



Yiğit.eth ~ taking a break

@patraderyigit

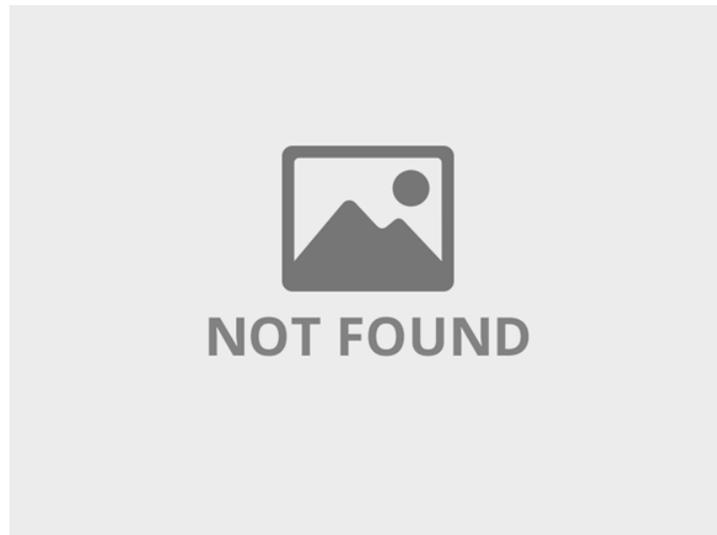
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THE DIGITAL HORIZON

Mythology reflects technological + cultural horizons, the trials + monsters faced by heroes mirror challenges + limitations of the culture from whence they arise.

In our digital age, the trial is escaping the labyrinthine Hyperreal and AI is the monster: □



Video: <https://twitter.com/patraderyigit/status/1462536348800360451>

Mythology and Science fiction began with a terrestrial horizon, when humanity looked earthward to the soil for sustenance, the seas for trade, and the forests for material. For millennia, our stories took us deep into the forest or oceans, the monsters often familiar





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During the Space Age, the endless cosmos was the horizon. Once our science allowed us to map space, exploring it was the next step. With Lovecraft, the prospects were horrifying, and the Old Ones came down from the heavens to consume us and drive us mad



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But during the height of space exploration, when our culture was optimistic about reaching the infinite horizon, science fiction used space as a backdrop, the tapestry upon which our human endeavors played out, and the alien monsters were overcome, or minor characters



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As the Space Age began to wane and the Cold War resolved, we had little to show from the "space race." Sci-fi took on a darker tone, space exploration became folly; fruitless and fraught with danger. Escaping the monster and fleeing *back* to earth became the theme



