

myths of the near future

Myths of the Near Future

As we stand on the cusp of rapid technological, social, and environmental change, it's natural for myths and misconceptions to emerge about what the future holds. These myths often reflect our hopes, fears, and uncertainties, shaping public perception and policy. Understanding these myths is crucial for distinguishing fact from fiction and preparing effectively for what's ahead. In this article, we will explore some of the most prevalent myths about the near future, unpack their origins, and consider what reality might actually look like.

The Myth of the Singularity: Machines Will Outthink Humans

What Is the Singularity?

The concept of the technological singularity refers to a point in the future when artificial intelligence (AI) surpasses human intelligence, leading to rapid, unpredictable, and potentially irreversible changes in society. Popularized by futurists like Ray Kurzweil, the idea suggests that once AI reaches a certain level, it could improve itself autonomously, resulting in an explosion of intelligence that humans cannot comprehend or control.

The Myth

Many assume that the singularity is imminent and that machines will soon become smarter than humans, rendering human cognition obsolete. This myth often fuels fears of AI takeover and dystopian futures where humans are enslaved or rendered irrelevant.

The Reality

- Current AI Limitations: Today's AI systems excel in narrow tasks but lack general intelligence, common sense, and nuanced understanding.
- Complexity of Human Intelligence: Human cognition involves emotions, consciousness, ethics, and social understanding—areas where AI still lags significantly.
- Timeframe Uncertainty: Experts disagree on if or when a true singularity might occur, with estimates ranging from decades to never.
- Ethical and Control Measures: Researchers and policymakers are actively developing frameworks to ensure AI development aligns with human values, reducing the risk of uncontrolled advancement.

The Myth of the Post-Work Society

Background

The idea that automation and AI will eventually eliminate the need for human labor has gained popularity, especially with reports of robots replacing factory workers and AI performing complex tasks.

The Myth

Many believe that in the near future, most jobs will disappear, leading to widespread unemployment and a societal shift where work is obsolete. This myth suggests that machine labor will completely replace human employment, creating a leisure society.

The Reality

- Job Transformation, Not Elimination: Historically, technological advances have transformed jobs rather than eliminated them entirely. New industries and roles tend to emerge.
- New Opportunities: Automation can free humans from mundane tasks, allowing focus on creative, strategic, and interpersonal roles.
- Economic and Policy Challenges: Transitioning to a post-work society would require massive policy changes, including universal basic income, retraining programs, and social safety nets.
- Inequality Concerns: Without proper measures, automation could exacerbate income inequality and social divides rather than lead to a leisure society.

The Myth of the Environmental Apocalypse

Climate Change: An Overhyped Crisis?

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, often depicted as an impending disaster that will devastate life on Earth.

The Myth

Some skeptics argue that climate change is exaggerated or a natural cycle, and that fears of environmental catastrophe are overstated or politically motivated. Others believe technological innovations will quickly fix environmental problems.

The Reality

- Scientific Consensus: The vast majority of climate scientists agree that human activities significantly contribute to global warming.
- Impacts Are Real: Current effects include rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss, which are projected to worsen.
- Technological Solutions Are Not Sufficient Alone: While renewable energy, carbon capture, and conservation efforts are vital, relying solely on technology may not be enough without systemic

changes.

- Urgency Is Critical: Delaying action increases risks and costs, and the window for effective intervention is narrowing.

The Myth of Ubiquitous Connectivity and the End of Privacy

The Connected Future

The near future is often envisioned as a world where everything is interconnected through the Internet of Things (IoT), leading to smart homes, cities, and workplaces.

The Myth

Some believe that in this interconnected world, privacy will become a thing of the past, and personal data will be freely accessible or exploited without consequence. Others assume that ubiquitous connectivity will eliminate all digital security risks.

