

Creative Connections: Fiction, Futures Studies, and Leadership (for the future)

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Background – “Agenda”

- Exponential developments make current approaches to **leadership** obsolete.
- Leaders and followers need to engage in **futures perspectives** (Mengel, 2017, 2019)
- **Fiction writing** has contributed significantly to the field of futures studies (Lombardo, 2018).
- Kim Stanley Robinson (e.g., Mars Trilogy and The Martians 1992 – 1999) helped us immerse into adventures in space – and make creative connections

Assumptions - “The present is under attack”

- “The present is under attack” (Avanessian & Malik, 2016) – Abyss of complexity
 - Integration, diversity, and change – inclusion
 - Walls, fences, law and order – exclusion
- Potential and existing responses (Scharmer, 2016)
 - “Paddling backwards”
 - “Muddling through”
 - “Moving forward”
- Creatively diversifying adaptive and systems leadership
 - “connect big drivers of change” across systems
 - “be the change” – from adaptors to actors

Leadership - Contemporary Approaches

ARTS OF LEADERSHIP

Establish creative connections between an identity (**philosophical arts**), a strategic vision (**fine arts**), organizational tactics (**martial arts**), and persuasive communication (**performing arts**) (Grint, 2000).

VALUES-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP

Emphasizes the significance of co-discovering and co-creating **values and meaning** for leadership and organizations. Focus on holistic and creative thinking in the **context of uncertainty**. Developing “**adaptive capacity**”, the foundation for “**intuitive leaps**”, and the ability to **tolerate and sustain ambiguity** (Mengel & Thomas, 2004; Mengel et al., 2009; Thomas & Mengel, 2014).

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP:

Mobilize people to **address difficult challenges** that require change through **adaptation** (Heifetz et al., 2009).

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP:

Catalyze **collective leadership** with “commitment for the health of the whole”: see the **larger system**, reflect, and **co-create the future** (Senge et al., 2015).

Leadership - Emerging Post-Contemporary Paradigms 1

- 2015/16 publications: **Critical, emerging and converging themes** addressing leadership challenges

LEADERSHIP 2050 (International Leadership Association, 2015):

- QUANTUM LEADERSHIP: Consider **scientific paradigms** resulting from chaos and complexity theories (Piel & Johnson, 2015; Wheatley, 1999,2006).
- MURMURATION LEADERSHIP: Humanizing the workplace and focus on “we-leadership” (future scenarios developed with strategic foresight). **Focus on people in evolving and temporary organizations.** Developed as one of four scenarios (Suderman & Foster, 2015)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Starling_murmuration.jpg



