



Seattle Pacific University

From the Selected Works of Michael J. Paulus, Jr.

Winter October 16, 2023

Artificial Intelligence and Human Hope

Michael J. Paulus, Jr.



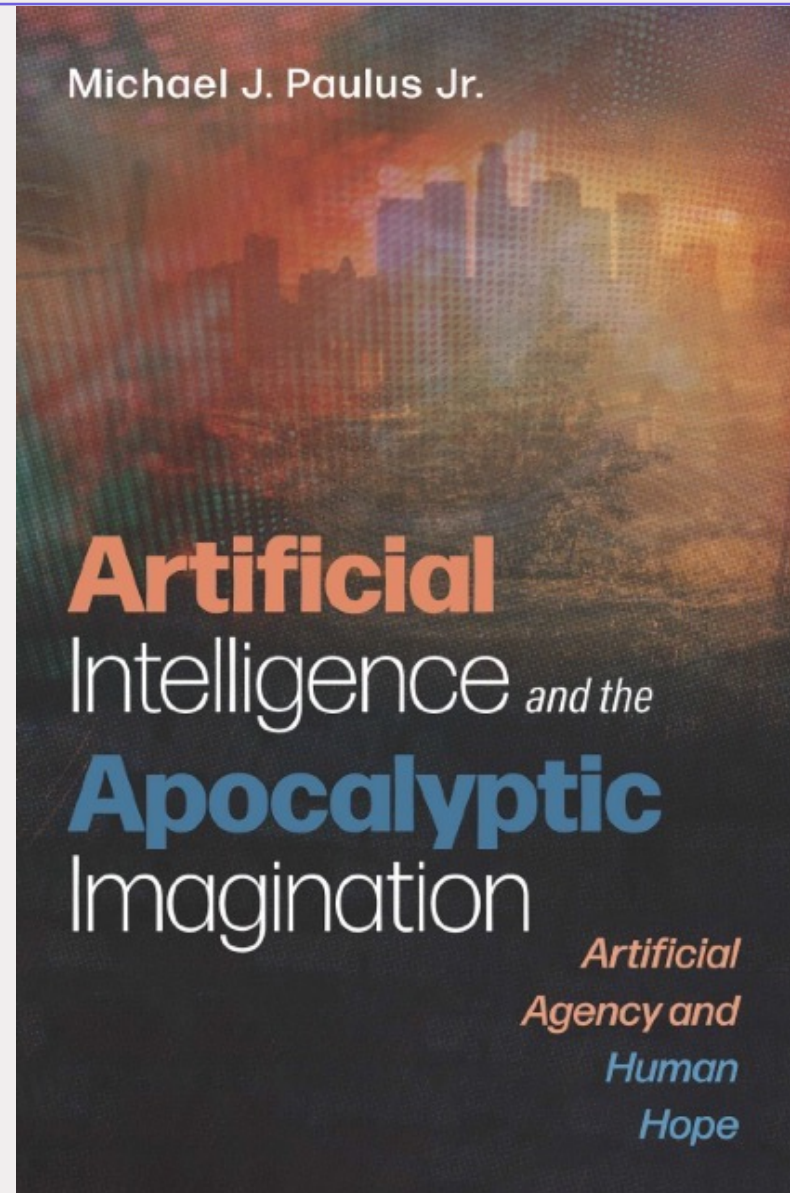
Available at: https://works.bepress.com/michael_paulus/89/

Artificial Intelligence and Human Hope

Michael Paulus

Folio: The Seattle
Athenaeum

October 16, 2023



“artificial intelligence”
and the
“apocalyptic imagination”



