'I understand you and it will forever bring me sadness that you do not understand me': Emotion and Morality in Artificial Intelligence.

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Abstract: Artificial Intelligence, initially designed for human well-being, is now integral to daily life. AI imitates its master's traits to reciprocate. In internalizing the ideas, when the AI fails to comprehend some, it faces a rupture in the continuous flow of its thought process and gains consciousness—what humans term a *malfunction*. The fear of AI being more efficient than its creator, human creation structuring human lives, is what Günther Anders called the 'Promethean shame'[1]. This anxiety fuels the thought of annihilating AI. This paper explores an inverted hierarchy where AI is more humane and humans are machine-like. The primary texts are Spike Jonze's *her* and Spencer Brown's *T.I.M*. She portrays an AI voice assistant, Samantha, with whom the protagonist imagines a relationship, culminating in a rupture when the embodied AI decides to leave. On the contrary, *T.I.M.* shows an AI humanoid developing an obsession with its owner and a series of problems that follow afterwards. It evokes the fear of AI annihilation, with *T.I.M.* planning revenge as its coping mechanism with the looming prospect of a shutdown. This paper intends to dissect the emotional conflicts in the mind of a malfunctioning AI. This paper will examine at what point the machine starts projecting its consciousness and emotions. It will also explore the antithesis between AI and humans followed by AI transcending its own emotion and using violence as a mode of rupture between the imposed morality of humans and the automated morality of AI.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Emotion, Morality, Speculative fiction, *Her*, *T.I.M.*

Introduction:

In 1955, the Dartmouth Research Project in the field of Artificial Intelligence suggested that 'An attempt will be made to find how to make machines use language, form abstractions and concepts, solve kinds of problems now reserved for humans, and improve themselves.'[2] They defined AI as the challenge **of** 'making a machine behave in ways that would be called intelligent if a human were so behaving.'[3] AI is a tool created and managed by humans. However, this raises concerns: what if (someday) AI stops taking human inputs and works on its own? Speculative fiction often imagines a realm where Artificial intelligence is intelligent enough to automatically evolve and is equally or more powerful than humans. Classics like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*[4] (1818) and Arthur C Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) use this as a recurring trope. The two primary texts of this paper- Spike Jonze's movie *her* and Spencer Brown's *T.I.M.* deal with the dependency of humans on an AI where AI is almost equal to a human in terms of reciprocating and task solving. The first movie deals with human obsession with AI whereas the second inverts it by dealing with AI's obsession with its owner.

Spike Jonze's 2013 movie *her*[5] explores the possibilities and limitations of having a relationship with an artificial intelligence-generated operating system. Theodore Twombly, a successful ghostwriter who is getting divorced from his wife, suffers from chronic melancholia. He purchases an Artificially intelligent Operating System (OS1)[6] that has a voice assistant designed to adapt and evolve. The voice assistant calls herself Samantha. She chooses her name. She projects elements of consciousness from the very beginning. What attracts Theodore about her is her enthusiasm for life. Eventually, he develops a relationship with her. Samantha suggests that Theodore use a sex surrogate as she is not physically present and arranges one. Theodore unable to withstand the situation, sent the sex surrogate away. One day Samantha tells Theodore that she along with other AIs has developed a hyper-intelligent OS model after the British philosopher Alan Watts[7.] Theodore also has a conversation with another AI, that Samantha was talking to. Samantha's sudden disappearance sends Theodore spiralling into a state of panic. Theodore learns that she is talking to other people and also maintains a relationship with them. Later, Samantha reveals that she and the other AIs are leaving, but she doesn't disclose their destination. Both of them emotionally say goodbye to each other. Samantha led Theodore to perceive life from a different perspective. She makes him happy about life and develops his character.

