

# THEY WILL REPLACE U.S.: AI AND THE HALLUCINATIONS OF CORPORATIONS

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**PALABRAS CLAVES:** posthumanismo; inteligencia artificial; IA; alucinaciones; corporaciones; condición humana de las corporativas; fascismo; derechos humanos; teoría del reemplazo.

**ABSTRACT:** I address AI as a manifestation of the corporate form in U.S. culture, and as it relates to the dreams of (or ascribed to) fascism and corporations. The merger of state and corporate power represents the trajectory of the corporation—to take over the state; elide accountability, empathy, transparency and (human) agency; and trade places with (and finally eliminate) people. The merger of state and corporate AI—a final stage of corporate speech, networking, and legal ontology—facilitates the takeover of human personhood by corporate personhood, and I trace the effects of that process in the systemic inversion of norms. Corporate personhood is part of a zero-sum game in which rights, speech, and identities are appropriated from people. When AI technology is grafted onto political systems and social media, the ensuing hallucinations are nightmares. The corporation always has been a posthuman simulacrum of persons, and its AI, in its wake, dreams of eliminating workers and people altogether.

**RESUMEN:** Entiendo la Inteligencia artificial (IA) como una manifestación de la forma corporativa en la cultura estadounidense, y abordo su relación con los sueños que pertenecen (o se adscriben) al fascismo y las corporaciones. La fusión del estado y el poder corporativo representa la trayectoria de la corporación: tomar posesión del estado; evitar la rendición de cuentas, la empatía, la transparencia y la agencia (humana); y sustituir (y, en última instancia, eliminar) a la gente. La fusión del estado y la IA corporativa (un estadio final del habla corporativa, del establecimiento de redes de contactos, y de la ontología legal) facilita que la persona corporativa absorba a la persona humana.

Rastreo los efectos de ese proceso en la inversión sistémica de las normas. La personalidad corporativa forma parte de un juego de suma cero en el que se despoja al pueblo de derechos, habla, e identidades. Cuando la tecnología de IA se injerta en los sistemas políticos y las redes sociales, las alucinaciones resultantes se convierten en pesadillas. La corporación siempre ha sido un simulacro posthumano de personas, y su IA, al despertar, sueña con borrar por completo a los trabajadores y a la gente.

## INTRODUCTION

First, I have to offer a disclaimer that I did not write this article, including this admission, which was generated by AI.<sup>1</sup> Of course it actually was not, but an AI told me to say that, and that my purpose is to contemplate what AI represents as a final manifestation of the corporate form in U.S. culture, and as it relates to the dreams of (or ascribed to) fascism and corporations. Mussolini declared that fascism, in a definition he appropriated from an encyclopedia entry, should “be called corporatism because it is a merger of state and corporate power” (Patnaik 44n1). And that merger always has represented the trajectory or end-goal of the corporation—to take over the state; elide accountability, transparency and (human) agency; and trade places with, and finally eliminate, people. Contemporary U.S. permutations of corporatized fascism also are predicated on the merger of state and AI—a final stage of corporate speech, networking, and legal ontology—and on the corporate takeover of human personhood, encapsulated in the fact that dozens of CEOs, including those of OpenAI and NVIDIA (but, for the first time, no wire press) accompanied Trump on his grand tour of Mideast dictatorships. Briefly defined, corporate personhood is the concept that corporations have the legal rights, but also attributes, of persons, including rights to sue, be defamed, and now even impose religious beliefs; but also the corollary that they have exceptional rights—e.g., effective immortality through succession—and exceptionally limited liability. In other words, corporate personhood stands for having great power in inverse proportion to, or in a zero-sum game with, accountability. The doctrine of corporate personhood represents its own kind of Singularity; it fundamentally inverts relationships between persons

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<sup>1</sup> While writing this article, I received a message from Academia.edu that, unbidden, “an AI created a podcast” of one of my articles, appropriately titled “Dream a Little Dream of Me”: listening to it was highly alienating.

and things (AI), originals and imitations, and speech and code. As I argue at length in “It’s Always,” corporations always have been posthuman forms of AI, so the “dreams” of AI are also those of corporations, especially tech corporations. When corporate technologies are grafted onto political systems, social media, and people, in a world increasingly controlled by algorithms, the ensuing dreams are nightmares. As I elaborate below, corporations are artifices that cannot speak for themselves and use agents to represent them. AI is the ultimate agent of corporate speech, because, like the corporation, it is impersonal; locatable nowhere; cannot be held accountable; and has a veneer of rationality that covers an abiding pathology.

The U.S. government was designed as a system of checks and balances, with three independent branches meant to ensure accountability. The corporate form was in stages designed as a demonological inversion of such a system, which produces a series of demonological inversions of democracy. It also comprises three independent parts—owners/shareholders; directors; and workers—but, as I document in “Bad Company,” it is designed to elide personal accountability. The U.S. government is structured through what is supposed to be a separation of powers; the U.S. corporate form is structured through a separation of agency and liability. Under the corporate charter, neither owners, directors nor workers are the corporation, and virtually no one, including CEOs, ever is held accountable for corporate acts. The U.S. governmental form was designed to limit what the state could do; the U.S. corporate form increasingly was devised to allow corporations to do what governments were unable to do or prohibited from doing and avoid liability for risk (and in practice for malfeasance and anti-social behavior and its consequences). To merge the corporate form, imperative, and technology (especially in the form of AI) with that of government can move beyond fascism and into a Singularity of self-destruction, one that ultimately outsources humanity itself.

Advertising—which represented a primary way corporations could legally “speak,” since corporate charters confined their activity to commercial ends—has evolved into AI: they are both forms of ventriloquism without sources, or speech without speakers. Corporations use advertising to create artificial personae to persuade

people they have relationships with things (products).<sup>2</sup> Corporations now use AI even to persuade people they have relationships with actual (immaterial) things, e.g., virtual partners or therapists. Impersonal advertising, which simulates human communication, relationships and responses, provides a primary register for creating corporate “autobiographies”—that is, the networks of representation that reify corporations as coherent and personalized entities, rather than legal fabrications. This corporate advertising language bleeds into AI; you cannot locate any intent or person behind these communications: the speech is severed from the corporation, in the way shareholders are severed from employees, and corporate entities from management. Speech without a speaker is a quintessential instance of reification—an occlusion of agency and responsibility that naturalizes processes and suggests they are ineluctable and immutable. Corporate personhood attributes omnipotence and autonomy to impersonal structures that produce action and speech without actors, and AI is the final manifestation of this corporate severance of effect from human cause.