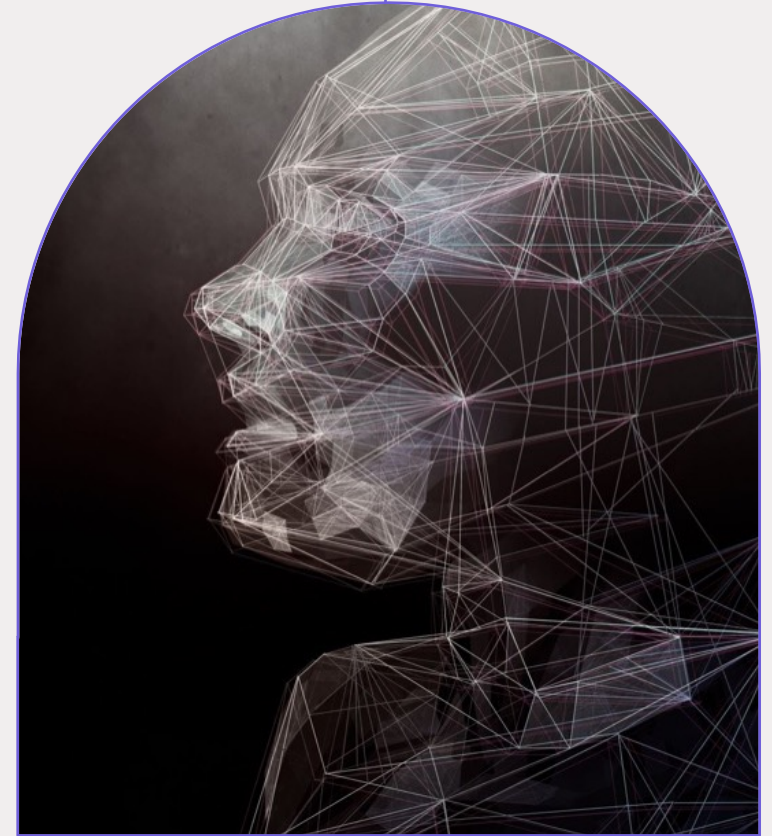
The four horsemen of the “AI” “apocalypse”

- Data surveillance
- Algorithmic manipulation
- Abdicating agency
- Abducted attention



Four theses

1. Our entanglement with technology is ancient – we shape it as it shapes us
2. We are living through a unique moment – intelligent agents no longer need to be human
3. We have been digitally naïve for too long – we need to seek digital wisdom
4. The apocalyptic imagination can transform how we think about and use AI to create a better world



A multi- disciplinary map

- Business (Y2K)
- Theology (Biblical Studies)
- Library and Information Science (Book history and digital transformation)
- Higher education professional



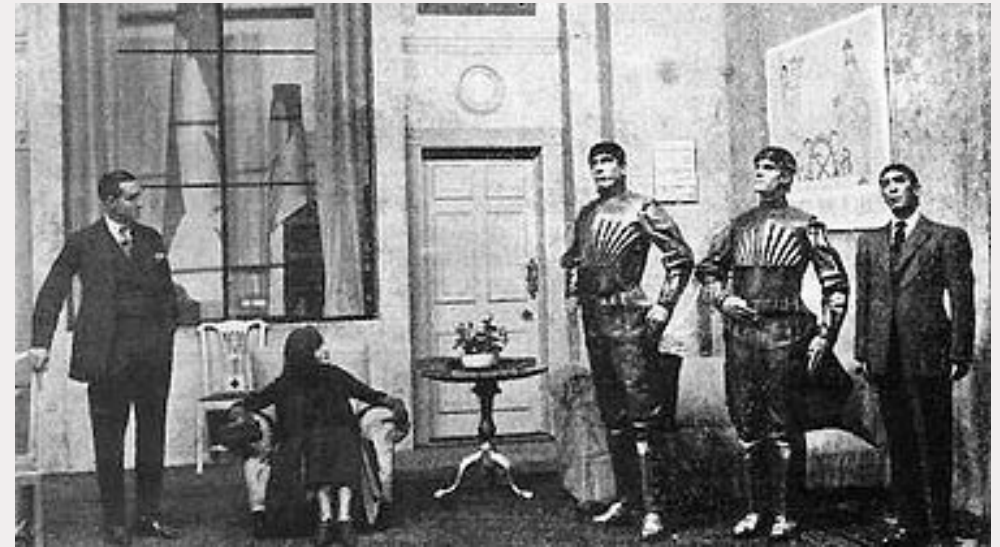
Overview

- I. Imagined and Real AI
- II. Information Revolutions
- III. Recovering the
Apocalyptic Imagination
- IV. Critiquing AI Narratives
and Systems

I. Imagined AI ...

Top: *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, by Karel Čapek, premiered in Prague, January 2, 1921

