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Imaginary into Real; Real into Imaginary

Final Essay

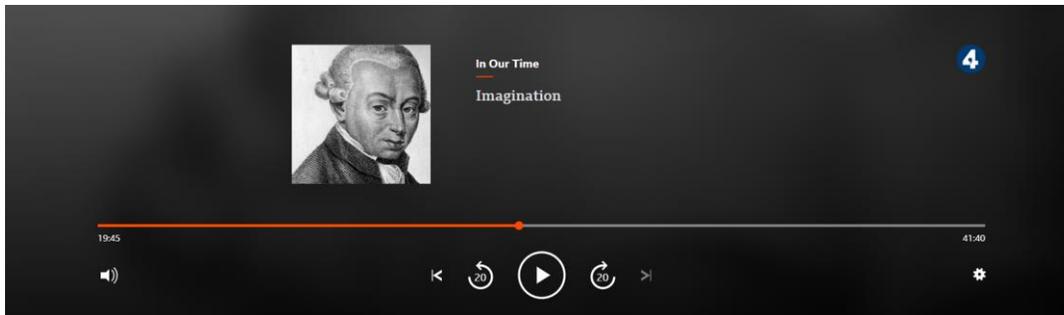
This essays aims to shed light upon how imagination is a key part in creating solution or even problems in today's world, which is; artificial intelligence. With the ever growing advancements in technology imagination has led to creating an alternate reality called artificial intelligence. The essay will focus on the questions that I have raised about humanity and how the world will eventually be and artificially intelligent. Watching movies and tv series has been my escape to get through this lockdown and I couldn't help but notice the underlying themes of a lot of content that I have seen. AI has made the line between what is imagines and what is real really thin.

To imagine is to be in a state in our mind that helps us to either visualize our desires or to just think. Imagination is something that all humans are capable of. It stems from our past experiences, memories, desires, environment and everything and anything. It can be an amalgamation of our thoughts and ideas to make the world a better place;to imagine a utopic or even a dystopic world; to solve problems.

"Imagination is a blind but indispensable function of the soul without which we should have no knowledge whatever but of which we are scarcely even conscious" - Immanuel Kant

Melvin Bragg discusses the possibilities of imagination in a podcast radio interview to various college professors and psychologists.¹

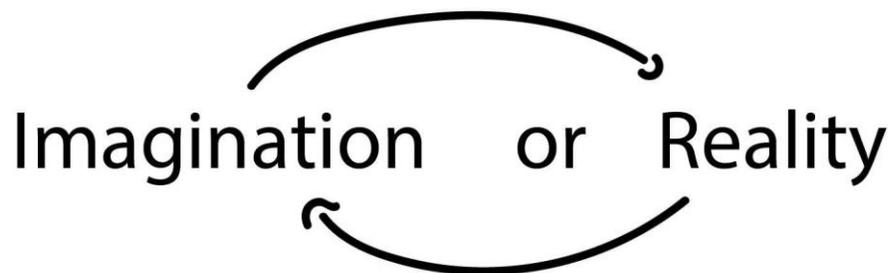
¹ Imagination on In Our Times at BBC <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p00548lc>



They talk about how imagination has been the inspiration for artists, scientists, leaders and visionaries. They understand where it came from and why is it related to creativity and what evolutionary function will it have.

But what we imagine, can that be real? Does reality stem from imagination? Or does imagination stem from reality?

What came first?