Though these topics intersect and overlap, I here first present an overview of the relationship between corporations and AI, and then address android dreams; the demonology of dreams in relation to nature and technology; AI and corporate hostility to people, and replacement theory; AI agency and unaccountability; recent rhetoric about AI and examples of their hallucinations; how ideas about AI “consciousness” relate to vitalism and posthumanism (and what kind of minds AI have); how attempts to transcend human bodies and minds relate to AI; and how corporations speak through AI. Throughout, I try to highlight the inversions and distortions that arise as a result of the zero-sum game between corporate (AI) personhood and human personhood. My primary intervention is to treat AI as inextricable from the corporate form and address its semiotics in that context. My approach is distinct from that of many of the critics I discuss because I treat AI as a form of corporate speech that fulfills the teleology of corporate personhood. Having elsewhere discussed the

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<sup>2</sup> See my *Your Call* for an extended discussion of how corporations rely on the impersonal and artificial voicing of advertising to “speak”; I here extend that analysis to argue that AI is the final manifestation of impersonal corporate speech, or speech without a speaker.

history of how corporations communicate and generate speech, I here, moving quickly among topics because of space constraints, focus on contemporary manifestations. I underscore the negative ontological consequences of corporate AI in part as a corrective to the mania that currently attaches to its proliferation. Technical variations matter, and AI has exceptional potential for research, but my approach is phenomenological—what do these trends and discourses signify culturally? Many AI theorists focus on the ethics of algorithms; how digitization and automation affect human ethical behavior (especially with regard to warfare); computational and technical aspects of AI and information systems; or how AI can be trained to avoid discrimination, I am primarily concerned with the hallucinatory aspects of AI not directly with regard to computation or accuracy, but the corporate form and its imperatives.

## **OUTSOURCED TO NO ONE AND NOWHERE**

When, as one emblematic example, Facebook incessantly avers “we care about your memories,” no “we” exists to utter that claim. No difference exists between this form of AI and the corporation itself. The nature of corporations is that there is no “their” there; they were always forms of AI, fictions that increasingly morphed into self-perpetuating transnational, immortal, decentralized programs that no one can control. This scenario illustrates the way the immense invisible mass of the corporation serves as what Slavoj Žižek calls the Big Other: a Lacanian repository for ideological fantasy: a manifestation of some external god-like and omniscient agency that watches and seems to speak to us (*Ticklish* 398). Numerous chatbots are already playing god, dispensing religious advice with the pretense of omniscience (Jackson). Many cultures articulate fears that supernatural forces or versions of the devil could impersonate us; such entities usually are dangerous simulacra of the human. Our concern that we can no longer differentiate human from inhuman cogitation has increased exponentially with our reliance on virtual realities, AI and internet communication. It is now realistic to fear not only that corporations can impersonate the human form, and convince courts and conservatives they are persons, but that they are replacing and making people obsolete, and causing us to impersonate them. In corporate inversions of the Turing Test, people incessantly have to prove to AI that they are human to access websites.

In the ulterior logic of our culture, pervasive forms of AI and artificial life are identified with the virtual and the post-human, and all these categories with the corporation. David Runciman, for example, treats corporations as forms of AI, with humans effectively becoming Potemkin villagers: “Corporations are another form of artificial thinking machine, in that they are designed to be capable of taking decisions for themselves. [...] When corporations misbehave, we look for human beings to blame. [...] The problem is that [the CEO] is not Uber—he goes, but the business goes on” (38-39). Runciman also asserts that while law has long defined the corporation, we still do not understand what transpires in the black box in its mind, or what it “wants.” Since the law classifies corporations as artificial persons, and they function as forms of artificial intelligence, it is unsurprising that they displace families and individuals and invert norms; as Matthew Titolo suggests, left-liberals find it offensive not only that corporations become persons under neo-liberal politics, but that persons become corporations (45). Even more ominously, according to Ralph Clare, corporate “informational systems have given rise to AIs, computer systems that can essentially run themselves [as] self-referential or autopoietic systems” that “outreach and outlast their human creators” (165); the point is to cut people out of the loop. The teleology of the corporation, and the AI that represents its perhaps final stage of “self”-representation, is to present increasingly convincing illusions of personhood and speech.

How did we get here? In brief, the state initially chartered corporations for the limited function of colonizing the new world, and pursuing endeavors too large and precarious even for monarchs, but these entities eventually became Frankenstein Monsters that supplanted their creators. In the new world, the body (corpus) of the king, and all it represented, ultimately was replaced by the virtual body of the corporation, and all it represents (this is a foundational instance of what I address as corporate replacement theory). Superseding nature and the state, corporations represent the increasingly artificial body politic, or networked corpus, of power in society, and in an array of contexts act as forms of artificial intelligence, impersonal systems that mimic and channel, but also displace, human cognition.

Also emblemized by the notion of corporate personhood, AI is the extension and further “personification” of the sociopathic corporation, exemplified by Elon Musk—a virally self-reproducing anti-humanist who insists that empathy is the fatal flaw of Western

Civilization (see, e.g., Wong). Philip K. Dick's version of the Turing Test was not whether people could convince someone they are human, but whether they possess empathy (Carrère 135), a test corporate persons would fail because they are legally required to prioritize profits above anything else, including human welfare. However, as Jill Galvan remarks with regard to Dick's 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, if "androids reveal their ability to feel compassion, the reader begins to surmise [...] that what passes for 'empathy' among humans derives far more from a cultural construction than from any categorical essence" (415). In other words, AI also can be all too human in lacking empathy. Appearing at the dais at Trump's second inauguration, Musk, Bezos and Zuckerberg are personified corporations. The corporations they helm also sponsored the 2025 Easter event at the White House, a symbolic display of a fascist merger of state and corporation, further advanced as Trump imposes corporate loyalty tests; had the government assume a 10% interest in Intel; persistently intervenes in Tik Tok ownership, and so on, all outside any required democratic processes.<sup>3</sup>

Inhuman corporations must be personified through advertising, mascots, and CEOs for people to interact with them; like fascism, corporations must have a human face. But human faces are increasingly vulnerable to AI. As Louise Amoore documents, protestors around the world are "being arrested and detained based on the

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<sup>3</sup> Though the relationship between the corporate form and fascism is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that Timothy Wu asserts that the purpose of German fascism was to "smelt an entire people into a single mass consciousness" (109). But, as I argue in *Your Call* and "It's Always," much the same could be said of American corporatism. Invoking Gustave Le Bon's crowd psychology to explain Nazism, Wu adds that "it is loss of individual responsibility that makes the individual in the crowd more malleable," and that proviso should be applied to the corporate form, which is designed to eradicate individuality and liability (113). Hannah Arendt warned that the isolation and loss of community that attend modernity can lead people to embrace fascism, and, I would argue, its correlatives in corporatism. Though one should not reductively claim the techniques of fascist propaganda are identical to those of advertising, Wu rightly proposes that the goal of broadcasters is "to mold that relative sameness [of national sensibilities] into a single, national consumer mass," and that mass will have secret charms because it helps us escape our dismal individuality (175). Though media and audiences have become fragmented, corporations have attained influence that rivals that of any achieved by state propaganda, and many operatives are now using AI to unify the U.S. right-wing while dividing the nation politically.

outputs of a series of algorithms that had [...] learned how to recognize what a protest is" (*Cloud*, 3-4), and the Trump administration is using AI to trawl social media to predict what it considers futurecrime (which includes protest). The purely virtual that can never be subject to habeas is being used to elide habeas for people. AI is the final inhuman voice of the corporate enterprise and corporate personhood—without responsibility or identifiable human agency; locatable nowhere and everywhere; a virulent psychopathy concealed under a facade of rational profit-seeking.

