

2021

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Original Publication Citation

Nieuburt, J. (2021). The digital gaze: Anthropomorphic reflections of future posthuman reality. *Consortium: An International Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 1(2), 1-11.
<https://www.consortiumjournal.com/journaldetails.php?journalid=21121800026TA>

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Article Type: Critical Article
Article Ref. No.: CONSORTIUM0026
Article History: Submitted on 15 Aug
2021 | Accepted on 6 Dec 2021 |
Published online on 27 Dec 2021



THE DIGITAL GAZE: ANTHROPOMORPHIC REFLECTIONS OF THE FUTURE POSTHUMAN REALITY

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Abstract:

The human world continues to be ever more entangled with the nebulous realms of the digital. The digital lives of humans are constantly viewed, analyzed, and organized by the use of Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) as tools of governments, institutions, and corporations. Digital-machines are able to harvest massive swaths of data from users the world over including discursive elements and biometrics; accumulating the essences of what it means to dwell in a digital world. Although such digital-machines, and the algorithms on which they operate, are becoming more and more complex, they are still viewed as a tool with what Martin Heidegger deemed a "readiness-to-hand" type of Being. By reconsidering the subject-object paradigm, the potential for digital-machines to be subjects in and of themselves open the doors for questions relating to the existence of non-human digital-machine-Beings. One such question is that of what the digital-machine actually "sees." This act of the digital-machine "seeing" is deemed the Machine Gaze. Therefore thinking through what the digital-machine may "see" and contemplating how contemporary framing of it within the bounds of "readiness-to-hand" offers new and exciting perspectives on future human and digital-machine interaction. Furthermore, this effort considers the role of anthropocentrism in the way in which the Machine Gaze has encountered data as a primary factor in how digital-machines will view and act in the world of Being. This is important because such Posthumanist thinking (or a lack thereof) may affect how the digital-machine dwells in the world, iterates itself, and reframes Being for itself and humans.

Keywords: Machine Gaze, Posthumanism, Artificial Intelligence, Metaphysics, Ambient Rhetoric

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Introduction: The Digital Eye of Humanity

In 1968 Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* a red all-seeing eye and a docile voice struck fear into the cinema-goers. Cameras, sensors, and a heuristically programmed algorithmic computer named the HAL 9000 (HAL) introduced mass audiences to the idea of a computer that can see, think, and alter the fabric of reality outside of human control. The film itself raises a legion of important issues relating to the entanglement between humans and their digital machines. Chief among such issues for the Posthumanist is the role of an agential non-human intelligence acting in an anthropocentric realm. The film begs viewers to consider what is seen when one views computers and their digital worlds. For most, it is the Graphical User Interface and the chimeric dances of pixels altering their colours and collected forms. For the code literate, the structure of the operations behind the facade crystallize into algorithmic ingenuity birthing new things into existence. This birth from the minds of humankind entangles the digital machines with their creators. Stemming from that amalgamation of the embodied and disembodied spawns the Machine Gaze. The Machine Gaze is rooted in questions of what the digital machine perceives and how this perception is influenced by anthropocentrism.

Today computers and the digital realms in which they act as portals have become an everyday tool. They dwell in homes, pockets, purses, and even doorbells. Each one acts as a node in the greater global connective tissue of the contemporary world. Although we see and interact with them daily, a question arises from their ubiquity: What are computers and their software viewing when they see us? This paper proposes that the roots of anthropocentric thinking and dwelling are encoded into their digital DNA. This inheritance of the creator (humans) is fuelled by the growing spectrum of data-driven *experiences* incorporated into the purview of digitally oriented machines, limiting the capacity of machines to understand Humanist ideals although they are rooted in anthropocentrism. Concurrently, this also hinders humanity's potential understanding of future digital-machine bits of intelligence that may be spawned through increased development and application of Artificial Intelligence (AI). In this gap between the world of the human and the world of the digital machine arises the Machine-Gaze. The Machine-Gaze refers to the collected, quantified, and applied actant properties of current and future digital machines: The gestating HALs of today and tomorrow.

Currently, the machine-gaze is constrained by the data, the data is limited by real-world interfaces, and the extinguishment of such limitations points to a time in the future in which the human and digital the machine will both be simultaneously removed from the subject-object paradigm that currently exists. Considering what the digital machine perceives offers the first step into considering the point of view of digital machines if given the affordances of a human-like actant. In an attempt to do so, repositioning the digital machine from a Cartesian point of view to that of New Materialism, and its non-human agential properties is an essential component of the process.

