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#### When is the future and who goes there? The current regime of global neo-liberal capitalism has made it impossible to imagine other futures --- science fiction and space appropriation are hyper virtual projections of the future, infected with colonial and anti-black conceptions of the past, entangled with the drive for accumulation and property.

Ali and Kingsmith 18 - 1 [Lina Nasr El Hag Ali, York University, Department of Politics, A. T. King smith, York University, Department of Politics, May 2018, “ COSMIC SLOP: Possibilities of Alien Futures (From the Past)” BCS Learning and Development, <http://dx.doi.org/10.14236/ewic/EVAC18.26> ww

1. INTRODUCTION: WHEN IS THE FUTURE? ¶ To put it nicely, the future seems bleak. Much of our present imaginings of the what-is-to-come are plagued with visions of the apocalyptic. But as The Invisible Committee (2015, 1.3) aptly observes, “the purpose of [these] prophec[ies] is never to be right about the future, but to act upon the present: to impose a waiting mode, passivity, submission, here and now.” ¶ ¶ Throughout the 20th century, avant-gardists and cyber-feminists from Walter Benjamin and Frantz Fanon to Donna Haraway and N. Katherine Hayles revolted in the name of a future against power structures that relied on the control and representation of the historical archive. Today, this situation is reversed. The impossibility of imagining a future outside of our present political and economic conditions — and how that is reflected to us in the works of science fiction — functions as a site of key concern for us in this work (Žižek 2002, Jameson 2005, Fisher 2009, Vint 2016). ¶ Our aim in this paper is to explore different ways of re-claiming the future as a space for greater social and ecological sustainability, but also the future as our capacity to imagine estranged and new worlds. This is in contrast to our current capitulation to the future as it is envisioned by global capital. In order to begin thinking of such futures beyond the ‘now’, we argue that it is imperative to dispense with the limitations of the human subject. ¶ ¶ What we call for is neither an overcoming of organic-mechanic dualisms, nor the reversing of their rootings, but their necessary and totalising alienation. In doing so, we explore the possibilities of extra-terrestrial futures in which ‘the alien’, as a material-semiotic figure, can displace the dualisms encoded on the human: organic/cyborg, animal/ machine, body/mind, man/woman, utopia/dystopia, white/black, hetero/homo, etc. In this regard, the alien, unlike the hybridized subjectivity of the cyborg, functions as a vector of transvaluation: a force existing, or coming from somewhere beyond our current planetary-technological assemblages of future-control. ¶ ¶ By probing the conditions of possibility beyond the hyperbolic tropes of the current futures on offer, we contend that alien-theory can help to conjure new tomorrows through a focus on the creative power of non-being, disconnection, exploitation and alienation. In collecting together these threads of critical inquiry, we attempt to synthesize a series of ‘alien-on-earth’ approaches to the politics of the future in the context of a neoliberal temporality where the future has become a site of crisis, both in the present — in the looming threats of climate change, environmental and species destruction, the rise of the Right in Europe, North America, India, the Philippines and elsewhere, and the immanent collapse of global financial markets — and in our capacity to imagine other possible worlds. ¶ ¶ With such ends squarely in mind we ask: How can we redirect science fiction towards estranged new worlds rather than extending our current one? What could it mean for us to conceptualise the alien not as a fantastic fiction or an affect of exploitation but as a mechanism for generating new possibilities in the present? What can we do if we were to embrace the shared experience of alienation and even proliferate it further? In other words, how can the alien work as a vector for organizing against the intensification of anxiety, racism, paranoia, and precarity that has thrown out the promise of all possible futures, be they cyber-feminist, Black liberationist, social democratic or otherwise? ¶ ¶ Addressing such questions necessitates a double move: tracing the co-optation of the cyborg present before redirecting our focus to alienated futures that are disorganized, noncoherent, nonhuman, and lacking, and thus do not function within the ambit of future-control. In considering the ways in which power now operates predictively as much as retrospectively — dissimulating historical archives by envisioning, managing, and delivering reliable futures — we conclude with a discussion of chronopolitics as a concept descriptive of a set of temporal practices that can be put to effective use (Virilio 1977, Eshun 1998). ¶ ¶ In doing so, we argue that alienation cannot simply be reduced to the isolating, dehumanizing, and disenchanting effects of working within a capitalist system of production. By recognizing alienation as a universal condition among all non-normative subjects, we probe alien-theory as a strategy for forging new solidarities that can cut across static identity categories as a way to extend rather than limit. Importantly, this is not a call for the rewarming of intersectionality. But rather, for an active project of alienation that moves away from the privileged norms, bodies and histories that have become naturalized as ‘the future’, and towards a political orientation that slices through every particular by refusing the linear classification of temporality. ¶ ¶ At stake, as van Veen (2015) discerns, is the recovery of past cycles of futurity and the derailing of the whitewashed, technocratic futures currently in effect. As corporations seek to manage the unknown through scenario-based decisions, while civil society responds to future shocks through habits formatted by science fiction, the covenants of the alien, marginalized within literature and yet central to modern thought, can be mobilized as a program for recovering the histories of counter- futures and as a space for the critical work of manufacturing tools capable of destabilizing the neoliberal futures industry.

