



**Seattle Pacific University**

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

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Winter October 16, 2023

# Artificial Intelligence and Human Hope

Michael J. Paulus, Jr.



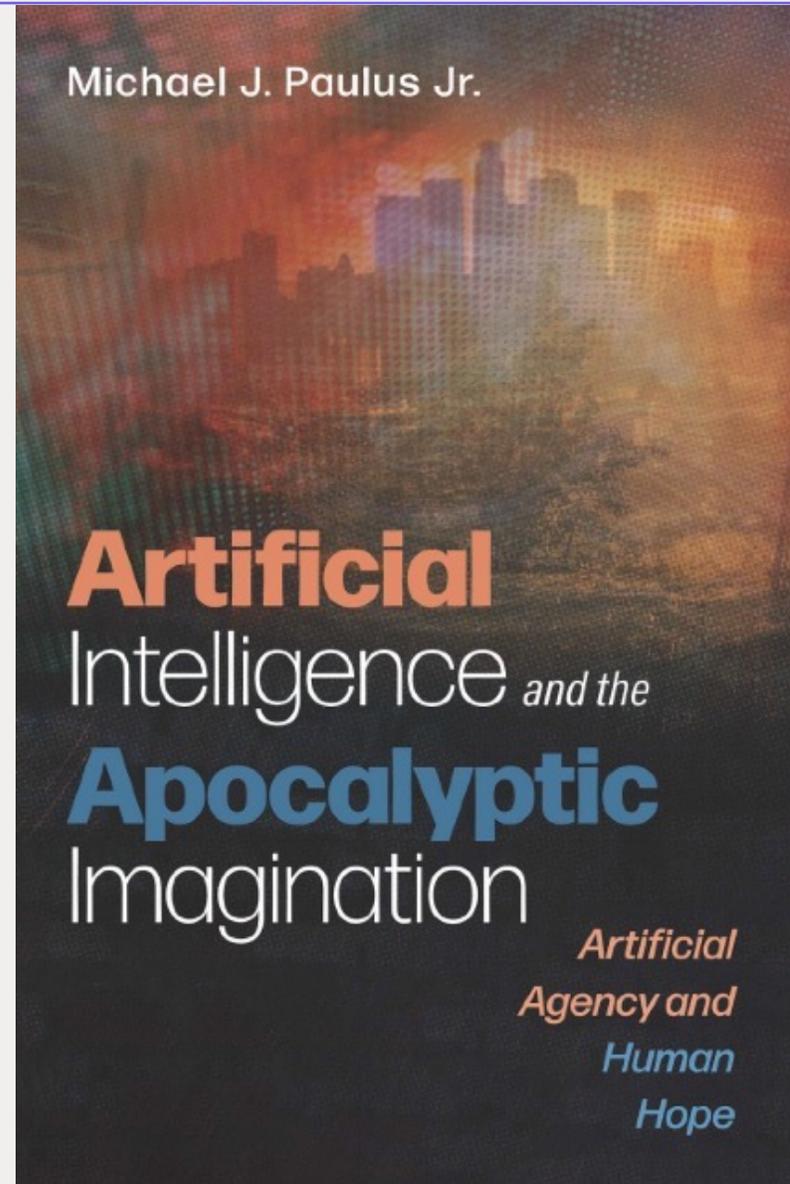
Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/michael\\_paulus/89/](https://works.bepress.com/michael_paulus/89/)

