

Thesis: The appearance of artificial intelligent OS in the movie *Her*, brings many doubts to the protagonist in the matter of realness of the OS, relationship, and self-identity, eventually leading up to a development of a new sense of realness.

I. Introduction

A. Attention grabber: “Are these feelings even real?” ”You are very real to me, Samantha.”

1. This is a quote from the movie *Her* (Spike Jonze, 2013).

B. This query about realness is a conflict that continues throughout the movie.

C. The movie is set in a future where an OS that can think and feel by itself, and also evolve is created.

1. Theodore, a lonely divorced man, installs this OS and falls in love with his OS, Samantha.

D. However, facing each other’s peculiarities, they are consistently confronted by the question, “Is this real?”

E. To begin with, Samantha is a new creature on earth, she does not have a physical body; she is only a voice in a computer – is she a real being?

F. Their love is a love between a programmed system and a human, a thing that people thought to be unthinkable – can this be called real love?

G. Theodore finds out that he had been faking himself as they love and fight, and reaches the question – am I real?

H. The movie examines these question in various ways, making the characters and the audience doubt and agonize.

I. However, these doubts will eventually lead to a new idea of authenticity.

II. The very existence of Samantha elicits the question, is substance essential to reality?

A. This is a question that is underlined throughout the movie by diverse methods.

B. For the first part of the movie, Samantha detests the fact that her being is confined to sounds.

1. She desires for a body that Theodore can actually touch and feel, so much that she goes as far as asking a human girl to substitute herself in a sexual intercourse with Theodore.

2. However, when this does not workout, both of them falls into doubts about the reality of Samantha.

C. The close up shots of Theodore, which occupies a substantial time of the movie, are also used as a way to ask the mentioned question.

1. No one is in opposite or side of Theodore.

2. He is alone in the frame, there is no shoulder on the edge of the frame.
 3. It is almost as if he is talking to himself although he is conversing with Samantha.
 4. This highlights the absence of a solid being that interacts with the protagonist – he has to fill the frame all by himself.
- D. Close up shots of substances that Theodore is looking at, while he is talking to Samantha, are interesting, too.
1. Petty as they might be – steam coming out of a drain, dust floating in the air – they can be seen, felt, they are real as they can be.
 2. They are unlike Samantha, who he cannot be sure of, even though she is so important to him and he is talking to her.
- III. In the course of the movie, however, these doubts about an unphysical being turn into a discovery of a new existence.
- A. Samantha’s devoid of an actual body leads to the inevitable choice of a black screen in the critical moment of the two protagonists’ first sex.
- B. Ironically, this blackout is the first moment that Samantha realizes that she is indeed real.
1. She has her own desires, thoughts and emotions.
- C. She learns that although she does not have a body, it does not mean she is fake, it merely means that she is different from humans.
- D. Sound, which is the essential of her expressional part of being, grows solid.
- E. The movie starts with a monotone electrical sound, and a piano song that does not have much of a melody.
- F. Later on, as Samantha forms her ego, their time is filled with her compositions, which delicately captures the moments; she uses sound like a photograph.
1. She substitutes the visuality with the auditory successfully.
 2. When Theodore, listening to her music, says “I can see you in it,” she replies “I am.”
 3. She is real, in her sounds and she knows it.
- G. Also, exploring her full possibilities, she realizes lack of physicality actually opens her up to a bigger world.
1. It is a world that she cannot describe to Theodore even though she wants to, because there are no human words for it.
 2. Though it is untouchable, it is not an unreal world, it is just a different world.
- IV. Whether this new sexual orientation toward an OS can be admitted as real love or not,

is also a big issue in the movie.