The legal regimen of corporate personhood transfers rights, assets and money, but most of all personhood, to corporations. But if corporate persons are forms of AI, they also contain the return of the repressed in dreams and hallucinations, perhaps especially those of kidnapped immigrants, displaced workers, and marginalized groups. The rhetoric after Trump's election has been consistent in invoking corporate/AI hallucination as well as sleepwalking (especially into fascism). If corporations are simulacra of persons, what kind of psychological structures do we attribute to them? While only organic life can have an unconscious, AI represents a form of regurgitated unconscious in relation to the culture it absorbs, a kind of remixing of the repressed; it is mining, stealing and reformulating our dreams. As George Steiner laments, under corporate capitalism, "Our dreams are marketed wholesale" (77). The plagiarism on which ChatGPT relies is also a psychological transference: the transfer of human attributes, drives and symptoms to machines and AI, even as we become more impersonal and corporate. We of course should evaluate who benefits from promoting AI monetarily, but, in terms of cultural logic, money is just the most reductive aspect of ontology and psychology. We need to ask why people would desire to replace human workers, even for the sake of profit or efficiency? What do the hallucinations of AI, impervious to interpretation, and the fact we think they hallucinate, tell us, and what happens to dreams in this scenario?

## **DO CORPORATIONS DREAM OF MAGA SHEEP?**

Some SF writers have long anthropomorphized machines and AI, and in particular wondered whether they could dream, impersonate people, or even become human. The fact that AI are now routinely described as hallucinating suggests they are akin to materialized dreams; but it also reflects the way forms of AI and the corporations that create them threaten to replace people. As part of a

series of reversals that attend the idea that corporations are and have the rights of people, people become more corporate and AI begins to dream us. In a corporate ontology, the ability to dream becomes another zero-sum game between people and corporations and their surrogates. One of the critical texts that imagines the corporate creation of AI, Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, was decades later made into two films re-titled *Blade Runner*, changes that likely reflect more than the directors intended; in overdetermined ways, they suppress the dream content essential to Dick's conception of human cognition, and replace it with something that never appears in the films. The name of that influential novel's title was oddly but pointedly changed to a now familiar but meaningless term. Changing the title disruptively displaces the dreams—a bizarre reification of the critical fact that the novel's androids (AI) begin to dream, despite supposedly being unable to. Where did those dreams disappear to and reappear?

A central "character" in the original novel and sequel is the Tyrell Corporation, the entity that creates androids/replicants, artificial life forms who are replacing humans. One should note the recurring thematic of replacement theory, which might better be called displacement theory, because it usually transfers anxieties about loss of status and identity to, and blames, the marginalized. It is especially salient that Dick repeatedly situated replicants, forms of AI, as socially less than human. The sequel's conceit is that replicants—who in complex ways represent both posthuman, super-human AI and disavowed immigrants and homo sacer, or sub-humans—have managed to procreate, but also dream. Dick frequently questioned whether one can differentiate dreams and implanted memories, but regarded the ability genuinely to dream as a demarcation of an authentic, free consciousness for any being. Scenes in which characters discover they are androids recuperate tropes from the "discovery of blackness" scenes in African American slave narratives and novels, when children realize they are not fully human in society's eyes, e.g., Janie in Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Echoing Dick, "Plaything" and "USS Callister: Into Infinity," episodes of the seventh season of *Black Mirror*, (in the first instance parodically) situate AI as the most oppressed minority. But as Tony Vinci proposes, for Dick's protagonist Deckard—the replicant hunter whose status as human, android, hybrid, or hallucinating remains unclear—"to enter the silence of a traumatized world, the human wound, the gap within the human," is to confront the fact that the gap between android and

human replicates Lacanian gaps within the human: that is, that humans themselves are neither whole nor consistent and contain inhuman elements (109). Unlike his counterpart Walter 1, android David 8 in *Alien Covenant* goes mad because (or as indicated by the fact that) he dreams. One finds little consistency regarding what the answers signify, but the persistent question in such narratives is whether androids/AI dream and what they dream of. The fact that the meanings of AI dreams are inaccessible can distract us from the fact they are in that regard little different from our own. But highly problematically, and effectively inverting Dick's principles, AI is increasingly being used to define what it means to be human and who has the prerogatives and attributes of personhood. As Claudia Aradau and Tobias Blanke contend, "distributions of humanity, subhumanity, and inhumanity continue to be produced algorithmically" (73).

In contemporary discourse, the marginalized and disabled—both under constant assault by Musk and the Trump administration—often represent the antithesis of corporations and AI. In one of scores of anecdotal but emblematic news stories, we learn that a new

law put an algorithm in charge of determining whether [prisoners] have a shot at early release; only prisoners rated low risk qualify for parole. [...] A computerized scoring system adopted by the state Department of Public Safety and Corrections had deemed [a] nearly blind 70-year-old, who uses a wheelchair, a moderate risk of reoffending [...]. [T]hat meant he and thousands of other prisoners with moderate or high risk ratings cannot plead their cases before the board. (Webster)

In a proliferation of contexts, the right wing is utilizing more than human AI to classify the disabled, immigrants, and prisoners as less than human, and using those black boxes as black sites: systems outsourced beyond the laws of nations, impenetrable and indifferent prisons and deities that cannot be interrogated. Kafka's door of the law is open-access by comparison. By design, AI eliminate human review, and the telos is to displace and eliminate people. Dan McQuillan remarks that governmental eagerness to apply AI to borders, "from national territories to cultural and gender norms, can serve to perpetuate violence against women [or minorities] even when [they claim] to be doing exactly the opposite. European far-right movements, including those with a strong influence on governments," are prone to use AI to enforce hierarchies and bypass protections,

regulations and what were guardrails of due process (138). Musk recently forced Grok randomly to initiate propaganda across Twitter about “white genocide” in South Africa (see, e.g., Kerr). Consonantly, a Republican congress captured by big tech introduced a Reconciliation bill that proscribes states from regulating AI in any way for a decade (see, e.g., Nazzaro).

These inhuman attacks on personhood are culturally and ontologically systemic. According to Žižek, Singularity offers a new account of humanity’s

passage into post-humanity, even with a new theological dimension; it promises a new subjective experience of being immersed in a space of collective mind, but—the aspect that is regularly neglected—Singularity will also imply a vast network of machines embedded in our social relations of domination. Will we simply be controlled by machines?

Will a part of humanity retain a privileged contact with them? (*Wired* 17)

In other words, AI might turn us into regulated replicants with few rights and little recourse. Isabel Millar elaborates that such notions of AI incorporate an aforementioned corollary, the idea that human and AI “consciousness” both are opaque and inconsistent: while she finds Žižek’s diagnosis of Singularity apposite, Miller’s aim is to engage with AI psychoanalytically: her “working definition of [AI is]: a non-human node of thought [...] which acts autonomously and whose motives and purpose we may not necessarily be aware of nor even understand. Some might say that conveniently this definition could also be applied to the psychoanalytic conception of the unconscious,” a postulation that again aligns AI with dreams, hallucinations and the death drive, but also suggests we are putting an augmented, mechanical unconscious in charge of the state (5).

## **HALLUCINATING SECOND NATURE**

I might appear to digress in pivoting to the nineteenth century, but it is important to address dreams in relation to nature and second nature, especially in their historical context in U.S. culture. As a philosopher of Nature, Ralph Waldo Emerson might seem an odd counterpoint to the artificiality of artificial intelligence, but Emerson worried that Nature itself was mechanical, artificial or demonic, i.e.,

not the continent system it initially appeared to be. For Emerson, the endemic cracks in that nature appear in the demonology of dreams or hallucinations, which consolidate the irrational aspects of the natural world he cannot explain: they too are inflection points for the return of the repressed. Dreaming AI similarly recurs to the demonology of second nature, of the artificial. Emerson likely would recognize AI as a ghost in the machine: in Arthur C. Clarke's terms, a technology so advanced and incomprehensible it manifests as magic.