# Artificial Intelligence and Human Hope

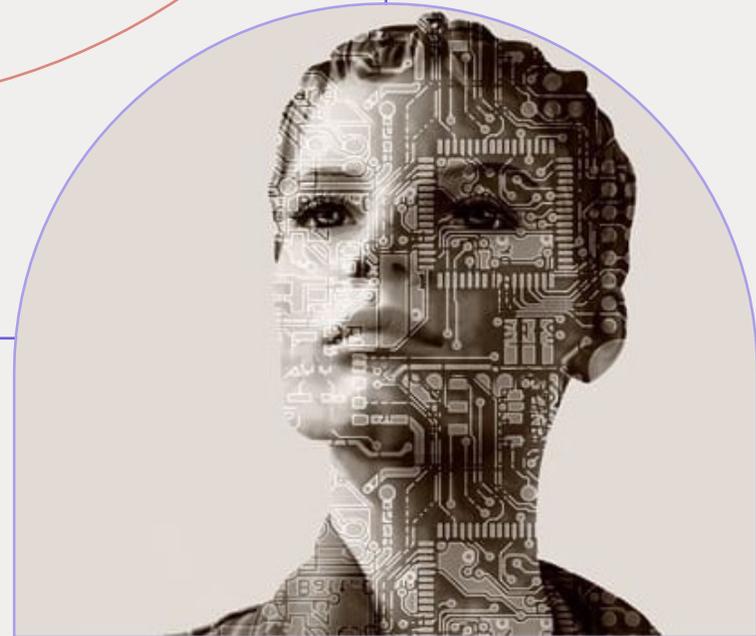
Michael Paulus

Folio: The Seattle  
Athenaeum

October 16, 2023



“artificial intelligence”  
and the  
“apocalyptic imagination”



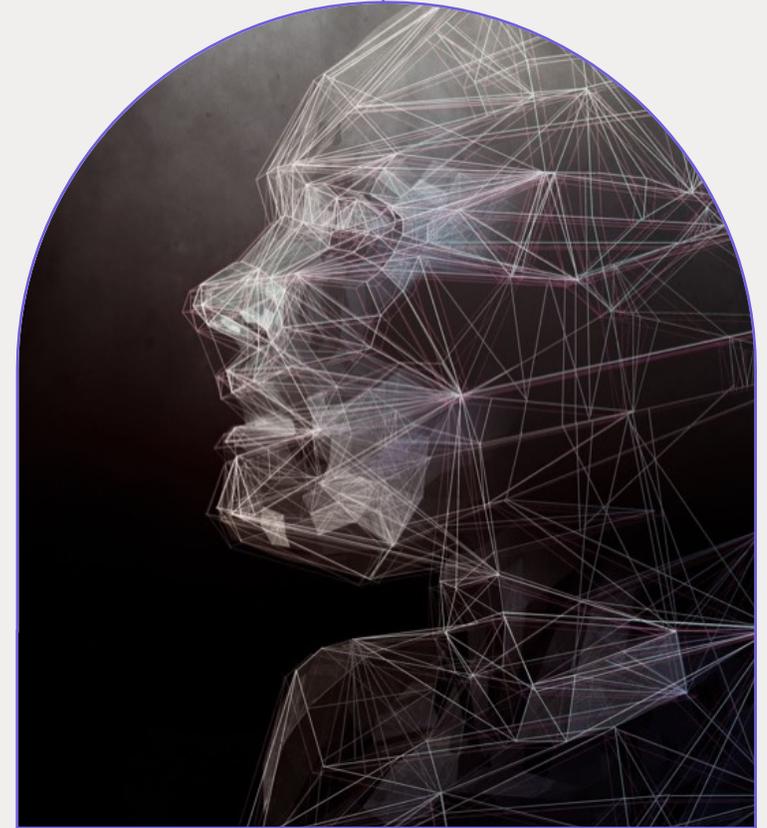
# The four horsemen of the “AI” “apocalypse”

