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Robot Death Care: A study of funerary practice

Abstract

Across the globe, human experiences of death, dying, and grief are now shaped by digital technologies and, increasingly, by robotic technologies. This paper explores how practices of care for the dead are transformed by the participation of non-human, mechanised agents. We ask what makes a particular robot engagement with death a breach or an affirmation of care for the dead by examining recent entanglements between humans, death, and robotics. In particular, we consider telepresence robots for remote attendance of funerals; autonomous, semi-humanoid robots officiating in a religious capacity at memorial services; and the conduct of memorial services by robots, for robots. Using the activities of robots to ground

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