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1 Virtual Reality as an Ultimate Empathy Machine and It's Limitations

¹ Virtual Reality as an Ultimate Empathy Machine and Its Limitations

Virtual reality can be described as a computer environment with three dimensions, which is can be reconnoitered and people can interact with. The person exploring and interacting with the computer environment is said to be part of the virtual world or being immersed in the interior of the world and whilst there. Moreover, the person ² is capable of manipulating objects or performing a series of actions. Virtual reality plays a major role in the stimulation of real manifestation through senses such as hearing, sight as well as touch.

Empathy is the aptitude to comprehend and share the emotional state of one another. Therefore, empathy is divided into three parts which are compassionate, cognitive, and emotional. In brief explanations, cognitive empathy is a kind of perceptive taking which is being able to put yourself in a "place" another person and see things according to their perspectives. Emotional empathy can be described to be good or bad (Elliott et al., 2011). For example, the goodness of empathy is recognizable because gives room for people to understand and feel the emotions of other people. On the other hand, emotional empathy is considered to be bad because people can get overwhelmed by such emotions, thus making it hard to respond to other people's emotions. When it comes to compassionate empathy, people can understand through compassion. This type of empathy is accompanied by extra actions to lessen the problem (Elliott et al., 2011).

Virtual reality has played a major role as an ultimate empathy machine. This is evidenced by the way virtual reality as an ultimate machine of empathy works towards the improvement of attitudes and behaviors positively (Solberg, 2016). For instance, virtual reality builds confidence and traits which help individuals to improve their attitudes. It enables people to use setbacks to improve their skills, gives them a sense of knowing how to react to other people's limitations.

However, virtual reality helps to improve people's attitudes and behaviors by teaching them how to stretch themselves past their limits each day to attain their best and to seek individuals to embark mostly on their positive attitude. Good practice of these concepts improves the behavior and attitude of people, thus confirming virtual reality to be an ultimate machine to empathy (Solberg, 2016).

Virtual reality has been of great help to people. It is through virtual reality individuals are enabled to understand what it entails to have experiences that require empathy and other than relying on experiences of other people. As human beings, people undergo many challenges that need much comfort from others. In a situation where someone has lost his/her beloved one, it is with great anticipation there will be people availing themselves to console, comfort, and give some hopes to the victim, something which is a good prove of empathy because they understand what the victim is going through. Though this tends to be of great help by making people in such conditions to have humble time and to feel supported, it does not mean without it the victim would not survive. Indeed, he will face a lot of challenges by standing alone but after all, life will have to move on. The ability of one being strong and having hoped from the support him/her from others is a clear implication virtual reality is an ultimate machine of empathy (Paul et al., 1967).

According to Bloom (2017), virtual reality has turned out to be misleading. Also, it is not able of creating empathy to its extent. For example, this has been witnessed in refugee camps. Governments and organizations have embarked on efforts to help and ensure refugees are living in a conducive environment as other citizens. There has been the provision of basic needs as well as recreational equipment. Even though is a good depiction, it has shown negative impacts on the members in the refugee camps. People have become reluctant, lazy and neglected their roles

because they are being provided with everything, thus making it clear that virtual reality as an ultimate of empathy has some drawbacks.

Virtual reality empathy machine fails to motivate individuals to have a sense of appreciation concerning their personal lives when encountering refugee life through seeing camps of refugees or the life of a person who is homeless via a simulation of virtual reality. It is unfortunate in refugee camps individuals are dominated by fear, anxiety as well as stress because they find their selves in new dominant land after having left their own country. Besides, people who are homeless are considered either to be suffering from physical health difficulties or illness resulting from the mental. Thus, people cannot encounter how horrible those issues are for individuals undergoing problems through a virtual reality machine (Elliott et al., 2017).

It is recommendable to be wearing the helmet when it comes to a virtual reality machine, then pace into encounters of other people even though doing it will never give the precise moods being experienced by another person in the experiences of their lifetime. Besides, if people are not aware the experiences people encounter results from conditions that are stimulated by the virtual reality, people could be having different moods and discernments on the situations they experience. Therefore, it is recommendable for a virtual reality machine to change the memories and beliefs of people to make it effective as well as to attain its objectives/goals (Ramirez, 2018).

Virtual reality is unable to engender empathy accurately. Ramirez (2018) suggests human beings cannot be encountering the experiences they face in their lifetime if they try life according to animals like cows. Nevertheless, human beings will not be able to empathize with cows. The reason behind this is because that role is played by psychology and biology. However, determinants of the way experience will appear for people through a virtual reality machine is

people's perception and process. Hence making virtual reality capable of showing individuals how their experience will be looking like, but not showing other people's experience.