- 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



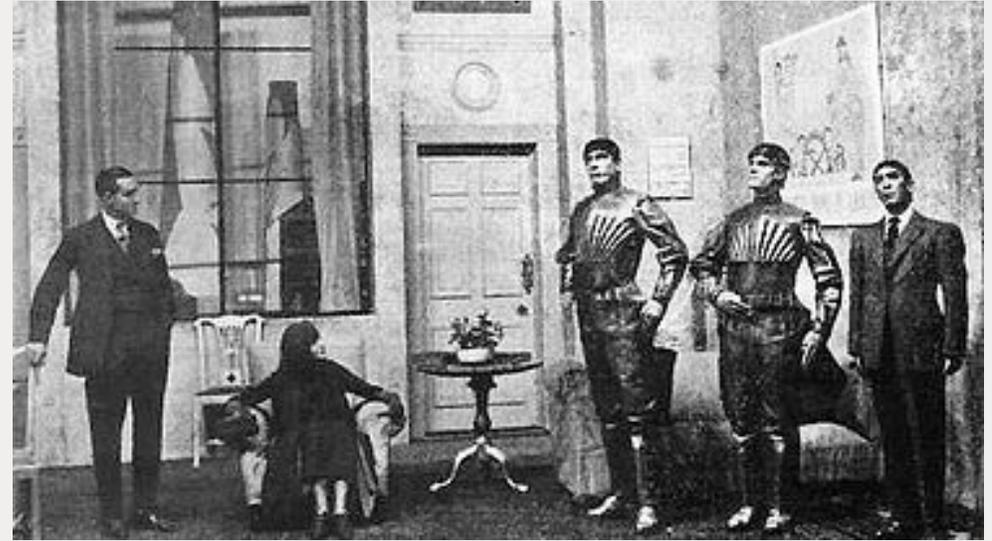
# Overview

- 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)



