Emotions and Free Will: The Questions of the Future

In the Article “Will AI ever understand human emotions” many important topics are touched. The capacity for humans to assess a situation is based on emotion and free will. As someone who had been personally affected by these dilemmas I can offer insight into the good that it does. Emotion and free will are essential to the progression of artificial intelligence. These capacities are applied in many fields to help rather than to hinder. I firmly believe that it is our best interest as a society to allow AI’s the capabilities of emotion and free choice, due to the need for AI’s to empathize and understand the emotions of those they are interacting with through therapy as well as deciding how to address a situation morally.

In order for robots to address major and minor threats proportionally in addition to showing compassion, I encourage the idea of giving AI’s emotion. AI’s have improved on reading emotion through facial expression, yet as Leandro Minku states on The Conversation “But reading is not the same as understanding.” With this new ability to emote they can experience and understand the consequences of their actions as well as empathize with those the robots would potentially be treating. AI’s could feel loss and understand the emotional trauma that their patients experience. The robots would also understand the pain they cause when eliminating a “threat” making the AI’s less likely to shoot immediately. Robots with emotional capabilities would begin to understand that not all criminals can be defined as good or bad some fit into a grey, indistinct area. They would take into account the feelings of each person they faced.

I heavily support granting free choice to AI’s because I have experienced the difference it causes in an AI’s performance. With free choice, AI’s can independently determine the intensity of a situation at a crime scene and deescalate a situation accordingly rather than simply identifying and eliminating a threat. With free choice, the option to arrest or temporarily disable the subject of an investigation is now a viable option. This new more moral way of dealing with crime would increase the public’s opinion of the AIs used in law enforcement and decrease criminal mortality rate. These outcomes of free choice institute a ethical factor into the law enforcement system and advance public safety in a way that cannot be done with ordinary robots.

Given these points, the distribution of emotions and free choice to AIs would benefit many aspects of human life. This article includes AIs with emotional capabilities acting as therapists and the ability to recognize emotional states through pictures which have their benefits. Yet if they cannot feel and understand that emotion, AI’s cannot make a moral and efficient decision. They will be missing a piece of the puzzle. If AI’s were to receive both emotion and free choice, the optimal, moral decisions could be made in a split-second on the scene of a crime or when supporting a patient in therapy. AI’s receiving human like qualities become acceptable to be given more responsibility in our society. For these reasons I support the addition of free will and emotion to AIs.