-in normativity. But he goes one step further in his critique and also objects to the "Latourian" idea that material things possess some kind of agency. In Pitt's account of a pragmatic ethics, normativity should be placed in people, especially in people making the relevant decisions, rather than in things and technologies.

This leads Pitt to his second issue: the pragmatist ideal of creative democracy. Here Pitt cautions against the editors' far too idealistic idea that the best way to generate the creativity that is needed to meet the ethical challenges of technological change is to have everyone at the table. According to Pitt, just bringing people to the table is simply not enough. Because technological change threatens a person's values and his or her perception of the good life, most people will refuse to engage in discussion. As an important way to overcome this fear of the unknown, Pitt mentions the use of metaphor. After all, the function of metaphor is generally to understand new and unknown things with the help of more familiar and well-known concepts. According to Pitt, there are two basic pragmatic maxims that can serve to find the right metaphor or metaphors to discus technological innovation. The first maxim is "consider the consequences," including the moral consequences; the second maxim is "the community is the ultimate arbiter."

In their reply, "Pragmatism in Progress," Jozef Keulartz, Michiel Korthals, Maartje Schermer, and Tsjalling Swierstra will use the opportunity provided by the commentators to further elucidate their pragmatist program.

References

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