

Electricdreams – Between Fiction and Society IV

Visions of Control: Power and Technology in Speculative Fiction

International Conference

Updated October 9, 2025

15-17 October 2025

Sala dei 146

IULM Building 6 Open Space

IULM University

Via Carlo Bo 7

20143 Milan (Italy)

WEDNESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2025 – Day #1 (9:00-18:15)

9:00 - 9:30

Welcome

9:30 - 10:45

Panel #1: TECHNO-ANIMATION AND ECO-CRITICISM

Chair: Javier Alvarez

- * **Shannon Magri** (University of Bergamo) “Techno-Eco-Topia: The Ecosophic Power of the Gardener-Robot, from *Silent Running* (1972) to *Wall-E* (2008)”
- * **Johan Nilsson** (Örebro University) “Wild Futures: Technology, Nature, and Power in *The Wild Robot*”
- * **Matteo Quinto** (University of Bergamo) “The Power We Didn’t Have: Steampunk and Nostalgia in Animation”

10:45 - 11:15

Coffee Break

11:15 - 13:00

Panel #2: TECHNOLOGIES OF THE BODY

Chair: Matteo Quinto

- * **Sava Saheli Singh** (York University) and **Debra Mackinnon** (Lakehead University) "Vulnerable Bodies: Diagnostic Politics of Health and Wellbeing in Frames"
- * **Cecilia De Martino** (University of Milan) "Bodies of Power: Gender, Control, and Biotechnology in Female-Centric Speculative Narratives"
- * **Beniamin Klaniecki** (Adam Mickiewicz University) and **E. Dawson Varughese** (Manipal Institute of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts) "Neoliberal Gestation: (Re)production of Techno-capitalism in Semi-peripheral Speculative Fiction from Poland and India"

13:00 - 14:00

Light Lunch

14:00 - 15:15

Panel #3: SHAPING FEMALE AND QUEER OTHERNESS

Chair: Ondřej Váša

- * **Flavia Criscione** (University of Milan) "Flaming Dystopias. The Lesbian Subject as a Technology of Otherness"
- * **Davide Lunerti** (Academy of Fine Arts of Rome) "Neither Red nor Blue Pills. Queer Hacking Practices in Speculative Fiction and Visual Arts"
- * **Clara Bafaluy i Avenoz** (University of Barcelona) "The Regulatory Practices of Melissa Scott's *Shadow Man*: A Bisexual Approach"

15:15 - 16:30

Panel #4: TECHNOLOGIES OF TEMPORALITIES

Chair: Scott Jordan

- * **Matteo Citrini** (University of Udine) "The Technological Control over Human Memory: Three Informatic Metaphors for the Identity Crisis in Audiovisual Science Fiction"
- * **Tamara Kamatovic** (Central European University) and **Augusto Petter** (Sciences Po Paris) "Archaeologies of the Future: Speculative Fiction and the Ethics of Temporality"
- * **Francisco Saez de Adana** (University of Alcalá) "Comics, Technology and Time Travel"

16:30 - 17:00

Break

17:00 - 18:15

Panel #5: SPECULATIVE RESISTANCE AND SYSTEMIC CONTROL

Chair: Francisco Saez de Adana

- * **Michelle Leccese** (University of Southern California) "Playable Dystopias: Interactive Storytelling as Lens on Technology and Control"
- * **Peter Melville** (University of Winnipeg) "Similes and the Politics of Containment in *The Mortal Instruments*"
- * **Giuseppina Pirozzi** (University of Parma) and **Brando Ratti** (University of Turin) "Power Narratives and Aesthetics in Sci-Fi Videogames: Patriarchal Representations of Power and New Forms of Visual Resistance"

THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2025 – Day #2 (9:00-18:45)

9:00 - 10:15

Panel #6: THE AI TURN: POSTHUMAN ETHICS AND ALGORITHMIC FUTURES

Chair: Maria Raffa

- * **Lars R. “Jones” Vadjina** (University of Tübingen) “Algorithmic Utopia or Technocratic Control? AI as Power in Speculative Media”
- * **Javier Álvarez Caballero** (University of Zaragoza) “Beyond Control: Posthuman Ethics, Technological Specters, and the Utopian Imagination”
- * **Emilio Gianotti** (University of Urbino – Carlo Bo) “One Man’s God is Another Man’s Moloch: Utopia, Dystopia, Reader-Response Theory and Divine AI”

10:15 - 11:15

KEYNOTE SPEECH #1

Chair: Elisabetta Di Minico

- * **Barbara Henry** (Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies) “From Golem to Cyborg. Posthuman Reconfigurations of an Ancient Monstrum”

11:15 - 11:45

Coffee Break

11:45 - 13:00

Panel #7: TECHNOLOGICAL IMAGINARIES AND CONTESTED POWERS

Chair: Dario Boemia

- * **Mehdi Achouche** (Sorbonne Paris Nord University) “Computers as Myth and Symbols: Technology and Metaphors of Power in 1960s and 1970s Cinema and Television”
- * **Francisco José Martínez Mesa** (Complutense University of Madrid) and **Ana-Clara Rey Segovia** (University of Valencia) “Solutionism, Accelerationism, and Capitalism in 21st-Century Utopian and Dystopian Narratives”
- * **Tonguc Sezen** (University for the Creative Arts) and **Digdem Sezen** (University for the Creative Arts) “Contested Futures: Speculative Technology Trees and Paradigms of Control in Strategy Games”