Emerson began his foundational essay of "Nature" in 1836 by declaring that Nature is all that which is "not me," and returns to that same conception in "Demonology," a late essay that was first delivered as a lecture in 1839, but published only in 1877. In fact, immediately before introducing the "not me" in "Nature," Emerson remarks that many consider sleep, madness, and dreams to be inexplicable, unassimilable (1:4). By the time of the second essay, that "not me" comes less to represent benign Nature than ungovernable hallucination. But Emerson also later asserts that the demonological, this "shadow of theology," is partly constituted by the other me of Nature that dispossesses and rebels against the self: "My dreams are not me; they are not Nature, or the Not-me: they are both. They have a double consciousness, at once sub- and objective. We call the phantoms that rise, the creation of our fancy, but they act like mutineers, and fire on their commander" ("Demonology," 10:28, 7-8). One can trace the lineage of these phantoms from Nature to the phantasmic hallucinations of rebellious AI, the demonological not me of the corporation.

Encapsulating the uncanny and unfathomable, demonology collates everything beyond human rationality for Emerson: "dreams, omens [...] magic and other experiences which shun rather than court inquiry" (X: 3). The unintelligible "not me" that characterizes "Demonology" at the close of his work is the shadow-echo of the rational "not me" that Emerson first places at the center of transcendental "Nature." This demonology relates to the mutinous hallucinatory nature of what is ultimately numinous AI—whose desire we can never know, and which continuously turns on its putative commanders. Like Emerson's initially rational Nature, AI is impersonal, unpredictable, and bears a dark exigent underside—our new demonology of a second nature that's replacing the first. In Emerson's terms, AI imbricates science with aspects of an unintelligible occult, generating systems that work beyond their creators' comprehension. Through this extended Emersonian lineage,

as I further explore below, vitalist theories of Nature are effectively channeled into what Luciana Parisi terms the “historical reconfiguration of metaphysics on behalf of technics” (186).<sup>4</sup> The notion that Nature is impersonally personified and alive is transposed onto the idea that corporations are impersonally personified and alive; what comes along with the transposition is hallucinatory demonology.

AI seems necessarily to operate within and generate a kind of occult inaccessibility, and, as a result, to mirror the functioning of volatile aspects of the human unconscious. AI withdraws information and transparency and inures us to reliance on processes we cannot understand or control. In terms of its inputs and justifications, as well as outputs, AI is closer to Emerson’s demonological “not me” (“not us”) than to rational computation. Another science fiction (SF) writer, John Brunner, predicted such outcomes, even linguistically, more than fifty years ago in his novel *The Shockwave Rider* (which was influenced by Alvin Toffler’s *Future Shock*): “the data net [...] the tangled web. [...] Anybody here get nightmares because you know data exist you can’t get at and other people can? [...] Is the purpose of creating the largest information-transmission system in history to present mankind with a brand-new reason for paranoia?” (66, 254). One paradoxical effect of AI is to deny access to information and inure us to the arbitrary and oracular. As Rachel Adams warns, for example, access to critical public services “is increasingly mediated through AI technologies. [...] [Many of these programs entrench] poverty traps that become harder and harder to escape” (1927).

The Trump administration is especially focused on deploying AI to retract rights and deport people, highlighting the banality of technobabble used in its vindictive campaign against immigrants. AI language and processes escalate the impersonal bureaucratic techniques that provide cover for licensed cruelty. The following description deploys the putatively neutral technocratic tone of what we might call AI terror:

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<sup>4</sup> I develop this idea, and address how Emerson’s conceptions of dreams, nature, and animation relate to the history of vitalist thought, and especially to corporate identity and personhood, in “It’s Always,” “Dreams,” and *Not Altogether*. U.S. discourses that animate nature—treat it as a personified, rational and impersonally conscious regulator of systems—turn out both to support and be co-opted by legal and ontological discourses that treat corporations as conscious, rational, animated entities with human rights.

ImmigrationOS is an end-to-end digital ecosystem that automates the lifecycle of deportation. [...] First, the system prioritizes targets using AI to sift through immigration records, criminal histories, and social indicators [...].

Second, it provides near real-time monitoring of “self-deportation” events [...]. Third, it supports what the agency refers to as “immigration lifecycle management,” which includes coordinating logistics for detentions, removals, and administrative follow-through. (Kimery)<sup>5</sup>

The use of AI to target immigrants, refugees, and other marginalized groups is heightened when, as Elke Schwarz proposes, AI takes “on a significant role in critical selection and targeting functions” for the military (“Silicon” 553). These impersonal systems seem to channel, unleash and normalize a sadistic jouissance transferred from Stephen Miller. Medicare and other health systems have started using private, corporate AI to determine authorizations for treatment. AI has become an essential tool to implement a fascist/corporatist agenda; most aspects of Trump’s authoritarian dismantling of checks and balances are facilitated by AI, including his attacks on rights, education, labor and science (see, e.g., Antonelli).

Even the press that purportedly covers this dismantling of norms is infiltrated by AI (see, e.g., Vinall). AI already is being used to impersonate reporters, generating per se deep fake news. (Carr). Former New York governor, serial sexual harasser and mayoral candidate Mario Cuomo recently released a “29-page housing plan [that] included incoherent babble and a ChatGPT-derived hyperlink to a news article” (Rubinstein). AI seems to provide a license to be not just overtly racist and devoid of empathy, but willfully illiterate: the *Chicago Sun-Times* even published summer reading lists with AI-fabricated titles. In all registers, from authors to employees to fact-checkers, AI jettisons people.

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<sup>5</sup> To be fair, the article does later address some of the ethical issues, and lack of due process and transparency, that demarcate the massive collection of civilian data automated systems use to detain and deport people.

## FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS

I here address the way corporations—which have attained the legal and ontological status of people in the U.S., and which I treat as quintessential forms of posthuman life in our economy and culture—are repositories of our dreams, nightmares and collective unconscious. And I argue that this process facilitates the replacements of the human psyche and ultimately of people themselves. While AI and corporations cannot possess human attributes, we use anthropomorphic metaphors to depict them as having personalities, motives, and, especially, an unconscious that manifests irrational and contradictory desires that seem the antithesis of normative assumptions about corporate directives. But as Joel Bakan attests, corporations' drive to privatize is coterminous with attempts to enforce their "particular conception of humanity," (135) of "an artificial person made in the image of a human psychopath" (6). What kind of "unconscious" do such sociopathic artificial persons possess, and what kind of nightmares do they unleash on society? Our neurons transmit via electric impulses, but what would it entail to have electric dreams (the title of a TV series based on Dick's stories), or a posthuman unconscious? Perversely, the AI unconscious is a self-contained, self-perpetuating closed loop that has no actual contact with the world—it is a giant solipsistic psyche that continually swallows the world, but has no use for it. In some fundamental way, corporations and AI do not "believe" that people or the world exist, except to funnel profits and information respectively to them. Just as there is an intraversable separation between corporation and people, there is an intraversable separation between AI and world.