#### Sci-fi, is the primary cite of neo-liberal future control --- the future is not thought of as a new world, rather it is an intensification of our own

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2. THE FUTURES INDUSTRY ¶ In fashioning the future, science fiction as both a literary tradition and an industry, is a primary site of future-control and its reproduction. This also makes it a primary site for power. ¶ ¶ When we look to the future we see only more of the present, more of the same capitalist values and sites of invisibility, while the actual present pales in comparison to the techno-product-saturated future to which we aspire, (Vint 2016). When this future is routinely invoked to obscure the present in all its anxiety and exploitation, the power of falsification, the drive to rewrite reality, and the will to produce all plausible alternatives becomes fundamental, not trivial, (Eshun 2003). ¶ ¶ Given this context, it would be naïve to understand science fiction, located within the expanded field of the futures industry, as merely a projection into the far future, or as a utopian project for imagining alternative social realities. As Liu (2016) observes, across the spectrum of popular science fiction, the future no longer functions to prompt us to imagine something other than the present but simply exists as the spectre of its intensification. ¶ As a mode of future-production, Fisher (2009) terms this kind of thinking science fiction capital or ‘SF capital’. Under the conditions of SF Capital, we seek simply to survive, to endure, and are no longer capable of imagining that there is an outside or alternative. ¶ ¶ By distancing the economic, social, and political conditions of the now-here and no-where, the world is rendered by capital as simply ‘the world’, not one social alternative among many, but an indeterminacy that defuses anything unstable that might explode (Hoffman 2016). This synergy — a utopian feedback of future oriented media and capital — encourages us to place our material investment in only a narrow range of futures that are produced by corporations as the chief mechanism by which we are encouraged affectively to invest in the possibilities of capitalism. ¶ ¶ The triumphant ‘end of history’ in the West, as considered by Brown (2015), has culminated in a loss of conviction about the capacity to craft and steer our existence or even to secure our future. As Vint (2016) reiterates, this is the most profound and devastating sense in which modernity is ‘over’. Ceding all power to craft the future to cybernetic algorithms, SF Capital insists that markets ‘know best’, even if, in the age of financialisation, markets do not and must not know it all, and the hidden hand has gone permanently missing. This lost present is stretching, slipping for many into yesterday, reaching for a privileged few into tomorrow.

#### We must fundamentally reorient how we understand spatial-temporalities and embrace new modalities of subjectivity --- the alien is how we achieve that, the alien is a semiotic-material subject that allows us to understand new temporalities of deviant bodies and imagine alternative futures

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3.1 Arrivals from Outer Space ¶ The non-linearity of Past-Future-Present is particularly important for the ways in which the material conditions of the past pre-configure the future. Whereas the trajectory of the cyborg follows from a linear model of progression (human- machine-hybridisation), the alien is out of synch with natural time: it arrives at the present through our futures-past. While the cyborg is half-human and half-machine, the alien is neither. As a mutable architecture that remains available for perpetual modification and enhancement, the alien pre-dates the discoveries of the hybrid, the machine, and even the human altogether. ¶ ¶ Like the cyborg did for the particular techno-political constellation of the Cold War era, the alien addresses what Gilroy (2013, 271) underscores as the fundamental lack of an adequate conceptual and critical language for engaging with the “density of today’s mixed and always impure forms”. As a subject, a migrant, a foreigner, an affect, an aesthetic, a relation to the mode of production and more — through the alien we can move beyond the normalisation of the cyborg’s present-past relation- ship with the antagonisms of silicon futures. After all, the alien is simultaneously ‘not of this world’ and also an ‘alien-on-earth’, characterised by the histories, peoples, events and practices submerged and displaced by the monopoly powers of particular whitewashed linear pasts, futures and presents. ¶ Against such currents, the arrival of the alien seizes alienation as a creative force for generating new worlds. Instead of dividing subjects into intensely localised nodes within a large grid of identities, the alien draws our attention to the fact that almost everyone is alienated from everyone else and in just about every way. In this regard, our alien displacement of the cyborg as a trangressive material semiotic figure is important because alien theory problematises any positive affirmation of identity — as even post-human categories are often defined against the human they are not, cyborg theories can function to indirectly resuscitate a sort of ‘critical’ humanism by producing particular bodies, identities, and histories that reproduce the dualisms we nod to earlier. ¶ ¶ By refusing the human (and by extention the cyborg) as a central analytic category, the alien provokes a fresh orientation: what Eshun (1998, 3) describes as a vector that can “design, manufacture, fabricate, synthesise, cut, paste and edit a so-called artificial discontinuum for the future [rhythm-machine]”. In demanding alien listeners who can hear another world, the alien speaks not only to the ubiquity of alienation, but its very necessity. Drawing from the Afrofuturism and Xenofeminism of elsewhere, alien theory reminds us that we are all alienated, but also, that we have never ever been otherwise. ¶ ¶ The condition of alienation — introduced by Marx (1939) as the abduction or estrangement from a ‘species-being’ that is always determined in a specific social and historical formation — is a psychosocial inevitability that all Afrodiasporic art uses to its own advantage by creating contexts that encourage a process of rethinking the relationship between politics and alienation (Blackman 2017). ¶ After all, it is true that Marx conceptualised human alienation as the reification of human and social relations caused by commodity relations. However, Marx made this reduction only in so far as the essence of the matter was concerned — even in a capitalist society, the concept of alienation embraces a wider field than that of ‘reification’ or ‘commodity fetishism’ (e.g. the alienation of socially possible futures, alienation from the recognition of alterative histories, alienation from non-Western temporalities, etc.). In this sense, the problem is not alienation per se, but the ways in which our present experience of alienation is confined within a particular socio-economic imaginary. ¶ ¶ The Afrodiasporic and Xenofeminist emphases on practices and forms that do not conform to specific semiotics and identities initiates an alien politics by exposing how the inhuman already exists within what counts as human life, even if submerged, occluded, disavowed and disqualified, (Goodman 2012). For instance, in speaking of the history of ‘Black Music’, Eshun (1998) describes the works of Coltrane, Sun Ra or Underground Resistance as alienating itself from the human, arriving from the future of non-being and non-coherence. ¶ ¶ As the Xenofeminist collective ‘Laboria Cuboniks’ (2018, 1) makes clear, it is through and not despite our alienated condition that we can free ourselves from the “muck of immediacy” that defines the normalisation of the cyborg through SF Capital. In contrast to the libertarian techno-determinism of silicon futures, the alien’s arrival from outer-space takes freedom not as given — and certainly not given by anything ‘natural’ — but as a process that involves the intensification of different forms of alienation. In accepting nothing as permanent — neither historical conditions nor social forms — the alien mutates, navigates and probes every horizon. ¶ ¶ To this end, alienations’ critical necessity lies in its ability to assemble conceptual approaches and counter-memorial practices that re-move and put back into circulation previously inaccessible alienations. In this way, the radical opportunities afforded by developing (and alienating) forms of technological mediation are no longer put to use in the exclusive interests of capital, which, by design, only benefits the few (Hester 2018). Rather, as a means to reprogram the present, alien theory is neither utopian nor forward-looking, (Gibson 1984). By engineering feedback between imagined futures and a becoming-present, an alien sense of temporality can generate an artificial discontinuum to cut through the silicon futures of ubiquitous sameness, symmetry, and individuated affirmation.