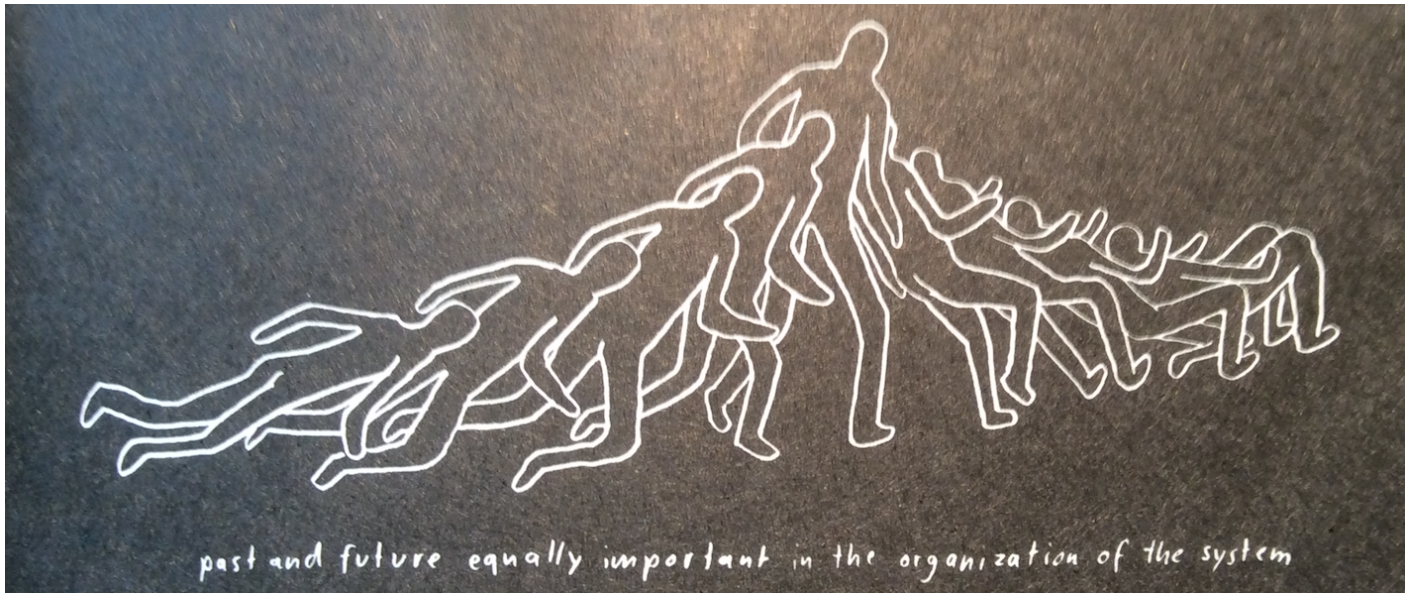
HOMO DEUS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FUTURE:

We are invited to “think in far more imaginative ways about our future” and **let go of our conditioning by the past.** We need to develop responses to challenges resulting from upgrading homo sapiens to “homo deus” through “biological engineering, cyborg engineering, and engineering of non-organic beings” (Harari, 2016).

Leadership - Emerging Post-Contemporary Paradigms 2

THE TIME COMPLEX - POSTCONTEMPORARY:

The present is perforated and the “time complex” has been disturbed by atavisms and anachronisms; **past and future merge eliminating the present** (as space and time of resistance) and resulting in a **new, modal, interconnected interpretation of time**. We live in a “**speculative time structure**” where “future happens before the present” and the “**postcontemporary**” conceptualizes **transformative, speculative, poetic actions and pragmatics towards an “open future”** instead of an “automated future” (Avanessian & Malik, 2016; photo: p. 65).

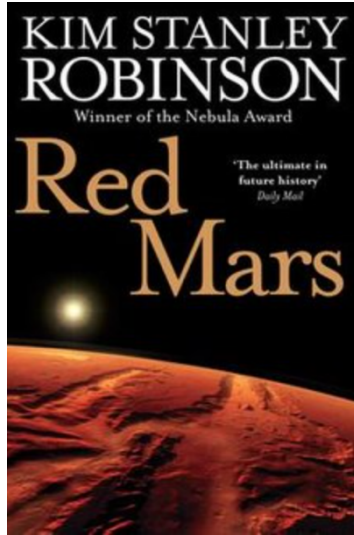


“Dawn of the Post-Contemporary”

“The Post-Contemporary program asserts that creativity is needed, that the universe’s storehouse of great and resonant images is not yet exhausted, that the species that gave us the unsettling dimness of Velazquez’s *Las Meninas*, the demanding and redeeming light of Caravaggio’s *Calling of St. Matthew*, the fearfully patterned flames of Botticelli’s *Inferno*, or even the blinding spike of broken glass that arcs across Hunt’s *Lady of Shalott* - that that species is not finished creating great things and, in fact, that nothing less than great things is what we ought to demand of ourselves” ([Maidman, 2016](#)).

