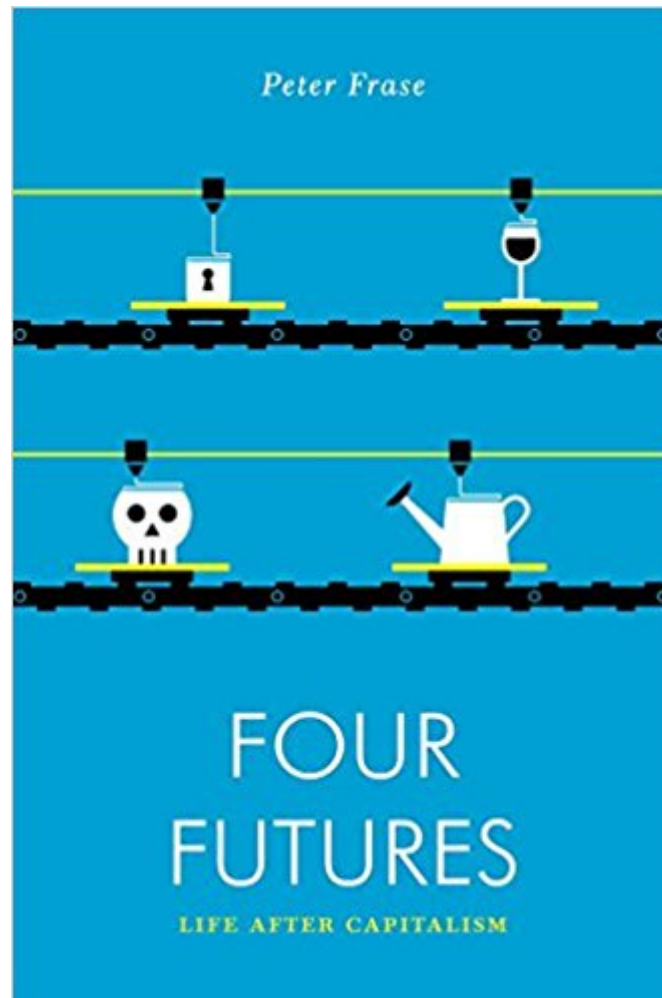




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Four Futures: Life After Capitalism (Jacobin)



Synopsis

Capitalism is going to end. Peter Frase argues that increasing automation and a growing scarcity of resources, thanks to climate change, will bring it all tumbling down. In *Four Futures*, Frase imagines how this post-capitalist world might look, deploying the tools of both social science and speculative fiction to explore what communism, rentism, socialism and exterminism might actually entail. Could the current rise of real-life robocops usher in a world that resembles *Ender's Game*? And sure, communism will bring an end to material scarcities and inequalities of wealth—but there's no guarantee that social hierarchies, governed by an economy of "likes," wouldn't rise to take their place. A whirlwind tour through science fiction, social theory and the new technologies already shaping our lives, *Four Futures* is a balance sheet of the socialisms we may reach if a resurgent Left is successful, and the barbarisms we may be consigned to if those movements fail.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Frase injects a sorely needed dose of reality to the conversation, and the result is invigorating. I lost sleep over it." —Ben Tarnoff, *Guardian* "An engaging thought experiment on the intersection of technology and the environment. Indeed, as we ponder the interplay between digital abundance and physical scarcity, the digital industrialist solutions of most thinkers in this space pale in comparison to Frase's more open-minded,

less deterministic understanding of the future unfolding before us. • Douglas Rushkoff, author of Program or Be Programmed and Present Shock • “A remarkably clear-eyed view of the futures we’re facing, bringing humor and intelligence to the lab of speculative fiction to create four smart and sharply lit early warning signals.” • Warren Ellis, author of Gun Machine and Transmetropolitan • “Are the robots eating our jobs? Will technology set us free? These questions aren’t new, but Frase’s approach to answering them is refreshingly inventive. Four Futures is a thought-provoking work of political speculation. This incisive little book offers the vital reminder that nothing is set in stone or silicon and that in order to fight for a better world we first need to be able to imagine it.” • Astra Taylor, author of The People’s Platform • “Brexit looms. Trump leers. Populism shouts. Reactionary politics casts long shadows. The right and left tear at themselves and stretch outwards. International tensions simmer. This seems like an appropriate moment for re-envisioning, and contributions to this process are arriving at some pace. Peter Frase’s engaging short book is another addition to this collective reimagining.” • David Beer, OpenDemocracy • “Frase deserves great credit for illuminating the possibilities our politics, technology, and environment now enable and constrain. Simultaneously entertaining and deep, Four Futures should inspire more social science fiction.” • Frank Pasquale, Commonweal

Peter Frase is an editor at Jacobin magazine, a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center, and has written for In These Times and Al Jazeera. He lives in New York City.

Nice work, exploring four scenarios for the future, which of course are already present in society just not widely distributed. Compelling, references to different science fiction; dystopias and utopias bolster his arguments and make the work very accessible. It’s very clear which of the 4 futures makes sense to Peter, and to me so if you are looking for an unbiased view - this isn’t it.

I have bought several copies of the book to share with friends and my granddaughter. This is an excellent book which lays out four possible scenarios to contemplate the future. It is a very readable and thoughtful book. The author has a good grasp of Marxism and unlike many Marxists knows how to apply Marxist ideas to the problems we are facing today. The author adds humor and examples from popular culture which makes the book very readable. As the author states, "I hope to reclaim the long left-wing tradition of mixing imaginative speculation with political economy." I think he does

this very successfully. The author's idea to decommodify labor and have a universal basic income are compelling ideas for the future.

I found this very thought provoking and logically laid out. The author does not try to predict a specific future but rather lays out various factors and four extremes, with the reality being probably some blend of them.

great

One of the few books I've managed to finish and a truly haunting vision of the logical consequences of our current social structure.

Really loved the thought experiment and I'm glad it stayed at that. I would recommend this to anyone interested in getting a hard glimpse at the reality of what COULD be parts of our future

A timely book given the struggle for political direction in the U.S. and around the world. The 4-cell matrix or quadrant framework provides an excellent starting point to think about options or alternatives and what might be. There are many ways to become engaged in setting a direction of interest to you and this framework and discussion will help anyone think more clearly about our common future.

Great

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