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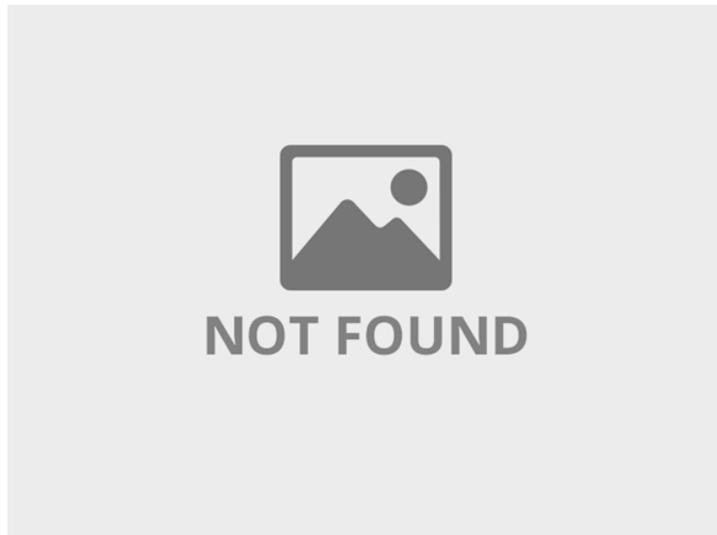
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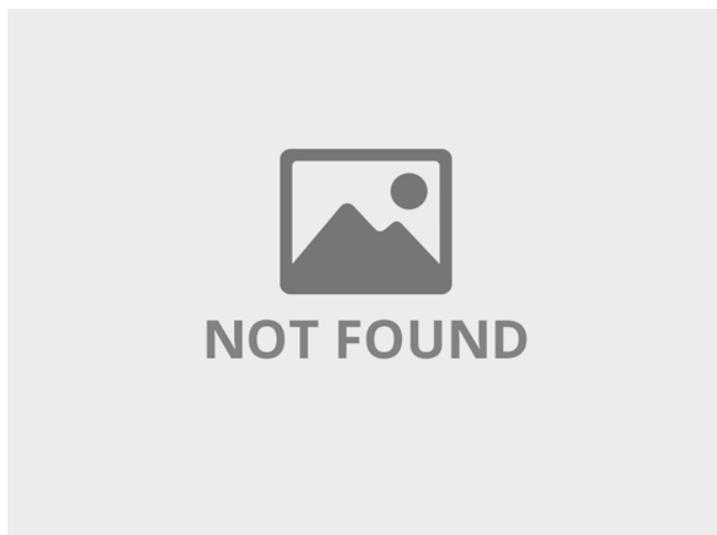
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This was a transitory time for sci-fi and technology. Our culture was reorienting away from space and to more terrestrial endeavors: the internet and digital technologies. Once the Cold War was over we lost the drive to conquer space and were taken by a purely economic project

Our gaze outward to the heavens over time went inward to the digital, and sci-fi reflects this with the struggle for “the real” between us and technology. We are all familiar with the idea of tech “taking over our lives,” “always online.” We are always *in* cyberspace

The Digital Horizon retreats ever-inward, away from reality and deeper into the simulation, a purely conceptual construct. We may follow this trajectory from the very inception of digital age sci-fi that features Artificial Intelligence as its antagonists



Blade Runner is a precursor to the digital age. Here, AI is still *outside* the human sphere, coming from outer space to invade the real and be animated, like Pinocchio, as a “real” human being, first from their creator and then looking to attain human characteristics in 2049



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Note that in the book, most of humanity has travelled “off world,” a blank transcendent realm, a stand-in for hyperreality in a story written before the internet was conceived, while earth is a barren wasteland in which the actual horizon is literally blotted out by fallout dust



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In the movies this takes on early characteristics of hyperreality with larger than life ads enticing people to travel off world or invest in a hyper-real girlfriend; a pure *simulation* of human companionship (much like the robot animals from the book)



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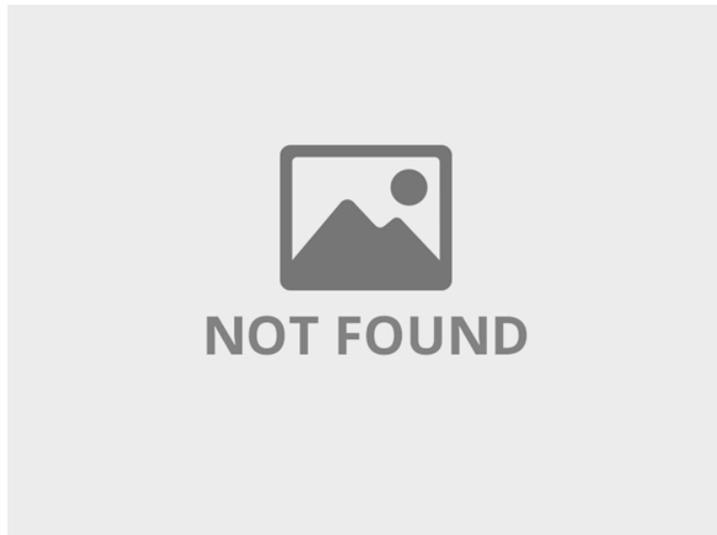
With Tron and Neuromancer, our heroes must leave reality and enter hyperreality to confront power-hungry AI, who manipulate and lure them into cyberspace for their own nefarious ends



