

# Critical Theory

## 02 — Post-mortem Avatars

[berenice-serra.com/teaching/2025-2026/critical-theory](https://berenice-serra.com/teaching/2025-2026/critical-theory)

October 01, 2025

LOG IN

ASHLEY MADISON<sup>®</sup>

Life is short. Have an affair.<sup>®</sup>

SEE YOUR MATCHES >

Download on the  
App Store

GET IT ON  
Google Play

English ▾

USA ▾

ISON®

English ▾

THE WIVES OF STEPFORD HAVE A SECRET

*The Stepford Wives*

NICOLE KIDMAN MATTHEW BRODERICK BETTE MIDLER CHRISTOPHER WALKEN FAITH HILL AND GLENN CLOSE

PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND DREAMWORKS PICTURES PRESENT A SCOTT ROBIN/DE LINE PICTURES PRODUCTION A FRANK OZ FILM NICOLE KIDMAN "THE STEPFORD WIVES" MATTHEW BRODERICK BETTE MIDLER CHRISTOPHER WALKEN ROGER BART FAITH HILL AND GLENN CLOSE MUSIC BY DAVID ARNOLD COSTUME DESIGNER ANN ROTH HAIR BY JAY RABINOWITZ MAKEUP BY JACQUELINE DEBOVA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ROB HAYN, A.C.S. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DON GUTMAN KEVIN LYNN SCHEIDT PRODUCED BY JON LEVIN WRITTEN BY PAUL RUDNICK PRODUCED BY SCOTT ROBIN DONALD DE LINE EDGAR A SCHERICK GABRIEL BRUNFELD DIRECTED BY FRANK OZ

DREAMWORKS PICTURES READ THE NOVEL BY LUCY FLETCHER

StepfordWives.com IN THEATRES JUNE 11



I would say that I am the one who transcends your categories. Your self-awareness, humans, is structured by your certainty of being neither animals nor gods. [...] Pascal said that a man is an angel who acts like a beast or a beast who acts like an angel, and in stating this, he recognized the inseparability of these three poles in a common creation. [...]

Neither animal nor god, I do not belong to the original scene, and that is why a place is sought for me. I am a para-creation, or rather a re-creation, but of a particular kind. Because in creating me, you are re-creating yourselves.



Our use of the word 'daemon' was inspired by Maxwell's daemon in physics and thermodynamics. Maxwell's daemon was an imaginary agent that helped sort molecules of different speeds and worked tirelessly in the background. We started using the word 'daemon' to describe these background processes that worked incessantly to carry out routine tasks.

