

Of Love and Affection and the Gaze Sensor

Rodrigo S Jamisola*

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Italian Institute of Technology, Italy

*Corresponding author: Rodrigo S Jamisola, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Italian Institute of Technology, Italy, Tel: 393400576275; E-mail: rjamisolajr@gmail.com

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Editorial

Humans, to a certain extent, have successfully transferred to machines the ability of three major senses, namely, seeing, hearing, and feeling by touching. Now, technological spectators would normally ask, what is next in terms of the human senses? A logical follow up question would be, “How do we transfer to machines the human abilities that are beyond the five senses”? For example, how do we endow love and affection to machines?

It may come in three stages. First is on how to make machines become media to transmit our love and affection to each other. Second is on how to make machines receive or feel love and affection. And finally, to put it more closely to human terms, how do we let machines have a total experience of love and affection by being able to give them back in return?

To create machines with the psychology of love and affection that is identical to that of humans, it would be necessary for machine to, first of all, have the ability to sense states of being that are detectable beyond the five senses, e.g., fear, anxiety, anger, want, jealousy, happiness, etc. In order to detect these states of being, we need to come up with the appropriate sensors to detect them.

This brings to the idea of the gaze sensor. This is not about detecting the gaze angle through a camera, but this is about endowing to machines an ability to detect that somebody is looking at it, similar to the human experience. For example, when a young lady walks by and she feels somebody is intently looking at her. She then turns to the direction of gaze and finds a young man staring.

What could be the use of a device that knows that somebody is looking at it? It can be a good burglar detector to guard precious objects. After all, a thief needs to look at the object of interest before taking it. Other possible applications can be endless.

Thus, if we attempt to build such a gaze sensor, how do we build it? First of all, we will get lessons on how humans detect gaze. We would try to trace what triggers this sense of gaze. We would say, it has something to do with the sense of feeling somebody staring at us from behind our back, even when the lights are out. Our nervous system detects it, and our brain processes the received signals. We seemed to have an invisible antenna from behind our back that collects the gaze signal. Or is gazing a signal or is it something else? We would need to identify what a gaze is so we can build an appropriate device to collect it. The device should also be able to distinguish gaze that is coupled with intention against casual gaze or gaze by accident. Collecting a gaze “signal” is already a huge challenge, how much more in identifying if it is coupled with an intention. It may next to impossible in our present technological state.

From the gaze sensor we can move further by detecting, for example, the aura of happiness or fear, even without visibly seeing an expression from the person's face. There will be possibly new categories in the Oscar's: Best In Happiness or Best in Fear movies.

If sensors can be developed to detect love, affection, gaze, happiness or fear, subsequent devices can be possibly developed to stimulate them.

Next logical question would be: “Will it be a happy world”?