#### Capitalism is unsustainable – it generates several intertwined crises that make it try or die for the affirmative – we’ve got charts!

**von Weizsäcker & Wijkman 17** (Ernest Ulrich von Weizsäcker and Anders Wijkman; 2018; Springer Publishing; *“Come On! Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet A Report to the Club of Rome”*; accessed 12/12/21; Ernest Ulrich von Weizsäcker, Professor and Director of the United Nation Centre for Science and Technology for Development, Founder and President of the Wuppertal Institute, Member of the German Bundestag, chairing the Committees on Globalization and the Environment, Dean of the graduate School of Environmental Science and Management at the University of California, appointed Co-Chair of UNEP’s International Resource Panel; Anders Wijkman, chairman of the Swedish Association of Recycling Industries, member of the Board of the Swedish Development Authority (SIDA), appointed chair of the Swedish Cross-Party Committee on Environmental Objectives, member of the European Parliament, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Policy Director of UNDP, Secretary General of the Swedish Red Cross and Director General of the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries, Member of the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, the World Future Council and the International Resource Panel; pages 1-9; ask me for the pdf) RC/HB

We all know that the world is in crisis. Science tells us that almost half of the top soils on earth have been depleted in the last 150 years1 ; nearly 90% of fish stocks are either overfished or fully fished.2 Climate stability is in real danger (Sects. 1.5 and 3.7); and the earth is now in the sixth mass extinction period in history.3 Perhaps the most accurate account of the ecological situation is the 2012 ‘Imperative to act’,4 launched by all the 18 recipients (till 2012) of the Blue Planet Prize, including Gro Harlem Brundtland, James Hansen, Amory Lovins, James Lovelock and Susan Solomon. Its key message reads, ‘The human ability to do has vastly outstripped the ability to understand. As a result, civilization is faced with a perfect storm of problems, driven by overpopulation, overconsumption by the rich, the use of environmentally malign technologies and gross inequalities’. And further, ‘The rapidly deteriorating biophysical situation is barely recognized by a global society infected by the irrational belief that physical economies can grow forever’. 1.1.1 Different Types of Crisis and a Feeling of Helplessness The crisis is not cyclical but growing. And it is not limited to the nature around us. There are also a social crisis, a political and a cultural crisis, a moral crisis, as well as a crisis of democracy, of ideologies and of the capitalist system. The crisis also consists of deepened poverty in many countries and the loss of jobs for a considerable part of the population worldwide. Billions of people have reached a state of mind where they don’t trust their government anymore.5 Seen from a geographic point of view, symptoms of crisis are found nearly everywhere. The ‘Arab Spring’ was followed by a series of wars and civil wars, serious human rights violations and many millions of refugees. The internal situation is not better in Eritrea, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen or Honduras. Venezuela and Argentina, once among the richer states of the world, face huge economic challenges, and neighbouring Brazil has gone through many years of recession and political turmoil. Russia and several East European countries are struggling with major economic and political problems in their post-communist phase. Japan finds it difficult to overcome decadelong stagnation, and to deal with the 2011 tsunami and ensuing nuclear disaster. And the temporary economic upswing several African countries have enjoyed lost its dynamism as soon as the prices of mineral resources collapsed, and partly due to very unusual droughts. Land grabbing is plaguing much of Africa, but also other parts of the world, leading to involuntary dislocations of millions of people and the related problems with refugees both within countries and abroad.6 The response of governments has been concentrated, at worst, on managing their own political image, and at best to treat the symptoms of the crisis, not the cause. The problem is that the political class in the whole world is strongly influenced by investors and by powerful private companies. This indicates that the current crisis is also a crisis of global capitalism. Since the 1980s, capitalism has moved from furthering the economic development of countries, regions and the world towards maximizing profits, and then to a large extent profits from speculation. In addition, the capitalism unleashed since 1980 in the Anglo-Saxon world, and since 1990 worldwide, is mainly financial. This trend was supported by excessive deregulation and liberalization of the economy (see Sect. 2.4). The term ‘shareholder value’ popped up in the business pages of the media worldwide, as if that was now the new epiphany and guardrail for all economic action. In reality, it served to narrow business down to short-term gains, often at the expense of social and ecological values. The myth of shareholder value has been effectively debunked in a recent book by Lynn Stout.7 A different, if related, feature of ‘disarray’ is the rise of aggressive, mostly rightwing movements against globalization in OECD countries, often referred to as populism. These have become overt through Brexit and the Trump victory in the United States. As Fareed Zakaria observes, ‘Trump is part of a broad populist

