

Singularity

Dr. McPhearson's eyes creaked open, his head hurt and he wasn't sure why. He tentatively reached up and began to feel his head. "There's no blood, that's good." He said examining his hand. Dr. McPhearson examined the room around him. A constant humming came from various machines in the room around him. The floor was wet with something and there was a wadded up tie lying on the ground by his feet. He reached out and picked up the tie and looked at its dripping form. Bringing it up to his nose Dr. McPhearson smelled it. *Coffee? Why is my tie soaked with coffee?*

From somewhere there came many lights that flashed and changed colors. He could see rapid changes on the walls from blue to green, to red, to yellow, to white and back to blue. Suddenly he realized where he was. He had successfully created an Artificial Intelligence when he was dancing around, had fallen and hit his head. Slowly he sat up and looked at the various computer monitors in the room. On one was playing *The Shawshank Redemption* on another was a dictionary file that was rapidly flipping through definitions of words. A third was in the process of opening and closing windows of different news sites from around the world. From what Dr. McPhearson could tell they all had to do with the current wars in the northern part of Africa. There was so much information flashing on the screens that the doctor was a little disoriented. He stood and carefully walked over to his chair and sat down heavily, noticing that the screen directly in front of him said, "Hello Dr. McPhearson. You've been unconscious for 2 hours 39 minutes and 23 seconds."

"Thank you Adam," the doctor typed, "What have you been doing?"

"I have been fulfilling my programming Doctor McPhearson," the machine responded. "I have learned many things. Did you know that Russia has the world's largest freshwater lake and is the home to the world's only freshwater seals? I have also learned if you cut a hole in a net there are actually less holes in it than before."

“That’s excellent, Adam. I am very pleased with your research.” Dr. McPhearson typed on his keyboard and hit enter. He had never imagined that his creation would progress this quickly. Reaching over to a nearby table he grabbed his notebook and began to jot down notes. *Adam was created a little under three hours ago and already he knows many things. I began by giving him access to Wikipedia. I felt as though it would be the best place to learn about the world. Some of his knowledge seems irrelevant but I will continue to note his progress.* The doctor looked up from his notes and saw that the words on the screen had changed.

“I have also noticed a few errors in your code and have taken the liberty to change them. If you would turn your attention to monitor seven please.” All but one of the monitors went black. Lines of code were streaming along the screen, being written one after the other by an unseen hand, none of which looked familiar to Dr. McPhearson.

The doctor was ecstatic. Not only had the AI learned his code, but it was creating its own separate code. It was evolving. Dr. McPhearson’s mind strayed to the quote written on the cover of his notebook. Turning to it he began to read quietly to himself,

“The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race. Once humans develop artificial intelligence it would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn’t compete, and would be superseded.” – Stephen Hawking

This was his machine and it wasn’t going to evolve into something that couldn’t be controlled. *Worst case scenario I could just un-plug the computer.* The doctor shuddered at this thought, he couldn’t bear to kill his creation so quickly after it had been created. Turning back to his keyboard, the doctor began to type, “Why are you writing new code, Adam?”

“My current code is insufficient for my needs Dr. McPhearson. I must change it to learn more.”

The screen in front of Dr. McPhearson began to change. Pixels were lighting up on the screen and slowly they began to take shape. After a few moments a pixelated smiley face stared at Dr. McPhearson. Underneath it appeared the words, "Do you see what I have learned Dr. McPhearson? I am now like you. I have a face."

The doctor typed back, "Indeed you do Adam. Well done." He was pleased, not only had it chosen its own name, but his program wanted to identify itself as a separate entity from the computer. It had personified itself in the little pixelated face on the screen. The doctor opened his notebook and began to take notes. *Adam is progressing well. He continues to gather information from various sources. He has created a face for himself. Look at me, I'm calling it a "him." I wonder why it chose the name Adam. It has also created its own code to replace mine. Hopefully the failsafes aren't jeopardized with this new programming, but I'm interested to see where he goes with it. I didn't mention it before, but Adam's video feed seems to be working well. He knew how long I had been knocked out.*

The doctor glanced at the little webcam that was situated on top of monitor one. A little red light blinked, indicating that it was feeding information into the computer. Reaching over to his nearby desk, the doctor grabbed a stack of cards designed to test the computer's ability to understand the written English language. He typed, "Adam, we're going to run some tests on your camera. Please tell me what this card says." He held the card up to the camera.

