

Robots and wars

In relation to the issue of preserving our human side, another version of robots need analysis. In recent years, there have been a gradual implementation of unmanned airplanes (drones) in wars. Remotely directed from pilots sitting in sophisticated labs on the other side of the planet often, drones are now widely used in military operations by -mostly- Western countries basing their moral legitimacy on the ground that they limit the number of casualties and help preserving human lives (in this case, the lives of soldiers). Leaving aside the political analysis concerning the possible discrepancy of value within equal lives in this instance, we need to investigate further into the implications of this technology as a more complex issue than so described, as it would be too easy to see this only in a positive light if this was the case.

Somehow related to the concern raised above, one should question the impact that this "detaching" technology could have (or does have already) on our way of interacting with other human beings and the way in which it can shape our behaviour beyond the supposed given functionality.

For example, those pilots that are manoeuvring the drones from their home countries, finish their shift (during which they might as well have killed some innocent babies by accident) and get catapulted back into their "normal" lives. Paradoxically this schizophrenic way of living their lives seems to produce more problems and imbalances than initially thought, and the effects needs to be considered with attention.

Also important, is to consider the increasingly realistic dystopian scenario of war robots allowed to make a call "on their own" as to whether to shoot or not. There wide consensus that we should not aim at programming a robot able to shoot a human being without the green light from another human being, but it is realistic to imagine contexts in which such an option would not be seen as particularly problematic. Even more relevantly, we should bear in mind the "hackability" of these technologies and wonder about the potentially catastrophic effects of leaving them in the wrong hands.