Bloom (2017) stresses technology is not an ethical game-changer as the way some people make it. However, there is enthusiasm which is considerable in the field of technologies. This technological enthusiasm allows individuals to stimulate engagement together with a bodily world. According to Bloom (2017), virtual reality is expected to convert education, marketing, fitness, therapy and video games. On the other hand, some people are certain of virtual reality making those people better. For instance, Chris Milk says in his TED talk describes virtual reality as the ultimate empathy machine. Indeed, his TED talk can show a good response by utilizing it well. It can enable people to care about, and helping groups like refugees, those who are homeless and individuals who are physically challenged and having mental impairments (Solberg, 2016).

Virtual reality as an ultimate empathy machine has further been depicted at Stanford whereby there are experiments taking place. These experiments are characterized by a simulation that portrays the progression being cast out and becoming an itinerant. Besides, this eviction has been accompanied by many cases of disability simulations. In these cases, people with disability end up sitting in wheelchairs, being blindfolded or listening to sounds that are intrusive to be helped in stimulating their schizophrenia. This has been supported the presence of pains and aches which are mostly experienced by "Age Suit" of about 85 years old. Moreover, virtual reality as an ultimate machine allows people to learn more from the pain of others, and they get to understand better ways of supporting them. Also, it gives a room for people to go into the shoes of someone else, something which happens via a perceptual illusion known as embodiment (Elliott et al., 2018).

Even though simulations have an unpleasant component, the simulation warns people not to engage themselves with other people who are taking advantage over them. In a case where people are planning to hold a fundraiser, it is recommendable to make use of virtual reality as a prerequisite for contributors and an incentive for people on the fence. Moreover, virtual reality has a possibility to showing the real value of education. This is because virtual reality can be used to educate people about the physical environment of individuals who deserve and need their support (Walker, 2016).

Many organizations support empathy and virtual reality. The UN, Alzheimer's UK, the Guardian, and homeless charities are organizations established to offer financial support into the experiences of virtual realities with an intention to provide insights to people. Such insights are given through involvement of people in experiences they have never been involved in before. With this kind of involvement there is a hope the task will contribute to attitude and behavioral change. Besides Waytz (2016) affirms that, psychologists have intertwined themselves in a couple of experiments with a purpose of linking these experiments to virtual reality, empathy, and pro-social characters differently (Robertson, 2016).

Despite the truth that many virtual reality simulations target to give the first-person viewpoint of an individual in a specified type of condition, other virtual reality simulations focus on creating illusions concerning the ownership of the body (Walker, 2016). This involves tricking the mind of a person in regards to a body which is a virtual being considered as a personal body. Besides, it is hard to trick the mind through the identification of a rubber hand which is physical as its own. Therefore, this can be done by regarding an arm that is virtual as its own.

According to philosophical professor Erick Ramirez, it is perilous ³ to think that virtual reality is an empathy machine. Researchers say that simulations can allow people to see what it entails them to familiarize themselves with day-to-day disgraces and humiliations of prejudiced micro aggression, of being displaced or becoming an animal which is clued-up to be butchered. In such a case, it is hoped that empathy which is enabled with technology will help people to convert to kinder, better, and people who are more understanding (Ramirez, 2018).

Empathy is considered to be very hard such that sometimes it appears to be impossible. Thomas Nagel contends that human beings cannot imagine how it could have appeared if they were to become a bat or if they can have gone to prodigious to try to be a bat or living like one. In an incidence where human beings have become or tried to be like a bat, the human will not be able to change their fundamental structure. Furthermore, the human experience could appear not being anything such as the experiences of animals (Elliott, 2017). Though this can seem to be an obvious thing, there is arising of an understanding gap. This is because of the way by which human beings evolved to become embodied, their self-reflectiveness, and the experiences they encounter in their personal lives. It is through these ways and experiences that people get shaped on the way the world appears to be according to them.

Additionally, virtual reality fails in generating the type of empathic perspective-taking it is then sold as an offering. In correlation with Nagel's bat, people can do the best with virtual reality by seeing what it can result to be for humans to entangle other kinds of racial discrimination which is temporally or becoming destitute. People are expected to be careful to know the differences between experiences that are realistic and those which are gamified to racism and homelessness (Alsever, 2015).

In summation, virtual reality has become the ultimate empathy machine even though it has been entangled with limitations like locomotion sickness and potential addiction. This has been justified by the way the possibilities of virtual reality have long-drawn-out well past the common gaming and application of sales. Moreover, empathy has been of great help to humans because it has enabled them to learn from the pain of others and it has shown how we can support each other. It also allows people to fit themselves in the shoes of others through the embodiment of the illusion of body ownership.

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