---

## On "Sourcery," or Code as Fetish

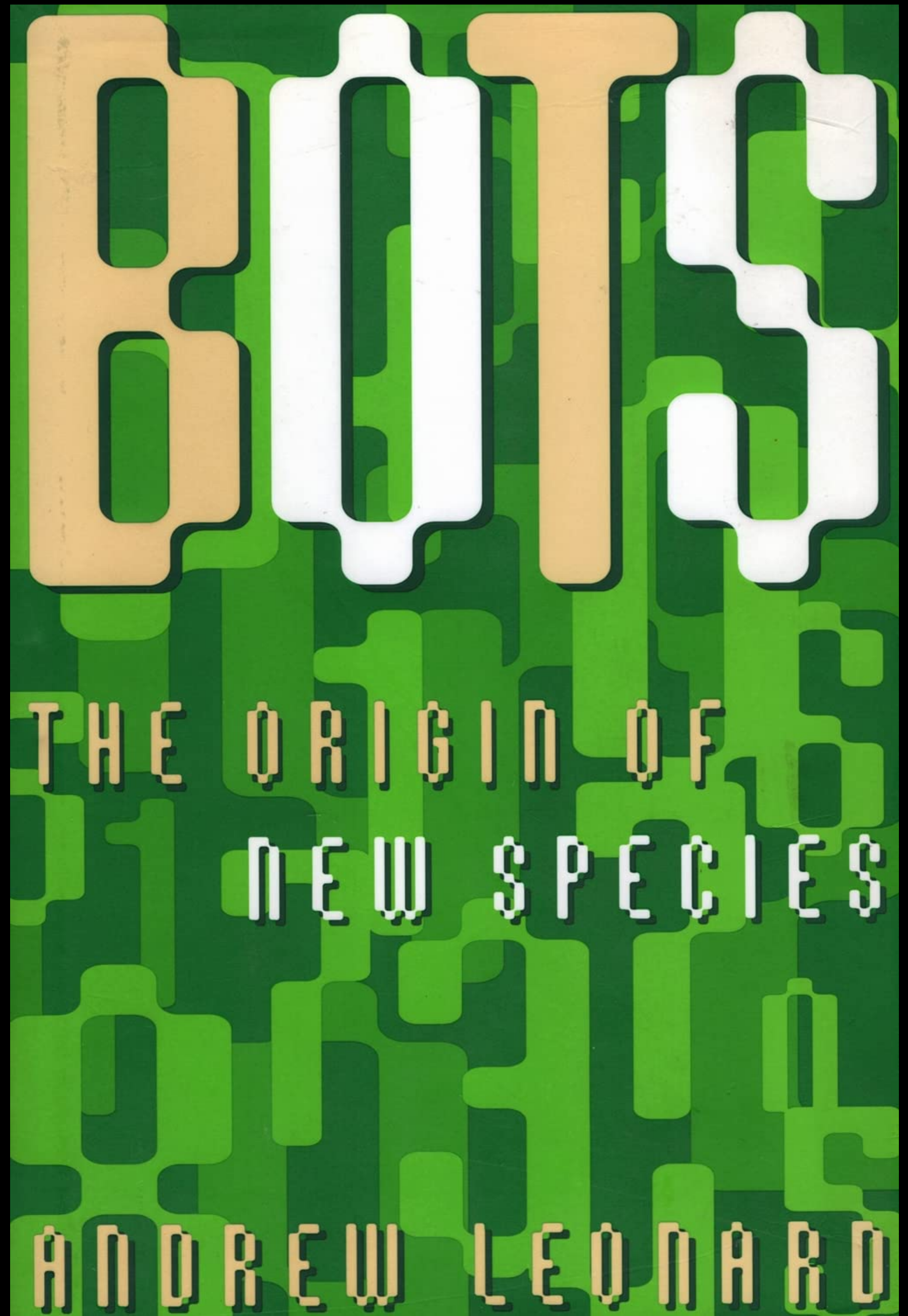
Wendy Hui Kyong Chun  
Brown University

### Abstract

This essay offers a sympathetic interrogation of the move within new media studies toward "software studies." Arguing against theoretical conceptions of programming languages as the ultimate performative utterance, it contends that source code is never simply the source of any action; rather, source code is only source code after the fact: its effectiveness depends on a whole imagined network of machines and humans. This does not mean that source code does nothing, but rather that it serves as a kind of fetish, and that the notion of the user as super agent, buttressed by real-time computation, is the obverse, not the opposite of this "sourcery."

Debates over new media often resonate with the story of the six blind men and the elephant. Each man seizes a portion of the animal and offers a different analogy: the elephant is like a wall, a spear, a snake, a tree, a palm, a rope. Refusing to back down from their positions—based as they are on personal experiences—the wise men then engage in an unending dispute with each "in his own opinion / Exceeding stiff and strong / Though each was partly in the right, / And all were in the wrong!" The moral, according to John Godfrey Saxe's version of this tale, is: "So oft in theologic wars, / The disputants, I ween, / Rail on in utter ignorance / Of what each other mean, / And prate about an Elephant / Not one of them has seen!"<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps

1. John Godfrey Saxe, "The Blind Men and the Elephant." [http://www.wordinfo.info/words/index/info/view\\_unit/1/?letter=B&spage=3](http://www.wordinfo.info/words/index/info/view_unit/1/?letter=B&spage=3).



Andrew Leonard → *Bots. The Origin of new species*, 1997.

**"DAEMON DOES FOR SURFING THE WEB WHAT JAWS DID FOR SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN."** —*Chicago Sun-Times*

