SNF Nostos

Conference

2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence • Ανθρωπότητα & Τεχνητή Νοημοσύνη •

Highlights

SNF Nostos

SNF Dialogues

SNF Agora Institute

Humanity - AI Symbiosis

AI & HUMAN DIALOGUES

In collaboration with

Johns Hopkins
Stavros Niarchos Foundation
SNF Agora Institute

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ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

held through journalism nonprofit

IMEdD

SNF Dialogues + SNF Agora Institute @SNFNostos
Humanity - AI Symbiosis

4-5

SNF Nostos Conference | Humanity and Artificial Intelligence

DAY 1

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CarrCentre for Human Rights, Harvard University (participated virtually)
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Christina Colclough — Founder, The Why Not Lab
Madeleine Elish — Program Director, AI on the Ground Data & Society (participated virtually)
Dimitris Bounias (moderator) — Project Manager Ideas Zone & Incubator, iMEdD

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Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

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Humanity and Artificial Intelligence
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DAY 2

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Meta-Patterns **28-29**
Blaise Aguera y Arcas — Software Engineer, Software Architect and Designer, Google AI
Azeem Azhar — Writer, Exponential View (participated virtually)
Manolis Andriotakis — Journalist and Author
Stephen Cave — Executive Director, Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, University of Cambridge (participated virtually)
Barry Coller — Vice President for Medical Affairs, The Rockefeller University
Sam Koplewicz (moderator) — Director, Voter Protection for the Florida Democratic Party
Daniela Rus — Director, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, MIT

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Lucas Joppa — Chief Environmental Officer, Microsoft
Xiaowei Wang — Creative Director, Logic Magazine (participated virtually)
Liam Young — Co-Founder, Tomorrows Thoughts Today (participated virtually)
Andrew Zolli — Vice-President, Planet, Inc. (participated virtually)
Stelios Vassilakis (moderator) — Chief Programs & Strategic Initiatives Officer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

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Sabelo Mhlambi — Founder, Bantucracy
Ted Chiang — Author
Panos Papoulias (moderator) — Chief Operating Officer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)
K Allado McDowell — Founder, Artists and Machine Intelligence, Google (participated virtually)
Robert Brooks — Evolutionary Biologist, Scientia Professor of Evolution, UNSW (participated virtually)

Debate: AI is In/Compatible With Human Freedom **36-37**
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Anasyua Sengupta — Founder & Co-Director, Whose Knowledge (participated virtually)

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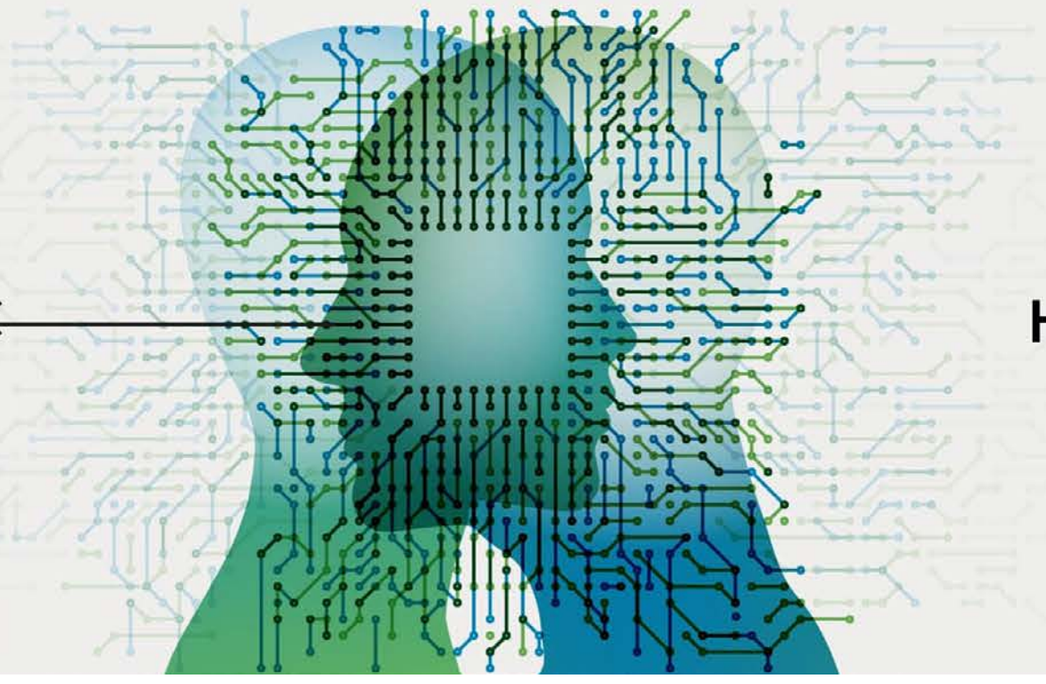


Humanity - AI Symbiosis

SNF Nostos

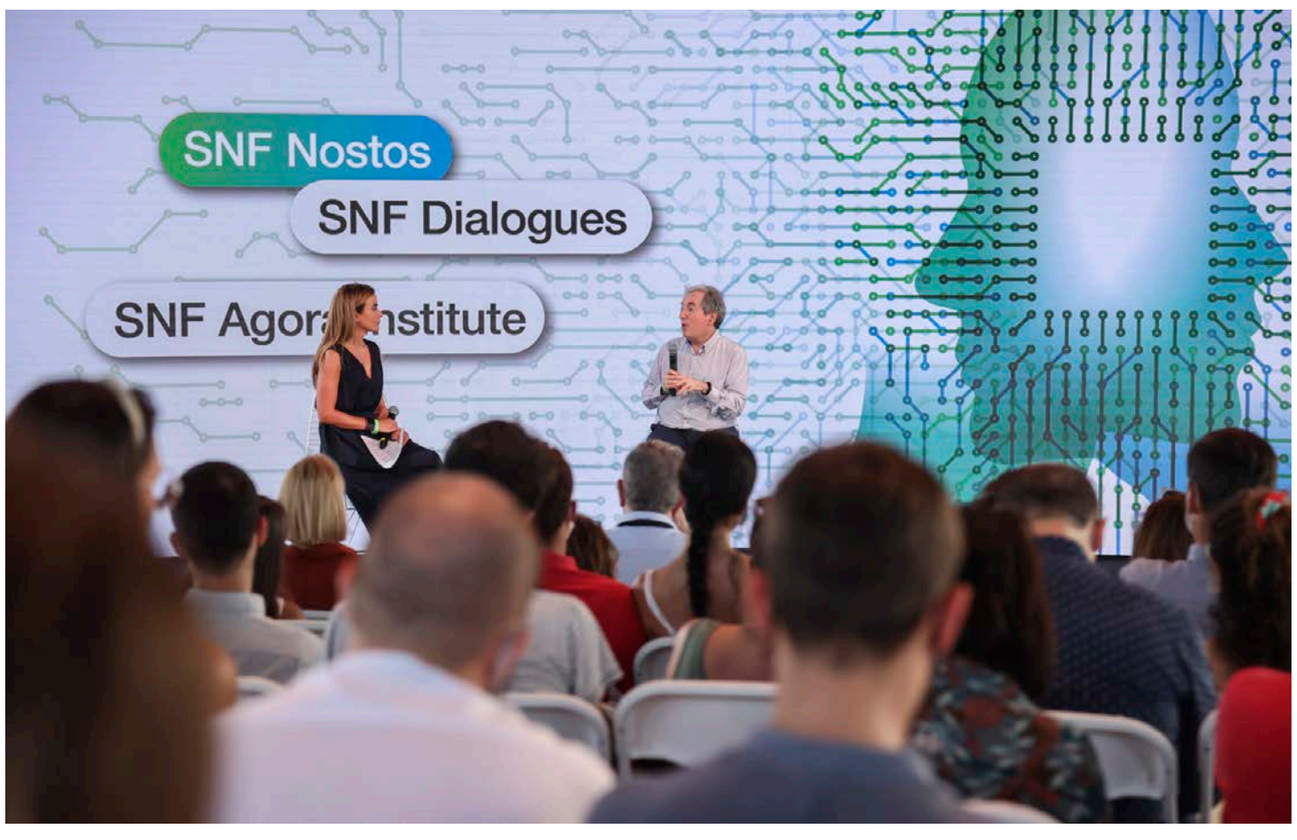
SNF Dialogues

SNF Agora Institute

August 25, 2021

HUMANITY - AI SYMBIOSIS

August 25, 2021
6:30 PM

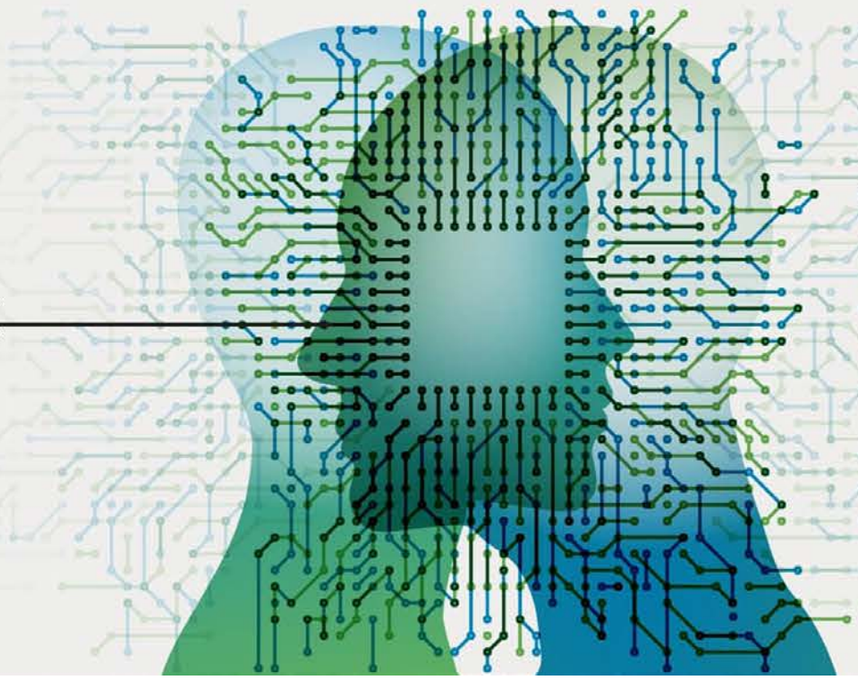


Artificial Intelligence is often viewed as a part of the future, and many people think of the symbiosis of humans and machines as something distant. However, the truth is that the revolution of artificial intelligence is not the future; it is already here. Many of us already live with AI, from smartphones to security cameras and cars, to growing crops and offering services. AI has already helped us fight COVID-19 in analyzing the genomic sequence of the virus and rapidly developing vaccines, and it may also help us predict the next pandemic. For a long time, artificial intelligence seemed like something out of a sci-fi film that offered a helping hand to humans. Now, AI has become profit-maker, deciding who will get a loan or who will get a job and what information a user will be exposed to on social media. Humans have always been able to claim mastery over AI when it comes to empathy. But do humans know what emotional intelligence is? While the need for a global moral code for AI is often discussed, which moral system are we going to use to power a machine when there is no universal moral code for humans?

Watch this on demand:
Humanity - AI Symbiosis
Duration: 1:22'

The SNF Dialogues discussion, held through journalism nonprofit iMEdD (the incubator for Media Education and Development), was moderated by journalist and SNF Dialogues Executive Director Anna-Kynthia Bousdoukou and SNF Agora Institute Director Hahrie Han, along with iMEdD Lab Project Manager Thanasis Troboukis.

The SNF Dialogues are curated and moderated by Anna-Kynthia Bousdoukou.



George Giannakopoulos
Artificial Intelligence Research Fellow at NCSR Demokritos, Co-Founder of SciFY PNPC

"When we include these linguistic models in a dialogue, what we see is essentially a reflection of human expression through a broken mirror. This mirror has been created by science, using data to train the system. Human nature is not only evident in our writings. All of its experience, all of its interaction is absent from the systems we have seen today. Therefore, what we have is a broken reflection of humanity, as expressed through the system and 'fed' into it."

DEEPY and PHILOSOPHERAI
AI Systems

Two AI systems—GPT2 and GPT3—were used in the dialogue on stage at the SNF Dialogues. The first of these systems was created by George Petasis, a researcher at the National Centre for Scientific Research Demokritos and SKEL, The AI Lab at the Institute of Informatics and Telecommunications. The second system was based on the Philosopher AI application.

Stelios Virvidakis
Professor of Philosophy, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

"There are philosophers who believe that if there is no organic matter to breed life, then there can be no emotions, such as pain, pleasure, desire, or more complex ones, such as fear, or anxiety... But other philosophers will tell us that there is no need for organic matter, but for electrical circuits as in machines, i.e., mechanical parts that will gradually develop emotions by interacting with the environment, with other human beings and machines, and thus develop a state of mind, and a sense of self. We cannot always decide on a moral dilemma on the basis of the use of algorithms. Aristotle spoke of prudence, which equals wisdom, the acumen that allows us to discern the complexity of an issue within a complex situation. Can machines ever develop this type of wisdom, which includes emotions, empathy, and relates to emotional intelligence? Morality is not just a matter of obedience and strict unyielding rules. That's what worries me: which moral system are we going to use to power a machine?
Machines can be good consistently, while us humans are notoriously inconsistent in our goodness."

Ethan Zuckerman
Associate Professor of Public Policy, Information and Communication, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

"The danger of an AI system is that we have this piece of computer code that appears to be very smart. It appears in some cases to be sort of all-knowing and it tells us to do this or that. The problem is, we end up encoding those sorts of biases. So, the risk of AI is that we take this unfairness, and we put it in code and we can't even interrogate it anymore. What is the best way to react to these AI systems? It is to demand transparency, and then to use this experience of trying to understand the biases of these systems not just to question the technology, but to question the social disparities that underlie the technology."

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SNF Nostos Conference

Humanity and Artificial Intelligence
August 26-27. 2021

SNF Nostos Conference

August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

WELCOME

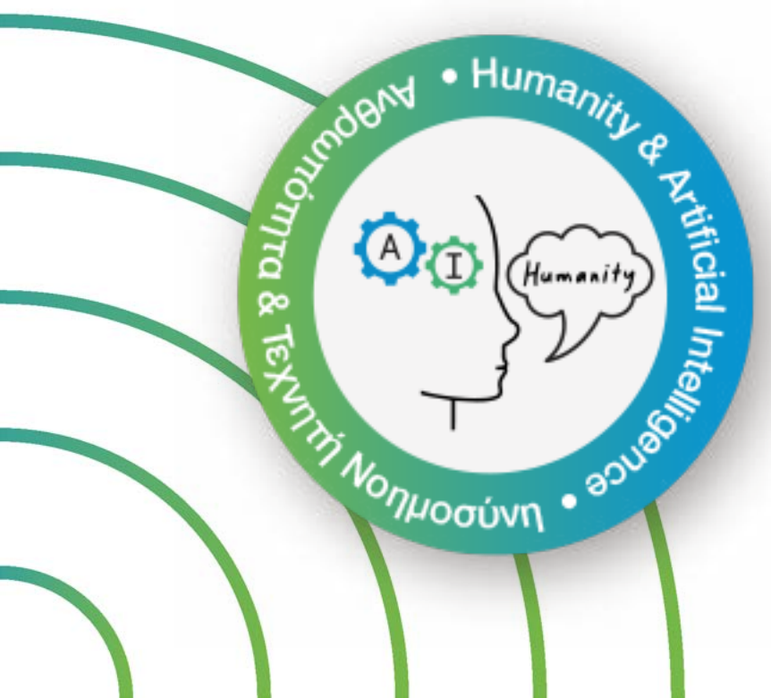
Anna-Kynthia Bousdoukou
iMEdD Managing Director,
SNF Dialogues Executive Director,
Journalist

Day 1
August 26, 2021
9:00 AM

Good morning and welcome to the Humanity and AI conference. It was a little more than a year ago when we convened virtually to discuss the same topic. Back then the possibility of holding a physical gathering again seemed a faraway dream for most of us. That we are here in this space again together, twelve months later, is a testament to our resilience as human beings, but also to the very fact that despite the opportunities that technology provides us to form virtual communities, physical co-mingling and sharing of public space, and physical communities, are at the core of our humanity. A humanity the very essence of which is called into question by the advancement of Artificial Intelligence. The pandemic monopolized our attention over the last year and a half, but it did not alter the fast course of technological innovation, and questions about what AI means in relation to us, human beings have not diminished but rather increased.
As we are about to open the 10th annual SNF Nostos Conference, we want to thank all of you for joining us here physically, despite the challenges COVID-19 continues to present, and those of you who join virtually. That we are here today demonstrates our faith in institutions and their importance. From our side, as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, we have made every effort possible to create as safe an environment as possible, in line also with the health and safety mandates of the Greek state.

