

THE CREATION AND IMPACT OF ROBOT VISIONS AS KEY ELEMENT OF TECHNOSCIENTIFIC FUTURES

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Abstract:

When talking about the study of possible futures, it is hard to avoid mentioning robots. Robots and robotic technology play a major role in many imaginaries and visions of future societies, with envisionings of human-robot interactions in every aspect of daily life. Imaginaries of robots are also used to answer large societal crises, in the European context especially the nursing crisis. Robots in general are often framed as help in challenging scenarios, for example as aid in reactor accidents, to solve loneliness, or to save industries.

In this panel, we want to discuss the creation and impact of such technoscientific futures of robots in society. We welcome talks about nationwide socio-technological imaginaries, e.g. the robotics policies of Japan or Korea, as well as about visions of robotic futures and their consequences, current or historical. Moreover, we want to talk about the real-world materialization of these visions and imaginaries, especially in the form of concrete scenarios and prototyping practices. We are particularly interested in examining prototyping practices as moments where imaginaries, concrete restrictions, as well as the "mangle of practice" of socio-material innovation, intermingle. In robotics research and development particularly, prototypes are an amalgamation of discursive forces, political desires, available technologies, and opportunities for "user contact." But also video prototypes, visualizations or pop cultural references play a crucial role in both connecting technology to societal visions and at the same time narrowing down the corridor of possible use scenarios of robotic applications. We are seeking theoretical, empirical, and practical examples of the creation, construction, and shaping of the technoscientific futures of robotics.

Key words:

Robot, Robotics, Human-Robot Interaction