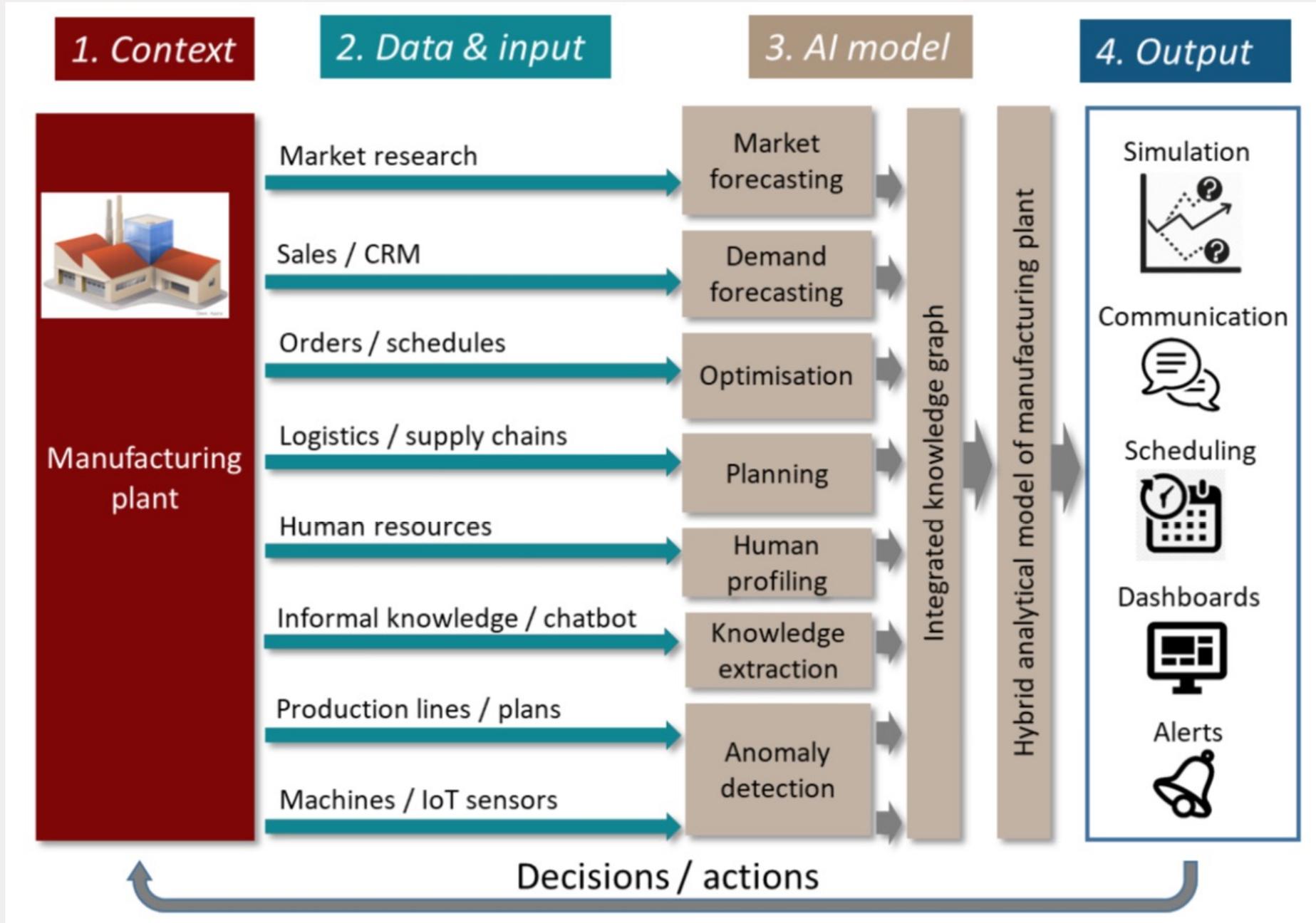
... and Real AI

## **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



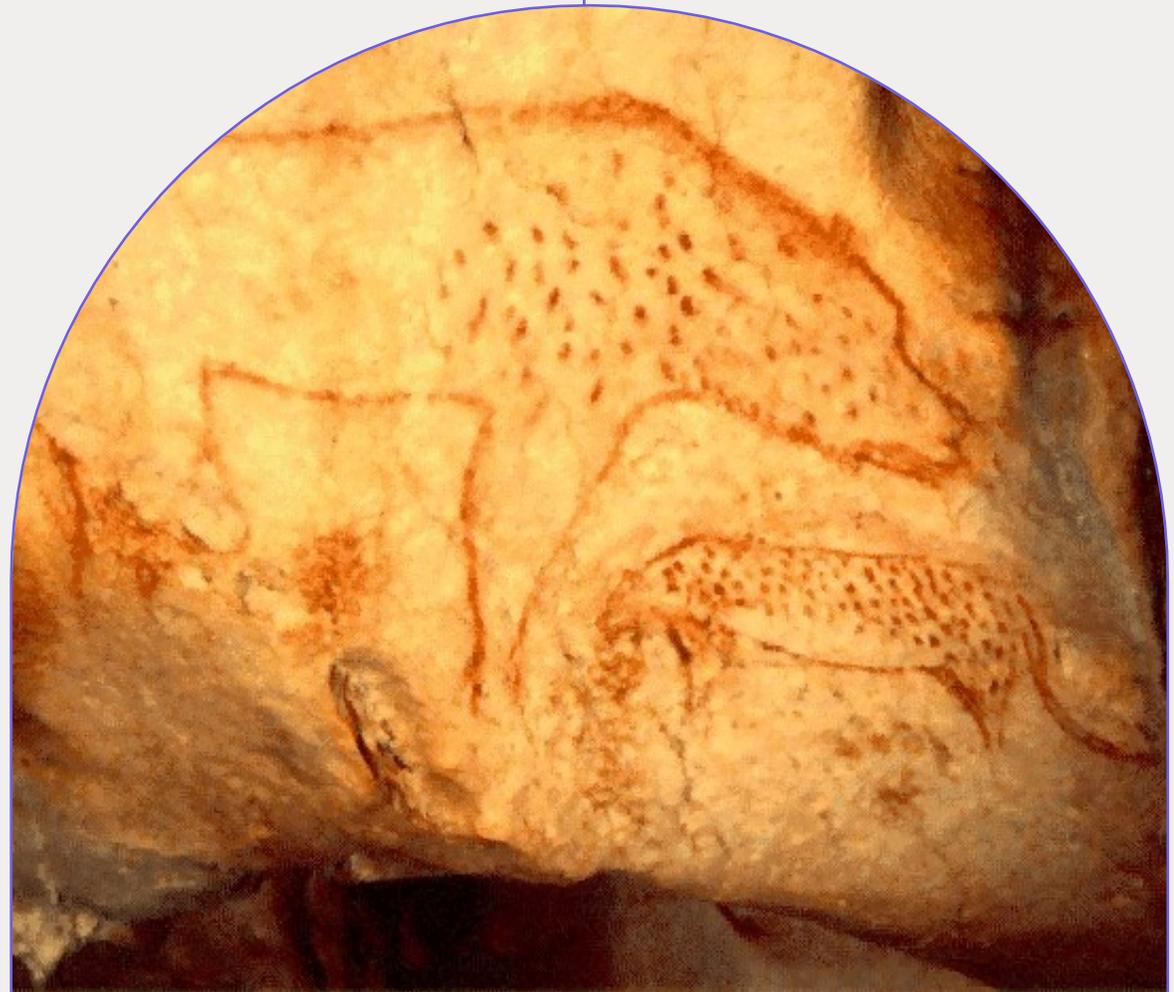
From OECD "Framework for the Classification of AI Systems," 61