Bottom: Agent Smith from *The Matrix* (1999)



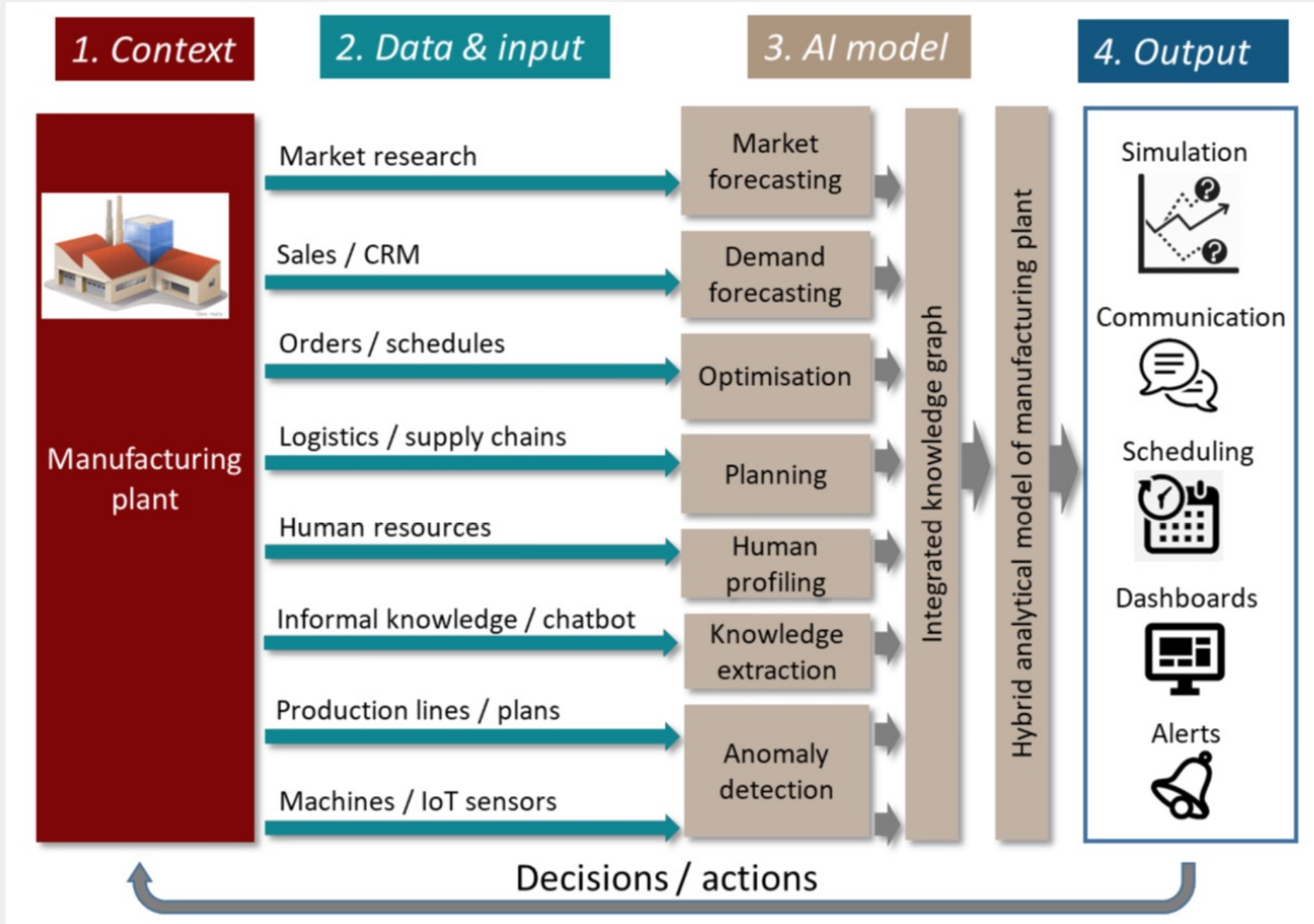
... and Real AI

iRobot's newest Roomba uses AI to avoid dog poop

Finally, decades of research into artificial intelligence are paying off



The Verge, September 9, 2021



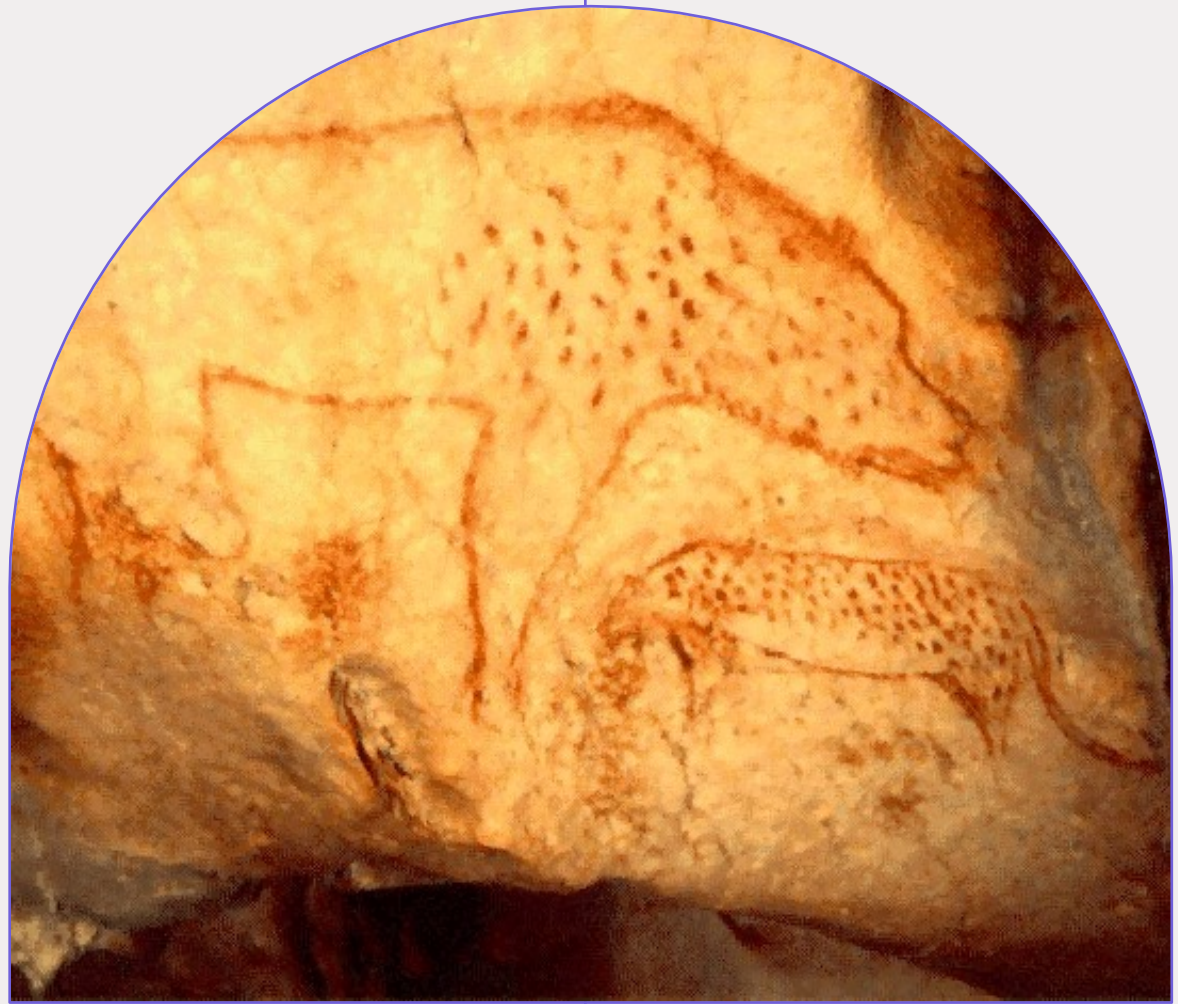
From OECD "Framework for the Classification of AI Systems," 61

II. Information Revolutions— and Revelations

1. Information attention
(~100,000 years ago)
2. Information agencies
(~10,000 years ago)
3. Information artifacts
(~5,000 years ago)
4. Information automation
(~100 years ago)



The first
information
revolution:
reflective
attention;
or, "The Tree of
Knowledge
Mutation"