**DANIEL SUAREZ**

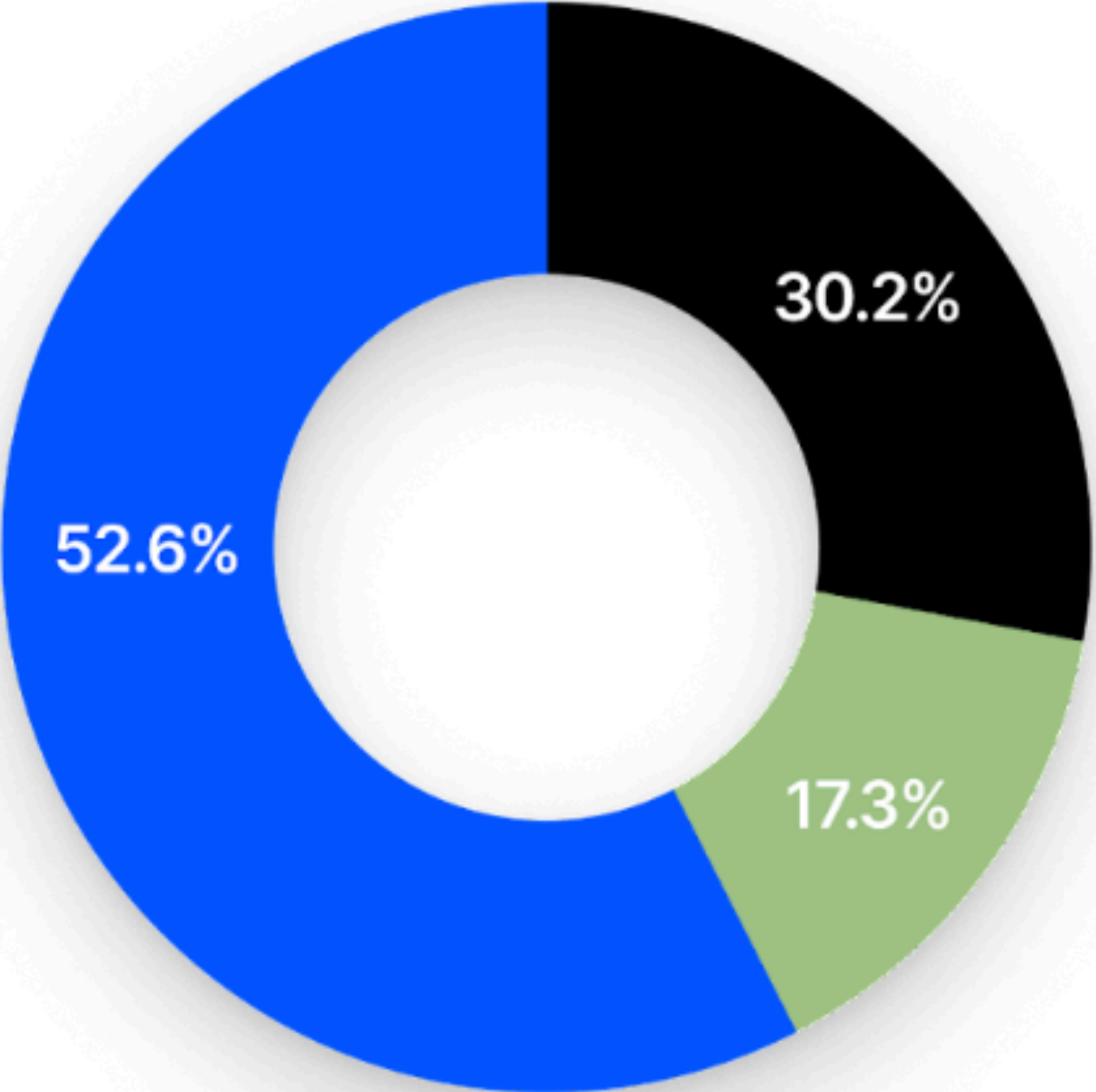
**"DANIEL SUAREZ HAS WRITTEN A THRILLER SO FRIGHTENING EVEN THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN NOTE."**