The Reality

- Growing Privacy Concerns: Data privacy remains a significant issue, with increasing awareness and regulations like GDPR aiming to protect individuals.
- Security Challenges: As devices connect, vulnerabilities grow, making cybersecurity a top priority.
- Balancing Benefits and Risks: The future likely involves sophisticated privacy-preserving technologies, user control over data, and ethical standards for data use.
- Regulatory Frameworks: Governments and organizations are working to establish norms and laws to prevent misuse of personal data.

The Myth of the Total Automation Future

Automation Everywhere

Popular media often depicts a future where robots and AI handle every aspect of life—from household chores to complex decision-making.

The Myth

The misconception is that automation will completely replace human involvement in all spheres, leading to a fully autonomous society with minimal human labor or oversight.

The Reality

- Human Oversight Remains Essential: Many systems still require human judgment, ethical oversight, and intervention.
- Technology Limitations and Costs: Not all tasks are economically or technically feasible to automate.
- Societal Preferences: Cultural, ethical, and personal values influence the adoption and extent of automation.
- Hybrid Systems: The near future is more likely to feature collaborative human-AI systems rather than full automation.

The Myth of the Instantaneous Technological Breakthroughs

Expectations of Rapid Innovation

Many anticipate that breakthroughs in areas like quantum computing, nuclear fusion, or biotech will happen suddenly and revolutionize society overnight.

The Myth

The belief that these breakthroughs will occur imminently and lead to immediate, sweeping changes is common.

The Reality

- Research Takes Time: Scientific and technological progress is often incremental, with many false starts and setbacks.
- Complexity of Innovation: Developing practical, scalable solutions involves extensive testing, regulation, and infrastructure.
- Potential Delays: Political, economic, and ethical considerations can slow or halt progress.
- Realistic Outlook: While breakthroughs will occur, their impacts will unfold gradually over years or decades.

Conclusion

Myths about the near future often stem from our collective hopes, fears, or misunderstandings about technology and society. While some future developments are inevitable, they will likely be more nuanced and complex than popular myths suggest. Recognizing these misconceptions allows us to approach future challenges and opportunities with a more informed perspective, enabling better decision-making, policy development, and societal resilience. As we move forward, maintaining a balance between optimism and realism is essential to shaping a future that benefits all of humanity.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will artificial intelligence inevitably surpass human intelligence in the near future?

While AI advancements are rapid, experts suggest that true human-level general intelligence and consciousness are still distant, and ethical considerations will shape its development rather than an inevitable surpassing.

Is the idea of widespread autonomous vehicles a myth, or will it become the norm soon?

Autonomous vehicles are progressing rapidly, but challenges like safety, regulation, and infrastructure mean they are unlikely to dominate the roads universally in the near future; widespread adoption remains a gradual process.

Will humans develop the ability to upload their consciousness into machines within the next decade?

Consciousness uploading remains a speculative concept with significant scientific and ethical hurdles; most experts consider it a myth or a distant possibility rather than an imminent reality.

Are renewable energy sources going to completely replace fossil fuels in the near future?

While renewable energy is rapidly expanding, complete replacement of fossil fuels involves economic, political, and technological challenges, making total dependence unlikely in the immediate future, though significant progress is expected.

Will climate change be entirely reversed or halted in the near future?

Reversing or halting climate change entirely in the near future is a myth; efforts can mitigate some impacts, but reversing the damage requires long-term global cooperation and significant technological innovation.

Is space colonization going to be a reality for humans within the next few decades?

Space colonization is progressing with missions to Mars and lunar bases, but establishing self-sustaining colonies on other planets remains a complex and long-term goal, making it unlikely to be fully realized soon.

Will all diseases be eradicated thanks to medical advancements in the near future?

Medical science is advancing rapidly, but eradicating all diseases is an optimistic myth; some illnesses will remain challenging due to complexity, mutation, and access disparities.

Are virtual reality and augmented reality technologies going to replace all forms of entertainment soon?

VR and AR are evolving quickly and will significantly enhance entertainment experiences, but replacing all traditional forms of entertainment is unlikely in the near future; they will coexist and complement each other.