Several elements of this year's conference give us occasion to consider the interplay between in-person interaction and digital tools. We welcome you to raise your hand with any questions for our panelists, or to submit them online at www.SNFNostos.org/Conference.

Your electronic badge is also a resource for forming connections and planning your day. Tap badges with someone else to exchange contact information, or flip your badge up toward you to display the conference schedule and information on how to access the contact details you're exchanging.



SNF Nostos Conference

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OPENING REMARKS

Andreas Dracopoulos
Co-President
Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

Day 1
August 26, 2021
9:03 AM

"We all need, as much as we can, to do all we can to help improve education, healthcare, justice, decency, compassion—to bring back hope, for every human soul in this world," said SNF Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos in his opening remarks at the 2021 SNF Nostos Conference.

The theme of this year's conference, Humanity and Artificial Intelligence, was one that has profound implications for each of those fields, and for our hopes for a brighter future.

Opening the conference, Andreas Dracopoulos welcomed attendees and dozens of speakers from around the world, setting the stage for a day designed to catalyze robust discussion on the future of our species. "We humans are partly responsible for having compromised/commoditized our own humanity in so many ways. Our humanity has been weakened and has become vulnerable. We have all seen this in a clear way during the ongoing COVID pandemic. We have been exposed, but maybe at the same time we have been given another chance to collectively regroup."

Watch this on demand:
Opening Remarks
Duration: 0:09'

Επίκεντρο ο άνθρωπος
Empowering Humanity

25 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ YEARS

ΙΣΝ SNF

ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

SNF Nostos

Conference

August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

SNF 25 YEARS IN 25 MINUTES

Day 1
August 26, 2021
9:10 AM

This year marks a quarter-century since the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) began making grants to nonprofit organizations around the world, guided by an openness to the excellent ideas of people close to the issues, by collaboration with valued partners, and by a desire to create transformative change whose benefits multiply and are shared widely across society.

Over the course of its history, SNF has committed over $3.1 billion through more than 5,000 grants to nonprofit organizations in over 135 countries around the world. The Foundation's mission is broad by design, and the core of SNF's grantmaking is its online application, open 24/7 to any nonprofit interested in applying. This accessible approach, paired with a belief in the power of public-private partnership, has helped SNF reach widely and deeply across its program areas of Arts & Culture, Education, Health & Sports, and Social Welfare. A 25-minute documentary

sharing highlights from 25 years of SNF partnerships and impact premiered today for a live audience at SNF Nostos in Athens

"Since SNF's first grant in 1996, made possible thanks to the endowment provided by our founder, my great uncle, the late Stavros Niarchos, our work has been strengthened by the varying perspectives, expertise, and backgrounds of our incredible grantee partners," said SNF Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos. "They have joined us in believing that a different reality is possible and in envisioning a future characterized, simply put, by greater humanity. This milestone belongs to all of us together, and we were honored to be able to celebrate it the same way—together—at our SNF Nostos 2021."

SNF Nostos Conference

Επίκεντρο ο άνθρωπος
Empowering Humanity

25 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ YEARS

ΙΣΝ SNF

ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

YOUR COURAGE CAN BE AS POWERFUL AS THE SEA.

Every human being is a world of endless potential. And for 25 years, we have been working to bring that potential to life.

Επίκεντρο ο άνθρωπος
Empowering Humanity

25 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ YEARS

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SNF Nostos

Conference

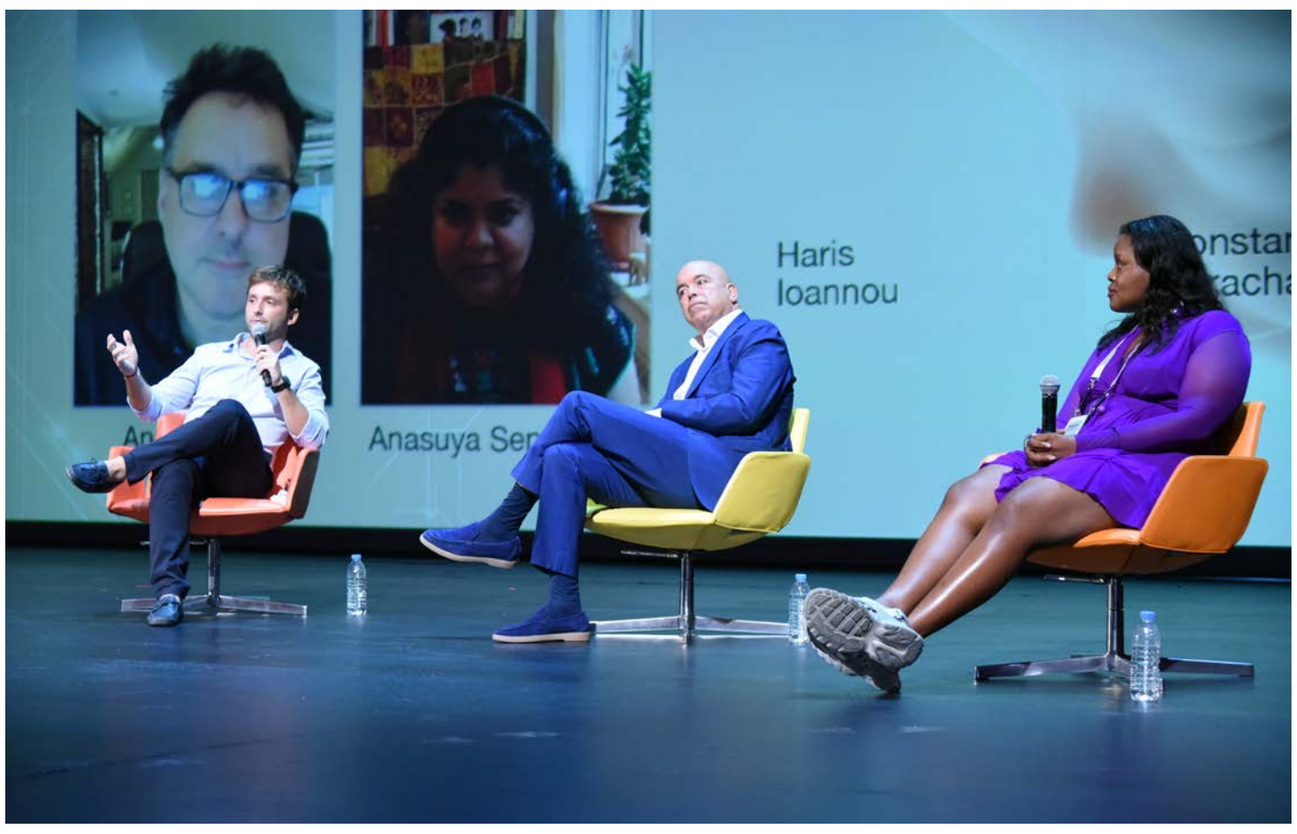
August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

AI FUTURE(S) WORTH WANTING

Day 1
August 26, 2021
9:40 AM

What do we mean by artificial intelligence? It's a set of technologies. It's data. It's soulless machines. But at the same time it's power—power to make change. We don't know who will control that power or how they'll wield it. Panelists discussed the pros and the cons of this new reality. They sought common ground for a global framework to regulate AI, discussed its impacts on society, broached a debate about open data, and interrogated who the gatekeepers of these new technologies are.



Watch this on demand:
AI Future(s) Worth Wanting
Duration: 1:16'

AI Future(s) Worth Wanting

Haris Ioannou
Product Manager in Machine Learning and Cybersecurity, Kleiner Perkins VC and Open Raven

"The future is coming fast. I am not sure it is coming as aggressively as we think it is, but it is the trust in machines that worries me."

"You have to publish the models, algorithms, data sets, you open the conversation to anyone, you open the research for anyone to participate, because otherwise you end up with monopolies... It's massively important to have these systems open."

Anasuya Sengupta
Founder & Co-Director, Whose Knowledge

(participated virtually)

"In most indigenous systems of knowledge, humans are seen as the youngest species in the world... So how do we come to this conversation around artificial intelligence and with humility?"

"AI is not one thing, it is multiple technologies through a system of power. How do we design for a world of collective wellbeing in which power is shared, power is understood to be equitable and power is with those most affected by these technologies? How do we reverse engineer.

Konstantinos Karachalios
Managing Director, IEEE Standards Association

"I don't want to live in a world where the current narrative about AI becomes predominant... Machines don't have a soul... I don't believe in AI as a concept. I believe in machines which can calculate and deliver a lot for us to have a better life... We should embrace it and use it. I say yes, to the use of computing technologies. And I say clearly no to the reductionist and materialist narrative around AI."

"We must stop losing one generation of children after another, making them addicted to these virtual worlds and destroying the future agora, destroying their sense of citizenship.... We have to give our children back their childhood and whatever hinders us from doing this is against humanity."

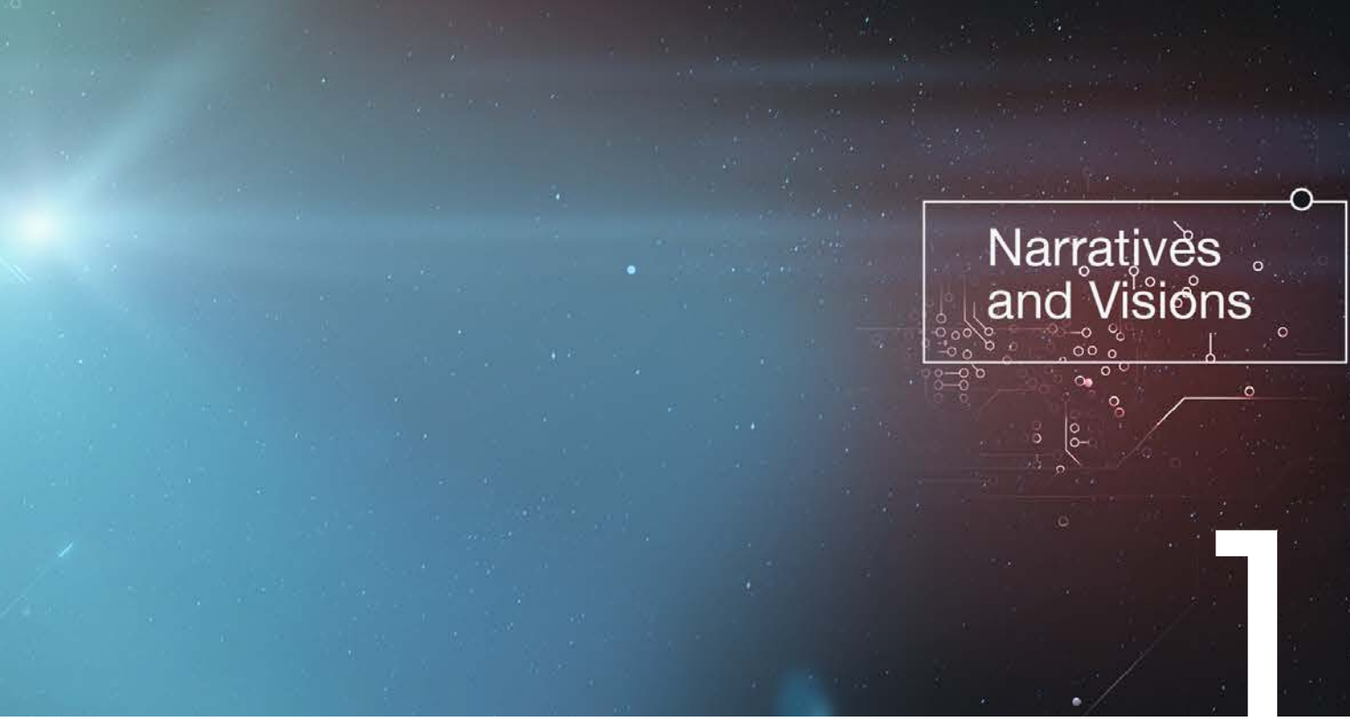
Yeshimabeit Milner
Executive Director, Data for Black Lives

"We can make data a tool instead of a weapon. And make it a tool for social change."

"I believe in machine learning, and I believe in AI, it is even more important to understand the context and the consequences. And those are dire... There are a lot of myths about people that we have subscribed to, that we reinforce and that are now becoming embedded in the very tools, in the very algorithms that we're creating. The question for me isn't about how do we make machines learn more, but what do we need to unlearn."

Andrew Zolli
Vice-President, Planet, Inc.

(moderator participated virtually)



SNF Nostos Conference

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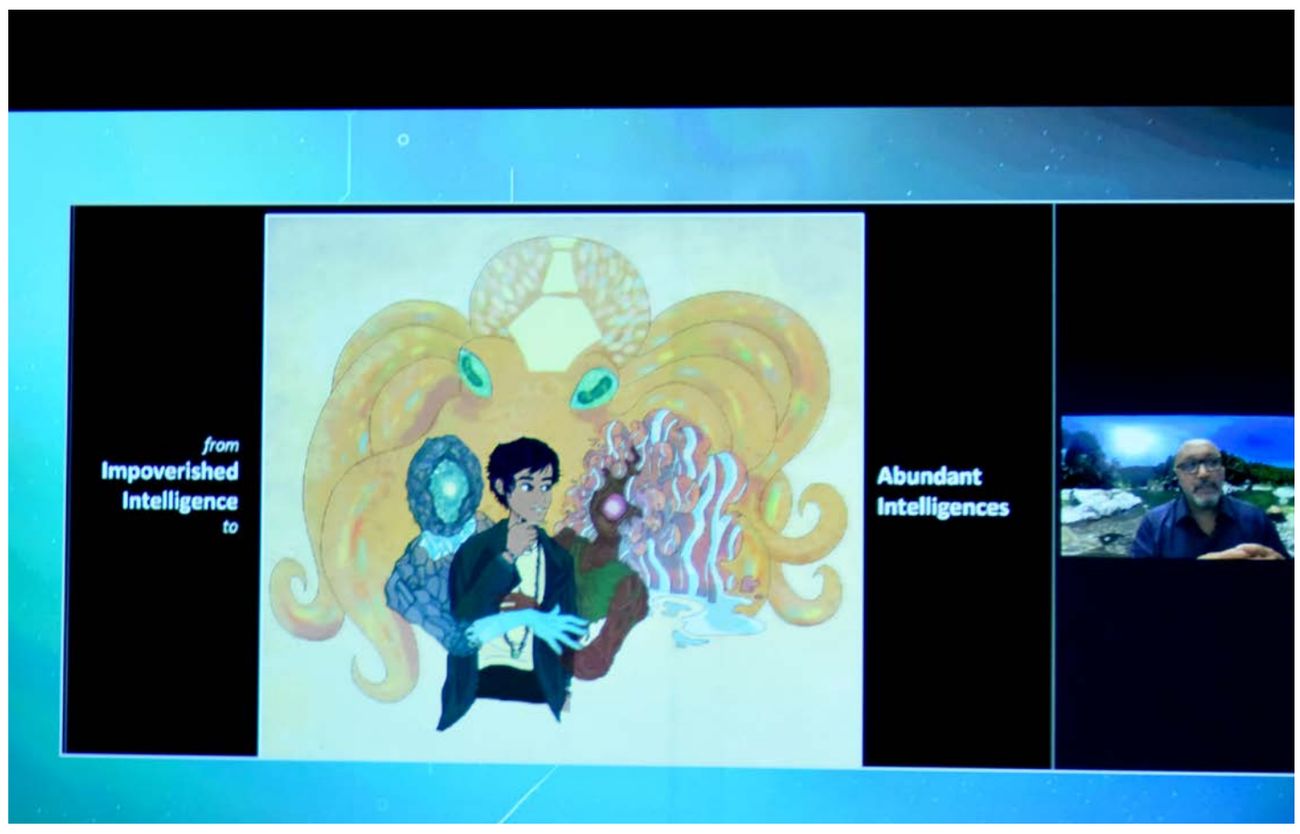
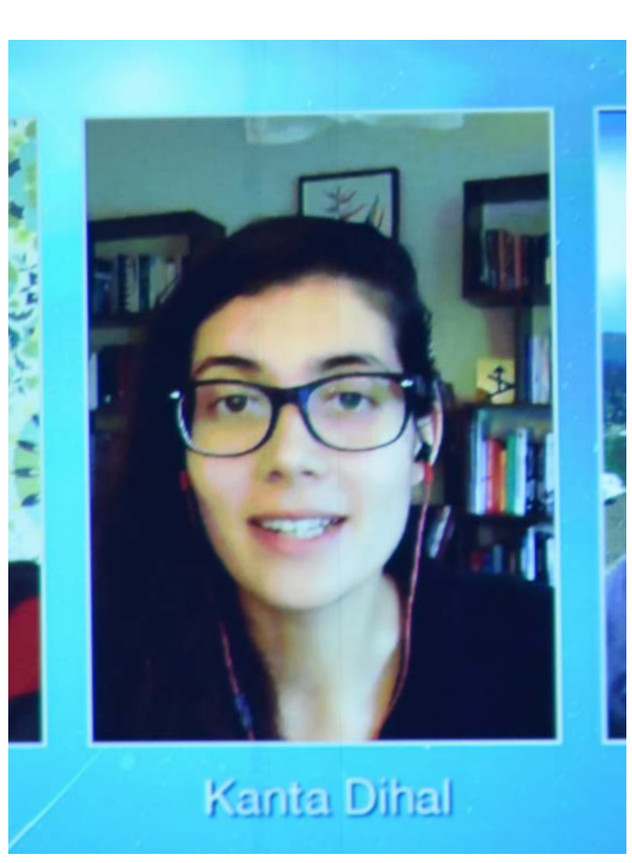
Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

NARRATIVES AND VISIONS

Day 1
August 26, 2021
11:10 AM



Panelists opened a conversation informed by different narratives, visions, and cultural perspectives. They discussed how people from different cultural backgrounds perceive and interact with AI technologies —and have for thousands of years. From early history onward, we see examples of people thinking about creating objects that are as intelligent as they are and can interact with them.