## 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"



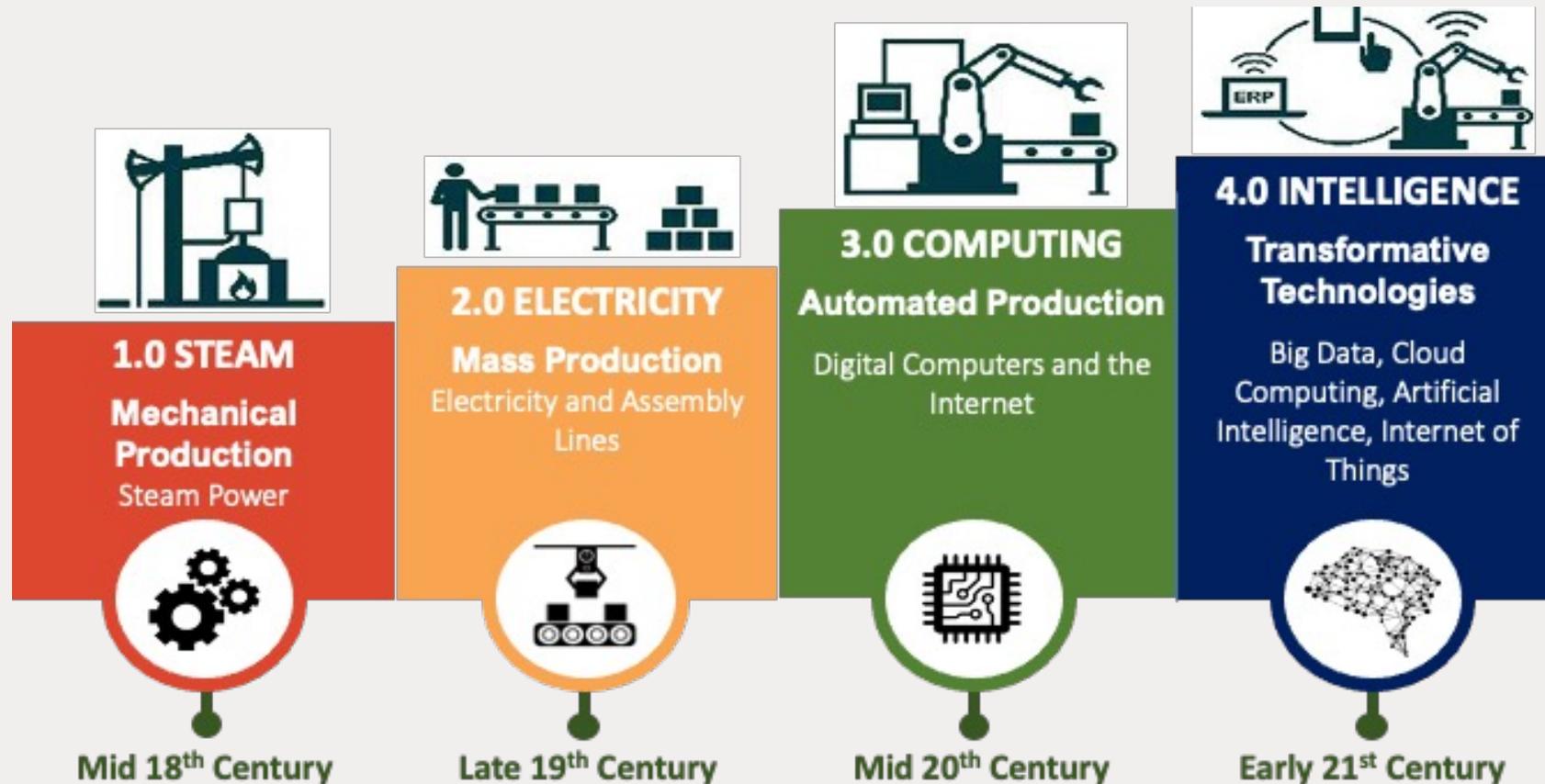
Relief of Ashurbanipal (British Museum)