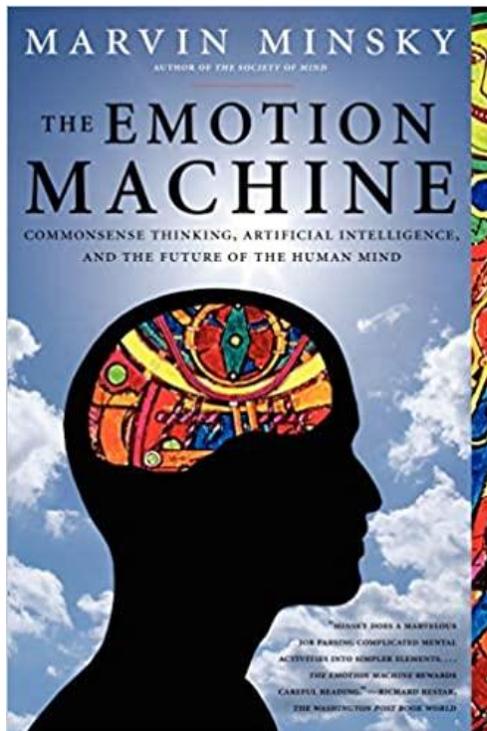


This is the question that made my mind wander and I started looking at things in this context.

With the lockdown situation, I have spent most of my time watching movies and Tv shows. Most of them fall under the sci-fi genre and I couldn't help but notice how there is an underlying theme.

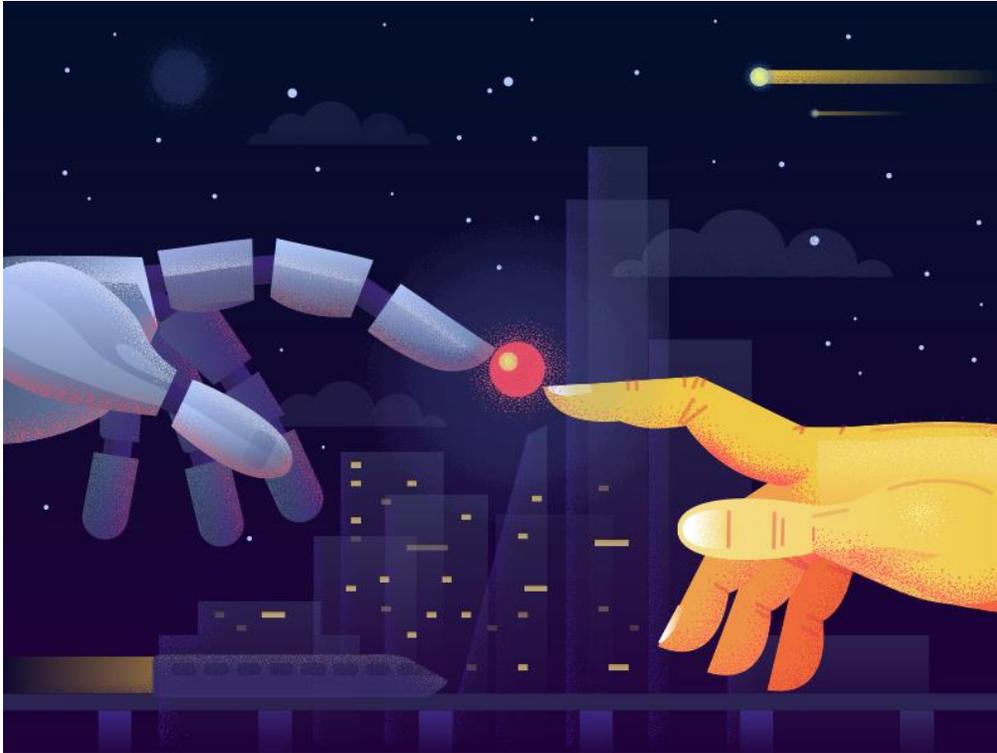
Most of them are trying to portray how the world is now being taken over by technology and a new phenomenon is born: *Artificial Intelligence*

Marvin Minsky in his book *The Emotion Machine*² explains his ground-breaking research on how our minds work and how we can use them to make machines. He discusses how our brains turn simple thoughts into complex form such as consciousness and self-awareness and if we consider these thoughts and emotions as a step by step process we can and may be able to make machines - artificial intelligences - that not only can assist with our thinking by thinking as we do but have the potential to be as conscious as we are.



