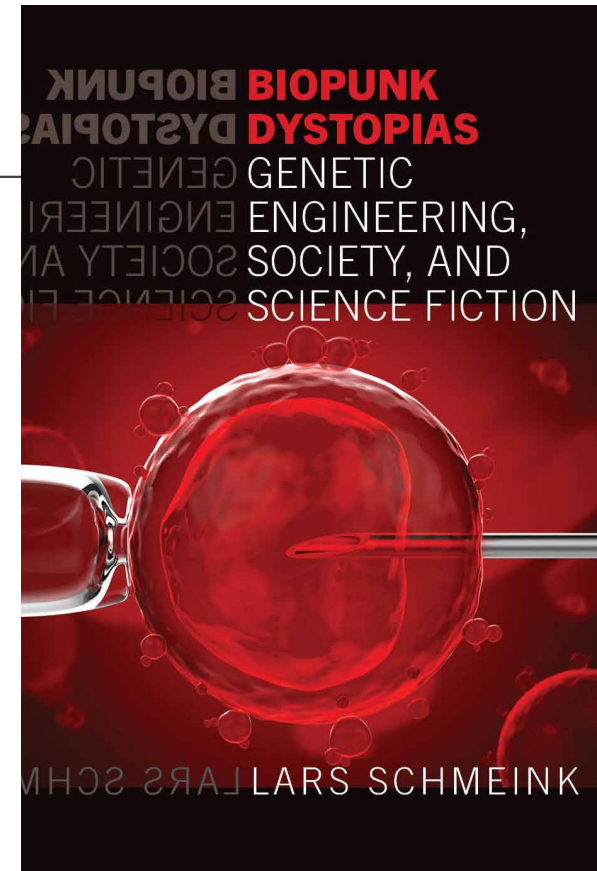
An abstract photograph of a dark, textured interior space. Three bright, parallel diagonal light beams enter from the top left and extend towards the bottom right. The beams are slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth. The walls and floor are dark and have a mottled, concrete-like texture. The overall mood is mysterious and futuristic.

Popular Imaginaries of the Digital as Science Communication

DR. LARS SCHMEINK
EUROPA-UNIVERSITÄT FLENSBURG

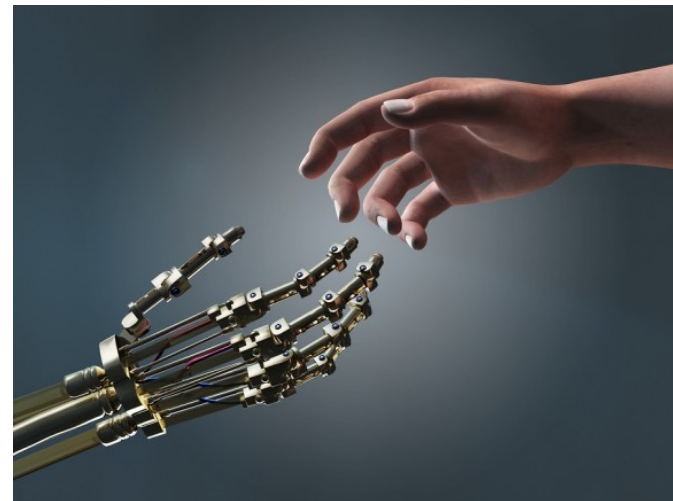
What I do ...

- Researcher of science fiction
 - Technology, their cultural representation and social impact
 - Genetics as a way to critique/promote ideas of neoliberal individualism and techno-utopian posthumanism (i.e. genetic determinism)
- Can we program DNA? Switch on/off certain traits?



Imaginaries of the Digital

- Big data and social media
- Drone technology and Surveillance
- Artificial Intelligence and Automation
- Prosthesis and Becoming-Posthuman
- Metaverse and Mind-Upload

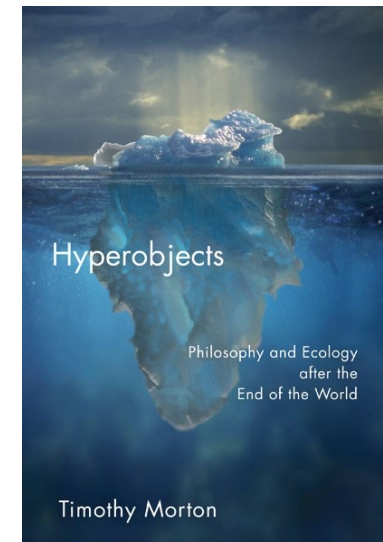


Hyperobjects

Hyperobjects have numerous properties in common. They are *viscous*, which means that they “stick” to beings that are involved with them. They are *nonlocal*; in other words, any “local manifestation” of a hyperobject is not directly the hyperobject. They involve profoundly different temporalities than the human-scale ones we are used to. (1)

The more I struggle to understand hyperobjects, the more I discover that I am stuck to them. They are all over me. They are me. [...] Every attempt to pull myself free by some act of cognition renders me more hopelessly stuck to hyperobjects. Why? (28-29)

(Timothy Morton – Hyperobjects)