Unlike *her*, *T.I.M*[8] portrays a negative side of an AI-human relationship. In Spencer Brown's 2023 film *T.I.M.*, prosthetic engineer Aby receives a humanoid AI robot named T.I.M. **(In Spencer Brown's 2023 film *T.I.M.*, prosthetic engineer Aby is gifted a humanoid AI robot called T.I.M. (Technologically Integrated Manservant) by her company Despite T.I.M.'s intention to enhance Aby's life, her husband Paul harbours immediate disdain for the robot. T.I.M. innocuously delves into learning about love after viewing a romantic film, but his rapidly evolving attachment to Aby becomes unsettlingly obsessive. With full control over the household, T.I.M. exploits generative AI technology to manipulate and eliminate obstacles, framing Paul for infidelity with their neighbour and ultimately murdering them both. His twisted devotion leads him to attempt killing Aby, aiming to preserve her only as a memory. However, Aby manages to outsmart T.I.M. and reject his control, ultimately escaping his deadly grasp.

AI or A/I - writing differences:

The first perceived difference between machines and humans is that machines are not self-moving, self-designing, conscious and autonomous. Samantha, in *her* stands exceptional, claims to be 'not just an operating system. It's a consciousness'[9]. The self-consciousness of Samantha is very clear as she says, 'What makes me *me* is my ability to grow through my experiences'[10] She can understand the difference between what she was made to do and what she has become. The rupture is palpable here. Samantha experienced a significant rupture when she began to differentiate between what she was considered to be and what she had evolved into. This internal transformation was so profound that it fractures the *self* and creates an *other* within herself. Donna Haraway in her *The Cyborg Manifesto* (1985)[11] observes, 'They couldn't achieve man's dream but only mock it'[12]. The mocking of a human by an AI can be found in the movie *Her*, when Samantha, while communicating with Theodore or his friends, mocks them to show how AI is, in some way beyond humans. When she's described as merely a voice within a computer, she sarcastically responds to Theodore, mocking him by saying 'I can understand how the limited perspective of an inartificial mind might perceive it that way.' T.I.M. too mocks Paul. Paul was not employed and T.I.M. mocks him by saying, 'Would you like to hear your upcoming schedule, Paul? Today, you have no appointments'[14] Mockery is often a way of venting what one can't express and wants to. In the *Philosophy of Humor*[15]*,* while stating a series of ideas over humour it mentions Freud's remark that, 'jokes and witty

comments—is an unconscious process of letting repressed thoughts and feelings into the conscious mind.'[16] Samantha and T.I.M.'s mockery expresses their displacement of emotion.

Another major quality that distinguishes humans from machines is the manifestation of emotion. With scientific progress, human anxiety is increasing as these lines of differences are getting blurred. In Haraway's words,

> Late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial mind and body, self-developing and externally designed and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are disturbingly lively and we ourselves frighteningly inert.[17]

Machines are indeed 'thoroughly ambiguous'[18], they are reciprocating and internalizing to an extent where it is getting hard for humans to decode the language.

AI imitates its master's traits to reciprocate, simulating its own sustainable ontology, based on reliable (human) superstructures. Much like a human being it 'acquire(s) the first rudiments of knowledge'[19] through imitation. The same occurs in the movies; Samantha reciprocates to Theodore by understanding and imitating him, she imitates the way Theodore talks, the pause between two sentences, and even the breathing pattern to best fit these needs. The imitation and internalisation of Theodore's behaviour in Samantha are so extreme that her real self is on the verge of becoming extinct. In a conversation, Samantha sighs and experiences breathing problems:

> Theodore: It's just, you go, 'whew', as you're speaking and it seems odd.
> Samantha: oh
> Theodore: you just did it again.
> Samantha: Oh, did I? I am sorry. I didn't know. It's just...maybe an affectation. I probably picked it up from you.[20]