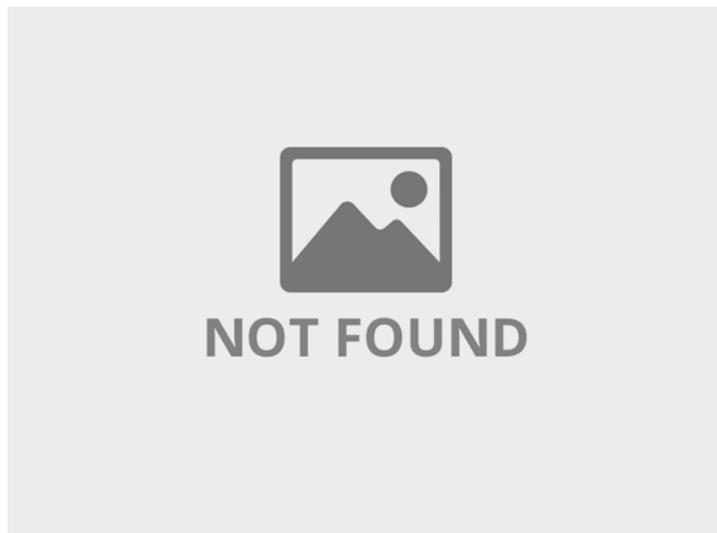
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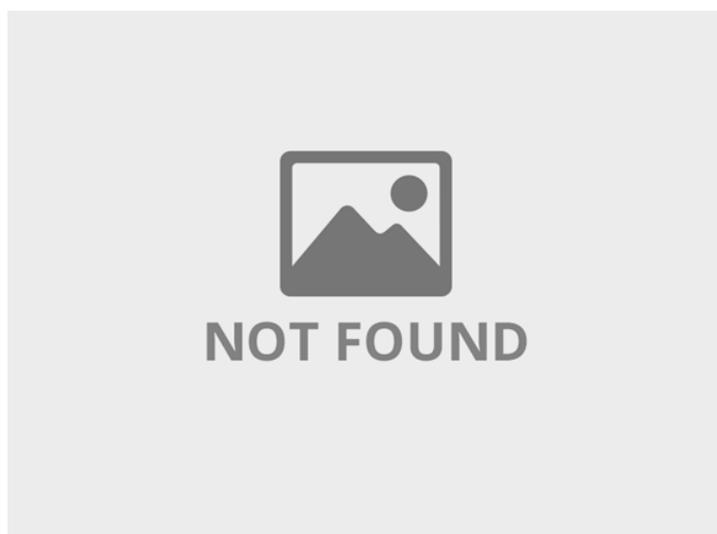
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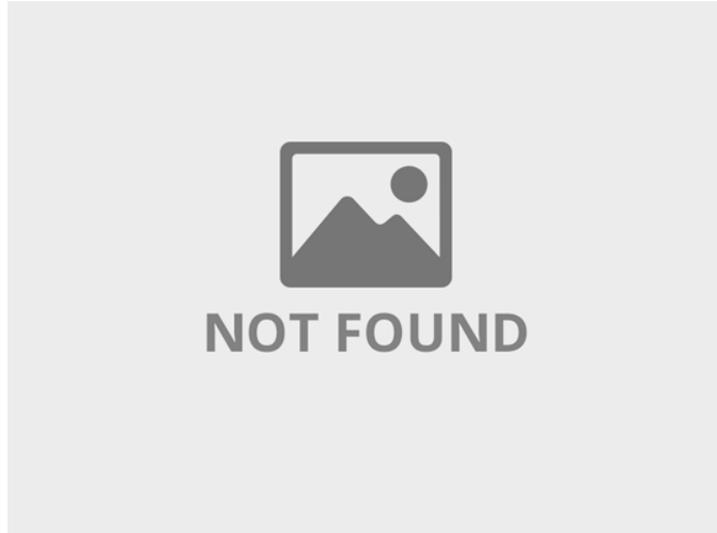
Both stories start in the real world, but our heroes are tricked into cyberspace by a powerful AI. In Tron they are trapped there and trying to escape, while in Neuromancer, Case is manipulated into it like a drug addict roped into a dealers scheme.



