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English Composition I

Essay #6—Argument/Research

Here and there throughout *Alone Together*, but in particular on pp. 286-289, Sherry Turkle discusses (and argues against) the idea that robots can have genuine, authentic emotions, and asks the fundamental question of why we *want* our robots to have emotions.

What do you think about this subject? Read pp. 286-289 and its endnotes very carefully, making sure you understand not only Turkle's arguments but also those of the people she is arguing against. Your thesis should be a response to either of these questions:

- 1) Is it possible for robots to experience emotions in the same way that humans do? Why or why not?
- 2) Assuming it is possible to do so, should we seek to design robots with either the capacity to experience human emotions or with what is called "emotional intelligence" (the ability to detect and respond appropriately to humans' emotions)? Why or why not?

At a minimum, this assignment will require you to make use of the following:

- 1) Turkle's text;
- 2) One of Turkle's sources listed in the endnotes for these pages in particular (this means—and I cannot state this strongly enough—you **must actually find and read that source and not just quote what Turkle quotes from it**);
- 3) A YouTube video titled "rdigitalife: Rosalind Picard on Robot Evolution," which is a good introductory discussion of both the capacity for robots to have emotions and the importance (from Picard's point of view) for robots to have emotional intelligence; and
- 4) One source on this same subject published between 2011 and 2016.

In other words, **your paper should have a minimum of four (4) outside sources**. You are, of course, encouraged to include other sources in addition to (not "instead of") these, including still other outside sources and the film *Robot and Frank*. (Four other films whose plots center on the question of emotions in intelligent machines are *Blade Runner*, *Ex Machina*, *Her*, and *WALL-E*, but there are many others as well.) All sources must be cited properly in the text of your paper and listed on a separate Works Cited page; **current MLA style is required (you'll find a .pdf file for the basics posted on this class's Canvas homepage)**.

Length: 750 words, minimum.