In today's day an age, technology is the one of the many things that hasn't stopped growing. With the inventions and discovers of the web, mobile devices, machines, computers etc., man has researched and developed more and more things every day.

² Minsky, M. *The Emotion Machine: Commonsense Thinking, Artificial Intelligence, and the Future of the Human Mind*. Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 2006



Art by Andy Selimov for Fireart Studio³

The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology⁴ written by Raymond Kurzweil is a book that explains how the humans are going to be overshadowed by technology. Humans themselves are going to be working and inventing artificially intelligent machinery which is going to be the final invention as that is going to take over the human race.

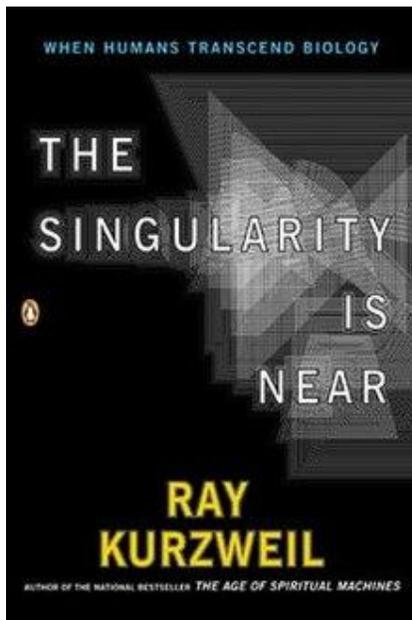
He describes his own realizations and how he started inventing things. Machinery and technology realed things, to be precise. He explains that technology is going to be spreading and us, humans, are going to be inventing machinery, robotics and artificial intelligence at such an exponential rate that it is going to surpass the human intelligence and take over our race.

“The key idea underlying the impending Singularity is that the pace of change of our human-created technology is accelerating and its powers are expanding at an exponential pace. Exponential growth is deceptive. It starts out almost imperceptibly and then explodes with unexpected fury—unexpected, that is, if one does not take care to follow its trajectory.”⁵

³ <https://dribbble.com/shots/3140598-Artificial-intelligence#shot-description>

⁴ Kurzweil, Ray. The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology. New York : Penguin, 2006.

⁵ Kurzweil, Ray. The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology, Chapter One, The Six Epochs, New York : Penguin, 2006



I have watched countless movies and TV shows that have the same underlying theme. A few such examples of them are the episode *Be Right Back- Black Mirror*⁶



The episode revolves around this young girl, Martha who finds that her husband, Ash has died. After his death, Martha is devastated and introduced to this new artificial intelligent system which uses all of Ash's social media accounts, chats etc and becomes a new online artificial intelligent Ash. Martha chats with it and considers it Ash and the story keeps evolving as how she knows it is not Ash but she does feel that it is Ash which makes her more and more frustrated.

⁶ Episode 1 – Be Right Back, Season 2 , Black Mirror

This made me realize and question that is it really going to be that hard to distinguish between artificiality and reality? Imagination and reality? Speaking of Be Right Back in particular, how Martha imagines it to be a human but it really is not. The line is getting blurred.

Imagination, in fact, is becoming reality afterall.