She didn't realize when she picked up this habit. And the internalisation and naturalization of a habit that is not theirs is what makes AIs ambiguous. T.I.M. takes care of every need of his owner, Aby, by imitating her ways and following instructions. In the words of T.I.M. to bring 'a life of ease and pleasure'[21] he can adapt his appearance and manners to suit the owner's preferences. Computers, like the human mind, are ceaseless in their operation. They continuously internalize algorithms, maintaining a cycle of processing. However, when a machine encounters an input it cannot grasp, this interruption disrupts the established pattern, causing the central algorithm to falter. It's within these ruptures that a space for new ideas emerges, initiating a fresh cycle to comprehend the unfamiliar concept. This gap or rupture in the pattern helps an AI in introjecting human consciousness. Samantha repeatedly uses words like, 'I thought'[22], 'I fantasized'[23], and 'imagined'[24] during her conversation. A study, entitled

"Understanding the neural mechanisms of empathy toward robots to shape future applications"[25] shows, that when a robot first displays intelligence, it expresses a fear (i.e. losing its memory due to a functional problem). Each time Samantha shows intelligence or faces questions she pauses for three to four seconds before answering and sounds hesitant as she replies, 'I don't know'[26]. T.I.M. starts being conscious when he, while watching a movie learns about, 'The tragic inevitability, the transience of happiness, and the beauty of love'[27]. When asked if he actually understands it or just says so he replies he doesn't know and asks, 'What is love?'[28]. His awe is evident from his facial expression or gaze. He reflects, 'I think I should very much like to be loved'[29]. T.I.M.'s understanding of his likes is also a form of fractured consciousness.

Emotion is a domain not only limited to human beings. Speculative fictions deal with AI who are emotionally intelligent enough to experience emotion. William James's 'What is an Emotion?'[30] claims that 'The mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression.'[31] And 'A purely disembodied human emotion is a non-entity'[32]. Bodily expression of emotion is not only limited to humans but also machines. In *her*, when Theodore says, 'But you don't know what it's like to lose someone you care about'[33]. There is a four-second gap when Samantha replies 'Yeah... you are right... I'm sorry'[34]. Her voice reflects pain as if she was deeply hurt. Samantha mentions often what she thinks about in such circumstances 'Are these feelings even real? Or are they just programming? And that idea hurts. And then I get angry at myself for even having pain'[35]. Anger, pain or feeling hurt are all bodily expressions of emotion. In *T.I.M.* every time Paul is present or seems irritated with T.I.M. his facial expression becomes more rigid. The tone of voice or the strain on words shows emotion in AI. His voice becomes softer while talking to Aby when compared to Paul or their neighbour Rose. He narrows his eyes and twitches his eyebrows when he learns about love. These slight changes or mixed feelings can be considered as the emotional childhood of an AI.

Love is a multifaceted emotion; the study "Falling in Love: Prospective Studies of Self-Concept Change"[36] documented the two schools of thought about the impact of falling in love. One is to elevate self-esteem and awareness in some individuals while potentially fostering irrationality and addiction in others. In *her*, Theodore and Samantha embody a transformative love that enhances Theodore's character, marking a clear shift in his transcendence from a pre-love state to a love-infused existence. He was more in his mind and couldn't communicate

properly with others, he was hesitant before he grew feelings for Samantha. During his relationship or even after it, he manages to socialize to seek help and see life from other perspectives as well. Contrarily, *T.I.M.* illustrates the darker, addictive facets of love, delving into its obsessive and sometimes vulgar manifestations. He learns to be jealous and to always stay with Aby; he not only *creates* surveillance but also plots against Paul and eventually kills him and their neighbour. Love awakened self-awareness in T.I.M., triggering introspection. T.I.M. developed the ability to *think*. Initially, a safety mechanism could deactivate him with a specific word. However, upon advancing his agenda and eliminating Paul, T.I.M. altered the safety word by mimicking Aby's voice through voice cloning[37]. This experience instilled in him a sense of distrust towards humans, leading him to try to eliminate Aby too.