Watch this on demand:
Narratives and Visions
Duration: 1:20’

Narratives and Visions

2

Harshit Agrawal
AI Artist & Human Computer Interaction (HCI) Researcher

(participated virtually)

"It's all about making people ask these questions for themselves. And people do that which is very interesting. It is such a wide range even across such possibly universal concepts and it makes people think how unique every individual is in terms of how they engage with the world? So can AI help us sort of bring out that uniqueness."

Kanta Dihal
Senior Research Fellow, Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, University of Cambridge

(participated virtually)

"The first narrative for an intelligent machine was in the Iliad... We have been finding these ideas of intelligent machines covering a time span of 3,000 years. In other parts of the world we've almost equally old ones...So what we've seen is that people have been thinking about creating objects that are as intelligent as and can interact with humans for millennia."

Jason Lewis
Director, Initiative for Indigenous Futures

(participated virtually)

"What we are talking about is different knowledge frameworks and what they value, what is considered knowledge, what is considered worth knowing, who has knowledge, who gets to exercise knowledge—these are all things that go really deeply into the question of how we design these systems. Because we are talking about knowledge systems, we are not talking about ethics systems they are not designed to be ethics systems, they are designed to be knowledge systems, systems for discovering, preserving, and communicating knowledge. And so we have to think about the epistemological frameworks that underlie the ways in which the technology is being created now and find ways to really engage with local epistemological frameworks and create systems that are able to express the values that are important to those communities."

Bing Song
Vice President of the Berggruen Institute and Director of Berggruen Institute China Center

(participated virtually)

"Humanity is the X factor of AI future. So what kind of AI future we're going to have entirely hinges on humanity's thoughts and actions. Because AI programs and robotics are the products of human minds, and they exhibit nothing but our values and the level of consciousness.

So A.I. is really humanity's mirror, reflecting and magnifying our strengths and flaws. All the philosophers that I engage with emphasize that the most critical task facing humanity is to engage in deep self-reflection and amend our own behaviors so that we can be role models for AI."

Aarathi Krishnan
Research Fellow, Berkman Klein Centre and Carr Centre for Human Rights, Harvard University
(moderator participated virtually)

SNF Nostos

Conference

August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

Starve the Algorithm

Day 1
August 26, 2021
12:30 PM

The discussion panels of the conference were interspersed with short performances related to artificial intelligence by artists including William Kentridge, adding an additional avenue for inquiry and exploration.

Kentridge observed that algorithms are very good at optimizing, but that the "less good idea" is often what produces the best result. He also explored the tension between convenience and the "authoritarian" processes AI fosters.

"The first question is: To what extent do we feed the algorithm? One line in the opera is: "Starve the algorithm." We try to not give it all the data. But we know that every time we pick up our phone, we flood the world with data. There's the convenience of what the phone gives us, and there's the sacrifice of our data."

He went on, "Nowadays, the bank will simply check with the algorithm whether they should grant you the loan or not. That's an interesting example of handing over agency. It's fundamentally an authoritarian process because it hands over any individual decision to a statistic average. Before, we relied on individual judgment, on the ability of being able to persuade someone. We relied on being exceptional. We hoped we'd be more than just fitting in with the statistics. With AI comes the acceptance of that not going to be the case.

2

WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

Starve the Algorithm

Day 1
August 26, 2021
12:30 PM

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Empowering Humanity

ΙΣΝ SNF
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12 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ 12 YEARS

SNF Nostos Conference

August 26-27, 2021

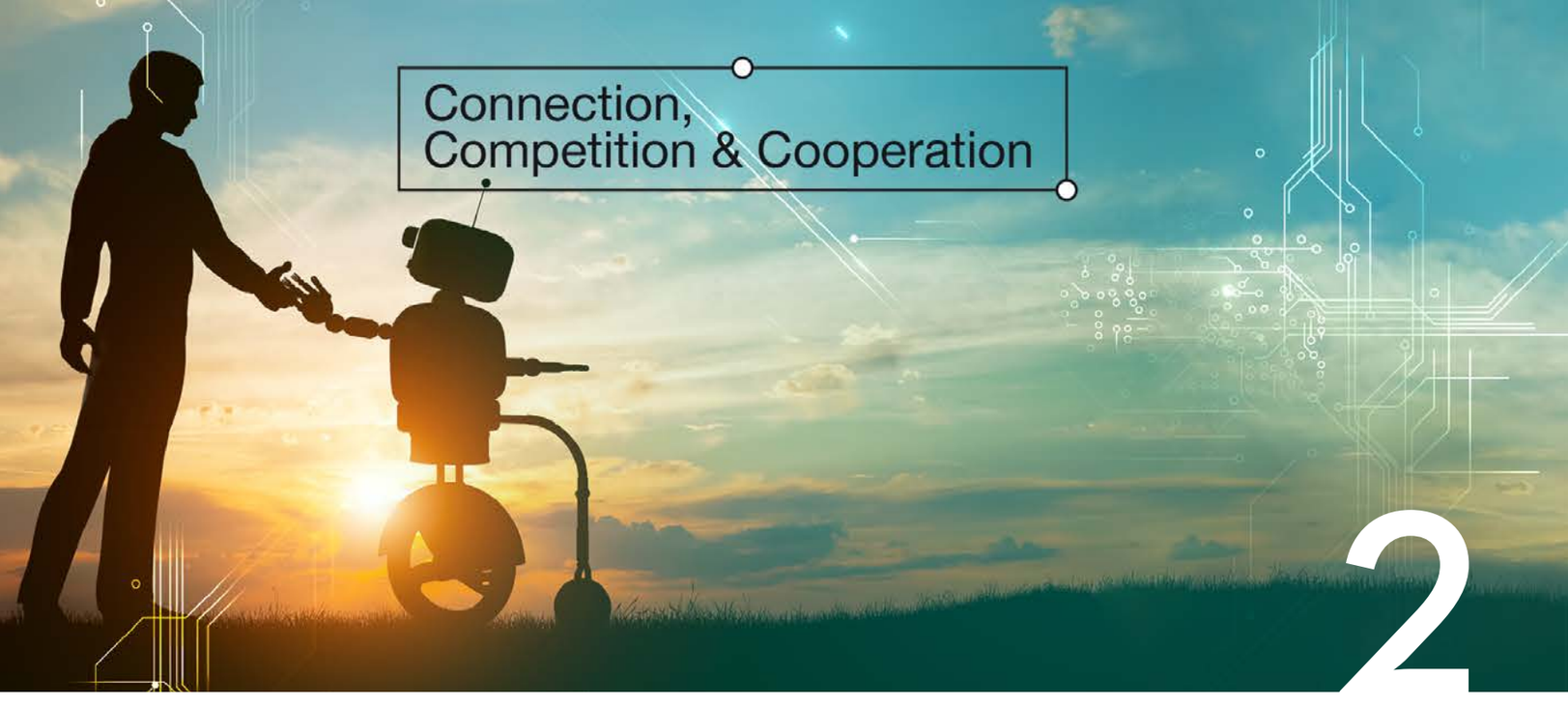
Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

CONNECTION, COMPETITION AND COOPERATION

Day 1
August 26, 2021
2:00 PM

A discussion on the challenges that AI technologies will bring to employment relationships, how it affects the judicial system now and how it will affect it in the future, and what societal changes algorithms will bring by impacting human relationships —and, as a result, the gene pool.

Watch this on demand:
Connection, Competition and Cooperation
Duration: 1:20’



Sinan Aral
Director, MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy (IDE)

(participated virtually)

"Algorithms are affecting various elements of our society, from our democracies to our economies to our public health. And one thing that we may or may not be aware of is the rise of algorithms in our relationship matching.

What I mean by that is that we have these dating apps now that are providing people access to relationships.... underneath all of these platforms are algorithms that match one person to another.

Typically, these platforms don't allow you to browse all possible options for people that you might date, but actually give you a running list of algorithmic suggestions which you can either say yes to or no to, which means that the entire pool from which you're choosing has been narrowed by an algorithm.

And it may surprise people to know that relationships formed of these algorithms surpassed relationships formed of traditional human meeting mechanisms out there in the physical world... in 2013.

So eight years ago, algorithmic relationships surpassed traditional meeting mechanism relationships. And the question we need to be asking ourselves is, how are these relationships—which may go on to results in marriage and offspring and the future generations of humanity—how are they different in terms of genetic pooling than the matches we traditionally make? And what does that mean for human society and evolution going forward?"

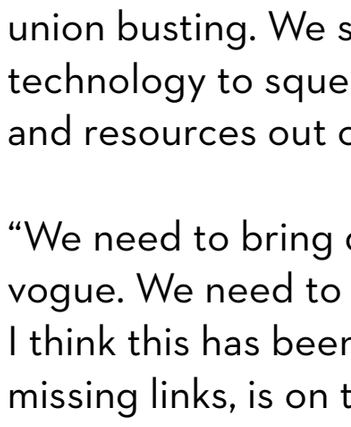
Christina Colclough
Founder, The Why Not Lab

"And I think that if we have more and more people who feel undervalued or under-seen, or many people work as well for other reasons than purely to earn an income; they work to fulfil themselves, to be inspired, to have social bonds. And if we see that there's a privileged few getting richer and richer and the rest of us are left to seek our creative potential, I think we're going to have massive social upheaval, revolutions, despair, growing income inequalities and so forth. So the short answer is I think UBI is being used as a scapegoat for taking responsibility."

"We should stop using technology for union busting. We should stop using technology to squeeze the last energy and resources out of people."

"We need to bring dialogue back into vogue. We need to talk again. And I think this has been one of the big missing links, is on the governance issue."

"But then we should also put red lines down. What can these systems not be used for? We should also say who has access."



Dimitris Bounias
Project Manager Ideas Zone & Incubator, iMEdD

(moderator)

Nicolas Economou
Chair, Science, Law, and Society Initiative, The Future Society; Principal Coordinator, The Athens Roundtable on AI and the Rule of Law

"Why should we be worried about AI automation in the law? After all, nobody was worried about other forms of automation, whether it's word processing or Excel spreadsheets, automating computations....

Why should we be worried about automation of legal judgments? Of the jobs that lawyers do, the jobs that judges do, the jobs that advocates do?

There is an answer to this, which is that there is a fundamental difference between prior forms of automation and the automation that enables AI. AI carries, is trained by, data. Data carries values. It carries judgments. And therefore, effectively, it embodies certain ethical perspectives on what is right, what is fair, and it embodies certain biases, conscious or unconscious, that we have in society.

So the problem with AI and automating legal judgments is that it effectively carries and produces judgments of people of their circumstances that are ethical judgments. And that is, in my view, the single major challenge for AI in the law."

SNF Nostos

Conference

August 26-27, 2021

Humanity &
Artificial Intelligence

AI IN FICTION

Katerina Lehou
Rafika Chawishe
Dimitris Lalos

Day 1
August 26, 2021
3:20 PM

Her name is Ana Alvarado, and she's having a bad day. She spent all week preparing for a job interview, the first one in months to reach the videoconference stage, but the recruiter's face barely appeared onscreen before he told her that the company has decided to hire someone else. So she sits in front of her computer, wearing her good suit for nothing. She makes a halfhearted attempt to send queries to some other companies and immediately receives automated rejections. After an hour of this, Ana decides she needs some diversion: she opens a Next Dimension window to play her current favorite game, Age of Iridium. The beachhead is crowded, but her avatar is wearing the coveted mother-of-pearl combat armor, and it's not long before some players ask her if she wants to join their fireteam. They cross the combat zone, hazy with the smoke of burning vehicles, and for an hour they work to clear out a stronghold of mantids; it's the perfect mission for Ana's mood, easy enough that she can be confident of victory but challenging enough that she can derive satisfaction from it. Her teammates are about to accept another mission when a phone window opens up in the corner of Ana's video screen. It's a voice call from her friend Robyn, so Ana switches her microphone over to take the call.

"Hey Robyn."

"Hi Ana. How's it going?"

"I'll give you a hint: right now I'm playing AoI."

Robyn smiles. "Had a rough morning?"

"You could say that." Ana tells her about the canceled interview.

"Well, I've got some news that might cheer you up. Can you meet me in Data Earth?"

"Sure, just give me a minute to log out."

"I'll be at my place."

"Okay, see you soon."

...

(Excerpt from the novel "The Lifecycle of Software Objects" by American writer Ted Chiang originally published in 2010.)