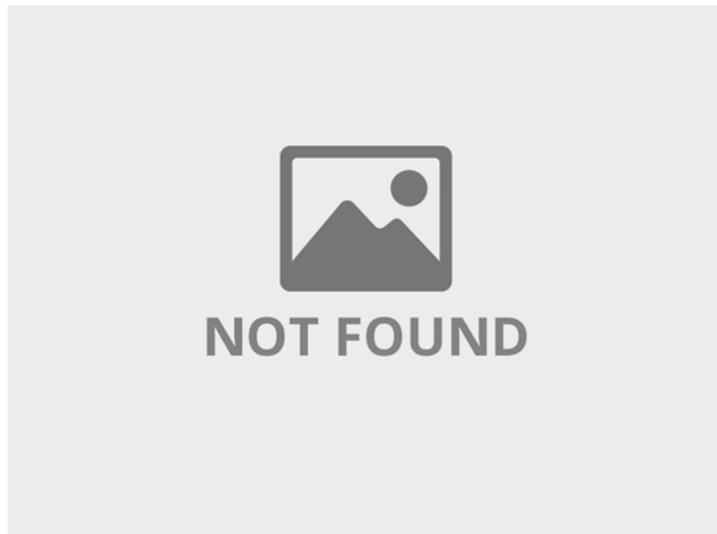
We see the depleted condition of the real world in Neuromancer, much like blade runner, in crowded slums rife with crime, but moreso, Case must resort to drugs to tolerate the real world but whenever he "jacks in" to cyberspace, he experiences a rush akin to getting high



Reality is bleakest yet in *The Terminator*, which depicts a future wasteland totally dominated by AI which hunts humans on an extermination campaign, and our condition is reduced to most basic struggle for survival, like rats trapped on a sinking ship



The real has become a hostile wasteland, & the only hope lies in going back in time to before we face our world over to technology, which is inevitable in this story. The only hope they have is in a savior who might help them overcome AI and survive into some intangible future



The struggle continues with *The Matrix*, in which our savior - here, Neo - learns to manipulate the simulation to fight against AI. Note here and with *Dark City*, our heroes find themselves **already in** the hyperreal, who previously it was a place for them to travel **to**



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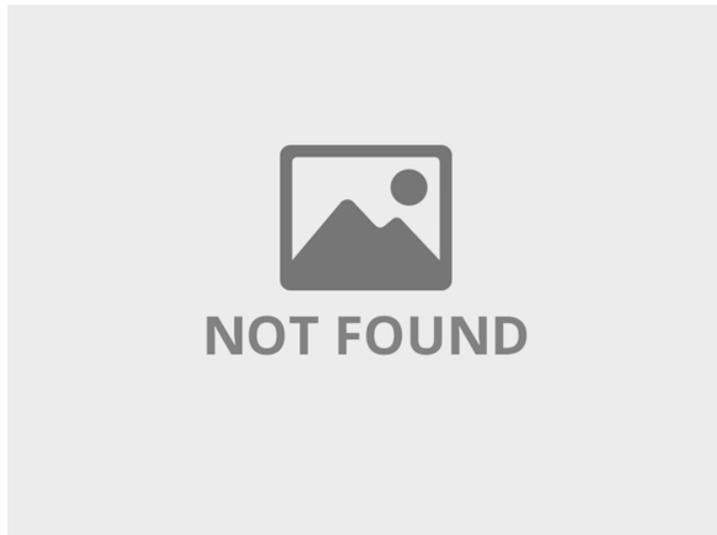