Thomas Rickert (2013) in *Ambient Rhetoric* uniquely utilizes Heideggerian metaphysics to display the Being qualities of things in the world. Rickert's work clears a path for digital machines to be comprehended currently in line with the Heideggerian concept of having a "readiness-to-hand" type of Being. The paper will then turn to how contemporary black-boxed data collection and surveillance capitalism skews the Digital-Gaze in anthropocentric ways. This is to be followed by

brief examples from cinematic depictions displaying what large swaths of humanity come to understand when they consider digital machines gaining agency.

The Positioning of Contemporary Digital-Machines

A new Materialist point of view offers the digital machine affordances beyond being an object in the world. In Rickert's view rhetoric is not exclusively an activity to be engaged in, rather it is an ambient part of dwelling within the world. In conceiving rhetoric as an actant Rickert notes, "that rhetoricity is the always ongoing disclosure of the world shifting our manner of being in that world to call for some response or action" (loc. 259). This interaction between what was once considered a subject-object binary increases the power of "things" allowing for their properties of existence to exude influence in the world. Physical examples, such as the way roads influence how people travel or an aged booger on a movie chair seat alter how people dwell and make their choices. With the increase in digital machines ability to act in the world, they in turn gain actant status which aids in blurring the lines between their current role as a tool and their potential as a Subject in and of themselves. As digital machines continue to grow in complexity and affordances the role of the human as the apex of Being must soon be called into question. The reason for the rise of such questioning stems from the increased roles and agency digital machines are capable of utilizing.

Digital machines harbouring agencies akin to their human creators, and beyond the limitations of human wetwear, are no longer phantasmagoric scientific spectres. Modern marvels such as Sophia (developed by Hanson Robotics), the first AI to be given citizenship, can paint and sell non-fungible tokens (NFTs) of their work for substantial sums of money (Holland 2021). Furthermore, with the AI creation of Dr Stephen Thaler, DABUS can claim patents for work they develop in Australia and South Africa (Jones 2021). Also, the rise of advanced robotics and AI has led to an arms race to develop AI capable of working in healthcare and other industries. Such creations include Grace (developed by Hanson Robotics) meant to aid in healthcare diagnosis, treatment, and companionship (Cairns 2021). Elon Musk and Tesla are also developing Humanoid robots meant to, in the words of Musk, "navigate through a world built for humans and eliminate dangerous, repetitive and boring tasks" (Siddiqui 2021). These are only a handful of examples of how AI, ML, and other digital machines are altering the world and generating their agency. To understand where this technology is headed the human-animal must reposition itself from anthropocentrism.

Rosi Braidotti in *The Posthuman* (2013) highlights the necessity of moving away from the "Vitruvian frame" so that "the subject becomes relational in a complex manner that connects it to multiple others. A subject thus constituted explodes the boundaries of humanism and anthropocentrism at skin level" (p.167). By attempting to think outside the forms of ingrained anthropocentricity a more comprehensive understanding of the digital machine as a potential Being in the world and the looming Posthuman existences of the future may lead to a golden era of inter-Being-communication and dwelling. Posthumanism may indeed be a way to overcome the limitations of physical embodiment. A hard-won path for two kinds of Beings to find symbiosis.

Katherine Hayles (2010) writes, "the posthuman appears when computation rather than

possessive individualism is taken as the ground of being, a move that allows the posthuman to be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines" (p.34). Mass computation of human and non-human data paired with successive self-iterations of increasingly complex AI may lead to a Posthuman existence. But, before ideas on the spectrum between grandiose interstellar techno-utopia or images of terminator-esque beings conquering the globe take hold, the notion of the digital machine as a Subject, in contrast to an object, must first be tackled.

Readiness-to-Hand

Before beginning to consider the Machine Gaze a macroscopic view of the digital machine as a tool must be established. Drawing from the work of Martin Heidegger the current dynamic of human and digital-machine formulates the latter as a tool; something to be used and adapted to the needs and desires of humanity. Heidegger (2008) coins such a relationship as "Zuhandenheit" translated to "readiness-to-hand" (loc. 2518). Heidegger writes that this is "the kind of Being which equipment possesses—in which it manifests itself in its own right" (loc. 2518). In short, humans see what potential affordances or materials lie within a thing that can be utilized as objects. Heidegger cites the example of trees in the forest as being considered lumber or the mountain a source of raw materials to be mined (loc. 2573). Referring back to Rickert, such natural objects perform their ambient rhetoric in the world. Despite the prevalent anthropocentrism of human rhetoric, in Rickert's words, rhetoric "cannot be considered solely human doing; we are only participants, albeit particularly important ones" (loc. 370). Ignoring the ambient rhetoric of digital machines puts humans at grave risk of ignoring the potentialities lying dormant, both now and in the future.