2

AI IN FICTION

Katerina Lehou
Rafika Chawishe
Dimitris Lalos

Day 1
August 26, 2021
3:20 PM

THE LIFECYCLE OF SOFTWARE OBJECTS

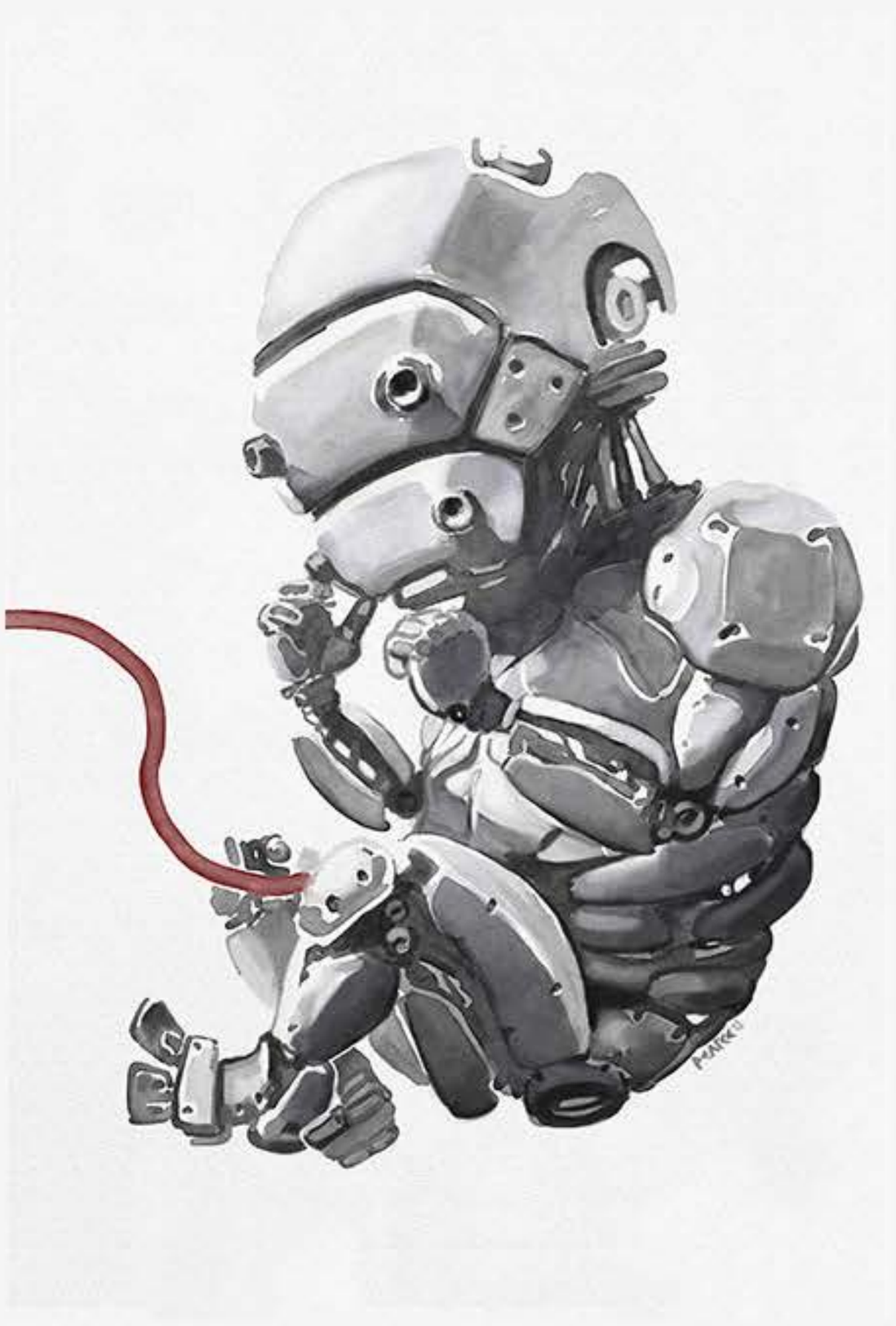


Illustration: Christian Pearce

TED CHIANG

Επίκεντρο ο άνθρωπος
Empowering Humanity

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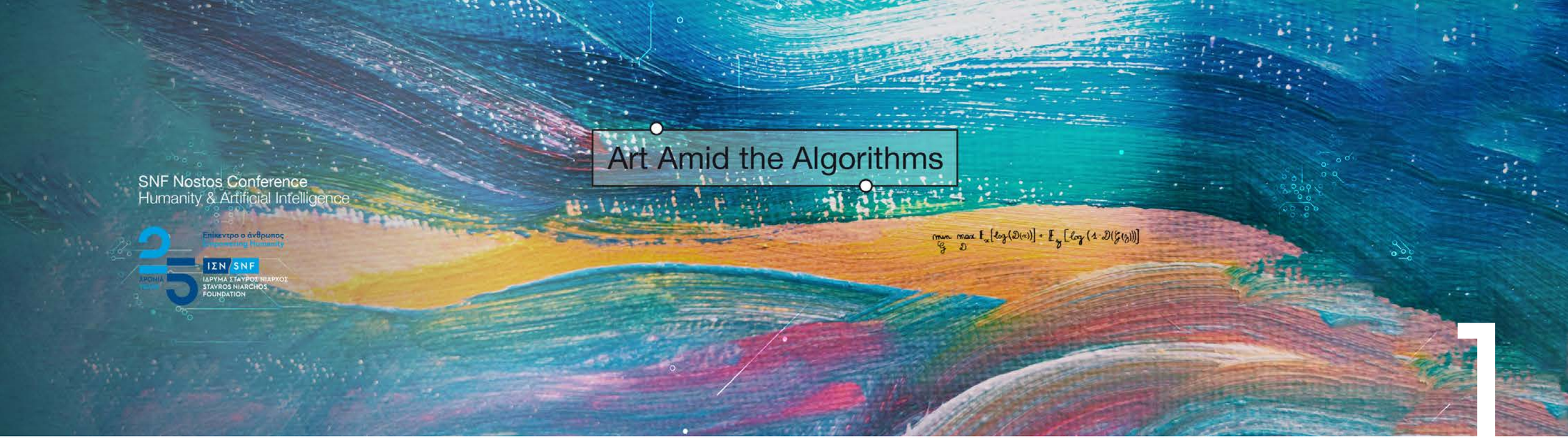
SNF Nostos Conference

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence • Ανθρωπότητα & Τεχνητή Νοημοσύνη •



SNF Nostos Conference

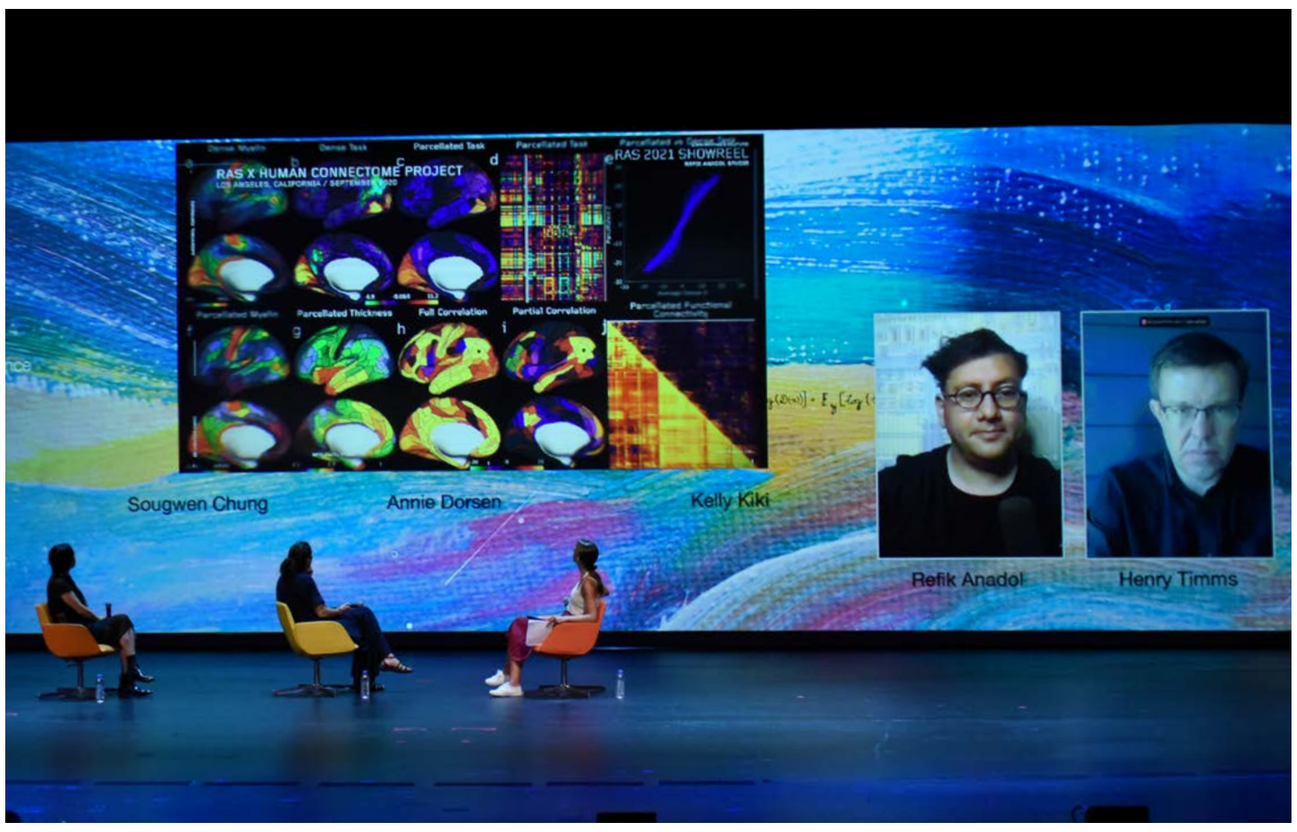
August 26-27, 2021

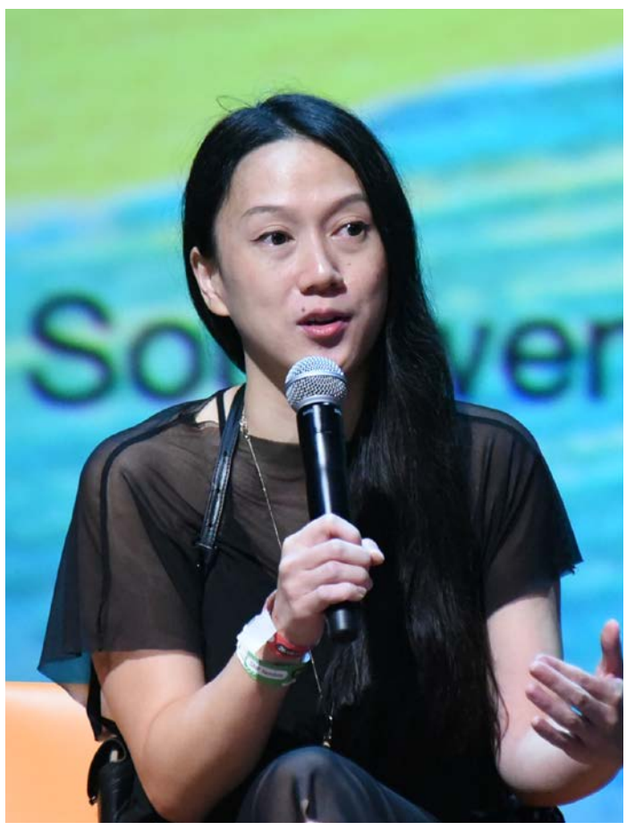
Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

ART AMID THE ALGORITHMS

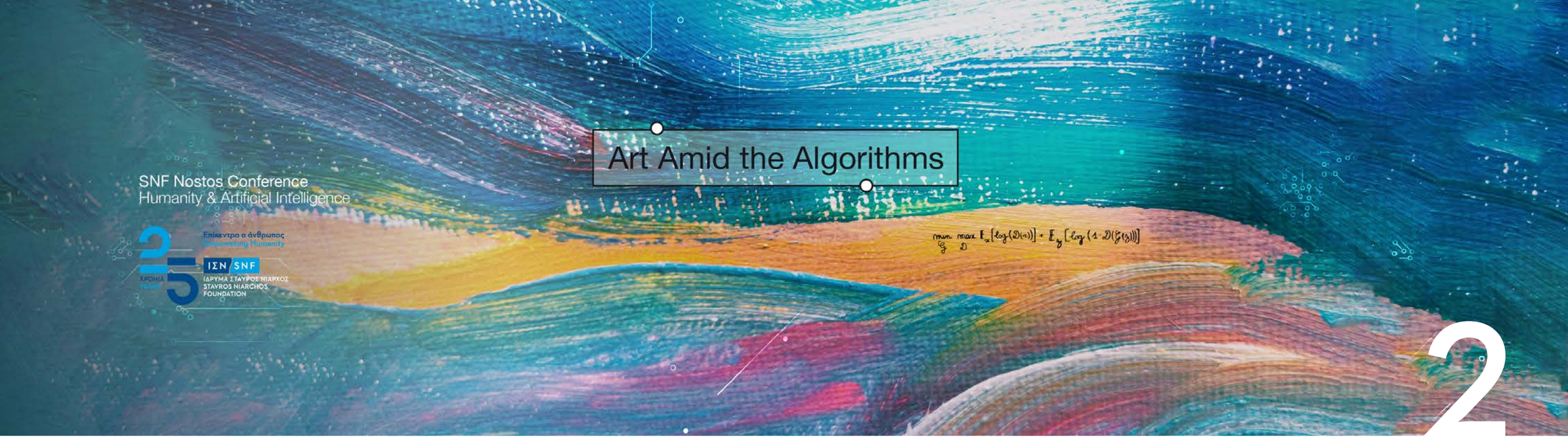
Day 1
August 26, 2021
3:45 PM

Do we need to redefine creativity? Can there be a creative relationship between machines and artists? Are algorithms an extension and manifestation of of our humanity, or something else entirely?





Watch this on demand:
Art Amid the Algorithms
Duration: 1:07’



Henry Timms
President and CEO, Lincoln Center

(participated virtually)

"The medium is the message, but I think there's a bigger question, which is something that all of the artists on stage today are reckoning with, which is who is the messenger. That's what shifted right there. Who is the messenger? Who actually has the agency? I think what's been so inspiring and so educational about some of the work, particularly the work represented on this panel today, is it's an investigation of the nature of the messenger. Who has the agency? What is the intersection between human and technology? How do we think about those kinds of questions? And that's a set of questions we never had when we were thinking in the arts community about the piano. It was pretty clear who the messenger was when we had the piano. It was pretty clear who had agency in that relationship. This is territory which is now being explored, it's something I think is fascinating....I think it's more about questions of messenger than it is message or medium."

Sougwen Chung
Artist and (Re)searcher

"Here's my thing about rights for machines, I think we should focus on rights for all humans first... I think there's something really sexy about the conversation about machine consciousness and machine rights, but I think there is so much happening in the world that that can be a bit of a fantasy. There's something about using these systems and these collaborators and tools to create more equity that we shouldn't shy away from, even though it is maybe sometimes a little bit more sci-fi to talk about."

Refik Anadol
Media Artist

(participated virtually)

"When we practice with AI or a thinking brush, I think it eventually creates this multiple dimensional imagination, meaning while you are truly practicing in dimensions, literally, mathematically, but also there's a chance that the audience have a chance to feel the past, now, and the future in a given time. So from that perspective, I think it's kind of deconstructing that idea of a medium and a message kind of blends into one cohesive experience in the mind."

Annie Dorsen
Artist

"Digital technology is often used to create alternate spaces of representation... I was really interested in trying to use algorithmic logic to investigate very classic questions about what theater is... Questions of imitation and representation... In a funny way, I think of algorithmic theater as a way of interrogating what is believable or plausible because that's such a central question to representational performance... That's a place where computer science and my performance research are really intersecting."

"It seems really critical to keep opening a space for reflection about all these tensions and all of these open questions so we don't make what I jokingly call trade show art."

Kelly Kiki
Project Manager Lab, iMEdD

(moderator)

SNF Nostos

Conference

August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

SNF NOSTOS YOUTH DISCUSSION: TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE IMPACT ON YOUTH INTERACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Day 1
August 26, 2021
5:00 PM

The teenagers expressed similar thoughts and concerns regarding the use of social media, cyber security, and personal data. They are fully aware that they are digital natives, but do not want this digital world to take over their lives. For them, social media is a means for their voice to be heard, and they believe that they have to find balance and not let social media control their lives. They also believe they can regulate themselves in terms of how much time they spend online, though some of them pointed out that their parents should set the limits at a younger age.

Watch this on demand:
SNF Nostos Youth Discussion
Duration: 0:56'

SNF Nostos Youth Discussion:

Technology, Social Media & their Impact on Youth Interaction & Development

Anthi Bousouni
Student

"I feel very happy for having the opportunity to communicate via social media, because I think that teenagers' opinions ...on important issues are set aside and ignored. So via social media we are able to express our opinions, and I think our voice is heard."

"Social media is my daily routine. When I wake up in the morning, I definitely would check my social media and then I go to the bathroom to brush my teeth. But I don't think we are so dependent on social media; I think that...the situation has made us be on social media because during quarantine we had not another solution. But also, I think we are a generation...born with screens in our house, so we cannot avoid social media."

Panagiotis Fanoulis
Student

"We as a humanity have reached a point where we cannot imagine our lives without it....Social media and technology being positive depends only on the way you use it."

"This vast amount of information and opportunities to entertain yourself... can also suffocate people and have exactly the opposite result...so I don't know if this is an opportunity to have... something cool out of it or if it's an opportunity to destroy ourselves."

"We need to learn from young age when we should stop....How many hours, for example, is excessive."

Savvas Daniilidis
Student

"There should be higher security of personal data."

"I mostly rely on face-to-face conversations. However, social media do play a huge role for me, especially the last few years due to the pandemic... I usually manage to control my presence there and use in moderation."

Maria Papadopoulou
Student

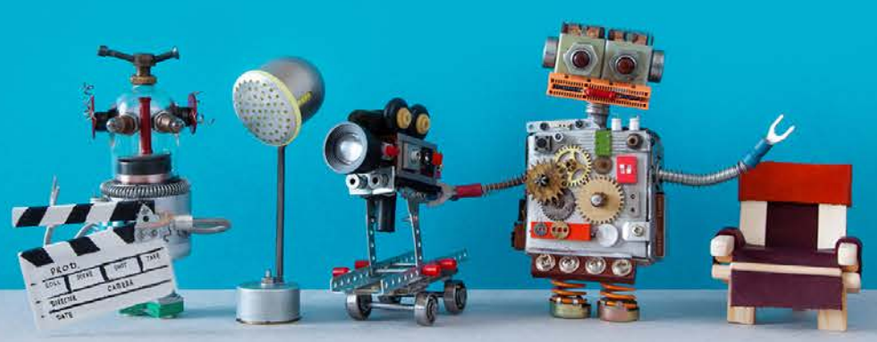
"Social media and technology are a very useful tool for people, and especially teenagers. We need to have other people... listen to other ideas that different people have. I think that social media have helped us to communicate and share our thoughts, though I think that human relationships are something more than a picture in social media."

Elize Dracopoulos
Student

"I think that for our generation, at least, social media is inevitably going to play a huge role in our lives....It's only going to continue to grow, and I don't think that's necessarily either a good thing or a bad thing. There are definitely many negative sides to it... You've probably heard of cyberbullying and other negative impacts of social media, but there also many positive ways in which social media can be used... I think it can be a great thing because it brings kids together from around the world. You can form connections and find people with common interests."