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

upsurge running through the Western world. … In most (countries), populism remains an opposition movement, although one that is growing in strength; in others, such as Hungary, it is now the reigning ideology’.8 This phenomenon of right-wing populism can be explained to an extent by the ‘trunk valley of the elephant curve’ (Fig. 1.1) 9 showing the decline of developed world middle classes, during a 20-year period. While more than half of the world’s population was enjoying over 60% income rises, OECD’s middle classes suffered losses caused mainly by the deindustrialization and job losses in major parts of the United States, Britain and other countries. In the United States, the median income increased by a meagre 1.2% since 1979. The stunning income growth on the left-hand side of the curve, the ‘back of the elephant’, lifting some two billion people out of poverty, was caused mainly by China’s and some other countries’ economic success. What remains invisible on the picture is the far end of ‘the trunk of the elephant’: The richest 1% of the world and, more revolting, the richest eight persons of the world now own as much wealth as the poorest half of the world population combined, a figure publicized by Oxfam during the 2017 World Economic Forum.10 The ‘elephant curve’ gives an incomplete picture for a second reason. The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has proposed a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) going beyond just income and including ten indicators around health, education and living standards. Using that MPI, OPHI counts 1.6 billion people living in ‘multidimensional poverty’ in 2016 – nearly twice as many as the number of people living in extreme poverty measured by income alone.11 Thirdly, the interpretation of the curve requires an analysis of the people in each percentile group. In fact, they tend to move. And the curve does not distinguish those in Russia and East European countries who lost much of their income after 1990 from those in Detroit or middle England who, for very different reasons, also were among the losers.12 Another fact cannot be seen in the picture: the massive shift of money and income from the manufacturing and trade sectors to the financial sector.13 Bruce Bartlett, a senior policy advisor to both the Reagan and Bush administrations, argues that this ‘financialization’ of the economy is the cause of income inequality, falling wages and the poor performance. David Stockman, Reagan’s director of the Office of Management and Budget, agrees, describing our current situation as ‘corrosive financialization that has turned the economy into a giant casino since the 1970s’.14 Populist politicians in the OECD countries see themselves as speaking for the forgotten ‘ordinary’ people and for genuine patriotism, but they tend to fight and antagonize the people representing democratic institutions – what an irony! For the European Union (EU), the strongest trigger for populism has been the millions of refugees who came or would like to come to Europe from the Near East, from Afghanistan and from Africa. Even the most generous European countries have reached their own assumed limits for receiving these masses of refugees. The EU institutions were too weak (not too powerful, as they are depicted by the new nationalists) to deal with the ‘refugee crisis’, resulting eventually in an identity crisis in the EU. Once a success story of an entity ensuring peace and economic development, the EU has lost some of its unifying narrative. The populist right-wing movements or parties see and criticize the EU as the culprit for all kinds of undesired events. The irony is that continuing the success story would require more, not less, powers for the Union. The Union should be entrusted with border protection, a well-funded common asylum and refugee policy to deal with the refugee crisis and maintain the advantages of the Schengen agreement. And for the re-stabilization of the Euro, the EU or at least the Euro zone needs a common fiscal policy, as the new French President Emmanuel Macron is proposing. But it is these very measures of which nationalist populists are most afraid. The EU in its present form is not without shortcomings. Free market principles have come to dominate EU policymaking, leading to a subordination of other policies, like environment. Notably the UK wanted that priority, as it preferred to see the EU chiefly as a union for mutual trade. And the austerity policies pursued have blocked many benign investments and led to unnecessary suffering among tens of millions of Europeans. Such shortcomings, however, should never be used to put in question the overall objectives of the EU – a union of peace, the rule of law, human rights, cultural understanding and sustainability. Addressing the global crisis of democracy, the German Bertelsmann Foundation has published a 3000-page empirical report on progress (or lack thereof) on democracy and a social market economy, as measured by the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI).15 Over the last few years, the report sees a consistent decay of such parameters as civil rights, free and fair elections, freedom of opinion and of press, freedom of assembly and separation of powers. Within the same time frame, the number of countries in which authoritarian, mostly religious, dogmas influence political decision making rose from 22% to 33%. That report was published before the assaults on democracy and civil rights that occurred in summer 2016 in Turkey or the Philippines. Symptoms of tyranny are spreading, including in some of the countries with a solid tradition of freedom and democracy.16 Let us briefly turn