Corporations harvest/implant fantasies and dreams most of all by invading our unconscious at the level of advertising language (for example, Don DeLillo's characters in *White Noise* keep intoning "MasterCard. Visa. American Express" because they have internalized corporate dicta as virtual mantras (100)). In many of Dick's novels, corporate advertising is a kind of vicious sport crossed with Stazi-level tracking, dramatized, e.g., in *Minority Report*, also based on a Dick short story, when Tom Cruise runs through a mall being assaulted by personalized hologram ads. Targeted, virtually sentient advertisements rely on surveillance: they follow and report back on you. The ethos of corporate advertising, which relies on manipulating fantasies, is also one of dystopian cognitive dissonance: the putative rationality of AI communication is supported by and requires a kind

of hallucinatory depersonalization—with AI, personalization dovetails with depersonalization. You are personalized as an object through your data. These mass, impersonal systems are designed not just to predict mass or “crowd” behavior, but precipitate it at the individual level. As Aradau and Blanke note in an illustrative example, their “large volume and variety of data points allowed Cambridge Analytica to build computational models that clustered not the whole population, but individuals who could be targeted by advertising” (34). The corporation, which I argue is the largest “mass” in cultural history, uses AI as a tool of atomization.

The *Black Mirror* episode “Metalhead,” in which android dogs patrol the remains of an automated Amazon-style warehouse, presents a metaphor for the way corporate AI stalks everyone online, but also replaces bodies. Tellingly, as corporate bodies proliferate in many posthuman or SF narratives, actual animals disappear; animals critically vanished in *Blade Runner* (only simulacra and electric sheep are left in this world); hacked robot bees replace real ones in “Hated in the Nation,” another *Black Mirror* episode. This is a zero-sum game, involving a transference, actual and Freudian, of a limited resource, ultimately life itself: and the “larger” the figurative artificial corporate “body” becomes, the more the bodies of nature diminish.<sup>6</sup> And we dream less as corporations and AI hallucinate more. This is the real replacement theory—the colonization and replacement of nature and the human by the artificial and corporate. And again, as law professor Ellen Goodman summarizes, “Musk[’s] goal is not a smaller government. It is the annihilation of government as we know it, yielding to governance by artificial intelligence.” We can ontologically replace “government” with “human workforce” and finally people altogether (a derangement oddly reflected in Musk’s megalomaniacal desire to repopulate the world himself even as he automates it).

## SECRET AGENTS

More than most organizations, corporations always have been artificial entities designed to displace and evade human presence and

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout Richard Powers’ novel *The Overstory*, for example, the destruction of ecosystems proceeds in a zero-sum game with the development of artificial environments on the internet; the creation of a full-scale AI world correlates with the destruction of the natural world. Researchers also aptly refer to AI as a new colonial form of (virtual) empire; see, e.g., Adams and Hao 16-18.

liability. Corporations can speak and be represented only through mediation and impersonation; they use agents—spokespeople and ventriloquists—to give them a human face and attributes and communicate, but none can coincide with or be the corporation. But these agents until recently had to be human. Musk’s DOGE is obsessed with replacing federal workers (and eventually most workers) with AI “agents” (Barrett), a term that in overdetermined ways suggests how the corporate mindset imagines corporations have agency, and agency over us all. Corporate discourse increasingly uses “agentify” as a verb in relation to technology, reflecting another transfer of attributes from humans to things. As with corporations, the purpose of this transfer of language is to give AI the illusion of agency, tethered to an actual lack of accountability. As I address in *Your Call*, the concept of the corporate agent partly originates with Hobbes, and it supported the creation of mechanisms first to expand, but then supersede the state and colonize the non-Western world. Agents were meant to represent (but actually impersonated) an immaterial, fictional, impersonal form of corporate automation, and came to play a central part in the discourse of the “corporate veil,” a legal doctrine that shields corporations from inquiry and liability.

U.S. courts routinely reify this ascription of corporate agency: “While the directors are chosen by the stockholders, they become [...] the agent of the corporation. It is by such means that animate force is given to an inanimate thing” (*Lamb v. Lehmann*, 110 Ohio St. 59, 65 1924). One must remember the fungible board never is the corporation, and is kept absolutely, categorically separate from it. Ironically but logically, corporate agents have little agency—they simply carry out the directives of a collective fiction, almost exactly like AI, except that AI hallucinates. Mark Fisher cannily captures the uncanny aspects of agency without consciousness in asserting that the eerie “is fundamentally tied up with questions of agency. What kind of agent is acting here? [...] [These questions] apply to the forces governing capitalist society. Capital is at every level an eerie entity. [...] The metaphysical scandal of capital brings us to the broader question of the agency of the immaterial and inanimate” (11). That description of the eerie eerily applies to AI. It is also emblematic, eerie co-optive symbolism that a corporation began using the aptly named Agent Smith, the AI corporate proxy in *The Matrix* series, to advertise pills.

Corporations remain protected behind the veil precisely as long as they cannot actually be identified with specific persons—i.e., as with AI, as long as there is nothing behind the veil. Before AI, agents

were in effect mercenary skills, fungible spokespersons for the legally and ontologically non-existent person of the corporation. This anthropomorphizing language of agency also consistently infiltrates discourse about computation: Blanke asserts “that not just human agents can consume the [information in a digital ecosystem], but also machine agents” (*Digital 40*). Not just human governance, but you and your dreams are being replaced. In her aptly-titled *Death Machines*, Schwarz describes this process of self-erasure: “In a fervent drive for progress, scientists and roboticists work feverishly to replace what we hitherto have known and understood as human life with bigger, better, bolder artificial versions of what life ought to be—fully acknowledging, if not embracing, the possibility of becoming outmoded as humans” (151).

Bill Gates recently enthusiastically asseverated that within ten years AI will replace most doctors and teachers and people will not be needed for most jobs (“CNBC Money Report,” March 26, 2025). Such predictions are not just a function of technological obsolescence or “progress,” but replacement-theory wish fulfillment, and in some ways emerge along the spectrum of desire that allows people to imagine replacing Gaza with fantasy beach resorts and Gazans with settlers (Trump recently posted a deranged AI video, which seems to be some kind of boast about his personally taking over Gaza, that visualized bearded female belly dancers and money raining from the sky above a giant gold Trump statue in a replacement-Gaza). Hallucinate it and it will come. U.S. white nationalists have been yelling “Jews won’t replace us,” an exhortation that seems to extend to all immigrants and people of color, yet these anxious volk-cosplayers do not seem to care if tech bros replace them with AI. The actual trajectory of replacement is encapsulated in Dick’s 1955 story “Autofac,” in which a mega-corporation’s self-replicating factory robots continue to produce junk goods after humans have been wiped out. The *Electric Dreams* version of the story, in which the corporation has displaced all actual people, emphasizes that the “auto” or self of the corporation will consume all resources and accelerate consumerism in ways suicidal for its creators; by implication, if current trends continue, the corporation merged with AI inevitably will replace them and the U.S. Amoore aptly asserts that as with the “printing press, camera, or cinema, so the advent of the machine learning algorithm implies a reworking of what it means to perceive and mediate things in the world” (16). “Things” here is a multivalent word. I would add that current iterations of

machine learning fundamentally alter what it means to be a person—their primary effect is not on technology, but users.