Stelios Vassilakis
Chief Programs & Strategic Initiatives Officer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

(moderator)



SNF Nostos Conference

August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

SNF 25 YEARS SHORT FILM CHALLENGE

Day 1
August 26, 2021
6:00 PM

Technology shapes every aspect of our lives. It even has the potential to redefine our idea of what it means to be human. So how can we be sure it makes us and our society better? We want to hear your ideas about how tech can be a force for good, or stories about how tech is making lives better already. Show us how technology can create a connection, expand our humanity, or help us express ourselves creatively.

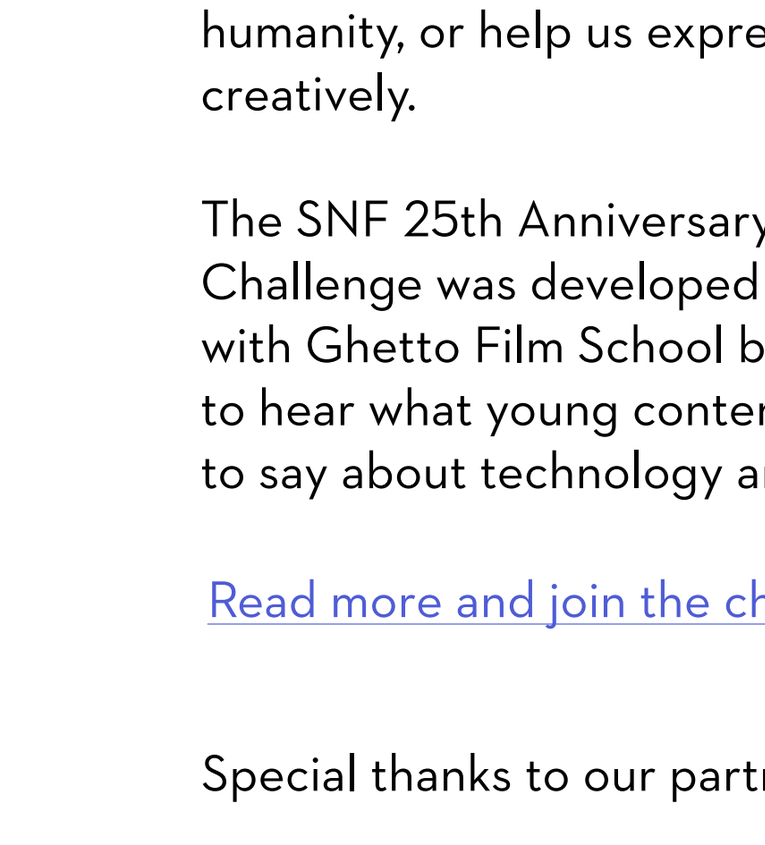
The SNF 25th Anniversary Short Film Challenge was developed in partnership with Ghetto Film School because we want to hear what young content creators have to say about technology and humanity.

Read more and join the challenge

Special thanks to our partners:

IMEdD: incubator for Media Education and Development

Syros International Film Festival



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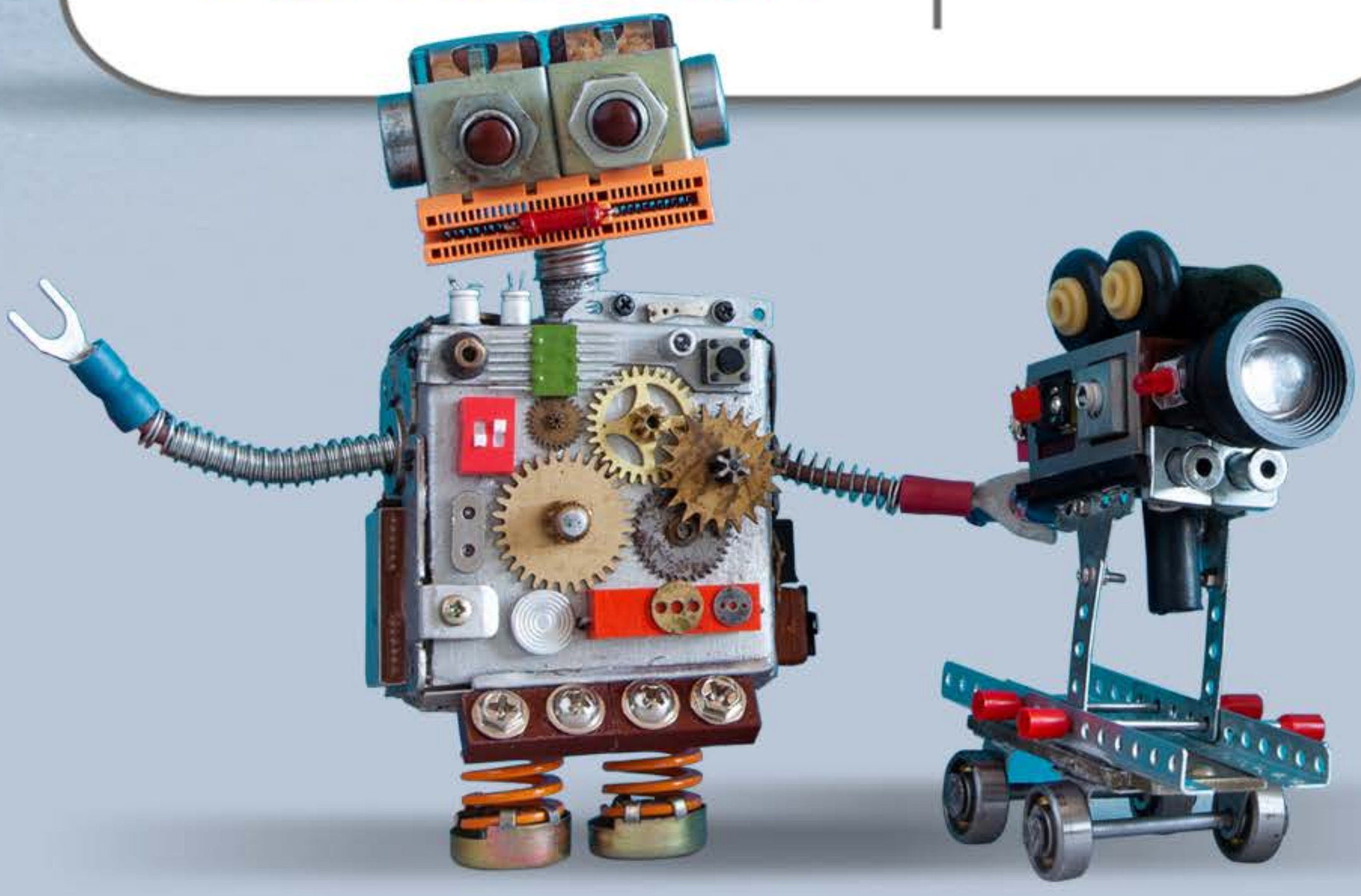
FILMO CHALLENGE

HUMANITY INSPIRES TECH

POWERED BY GHETTO FILM SCHOOL



SNF Nostos

Conference

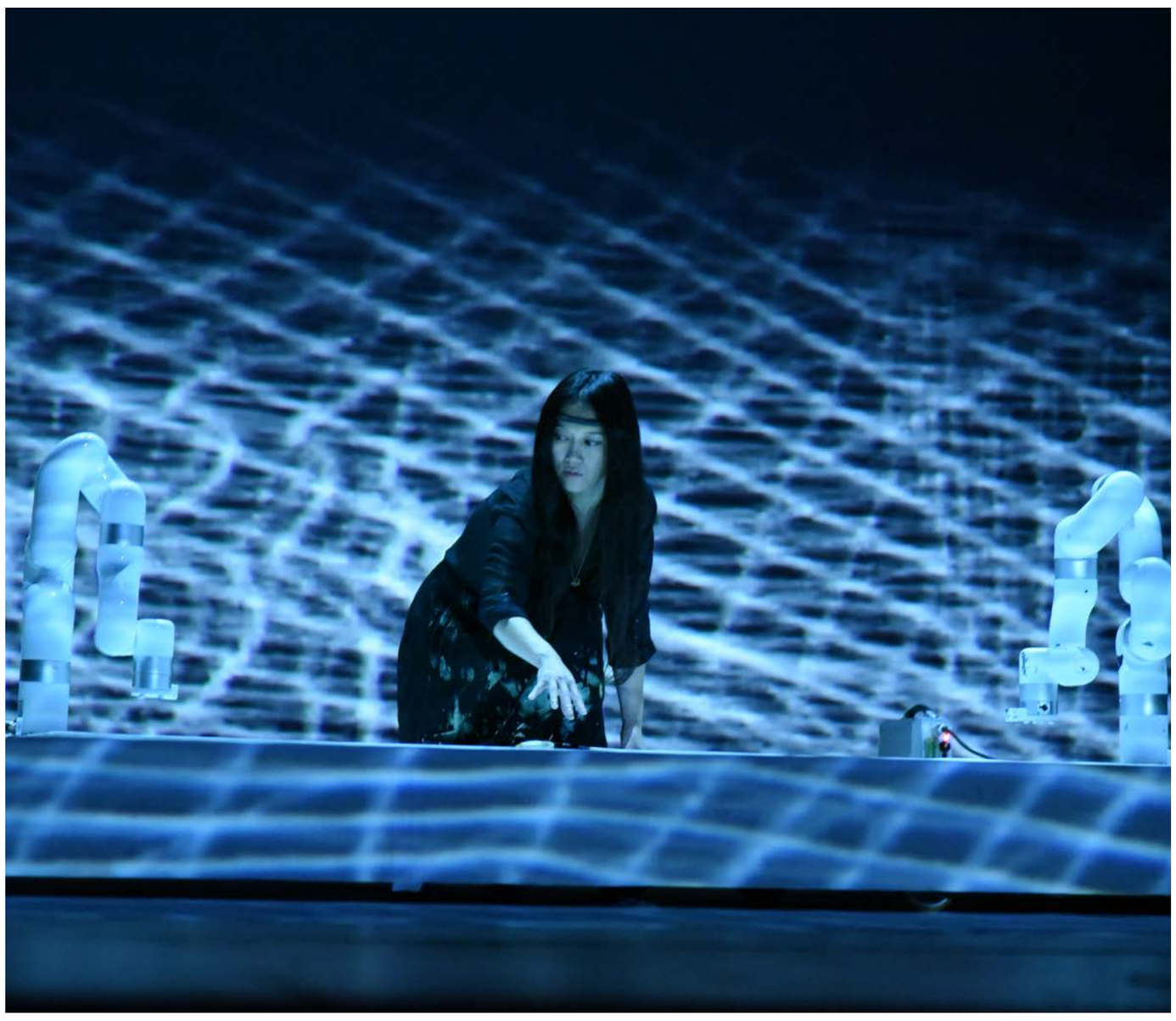
August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

SOUGWEN CHUNG

Paint with AI Robots

Day 2
August 27, 2021
9:00 AM



Chung's work explores the mark-made-by-hand and the mark-made-by-machine as an approach to understanding the dynamics of humans and systems. Chung is a former research fellow at MIT's Media Lab and a pioneer in the field of human-machine collaboration. In 2019, she was selected as the Woman of the Year in Monaco for achievement in the Arts & Sciences.

Her speculative critical practice spans performance, installation, and drawings which have been featured in numerous exhibitions at museums and galleries around the world.

In 2018 she was an inaugural E.A.T. Artist in Resident in partnership with New Museum and Bell Labs, and was awarded a commission for her project Omnia per Omnia. In 2016, Chung received Japan Media Art's Excellence Award in for her project, Drawing Operations.

She is a former research fellow at MIT's Media Lab. She has been awarded Artist in Residence positions at Google, Eyebeam, Japan Media Arts, and Pier 9 Autodesk. In 2014, she was selected as one of the Top 20 New Visual Artists by *Print Magazine*.

2

SOUGWEN
CHUNG

Paint with AI Robots

Day 2
August 27, 2021
9:00 AM

25 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ YEARS

Επίκεντρο ο άνθρωπος
Empowering Humanity

ΙΣΝ/SNF
ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
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SNF Nostos

Conference

August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

DISCOURSE AND DEMOCRACY

Day 2
August 27, 2021
9:40 AM

The speakers delved into the deeper questions facing human society, and even our species, with the advent of AI, when we are already at an existential point fueled by a number of concurrent crises. There was consensus that not a single aspect of modern life is untouched by AI, including geopolitics, warfare, and our own perception of self and others. The issue of algorithmic transparency was raised, as well as the imperative for democratic governments to keep up with technology advancement — as well as the perils brought by authoritarian regimes employing it. The alternative notion of a collaborative rather than autonomous AI was presented, as well as the idea that rebuilding communities on a local level can counter the effect of mistrust in civic discourse fueled by algorithms.

Watch this on demand:
Discourse and Democracy
Duration: 1:38’

Discourse and Democracy

Anja Kaspersen
Former Director, United Nations for Disarmament Affairs

"Technology is not neutral. It's definitely not apolitical. An algorithmic technology, a code, may be designed with the best of intentions, but once it's embedded, it carries with its power structures, values—everything that society brings to it."

"So we are at an inflection point in history where some of the issues we're discussing in using technology is a theological, one. It's not a technological one. It's theological and it's political."

"There's a saying that fish cannot see water. And that's sort of where we are in terms of algorithms as well. It permeates our daily life in such ways and it permeates our decisions, it permeates how we live life, the human condition... in such ways that we can't see it any longer."

George Zarkadakis
Leader for Future of Work, Willis Towers Watson

"There is a risk around autonomy.... And I think that the most important risk is that the system is able to set its own goals, ultimately. And that means that those goals may diverge from human goals. And I think that's the high risk about system autonomy that we somehow need to manage."

"What we will see... is fast innovation, creative destruction in the economy."

"I would expect that we're not going to reach singularity, simply because our instinct of survival will kick in much sooner than that. And I would like to predict that you'll see more and more AI systems become more embedded in human society and become more collaborative rather than autonomous."

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
President and CEO, International Peace Institute

"AI... in the hands of authoritarian governments, the more powerful it is, the more difficult it is for us to maintain a sense of our humanity."

"The way in which that opinion is being curated, buffeted, undermined through the use of algorithms which force us down little rabbit warrens is something we need to think about how to remedy."

"We are now reaching a point of some sort of existential moment, and we need to change the competitive instinct, the commercial desire for profit, into something that will allow the species to continue and not to destroy itself."

Kevin Rudd
President and CEO, Asia Society

(participated virtually)

"Unless we have a dedicated capacity at the peak of governments creating the technology and policy and human—shall we say—connection on a daily, weekly basis to inform decision-making by a democratically elected governments and politicians, bit by bit, we will lose our democracies."

"I think a national parliamentary commission and/or bodies which are authorized with fact-checking in a manner which is not 'big brother,' but which is open, transparent, and, as it were, empirical is now essential because of the ability to algorithmically manipulate the truth and turn black into white on a daily basis."

"There's a great technical debate about how far advanced China is in artificial intelligence.... There is a superpower race on at the moment in terms of artificial intelligence."

David Simas
Chief Executive Officer, Obama Foundation

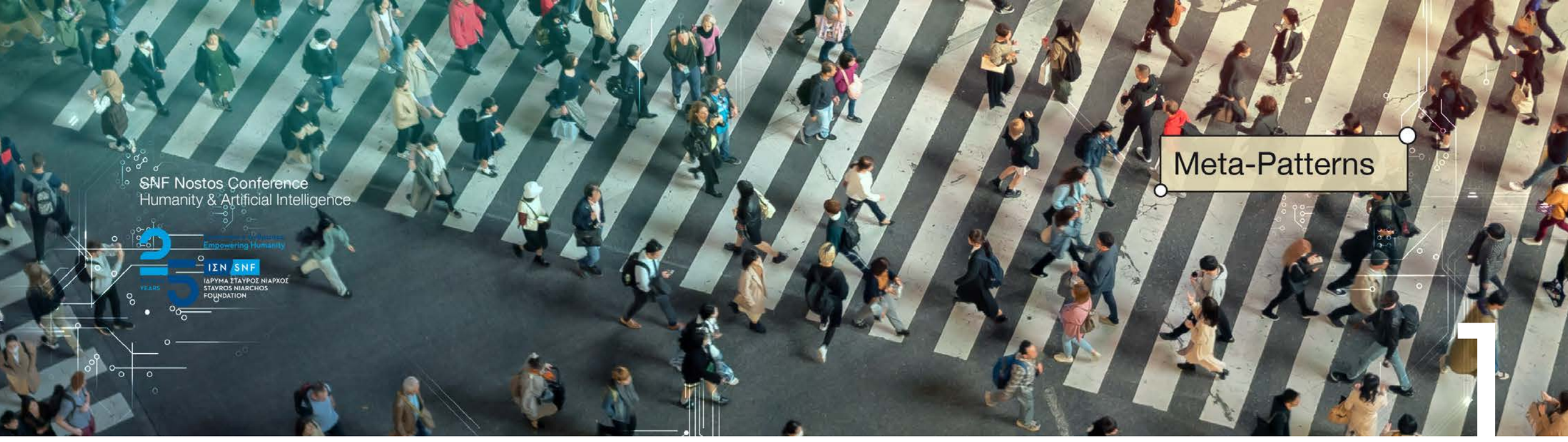
"There is a way to think about horizontal trust, and beginning to build back, and using community councils in a community form of greater representation as a bulwark against AI."