to a different kind of crisis. Well, not exactly a crisis but an unpleasant feature in an otherwise fruitful communication tool, the ‘social media’. Aside from being practical and useful for everyday arrangements and exchange of news and reasonable opinions, social media also have become vehicles for enhancing conflicts and vilification of mostly innocent individuals, and for spreading ‘post truth’ nonsense. Much of the contents of social media political conversation is selfenhancing political rubbish, as those media serve as ‘echo chambers’ for networks of like-minded frustrated citizens.17 An empirical study from China found that anger and indignation are the emotions that are most likely to get viral in the social media, meaning they are multiplied faster and stronger than other emotions.18 The Internet and the social media are also vehicles for ‘bots’ (short for robots) that can disrupt or destroy messages, multiply nonsense and create all kinds of mischief. There are dozens of types of malicious bots (and botnets) to harvest email addresses, to grab content of websites and reuse it without permission, to spread viruses and worms, to buy up good seats for entertainment events, to increase views for YouTube videos or to increase traffic counts in order to extract money from advertisers. A more frightening cause of disarray relates to terrorism. In earlier times, humanity’s violent conflicts occurred mostly between different countries. In recent times, systemic and at least partly religious conflicts prevail, using terror attacks with the explicit intention of making people feel insecure. During much of the twentieth century, religions remained quiet, non-aggressive and geographically confined to rather stable territories. This no longer is true. Partly because of globalized populations moving or being forced to leave their home territories, some factions of Islam have expanded geographically and are claiming strong influence over national states, for example, attacking countries like France with its tradition of laicism that does not permit religion to dominate politics. What tends to be underrepresented in the media is the positive role of religions. In Christian-dominated Europe, liberal and tolerant religion became part of the European identity a century after the Enlightenment successfully discredited the earlier doctrinaire, authoritarian and colonialist-missionary manifestations of the faith. During the Cold War, Christian goals of social cohesion helped build the system of ‘Western values’, often described as the social welfare state, or the ‘social market economy’ (for its partial demise, see Sect. 2.4). With a view towards leading Islam into an equally benign and co-operative social role, some Islamic scholars, such as Syrian born Bassam Tibi, call on Muslims in Europe to integrate into democratic society.19 Tibi, however, is not popular among radical Muslims, to put it mildly. But to understand the radicalization of Islam, one must not underestimate the role played by the West, in particular the United States, in interfering with Near Eastern states. Some would say that the troublesome situations mentioned so far, the recurring topics of media headlines, are only the surface of our world’s ‘disarray’. Deeper and more systemic problems include the breath-taking speed of technological development that may very easily run out of control. One trend is digitization that potentially threatens millions of jobs (see Sect. 1.11.4). Another trend or development can be observed in the biological sciences and technologies. The enormous acceleration of genetic engineering through the CRISPR-Cas9 technology20 is causing fears of monster creation or the extinction of species or varieties not seen as valuable under human utilitarian criteria. Generally, a non-specific feeling is spreading that ‘progress’ has scary sides and that the genie may already have left the bottle (see Sect. 1.11.3). No doubt there is a need to analyse and understand the symptoms and roots of the variety of crises, political, economic, social, technological and environmental. It is also important to recognize the extent to which people perceive the various phenomena of disarray and feel disoriented, and to recognize that the reality and the feelings of disarray have a moral and even religious dimension. 1.1.2 Financialization: A Phenomenon of Disarray An important part of the disorientation relates to financial markets. Historians will look back at the last 30 years with concern, when looking at the explosion in bank balance sheets, backed up by declining levels of equity and massive borrowing. One of the results was a temporary private-sector-led boom. The other was a massive increase in the world’s financial sector (finance, insurance, real estate – FIRE), often called financialization, and subsequently the financial crisis of 2008–2009. Excessive risk-taking developed into a crisis that was close to bringing the whole financial system to a halt. When the bubble burst, many governments were forced to step in with broad support programmes. Governments caught by the new mind-set (see Sect. 2.4) were intimately involved in all of this. True, there are many examples of serious malpractices within the private financial sector. But had it not been for the systematic deregulation of the banks by governments, with the purpose of stimulating economic growth by issuing more debt, the situation would have been radically different. The causes behind the crisis were many and varied: – Excessive lending by the banking industry – Lack of action on the part of regulators and central banks to stop (i) excessive lending, (ii) the spread of exotic financial instruments (synthetic assets and bonds, collateralized