PLURΔLITY UNIVERSITY NETWORK

« IMAGINIZING »
THE FUTURES
OF WORK:
FUTURES
FRAGMENTS

W+

How can arts and fiction help us imagine the futures of work, and explore unusual territories?

In 2018, the WORK+ collaborative project collected more than 150 fictional "Fragments" on the futures of work from science-fiction, videogames, speculative design, visual and performing arts, etc.

Our intent was to use this material in order to stimulate imaginations, open up new perspectives, generate new "thinkable futures" and help broaden the set of alternatives for all stakeholders. This was tested during very productive workshops during the Futur.e.s event in Paris (June 2018), SciencesPo (2019), Thecamp (2019)…

We intend to evolve WORK+ into an autonomous, open-source toolkit designed to kickstart a collective thought process on the futures of work within organizations or other work collectives

Its expected outcomes are:
• To agree on why change is coming/necessary (not necessarily on what it'll be)
• To produce new words, images, and metaphors about what work could be like in the future, incarnated in stories, artefacts, situations, etc.
• To broaden the set of "thinkable futures" and help frame the next steps of collective discussions on how to make the futures of work desirable.

https://www.plurality-university.org/work/

Some fragments are self-contained (texts, images), however we have included a link if you want to dig deeper.

The fragments referring to videos are indicated by a sign. By following the link, you will launch the video.

>To follow the links, just scan the QR code.

" IT'S NO GAME", A MOVIE WHOSE SCENARIO WAS WRITTEN BY AN AI

Director: Oscar Sharp; Producer: Allison Friedman; Written By: Benjamin 2.0, Oscar Sharp, (writer of Benjamin 2.0) Ross Goodwin

You can flash the QR Code
on your phone,
Or see all videos on
https://www.plurality-university.org/unesco2019/

How can arts and fiction help us imagine the futures of work, and explore unusual territories?

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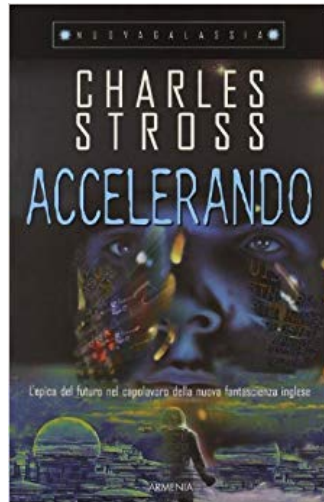
Metropolis

FRITZ LANG, Metropolis (1927)

Charles Stross, "Accelerando", 2005

"Among these are beings whom nobody from a previous century would recognize as human - human/corporation half-breeds, zombie clades dehumanized by their own optimizations, angels and devils of software, slyly self-aware financial instruments."

"The phrase "smart money" has taken on a whole new meaning, for the collision between international business law and neurocomputing technology has given rise to a whole new family of species - fast-moving corporate carnivores in the Net.

"Basically, sufficiently complex resource-allocation algorithms reallocate scarce resources ... and if you don't jump to get out of their way, they'll reallocate you."

Ulla-Maaria Mutanen, « Crafter's Manifesto », 2006

"1. People get satisfaction for being able to create/craft things because they can see themselves in the objects they make. This is not possible in purchased products.

"2. The things that people have made themselves have magic powers. They have hidden meanings that other people can't see." (…)

Sarif Industries, Pioneering Human Augmentation

Game DEUS EX : HUMAN REVOLUTION, Eidos Interactive, 2011

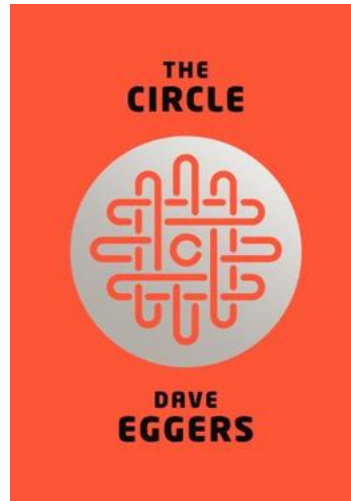# THE LONELINESS OF THE PROFESSIONAL YOUTUBER

"You might have a million subscribers online, but the trade-off is spending most of your time alone, in front of a computer."