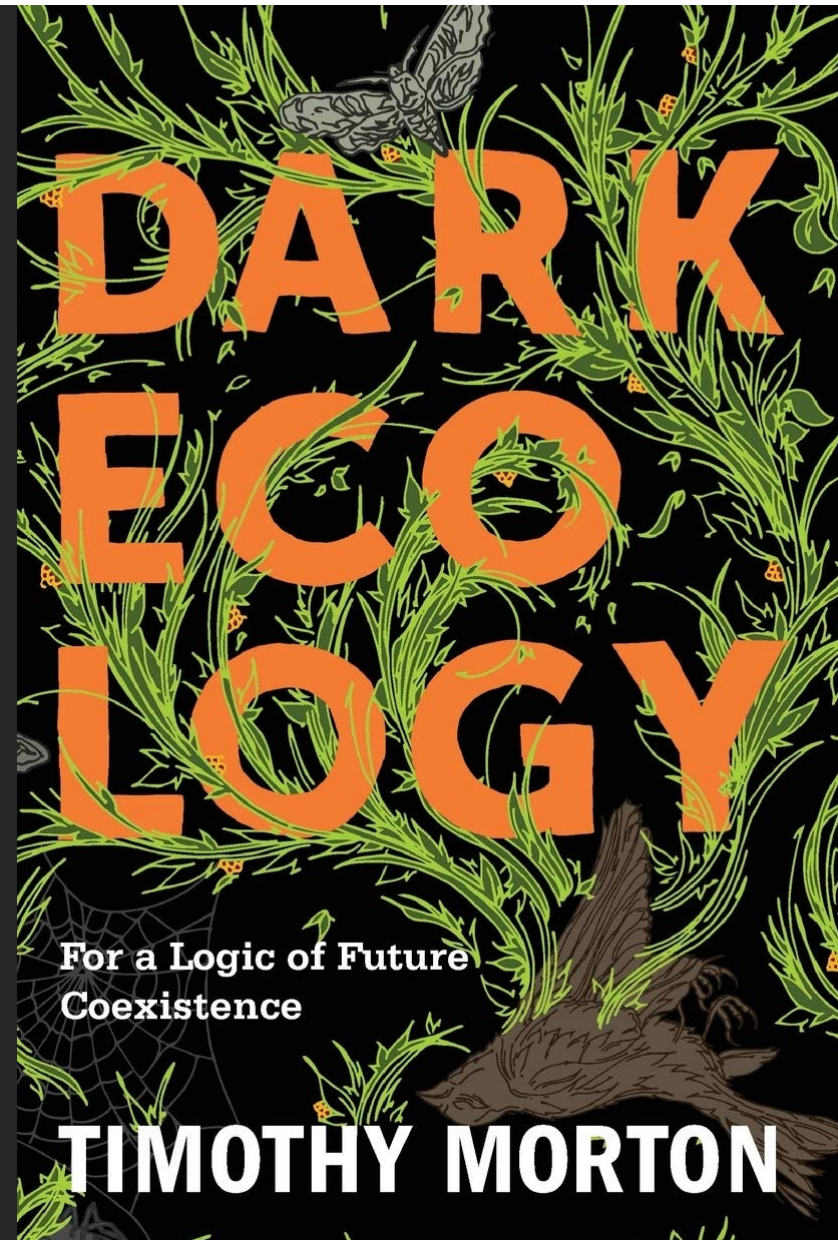


Hyperobjects

There you are, turning the ignition of your car. And it creeps up on you. You are a member of a massively distributed thing. This thing is called species. Yet the difference between the weirdness of my ignition key twist and the weirdness of being a member of the human species is itself weird. Every time I start my car or steam engine I don't mean to harm Earth, let alone cause the Sixth Mass Extinction Event in the four-and-a-half billion-year history of life on this planet. [...] Furthermore, I'm not harming Earth! My key turning is statistically meaningless. In an individual sense this turn isn't weird at all.

But go up a level and something very strange happens. When I scale up these actions to include billions of key turnings and billions of coal shovelings, harm to Earth is precisely what is happening. I am responsible as a member of this species for the Anthropocene. Of course I am formally responsible to the extent that I understand global warming. That's all you actually need to be responsible for something. You understand that this truck is going to hit that man? You are responsible for that man. Yet in this case formal responsibility is strongly reinforced by causal responsibility. I am the criminal. And I discover this via scientific forensics. Just like in noir fiction: I'm the detective *and* the criminal! I'm a person. I'm also part of an entity that is now *a geophysical force on a planetary scale*.

(Timothy Morton – Dark Ecology)

