

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE PROFESSIONAL DEONTOLOGY OF DESIGNERS

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1. Objectives

The objectives of this paper is to propose some considerations about the professional deontology of the designer, with the aim to stimulate the discussion and to organize some actions in the direction to the upgrading the professional ethic in the design field

2. Methods

In our times there are often questions about the role of science and technology, particularly in regard to the world wide emergencies(moral, cultural and environmental).

Related to these questions, there is the problem about the professional deontology of technicians and scientists. From this point of view, and in regard to the items of Design 2004, we can read about three professions

- a) scientist
He is involved in scientific researches and, with Galileo Galilei “reads in the Nature book”
- b) technician
He is utilizing the science’s results, to realize technical products
- c) designer
He is the technician who organize the necessary information to realize such technical products.

In this paper, some considerations in particularly about the designer’s deontology are proposed. The proposed steps for the determination of the professional deontology of the designer are as follows:

- a) determination of the “terminal behaviour” of the designer
This step is corresponding to the individuation of the professional ability of the designer: the designer’s activity shall be described carefully and completely.
- b) deontological principles individuation
It seems natural and necessary that a deontological research has as reference point some ethic descriptive and prescriptive principles; such principles can be considered as recommendations to be applied with the aim to reach a virtuous behaviour.
The ethic principles shall be determined in relation to a given ideology, e.g. the “civil ideology”, based on a general respect for the human being, or the Christian ideology.
- c) comparison between steps a) and b)
From such comparison, it is possible to define the deontological criteria to be applied in the design profession.

In figure 1, it is possible to see the above mentioned procedure.

The interest for some aesthetic aspects of the professional activity is now very big [1][2][3][4]

The authors has proposed some principles in this direction[5][6].

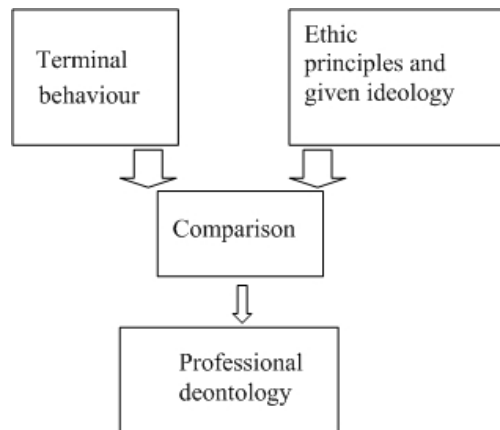


Figure 1. Logical scheme to determine a professional deontology

3. The terminal behaviour of the designer

The terminal behaviour is a complete and precise description of knowledge and ability to be reached by a formative action. The terminal behaviour is therefore the object of each technical communication. The terminal behaviour of the designer could be assumed, in first approximation as follows, by using methods and procedures proposed by the authors[7] and confirmed by comparison with other indications [8]. The designer:

- a) by starting from the assigned function and requirements(if necessary, correct formalized) of the product;
- b) by using methods and means;
- c) determines all the necessary information to realize the industrial product;
- d) with the requirements of a good behaviour of the product in all phases of the life cycle.

In table 1, such terminal behaviour is schematic represented.

4. The definition of “Ethic”

Ethic could be defined as the research or discipline about the behaviour of the man in relation of the concepts of “good” or “bad”. Ethic is based on such concepts and, consequently, on the respective ideology. There is, also, a pleasure ethic, a Christian ethic, an Islamic ethic, and so on.

In this paper the fundamental point of reference is a “civil ethic”, based about a general respect of the human being. It is necessary to determine a starting point to determine such civil ethic. Among many references, the authors opinion is that a good reference point in this field could be a service world association as Rotary International: such association has members of all ideologies and all religions, but with a common point of view, the respect and the service for the human being. The fundamental of the rotarian ethic is the test of the “Four questions”. Before each action, it is necessary to respond YES to all the following four questions:

1. it is true?
2. it is right?
3. it is an amelioration of the relations between human beings?
4. it is an advantage for all other persons?

It is easy to recognize that, if in all circumstances would be possible an affirmative answer to these questions, the world would be very better! The problem is now how apply the four questions to the designer’s activity.

5. Comparison between terminal behaviour and definition of ethic

It is possible to propose a comparison between the four question (deontological synthesis) and the terminal behaviour of the designer (Table 1)

In such table, each question is compared with the portions of which the terminal behaviour could be considered composed.

Table 1. Terminal behaviour of the designer

Parts of terminal behaviour	Contents
a) starting point	Function and requirement to be performed by the industrial product
b) instruments	b.1) Methods(Theory of Technical Systems, Design for X, evaluation criteria, representation and calculation methods, modelling, updating ability) b.2)Means(computer, materials, technological processes, standard components, cooperation of colleagues, technical documentation)
c) information about product	Forms Dimensions Materials Tolerances
d) conditions	Good behaviour of the product in all life cycle phases(by using Dfx's concept): -production -assembly -packaging -transportation -performances -maintenance -reliability -safety -liquidation -quality -costs

Table 2. Comparison between “four questions” and parts of terminal behaviour

Questions	Parts of terminal behaviour
True	Professional preparation: -basic culture -specific formation -continuing education
Right	Correct behaviour in respect to the colleagues and other persons
Amelioration of the relations among human beings	Good influence of the industrial product on the relations among human beings
Advantage for other persons	Good influence of the industrial product on the life of all human beings

6. First proposal of “deontological chart” of the designer

Starting from the above mentioned considerations, some fundamental principles of a “deontological chart” of the designer could be proposed (table 3):

Table 3. First proposal of “deontological chart” of the designer

Questions	Dues
1. serve the true	the designer should give great attention to their professional formation the designer should give particular attention to the updating their professional formation adequate the difficulties of the work with the personal professional ability each affirmation must be true

2. serve the right	2.1 honest behaviour with other human beings(professional operators and product's users to each levels) 2.2 honest behaviour particularly as Judge Consultant
3. amelioration of the relations among all human beings	3.1 avoid(indipendently from law's prescriptions) all situation of danger, discomfort, and so on to all product's users in each life cycle phases(production, assembly, packaging, distribution, use, maintenance, liquidation) 3.2 avoid to design product that could improve excessive consumerism 3.3 the economic advantage should not be a greater aim as the amelioration of the product for better relations among all human beings
4. advantage for other persons	4.1 carefully examine what are the effect of the industrial product to be designed, about the users, such as health, education, formation, moral excellence, and so on 4.2 the utility of the users of the product should be more important as the economic advantages for the designer

7. Conclusions

By the mentioned confrontation, some ethic principles for the designer's profession could be deducted. The proposed considerations could be assumed as a first basis for discussion, with the aim to organize a complete Deontological Chart of the designer, and, in more large sense, of all technical professions, such as engineer, architect, university professor in technical fields.

To this aim, it would be interesting the constitution of an unformal working group with the aim to organize a Deontology Chart of the designer.

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