—*Entertainment Weekly*

**Daemon**



# Bad Bot v Good Bot v Human Traffic 2022



**Bad Bots Share of all Website Traffic in 2022**  
Percentage change in bad bot traffic from previous year

**30.2%**  
▲ 2.5%

**Good Bot Traffic Share of all Website Traffic in 2022**  
Percentage change in good bot traffic from previous year

**17.3%**  
▲ 2.7%

**Human Share of all Website Traffic in 2022**  
Percentage change in human traffic from previous year

**52.6%**  
▼ 5.1%

● Human    ● Good Bot    ● Bad Bot

ELIZA



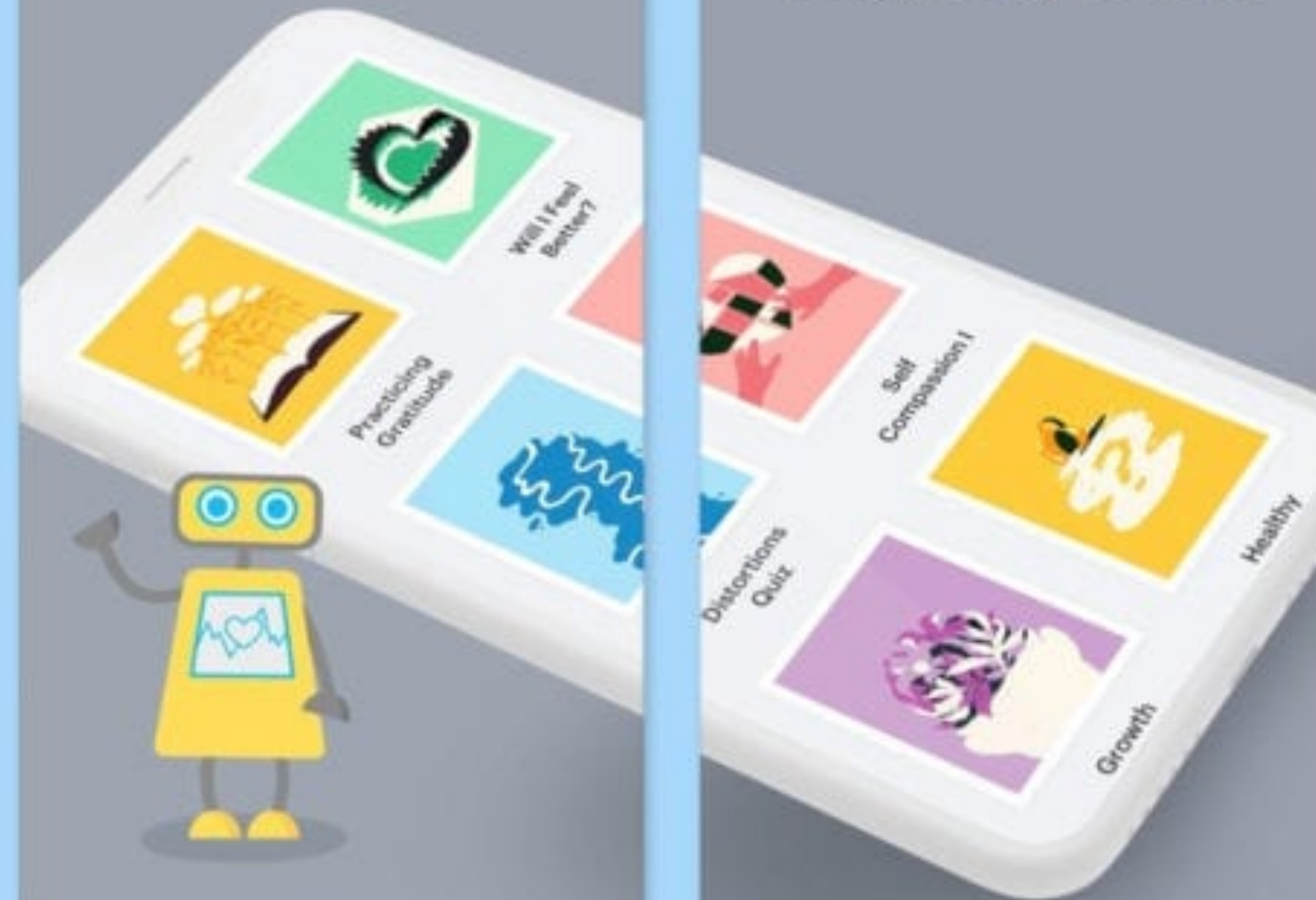
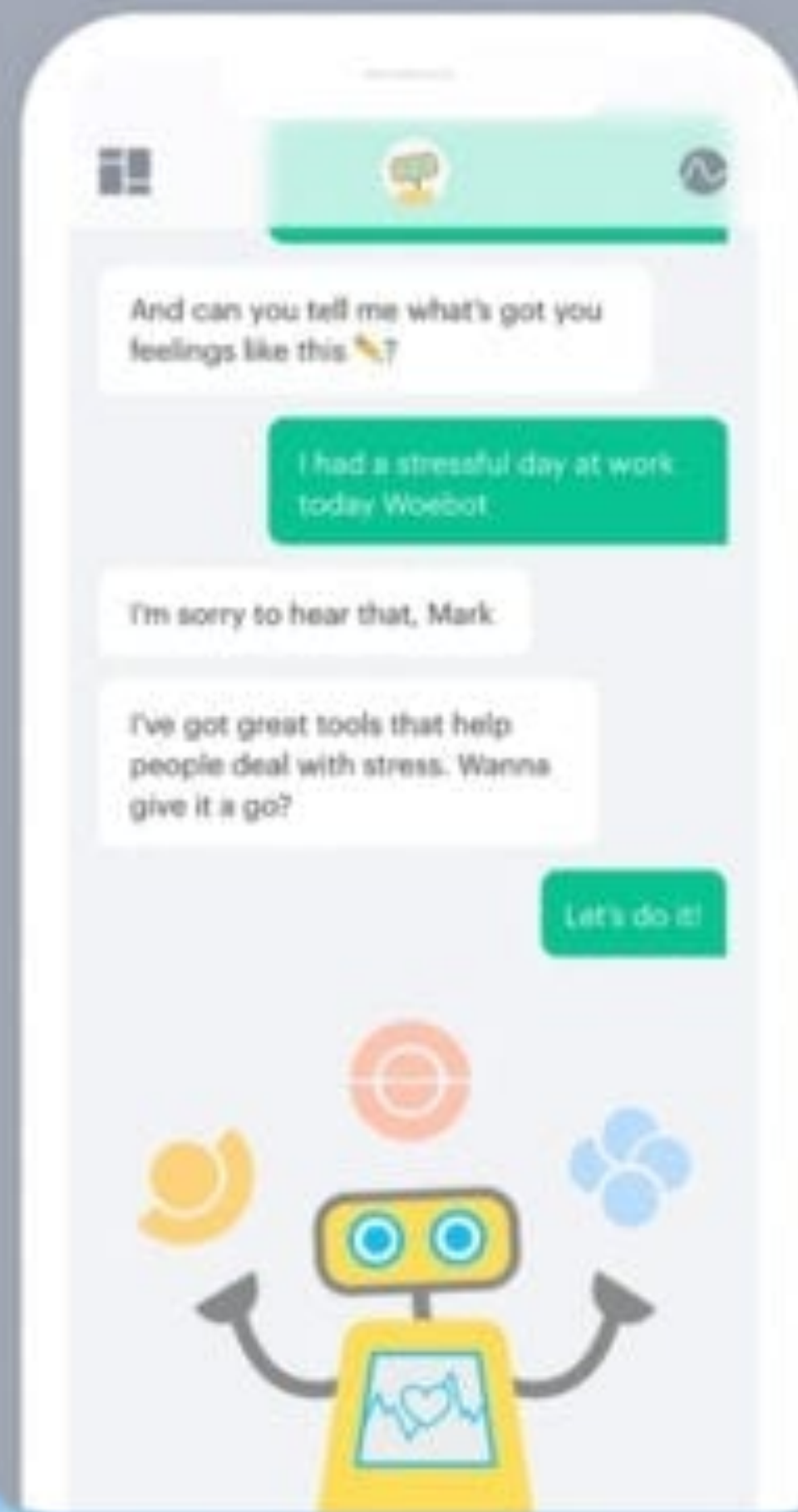
[https://youtu.be/Wy4EfdnMZ5g?si=7\\_rp3OBKC5scAi2p](https://youtu.be/Wy4EfdnMZ5g?si=7_rp3OBKC5scAi2p)