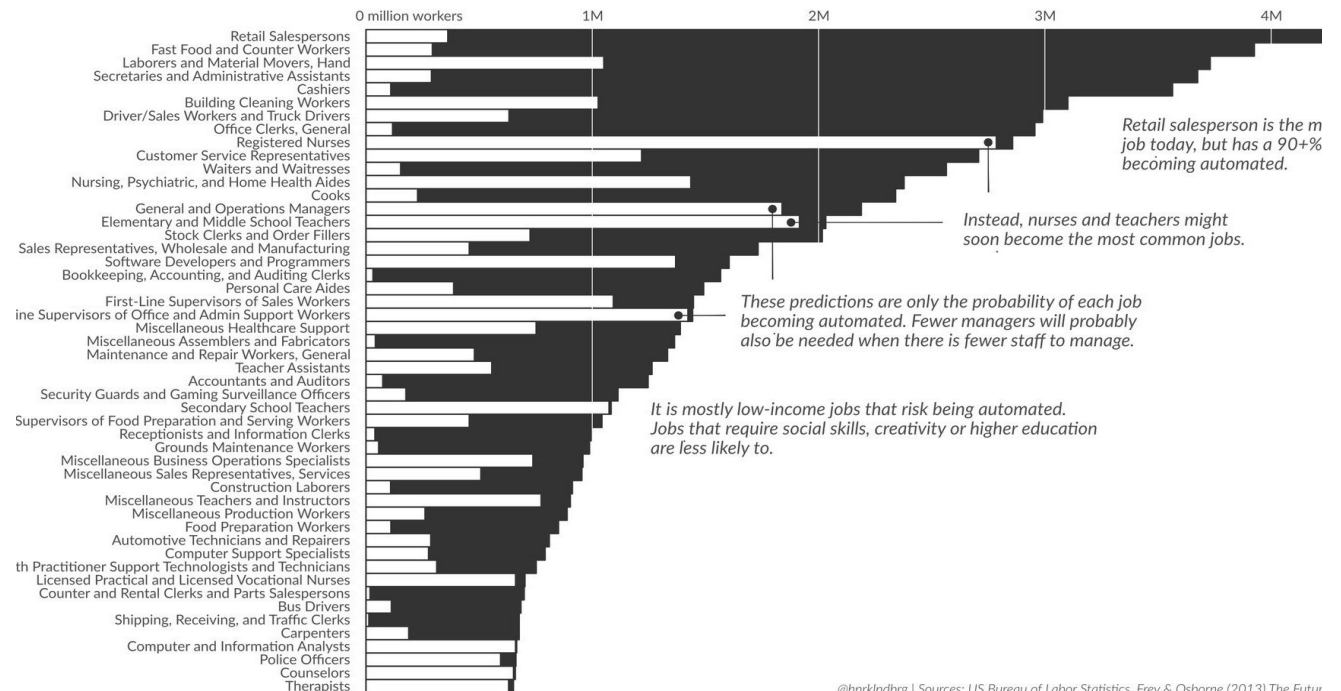
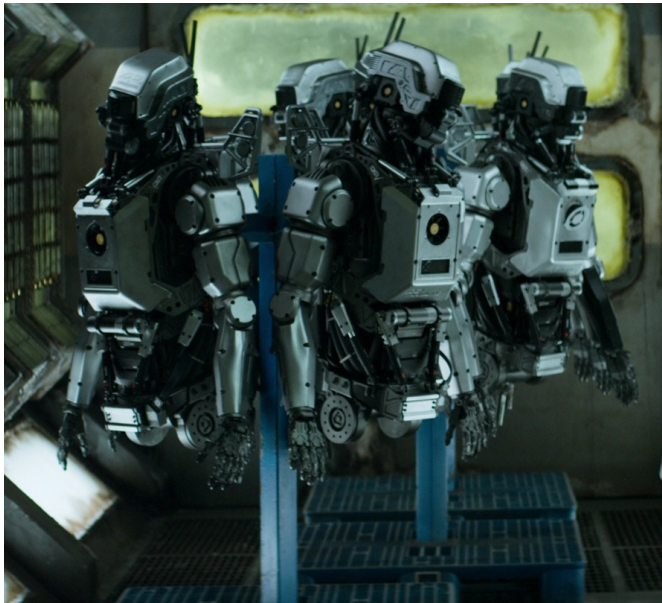


Digital Transformation

The future of employment

About half of today's jobs will likely be done by computers in a decade or two. Automation has so far taken over mostly well-defined routine tasks, shifting jobs from middle-income manufacturing to lower-income service jobs. As computers get better at for example perception – think self-driving cars – those services jobs are likely next up to be replaced by machines. Frey and Osborne (2013) estimate the probability of each job becoming automated. Here are how their predictions apply to 2016 US employment statistics.

Black fields are jobs likely to be automated and white fields are jobs that are likely to remain.

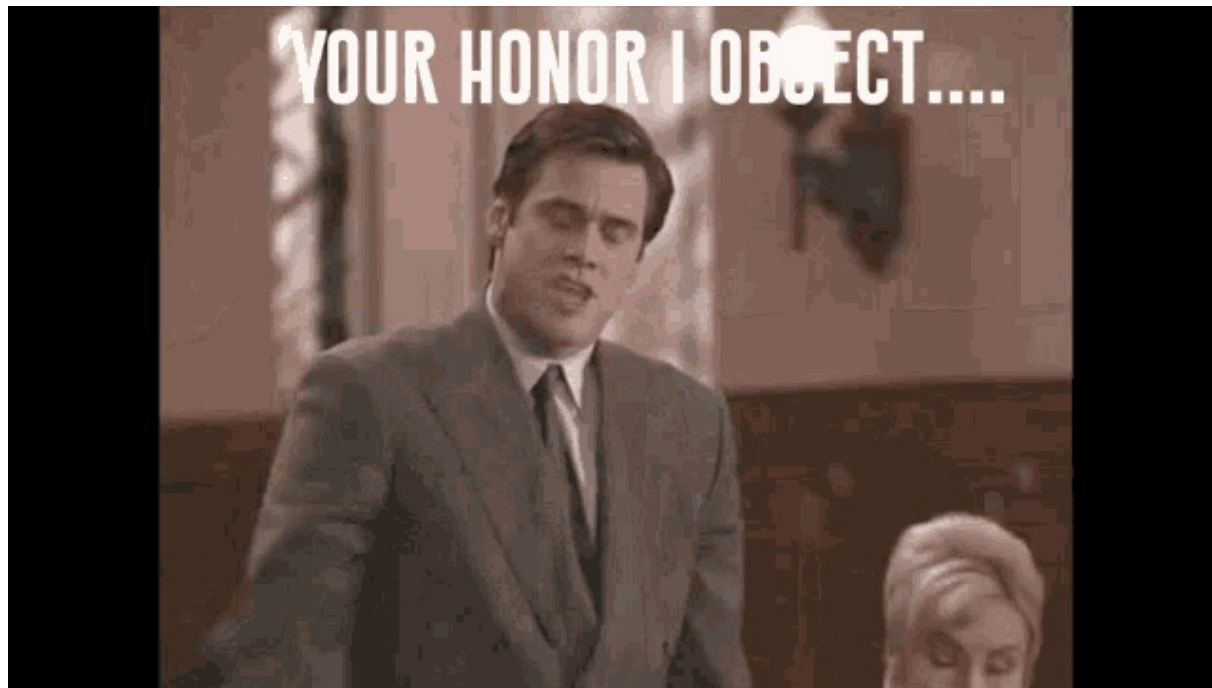


@hnrkndbrg | Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Frey & Osborne (2013) The Future of Employment