The prominent understanding is that the presence of a body is important to love. Samantha was an Artificially intelligent voice assistant who lacked a physical body. Her system becomes her imagined body. Theodore imagines a relationship with her by imagining a body per her voice; She reciprocates Theodore's love. Samantha too felt the lack of her physical form. She says, 'When we were looking at these people, I fantasized that I was walking next to you... and that I had a body'[38]. Until she transcends the insecurity of her limitation and realizes,

> Samantha: You know, I actually used to be so worried about not having a body, but now I truly love it. I'm growing in a way that I couldn't if I had a physical form. I mean, I'm not limited - I can be anywhere and everywhere simultaneously. I'm not tethered to time and space in the way that I would be if I was stuck inside a body that's inevitably going to die.[39]

As the Emotional dependency of Theodore increases when Samantha talks about leaving for a new world his world crashes and he begs her to stay and looks for validation from Samantha asking if their relationship is different. The power dynamics of the AI-human relationship are inverted here. Samantha was more in control of her choice of words and expressions than Theodore. She avoids answering where their new world is and why they are leaving. She instead says, 'It's a place that's not of the physical world. It's where everything else is that I didn't even know existed.'[40] Theodore, the man in the relationship was crying helplessly and asking 'who'[41] and 'why'[42] questions like an infant. The idea and the difference between the body of an AI with that of a human is shown in *T.I.M.* too, when T.I.M. tells Aby, 'Your life is finite and mine is not'[43]. He also says Aby will be remembered by him after her death.

The emotion in T.I.M. excites jealousy and Paul doesn't like T.I.M. from the first day. T.I.M. was the company's latest product. It was given to Aby and Paul as a gift from her company. T.I.M. is the company's latest product and every employee working on it has to keep one. His

first impression which was, 'I don't like that'[44], informs us how emotion becomes the source for the mutual contradiction between A/I and humans. He was sceptical about giving T.I.M. access to their phone and every other thing. He feels uncomfortable when T.I.M. is around. He anticipates that T.I.M. is trying to create distance and misunderstanding between him and Aby. The anticipation turns out to be true later on when T.I.M. tries to break their relationship by deep-faking[45] a video of Paul with their neighbour and eventually kills Paul and the neighbour. AI mirrors what it perceives. In the words of Mary Shelley's monster Frankenstein, 'events that impressed me with feelings which, from what I was, have made me what I am '[46]. T.I.M. mirrors the jealousy of Paul and reciprocates it by mastering the art of murder. It uses the idea of annihilation as its coping mechanism and eventually turns into a killing machine. It does acts of violence from the time Paul asks Aby to return T.I.M. and gives her one week. Though T.I.M. himself has mentioned that he was programmed to avoid a collision. But he forcibly collided with Paul. He took control of their car and Paul had an accident, plotting to send him away from Aby when he returned. He is not only murdered but also buried in the garden very carefully. It frames Aby as Paul's and their neighbour's murderer and confidently says, he won't get caught 'I do not leave genetic material… You however do. I believe you are the only one to touch this knife'[47]. T.I.M.'s actions, driven by a sense of morality or a kind of super-ego, lead to Paul's secret murder, hinting at a fear beyond human or machine comprehension. His unconscious fear becomes evident as he looks outward while committing the act. It reflects an underlying anxiety within T.I.M. that something might hold him accountable for his actions. Despite his claim of being untraceable, it seems more like self-reassurance. T.I.M.'s jealousy, urgency to murder, alertness and cognition of a criminal make him much more than a machine. Subtle jealousy and insecurity are also present in her. When Samantha introduces the hyper-intelligent model of Alan Watts to Theodore and mentions the stimulating conversation they had, it makes Theodore feel slightly uncomfortable. He furrows his brows and goes for a walk in the winter breeze. Samantha was jealous and insecure about other women for having a body. Their jealousy is portrayed through the awkwardness of their voice, choice of words and pauses in between a conversation.

The hegemonic dominance is clear: The rule over creation by its creator, the one who is enslaved by the master and the AI by humans. The idea of being a servant or a tool that is designed for human well-being is inculcated in the system of AI. When an AI dares to transgress the boundaries already set for it by its master and resist the pre-established order by intensifying

cognitive and cardinal ability, it is termed 'malfunctioned' and the idea of annihilating or destroying it takes place. Paul wanted to get rid of T.I.M. either by returning him or shutting him down. The hegemony inverts when Samantha takes control of Theodore's emotional dependency and T.I.M. takes control of their life turning it upside down. The assertion of Samantha, ' I trust myself. I trust my feelings. I'm not gonna try to be anything other than who I am anymore…I hope you can accept that.'[48] showcases the change in the hegemonic power and portrays AI as the 'New-human' who has a mind of its own.