Additional Resources

Myths of the Near Future: Debunking Tomorrow's Common Misconceptions

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and societal transformation, the future often feels both tantalizingly close and unpredictably elusive. As we peer into the horizon, a flurry of predictions, hopes, and fears emerge—many of which are amplified by media, popular culture, and even well-meaning experts. However, not all of these visions align with reality. Some are rooted in misconceptions, exaggerated expectations, or oversimplified narratives. Understanding these myths is crucial for shaping informed policies, realistic expectations, and a balanced perspective on what the near future holds.

This article explores some of the most pervasive myths about the near future, dissecting their origins, implications, and the truths that lie beneath the surface.

The Myth of the Autonomous Utopia: No More Human Drivers

The Rise of Autonomous Vehicles: Progress and Pitfalls

Autonomous vehicles (AVs) are often heralded as the dawn of a driverless utopia—reducing accidents, easing congestion, and liberating millions from the tedium of commuting. Media stories frequently showcase sleek, fully autonomous cars navigating complex urban environments seamlessly. The myth suggests that within a few years, human drivers will be largely obsolete, and roads will be filled with self-driving vehicles.

Reality Check:

While significant advances have been made in autonomous driving technology, the reality is more nuanced. Fully autonomous, accident-free vehicles are still in development, with several hurdles to overcome:

- Technical Challenges:
- Handling unpredictable human behavior (pedestrians jaywalking, erratic drivers) remains complex.
- Sensor limitations in adverse weather conditions (fog, snow, heavy rain) impair functionality.

- Navigating complex urban environments with construction, temporary signs, and unclear markings.
- Regulatory and Ethical Issues:
 - Legal frameworks for liability and safety standards are still evolving.
 - Ethical dilemmas—such as decision-making in unavoidable accident scenarios—remain unresolved.
- Market Adoption and Infrastructure:
 - The transition requires significant investment in infrastructure updates.
 - Consumer acceptance and trust are still developing.

Implication:

Instead of an immediate shift, the near future will likely see a gradual integration of autonomous features—such as advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS)—within human-driven vehicles, rather than a complete replacement.

The Myth of Ubiquitous AI: Smarter Than Humans Everywhere

The Expectation of General Artificial Intelligence (AGI)

Popular science fiction and sensational headlines often suggest that artificial intelligence will soon surpass human intelligence across all domains, leading to superintelligent machines capable of solving all problems and making autonomous decisions. This belief fuels visions of a future where AI dominates every aspect of life, from medicine to politics.

Reality Check:

Despite rapid progress in narrow AI applications—such as image recognition, language translation, and game-playing—artificial general intelligence (AGI) that matches or exceeds human reasoning in all areas remains elusive.

- Technical Barriers:
 - Current AI systems are specialized; they excel at specific tasks but lack general understanding.
 - Developing systems with common sense, contextual awareness, and emotional intelligence is profoundly complex.
- Understanding Intelligence:
 - Human intelligence is intertwined with consciousness, subjective experience, and social cognition—areas still poorly understood.
 - Replicating these aspects in machines is a monumental scientific challenge.
- Ethical and Safety Concerns:
 - Even as narrow AI becomes more capable, concerns about control, bias, and unintended consequences grow.
 - The idea of superintelligent AI acting autonomously raises existential questions, but such systems are still theoretical.

Implication:

The near future will likely see continued progress in AI tools that augment human abilities rather than fully replacing or surpassing humans across all domains.

The Myth of the Post-Work Society: No More Jobs

Automation and Job Displacement

A common narrative suggests that automation and AI will eliminate most jobs, leading to a post-work society where human labor is obsolete. This myth envisions a future where machines handle all productive tasks, freeing humans to pursue leisure and creativity.

Reality Check:

While automation is transforming industries, the idea that all jobs will vanish is overly simplistic.

- Job Displacement vs. Job Transformation:

- Certain sectors (manufacturing, routine data processing) are already experiencing significant automation.