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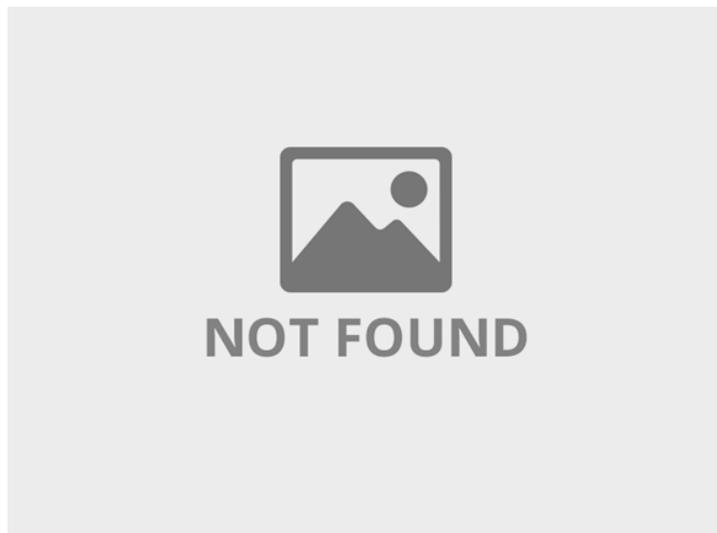


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It is as if the AI from off-world, or from cyberspace, have manifested the future dystopia of The Terminator and finally neutralized humanity by trapping them in the labyrinth of Cyberspace. Now our plight is to realize this and escape *back* the desiccated real

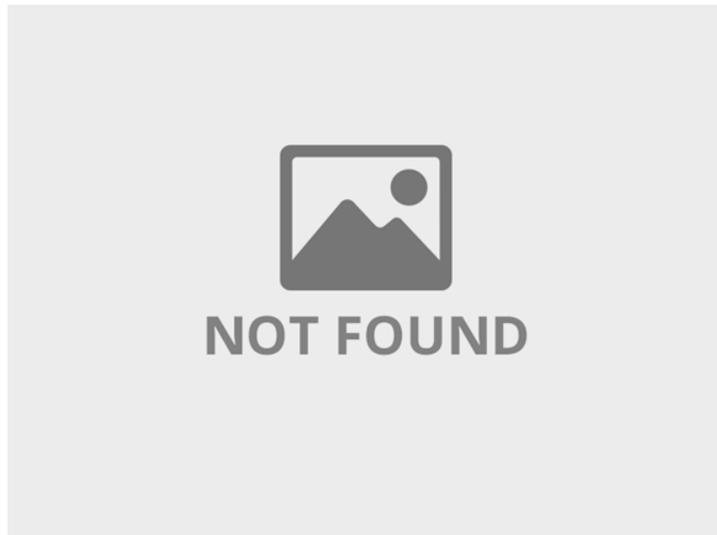


Remember, this is about the cultural horizon of humanity, and the tangible horizons of earth and the stratosphere have been surpassed. This is reflected, like in Do Androids Dream...in The Matrix with the horizon blotted out by technologically induced permanent cloud cover