13:00 - 14:00

Light Lunch

14:00 - 15:45

Panel #8: TRANSMEDIA SURVEILLANCE CULTURES

Chair: Andrea Chiurato

- * **Paola Dalla Torre** (LUMSA University) “Ethics, Surveillance and Totalitarianism in Andrew Niccol’s Science-Fiction Dystopias”
- * **Silvia Gianni** (IULM University) “Surveillance and Control in Contemporary Graphic Novel Adaptations of *1984*”
- * **James Cartlidge** (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava) “Sons of the Panopticon: Discipline, Surveillance and Panopticism in the *Metal Gear Solid* Series”
- * **Francesco Cattani** (University of Bologna) “The System Knows Better than You: Escaping Surveillance in *H(a)ppy* by Nicola Barker and *The Dream Hotel* by Laila Lalami”

15:45 - 16:15

Break

16:15 - 17:30

Panel #9: COGNITIVE POWERS AND AFFECTIVE ARCHITECTURES

Chair: Ana Clara Rey-Segovia

- * **Riccardo Boffetti** (University of L'Aquila) "Defiant Monads. Severance and the Architecture of Corporate Isolation"
- * **Miasol Eguibar-Holgado** (University of Oviedo) "The Coloniality of Digital Technology in Edmundo Paz Soldán's *La mirada de las plantas*"
- * **Tamires Oliveira** (Research Centre for Communication and Culture, Catholic University of Portugal) "Split at the Core: About Grief, Guilt, and Emotional Resonance in *Split Fiction*"

17:30 - 18:45

Panel #10: WILD ARCHITECTURES AND SYMBOLIC FUTURITIES

Chair: Marie Thevenon

- * **Neil Gerlach** (Carleton University in Ottawa) Robot Visions: Corporate Vision Statements as Science Fiction
- * **Scott Jordan** (Illinois State University) Wild Stories: Power, Technology, and Being in Speculative Fiction
- * **Ondřej Váša** (Charles University of Praha) The Convex and Concave Curves of the Future: Satellites and Domes as Symbols of Futurity

FRIDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2025 – Day #3 (9:30-16:45)

9:30 - 11:00

Panel #11: AI AND DYSTOPIAN FUTURES

Chair: Davide Lunerti

- * **Elio Baldi** (University of Amsterdam) "Artificial Narratives: AI in Benjamin Labatut's *The Maniac* and Richard Powers' *Playground*"
- * **Irene Villaescusa Illán** (University of Amsterdam) "Are We Nothing but Memories? Techno-philosophical Questions in Speculative Fiction"
- * **Laurence Scherz** (Amsterdam University of Applied Science) "The Machine as a Villain: Narrative Empathy and (Emotive) Robots in Speculative Fiction"

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 - 12:30

KEYNOTE SPEECH #2

Chair: Federico Selvini

- * **Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay** (University of Oslo) "Speculating on Control: Gods and AIs in Surveillance Mode"

12:30 - 13:30

Light Lunch

13:30 - 14:45

Panel #12: NORMATIVE POWERS AND TECHNOSCIENTIFIC IMAGINARIES

Chair: Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay

- * **Dario Altobelli** (University G. d'Annunzio – Chieti-Pescara) “Common People, Normal World. Or the Impossibility of Change and the Power of Technoscience”
- * **Loreta Minutilli** (Independent Scholar) “Imagining Future Women Scientists Through Speculative and Solarpunk Fiction”
- * **Sheryl Hamilton** (Carleton University in Ottawa) “Regulating Technology Through Forms of Science Fiction: Future Scenarios in the World Health Organization’s Human Genome Editing Governance Framework”

14:45 - 16:15

Panel #13: COUNTER-NARRATIVES OF TECHNOLOGICAL RESISTANCE

Chair: Chiara Grizzaffi

- * **Valentina Corosaniti** (University of Turin) and **Monika Riedmann** (University of Innsbruck) “Who Rules the Game? Ludic Aesthetics and Spectacularisation of Control in Contemporary Science Fiction”
- * **Jennifer Malvezzi** (University of Parma) Retribalization and Collective Agency. Tracing McLuhanism in Superstudio's *Fundamental Acts* Film Cycle”
- * **Paola Lamberti** (University of Salerno) “Counter-Narratives of the Anthropocene: Youth, Technology and the Ecological Revolt”

16:15 -16:45

Closing remarks (...and round of drinks)

Scientific and Organising Committee:

Simone Arcagni (IULM University)
Matteo Bittanti (IULM University)
Gianni Canova (IULM University)
Manuela Ceretta (University of Turin)
Luisa Damiano (IULM University)
Megen de Bruin-Molé (Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton)
Elisabetta Di Minico (HISTOPIA)
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Gaia Giuliani (CES - Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra)
Hagen Lehmann (IULM University)
Stefano Locati (IULM University)
Scott Jordan (Illinois State University)
Francisco José Martínez Mesa (Complutense University of Madrid, HISTOPIA)
Anna Pasolini (University of Milan)
Juan Pro Ruiz (CSIC - Spanish National Research Council, HISTOPIA)
Federico Selvini (IULM University)
Nicoletta Vallorani (University of Milan)

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