Fiction: K.S. Robinson – Leadership in Mars Trilogy I

1992



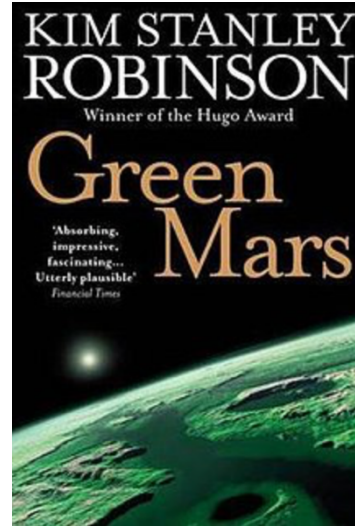
Colonization - 2026

Conflicts and refuge

Transnational control
from Earth

Frank vs. John, and Maya

1993



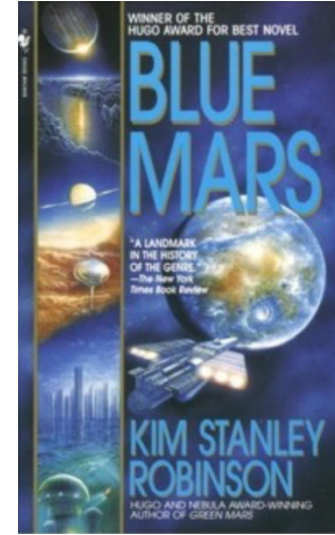
Terraformation – 2120s

Resistance and second
Revolution

Political autonomy

Sax and Maya

1996



Transformation – 2220s

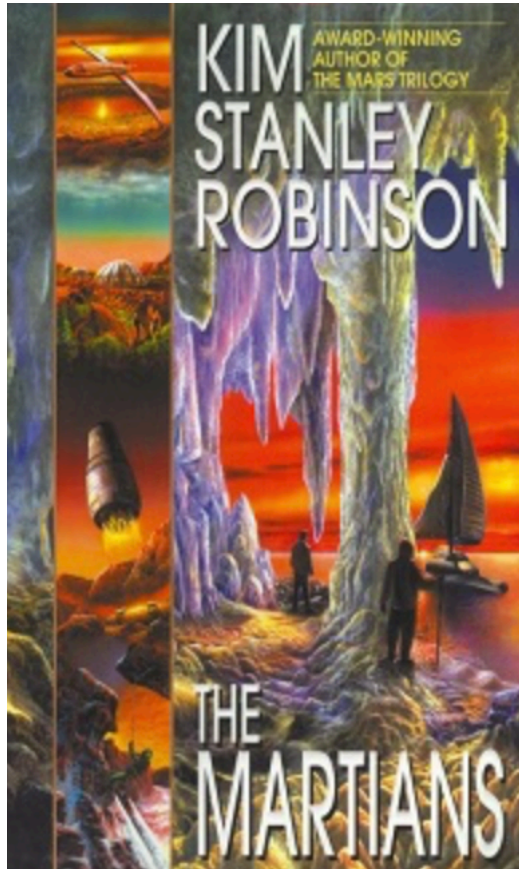
Spreading of civilization
through space

Transglobal harmony
and security

Ann, Sax, Maya, and Nadya

Fiction: K.S. Robinson – Leadership in The Martians

1999



Spanning timeframe of Mars Trilogy

Exploring

- Power of transnational corporations (transnats)
- Democratization of transnats
- Genetic engineering (adaptation and side effects)
- Longevity (survival and psychological effects on memory loss, personality change, mental instability, and existential boredom)