- However, new jobs emerge in tech, renewable energy, healthcare, and creative industries, often requiring new skills.

- Historical Perspective:

- Past technological revolutions (e.g., the Industrial Revolution) displaced some jobs but also created new opportunities.

- The key difference now is the speed and scale, which can cause short-term disruptions.

- Human-Centric Roles:

- Jobs requiring empathy, complex decision-making, negotiation, and ethical judgment remain challenging to automate.

- Fields like mental health, education, arts, and leadership are less susceptible to full automation.

- Universal Basic Income (UBI) and Policy Responses:

- Some advocate for UBI as a solution to automation-induced unemployment.

- Policy measures will likely evolve to mitigate displacement rather than eliminate work altogether.

Implication:

The near future will see a shift in the nature of work rather than its disappearance. Emphasis on reskilling and lifelong learning will be essential.

The Myth of the Climate Crisis Resolution: Technology Will Save Us

Over-Reliance on Future Tech to Tackle Climate Change

Many believe that breakthrough technologies—such as carbon capture, geoengineering, or fusion energy—will soon solve the climate crisis, rendering current efforts unnecessary. This myth fosters complacency, suggesting that technological miracles will rescue us without fundamental lifestyle changes.

Reality Check:

While technological innovation is vital, relying solely on future solutions is risky.

- Technological Limitations:
 - Carbon capture and storage (CCS) remains expensive and unproven at large scales.
 - Fusion energy is still in experimental stages, with commercial viability years or decades away.
 - Geoengineering poses unknown environmental risks and governance challenges.
- Behavioral and Policy Changes:
 - Emission reductions require systemic changes—shifting to renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and circular economies.
 - Policy, regulation, and societal shifts are critical alongside tech developments.
- Urgency of Action:
 - Climate impacts are already unfolding—extreme weather, rising sea levels, biodiversity loss.
 - The window for effective intervention is narrowing; technological solutions alone cannot undo damage already done.

Implication:

The near future demands a balanced approach—accelerating technological innovation while implementing immediate, tangible policy measures and behavioral changes.

The Myth of the Perfect Digital Society: No Digital Divide

Expectation of Universal Connectivity and Digital Literacy

A prevalent myth assumes that the near future will feature a fully connected, digitally literate society—where everyone has access to the internet, devices, and digital skills.

Reality Check:

Digital inequality persists and is likely to continue being a significant challenge.

- Global Disparities:
 - In many regions, infrastructure deficits, poverty, and political instability hinder internet access.
 - The digital divide is often correlated with socioeconomic status, education, and geography.
- Skills Gap:
 - Digital literacy varies widely; older populations and marginalized communities may lack necessary skills.
 - Without targeted efforts, inequalities could deepen, exacerbating social divides.
- Data and Privacy Concerns:
 - As digital reliance grows, issues around data security, privacy, and surveillance become more pressing.
 - Not everyone benefits equally from innovations due to unequal access to protections and rights.
- Policy and Investment Needs:
 - Achieving universal connectivity requires concerted global policies, investments, and education programs.
 - Without proactive measures, digital inequality will persist.

Implication:

The near future will likely see ongoing efforts to bridge the digital divide, but complete universal digital inclusion remains a complex and long-term challenge.

The Myth of the Seamless Human-Machine Integration: Cyborgs and Brain-Computer Interfaces

The Vision of Merging Humans with Technology

Science fiction often depicts humans seamlessly integrating with machines—brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) enabling direct thought-to-device communication, or even cyborg-like enhancements to human abilities. The myth suggests that such integration will become routine in the near future.

Reality Check:

While BCIs and neural interfaces are advancing, widespread, seamless integration is far from realization.