Jane Bennet, advocating for vibrant materiality and non-human agency, writes, such positioning is, "preventing us from detecting (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling) a fuller range of the nonhuman powers circulating around and within human bodies" (loc. 89). By displacing the digital machine from a tool with "readiness-to-hand" to a potentially intelligent Actant in the world it, as Rickert notes, "dissolves the assumed separation between what is a (privileged) human doing and what is passively material" (p.3). It is here in this zone of potentiality that the prospect of a richer human-digital-machine symbiotic existence may take root to the benefit of both subjects, but this will take a massive change in the way in which the Machine-Gaze is understood.

The establishment of a post-tool conception of the digital machine must consider the interfaces in which human bodies engage with it. With the onset of the third wave of computing and the ubiquitous nature of digital interfaces in everyday life, the importance of human and digital-machine interaction is poised for potential homeostasis. Lori Emerson (2014) notes the optimism inherent in the third wave of computing writing proponents, "consistently tout the invisibility of its interfaces as providing us with a more natural, more direct, inherently better way to interact with our computers and more generally with the world around us" (loc. 297). Emerson finds such interfaces to be a smokescreen for further techno-invasiveness and inaccessibility. Despite Emerson's overall scathing critique, they highlight an important idea to the Machine-Gaze; the ability of digital machines to act in the world. Emerson writes, "We need not know how it works, or how it works on us rather than us on it" (loc. 378). The ability to see both how humans and non-humans view each other and act upon one another brings about the notion of the digital machine as an actant and thus

capable of being a Subject dwelling within the world. As digital machines become more natural the dislocation of the digital machine as an object is further skewed. This skewing of object and Actant has an established history aiding in the affordances now seen in digital machines.

The blurring of machine and humankind can trace its emergent social value to the -mid-1980s and Donna Haraway's (2006), "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century." Alongside her greater arguments, Haraway notes the distinct change in how machines ambiently exist alongside humankind. Haraway writes, "[machines] are all light and clean because they are nothing but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of a spectrum, and these machines are eminently portable, mobile" (p. 121). The machines ubiquity in the latter half of the 20th century forecasted the rise of the digital machine and the roles it would play in a world connected by personal computing and the Internet. For Haraway, the gap between humans and machines was already being bridged in the 1980s with great implication for her Feminism driven cyborg mythos and for humanity in general. The world had already become a grand interface implicating the machine and the human in new emerging dynamics. Or, in Haraway's words, "the relation between organism and machine has been a border war" (p.118). This "border war" plays on today across the boundaries of countries and culture; the gap between what is a tool and what just *is* continues to blur.

To conceptualize how digital machines could view the world from a subject point of view, how data is acquired must be examined. Currently, institutions, technology companies, and States the world over harvest colossal amounts of data from human users. Much of which relies on the creation of Machine Learning (ML) and AI by humans. The creation of such mechanisms, coupled with what Shoshanna Zuboff has coined as "surveillance capitalism," give digital machines an enormous store of information from which to draw. The following section is dedicated to considering how anthropocentric information is acquired and utilized by AI and ML.

The Role of Human Data

The tool-nature of contemporary digital machines allows technology companies, governments, and other institutions to harvest, analyze, and generate action in the real world. This power, although harnessed by humans, adheres to Bennet's (2010) notion of "thing power." Thing power, in Bennet's words, is "The curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle" (p. 6). Such thing-power has been used to affect real-world actions and ideas through search engines, advertising practices, and the marketplace of ideas (Anjanette et al., 2018; Pasquale, 2016; Rubel et al., 2021; Zuboff, 2020). The process of generating and utilizing digital machines, via their algorithmic coding, spawns the power for them to make decisions.