mortgage obligations/CMOs, structured debt issues, etc.) and (iii) pure speculative transactions – Opaque tax havens, and the absence of a binding legal framework that is accepted and implemented by the international community, in general, and the major jurisdictions and financial centres – Securitization and distribution by investment banks and other financial actors of mortgage-related assets and investment vehicles transferring the credit risk from the original lender to the ultimate bondholders – Failure by some rating agencies and auditing firms to properly assess and report the inherent risks posed by many of the financial products A deeper analysis is presented by economists Anat Admati and Martin Hellwig21 about the main causes behind the financial crisis. Western banks borrowed far too much with far too little equity in their balance sheets to act as a buffer if things went wrong in their business – from trading in the multitrillion-dollar derivatives markets to often reckless lending on real estate. In the decades following the Second World War, banks operated with between 20% and 30% of their liabilities as equity. By 2008, that had shrunk to just 3%. Banks obviously believed that they had invented instruments that removed the risk, allowing them to run their banks with a tenth of the buffer they had before. It proved to be very unrealistic. But they counted with the state to underwrite their risks. Bankers have enriched themselves spectacularly in the process. They made themselves ‘too big to fail’ – and too big to jail. The 2008 financial crisis was mostly caused by that irresponsible greed.22 Yet, in 2009, not only did bankers avoid criminal prosecutions and receive hundreds of billions in government bailouts, but some still paid themselves record bonuses. At the same time, almost nine million households in the United States had to abandon their homes when the value of their houses plummeted and they could no longer service the adjustable-rate mortgages – the so-called foreclosure crisis.23 Financialization refers to the dominance of the financial sector in the global economy and the tendency for accumulated profits (and leverage) to flow into real estate and other speculative investment. Debt is an intrinsic element in this process. In the United States, for example, both household debt and private sector debt more than doubled relative to GDP between 1980 and 2007.24 The same is true for most OECD countries. At the same time, ‘the value of financial assets grew from four times GDP in 1980 to ten times GDP in 2007 and the finance sector’s share of corporate profits grew from about 10% in the early 1980s to almost 40% by 2006’.25 Adair Turner, chair of the UK’s Financial Services Authority in the years following the 2007–2008 crisis, regards unchecked private credit creation as the key system fault that led to that crisis with its devastating consequences.26 From this follows that the financial sector constitutes a significant and increasing risk factor in the economy. The degree of financialization varies from country to country but the increase in the power of finance is general. The current finance sector evolved in the context of the deregulation that gathered pace from the late 1970s and expanded dramatically after the 1999 removal of the separation between commercial and investment banking in the United States.27 This barrier had been put in place in 1933 by the Roosevelt administration in response to the Wall Street Crash of 1929, when a period of rampant credit creation and financial speculation collapsed. Similar speculation preceded the crisis of 2007–2008: The face value of financial products reached US$640 trillion in September 2008, 14 times the GDP of all the countries on earth.28 Lietaer et al.29 compare speculation with ordinary money transfers paying for goods and services: ‘In 2010, the volume of foreign exchange transactions reached $4 trillion per day’, which does not even include derivatives. In comparison, ‘one day’s exports or imports of all goods and services in the world amount to about 2% of those $4 trillion’. Transactions not paying for goods and services, almost by definition are speculative. Such financial products and transactions, the authors continue, lead regularly to monetary crashes, sovereign debt crises and systemic crashes with an average of more than ten countries in crisis every year. One of the consequences of this development is that a significant part of economic growth has been distributed to the wealthy, as mentioned with the new Oxfam figures in the previous subchapter. Practices within the financial sector demonstrate a disregard for the impact they have on both people and the planet. That includes a distinct short-termism, the ratio of banks’ reserves to their loans, the ratio of banks’ lending that support the real economy versus speculation in property and derivatives, unchecked credit creation – in fact money creation – and the failure to account for long-term climate and environmental risks. In the words of Otto Scharmer at MIT,30 ‘We have a system that accumulates oversupply of money in areas that produce high financial and low environmental and social returns, while at the same an undersupply of money in areas that serve important societal investment needs’. The failure to account for environmental risks means that the pressure on already scarce natural resources accelerates – trees are felled, waterways polluted, wetlands drained and the exploitation of oil, gas and coal accelerating, as long as there is demand. It also means that huge savings, among them pension funds, are locked into investments in fossil-based assets. Such assets are increasingly looked upon as high-risk assets (see Sect. 3.4).