→ Leadership as explorations

Imagine... Potential Elements of a Model of POCO-Contemporary LEADERSHIP 1

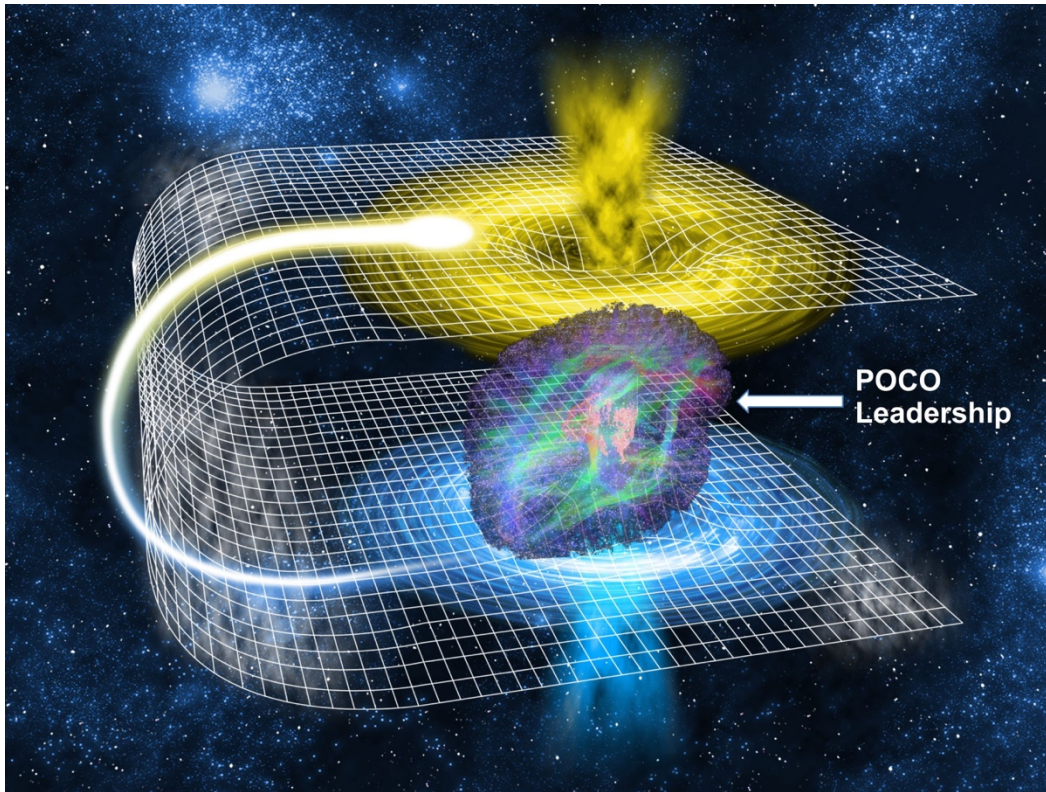


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Complex and highly adaptive system floating in the multi-dimensional time-space (dis-) continuum of co-existing values, states, and modes:

- local – global – trans spatial
- Intra – inter – trans personal – trans gender – trans human
- past (future) – present (past) (future) – future (past)
- claim – enable – fail – sustain – disclaim
- disruptive – poetic – co creative – synthetic – integrative
- dynamic – fluid – elastic – plastic
- emergence – design – change
- structure – process – influence – relationship – system(s)
- resisting – following – participating – facilitating – leading

Imagine... Potential Elements of a Model of POC Contemporary LEADERSHIP 2

Examples of PoCo Followership and Leadership attitudes, skills, and behaviours:

- local – **global** – trans spatial: Imagine the future, act globally, consider the local
- **Intra** – inter – **trans personal** – trans gender – **trans human**: Empathize with and consider on all levels/ from all perspectives; shared decision-making/problem-solving/leadership across human/non-human systems; focus on relationships and relational aspects
- past (future) – **present (past) (future)** – future (past): Imagine and consider non-linear developments; coexistence
- **claim** – enable – **fail** – sustain – **disclaim**: leadership as risky choreographic artistry
- **disruptive** – poetic – **co creative** – synthetic – **integrative**: open minds by disrupting the “traditional” while creating and integrating the unexpected
- dynamic – **fluid** – elastic – **plastic**: move, shake, and shape
- emergence – **design** – change: listen and respond; dance the dance of followership
- **structure** – process – **influence** – relationship – **system(s)**: multi-level and multi-dimensional follower- and leadership:...
- resisting – **following** – participating – **facilitating** – leading:...oscillating between various modes of participation



<https://www.faithandleadership.com/nathan-kirkpatrick-trapeze-artists-fly-through-air-holding-trust>

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