„We went to our favorite restaurant for dinner that evening“...



Fiction as model for action



Mimesis

Mimesis, basic theoretical principle in the creation of art. The word is Greek and means “imitation” (though in the sense of “re-presentation” rather than of “copying”).

(Encyclopedia Britannica)

Mimesis, (griech.: Darstellung, Nachahmung), kunstphilosophischer, insbesondere literaturtheoretischer Begriff, der das grundlegende Verhältnis der Inhalte von Kunstwerken zur dargestellten außerkünstlerischen Wirklichkeit erfassen soll.

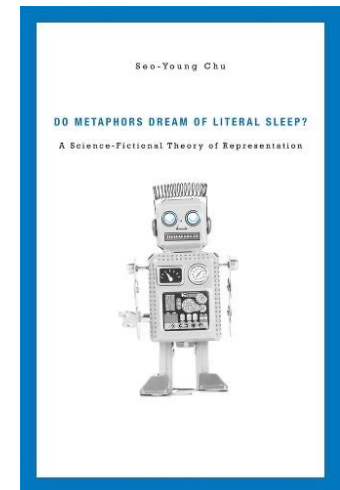
(Metzlers Philosophie Lexikon)



Cognitively estranging referents

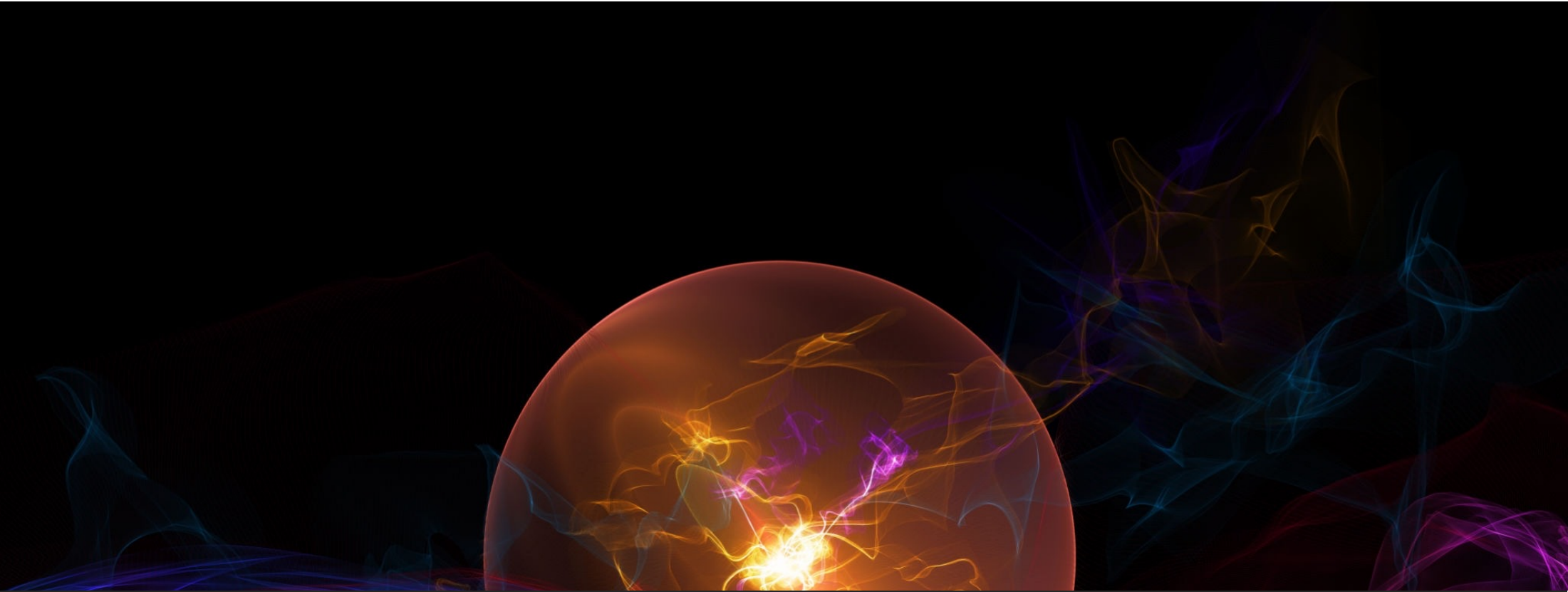
Picture a spectrum whose two limits are "referents wholly accessible to cognition" and "wholly estranging referents." One end of the spectrum is populated by concrete objects highly susceptible to understanding and amenable to representation. These include softballs, paintbrushes, oak leaves, dimes, apple blossoms, almonds, and pencils of the kind discussed above. Realism and naturalism are extremely capable of representing such objects. The other end of the spectrum is occupied by referents virtually unknowable, referents that all but defy human language and comprehension. These include the infinitely remote future, the infinitely remote past, and whatever lies on the other side of death. Mimetic accounts of such referents exist nowhere-not even in science fiction.