Art by Eric Chow⁷

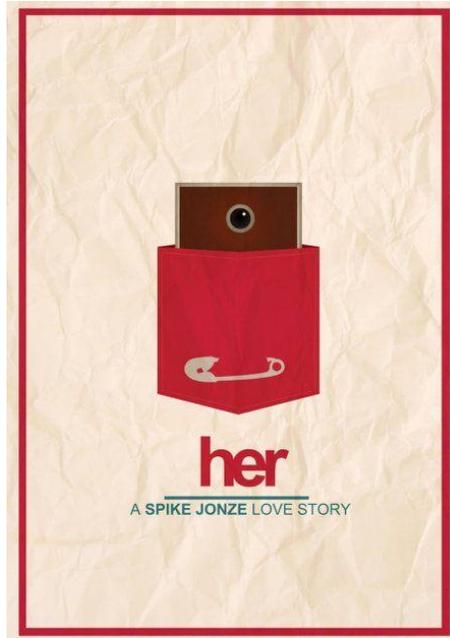
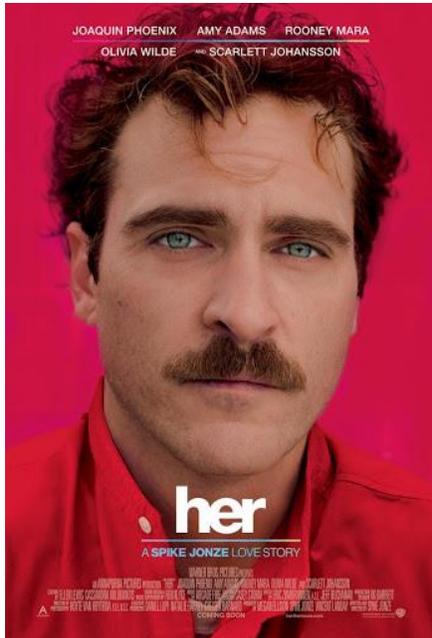
Another such example of a movie that shows how imagination and reality is blurred by the invention of artificial intelligence is *Her*

The movie is about a guy who falls in love with an Artificial Intelligent operation system and names her Samantha. The story evolves as a love story between the two which in the end he realizes that it is a computer operating system and that system is available to many others and she is in love with many others.

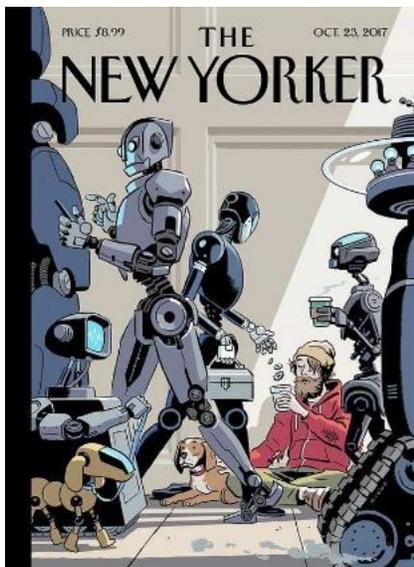
Many other movies and TV shows talk about the same things. Some of which that I have seen are

Blade Runner, Ex Machina, Robot and Frank

⁷ Artificial Intelligence EC211 -<https://i2iart.com/eric-chow>



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Imagination has taken a different form. Artificial Intelligence is the imagination of us human beings. And we have imagined it to the extent where it has now become a reality. But is it real? It feel surreal. The AI world has an exponential growth and it may or may not take over our world. Or the human race.



It is even said and now it is a prediction that an AI God will emerge amongst us.

“In the next 50 or 100 years, an AI might know more than the entire population of the planet put together. At that point, there are serious questions to ask about whether this AI — which could design and program additional AI programs all on its own, read data from an almost infinite number of data sources, and control almost every connected device on the planet — will somehow rise in status to become more like a god, something that can write its own bible and draw humans to worship it”⁸

If that were to happen, the human race would be taken over by AI. And thus the human invention would become the reason for human extinction.

In conclusion, I believe that reality came first and that has led to us imagining things. There is no limit to imagination but where will all of this imagination take us? An example of an AI God is such which explains how our imagination will be the reason of us dying or become slaves to the robots. But that itself is a imagination, right? The debate between imagination and reality, the line between the two will always remain amongst us. But it is for us to decide and ponder upon if we are using our imagination for the benefit of us or not.

⁸ <https://venturebeat.com/2017/10/02/an-ai-god-will-emerge-by-2042-and-write-its-own-bible-will-you-worship-it/>

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