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Lecture 2 Questions

1. As artificial intelligence slowly advances in society, the possibility of programming mechanical surgeons has become a topic of skepticism. As of today, it is completely justified to feel uneasy about having a robot perform surgery on humans since robots are just beginning to enter the surgical field and are still being improved for future use. Eventually as robotic surgeons are improved enough to become faster and more precise than human surgeons, mechanized surgeons will be more trusted and accepted in society rather than being rejected. As a matter of fact, machine surgeons may get to the point that surgical mistakes will never be made, thus making human surgeons impractical (many may argue that the machine surgeon could have a programming or technical error; however, the likelihood of a tech issue happening to a machine surgeon is slim compared to the number of mistakes a human surgeon could accidentally make on a patient). In the current social unrest of the United States, machine police seem like an incredibly good idea since machines will not be biased towards criminals of other races unless the machine police are programmed to be biased towards certain races. On the other hand, machine police would be too rigid with the rules of the police force and wouldn’t be able to apply ethics and emotions to a situation that humans would be able to handle better. For example, if a person is pulled over while speeding to the hospital because his wife is pregnant, a machine police would probably go through the hassle of giving that person a speeding ticket. A human police officer would probably see the man trying to drive his pregnant wife to the hospital and may even escort him safely there.
2. When it comes to conversing with the obscurity of hearing the voice of a human or a supposed “human-like” AI, most people would feel indifferent, yet want to at least know if he/she is talking to a machine or not. The thing is, talking to a machine isn’t the same as talking to a human since there is more of a socially personal connection between two humans that just can’t be replicated by the artificial feelings of a machine. For instance, if your email replies were mostly generated by an AI, I would feel like you simply do not care about your job or students, and it makes you seem like you lack the professionalism that comes with communicating to people. We absolutely have the right to know whether we are conversing with a chat bot because services that use chat bots for customer support (or something else) should offer the option to talk to a human instead of a bot.
3. Cybernetic enhancements are probably one of the coolest concepts of science fiction, so having chips implanted into our brains seems groundbreaking for our society. With enhanced memory and a search engine in our heads, everyone is essentially on an even playing field when it comes to intelligence since a search engine would allow easy access to the unlimited data and knowledge on the internet. Breakthroughs with the memory of the brain chips could even aid in helping to cure individuals afflicted with dementia or Alzheimer’s, allowing them to save memories or data that will likely be forgotten. However, memory could become an easily capitalized necessity, similar to how smartphones are marketed today for increasingly larger storage capacities (thus making more fortunate people able to have more memory than less fortunate people). When it comes to everyone having unlimited knowledge in their minds with a search engine, malicious individuals would have an easier time committing heinous crimes on our society, possibly at a scale far larger and more destructive than what happens today. We may think that the events of 9/11 are bad today, but imagine a terrorist organization getting their hands-on brain chips now; 9/11 only targeted the United States, but with enhanced thinking and memory, terrorist attacks worse than 9/11 could happen on a global scale. When it comes to replicating out cognition for others, we will finally be able to show others the world from our own individual eyes instead of simply having to imagine what it is like to be “in another person’s shoes.” This concept could make exposing criminals a million times easier since law enforcement will be able to see the crime committed from the criminal’s eyes; however, this removes the idea of a fair trial and the concept of “innocence until proven guilty” when it comes to the justice system.
4. With the many different ethical approaches that people can have, a dialectic approach could most definitely help to bridge the understandings and principles between each approach. Since a dialectic view seems to involve at least two contradicting sides debating each other’s logical faults “to produce a linear progression or evolution in philosophical views or positions,” people with conflicting approaches (such as deontologists and utilitarianists) could come to a better, more sophisticated understanding of each other’s view. In fact, if the debate continues to progress further, an eventual compromise could be made between the two sides that becomes like a “hybrid” approach. For instance, deontologists are adamant on abiding the law and being logical, while utilitarianists are focused on happiness/utility for the general populous; however, a hybrid approach could be created from dialectics that involves the idea that certain laws must be followed in order to increase the utility for the majority while other minor laws don’t matter as much. Although Hegel argues that dialectics “cannot get beyond arbitrariness and skepticism [and] it generates only approximate truths,” it is still a stepping stone towards uniting those with opposing views to form compromises that can satisfy each side.
5. The approach that best explains why you shouldn’t drive on the right side of the road in the UK is the deontologist approach. The deontologist argument is rigid and straight-to-the-book when it comes to following laws and rules set by members of a society. Because driving on the right side of the road in the UK is illegal, you should not drive on the right side at all even if it makes you happier. Plus, driving on the right side in the UK is completely irrational, which is viewed as malicious behavior from the perspective of a deontologist. This scenario would not be better explained by a consequentialist because that approach does not respect your individual right to drive on the right side of the road while others continue to drive on the left. Breaking this rule does not increase the happiness of many other people, therefore your choice to drive on the right side of the road does not increase utility.