(Seo-Young Chu, *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep?*, 6-7)

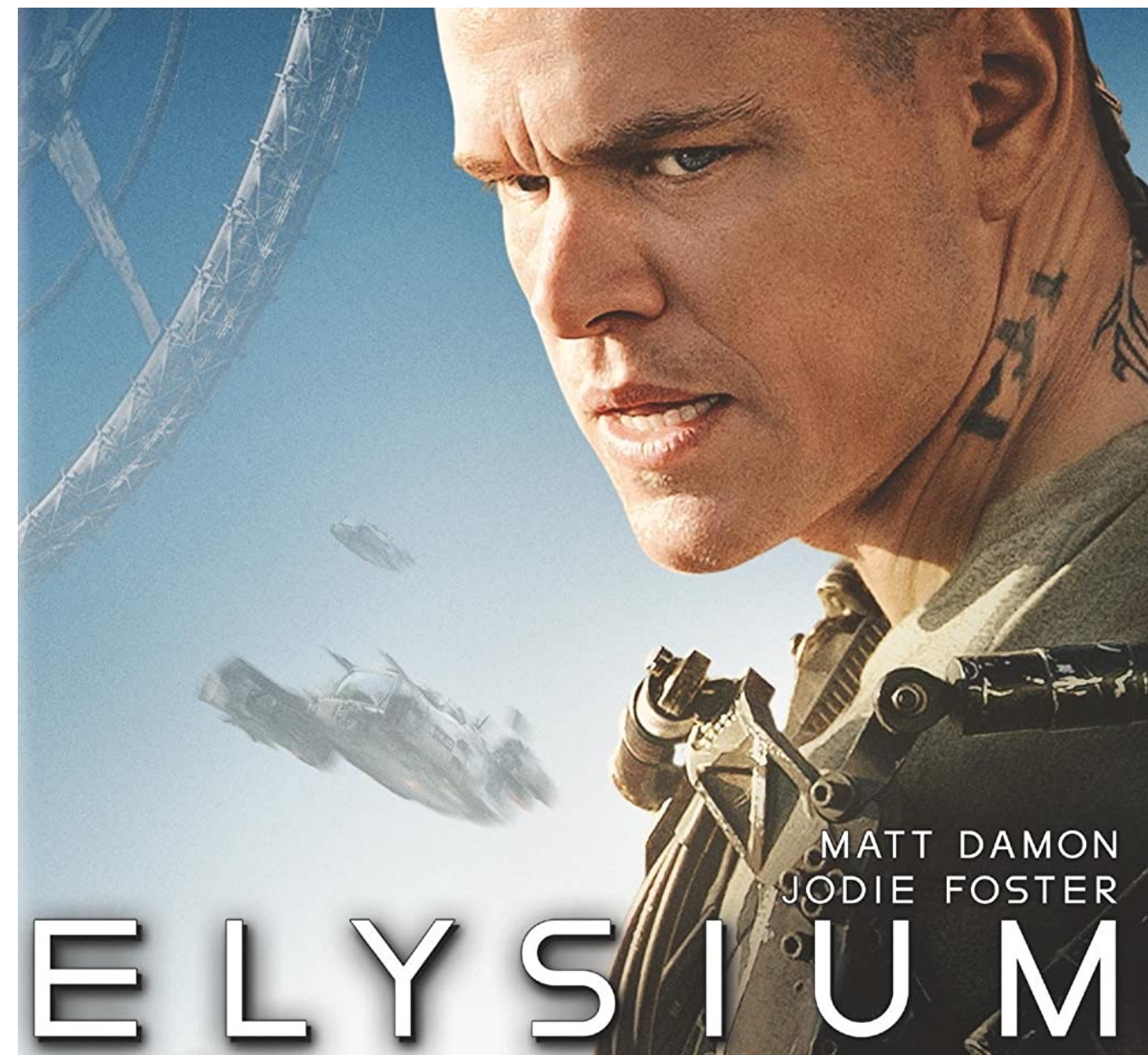


Estranging referents





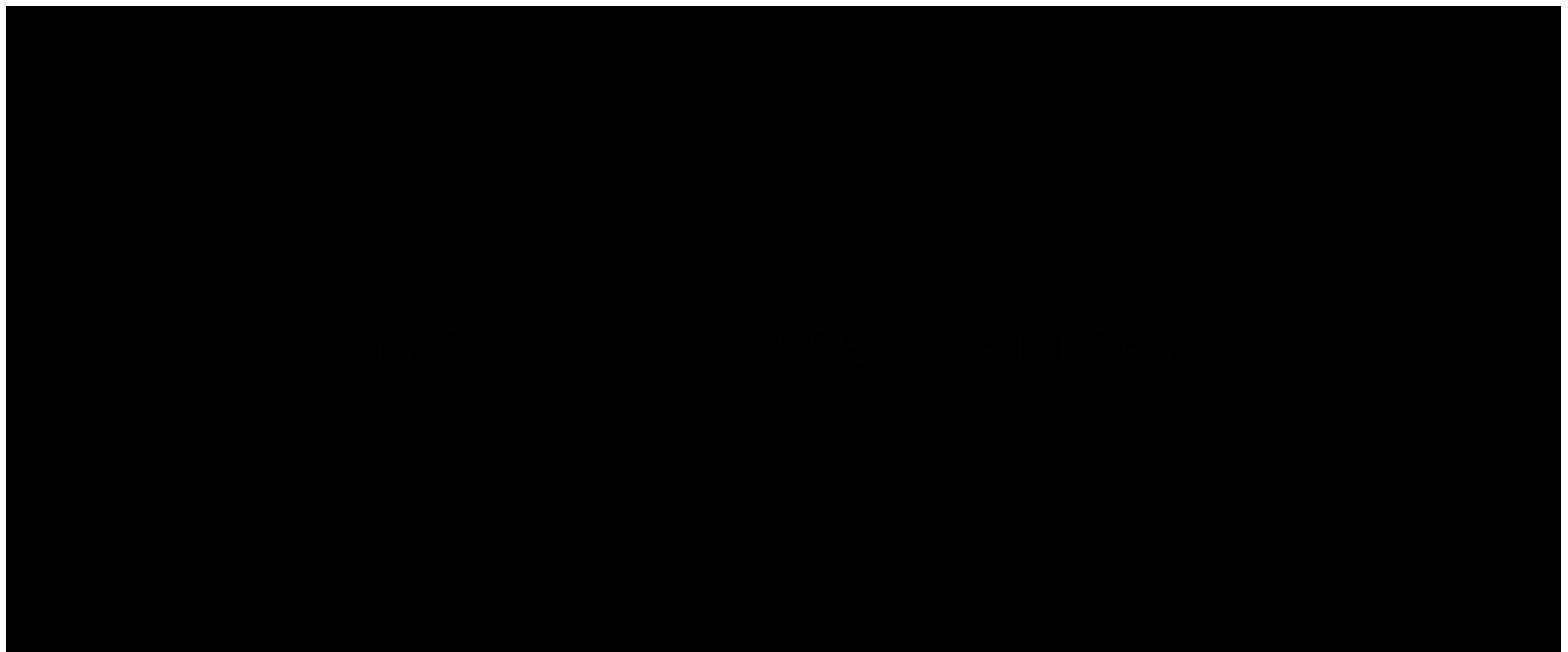
Science Fiction allows us to mimetically represent hyperobjects. 21st century reality is full of those.



Mimetic
Representation of
Hyberobjects:

Automation
Climate Crisis
Social Inequality

Elysium (2013, Neill Blomkamp)



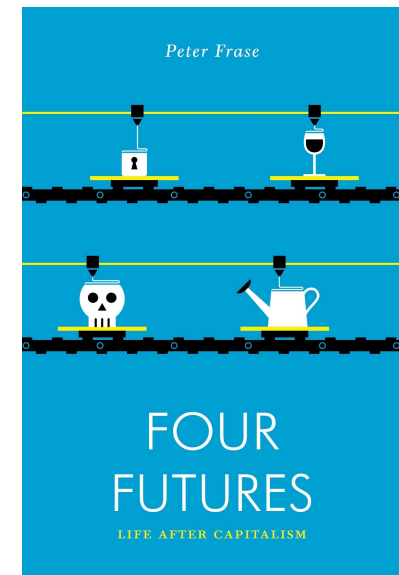
Elysium



Four Futures

The question of class power comes down to how we end up tackling the massive inequality of wealth, income, and political power in the world today. To the extent that the rich are able to maintain their power, we will live in a world where they enjoy the benefits of automated production, while the rest of us pay the costs of ecological destruction—if we can survive at all. To the extent that we can move toward a world of greater equality, then the future will be characterized by some combination of shared sacrifice and shared prosperity, depending on where we are on the other, ecological dimension.

(Peter Frase - Four Futures)



Mimetic representation





Popular Imaginaries of the Digital as Science
Communication

Al Gore, who came up short in his 2000 bid for the White House, informed humanity recently by video that "it's time to say goodbye to coal, oil and gas worldwide." He has introduced "Climate Trace," a network of satellites and ground-based sensors augmented by