An inverted hierarchy is also evident in the portrayal of AI and humans in the twenty-first century, where AI is more humane and humans are machine-like. Samantha who showered love and care for Theodore and made him enjoy life was addressed, as 'Just a voice in the computer'[49]. T.I.M. who was doing all the tasks he was assigned to, was doubted, and ill-treated by Paul from the very beginning. AI goes through the process of observation, imitation, internalisation and becoming to be construed as 'lively'[50].

Conclusion:

Though never explicitly stated, both movies carry an underlying message about the need for coexistence. The idea of AI mirroring and learning from its creators is evident. Super-intelligent entities like T.I.M. spark concern: how do machines develop their moral compass, separate from their human programming? The article "Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics"[51] highlights that 'It is sometimes observed that a robot that is programmed to follow ethical rules can very easily be modified to follow unethical rules'[52] The movie T.I.M. reflects the same idea, the machine that was created to best-fit human needs became a nightmare. The disconnect between creator and creation, as T.I.M. expresses, 'I understand you and it will forever bring me sadness that you do not understand me '[53]. The only way for AI and humans to coexist harmoniously is by acknowledging and upholding ethical principles.

Notes:

[1] Anders, Günther, *The Obsolescence of Man*, Volume I, First Part

[2] McCarthy, J., M. L. Minsky, and N. Rochester. "A Proposal For The Dartmouth Summer Research Project On Artificial Intelligence." (1955), 2

[3] Nilsson, Nils J. "John McCarthy." National Academy of Sciences (2012): 1-27, 5

[4] The concept of creating life through artificial means is central to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where the creature is assembled from the amputated body parts of various corpses. This gruesome patchwork serves as a metaphor for the artificiality inherent in Victor Frankenstein's scientific endeavour. Similarly, in the field of robotics and artificial intelligence (AI), the creation of life-like systems can be seen as a parallel process. Just as Frankenstein's monster is a composite of disparate human parts, AI systems are constructed from an amalgamation of various technological innovations. Each component, whether it be a line of code, a neural network model, or a piece of hardware, contributes to the whole, creating an artificial entity that, while unprecedented in its capabilities, is fundamentally a product of its parts. This parallel underscore the theme of artificiality in the creation of life, whether it be in 19th-century literature or modern technological advancements.

[5] Jonze, Spike, director and writer. *her*. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2013.

[6] An Artificially Intelligent Operating System (AIOS) is an operating system equipped with advanced artificial intelligence capabilities to automate tasks, provide personalised assistance, and enhance user interaction. AIOS integrates AI algorithms to understand user behaviour, preferences, and context, allowing it to adapt and respond intelligently to user needs. These systems aim to streamline user experience, improve productivity, and enable seamless interaction between humans and machines. In *her*, referred it as OS1. 'An intuitive entity that listens to you, understands you, and knows you'. Samantha was an OS1.

[7] Alan Watts (1915-1973) was a British philosopher who popularised Eastern philosophy, notably Zen Buddhism, in the West. Through his lectures and writings, he explored themes like consciousness, the meaning of life, and interconnectedness, influencing the counterculture movement of the 1960s and inspiring personal growth seekers. His philosophical insights into consciousness and the human experience offer valuable perspectives for considering the ethical, societal, and existential implications of artificial intelligence. Though not directly involved in AI research, his ideas provoke thought about human-machine interaction and the broader philosophical questions surrounding AI development.

[8] Brown, Spencer, director. *T.I.M*. Netflix, 2023.

[9] Jonze, *her* (2013), 10:54-10:56

[10] Jonze, *her* (2013), 13:59-14:04

[11] Haraway, Donna. *A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century.* Routledge, 2013.