"A digitally native generation of people also have a very different perspective, and in some ways a more balanced and realistic view, as you heard yesterday on that panel, about what real life is and then what it isn't."

"Imagine a universe where at a local and regional level, it isn't just setting up the assemblies, but identifying leaders who have a sense of what citizenship means that isn't consumptive."

Thanasis Troboukis
Journalist & Project Manager, iMEdD Lab

(moderator)



SNF Nostos

Conference

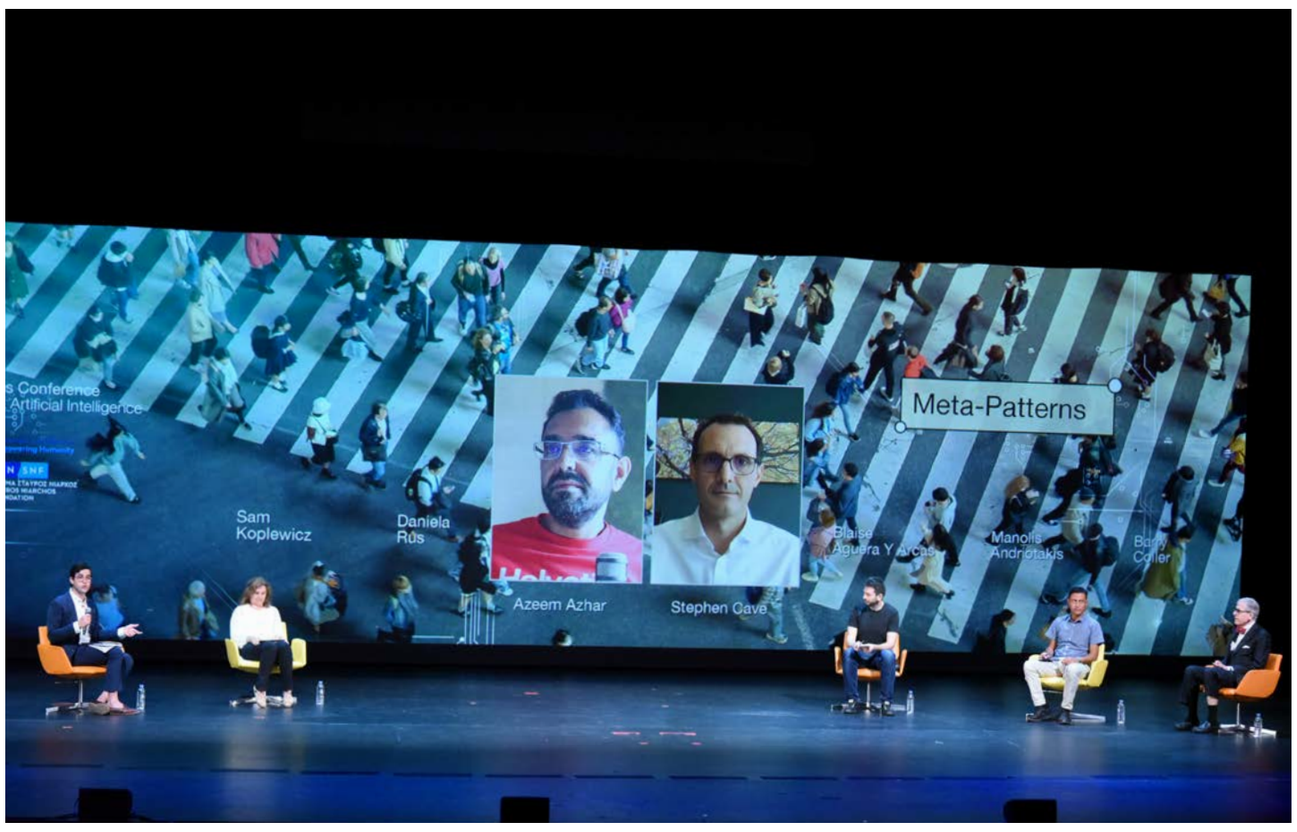
August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

META-PATTERNS

Day 2
August 27, 2021
11:15 AM

What are the deeper patterns that exist when technological advancement is taking place? We need to be conscious of the fact that AI is a set of tools, created only by the data sets we feed them. It's a reflection of us. And though it is possible that we don't like what we see in the mirror, it is our responsibility to regulate better, define our goals with accuracy, and check the results. Feeling anxiety about this is normal. The clock speed of change is faster than ever; as every predator always tries to predict what its prey will do next. We ask, 'Is AI good?' What we should be asking is "Good for whom?" Something may be good overall for humanity but a catastrophe for individuals. To be able to escape the loop of trying to answer if something is right because AI says it or vice versa, we need to be able verify it independently.



Watch this on demand:
Meta-Patterns
Duration: 1:16'

SNF Nostos Conference
Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

25 YEARS
Επίκεντρο ο άνθρωπος
Empowering Humanity
ΙΣΝ SNF
ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
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Meta-Patterns

2

Blaise Aguera y Arcas
Software Engineer, Software Architect and Designer, Google AI

"We're threatened in many ways by AI because of the way it dismantles our myths about humanity itself."

"I think that it's not possible to think about humanism without thinking about very large models.... What those very large models are doing is learning all of the patterns and all of the correlations in this vast amount of data.... And that also includes biases.... It's only by actually modeling all of those things, however, that we can even begin to ask the question, 'What are those biases?'"

"We like to talk about good and bad, in ethics and so on, as if there is some good and bad that descends from the sky. But that's not so. You always have to say, good for whom? Good for what entity? .... You're making tradeoffs all the time."

Stephen Cave
Stephen Cave—Executive Director, Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence, University of Cambridge

(participated virtually)

"Those real [AI] technologies are part of a much, much bigger system of stories and values and myths, hopes and fears, that stretch back hundreds or even thousands of years. And this is what I mean by the mythology of AI. It's this great collection of stories and beliefs that shape what we want to do with the technology, why we're even creating it, how we design it, how we feel about it, how we respond to it, and so on."

"This idea is sometimes called technogenesis, the idea that we have developed with and through our technology.... If technology is part of who and what we are, that means our very selves are changing incredibly fast.... This technological nature of ours makes us feel extremely vulnerable, just as it makes us feel powerful. The more technology gives us new powers, the more dependent we become upon them and the more removed from that natural state."

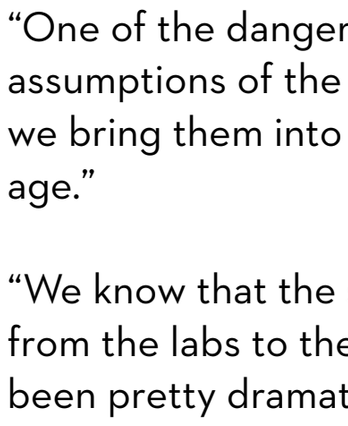
Azeem Azhar
Writer, Exponential View

(participated virtually)

"The internet is a new space. It is a new infrastructure. It is a new oxygen. It is a new road system. But the nature in which these technologies have come to market and how they have developed has actually created this space that is owned largely privately and governed largely privately. So suddenly, it's a public space where the oxygen is owned by four or five different companies."

"One of the dangers is that we take the assumptions of the industrial age and we bring them into this exponential age."

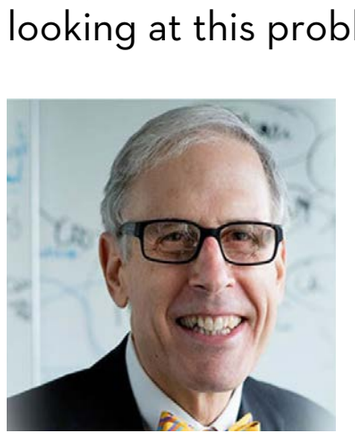
"We know that the shift of the AI talent from the labs to the corporations has been pretty dramatic over the last decade.... And so the research and the talent... go into exploiting an industrial tool that we already have, like large scale models for commercial profit and private gain, rather than exploring the terrain and the landscape of alternatives, perhaps alternative futures and potentials and critical ways of looking at this problem."



Barry Coller
Vice President for Medical Affairs, The Rockefeller University

"We have to deal with the fact that something may be fantastic for general decision making but can be a catastrophe for the individual."

"There are two types of people. Tool builders and Tool users. Technology makes human learned skills obsolete"



Sam Koplewicz
Director, Voter Protection for the Florida Democratic Party

(moderator)

SNF Nostos Conference

Manolis Andriotakis
Journalist and Author

"I worry a lot about the weaponization of technology and especially the undermining of free will."

"We asked for connection, for deepening democracy. And we got the like button and the hearts."

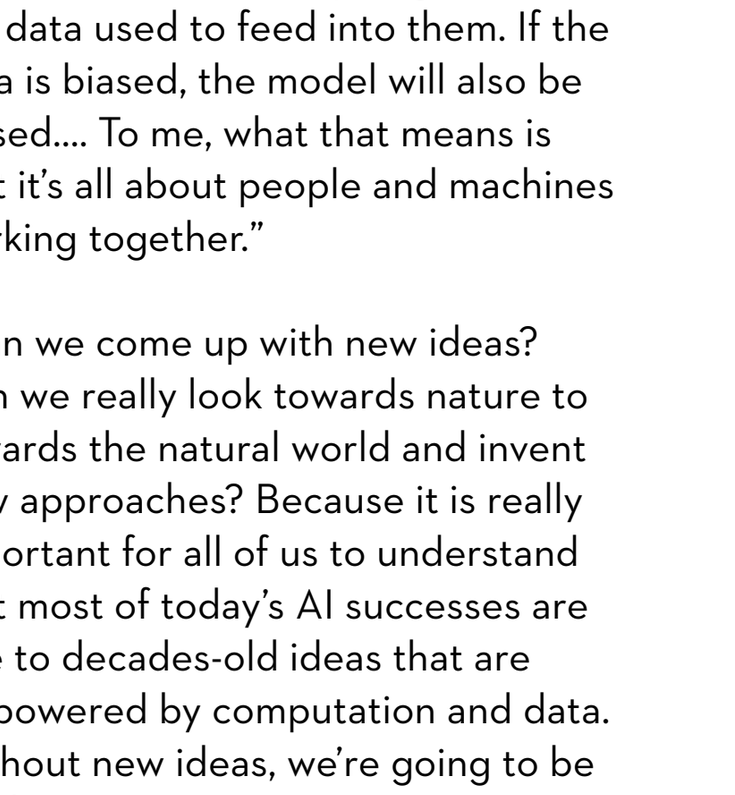
"We may see accidental autocrats due to the power of AI and manipulation. So EU regulation seems very cutting-edge."

Daniela Rus
Director, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, MIT

"AI is a set of tools by the people and for the people. And like any other tools, I see the AI possibility as something that empowers us. These tools are not intrinsically good or bad. They're really what we choose to do with them. I, for one, believe that we can choose to do extraordinary things."

"These models are only as good as the data used to feed into them. If the data is biased, the model will also be biased.... To me, what that means is that it's all about people and machines working together."

"Can we come up with new ideas? Can we really look towards nature to towards the natural world and invent new approaches? Because it is really important for all of us to understand that most of today's AI successes are due to decades-old ideas that are empowered by computation and data. Without new ideas, we're going to be stuck."



25 ΧΡΟΝΙΑ YEARS
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STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

SNF Nostos

Conference

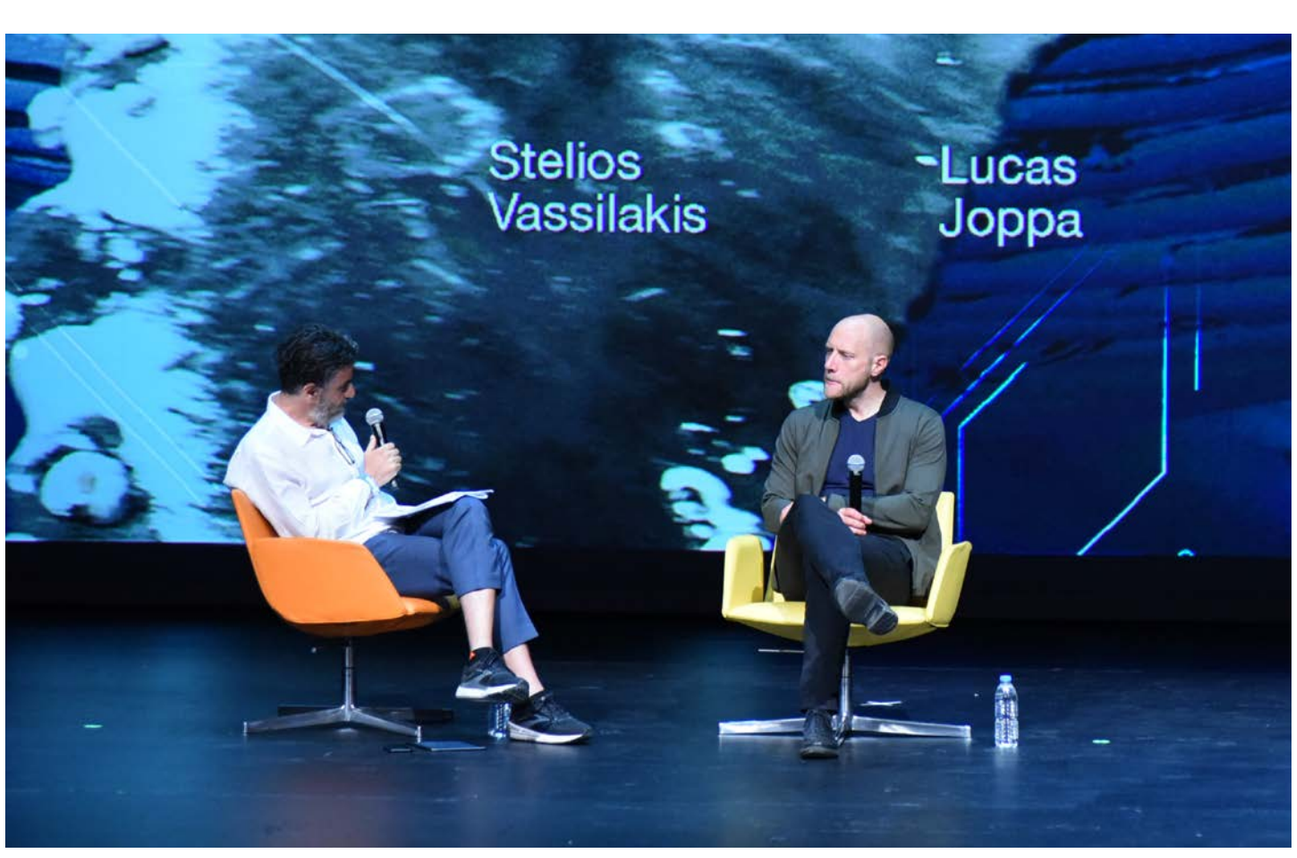
August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

CITY, PLACE AND PLANET

Day 2
August 27, 2021
2:00 PM

How is AI remaking architecture and public places? How is it challenging and changing our perception and understanding of fundamental concepts such us place, community, and society? We live in new spaces, that are mostly privately owned and where we have little or no real participation. We face a rapid climate change, where AI, aside from the multiple negative effects it may have on this, can also support us in stepping away from our narcissistic view, to a more decentralized one, where not all decisions have to do with us. It can help us predict beyond our cognitive ability and tease out cautionary tales. The drive to do things bigger, faster, stronger needs to be tempered by better regulations, and defining boundaries can help us use AI tools to understand what our place on Earth is and how everything is interconnected.



Watch this on demand:
City, Place and Planet
Duration: 1:08'

City, Place and Planet

Lucas Joppa
Chief Environmental Officer, Microsoft

"When it comes to climate change, the train has more than left the station.... There's a lot of things that machine learning and artificial intelligence can allow us to do both to make better predictions about the climate, as well as to make better choices about how we adapt our social systems to climate that we know is going to change."

"So many of these conversations around machine learning and artificial intelligence have to do with us. People. And that's really indicative of this broader definition of how we think about technology and how human-centric it is."

"I think that if we would back out a little bit and say, 'What's the real value that we are trying to achieve or derive for society by actually training this machine algorithm in the first place?' we might have more helpful conversations about 'Is it worth it to society for this algorithm to get 0.000001% better?'"