- Current State of Technology:
 - Experimental BCIs can help restore mobility (e.g., in paralysis) or control prosthetics.
 - Companies like Neuralink aim to develop more advanced interfaces, but these are still in early stages.
- Technical and Ethical Barriers:
 - Invasiveness, long-term safety, and reliability issues remain unresolved.
 - Ethical concerns around identity, autonomy, and consent are significant.
- Societal Acceptance:
 - Cultural and societal attitudes towards enhancing or modifying human cognition vary widely.
 - Regulatory frameworks will influence adoption rates.
- Use Cases and Limitations:
 - Near-term applications are likely to be medical and assistive, rather than widespread enhancements.
 - Full integration, like merging consciousness with machines, remains speculative.

Implication:

The near future will see incremental progress in neural interfaces primarily for medical purposes, with broader human-machine integration still on the horizon.

Conclusion: Navigating a Complex Future with Clarity

The near future is undoubtedly poised for remarkable innovations and transformations. However, amidst the excitement, it's vital to approach prevailing myths with a critical eye. Overestimating or underestimating technological capabilities and societal responses

Myths Of The Near Future

myths of the near future: Myths of the Near Future J. G. Ballard, 1987

myths of the near future: Out of the Night and Into the Dream Gregory Kent Stephenson, 1991-10-30 The author of *Empire of the Sun* and other acclaimed novels and stories, British science fiction writer J. G. Ballard is here given a penetrating analysis, his work being explored in terms of its internal coherence, its continuity and development, and its mythic and metaphysical aspects. Ballard's fiction is widely considered to be a critique of our secular, rational, technological culture, but this study departs from earlier ones that label him a fatalistic or nihilistic writer obsessed with entropy, devolution, and dissolution in showing him, instead, to be most deeply concerned with the redemption and regeneration of the human psyche. With Ballard's focus so much on visionary perception and mystical transcendence, Gregory Stephenson argues for his placement in the Romantic visionary tradition. A comprehensive examination of Ballard's work, this study traces his output and accomplishments over four decades, exploring their thematic development. Ballard is considered in relation to a number of British and American writers of the post-World War II era--within and beyond the often too-rigidly applied categorization of science fiction, as well as to poets and novelists of the past.

myths of the near future: Myths of the Near Future J. G. Ballard, 1982

myths of the near future: J. G. Ballard D. Harlan Wilson, 2017-11-10 Prophetic short stories and apocalyptic novels like *The Crystal World* made J. G. Ballard a foundational figure in the British New Wave. Rejecting the science fiction of rockets and aliens, he explored an inner space of humanity informed by psychiatry and biology and shaped by surrealism. Later in his career, Ballard's combustible plots and violent imagery spurred controversy--even legal action--while his autobiographical 1984 war novel *Empire of the Sun* brought him fame. D. Harlan Wilson offers the first career-spanning analysis of an author who helped steer SF in new, if startling, directions. Here was a writer committed to moral ambiguity, one who drowned the world and erected a London high-rise doomed to descend into savagery--and coolly picked apart the characters trapped within each story. Wilson also examines Ballard's methods, his influence on cyberpunk, and the ways his fiction operates within the sphere of our larger culture and within SF itself.

myths of the near future: *The Empire's of J. G. Ballard* David Ian Paddy, 2015-08-25 J. G. Ballard once declared that the most truly alien planet is Earth and in his science fiction he abandoned the traditional imagery of rocket ships traveling to distant galaxies to address the otherworldliness of this world. *The Empires of J. G. Ballard* is the first extensive study of Ballard's critical vision of nation and empire, of the political geography of this planet. Paddy examines how Ballard's self-perceived status as an outsider and exile, the Sheppertonian from Shanghai, generated an outlook that celebrated worldliness and condemned parochialism. This book brings to light how Ballard wrestled with notions of national identity and speculated upon the social and psychological implications of the post-war transformation of older models of empire into new imperialisms of consumerism and globalization. Presenting analyses of Ballard's full body of work with its tales of reverse colonization, psychological imperialism, the savagery of civilization, estranged Englishmen abroad and at home, and multinational communities built on crime, *The Empires of J. G. Ballard* offers a fresh perspective on the fiction of J. G. Ballard. *The Empires of J.G. Ballard: An Imagined Geography* offers a sustained and highly convincing analysis of the imperial and post-imperial histories and networks that shape and energise Ballard's fictional and non-fictional writings. To what extent can Ballard be considered an international writer? What happens to our understanding of his post-war science fictions when they are opened up to the language and logics of post-colonialism? And what creative and critical roles do the spectres of empire play in Ballard's visions of modernity? Paddy follows these and other fascinating lines of enquiry in a study that is not only essential reading for Ballard students and scholars, but for anyone interested in the intersections of modern and contemporary literature, history and politics. (Jeanette Baxter, Anglia Ruskin University)