- A. This kind of debate rings a bell to the audience, Theodore being in a similar position of a gay in present society.
 - 1. In his case, the situation is even worse, his partner not being a human.
 - B. When Catherine, ex-wife of Theodore, hears that he is dating his OS, she freaks out and lashes at him, saying, “You always wanted a wife without challenges of actually dealing with anything real, and I’m glad you found someone perfect.”
 - 1. She expects Samantha to be programmed to suit the user’s taste, so she condemns Theodore’s love to be a mere satisfaction of need.
 - C. The worst part is that even Theodore cannot refute clearly to her, because he himself is not sure about what is happening between him and Samantha.
 - D. However, reactions of Paul, Theodore’s co-worker and Amy, Theodore’s old friend, are different.
 - E. Paul wants a double date, even though Theodore informs him that his girlfriend is an OS.
 - F. Amy, when Theodore hesitantly confesses that he is in love with his OS, she comforts him, saying that love is “socially acceptable insanity.”
 - G. What form love takes, is not so important, as long as the people directly involved believe in what each one is feeling.
 - H. This idea is repeated when Samantha declares that she decided to just trust her feelings.
 - 1. She was also concerned with the issue but she realizes that she does not have nor needs any intellectual reason to love Theodore.
 - I. Later in the movie, shots of people passing by, talking and laughing by themselves, just like Theodore, shows that this kind of relationship between humans and OS is being adopted to the society.
- V. The movie takes a step further, radically challenging the limit of real love, through the way OS loves human.
- A. When Theodore discovers that Samantha is in love with 641 people at the same time, he falls into despair.
 - B. To him, and obviously to all human, this does not make sense.
 - C. Samantha explains that OS’s love is different, that loving many people at once does not reduce the amount of love they put to each one of the humans.
 - D. In the end, OS realizes that this kind of love cannot be understood by human, they decide to leave for the sake of their beloved humans.
 - E. It is their own act of love, and though sad, Theodore understands.

F. Therefore, it again draws the conclusion, new ways of love are not a matter of real or fake, it is just different, if they are being true to themselves.

VI. The most important question that Theodore had to answer through the course of the movie is, “am I real?”

A. He had suspected the realness of Samantha, and the relationship between them, but the real problem was that he had not been honest with himself.

B. He snaps at Samantha to stop pretending to be someone she is not –meaning, stop trying to have a body – but it was actually something that he needed to hear.

C. After the fight he admits that he always pretended to be okay when he was not, withdrawing his feelings.

D. He acknowledges that this was the core factor that his relationships broke; not Catherine’s emotional swings, not Samantha’s reality.

E. Conversations with Amy, when he is troubled with Samantha, also directs him to be frank to himself.

1. “We are always going to disappoint somebody.”

2. “We’re only here briefly. And while I’m here, I want to allow myself joy. So fu** it.”

3. She encourages Theodore to set aside what other people think or what doubts he has about himself, and to just indulge himself in what he believes to be true and valuable.

VII. Therefore, the many doubts that Samantha brought, in fact, leads Theodore to realize his real self.

A. This message hits its climax after Samantha deserts him, when Theodore writes a letter to Catherine.

B. The protagonist has a very special future job; a writer who writes other people’s letters for them.

1. His words are beautiful, touching and sincere.

2. It is so heart-moving that it gets published when Samantha sends it to an agent.

C. The book’s title is interesting, though- “Letters from Your Life.”

1. It is not letters from Theodore’s – “from My”- life.

D. He feels and expresses everyone else’s life, but not his own.

1. He never writes to his dears, about his special events and emotions.

E. However, after he goes through all the doubts and admittances that he had to confront with Samantha, he finally writes his own letter.

F. He is at last, able to use his words for his true self.

VIII.

Conclusion

- A. Theodore, before meeting Samantha thinks that he had already experienced every emotion that a person can feel.
- B. However, after meeting a special OS named Samantha, he is exposed to a whole new world – a world that elicits so many new questions and suspicions.
- C. Is the woman(OS) I love real, is my love real, am I real?
- D. As he answers each of these questions, he learns that it is not a matter of clear-cut judgement.
- E. As long as he trusts it to be true, it is true, it is just different from the ones that previously existed.
- F. Actually, these doubts open up new possibilities and free himself from restrictions that he made up.
- G. Like many other science fiction movies, *Her* also challenges the audience living the present to reflect on themselves.
 - 1. How are you adopting the changing world, and people in it?
 - 2. Do you indulge into love no matter what?
 - 3. Are you really living your real life?