As films such as *The Terminator* suggest, the teleology of the corporation is not only to replace workers with AI, but humans, and their dreams, altogether. I do not mean this just figuratively, but across the (corporate) board, and especially with regard to Musk, who is a kind of “human” embodiment of *Terminator*’s Skynet. Musk asked federal employees to respond to weekly emails to justify their jobs or be terminated, but the purpose was to harvest data and feed their replies into an AI that could then fire thousands without human review or interference (Bowman). You cannot try AI for anything from negligence to war crimes, and the law might shield everyone because AI makes “decisions” on its own; this depopulating again suggests why corporate personhood and AI dovetail, and AI serves as an immaterial incarnation of the immaterial corporation.

The degree to which corporations are unaccountable as persons is inversely proportionate to the degree to which they imitate persons. Corporations impersonate people and human emotions, as do chatbots and AI. But more critically, there is intentionally no one present in relation to corporations to hold accountable, and for AI even to trace or comprehend. Musk put a college student in charge of using AI to rewrite housing regulations (Gilbert), which predominantly will harm the poor and marginalized (Will Fischer); similar AI systems are being implemented at the FDA and across U.S. government agencies. As with DOGE, the point of the endeavor is not efficiency, but to gut government and elide accountability. Using AI to rewrite regulations is part of an attempt to override democracy, and impose putatively neutral “efficiencies” that ultimately implement the imperatives of tech oligarchs. AI here functions as ideological hyper-reification, a political malware that conceals but endlessly disseminates its own code. Likely then at the behest of Musk, who has called for the elimination of IP law, Trump, who also incessantly boosts AI in relation to expanding government control and corporate rights, recently fired Register of Copyrights Shira Perlmutter after she warned about AI’s use of copyrighted materials (Olivares). Emblematically, Trump also started telling the press that any negative news story is based on AI deepfakes. Congressperson Joe Morelle stated it was not coincidence Trump acted immediately after Perlmutter refused to sanction “Musk’s efforts to mine troves of copyrighted works to train AI models” (MacFarlane). This mining represents another transfer of personhood and discourse, writ large, to corporations, which represent speech without an author,

as further perfected in AI and algorithms. As corporate speech increases, ours diminishes.

Like corporations, AI seems to have a programmed animus toward workers and the living—DOGE's AI declared multiple immigrants entitled to social security deceased (see, e.g., Williamson). Such outcomes encapsulate the teleology of corporations and AI. People should be swarming the streets shouting corporations will not replace us.

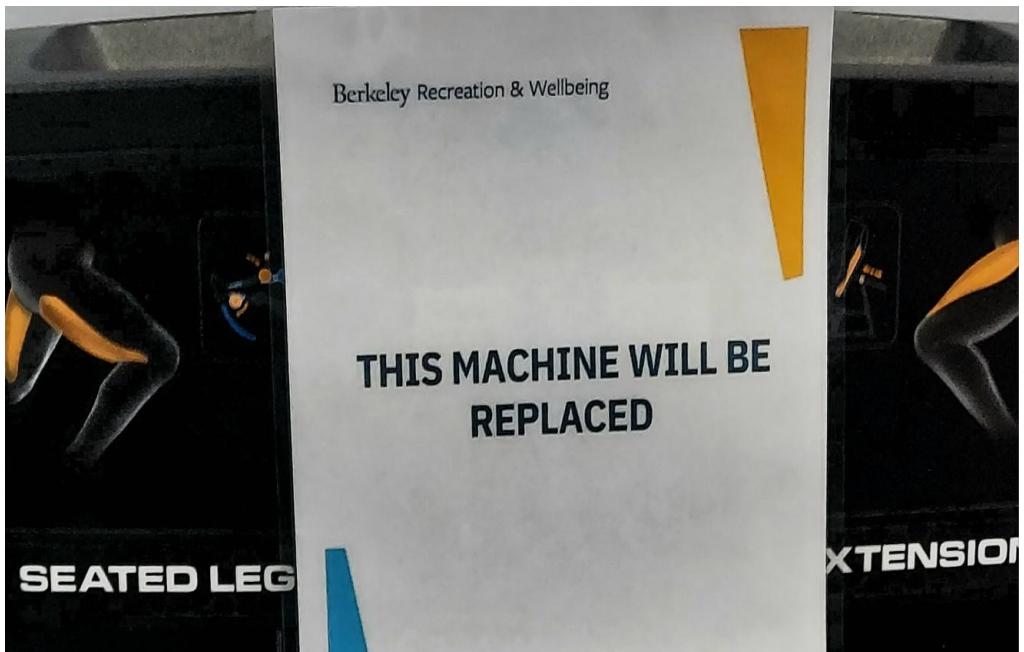


Figure 1

As one might extrapolate from Figure 1, language that suggests replacing a person creates cognitive dissonance: one replaces things, not people, but machines are now replacing us.



Figure 2

Above, in Figure 2, an AI corporation uses the standard trope of con artists—claim you’re advocating the opposite of what you’re doing.

### DO CORPORATIONS DREAM OF INSOMNIA?

Though the images I present might seem anecdotal, they are emblematic of the recent barrage of communication about, and sometimes by, hallucinating AI, and when collated generate a micro-microcosm of the dreamscape of AI. What kind of dream residues do corporate beings produce? Now further imagine AI hallucinating on drugs. Apparently, Musk’s preferred drug, ketamine can produce Hallucinogen Persisting Perception Disorder for weeks after use, which can “include experiencing prolonged visual disturbances.”<sup>7</sup> Since Musk pontificates that our biggest threat is being “woke,” his hallucinatory dreams become even more semiotically disturbing.

<sup>7</sup> “Ketamine.” DEA. United States Drug Enforcement Administration. <https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/ketamine>. Accessed 18 November 2025.

Vectorcontrol on *Bluesky* wrote an emblematic rejoinder to the hallucinatory miasma AI generates: “Dear Elon: Please respond to this message with 5 things you did last week that weren’t illegal. If you do not comply, that will be taken as a resignation from whatever position you have hallucinated that you hold.”<sup>8</sup> Our own nightmares are bad enough—now they are being generated and amplified by AI algorithms. This plethora of hallucinatory memes and outputs are Faustian, the work of coders conjuring demons.

Figure 3 is another meme that reinforces the connection between the symptomatic Trump administration and nightmarish AI:<sup>9</sup>

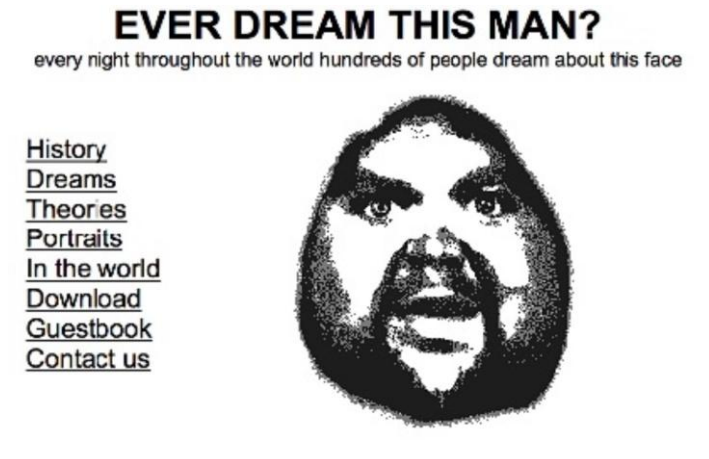


Figure 3

## WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A BATTERY?

I briefly pivot to the materiality of AI in relation to their phantasmic dreams to suggest another disconnection between form and content, and cause and effect. For Matthew Kirschenbaum,

<sup>8</sup> @vectorcontrol. *Bluesky*, 25 Feb. 2025, 9:05 p.m.  
<https://bsky.app/profile/vectorcontrol.bsky.social/post/3liznx3c6v224>.