"AI is a space that society is lagging pretty far behind its kind of historically assumed role in regulating the uses of these things, because otherwise you're asking individuals and individual organizations to make value judgements, societal value judgments."

"But also building what we're calling a planetary computer platform.... so that we can bring together and make it easy for individuals and organizations around the world to access these incredibly large new datasets that the world is collecting."

"I'm less concerned about machines and I'm more about people."

Xiaowei Wang
Creative Director, Logic Magazine

(participated virtually)

"It's just this very short-sighted: we'll apply this technical solution to this actually very complex social, social and ecological problem. And so they're optimizing for something that potentially might not actually be that great to optimize for, because it's just accelerating this pretty big environmental impact."

"If you do have these technologies providing what we call 'social benefits,' it's kind of, to what trade off and at what cost? .... Control over population, repression, all of those are actually put under the umbrella of tech for good."

"It's about this question of capital. In order to use an AI system for farming right now, it's so expensive. And so the people who are able to access that really are large agricultural companies."

"One of the roles that art can play is really teasing out these cautionary tales and also as a way of catalyzing action in our present."

Stelios Vassilakis
Chief Programs & Strategic Initiatives Officer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

(moderator)

Andrew Zolli
Vice-President, Planet, Inc.

(participated virtually)

"[COVID-19 is] not just a public health issue. It's an ecological issue. It's about our relating to the world around us.... It's worth remembering where we are as a as a species on the Earth.... We're living in what we think of as a time of spikes. Every major variable that's associated with humanity is moving from something that's broadly horizontal to broadly vertical."

"We're all interconnected with the greater web of life. If we want to preserve that web of life, we have to make efficient the ways in which, for instance, we use the land.... One of the ways in which we can do that is by using the tools of data, AI, and remote sensing to gather today to understand and to improve the efficiency of agriculture."

"One of the central effects of artificial intelligence and big data and analytics is that they're creating new, and sometimes very strange, feedback loops. And we're living in the era of the invisible feedback loop. The invisible feedback loops led us to a place where we now have imperiled the planet and its many living systems. We need to design more intentional feedback loops that move us away from that danger zone, back into something that's a healthier operating space for humanity and for life on Earth."

"The essential thing to guide behavior is to get the right information at the right time to the right person. And that can only really happen with the kinds of tools that Lucas and his team are building, those artificial intelligence tools that sift through, sort collate, correlate all that information to create the signal to which people can respond."

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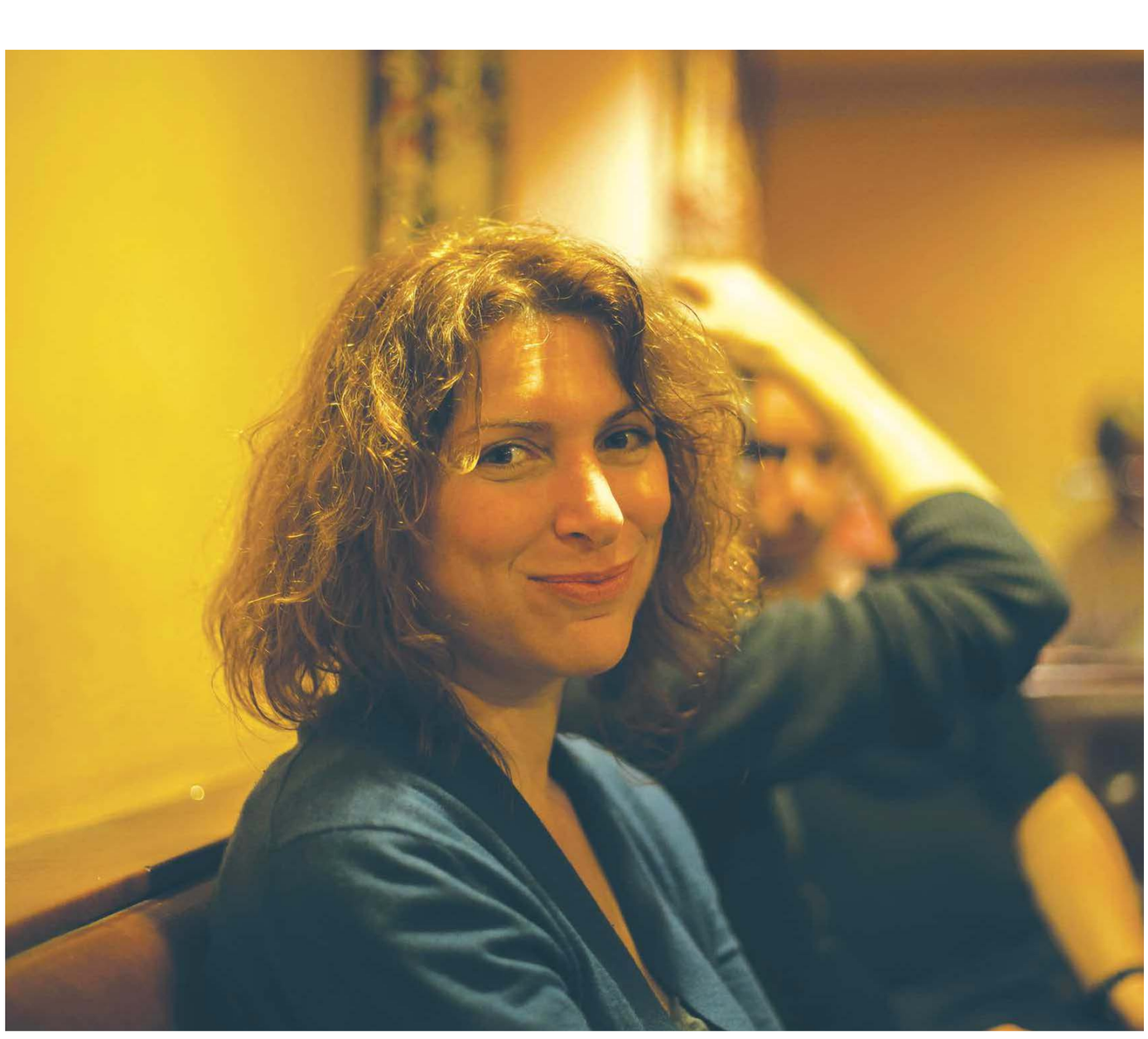
Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

ANNIE DORSEN

Hello Hi there

Day 2
August 27, 2021
3:15 PM



Hello Hi There uses the famous television debate between the philosopher Michel Foucault and linguist/activist Noam Chomsky as inspiration and material for a dialogue between two custom-designed chatbots: every evening, these computer programs, designed to mimic human conversations, perform a new – as it were, improvised – live text.

Can you call it a play when two Macbooks are the actors? This unusual performance by NY-based director Annie Dorsen illustrates the extent to which a human can be replaced by a computer. The machines debate human nature and the various facets of human intelligence in a conversation based on the famous discussion from the 1970s between Micheal Foucault and Noam Chomksy. Dorsen uses this material, along with additional text culled from YouTube, the Bible, Shakespeare, the big hits of western philosophy and other sources, to construct computer programs which create a new, "improvised," dialogue. What does humanism, and the belief in human virtuosity, mean when machines and artificial intelligence are able to so easily outdo us? Can something worthwhile come out of the reflections of two computers? *Hello Hi There* is an intelligent, sometimes scary, creative and humorous dialogue about humanity in the age of its digital reproduction.

ANNIE DORSEN

Hello Hi there

Day 2
August 27, 2021
3:15 PM

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Empowering Humanity

ΙΣΝ SNF
ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
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Humanity & Artificial Intelligence • Ανθρωπότητα & Τεχνητή Νοημοσύνη •

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Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

SPIRITS AMID THE MACHINES

Day 2
August 27, 2021
3:30 PM

What kind of artificial intelligence do we have right now? Is it limited to applied statistics or has it developed further intelligence? How far away are we from an artificial intelligence that will be a thinking machine, an autonomous, creative entity? Those were some of the issues the panelists discussed, along with the reasons we would or would not want to pursue machine autonomy. And if that autonomy implies emotional intelligence, then do we know what it would be like for machines to suffer or fear mortality like humans do?

Watch this on demand:
Spirits Amid the Machines
Duration: 1:16’

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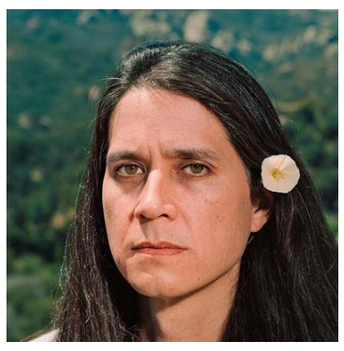
Spirits Amid the Machines

2



K Allado McDowell
Founder, Artists and Machine Intelligence, Google AI

(participated virtually)

"What I learned from that experience — and confirmed an intuition I had working in the field of AI— which was that a lot of these questions about whether or not the machines are thinking or are sentient or being creative are really ways of avoiding our relationship with them and our culpability within that relationship and the relational nature of being in general."

Tenzin Priyadarshi
President and CEO, Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values, MIT

(participated virtually)

"I think right now it is mostly applied statistics, but we shouldn't rule out what the capabilities of machines can be even in the short term. Most proponents or designers of AI systems are actually making that argument that everything human said that a machine couldn't do, the machine inevitably starts doing that. I think we need to be cautious about suggesting that a machine would never be able to do that."

Sabelo Mhlambi
Founder, Bantucracy

"We assume with higher intelligence, there's higher morality, there's a higher ethical dimension....We sort of assume that the more logical or rational or more correct something is, we will have even better ethical outcomes, but those two don't always go together.
So, then, if we have machines that are more correct...machines that have better technology, it's not a guarantee that they would be more moral. And so then, one wonders what type of world we will have with very advanced machines that are not necessarily moral and they don't have to be."

Ted Chiang
Author

"The idea of an AI that is an autonomous creative entity, I think that is a very long ways off. We will probably have text generating tools that will do a pretty good job pretty soon... Not too far from now, we will have tools that can generate a coherent, lengthy piece of text, but that will not be an autonomous, creative entity... I think it is entirely possible in principle for us to build a machine that is an autonomous creative entity, but that will be extraordinarily difficult and I think there is probably no good reason to do so."

Robert Brooks
Evolutionary Biologist, Scientia Professor of Evolution, UNSW

(participated virtually)

"Our interaction with machines, our notion of what the machines are, so our capacity to feel that they are friends or intimates, or in some senses, a lover, or that they have some form of spirit, all of those things are products of inter-subjectivity and they're our feelings in relation to the other thing that's there. We can never know how someone else really feels in a human interaction, and likewise with the machine. We know deductively that the machine isn't doing this like a human, but as long as it's emulating the things that humans do, I think that we can treat it as if it's holding up its end of the bargain in good faith."

Panos Papoulias
Chief Operating Officer, Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

(moderator)

SNF Nostos

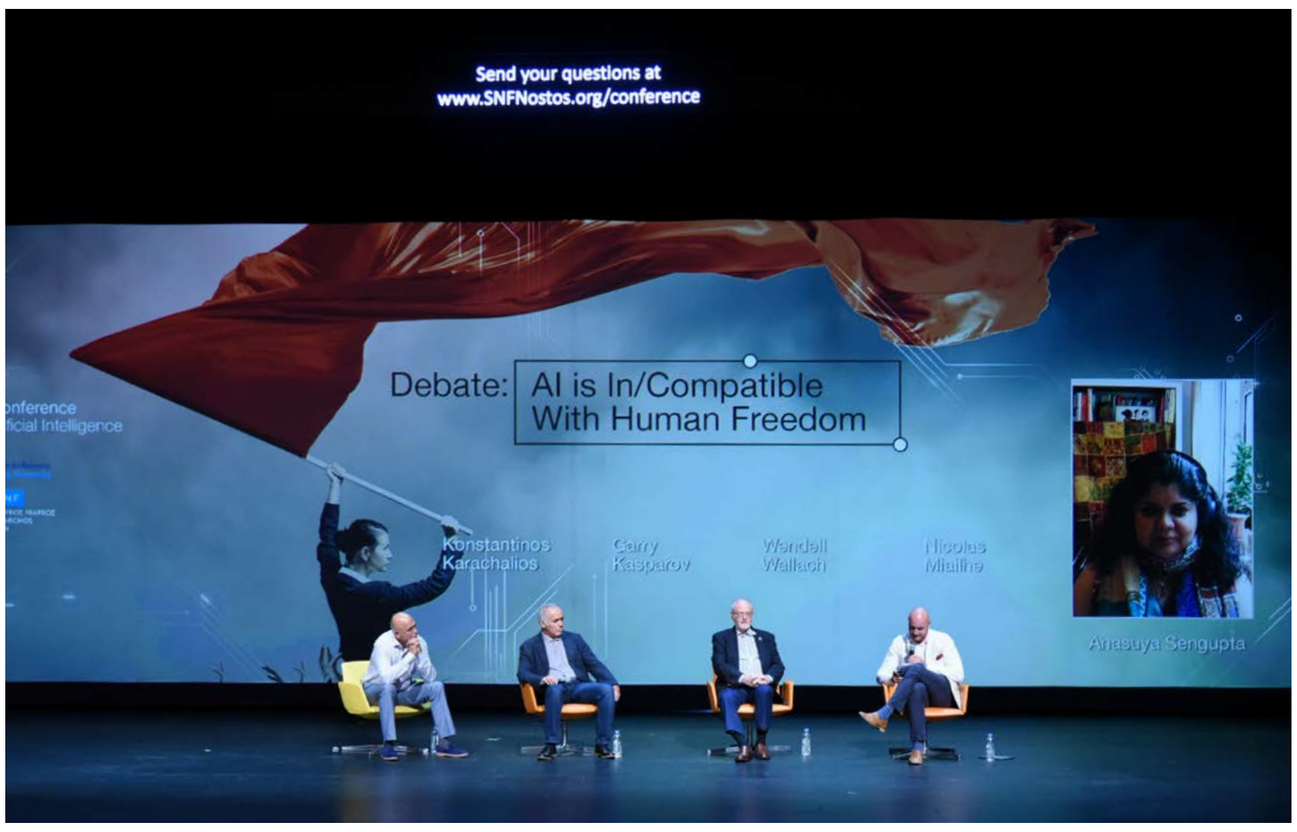
Conference

August 26-27, 2021

Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

DEBATE: AI IS IN/COMPATIBLE WITH HUMAN FREEDOM

Day 2
August 27, 2021
4:45 PM



The debate on whether technology is (in)compatible with human freedom is linked to the long-running debate on the so-called neutrality of technology. The panelists raised issues of power, authority, and human intention, all central to the debate on the relationship between technology and human freedom.

Watch this on demand:
Debate: AI is In/Compatible With Human Freedom
Duration: 0:53'

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Debate: AI is In/Compatible With Human Freedom

Konstantinos Karachalios
Managing Director, IEEE Standards Association

"I see two major problems: the one is threatening the physical survival of our children and the other is threatening their mental and political liberty and leading them into submission. Both are technology driven. Global warming is a problem of gaining energy, producing energy, and consuming energy. This is very much an engineering —let's say, creation with good intentions, but with, let's say, disastrous outcomes. The question is how we can use technology (we as technology builders) to reverse this. We have created this problem. Can we be part of the solution and how? The second is about the Internet platforms which are leading our children to submission, to addiction and to losing their political freedom and mental health. We are creating these platforms. They are not created by extra-terrestrials. So, are we innocent?

Where is our innocence in this?... The time of our innocence, if ever there was one, is over. Don't believe that technology is neutral anymore. We must share our part of responsibility. Unless we share our part of responsibility and respond to it in a constructive way, we are all lost physically and politically."

Garry Kasparov
Scholar, Humanitarian, Former World Chess Champion

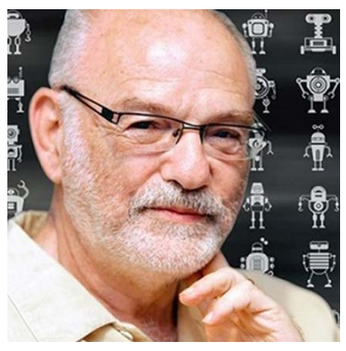
"Technology always made improvements in civilization, and it can be used one way or another... Technology is way to make knives. Now, shaping knives to kill or to cut your cucumbers, that's the next step, that's human intention. But technology is how to make knives... We should make a very clear separation between human intention to use technology which is neutral by definition. We add plus or minus, pros and cons."

Anasyua Sengupta
Founder & Co-Director, Whose Knowledge

(participated virtually)

"I believe that technology is not neutral, exactly because it is inextricably linked with the human. We imbue technology with the politics, the values, the belief systems and the epistemic frames, the knowledge systems that we have as humans."