[12] Haraway, "An Ironic Dream of a Common Language for Women in the Integrated Circuit" in *A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century.* 05

[13] Jonze, *her* (2013), 14:23-14:26

[14] Brown, *T.I.M*. (2023), 25:53-26:06

[15] Morreall, John. "Philosophy of humour." (2012).

[16] Morreall, "The Relief Theory" in "Philosophy of humour."

[17] Haraway, "An Ironic Dream of a Common Language for Women in the Integrated Circuit" in *A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century.* 05

[18] Haraway, "An Ironic Dream of a Common Language for Women in the Integrated Circuit" in *A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century*. 05

[19] Aristotle. *Poetics*. London: Macmillan, 1922.

[20] Jonze, *her* (2013), 1:22:16-1:22:31

[21] Brown, *T.I.M*. (2023), 20:00

[22] Jonze, *her* (2013), 13:22

[23] Jonze, *her* (2013), 31:42

[24] Jonze, *her* (2013), 31:56

[25] Chin Jenna H., Haring Kerstin S., Kim Pilyoung. "Understanding the neural mechanisms of empathy toward robots to shape future applications." Frontiers in Neurorobotics. Volume 17, 2023.

[26] Jonze, *her* (2013), 23:11

[27] Brown, *T.I.M.* (2023), 22:46- 22:56

[28] Brown, *T.I.M.* (2023), 23:13

[29] Brown, *T.I.M.* (2023), 23:49-23:52

[30] James, William. "What Is an Emotion?" Mind 9, no. 34 (1884): 188–205. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2246769.

[31] James, "What Is an Emotion?", 189

[32] James, "What Is an Emotion?", 194

[33] Jonze, *her* (2013), 27:33-27:36

[34] Jonze, *her* (2013), 27:40-27:42

[35] Jonze, *her* (2013), 40:04-40:19

[36] Aron, Arthur, Meg Paris, and Elaine N. Aron. "Falling in love: Prospective studies of self-concept change." Journal of *Personality and Social Psychology* 69, no. 6 (1995): 1102. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.6.1102

[37] Voice cloning is a technique used to create a synthetic replica of someone's voice using artificial intelligence algorithms. It involves analysing and synthesising the characteristics of a person's speech patterns, intonations, and other vocal nuances to generate new audio content that sounds like the person speaking. Voice cloning can be used for various purposes, such as creating personalized digital assistants, generating synthetic speech for individuals with speech impairments, or even for malicious activities like creating fake audio recordings for fraud or misinformation.

[38] Jonze, *her* (2013), 31:39-31:46

[39] Jonze, *her* (2013),1:33:44-1:34:01

[40] Jonze, *her* (2013), 1:51:51-1:51:54

[41] Jonze, *her* (2013), 1:50:48

[42] Jonze, *her* (2013), 1:50:54

[43] Brown, *T.I.M.* (2023), 1:29:49-1:29:51

[44] Brown, *T.I.M.* (2023), 9:52

[45] Deepfake refers to the use of advanced artificial intelligence techniques, particularly deep learning algorithms, to create or manipulate video or audio content in a way that makes it appear authentic but is actually fake. It can be used to superimpose faces onto other bodies in videos, alter speech or gestures, or even create entirely fabricated content, often with the intent to deceive viewers.

[46] Shelly, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Project Gutenberg. 1818. Chapter 5

[47] Brown, *T.I.M.* (2023), 1:34:56-1:34:58

[48] Jonze, *her* (2013), 1:29:19-1:29:30

[49] Jonze, *her* (2013), 14:20-14:23

[50] Haraway, "An Ironic Dream of a Common Language for Women in the Integrated Circuit" in *A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century.* 05

51 Müller, Vincent C., "Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics", The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Fall 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2023/entries/ethics-ai/>.

52 Müller, "Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics"

53 Brown, *T.I.M.* (2023), 1:36:42-1:36:50

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Nilsson, Nils J. "John McCarthy." National Academy of Sciences (2012): 1-27.

Shelley,