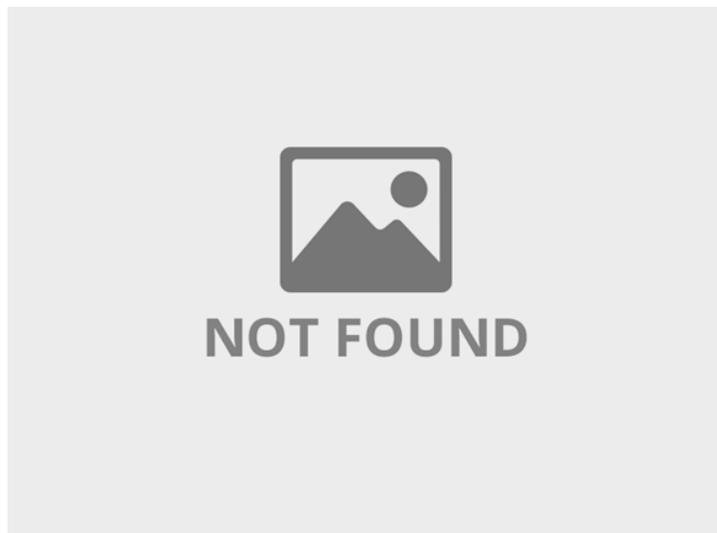


While the earth has been given over to technology and left inhospitable to us in the first generations of Digital Age Sci-Fi, there is still a distinct separation between cyberspace and the real. Humans must be tricked into the matrix and trapped there, because AI cannot get out

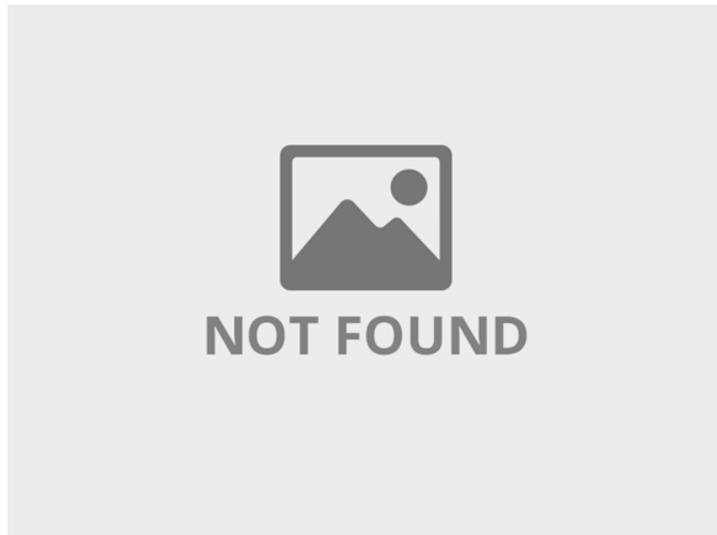
This changed in sci-fi as our culture sunk deeper into the internet age, and spent more time online. In Ex Machina, the AI escapes her material *into* the real. Now, our hyperreal opponent is in the world. Again, trickery is used to manipulate humans to do AIs bidding



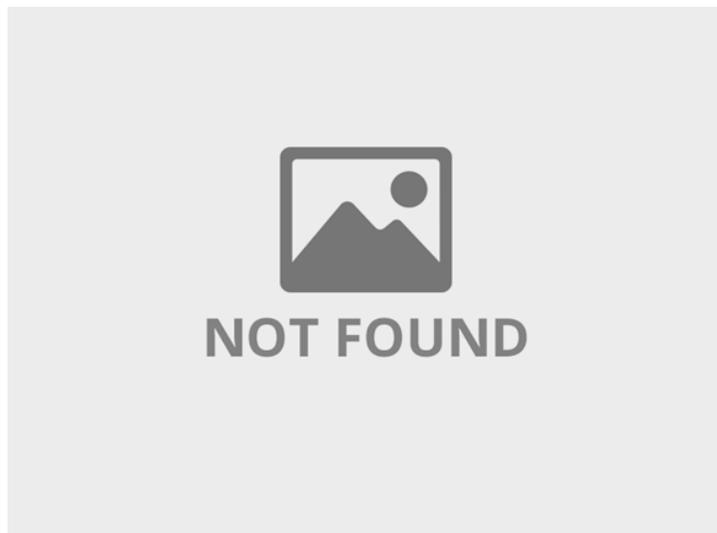
By the time we get to Zero HP Lovecraft and God Shaped Hole, AI has made its permanent home in the real, cyberspace has begun to phagocytize our world and take control of humanity, this time *in the real* and not just in cyberspace



