

Gopnik turkle essay robotic and emotions essay



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Time will inevitably affect the way we view the world around us. As time moves on so do our opinions and views on the world around.

Transitioning through age also affects our view on reality. In Alison Gopnik's "Possible Worlds: Why Do Children Pretend?" she shows us the difference between how children and adults perceive things. At the same time in Sherry Turkle's "Alone Together" we are shown how growing technology affects our views on reality. When one combines the ideas of both Turkle and Gopnik, they see a correlation between technology's growing influence and the rate at which your view of reality changes.

Turkle reveals how a gap in age might affect a changing view of reality.

During a trip to the American Museum of Natural History with her daughter Rebecca, they encounter the Galapagos Island tortoises. To her surprise Rebecca thought it would be better if the tortoises were robotic instead of being real. Turkle explains "She said she thought it was a shame to bring turtle all this way from its island home in the Pacific, when it was just going to sit there in the museum, motionless, doing nothing. Rebecca was both concerned for the imprisoned turtle and unmoved by its authenticity".

Furthermore Turkle was surprised to find that other children shared the same opinion as Rebecca. This shows how a gap in age can affect the way we view the world. In addition Gopnik further shows how a slight gap in age can change our view of reality. In an experiment with babies and stacking rings, one of the rings was taped over to prevent it from being stacked. When a fifteen month old baby tried to stack the fake ring Gopnik states "He would stack some of the rings, look carefully at the taped-over one and then try it on the post. And then try it on the post again..." The fifteen month old baby

could not comprehend the idea of a rigged ring. On the other hand, an eighteen month old baby saw that the ring would not work without even attempting to try the ring. It is through Gopnik's observations that we can see that with age and the passage of time the way we view the world changes.

Moreover Gopnik builds on this observation and connects in to counterfactual thinking. They are the "Woulda-coulda-Shouldas of life" as Gopnik explains. These counterfactuals later turn into children's pretend play time. Gopnik suggests that "Pretending involves a kind of present counterfactual thinking—imagining the way things might be different". These imaginative play times give birth to a new world, or different reality. They alter the way we perceive the world and as time goes on this part in our life fades. At the same Turkle introduces us to Miriam, an elderly woman in a nursing home. As a form of comfort she is given Paro, a robot in the form of a baby seal. Paro is used to stabilize Miriam's emotional instability after her relationship with her son was broken up. Turkle states "On this day she is particularly depressed and believes that the robot is depressed as well... Miriam's tender touch triggers a warm response in Paro...Encouraged, Miriam shows yet more affection for the little robot. In attempting to provide the comfort she believes it needs, she comforts herself". This sociable robot not only brings back that pretend time in a child's life, but raises the question of the effects of a sociable robot.

Not only that, these sociable robots inadvertently change the way we view reality around. In today society what was once taboo like talking to an inanimate object is now acceptable because of new technology. Even the idea of a sexual relationship with these robots is growing support. Turkle <https://assignbuster.com/gopnik-turkle-essay-robotic-and-emotions-essay/>

introduces us to David Levy author of *Love and Sex with Robots*. A New York Times reporter stated after visiting MIT that: "Love and sex is earnest in its predictions about where people and robots will find themselves by mid-century:" "Love with robots will be as normal as love with other humans, while the number of sexual acts and lovemaking positions commonly practiced between humans will be extended as robots will teach more than is in all of the world's published sex manuals combined. With this we see how our views are changing before us. What was taboo is now acceptable. Turkle explains earlier in the section " I believe that in our culture of simulation, the notion of authenticity is for us what sex for the Victorians— threat and obsession, taboo and fascination". Turkle is explaining that the way we look at authenticity is changing since sociable robots and how luring our fascination with the taboo can be. The lure to the taboo is what inspires change in our views of reality. At the same time Gopnik talks about how children would talk to their dolls knowing that it was inanimate yet still find it fun. However Gopnik tells us this was not always believed to be the case. Both Sigmund Freud and Jean Piaget came to the conclusion that " young children are unable to discriminate between fiction and truth, pretense and reality, fantasy and fact". This however has widely been proven untrue. Gopnik also explains that " If, for example, someone[Adult] with wild hair and a sparkly cloak around her shoulders announced herself queen of the fairies—you would probably conclude that she was confused about reality and fantasy". With integration of technology that time period in a child's life is now acceptable for an adult, Maybe not to as great an extent, but to the point of a robotic friend. Talking to a robot and a child talking to a doll are essentially the same thing, neither one is alive.

Additionally devices like phones, tablets, and computers which connect us together also dissociate our social interactions with each other. Turkle explains “ Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other. We’d rather text than talk”. As new forms of communication are added accepted ways of communicating become less accepted. In person interactions became phone calls which became text messages. These technological advances were all imagined through counterfactuals. Gopnik states “ we know that even very young children constantly think about future, past, and present possible worlds”. Basically even little kids are capable of imagining things like phones, but do not contain the knowledge to make them reality.

Consequently as we age and with new technology one will see a change in their view of reality. Things like the counterfactual and robotic integration into are society have accelerated the rate at which we accept these changes. Gopnik and Turkle’s collective works help create a blueprint of how and why our view of reality change and the growing affect that has on us. As a result, we can be more accepting of people such as Miriam and her robotic companion Paro. Not even a decade ago an elderly women petting a doll would be considered insane. Now it is a widely accepted therapeutic practice. With the above mentioned we can conclude that the passage of time with the help of integration of technology changes the way we view reality and what is acceptable in society.