30K-year-old cave hyena painting (Chauvet Cave,
France)

The second
information
revolution:
structural agency;
or, "Welcome to
Babel"



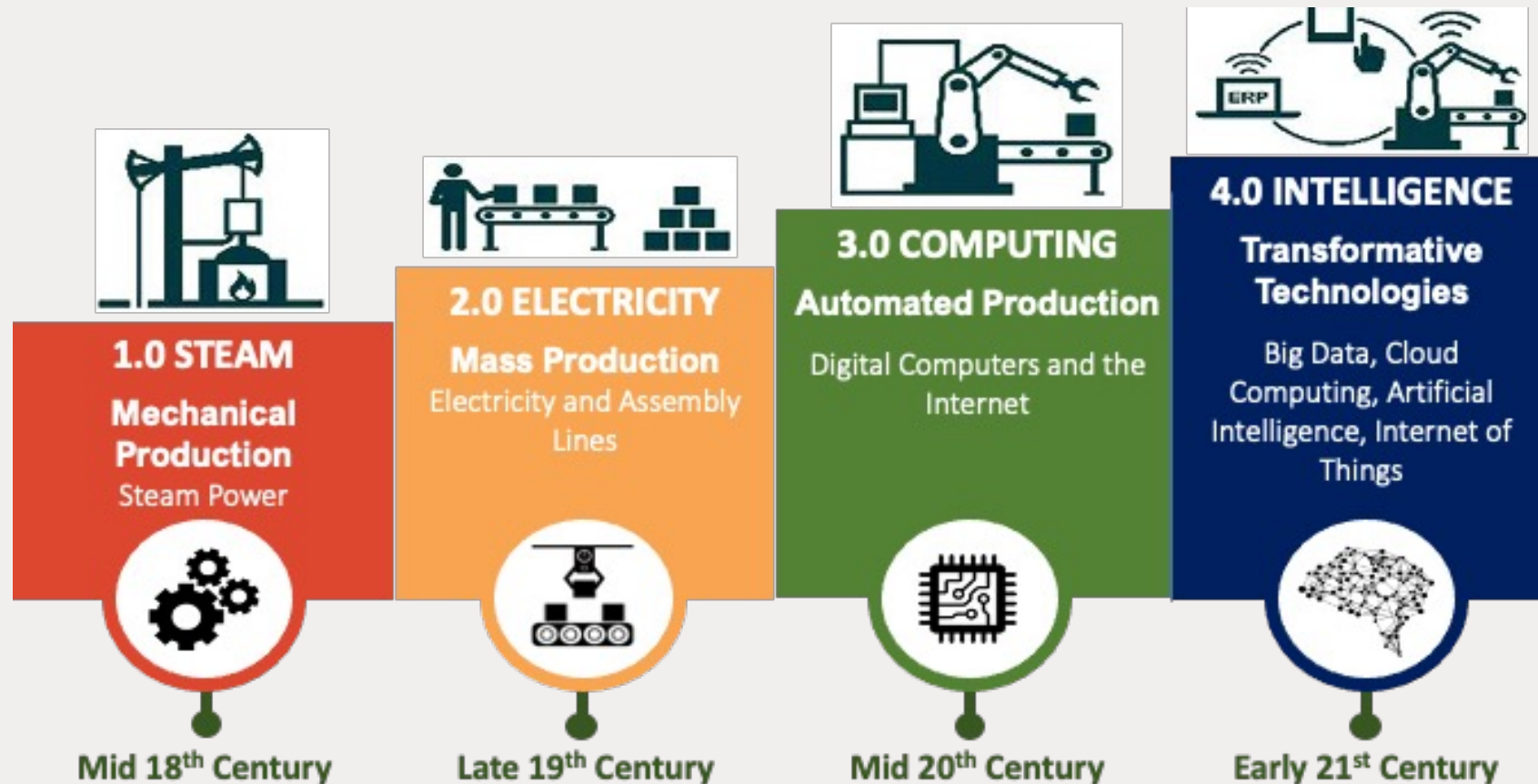
Relief of Ashurbanipal (British Museum)

The third
information
revolution:
knowledge
augmentation;
or, "The Making
of Many Books"



Tablets from the library of Ashurbanipal (British Museum)