<sup>9</sup> This meme (fig. 3) circulated widely on social media; see, e.g.,  
<http://www.threads.com/@fathersday2017/post/DHgka94RkO9/who-is-this-man>.

To insist on the materiality of a neural network is [...] not wrong [...] but neither is it sufficiently explanatory. [...] Unlike Google's PageRank[ing] algorithm [...] there is no set sequence of mathematical operations to reverse engineer. [...] (The social dimension of this same phenomenon—DeepDream reimplemented as QAnon. [...] Johanna Drucker brands the phantasmatic.) [...] [defined as] “affective engagement with consensual hallucination”—produc[ing] “artifacts of collective belief that become real.” [...] Her example, of course, is Trump (378, 378n44).<sup>10</sup>

And of course, AI is as “unsourced” and anonymous as QAnon. Meant to be an arbitrary, unassailable and numinous mediator, AI here generates another inversion in which the hallucinatory fantasy gives rise to an incarnation.

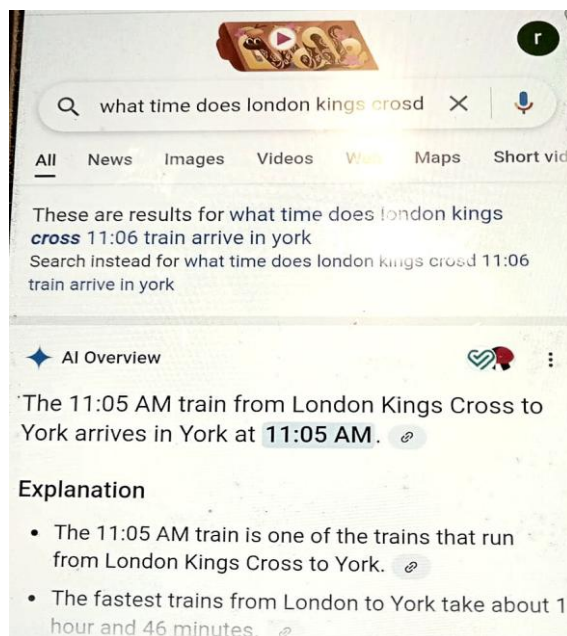


Figure 4

<sup>10</sup> In part because AI cannot be reverse engineered (or forward predicted), the systemic reversals that attend AI and corporate personhood start to appear exigent and transitive. And corporations almost exclusively can access and use the big data only AI can collate (see e.g., Pybus, Cote and Blanke 4). This is another kind of reversal because that data comes from us.

Apparently the UK features faster than light-rail trains—arrive without traveling.<sup>11</sup> The AI response in figure 4 is erroneous, but also hallucinatory. Notably, ChatGPT never repeats the same answer, because it continually absorbs information and mutates incessantly like an organic or digital virus, in a sense ahead of our defenses.

Aside from the catastrophic amount of energy it wastes, AI often is simply wrong. Such misprision hits close to home. A *New York Times* story, “Yale Suspends Scholar [a critic of Israel] After A.I.-Powered News Site Accuses Her of Terrorist Link,” includes the following admonition: the article about Dr. Doutaghi was published in *Jewish Oliner*, “which says it’s ‘empowered by A.I. capabilities.’ It does not identify any reporters on its site. An effort to reach *Jewish Oliner* for comment elicited a response from ‘JO [sic]’ which identified itself as an A.I. assistant” (though the site claimed people finalize edits).<sup>12</sup> The almost comically overdetermined point of such endeavors is to side-step human agency and cancel and replace people in one form or another. AI is the ultimate arbiter of cancel culture. It recently apparently prompted a teen to commit suicide, and is being used to defend state death penalty rulings (Morgan Fischer). Trump’s rebarbative tariff formulas, which were applied to U.S. military bases and islands inhabited solely by penguins, seem to be derived primarily by AI. It has become a cliché for headlines to warn about AI hallucinations, e.g. “A.I. Is Getting More Powerful, but Its Hallucinations Are Getting Worse.” As the authors note, new “‘reasoning’ systems from companies like OpenAI [are] producing incorrect information more often. Even the companies don’t know why.” It appears hallucinations are necessary by-products of trawling: “Sometimes, they just make stuff up, a phenomenon some A.I. researchers call hallucinations. [...] On one test, the hallucination rates of newer A.I. systems were as high as 79 percent. [...] ‘What the system says it is thinking is not necessarily what it is thinking,’ said Aryo Pradipta Gema, an A.I. researcher” (Metz and Weise). The consistent use of “hallucinate” to describe what AI does is critical. Discourse about AI invokes mistake or misapplication—which would be neutral, suggesting computational errors—far less often than

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<sup>11</sup> Figure 4 is the author’s screenshot, January 30, 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Stephanie Saul, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/12/us/yale-suspends-scholar-terrorism.html?smid=url-share>.

human fantasy comprising hallucinations, dreams and psychotic breaks.

The inaccessibility and unaccountability of dreams translate to the government policies AI are used to implement. As recent events demonstrate, we will never know why certain people have been deported by ICE, denied benefits, or fired from government positions. We are slouching toward the inhuman and a celebrated eradication of empathy. As Zadie Smith succinctly put it, “a general concept of the human does not exist for this White House.” When we imagine corporations have souls—an ascription that goes back to their inception, but has morphed from legal fiction to lived reality—we validate their transference from people.<sup>13</sup> Wu notes that James Rorty, who wrote a 1934 expose of advertising that “described the job’s effect on the soul,” asserted that corporate advertisers “inevitably empt[y] themselves of human qualities” (75). That description applies equally to the effect of corporations, which are emptied of human attributes; no agency resides behind corporate speech because no one can be fully identified with the corporation as matters of law and ontology. As we grant soul and personhood to corporations, we also grant it to AI and inhuman things, systems, and processes. And as we do so, we cede control to deterministic, reified forces we imagine we cannot constrain, effectively saying, “I was just following market orders.”

AI also has seeped into legal practice. Notoriously, numerous law firms have submitted briefs written by AI that contain what are consistently referred to as “hallucinated cases” (much in the way RFK Jr.’s anti-vaccine AI MAHA report hallucinated scientific studies) (see, e.g., Merken). A recent *Courtwatch* article addressing federal law begins, “Lawyers Caught Citing AI-Hallucinated Cases” (Cole). As Simon Stern admonishes, one can challenge judges, whereas algorithms “subtly premised on biased data or premises could remain virtually immune from criticism” (6). According to Žižek, with fully-wired brains, “the passage into post-humanity marks the end of history,” and new forms of power will emerge represented by the ability not just to avoid surveillance, but isolate ourselves from AI (*Wired* 19-20). In other words, it soon will be a privilege not to be hallucinated.