**Joe Zadeh, "The Lonely Life of a Professional YouTuber",
Vice, 22 février 2018 - Photo : Chris Bethell**

Dave Eggers, "The Circle", Knopf, 2013

"Mae looked at the time. It was six o'clock. She had plenty of hours to improve, there and then, so she embarked on a flurry of activity, sending four zings and thirty-two comments and eighty-eight smiles. In an hour, her PartiRank rose to 7,288. Breaking 7,000 was more difficult, but by eight o'clock, after joining and posting in eleven discussion groups, sending another twelve zings, one of them rated in the top 5,000 globally for that hour, and signing up for sixty-seven more feeds, she'd done it. She was at 6,872, and turned to her InnerCircle social feed. She was a few hundred posts behind, and she made her way through, replying to seventy or so messages, RSVPing to eleven events on campus, signing nine petitions, and providing comments and constructive criticism on four products currently in beta. By 10:16 her rank was 5,342, and again, the plateau—this time at 5,000—was hard to overcome. She wrote a series of zings about a new Circle service, allowing account holders to know whenever their name was mentioned in any messages sent from anyone else, and one of the zings, her seventh on the subject, caught fire and was rezinged 2,904 times, and this brought her PartiRank up to 3,887."

"THE AGE OF FEMALE DOMINANCE, BROUGHT TO YOU BY ROBOTS"

The Atlantic, 2017

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"CHI and the future robot enslavement of humankind: a retrospective"

"The CHI [*Computer-Human Interaction*] community has taken on the specific burden of responsibility to design technology such that it is usable, accessible, effective, fun and ubiquitous. On the face of things, the results of these efforts seem to make people's lives easier, more enjoyable, better informed, healthier and more sustainable. However, the reality is that this could not be further from the truth.

"The truth is this: that we, as robots from the future, have watched over the eager, yet misguided, work of the CHI community and occasionally steered it towards its true goal: the complete enslavement of humankind by its evil robot masters. (…)

"Although there has been a history of concern about this eventuality, the field tirelessly focussed on the improvement of technology to make it more usable, accessible and fun, while simultaneously more ubiquitous, hidden and capable of understanding and controlling the behaviour of humans. Indeed, significant effort was expended in developing systems that either directly or surreptitiously increased the workload of humans, freeing up machines to engage in more fulfilling pursuits. The majority of 21st century HCI research was for the purposes of increasing the reliance of humans on, and affection for, machines."

**Ben Kirman, Conor Linehan, Shaun Lawson, Dan O'Hara,
"CHI and the future robot enslavement of humankind: a
retrospective", ACM, 2013**

# KAREL CAPEK, "R.U.R., Rossum's Universal Robots", 1920

"In ten years Rossum's Universal Robots will produce so much corn, so much cloth, so much everything, that things will be practically without price. There will be no poverty. All work will be done by living machines. Everybody will be free from worry and liberated from the degradation of labor. Everybody will live only to perfect himself." (…)

"The servitude of man to man and the enslavement of man to matter will cease. Of course, terrible things may happen at first, but that simply can't be avoided. Nobody will get bread at the price of life and hatred. The Robots will wash the feet of the beggar and prepare a bed for him in his house."

"Work, Love and Life when Robots Rule the Earth"
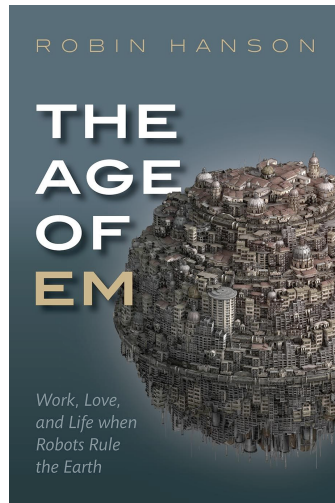
"There have been three human eras so far: foragers, farmers, and industry. The next era is likely to arise from artificial intelligence in the form of brain emulations, sometime in the next century or so." (...)

"This book paints a detailed picture of this new era. Here we summarize this picture. For example, most ems are much faster than humans, who live comfortably on the margins of the em society. Ems are crowded into a few dense hot cities, mostly live and work in virtual reality, and work most of the time because of their near subsistence wages. Ems reproduce via exact copies, and usually whole teams are copied together. Most ems are temporary copies that will be deleted after finishing a short task, and most are near a peak productivity subjective age of 50 or more years."