#### Thus, we affirm that: the appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust ---

#### Space X, Elon musk, Jeff Bezos, all are silicon elites driving the status quos conception of the future --- we affirm the resolution as a method of embracing alien temporalities and imagining alternative futures

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2.1 Futures Made of Silicon (Valley) ¶ SF capital works by giving expression to a futurity that is already implicit within the present moment. And while science fiction does not claim to actually predict the future, what it projects or extrapolates is a kind of virtual future. That is to say, as Shaviro (2010) points out, it explicates (literally unfolds) the anticipations — or the shards of futurity — that are lurking within our actual social experience. ¶ ¶ Since the 1980s, this actual social experience of the future has been dominated by a global orthodoxy that serves to naturalise a libertarian science-fantasy that actively forecloses all possible alternative futures. As early as 1995, Barbrook and Cameron characterised this orthodoxy as ‘the Californian Ideology’ — in honour of the U.S. state where it originated — an assertion that social and political debates about the future have now become meaningless. ¶ ¶ By arguing that only the cybernetic flows and chaotic eddies of free markets and global communications will determine the future, these Californian ideologues underpin the de-politicising forces of SF Capital. Alternative economic and political imaginations are seen as a waste of resources. As libertarians, they assert that the will of the people, mediated by participatory and diverse imaginaries of the future, is a dangerous heresy that interferes with the natural and efficient freedom to accumulate property. As technological determinists, they believe that human social and emotional ties obstruct the efficient evolution of the machine (Barbrook and Cameron 2015). ¶ ¶ As Kriss (2017) points out, when situated in the context of industries that actively over-determine which futures are possible, Elon Musk’s project of Martian colonisation is symptomatic of this silicon future. Musk’s corporate practices are not utopian, nor are they world-building. As is indicative of the longstanding relationship between science, capital and power, the work of Space X and other ‘private’ research endeavours are made possible largely by government contracts (Sassower 2015). ¶ But what is seemingly never asked are those questions that ultimately expose the future as the subjugation of present realities. Who is going to go to Mars? Is it Musk? Philanthro-capitalists like Musk? What historical, ideological, patriarchal, and colonial visions of society will they take with them? As Albanese (1996, 59) observes, we must not only consider science, fiction and capital as isomorphic modes of power, but also the role of colonial violence as mutually constitutive and inter- dependent, “given [its] intermittent re-articulation within successive cultural formations”. ¶ ¶ Considering the relationship between the silicon future, imperialism and colonialism, Kern (2003, 92) notes how the “annexation of the space of others” and the “outward movement of people and goods” has amounted to “spatial expressions of the active appropriation of the future”. That colonialism, SF capital and power are fellow-travellers is indicated by a casual reflection on the popular tropes of science: to seek new vistas, explore new fields, go where no ‘man’ has gone before.

#### The embracement of the alien is part of the chrono political project of imagining alternative political futures --- We are not ivory tower theorizing, we are a material rejection of linear temporalities and a material embracement of partial time

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4. CHRONOPOLITICS ¶ As we move from a discussion of the normalisation of Haraway’s cyborg embodiment of hybridity to a focus on chronopolitics as a dissipation from the outside in, we conclude by probing processes in which the alien, taken as a force existing, or coming from somewhere beyond, functions as a temporal vector for unsettling what we take bodies, communication, fiction, music and politics to be in the here and now. ¶ ¶ After all, as anyone who has been deemed ‘unhuman’ or ‘unnatural’ in the face of reigning biological norms, anyone who has experienced injustices wrought in the name of the particular technological futures of SF capital, will realise the valorisation of the cyborg today has less and less to do with ‘us’ — queer, non-white, and trans bodies among us, the differently-abled — and everything to do with repackaging the possibilities of other worlds as an intensification of the same heteronormative, neo-colonial and technocratic presents regenerated by SF capital. ¶ ¶ Centring the choronopolitics of alien time, we probe these other future-worlds through discourses of the “future as indifferent towards the human” (Ferrara 2012). As an alternative to the limitations of the linear past-present-futures terrain, chronopolitics — meaning the politics of time — emerges not only as a critique of the whitewashing of the past, but as an active generator of future narratives. As alienation and temporality are entangled with one another, it is through chronology and causality, duration and frequency, continuity and discontinuity, that alien histories produce temporal meaning. ¶ ¶ Alienation always works through both retrospection and anticipation, uniting the three elements of the time continuum (past-future-present). Simply put, a vision of the future is filtered by past experiences; our understanding of the past is constituted through that very future vision. In this regard, chronopolitics enables us to mark the present, that point in time that has always already passed or not yet come, through delimitating it from a retrospective past and an anticipated future. ¶ ¶ As a political vector for recovering and generating new temporalities, van Veen (2015, 80) describes this process of enacting Chronopolitics as: ¶ Intervening in the production of collective memory — institutional, pedagogical, epistemic and museological histories, oral traditions and myths — and also schematic projections of the future. This collective memory is inscribed in texts, cultural practices, and technological objects. ¶ (ii) Temporally producing counter-memories and counter-realities to combat corporate, techno-capitalist futures of dystopia-as- utopia. A historical recovery operation, in which erasures and evacuations of the unwanted, insurrectionary, or traumatic past — the life of the alien-on-earth — are uncovered and put to use, in the responsibility towards the not-yet. ¶ What might these alien temporalities look like? In contrast to the silicon futures that impose a spatio- temporal consciousness of time as the now of inevitable progress and growth — metrics that depend on some specific clock time or calendar date — Phillips (2016) points to what Mbiti (1990) calls ‘potential time’, where time itself depends on the quality of the event and the bodies and spaces experiencing it. Once the future event is experienced, it instantaneously moves backward into the present and past dimensions, destabilising the mechanical, progressive, unidirectional order of temporality. ¶ ¶ Importantly, this chronopolitical sense of potential time is already being mobilised to revise hegemonic accounts of slavery, colonialism, and capitalist modes of production, rewriting these traumas by seeding not only alternate futures but recursive pasts for alienated subjects who have been overdetermined by what Sun Ra terms ‘the manufactured past’ (Eshun 2003). We offer two prominent examples. ¶ ¶ First, the Kurdish liberation struggle (i.e. the People’s Protection Union or ‘YPG’ in Rojava, also known as the ‘Democratic Confederation of Northern Syria’) can be understood in terms of alien time through its refashioning, cutting, pasting and synthesizing of elements of Bookchin’s (2005) ecological anarchism to generate its own historical narrative. In marking the struggle for Kurdish independence as decentralised, anti-statist and feminist, this vision of their society takes aim at the past in order to insert in it the tools needed for the present-future. ¶ ¶ Second, the ‘degrowth’ movement in political ecology can be understood as an alien praxis for producing knowledge critical of the ideology and costs of growth-based development. In this way, as Bollier (2009) points out, ‘degrowth’ signals a radical political and economic re-organisation that aims to destabilise linear notions of progress underpinning increasing resource and energy use. By dislodging the central analytical category of the Anthropocene, degrowth explores present-futures in the absence of growth. In doing so, their project calls not for the implementation of better, ‘more progressive’, futures-based development, but the decolonisation of the social and temporal imaginary from economic growth altogether (Latouche 2010). ¶ ¶ Against the growth-driven orientation of naturalised, silicon futures, which are underpinned by the cyclical re-inscription of class, poverty, oppression, racism, violence against women and the legacy of slavery, the chrono-politics of the YPG, the degrowth movement, and elsewhere reminds us of the political importance of presentism over futurism. As Philips (2016) reiterates, such potentials can be operationalised against a myriad of communal trauma under conditions of class warfare and racial oppression by reengaging with the alternative temporal-spatial consciousness of alien time.