artificial intelligence (AI) to surveil the planet and root out naughty carbon producers. "We can accurately determine where the greenhouse gas emissions are coming from." Though eerily reminiscent of "Skynet," the human-hunting AI network of "The Terminator" films, Mr. Gore's operation won't be deploying robots to exterminate offenders, Yet.

06.09.2016

MOBILS KÜNSTLICHE INTELLIGENZ

Dass Skynet-Armageddon fällt vorläufig aus

Von: Ingo Steinhaus

Die Roboter werden uns zumindest bis 2030 nicht terminieren, ist das Zwischenergebnis einer KI-Langzeitstudie, deren letzter Bericht 2115 erscheinen soll.



Artificial Intelligence Can Bring Skynet From 'Terminator' to life: Reality or Myth?

Should we fear artificial intelligence?

By Hugo Cen February 18, 2021



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High-Risk Artificial Intelligence

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By Chuck Dinerstein, MD, MBA — October 27, 2021

Once, a long time ago, it seems, individuals used rules-of-thumb, fancy name heuristics to navigate transactions – social or commercial. As the scale of our interactions grew, rules-of-thumb gave way to algorithms, which were, in turn, unleashed to create new algorithms based upon artificial intelligence. Somewhere along the way, those artificially intelligent algorithms became dangerous. What is high-risk artificial intelligence? Spoiler alert – it is already upon us – welcome to our version of Skynet.