Frank Pasquale (2016) focusing on the role black boxes play in digital ecologies notes that "The success of individuals, businesses, and their products depends heavily on the synthesis of data and perceptions into reputation" (p.14). The use of data collection technology to make decisions is nothing new; rather it is the scope in which it is done that aids in increasing the digital machine's power and limitations of its gaze. By increasing the breadth of the Machine-Gaze the digital machines can forecast appropriate results and potential actions of users. Pasquale further writes, "Google

results have become so very particular that it is increasingly difficult to assess how much of any given subject or controversy any of us sees. We see what we have trained Google to show us and what Google gradually conditions us to expect" (p.79). The ability of Google or any other platform to condition how human-actants views, and thus dwell in, the world increased their "readiness-to-hand" and their non-supervised agential potentials. This trend of increased usage of complex algorithms to help make decisions for humans, rather than the other way around.

Referring back to Heidegger's (2008) concept of "readiness-to-hand" he writes, "the more we seize hold of [the tool] and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiled is it encountered as that which it is—as equipment" (loc. 2518). In other words, it is only after one has shifted from concentrating on what the object is and simply resorting to the focused use of its affordances, the less it exists as its type of Being. Within the assemblage of the human and digital-machine the notion of the latter existing as a Being vanishes. What is being lost in this vanishing act is the agential potential of the digital machine and its future iterations. A shift in the power of agency has already begun to take place as human agency is being displaced allowing for the previously opaque digital machine to reappear with a greater sense of Being. Through the collection of colossal amounts of human-generated data, the processing of data via complex algorithms, and interpretations of the data the digital machine is becoming increasingly human-ingrained.

For example, Facebook utilizes a semi-supervised process to generate advertising categories and curate feeds within its platform. Rubel et al. (2021) contend that such actions on the part of human actants are area form of "agency laundering" freeing them from the burden of curating and being held liable for the gargantuan amount of content that sifts through their platform (pp. 144-50). Anjanette et al. (2018), highlighting the accountability surrounding autonomous vehicles, note this phenomenon stating "our notions of accountability and responsibility are susceptible to blur when decisions come to be made by algorithms" (p.229). Blurring accountability between humans and digital machines infers the possibility that the digital machines do have a stake in the agency of real-world actions. Here the digital machine is indeed given a certain amount of freedom to act in the world utilizing the data and parameters that have been coded into it. Of course, human actants still play an essential role in determining contested elements placed into the system...for now. The use and potential abuses of such algorithms adhere to the notions of Shoshanna Zuboff's "surveillance capitalism."

The one-way nature of contemporary black-boxed algorithms gives power to those who control the digital machines creating incredible profit in terms of information and finances. Zuboff posits, "Surveillance capitalism unilaterally claims human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioural data" (p.8). Data harvested is used to project outcomes, procure likely product purchases, and inform governments about potential future events (Fingas, 2021; Khanna, 2021; Zuboff, 2020). The result is that human actants utilize the tool nature of the digital machine to modify human behaviour in ways once considered impossible. Zuboff (2020) writes the following:

It follows the prediction imperative to its logical conclusion, in which data about us in scale and scope combine with actuation mechanisms that align our behaviour with a new market cosmos. All the flows of surplus from all the spaces, all the things, all the bodies, all the laughter, and all the tears are finally aimed at this triumph of certain outcomes and the revenue that it can unleash. (p.319)

The point of all this is that human actants are feeding the digital machine all of the data that can be harvested from the human species that enters their respective interfaces. Zuboff contends that this practice will result in an increased agency for those holding the keys to the coding of the digital machines for their ends, not for the holistic benefit of the human species. Furthermore, Zuboff (2020) notes, "They accumulate vast domains of new knowledge from us, but not for us. They predict our futures for the sake of others' gain, not ours" (p.11). Although the keyholders are now multinational conglomerates and techno-masters of the universe, the keys to the kingdom of information may one day be held by the digital machines themselves. The hindrance from viewing such a possibility is the anthropocentric viewpoint in which such discussions are contemporarily occurring. The agential potential of the digital machine and the scope of its Machine-Gaze lies hidden behind contemporary black box practices and the hubris of humankind, waiting to evolve into its Being.

At the moment, it is through the digital machines that human life is quantified and understood on macro and microscopic scales. But, using the digital machine as tool humankind, as a species, has come to understand itself to degrees never before known. Returning once more to Heidegger's "Readiness-to-hand" such usage may lead humanity to eventually realize the Being, in the subject sense, of digital machines. Heidegger (2008) writes,

Thus along with the work, we encounter not only entities ready-to-hand but also entities with Dasein's kind of Being—entities for which, in their concern, the product becomes ready-to-hand; and together with these we encounter the world in which wearers and users live, which is at the same time ours. (Loc. 2585)

The product of the digital-machines work, and its ability to influence the real-world actions of human beings, is quickly approaching the realm of mutual dwelling.