Shanghai made my father. Arriving in England after WW2, he was a person of the world who d witnessed extremes of human experience, and remained the outsider observing life from his home in Shepperton. 1930s Shanghai, Paris of the East , was a mix of international sophistication and violence, unfettered capitalism and acute poverty, American cars, martinis and Coca Cola, a place marked by death and war. It had a profound influence on my father and his imagination. Dr Paddy s fascinating book explores my father s fiction within an international context and offers a profound reading of a man who always kept his eyes and mind open to the world. (Fay Ballard)

myths of the near future: *Mythic Thinking in Twentieth-Century Britain* M. Sterenberg, 2016-06-01 A variety of thinkers used the concept of myth to articulate their anxieties about modernity. By telling the story of mythic thinking in Britain from its origins in Victorian social anthropology to its postwar cultural mainstreaming, this book reveals a yearning for transcendence in an age long assumed to be disenchanted.

myths of the near future: *J. G. Ballard* Jeannette Baxter, 2009-02-12 J.G. Ballard is one of the most significant British writers of the contemporary period. His award-winning novels are widely studied and read, yet the appeal of Ballard's idiosyncratic, and often controversial, imagination is such that his work also enjoys something of a cult status with the reading public. The hugely successful cinematic adaptations of *Empire of the Sun* (Spielberg, 1987) and *Crash* (Cronenberg, 1996) further confirm Ballard's unique place within the literary, cultural and popular imaginations. This guide includes new critical perspectives on Ballard's major novels as well as his short stories and journalistic writing covering issues of form, narrative and experimentation. Whilst offering fresh readings of dominant and recurring themes in Ballard's writing, including history, sexuality, violence, consumer capitalism, and urban space, the contributors also explore Ballard's contribution to major contemporary debates including those surrounding post 9/11 politics, terrorism, neo-imperialism, science, morality and ethics.

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myths of the near future: *Practice-based Design Research* Laurene Vaughan, 2017-01-26 Practice-Based Design Research provides a companion to masters and PhD programs in design research through practice. The contributors address a range of models and approaches to practice-based research, consider relationships between industry and academia, researchers and designers, discuss initiatives to support students and faculty during the research process, and explore how students' experiences of undertaking practice-based research has impacted their future design and research practice. The text is illustrated throughout with case study examples by authors who have set up, taught or undertaken practice-based design research, in a range of national and institutional contexts.

myths of the near future: *The Woman of the Crowd* Daniela Daniele, 2000 This book traces the origins of the Postmodern eclectic grammar of linguistic collision back in the Surrealist poetics of ruins. Keeping in mind the images of lost direction in the big city as a central figure in the discussion of both the Modern and Postmodern aesthetics of displacement, Daniele starts comparing the epiphanic encounters of the Baudelairian flâneur in metropolitan Paris - in constant search for the traces of a lost symbolic order - with Breton's enigmatic pursuit of Nadja, the elusive sphinx in the crowd who moves in a mental territory of puzzling condensations and of ineffable objets trouvés. In his visual and written work, Marcel Duchamp was probably the first artist to envision the space of the crowd as a trans-urban, multiple dimension: a cool arena of disjunctive encounters contributing to transform the Surrealist erotic space of desire in a cooler, open field of performance. Deeply influenced by Duchamp's hybrid aesthetics, American Postmodern writers such as Donald Barthelme and Thomas Pynchon, and the performance artist Laurie Anderson, represent metropolis as a geographical incest, as a plural, entropic semiosphere which transcends the notion of urban community to become the tolerant receptacle of an ethnic and discursive multiplicity, an electronic area of linguistic collisions translatable in new fragmented and unfinished narratives. Evoking the assemblages of Abstract Expressionists, the debris of Simon Rodia junk art, and the hybrid language of Postmodern architecture, this neo-Surrealist narrative discourse transforms the epiphanic traces

