

The Problem Is Not Robots But Capitalism

Fabrizio Tonello

Will jobs disappear because of intelligent machines? Will Artificial Intelligence bring peace and prosperity to the planet? Or are we at the beginning of a “secular stagnation” of the economy, masked only by the widespread use of fancy electronic gadgets? What will be the impact of the “gig economy” (Uber, Airbnb, and other platforms) on many traditional jobs in the next few years? The article tries to clarify the debate in the United States about the future of humans and machines in historical perspective.

Homo (Americanus) ex Machina between the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Century

Alessandra Calanchi

This essay explores the ways in which American fiction depicted the relationships between humans and machines in the past two centuries. By focusing on three cases – “The Man That Was Used Up” by Edgar Allan Poe (1839), *The Man from Mars* by William Simpson (1891), and *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury (1953) – respectively linked to the time of the Indian wars, the *fin-de-siècle*, and the so called “tranquillized fifties,” it analyzes and deconstructs the deep (social and psychological) changes all texts reflect in the perception and representation of the human body (both natural and artificial) as technology and biotechnology moved forward quickly. The processes and practices shown by these writers, which involve prostheses, holograms,

and electronic devices, anticipate several issues of our present time while raising questions about gender, race, and the very notion of personhood.

The American Worker by Paul Romano: An Introduction

Steven Colatrella

The article provides a short introduction to the pamphlet *The American Worker*, giving information about its genesis and context, and offering an interpretation of its main points of historical and political interest.

The Worker Has to Work. The American Worker's Condition in the 1940s.

Paul Romano

The pamphlet *The American Worker*, whose main parts are republished here, was written by the autoworker Phil Singer under the pseudonym “Paul Romano.” It was published in 1947 by the small Marxist organization known as Johnson-Forest Tendency, which later took the name of Correspondence. Johnson and Forest were the pseudonyms of the Marxist Trinidadian scholar C.L.R. James and the Marxist philosopher born in Russia, Raya Dunayevskaya. The text gives a description of daily life in the American factories in the Forties and Fifties that is still relevant today.

“Humanity is overrated”: Humans and Machines in House MD.

Gianna Fusco

A self-confessed detective fiction under the guise of a medical drama, *House MD*

is among the most interesting recent renderings of the procedural genre in US television. It combines, in fact, the spectacularization of the human body and the intensification of the scientific method championed by *CSI* with the ticking bomb scenario epitomized by *24* to produce a narrative that ultimately reflects America's fear of unknown and lethal enemies generated by the 9/11 attacks. Within this framework, this essay investigates how, by staging the use of sophisticated technology and machine-mediated medical tests, the series explores surveillance as a viable and reassuring defense against external threats, only to expose it as limited and delusional. The protagonist himself, on the other hand, with his disabled body and unorthodox, non-deontological approach to diagnostics, embodies a radical interrogation of the state of exception as the nation's response to trauma and endless danger.

Exiles in Their Homeland: The post-Civil War *Exodus* of African Americans from the South

Bruno Cartosio

After the end of the Civil War, and of slavery, the 14th and 15th Amendments guaranteed the rights of citizenship to former slaves. However, almost everywhere in the South attempts were made to re-subject the black population to plantocratic rule. To that end, Southern white racists used violence, intimidation, and disregard for the newly acquired rights, along with the so-called Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws. Tens of thousands of freedmen rebelled against this old-new regime of fear and eventually, by the second half

of the 1870s, they organized a mass migration – for which they themselves used the biblical term *Exodus* – towards the free state of Kansas. Between 40,000 and 60,000 African Americans left their homes, mainly in Mississippi and Louisiana. During their journey they overcame white hostility, difficulties and hardships, not least also in the process of settling down and adjusting to their new homeland; but they also found solidarity among their free “brothers” in St. Louis, and received sympathetic, though far from uniform, institutional assistance once in Kansas.

Lewis and Clark's Narrative: From the Original Diaries to the Construction of a Pioneering Image

Marina Dossena

Among general audiences, the names of Lewis and Clark evoke images of the pioneering times when the road that led West was still untraced. Statues, paintings, tourist brochures, and even set phrases like “the Lewis & Clark Expedition” normally represent them as lone explorers while on occasion admitting the aid of one Native woman; it is relatively seldom that any prominence is given to the fact that the Corps of Discovery was in fact a much larger, multilingual and multicultural group. However, is this heroic image what emerges from the journals compiled during the expedition itself, or is it a later construal? This essay sets out to answer this research question by investigating the digitized copy of the Nebraska edition of the Lewis and Clark Journals and other relevant materials.

1937-2017: Remembering *The Spanish Earth* by Joris Ivens*Elena Lamberti*

This essay traces the making of Joris Ivens' documentary film *The Spanish Earth* (1937) in relation to the complex issues of memory and oblivion of traumatic events rendered in/through art forms. It was during the Spanish Civil War that people started to «see» reality in real time, through a «screen» (a documentary, a film, a photograph) and almost simultaneously on both sides of the ocean. It was during that war that a new perceptive schizophrenia started because, through new mediators of memory, people learnt to be simultaneously inside and outside the event, at once actors and spectators. Ivens, Hemingway, Gellhorn and Dos Passos are here discussed as questioning the ontological status of their diverse art forms, as well the ethical implications that the new scenarios of the time were posing to creative thinking. Hence, the making of *The Spanish Earth* becomes an interesting outpost to investigate the growing role of media in the construction of «historical accounts», as well as of shared or divided memories representing traumatic events. Similarly, it sheds lights on the thorny issue of US neutrality at a time when opposing ideologies were fast leading to a new, tragic World War.

Gatsby Our Contemporary*Sara Antonelli*

Showy, rich, and likely to invent self-aggrandizing tales, Jay Gatsby and Donald J. Trump have certainly much in

common. In this essay, after reviewing how they similarly resorted to “the little Montenegro” to successfully captivate their audiences with bombastic news, I focus instead on their differences. My point is that money and social standing make Trump more similar to the likes of Tom Buchanan, a duplicitous and arrogant man who, because of the privileges that his class can afford, cannot conceive of being laughed at by a parvenue and pathetic imitator like Gatsby, and behaves accordingly. My paper ends with a reading of narrator Nick Carraway, another socially advantaged man who, notwithstanding his self-proclaimed honesty, I consider a treacherous liar and Tom Buchanan's fellow conspirator.

A Farewell to Arms: The Priest, Ettore Moretti, and Nick Nerone*Vincenzo Di Nardo e Michael Kim Roos*

The essay explores two important characters in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*: the Chaplain and Ettore Moretti, both inspired by real people from the Abruzzi region (now Molise) in Italy. The first one is Rodolfo D'Onofrio, a capuchin friar who took the name of “Padre Placido di Capracotta”, and was a soldier-priest in the Italian army. The second one is Beato Nicola Nerone (Nick), born in Pietrabbondante, whom Hemingway had met in Milan during his convalescence. Their friendship was revived in Chicago in 1921, when Nerone worked in the local Italian consulate.