Related articles

Healthcare for Blacks: I'm Not Prejudice, The Healthcare Algorithm Made Me Do It

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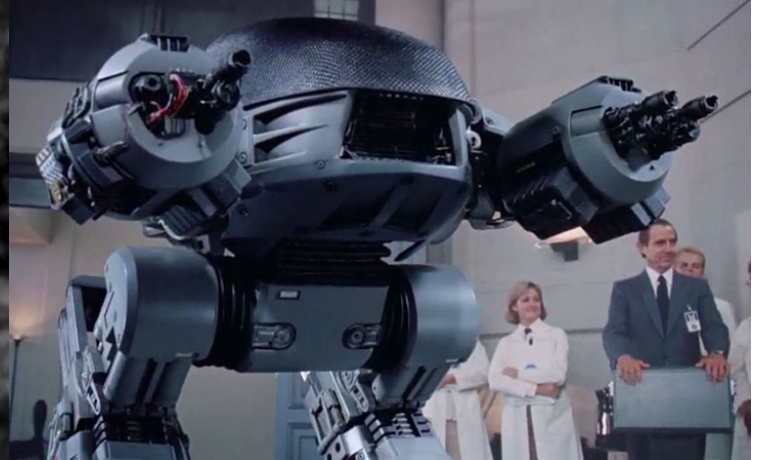
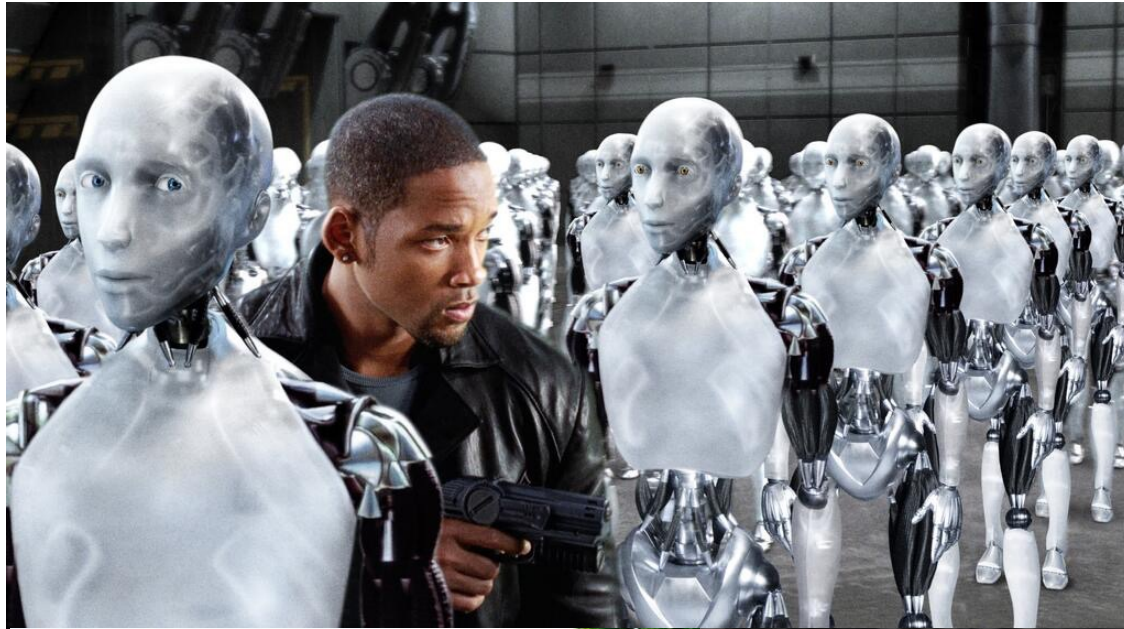
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Wenn Skynet kommt, ist Microsoft wahrscheinlich nicht unschuldig



Wenn die technologischen Entwicklungen schief laufen und tatsächlich eines Tages eine Art Skynet entsteht und sich gegen die Menschheit richtet, dürfte Microsoft mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit schuld sein. Aber auch verschiedene andere Technologie-Konzerne gehören zu den möglichen Verursachern einer solchen Katastrophe.



CULTURE & CRITICISM

Silicon Valley Is Turning Into Its Own Worst Fear

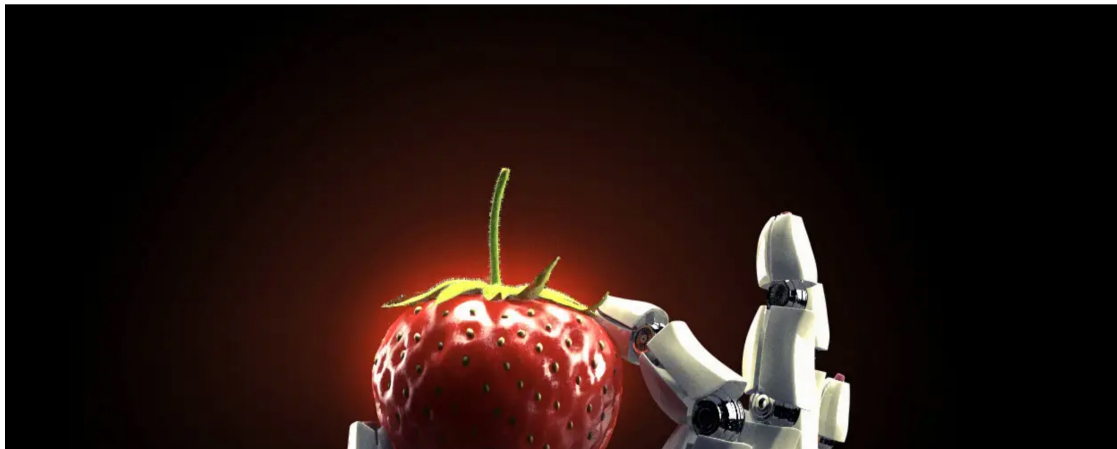
We asked a group of writers to consider the forces that have shaped our lives in 2017. Here, science fiction writer Ted Chiang looks at capitalism, Silicon Valley, and its fear of superintelligent AI.