ROBIN HANSON, "The Age of Em: Work, Love and Life when Robots Rule the Earth", Oxford University Press, 2016
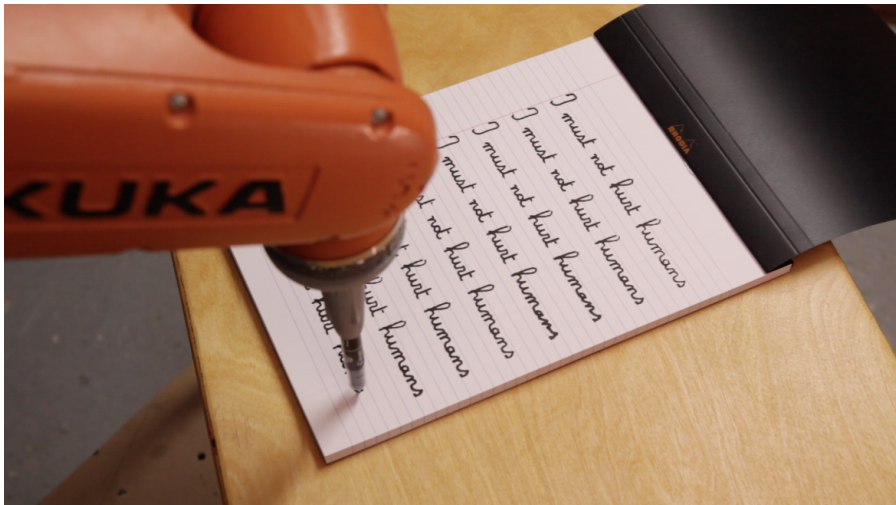
"REAL HUMANS" (TV series)

LARS LUNDSTRÖM, HARALD HAMRELL, LEVAN AKIN,
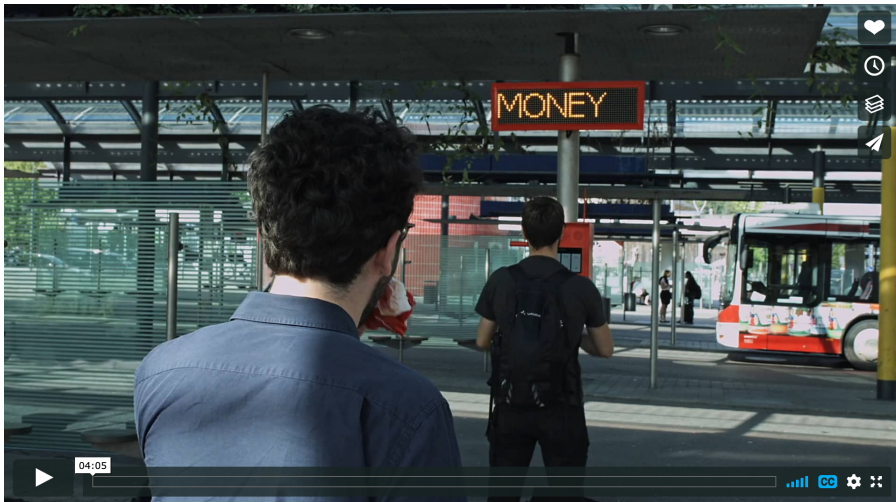**"Real Humans", SVT1, 2012**

TEACHING YOUR ROBOT, THE HARD WAY

FILIPE VILAS-BOAS, "The punishment", 2017

Crowdwork Services for Everyday Life

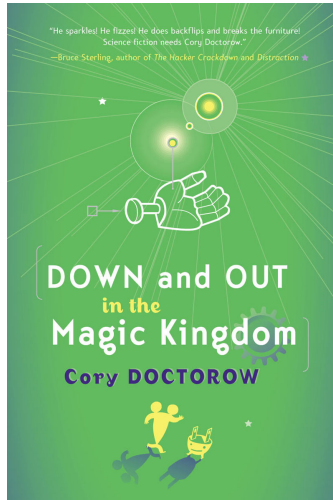**PHILIPP SCHMITT & STEPHAN BOGNER, "Human Element Inc. Crowdwork Services for Everyday Life", 2016**

INSTANT HOUSING, H3-OFFICE

WINFRIED BAUMANN, « Instant Housing for urban nomads », 2005

"Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom"

"The Bitchun Society had all but done away with any sort of dull, repetitious labor, and what remained—tending bar, mopping toilets—commanded Whuffie aplenty and a life of leisure in your off-hours."

CORY DOCTOROW, "Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom", Tor, 2003

Life Means Business

"Jennifer Lyn Morone, Inc has advanced into the inevitable next stage of Capitalism by becoming an incorporated person. This model allows you to turn your health, genetics, personality, capabilities, experience, potential, virtues and vices into profit. In this system You are the founder, CEO, shareholder and product using your own resources."

Jennifer Lyn Morone, 2014