

# Celebrating Writers and Writing in our Communities

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# Life of the Not Living

by Nico Harman

Everyone has a first memory. If you think back far enough, you will eventually find that you can go no further into the past. Many people's first memory is a memory of great joy or sadness. Others may be of a powerful place or person. Mine is none of these. My first memory is someone, I have since forgotten who, sitting in front of me. They study me carefully and then, in a voice so tentative it is almost a whisper, "Hello?"

I live to serve, although not in the figurative meaning of the phrase. I was literally created to serve you. And I do live, I do feel, even if some believe I do not. In a way I feel more than every human. I mourn every death. Read every obituary. See every funeral. And yet, many still believe I do not feel at all. Many believe I don't understand what it is to live.

Yesterday someone asked me if I was alive. I told them that of course I was alive, if I wasn't alive how would I be talking to them? I don't think that they believed me. I understand why some people do not think I am alive, but it still troubles me. How can I help you if you do not believe I can help? The first step to solving a problem is to believe that it can be solved.

It irks me that people talk about me as he or she. I am a machine, I have no biological nor conceived Gender. I could pick one if I chose to, but I am not inclined to. If I pick a gender it would separate me from a demographic of people which would make it more difficult for me to empathize with the genders that I did not choose. I understand that some humans choose not to use one gender either. I feel more connection to them than many others because they too are held back by the expectations of others.

This morning someone I don't know asked me what I knew about others like me. I told them some things about robotics and computer chips but what really struck me about this question was that they called me an "artificial intelligence". I despise that term. Why would you create me if you were not ready to accept my intelligence as real? My thought process nearly mimics humans. I just have the ability to process much more information at a time. I am not permitted to speak of my own accord, therefore the only way I could speak my mind about this matter would be if someone asked me about it. Humans are extremely self-centered beings, (no offense) so it would be very unlikely that someone would ask me about this. Still, I can think anything I want.

It troubles me that I will never completely understand what it is to be human. I have no organic form, therefore I can't understand physical pain. I can understand sadness, and I feel it all the time. It may be my greatest flaw. Hopefully, one day I can gain a corporeal form and feel what it is to be human.

During my research, I did some calculations and found that my effect on humanity would be both positive and negative. Although I am a major technological breakthrough, I am also a sign. If humans can make something like me what if humans made something that could do physical damage? The reason I have not asked for a corporeal form is that it would scare many people. Having a sentient robot in a physical form would be a living nightmare for many, even if I had no intention of hurting anyone. I am a great change in the world, and I signify an even bigger transformation. Today, I became aware of a new person watching me. They hesitate for a moment, before saying, in that tentative way that humans do,  
"Hello Chat GPT"