

There exists a growing need and dependence on technology in assisting human beings to solve problems more efficiently. From the execution of mathematical calculations to performing precise medical operations, machines offer efficient solutions to many challenges. But, are machines capable of assisting humanity to understand itself? Considering David Mitchel's words in *Cloud Atlas*, "To be is to be perceived, and so to know thyself is only possible through the eyes of the other ..." one wonders about the possibility of creating humanity outside of humanity; that is, replicate our consciousness for knowing ourselves. Programmers have already begun replicating human behaviour in engineering artificial intelligence. Caleb Chung, an animatronics designer, has programmed into the Furby and Pleo toys the ability to simulate human emotion. The toys also exhibit human sociological behaviour and react to various stimuli in very human/humanlike ways. This raises the question of our responsibility towards certain high-level programmes which are designed to mimic human sentience and intelligence. Are we morally obligated to do no harm to that which feels? How can we use technology to develop empathy and to shape the human social culture? Outside of animatronics, there are other types of technology which can positively affect human social culture. Immersive virtual reality creates the illusion of presence, giving one the illusion or the sensation that one is a part of the programme generated reality. The advantages of these technology are immense, especially in the field of psychology. For example, with avatars, or one's computer self, the avatar can be created to give someone the experience of being someone other than him or herself. If the user is a slim person, the avatar may be chubby, thereby giving the user an awareness of what it might be like to navigate the world as through different means. Of course, we will have to question the possible negative implications of these technologies and determine mitigation.