Chapter 9
An Intimate Relation:
Human Beings with Humanoids

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ABSTRACT
From the reading of numerous press releases, one may deduce that Japan is a country more and more dedicated to a ‘robot world’. Previously, robots were hidden in plants confined within difficult or dangerous tasks: nowadays robots make themselves visible: humanoids and androids offer home services for elderly. Such a situation is questioning the nature of relationships between human beings and humanoids and highlights how we can understand the human’s position and identity. In becoming part of a family, we could presume that robots should be considered in the position of a child with his or her parent establishing an amazing couple. We will refer to the works of a renowned psychoanalyst Donald Woods Winnicott to understand the way a child may receive the best conditions to become a mature and independent adult. A child when becoming an adolescent is at risk to show possible antisocial behaviours, as symptoms of delinquency. Human beings would certainly prefer the option of an absolute dependence from their robot-child, keeping it waiting in a sort of perpetual adolescence. In that way, human beings would feel more secure not to be challenged in their unshared human hood. Conversely, humans challenging machines and imagining cyber-bodies are to be found in performances and sports events. Researchers consider that robots would emancipate and create a life of their own. Doing so, they seem to offer new opportunities for developing human creativity, eluding the inexpressible threat: shall humanoids overtake human beings in their capacity to run a creative life?

1. INTRODUCTION
In a country where Sony Aibo robot dogs are treated like family, humanoid and android robots are expected to take place of the workforce and to provide an aging population with a compassionate presence and create one of the greatest new industries of the 21st century. Very soon androids
will be available in a price range where many people will be able to afford them.

When asked to give a definition of a robot, Katsushi Ikeuchi, a Professor at The University of Tokyo [Ikeuchi, 2008] answers that a robot is an artificial thing with three functions: a function of sensing, one of taking an action and thanks to an artificial intelligence, the capacity of judging and executing by itself. [Ikeuchi, 2008]

A robot with the shape and abilities of a human is an android. An egg shaped lawnmower equipped with eyed- video camera and remote control is a robot but not an android. Anything that can initiate interaction with the outside world like a human being does is a humanoid. For instance, Asimo the famous robot, launched by Honda Company in 1996, not only collects information from its environment but also initiates interaction with the outside world: it is an understatement that Asimo is a true humanoid.

For more scientists the goal of an android is to be a domestic servant which is supposed to become as useful as a car. Robots are built mainly to relieve people of dangerous and tiring tasks. It is interesting to notice that robots help human beings enjoy life not only in providing them more time for their leisure but also in providing them with more interesting jobs. It could be foreseen that in the future, any job which is not creative could be performed by a robot. Thus, factory line workers but also dangerous tasks as security guards should be replaced by these new machines. It is worth to mention that robots and androids could be also very efficient machines in spaceships bound for the Moon and further...

Is this trend only restricted to economical stakes dedicated to our wellbeing or is it a main issue for human kind?

2. RELATION & INTIMACY

We can’t ignore that the generation of humanoids and androids have a strong humanlike appearance: this similarity is not resulting from an accident. As Researchers are starting from a human template it is an implicit fact that a robot must resemble a human being.

Robots and humanoids are supposed to interact with people and to be dedicated to live in proximity of the humans. Thus the similarity of appearance with human beings becomes an issue to facilitate interpersonal relationships and is justified by the intimacy with the human models.

The Director of Osaka University Intelligent Robotics Laboratory, Hiroshi Ishiguro [Ishiguro, 2008] wants to investigate human activities from multiple points of view (with cognitive science, behavioural science and neuroscience) and supports this new cross-interdisciplinary framework called android science. He is the creator of Repliee Q1 the humanoid which he built by “copying” a real person, Ayako Fuji who is a speaker at NHK TV. Everyone can testify that the result is astonishing: Repliee Q1 is a clone not distinguishable from the person it is supposed to represent. Repliee Q1 is a child of the “Android science.” Development of androids occurs to be an important issue.

The resemblance appearance status is not a mere design solution. When the robot android is part of the household and occupies the same space as humans, it is logical that it should resemble the human being not only in function but also in shape.

Katsushi Ikeuchi, Professor at the University of Tokyo ponders upon a robot which could become a true partner of human beings and have a ‘normal’ dialogue with a human being [Ikeuchi, 2008]. Is this only a fantasy?

In June 2007 a team research has created a robot which was trained physically to show human emotions. Kansei Robot through its silicone face frowns or smiles or is scared depending on the selected words it is supposed to react to. Kansei frowns when he hears the word “bomb” smiles at “sushi” and looks afraid and disgusted when someone says “president”. ‘What we are trying to do here is to create a flow of consciousness in robots so that they can make the relevant facial
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