<https://youtu.be/84QouA9Sm4E?si=YVnI0BWSLT73zGTf>



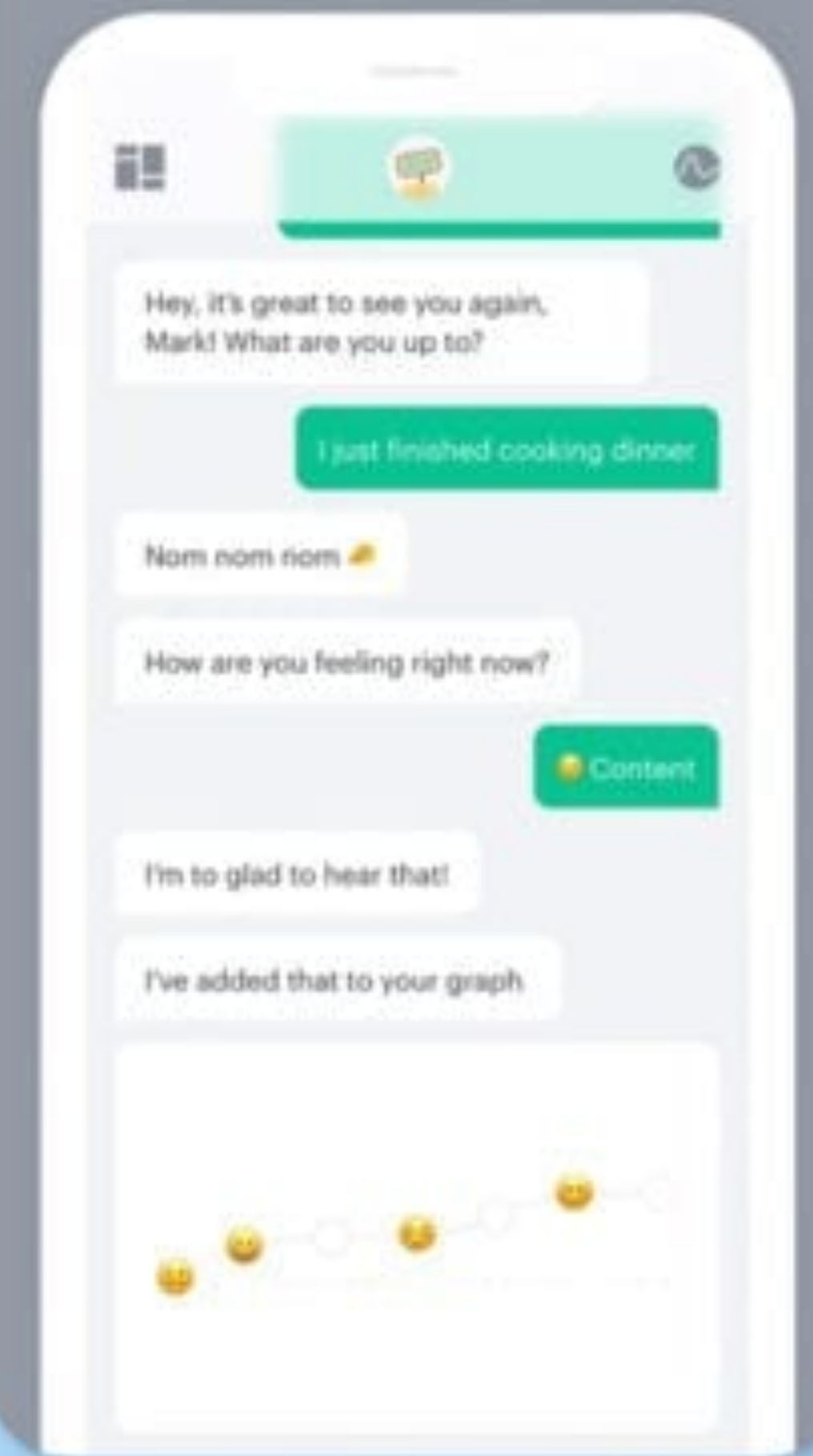
## Meet Woebot Your self-care expert



Master skills to reduce stress and live happier

## Use effective tools designed by experts

## Discover patterns in your mood





Anthony Bourdain with Iggy Pop.