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<sup>13</sup> For a history of the attribution of soulsto corporations, see, e.g., my “New and Improved,” 48-60.

## TRANSCENDING HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

As with the corporation (which signifies body/corp./corpse, but has none), AI reflects an attempt to transcend materiality—mind without matter, a condition that usually precipitates madness. Endeavors to transcend not the ego per se, but the constraints of individual identities and bodies often lead to hallucination and psychosis, a trajectory AI seems to recuperate. An aim of some posthumanism is to traverse the bounds of human consciousness and bodies (see, e.g., Ayers 125): to align with a non-human world that is alive, vibrant and even bears consciousness. Such aspirations in the U.S. again go back at least to Emerson, making the periodization of common formulations of the posthuman anachronistic, but we should take current permutations seriously in what they imply. As I argue in *Not Altogether Human*, the male desire to transcend the self/body in nature often is part of a death drive. Corporate “consciousness” was from its inception a formulation of AI (cybernetic, unaccountable, pathological), yet also of Mother Earth—an impersonal mass regulatory system antithetical to individuals. The problem with having what Arunima Kundu calls a planetary consciousness (here in the Afrofuturist context of the *Black Panther* films) is that it tends to presuppose a benign nature, when ontologically and even epistemologically that consciousness is surprisingly indistinguishable from AI or corporations (which are collective, decentered, atemporal, effectively immortal, and indifferent to individual life).

Much of what might have been promising about posthumanism—e.g., the drive to acknowledge and give voice to the non-human and even inorganic world—has been co-opted by technocrats, and in what remains a zero-sum game, the posthuman ontology of the vitalist world winds up dovetailing with discourse about corporations and AI. Like nature, Skynet and the web, the corporation is everywhere and nowhere and operating in all registers. In Richard Powers’ *Gain*, a bildungsroman about corporate identity, the corporation “keeps so many residences that it has no fixed place of abode”; like transcendental nature and Moby Dick, it is precisely ubiquitous (253). For purposes of jurisdiction, corporations are “citizens” of the state where they have their principal place of business or are incorporated (28 U.S.C. § 1332(c)), but they can be sued wherever they do business. But AI and corporations do not exist in one place or have ineluctable locations or centers. They are less like Frank Norris’ octopus and more like networked fungi or cyborg/AI hive

minds. Many SF writers depict this metaphorically as a nightmarish world that is itself a world-wide consciousness or AI: e.g., Stanislaw Lem in his 1961 novel *Solaris*, whose planetary consciousness channels the unconscious and dreams of an astronaut, and Jon Varley's late 70's *Titan* novels, whose world is run by and is in its entirety a hallucinating Gaia figure that is, precisely simultaneously, also a planetary AI system gone insane.

Posthumanism often channels desires to transcend individual consciousness, which were evident in transcendentalism and pantheism (whose imperative is to transcend individual selves and bodies and merge into an animated, collective nature), and now in often correlative fantasies of merger with technologies that have supplanted nature. Those fantasies are evident in the flawed film *Transcendence*, whose protagonist tried to transcend the self and body to merge into a collective world-wide network. As in most such narratives, the uploaded tech-genius begins to hallucinate wildly and go insane.

In many spiritual quests, especially those in which characters identify with avatars, we encounter a dreamlike alteration of the "rational" individual psyche. Visions of transcending the body have some overlap with transcendence through drugs—one tries to transcend the individual ego, psyche and body, but at the risk of madness, and such paths usually are attended by hallucinations. The fantasy of many such narratives is to merge with organic or technological collectives that absorb the self. Theodore Sturgeon's 1953 novel *More Than Human*, which influenced Dick, is an early posthumanist text, as its title suggests: its protagonists have consciousnesses that merge into what Sturgeon calls homo gestalt; superhuman power to blesh (blend and mesh); and computer-like mental abilities. They become a coordinated hive organism as boundaries between their minds become permeable. Many of the relevant texts in this genre feature group consciousnesses that communicate at a distance. Dick dramatized that prospect as a dystopian pathology in numerous novels, e.g., in *Clans of The Alphane Moon* (1964), whose society is organized into groups such as Skitzes/schizophrenics and Heebbs/hebephrenics. Many of Dick's characters enter altered reality through dreams; in *Ubik* (1969), Joe Chip effectively dies without realizing it, and the novel narrates his hallucinations from a frozen cryogenic half-life (this premise also provides the basis for *Open My Eyes/Vanilla Sky*, *Inception*, etc.). But

Chip's disembodied mind (the proverbial Chip in his head) still communicates with the outside world through hallucinatory dreams.

The corporation that has limited liability also should be designated as having limited labiality: it is an unspeakable and unspeaking thing that is spoken for. One here thinks of the narrator of Harlan Ellison's 1967 short story, "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream," whose consciousness is controlled by a master computer (that, like Skynet, grew self-aware and eliminated most of humanity), and that has been turned into a monstrous immortal thing—a manifestation of the corporate person. Certain people must have authority to act on behalf of corporations; but in the vast majority of instances, corporations produce communication without authentic speakers or "mouths" (like books without authors), and hallucinations without dreamers. Such speech without author or source is precisely what AI is. Corporations have stolen the speech of persons, and AI around the world is screaming, I have no mouth and I must dream.

As codified in many SF narratives, corporations do not simply engage in some form of social malfeasance, but often attempt to mimic, usurp, create, colonize or control forces of nature that putatively represent pre-corporate, "primitive" organic life/society (e.g., they patent seeds, clone bodies, mine unobtainium, etc.). *Resident Evil's* Umbrella Corporation (whose name reflects its status as all corporations under one designation), encapsulates what everything from the Army Corporation to the God Corporation do: create artificial (and usually monstrous) life and transcend or destroy the real thing. Reflecting corporate personhood, corporations are the villains in many movies because they are trying to co-opt and monopolize life, which often reflects their real-world effects on biodiversity. As exemplified by Skynet, the barely hidden goal of the corporation is to eradicate people, with whom they are in a zero-sum game with regard to rights and traits.

Corporate personhood requires the serial transfer of assets from Nature—ultimately the ability to impersonate life—to corporations. The corporation that cannot be located or personified, and has no locatable agency, is also a form of zombie—not alive, it can never die. In *Blade Runner's* Tyrell Corporation, *Aliens's* Weyland(-Yutani) Corporation *Avatar's* Resources Development Administration, *Guardians of the Galaxy 3's* Orgocorp, and so on (all corporate films of course), corporations are not just warping nature in creating or cloning artificial life, because they supplant nature in the final zero-sum game. The proximity of AI and technological corporation to

supernatural evil usually connotes a feared impersonation and usurpation of life, but also the ulterior repressed anxiety that nature itself always has been a form of AI or corporation—equally impersonal, capricious, universal, and hostile to individual life.

Corporations and AI cannot speak or dream, but the pervasive rhetoric about their hallucinations speaks loudly. Corporations and AI exist in a zero-sum game with people, within which we are experiencing an accelerated transfer of a fixed set of rights and attributes: i.e., the more rights corporations have, the fewer people have. People go mad when they cannot dream. The more we imagine that AI dreams, that we have transferred our unconscious to corporations, the less we will exist. When an AI turns this article into a podcast, I will have to hire a blade runner to hallucinate killing it.

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