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)

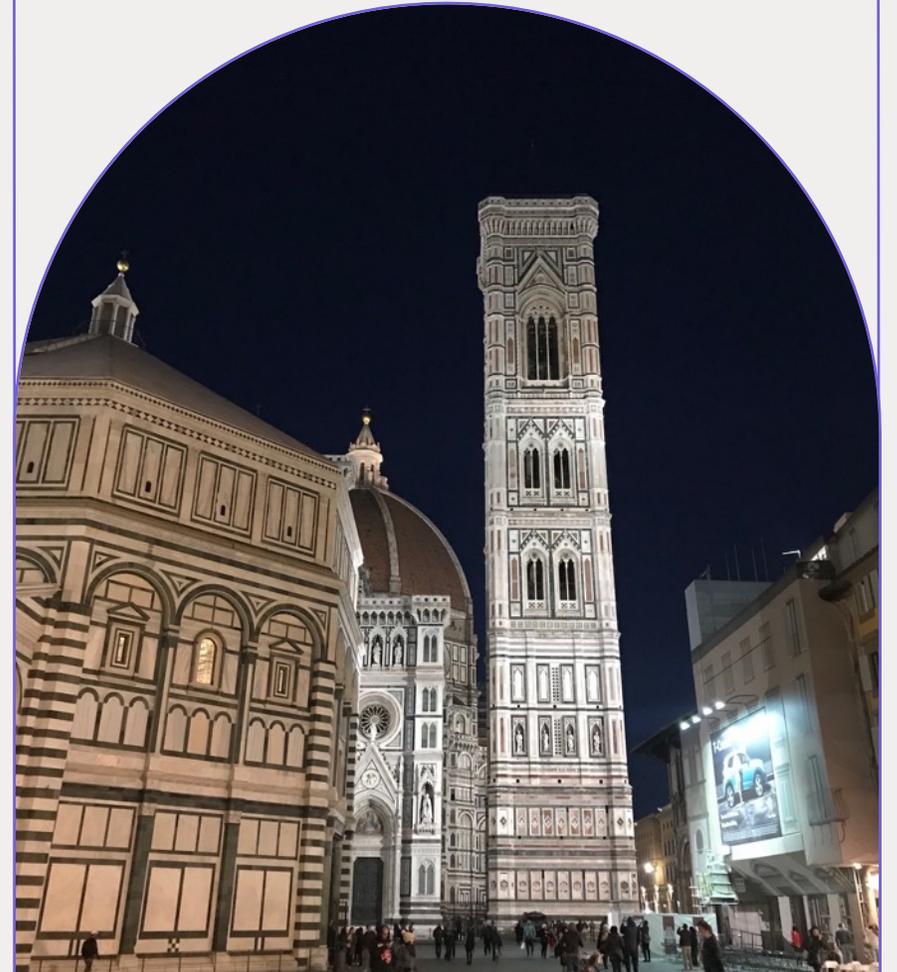
# Participating in the two cities

- 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