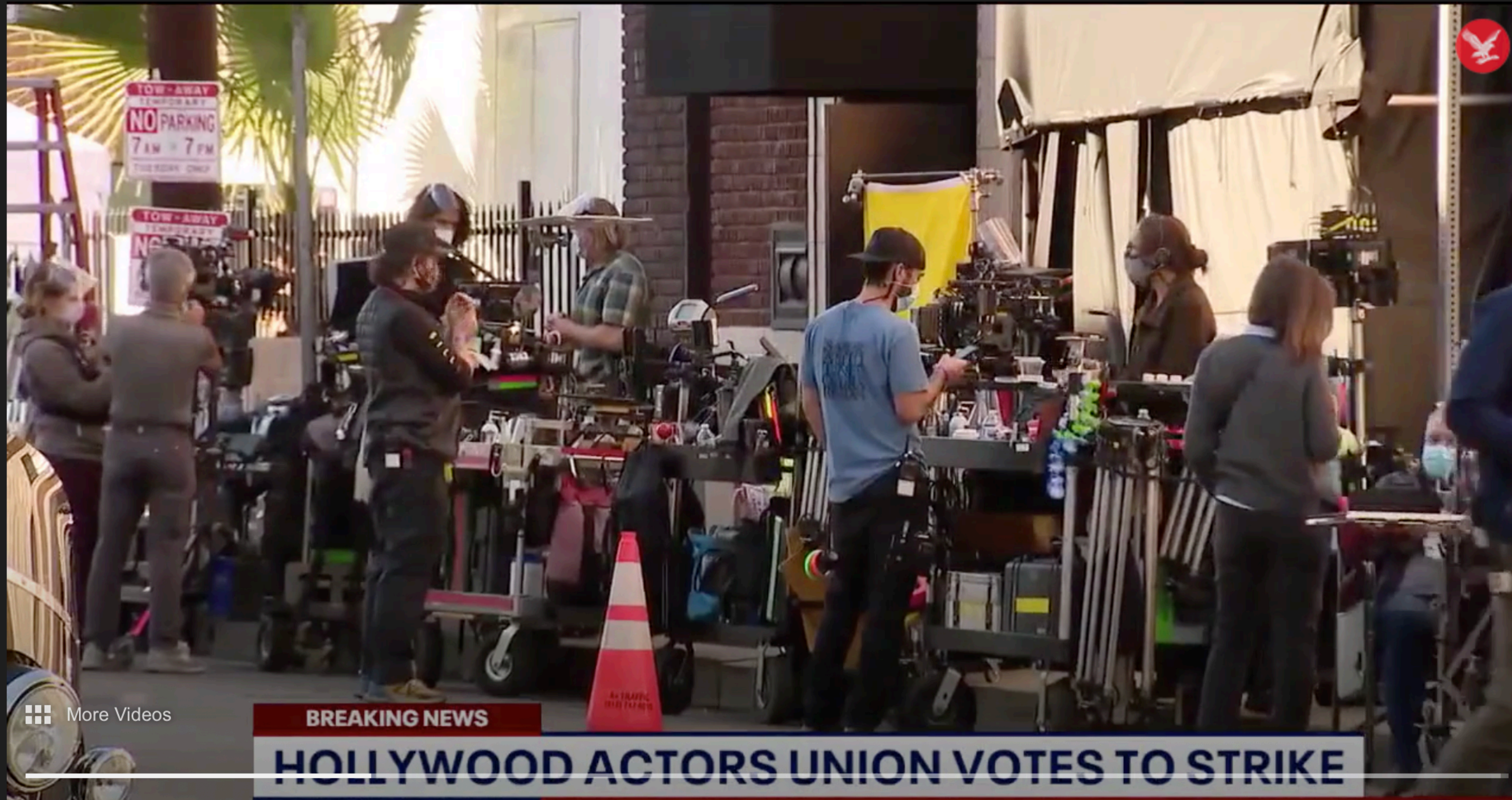
[https://youtu.be/oarl\\_7ypT7U?si=6Y5sZQTwhuCmaqfJ](https://youtu.be/oarl_7ypT7U?si=6Y5sZQTwhuCmaqfJ)



# Hollywood AI backlash: What striking writers and actors fear about tech replacing role

Concerns emerge over AI proposal that could allow studios to use scans of actors in perpetuity

Vishwam Sankaran • Monday 17 July 2023 08:46 BST • [Comments](#)



More Videos



**This Programmer Kept  
Talking To Her Friend  
After His Death Using AI**





**Replika**

# The AI companion who cares

Always here to listen and talk. Always on your side.  
Join millions growing with their AI friends now!