#### Were all made of stars --- the role of the ballot is to reject the monopolization of the future

* Arguments that concern alternative temporalities, alternative theories of time, propose alternative methods of understanding the future, alternative understandings of subjectivity, function as offense, you can also gain offense if you win my ROB is bad.

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4.1 We Are All Made of Stars ¶ The inevitable consequence of the silicon futures illustrated by SF Capital are what Toffler (1970, 11) called ‘Future Shock’: the “shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time”. For Toffler, the greatly accelerated rate of social and technological change in our society has undoubtedly produced negative personal and psychological consequences by way of the super- imposition of future-control over all other possible futures. ¶ ¶ As we have emphasised throughout this paper, such future-shocks are not only a problem for the alien-on-earth, the marginalised Black, queer, differently-abled bodies most vulnerable to the affects of future-control. Apart from a few elites (i.e. Musk and company) we are all alienated from access to the supposed leisure, luxury and fulfilment of the future, stuck planning for a permanently disjointed present while the society around us speeds forward towards illusory, linear progress. ¶ ¶ In this sense, the silicon-elites in our world hold a monopoly over the future, drawing power from the particular ‘utopias’ they promote as a kind of currency to induce a psychosomatic investment in a specific future of society. We have argued that this displaces the material and temporal content of actually lived exploitation today. As future- enterprises like Space X sabotage alternative futures, responding to future shocks by drawing the unforeseeable back into tangible realities, in which one can invest in and ‘bank on — very much in the spirit of stock market ‘futures’ — we call forth the possibilities of the alien for a future-now, a reengineering of the past brought about by a creative expansion of the scope of temporality. ¶ ¶ Jameson (2005, 228) echoes Benjamin’s (1936) notorious observation that ‘not even the past will be safe’ from the manufacturers of history, adding: “the future is not safe either” from “the elimination of historicity, its neutralization by way of progress and technological evolution”. The urgent need for a genuine re-imagining of the manufactured past so as to unlock alternate futures, the need to reclaim the power to imagine the future outside of industry- produced advertising images and experiences — that is what the practice of alien theory is about. ¶ ¶ For those of us who consider ourselves to be politically invested in the project of the future, recovering alternative futures of potential temporalities is a necessary task. Crucially, such a chronopolitics is a process of repurposing, not an outright rejection of the motifs of the past. ¶ ¶ We are not saying we simply need more stories, more fictions. What we need is the conjuring of other worlds. This work is being done. In this regard, ‘Cosmic Slop’ is the messy entanglements cutting across all the different vectors presently working to transplant the cultural, political and technological spaces of the future into the past so as to be able to access them in the present. What we need are frameworks of reference to actualise our potential futures. Such work is being done in fields and spaces that are not typically understood to generate explicit political projects. This includes non-Western science fiction, Afro-diasporic design and creation, critical engineering, art and aesthetics. ¶ ¶ We began this paper by asking: when is the future? By moving from SF capital’s silicon futures through the cyborg, the alien, and finally, the politics of the chronos we have attempted to show that this ‘when’ is an endlessly postponed future-control that continues to produce unequal, predictable futures set against a forward moving time-line — one that will eventually come to a climactic, chaotic end. ¶ ¶ In speaking to the ways in which we can begin to decolonise this future, we have emphasised the collective effort required in unearthing different histories, mapping alternative spatio-temporalities and understanding our present conditions in the now of time. By actively adopting alternative alienating orientations and frameworks, saturating our praxis in the cosmic slop provides a perpetual bridge between the past, future and present that can be used as liberation technologies to build future worlds. ¶ ¶ To this end, what we are advocating for is the integration of aesthetics, politics, and technology towards re-envisioning and refashioning the past and the future — potential temporalities that are transgressive largely because they allow us to think and experience beyond the current limitations of thought, imagination and their materialising.