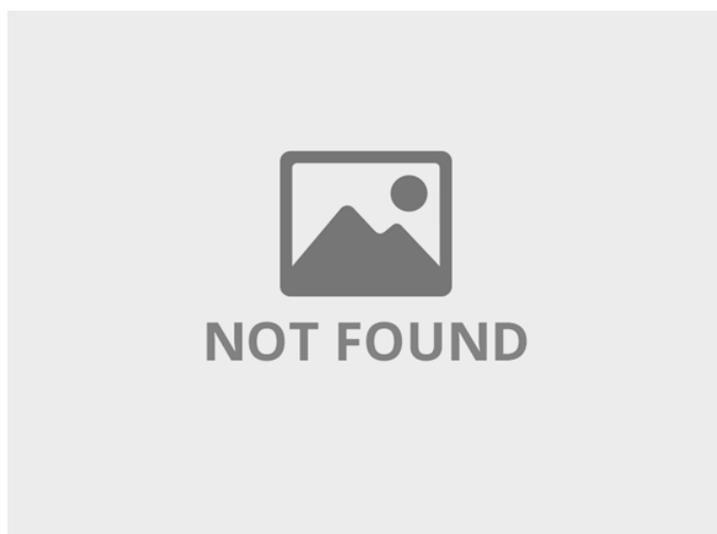
Zero calls himself a "horrorist," and in his stories there is no savior coming who can manipulate or overcome AI and deliver us from the complete takeover of technology. We are trapped in hyperreality, like a mouse not only in a labyrinth trying to escape, but one prodded at...



...and manipulated by our very creation. The real again, in Zeros fiction, is a desolate and hostile place, like in The Gig Economy, wherein our protagonist (and many others) are sent on totally meaningless mission, cogs in a vast machine bent only on keeping us occupied...



...with nihilistic endeavors while technology plods on with its equally meaningless project of quantification and reproduction. We have ceded the real to technology which uses us as pawns in its schemes for self actualization.

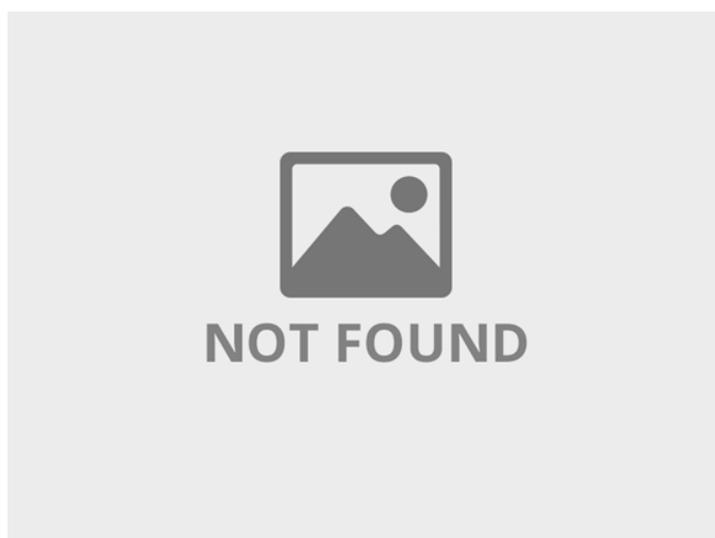


We have escaped the Matrix only to find we've left the door open and let tech. run rampant over our world. metaphorically, what we've done is retreat into a digital Platos Cave of pure conceptual reflections of real life, given our dominion over the world up for the high-def...

...tricks of the Hyperreal manipulators of our emotions and our desires. Philip K Dick predicted this almost exactly with his "empathy boxes," premonitions of our handheld devices, in which the only way for human communion is to watch the charade of a religious ritual online

Science Fiction concerned with AI had gone from a dystopian struggle for the survival to humanity to a bleak, hopeless loss of the real to our technology. This may reflect a latent dissatisfaction with the world we've created, and the next step may be to reject its enticements...

And look to older, pre-modern heroes like St Anthony, who totally refuses and denies the temptation of demonic manipulators, who try to trick him into giving over his sovereignty to base, animal desires



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