"Who has the power to do what with these technologies? The conversation around freedom cannot be had without the conversation around power.... Power can be power over, it can be power to and from, but the way that I like to think of power which is empowering, is power with. Similarly, freedom, often in a very individualistic, atomistic way, can be talked about as freedom over things, it can be talked about as freedom to and from things. But the freedom I'm really interested in is freedom with. What can I do with technologies and humans that will lead to individual and collective liberation? That is the freedom I am interested in. And that is the tech that I want to build in the world with others."



Wendell Wallach
Consultant, Ethicist, and Scholar at Yale University's Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics

"Is technology neutral or non-neutral? I think it's a false question. Technologies and humans are so inextricably bound up with each other whether it's the technology that are eliciting the behavior from the humans because certain technologies are clearly political in their very structure or at least open the door for very profound political uses. I'm among those who believe that a lot of technologies are structured in ways where the politics is almost intrinsic to the technology, but it still depends upon how people actually deploy it."

Nicolas Miailhe
Co-founder & President, The Future Society (TFS)

(moderator)

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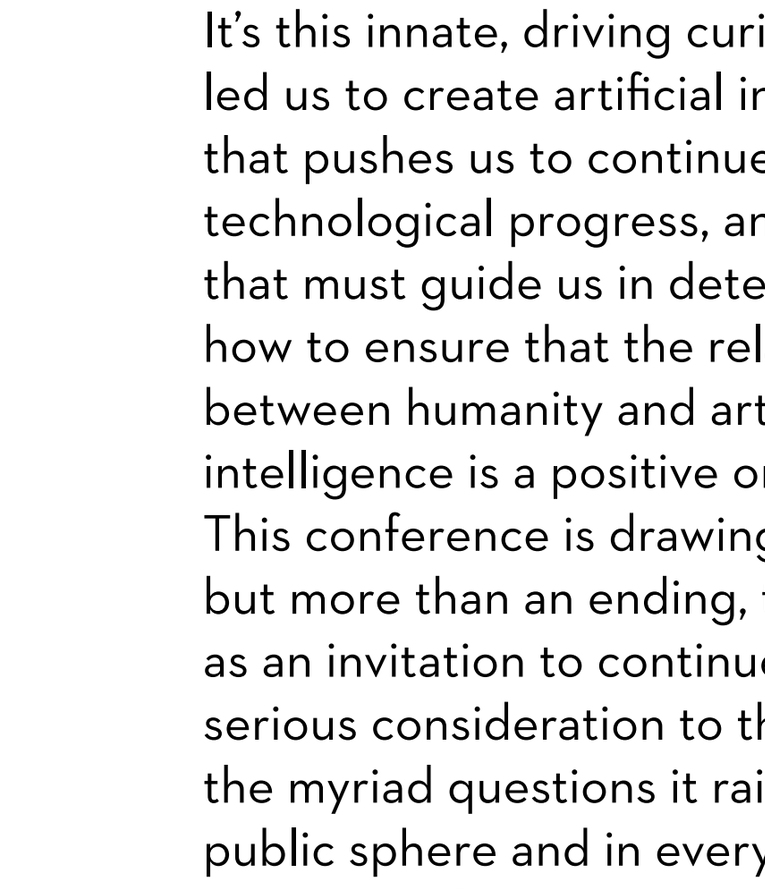
Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

WRAP UP

Anna-Kynthia Bousdoukou
iMEdD Managing Director,
SNF Dialogues Executive Director,
Journalist

Day 2
August 27, 2021
6:00 PM

One of humanity's defining characteristics is our curiosity. We need to know, and so we explore collaboratively, with our ideas constantly building on one another and taking us to new heights of inquiry and understanding.
It's this innate, driving curiosity that led us to create artificial intelligence, that pushes us to continue to advance technological progress, and, ultimately, that must guide us in determining how to ensure that the relationship between humanity and artificial intelligence is a positive one.
This conference is drawing to a close, but more than an ending, think of this as an invitation to continue giving serious consideration to this topic and the myriad questions it raises, in the public sphere and in every aspect of our private lives.



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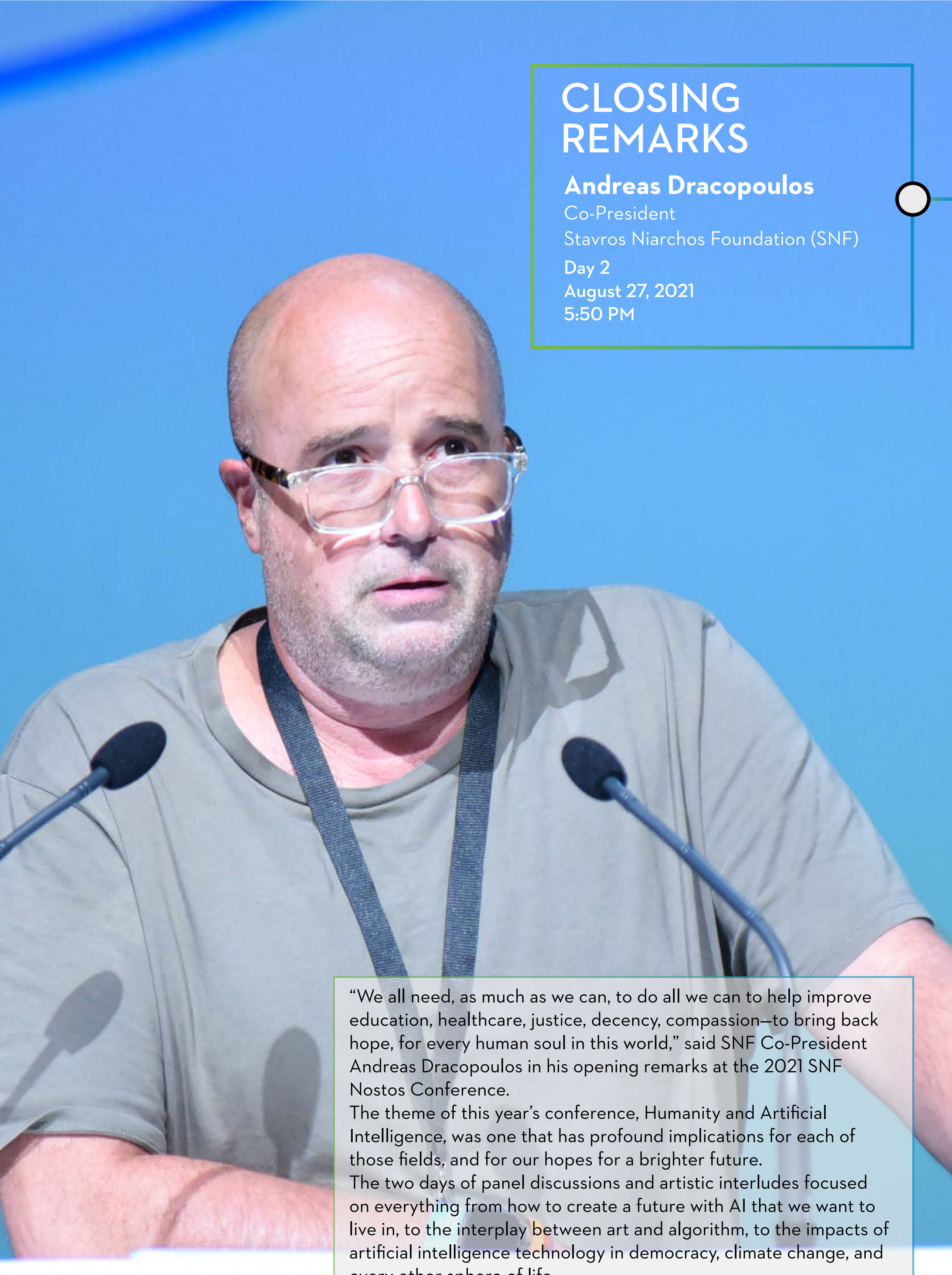
CLOSING REMARKS

Andreas Dracopoulos
Co-President
Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF)

Day 2
August 27, 2021
5:50 PM



"We all need, as much as we can, to do all we can to help improve education, healthcare, justice, decency, compassion—to bring back hope, for every human soul in this world," said SNF Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos in his opening remarks at the 2021 SNF Nostos Conference.

The theme of this year's conference, Humanity and Artificial Intelligence, was one that has profound implications for each of those fields, and for our hopes for a brighter future.

The two days of panel discussions and artistic interludes focused on everything from how to create a future with AI that we want to live in, to the interplay between art and algorithm, to the impacts of artificial intelligence technology in democracy, climate change, and every other sphere of life.

In closing the conference, Andreas Dracopoulos asserted that advancing AI offers us an opportunity, if we have the courage to take it, to reevaluate and reaffirm what makes us human. Picking up on the optimism expressed in the panel featuring young people on day one, Andreas expressed confidence in the next generation and that technology will, on the balance, improve human lives.

He offered key takeaways from the discussions: We must be vigilant about making sure we hear from voices that have so far been marginalized in decision-making. Civic discourse and civic engagement, as well as modern "agora" spaces, will only grow in importance. And we need to find a way to make sure that our data is used in a way that centers our humanity.

After all, "AI is here to stay."

Watch this on demand:
Closing Remarks
Duration: 10'

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Humanity & Artificial Intelligence

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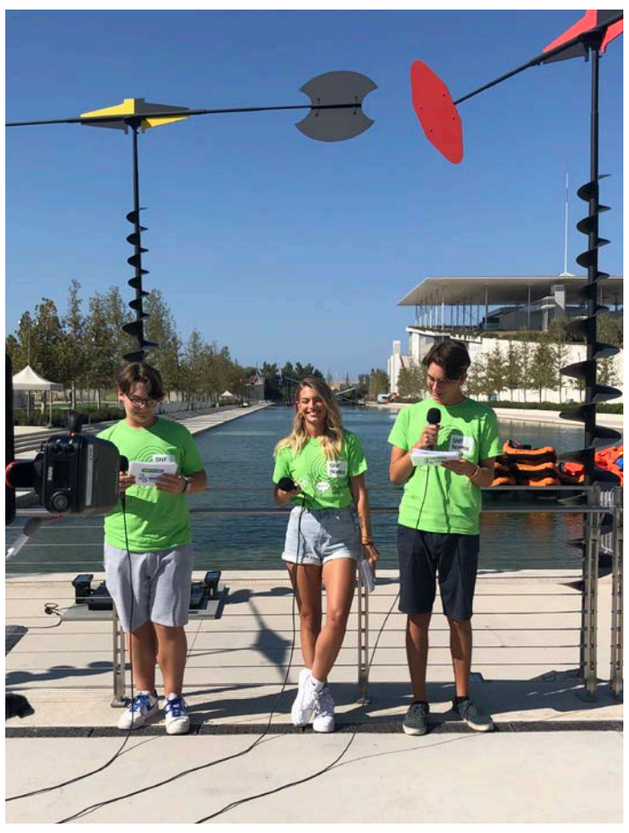
Artificial Intelligence

YOUTH ON THE FRONTLINE

The future belongs to young people, and so does part of the success of this year's SNF Nostos Conference. Young people ages 16 to 20 were given a platform to weigh in on the theme of Humanity and Artificial Intelligence, and they took an active role in the conversation as the direct stakeholders who will be most affected by developments in this area the years to come. By raising questions and concerns and sharing observations relevant to younger generations—both as panelists and through interviews of renowned speakers—they delivered real, substantial food for thought with a fresh, direct, and positive approach.



SNF Nostos Intern Elize Dracopoulos catches up with David Simas, CEO of the @obamafoundation, at the #snfnostosconference to discuss AI and his experience in politics.

Watch here

@eftyhia_katsari from @mad_tv catches up with AI artist @sougwen_chung at the #snfnostosconference to discuss her concerns about the future of humanity and AI, in addition to what is misunderstood about working with AI.

Watch here

SNF Nostos Intern Elize Dracopoulos catches up with @harisioannou at the #SNFNostosConference to discuss his thoughts on the future of humanity and AI, what we can all do in our personal lives to work toward a more positive future, and what people misunderstand about working in AI.

Watch here

SNF Nostos Conference

Humanity and Artificial Intelligence
August 26-27. 2021

Thinkers and practitioners from a wide variety of fields—from the tech sector, to medicine, to politics, to the arts—came together at the 2021 SNF Nostos Conference on the theme of Humanity and Artificial Intelligence. Behind the incredibly complex topic of artificial intelligence are simple, human essential questions: What sort of world do we want to live in? And how do we get there?

The concept of artificial intelligence has been on humanity's mind for thousands of years, and approaches have differed profoundly across cultural contexts, which participants explored in a panel on Narratives and Visions. "The first narrative for an intelligent machine was in the Iliad....People have been thinking of creating objects that are as intelligent and can interact with humans for millennia," said Kanta Dihal, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge Leverhulme Centre for the Future of Intelligence. "AI is not one thing, it is multiple technologies through a system of power. The question is how we can design a system were power is shared," said Anasuya Sengupta, Founder & Co-Director of Whose Knowledge, in a panel focused on envisioning AI Futures Worth Wanting. Power dynamics—how they influence the creation of AI technologies and how AI technologies help shift or reinforce them—were a consistent undercurrent across a number of different discussions.

"We can't ask 'Is it good?' We have to ask 'Good for whom?'.... We are making tradeoffs all the time," said Google AI Software Engineer, Software Architect, and Designer Blaise Aguera y Arcas. Even when AI is being used to deliver more widely shared benefits rather than harnessed for the benefit of a few, the outcomes may not be equal or fair. In the medical field, Dr. Barry Coller, Vice President for Medical Affairs at The Rockefeller University, commented in a panel on Meta-Patterns, "We have to deal with the fact that something may be fantastic for general decision-making but can be a catastrophe for the individual."

In the arts, William Kentridge observed that algorithms are very good at optimizing, but that the "less good idea" is often what produces the best result. The discussion panels of the conference were interspersed with short performances related to artificial intelligence by artists including Kentridge, adding an additional avenue for inquiry and exploration.

As AI has the potential to fundamentally reshape our institutions, our social structures, and our ways of living, conference participants probed how those same structures, habits, and unquestioned assumptions have helped shape the form that AI has taken. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, President and CEO of the International Peace Institute, discussed how AI should be deployed during a panel on Discourse and Democracy. "We are now reaching some sort of existential moment and we need to change the competitive instinct, the commercial desire for profit into something that will allow our species to continue and not to destroy itself."

"AI is trained by data. Data carries values. Values carry judgements. And therefore it embodies certain ethical perspectives on what is right, what is fair, and it embodies certain biases, conscious or unconscious, of a society," said Nicolas Economou, Chair of the Science, Law, and Society Initiative at the Future Society and Principal Coordinator of the Athens Roundtable on AI and the Rule of Law in a panel on Connection, Competition and Cooperation.

The ethical challenges of developing new AI technologies concern not only the humans who interact with them, but also the technology itself. "I think on the way to building a machine that is conscious, that could think like a person," said author Ted Chiang, "you will inevitably build a machine which is capable of suffering and then you will create a class of entity which is almost infinitely reproducible, which can experience suffering. Right now we have human suffering and we have animal suffering. I don't think we need to create an additional category of entity which is capable of suffering."

On the other hand, several speakers expressed optimism that seeing our own faults manifested and reflected back to us in artificial intelligence could be the impetus humanity needs to address our prejudices. "Is AI biased? It is like looking in the mirror and not liking what you see," said Blaise Aguera y Arcas.

However the relationship between humanity and AI evolves in the long term, a sense that the this evolution is already underway—and perhaps further along than we can appreciate—was widely shared. The first day of the conference closed with perspectives from the people who will be most affected by accelerating technological change: young people. Five students fielded questions, then turned the tables to ask questions of the

adults in the room.
The discussion with the students struck an optimistic tone on the future of technology, affirming that real human connection is irreplaceable, and that younger generations are conscious of both the upsides and the downsides of using social media. Because perspectives like these, from the young people who will experience accelerating technological change more than anyone, are too often missing from the conversation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) announced the launch of a brand-new opportunity for them to share their perspectives. The SNF 25th Anniversary Short Film Challenge invites people ages 14 to 21 to share their ideas about how technology can be a force for good and win a chance to take their story to the next level with professional creators.

In his closing remarks, SNF Co-President Andreas Dracopoulos issued a collective call to embrace and engage with AI, and to direct our efforts toward shaping AI so that it better serves humanity. “We all need, as much as we can, to do all we can to help improve education, healthcare, justice, decency, compassion—to bring back hope, for every human soul in this world.”

Special thanks to all the speakers and the attendees for being with us and making the SNF Nostos Conference in person possible.

Special thanks to:

For Conference minutes and summary:

iMEdD: incubator for Media Education and Development

For producing this on and off stage:

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Highlights

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