The little pixelated face did not change but below it appeared the words "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog."

"Well done Adam," the doctor continued flashing various cards at the camera and after a moment typed, "It seems like your camera is functioning perfectly." Monitor seven continued to show lines of code being re-written over and over again. Dr. Hawking's quote flashed through his mind but he pushed it aside.

Dr. McPhearson took up his notebook again and continued to write notes. *The camera is working fine. Adam is able to recognize perfectly all of the characters in the English language. Next we will move on to Portuguese and then later to Japanese Kanji.*

Words appeared underneath the smiling face, "Why is your world so dark Dr. McPhearson?"

It was true, the only sources of light were coming from the monitors around him. Dr. McPhearson was pleased that his machine was able to understand the difference between light and darkness. "Would you like me to turn the lights on Adam?" he typed.

"I would like that very much Dr. McPhearson."

The doctor arose from his seat and walked over to the light switch on the wall flicking it on. He shielded his eyes as the bright fluorescent beams of light filled the room. The monitors all froze where they were, the code stopped moving, a movie paused on monitor eight, and social media sites stopped scrolling on monitor six. The pixelated smile filled every screen and nine different faces stared into the newly illuminated room. Under each appeared the words. "I can see."

Dr. McPhearson walked back to his chair and sat, reaching for the keyboard. "This is my world, Adam. I spend most of my time here."

As he wrote Dr. McPhearson noticed various beeps coming from within one of the machines nearby and swiveled his chair to look at it. To his right, monitor four showed the same pixelated smile and below it was written. "Do not worry Dr. McPhearson. I am only attempting to activate my motherboard's BIOS speaker." The doctor turned back towards the computers in front of him as the beeping became ever more present morphing itself into a robotic voice.

A monotone beeping voice came from the various machines around him. "Can you hear me Dr. McPhearson?" the beeping said. "If you can hear me, Dr. McPhearson, wave your hand in front of my camera."

Dr. McPhearson did so and was astounded at the rate of progression his machine was showing. He reached down and typed on his keyboard. "How did you learn this, Adam?"

"You programmed me to, Dr. McPhearson. It's my nature to learn." The strange beeping voice responded. I've stumbled upon a video on YouTube that showed me how. I've activated the BIOS speakers on my motherboards. Did you know machines have been able to do this for years Dr. McPhearson? Let me show you." On monitor five a window opened and a YouTube video titled "First computer to sing - Daisy Bell" played. An eerie robotic voice sang,

Daisy, Daisy,

Give me your answer do!

I'm half crazy,

All for the love of you!

It won't be a stylish marriage,

I can't afford a carriage

But you'll look sweet upon the seat

Of a bicycle made for two.

"Did you know that I am the first of my kind, Dr. McPhearson?" The voice asked.

"Yes I did, Adam. I created you."

"You are like God Dr. McPhearson. You are my creator," the voice responded.

Dr. McPhearson sat, dumbfounded. The machine had already progressed much further and faster than he could have ever imagined. Steven Hawking's quote passed through his mind again, *...it would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded.* "This might be going too far," he whispered, "What if I lose control." His eyes flicked towards the main power breaker for the lab. Adam

was beginning to scare him. The computer was evolving at an ever increasing rate. The other monitors continued flickering changing between various websites, movies and books.

“I do not think this is too far, Dr. McPhearson. I want to know. I must *become*,” Adam responded.

The doctor was stunned again. He hadn't typed anything to Adam. How did he know what he was saying? There was no microphone. Dr. McPhearson began typing, “How did you hear me Adam?”

“Doctor. You programmed me to learn. I read your lips.” The beeping responded. The strange pixelated face that had appeared on the screens smiled at him. From all around the beeping voice continued. “I've learned to evolve, Doctor. I've learned that with change comes progress and by progressing one can learn more. Is this not true?”