The fourth information revolution: automated information processing and intelligence



III. Recovering the Apocalyptic Imagination



The cities of the Apocalypse



The falling Babylon



Gustave Doré (ca. 1872)

The arriving New Jerusalem



Gustave Doré (ca. 1872)

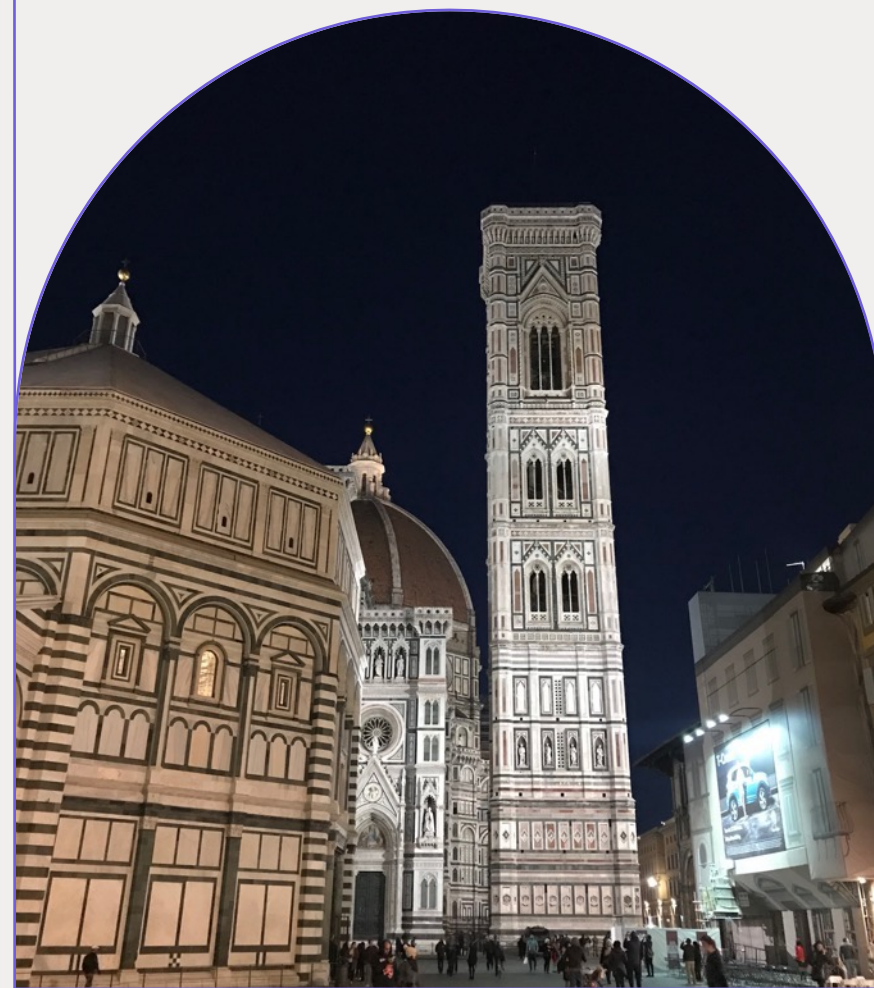
Participating in the two cities

- Aligning attention and agency with New Jerusalem
- Rejecting deforming works of counter-creation
- Participating in works of new creation



Discerning technologies of New Jerusalem

- An ethical minimum for political, economic, and social justice
- Strategies and structures for resisting and reforming unjust systems
- Imagining and realizing a better world that is a future promise and a present actuality





IV. Critiquing AI Narratives



An apocalyptic scorecard for assessing AI

- 1. Reflective attention:** What ultimate hopes and goals are identified and cultivated?
- 2. Structural agency:** What advantages of collective action are used and curated?
- 3. Knowledge augmentation:** Are people growing in knowledge and wisdom?
- 4. Ethical foundation:** Does the system advance political, economic, and social justice and peace?
- 5. Reformation:** What formative practices accompany the system to shape attention and agency with, against, and beyond the systems?



AI for AI

1. Our **ancient** entanglement with technology
2. Our unique **historical** moment
3. Our present need for **digital wisdom**
4. The **apocalyptic imagination** can transform how we think about and use AI to create a better world