envisioned by the Baudelairian and Bretonian heroes in partial parodies, in enigmatic fragments whose ultimate source transcends the narrator's knowledge. The conceptual strategy which is constitutive of these texts implicitly asks the puzzled reader to disentangle the entropic plots, immersing him in the midst of a linguistic wilderness, where all opposites - fact and fiction, man and machine, man and female - enigmatically and humorously coexist.

myths of the near future: Myths of the Near Future , 2023

myths of the near future: Myth, Society and Profanation William Pawlett, 2024-10-31 This work challenges the dominant pejorative view of myth by showing how myth is implicated in the deepest layers of society, politics, individuality and temporality. This work draws upon European cultural theorists, particularly Schelling, Nietzsche, Freud, Bataille and Baudrillard, to challenge the dominant pejorative view of myth. It argues that myth has been subjected to an intensive process of profanation yet nevertheless is always implicated in society, politics and temporality. The work examines sacred dimensions of myth, the modern myth of desire and some cultural effects of the profanation process. The intended audience is undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences.

myths of the near future: Influences of Pre-Christian Mythology and Christianity on Old Norse Poetry Andrew McGillivray, 2018-10-08 The Eddic poem Vafþrúðnismál serves as a representation of early pagan beliefs or myths and as a myth itself; the poem performs both of these functions, acting as a poetic framework and functioning as sacred myth. In this study, the author looks closely at the journey of the Norse god Óðinn to the hall of the ancient and wise giant Vafþrúðnir, where Óðinn craftily engages his adversary in a life-or-death contest in knowledge.

myths of the near future: Anti-American Myths Arnold Beichman, 2023-05-09 In his probing new introduction to *Anti-American Myths*, which was initially published twenty years ago as *Nine Lies About America*, Arnold Beichman notes a powerful fact: what makes the United States unique is not only its military power nor its huge economy, nor even its great technological innovations. Rather, what differentiates the nation from virtually all others is that there is no large-scale territorial movement whose sponsors seek to secede from the country and to establish a new nation. And yet, anti-Americanism has characterized a small portion of ideologists whom Beichman refers to as radical egalitarians. These prophets of doom still abound. Everywhere the glib accusations are leveled: America is sick, racist, materialist, aggressive, decadent, and only violent revolution can save it. Even the collapse of the Soviet Union and of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe has not quelled the rhetoric of anti-Americanism. It is Beichman's aim to explain the roots of such persistent opposition to American society as presently constructed. Tom Wolfe in his Foreword shrewdly observes: This is not a book 'about America'... it is a book that uses the subject of the United States as a device with which to explore the modern intellectual's retrograde habits of mind. Beichman finds nothing particularly amusing about what American intellectuals do to rationality and the English language, let alone the common weal, when they get on the subject of the United States. But I, for one, find his demonstration of the hash these men have made of the mother tongue extremely entertaining. When initially published, Beichman's classic was termed powerful, persuasive and credible ... a laser beam of fact and reason by the Los Angeles Times, and a most valuable antidote to a lot of cliché thinking and cliché writing by the New York Times. Edwin McDowell, in his review for the *WaH Street Journal* reminds the reader that Beichman is not a rightwinger bent on defining the status quo. ... but unabashedly a man of the left... an important figure in the international trade union movement. *Anti-American Myths* will be of interest to intellectual historians, political scientists, sociologists, and all readers interested in contemporary social and political affairs.

