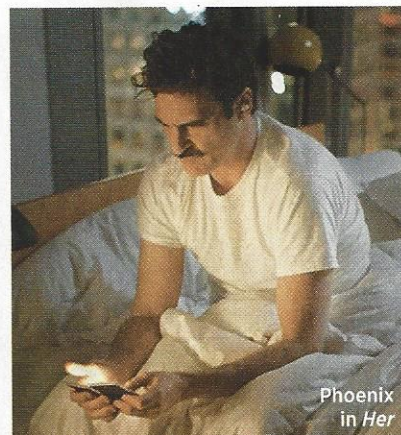


THE FUTURE

# Can 'Her' Happen? The Experts Weigh In

In Spike Jonze's new movie, *Her*, a lonely single guy named Theodore (played by Joaquin Phoenix) falls in love with a superintelligent, highly empathetic operating system named Samantha (voiced by Scarlett Johansson). The film is a strange, heartstring-pulling love story and a visual feast of retro-futuristic design – but could the film's world become a reality, and is it even one we'd want to live in? Will artificial intelligence be sexy like Samantha or terrifying like the Terminator? Or is the idea of a computer with human emotions pure science fiction? Three futurist thinkers have the answers.

JONATHAN RINGEN



Phoenix  
in *Her*

## RAY KURZWEIL

Author, technology philosopher



In my timeline, Samantha-level AI will appear around 2029. But it's not going to be us versus them, or unenhanced humans versus

the machines. Whether the machines are enemies or lovers, we're going to integrate with them. We'll be enhanced – and I would argue we're already enhanced with the devices we have. We've already extended our mental capacities with computers. Even if they aren't yet inside our bodies and brains, that's an arbitrary distinction. I wrote my last book in a fraction of the time of my first book, just because of all these technologies we have. And they're getting closer and closer – there are a couple of billion smartphones on the planet. By the 2030s, when computers are the size of blood cells, they'll go inside our bodies and brains quite effortlessly and unobtrusively.

## JARON LANIER

Virtual-reality pioneer



People are already willing to believe that Facebook, Google or Netflix know us – but that's just simple code running a confidence game.

So who controls Samantha? Why does the company that makes her exist? And is Samantha even real, in the sense of a real artificial intelligence? Just because you believe the machine is alive doesn't mean it actually is. Maybe there's a room full of guys who are the puppet masters, scripting Samantha moment to moment. Or suppose that Samantha is a scam involving an actress working for criminals somewhere. There will never be a reliable "consciousness meter" to determine if supposed AIs are real, which means it's up to us to decide whether or not to have faith in them. I've always argued that the more pragmatic choice is to *not* believe.

## DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF

Author, cyberspace theorist



Who in this strange, sick society wouldn't want a Stepford Entity? Especially if it's Scarlett Johansson! But in the movie – and much of the

scientific community – there's this underlying, unquestioned presumption that as technology gets more complex, consciousness will emerge. That our robots or nanos or computers or programs are going to achieve this singularity point where they become conscious, and then surpass us. But remember how badly people responded when Dell hired people in India to do customer service? Even college-educated, English-speaking citizens of India couldn't relate to Americans well enough to satisfy our customer-service needs. That makes me think that the kinds of fantasies we're talking about are hundreds of years away, rather than decades.

COOL INFLUENCE

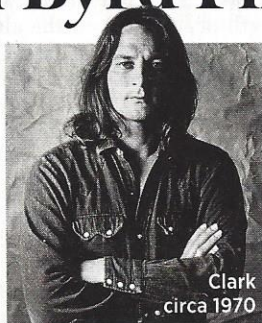
# Gene Clark: Forgotten Byrd Flies Again

Indie-rock stars perform the late singer's cult classic 'No Other' in full

**G**ENE CLARK WROTE and sang Byrds classics like 1965's "I'll Feel a Whole Lot Better" – but the late artist also sabotaged his own career with alcohol and erratic performances. Now he's been re-

discovered by a new generation: In January, Beach House's Alex Scally and Victoria Legrand corralled a group of indie all-stars (including members of Fleet Foxes and Grizzly Bear) for four shows playing Clark's 1974 cult favorite, *No Other*, in full.

When Beach House formed a decade ago, Scally and Legrand bonded over the opulent-



Clark  
circa 1970

ly produced psych-folk album. "I remember thinking, 'This is probably a famous record like *After the Gold Rush*,'" says Scally. "Then I found out no one knew it." The *No Other* shows painstakingly re-created the LP, which Clark didn't tour behind. "We played every fill," says Scally. "The songs had never been played live that way." DAVID BROWNE

FROM TOP: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE; JESSE JENKINS; CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: WARNER BROS. PICTURES; ENTAGENCY; MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/BETTY IMAGES; JOHN M. HELLER/GETTY IMAGES; CHELSEA LAUREN/WIREIMAGE