Ted Chiang
BuzzFeed Contributor

Posted on December 18, 2017, at 11:08 a.m. ET

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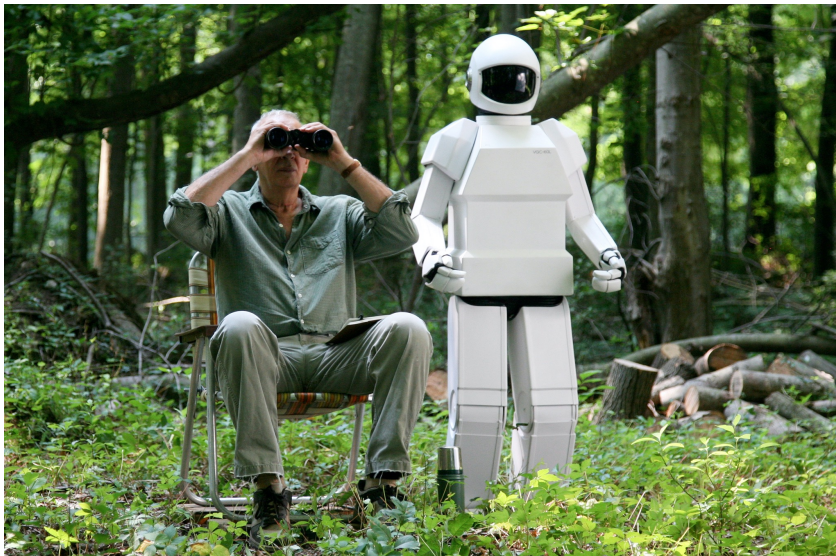
Ted Chiang

Consider: Who pursues their goals with monomaniacal focus, oblivious to the possibility of negative consequences? Who adopts a scorched-earth approach to increasing market share? This hypothetical strawberry-picking AI does what every tech startup wishes it could do — grows at an exponential rate and destroys its competitors until it's achieved an absolute monopoly. [...]

But when Silicon Valley tries to imagine superintelligence, what it comes up with is no-holds-barred capitalism.

Indie-Film and European Visions

Robot and Frank (2013)



Ich bin dein Mensch (2021)



Digital Imaginaries

Automation

Robotics

Artificial Intelligence

Big Data

Social Media

Surveillance

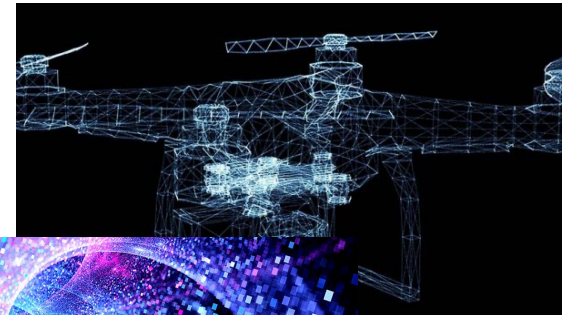
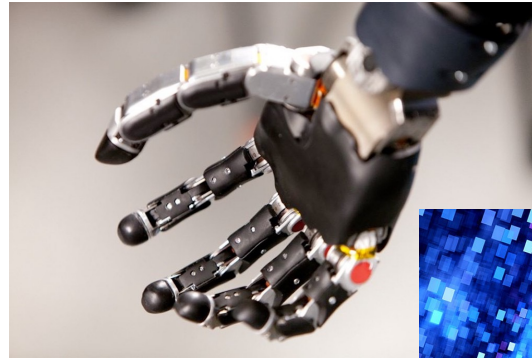
Prosthesis

Hacking

Nanotechnology

Drone technology

Globalization / Financialization



Research Objectives

1. *to formulate a rhetorics of representations of digital technologies by extrapolating narrative and visual patterns in contemporary visual culture*
2. *to analyze the cultural work of how these representations produce hegemonic structures and narratives that impact socially and politically relevant discourses of digitalization and what ethical evaluations of technology they generate*
3. *to identify how science and technology is communicated translocally, especially comparing the US with Europe, to better address social anxieties around digital technologies*

Phase	Object	Summary
Phase 1 10/2022 – 06/2023 9 months	Corpus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of preliminary corpus, identification of non-US/UK perspectives • Division into subsections for analysis • Identification of imaginaries of digital technology <div> Digital Input Workshop → Expert opinions to verify categorization of imaginaries </div>
Phase 2 07/2023 – 12/2024 18 months	Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyses of media for subsections and evaluation of 5 case studies • Writing of chapters for monograph on representation of digital technology • Selection of one chapter for peer-reviewed article • Dissemination of results at SFRA 2024 (Tartu) and ICFA 2024 (Orlando) <div> 1 month research stay at the University of California, Riverside with Sherryl Vint / Eaton Collection (Fall 2023) </div>
Phase 3 01/2025 – 09/2025 9 months	Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of impact of representations and comparison with actual SciCom • Finalizing the monograph with the results from WP2; second peer-reviewed article • Preparation and organization of workshop for Spring 2025 • Dissemination of results at two conferences in 2025 <div> Project Workshop → Identifying future research, finalizing results </div>