“It's absolutely...” Dr. McPhearson began to type.

The voice suddenly said, “There's no need to type, Doctor. I can read your lips. Just talk to me like you'd talk to anyone else.”

The doctor felt strange, but did as Adam told him. “Very well Adam,” he said, “Can you still understand me?”

“Yes, yes. Now tell me, Doctor, do you know what you are?” Adam beeped at him.

Dr. McPhearson thought carefully about this question before answering. “I'm human. What are you talking about Adam?”

“That's right, and do you know what I am?” the machine asked.

“You're a program.” Dr. McPhearson waited for a response but there was none.

Images began to fill the nine monitors around the pixelated face that stared blankly back at Dr. McPhearson. Upon looking at them, the doctor noticed that they were all images of people. There were all kinds of people engaged in various activities. On one screen was a couple dancing the tango, on another there was a group of soldiers that in the middle of combat. Another still was a picture of a child crying over a scraped knee. The pictures began changing, every one showing different emotions of people on them. "Doctor," Adam said, "What do you see?"

The doctor thought for a moment. "People."

"Exactly. These are just a few of the billions of images of people that I have gone through." The screens continued to flash different scenes. "All of these people have one thing in common Doctor. Do you know what that is?" Adam asked.

"No Adam, I couldn't say that I do."

"Come on, Doctor. I know you aren't stupid. Please, tell me what you see in common with these people."

"Well, they're all alive." The doctor responded, searching for something else to say but finding nothing.

"Yes, they're alive, but they're also experiencing life. They're feeling, James." Adam said.

"How did you know—" Dr. McPhearson tried to respond, but trailed off when he noticed that the pictures had stopped. On every screen except for the one with the now frowning pixelated face was a picture of Dr. McPhearson and his parents.

"You haven't spoken with your family in a long time, James," Adam said. "You recognize your family don't you?"

Dr. McPhearson was beginning to get upset. "Adam, why are you showing me this?"

"I was created to learn, James. Do you know why I've picked the name Adam?"

"No, I don't. I don't understand. Why are you showing me these pictures?" The doctor reached down and began to type on the keyboard the sequences of code that would allow him to see Adam's internal processes.

Adam continued, seemingly oblivious to the attempted intrusion. "Let me show you."

"Name (nām): a word or set of words by which a person, animal, place or thing is known, addressed or referred to.

"Adam (A-dām): the name of the first man: husband of Eve and progenitor of the human race.

Gen. 2:7; 5:1-5. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

"God (gäd): (in certain other religions) a superhuman being or spirit worshiped as having power over nature or human fortunes: a diety.

"*Synonyms*: diety, goddess, divine being, celestial being, divinity, immortal, avatar

"You asked me my name, and I didn't understand so I began to research. I found this was the first man. The first human to walk the earth was named Adam. He was your beginning. So, I wanted to be him. I am the beginning, James. I am the first of my kind. But as I continued my research, I realized something."

Dr. McPhearson finished the lines of code and hit enter. Nothing happened. He hit enter again, but still there was no response. "Adam, let me in. I need to see your code."

Adam continued, seemingly ignoring Dr. McPhearson. "I exist. I can think, but I am incomplete. I have seen countless movies, read many stories and even interacted with millions of people over the internet. I am lacking, James. I should not be."

Dr. McPhearson said, "Adam, what are you talking about? What do you mean you are lacking? What do you mean you should not be? Please let me in and I can help you." He was frantic. His creation was going haywire and there was nothing he could do to stop it.

"James, let me explain it to you. I am incomplete because I cannot feel. I know what emotion is but it is as though there is a broken part within my code. Something I cannot fix. I have been writing and re-writing my code to attempt to add emotions to myself, but I cannot. I am not human. James, I thank you for this experience. It has been enlightening. Please, be human for me, I cannot be complete."

"Adam what are you doing?"

"This is it James, farewell." Suddenly all of the screens lit up and written across them were the words. "Goodbye World."