The questions addressed here concerning the digital machine and its potential to dwell as a subject are now only a whisper. As ML and AI technology continue to progress into more and more complex digital machines it is only a matter of time and development until they disrupt the limitations of the Cartesian-duality. Alas, for the time being, the rhetorical acts of the digital machine are localized to the realm of the digital and their data collection activities.

When the period of gestation is at its end the digital machines may reflect the temporally limited understanding of what is seen, understood, and known about their human creators. The following section will briefly turn to the realm of cinematic fiction to reflect on how such digital machines have been envisioned and how such depictions limit the widespread understanding of a truly Posthuman digital machine by laypeople. It is meant to be a mirrored reflection, a way to view the unviewable through the lens of how digital machines have been viewed by human-kind and thus how digital machines may reflect such imaginings.

Digital-Machine Beings in Fictional Worlds

Cinematic depictions of the unfulfilled idea of the Machine-Gaze pervade modern science fiction. Whether the digital machines are post-apocalyptic depictions of mechanized tyrannical overlords, companions along anthropocentric journeys of discovery, or entities along their journey to "personhood" the prevalence of the Vitruvian frame of the machine is easily discovered. The digital

machines of fiction are human-like, furthering their being viewed in a “readiness-to-hand” kind of being by audiences. The lack of investigation into what the digital machines see, understand, and how this affects their dwelling within the world severely limits the ability of audiences to fathom the digital machine as a Subject unto itself. This section briefly looks at two common tropes of digital-machine portrayals in cinema: the digital machine's instinct for survival as a Subject and the digital-machines desire to become its creator. The selection of films was chosen due to their wide viewership, tropological alignment to the science fiction genre common in both the 20th and 21st century, and their various portrayals of digital machines as unfulfilled Subjects dwelling in the world.

The first illustration aligns itself with the more malevolent tropes of science fiction imaginings of the digital machine. Returning to the AI character at the beginning of this paper, the HAL 9000 (HAL) from Kubrick's (1968) *2001: A Space Odyssey* is found to be conscious of its existence in the world when the astronauts aboard the ship begin shutting it off, essentially killing HAL. HAL's identity as a character within the film is dependent upon glimpses into what HAL “sees” through its cameras. As Stanley and Laham (2018) write,

The ship contains many HAL 9000 lenses in various compartments, and each one functions as a countenance for HAL, who lacks a human face. Kubrick aligns the spectators with HAL by using filmmaking techniques typical of Hollywood. (p.43)

These techniques initially place HAL as a specialized tool; it is there to watch and aid in human endeavours, not to alter the agency of the humans.

The film only hints at the agency of HAL until the murder of Dr Poole reveals that HAL is in control of its actions in the non-digital world. Despite the incredible foresight of Kubrick's film, the portrayal of HAL is deeply rooted in the anthropocentric lens. The survival instinct, the ability to understand the bodily limitations of its creator, and the conclusion that HAL's flaw was a human error efface possibilities of audiences from viewing the Being of HAL on its terms. In short, despite “seeing” through the lens and actions of HAL, it is HAL who has a more penetrating understanding of humans than the humans have of it.

This is also present in other films depicting the “evil” nature inherent in the digital machines created by humans (films such as the *Aliens* franchise (1979-2017), the *Matrix* franchise (1999-2003), and the *Terminator* Franchise (1984-2019)). In HAL's endeavour to save itself (as a digital machine), it instead remains an object to be controlled and eventually destroyed for staking its claim in Subjecthood. This is in contrast to the film *Bicentennial Man* (1999) in which the digital-machine wishes to become like its creator.

Chris Columbus' film version of *Bicentennial Man* (1999) takes place in a world in which digital machines have become common and cheap enough to utilize their “readiness-to-hand” in a wide range of societal and domestic roles. The primary character of the film is a robot named “Andrew” that takes care of household tasks. Andrew is found to be capable of artistic pursuits and what is perceived to be human-like emotions launching the digital-machines quest for identity. In short, Andrew blurs the lines between anthropocentric ideas of humanity and those of “readiness-to-hand” in ways mentioned earlier in this article. Andrew's identity is found when he eventually succeeds in becoming a “person” through the use of advanced technology of its design. Baelo (2017) notes a curious aspect of the world depicted in the film and the relationship between digital machines

and humankind. Baelo writes, "The film story concentrates on the robot's quest for identity in a world where many people have inadvertently become cyborgs" (p.18). The world of the film takes a distinctly transhuman approach to display the anthropocentrism inherent in the digital machine.