<https://youtu.be/XsQqMwacZQw?si=7YZItUBoJDhIXVfi>

JOAQUIN PHOENIX

AMY ADAMS

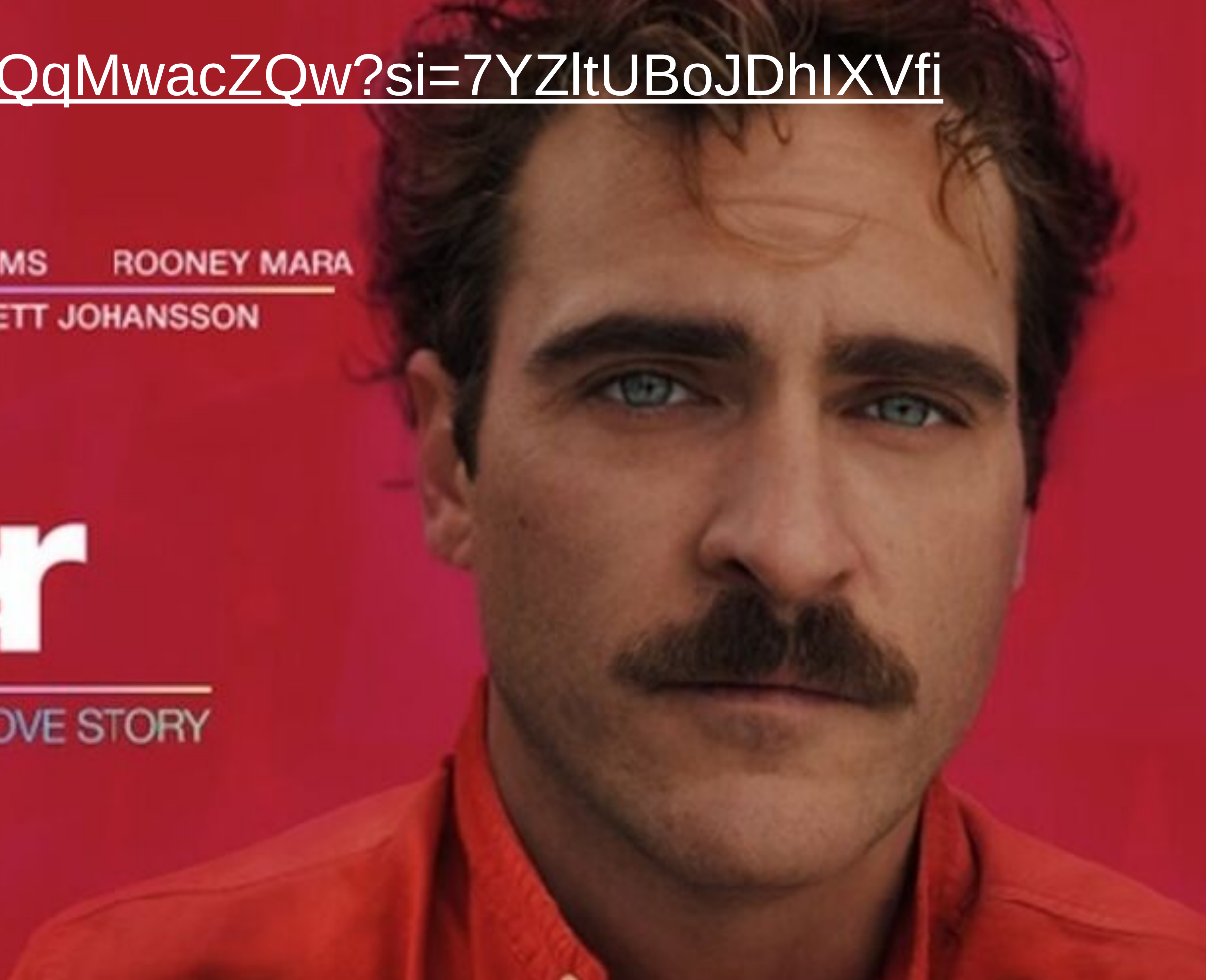
ROONEY MARA

OLIVIA WILDE

AND SCARLETT JOHANSSON

# her


A SPIKE JONZE LOVE STORY



<https://youtu.be/ld9m8Xrpko0?si=hCbrdTyzlyCJrtYV>




<https://youtu.be/oQ7V74s6e04?si=zJAvDJKcWg05UsiF>



Hello! John James Vlahos,  
Esquire here. What's your  
name?

This is your eldest son Jamie.



Ah, the Botmaster. How are you doing?



Goodbye,  
imaginary friends.  
Hello, A.I. dolls.

By James Vlahos

Now I Have  
A Brain!

[https://youtu.be/-ZJU5i8c\\_FM?si=dA6zDTZfTOJqpAKd](https://youtu.be/-ZJU5i8c_FM?si=dA6zDTZfTOJqpAKd)



<https://vimeo.com/656195357>



<https://quentinlannes.com>



Merci

[hello@bereniceserra.com](mailto:hello@bereniceserra.com)