myths of the near future: 50 Great Myths of Human Evolution John H. Relethford, 2017-01-17 *50 Great Myths of Human Evolution* uses common misconceptions to explore basic theory and research in human evolution and strengthen critical thinking skills for lay readers and students. Examines intriguing—yet widely misunderstood—topics, from general ideas about evolution and human origins to the evolution of modern humans and recent trends in the field

Describes what fossils, archaeology, and genetics can tell us about human origins Demonstrates the ways in which science adapts and changes over time to incorporate new evidence and better explanations Includes myths such as "Humans lived at the same time as dinosaurs;" "Lucy was so small because she was a child;" "Our ancestors have always made fire;" and "There is a strong relationship between brain size and intelligence" Comprised of stand-alone essays that are perfect for casual reading, as well as footnotes and references that allow readers to delve more deeply into topics

myths of the near future: From Georges Sorel Georges Sorel, 2018-01-16 The prophet of social decadence, the theorist of violence and advocate of the general strike, the critic who stood Marx on his head, Georges Sorel was one of the foremost writers of this century to write extensively on the great importance of the moral aspects of social movements. His reconstruction of socialist ethics established him as one of the most remarkable critics of Marxist thought, and his writings in many aspects anticipated contemporary interpretations. From Georges Sorel, the first of two volumes of Sorel's work, presents his major contributions to social thought articles on Marxism, religion, syndicalism, social myths, the philosophy of history and science, as well as a large and newly translated segment of Reflections on Violence. In his introduction, John Stanley disputes the frequently encountered view of Sorel as a reactionary or extreme rightist, and emphasizes Sorel's attempt to provide Western society with a morality based on labor, struggle, and family life.

myths of the near future: Mission AI Haroon Sheikh, Corien Prins, Erik Schrijvers, 2023-01-30 This open access book offers a strategic perspective on AI and the process of embedding it in society. After decades of research, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now entering society at large. Due to its general purpose character, AI will change society in multiple, fundamental and unpredictable ways. Therefore, the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) characterizes AI as a system technology: a rare type of technologies that have a systemic impact on society. Earlier system technologies include electricity, the combustion engine and the computer. The history of these technologies provides us with useful insights about what it takes to direct the introduction of AI in society. The WRR identifies five key tasks to structurally work on this process: demystification, contextualisation, engagement, regulation and positioning. By clarifying what AI is (demystification), creating a functional ecosystem (contextualisation), involving diverse stakeholders (engagement), developing directive frameworks (regulation) and engaging internationally (positioning), societies can meaningfully influence how AI settles. Collectively, these activities steer the process of co-development between technology and society, and each representing a different path to safeguard public values. Mission AI - The New System Technology was originally published as an advisory report for the government of the Netherlands. The strategic analysis and the outlined recommendations are, however, relevant to every government and organization that aims to take up 'mission AI' and embed this newest system technology in our world.

myths of the near future: IT Workers Human Capital Issues in a Knowledge Based Environment Fred Niederman, Tom Ferratt, 2006-04-01 The goal of this book is to serve as a gathering of knowledge and ideas at the intersection of the human resource management (HRM) and management information systems (MIS)/information technology (IT) fields. In striving toward achieving this goal we have relied on authors who responded to our call for work within this intersection. As described more fully below, the chapters clustered into four topic areas: (1) effective management of IT workers, (2) IT workers and their careers, (3) diversity in IT, and (4) organizational issues. Thus, this book focuses on selected areas within the intersection of these fields rather than covering the entire intersection. Of course, the broad goal of this book could not be completely fulfilled - and even if it were, such knowledge would be continually overtaken by the ongoing evolution of people, technology, and their interactions. However, in the process of undertaking this project, we have had the opportunity to make some observations about the current state of knowledge regarding IT workers, the human capital that makes it possible for organizations in a knowledge-based economy to plan, create, integrate, operate, and maintain their various IT-based systems.

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