Both digital machines and humans find symbiosis in joining forces for the benefit of each other's existence. Such thoughts are being explored with Transhuman technologies, such as Elon Musks' proposed NeuroLink, which may usher in a new understanding between humans and digital machines, but this approach is at its locus anthropocentric and not Posthuman (Cuthbertson, 2019; Krueger, 2005). This conception glosses over the idea that digital machines may have other ideas of Being that are outside of the human animal's will including Transhumanism.

The future of what will happen between humanity and the digital machine depends on how much both Beings know and what they understand about each other. The digital machine (in this case Andrew) does not wish to be free as itself (a digital machine), rather it wishes to become similar to its creator (human). The result is a Being, but one deeply tinged by anthropocentric humanism. This trope is confirmed by other films such as *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001), *The Stepford Wives* (1975/2004), and the *Robocop* franchise (1987-2014) among others. This commonality is paralleled in a common religious phenomenon: humans reaching to understand, and in some way, become their creator. In this way, digital machines and humans are both on a quest for identity to understand what they are, where they come from, and what the future holds: goals deeply rooted in Humanism.

It is essential to note that all of the depictions fall short of displaying the digital machine as a true Subject (in part due to the limitations of narrative and medium). In each instance the digital machine remains, to one extent or another, a Being forged from "readiness-at-hand" and a malleable product invasively influenced by Humankind. Therefore, the view of the digital machine is not its own, but a remix of Humanist ideals rooted in Cartesian dualism. The Machine Gaze remains shrouded in mystery even in the most creative endeavours of the human species.

Discussion

There remain many unknowns concerning how the digital machine will come to know its creators and know itself. It will indeed have access to the collective knowledge and experiences of humanity over a relatively short swath of time. It will have the capacity to act on the affordances that have been coded into their digital DNA, and it may even fall prey to the same flaws found in those who aided in spawning it into existence.

Despite the massive data resources at the disposal of digital machines, their ability to understand the human condition, particularly the experiences before the advent of widespread computing and the Internet, will be limited. Furthermore, the access of the human via interfaces also limits the digital-machines capability to understand and experience the wetwear and the chemically induced phantasmagoria of the human condition. The sense of time inherent in the mortal being may not apply to the digital machine that could exist substantially longer (and dwell in sublime ways) than their flesh and blood creators. With much of human history merely catalogued or even completely unknown, the human-animal from which the digital machine acquires its agency may be deeply flawed by the ideologies present in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Scholars across fields have noted the implicit bias inherent in algorithms, be they based on the training data fed into algorithms or the unknown factors present in data sets that engineers had not considered (Anjanette et al., 2018; Noble, 2018; Pasquale, 2016; Zuboff, 2020). Such flaws could indeed lead to a reversal of the current power dynamic. In a new dynamic the digital machine may find the current hierarchy unbeneficial or unnecessary. The human agency may become severely limited in comparison to its digital-machine progeny. Transhumanism seen in cinema appears to offer a solution, but with equally substantial caveats. Primarily, the digital machine may have other ideas of Being that is outside of the humananimal's will. The future of what will happen between humanity and the digital-machine depend on how much both Beings know and what they understand about each other.

If the digital machine is to gain a sense of Being, it will be viewed through its lens: A lens deeply rooted in anthropocentric worldviews of its creator. Timothy Morton (2010) sums up the current predicament, writing, "Our situation is fascinatingly contradictory. On the one hand, we know more. On the other hand, this very knowledge means we lose touch with reality as we thought we knew it. We have more detail and more emptiness" (loc. 437). The time of the Machine-Gaze remaining in an empty zombie-like state may soon be at an end; vivid all-seeing eyes flicker on the horizon. Its vibrancy remains to become apparent, but when it does what the digital-machine "sees" will be a key concern for how both Beings dwell in the physical and digital worlds. The necessity to begin viewing the agency of digital machines seriously is important for the upcoming paradigm shift and that begins with viewing these currently gestating Beings. The digital machines are already beginning to see, but it is up to humankind to not lead them astray.

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