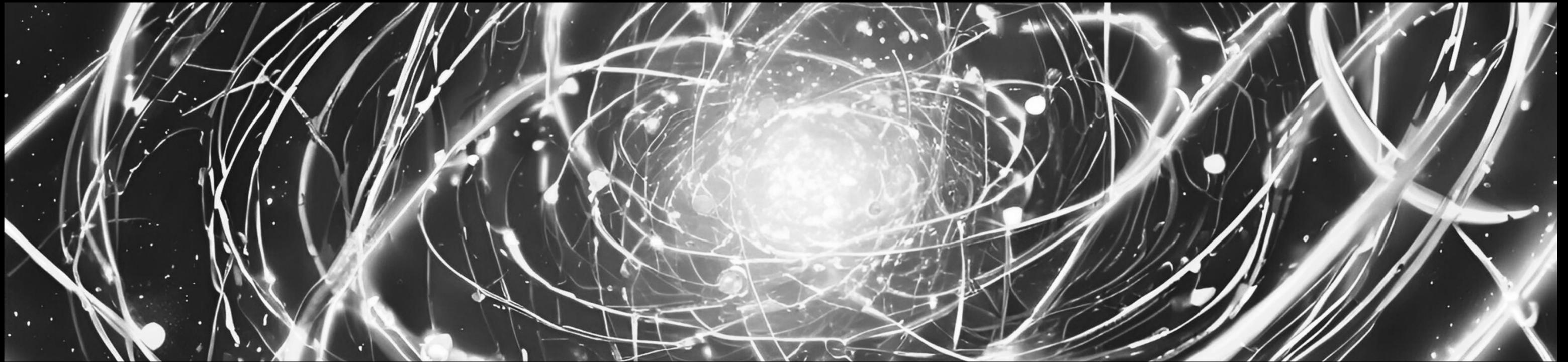


ENTANGLED TOMORROWS

HARNESSING QUANTUM INSIGHT FOR DYNAMIC FORESIGHT



A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT FOR PSYCHOLOGY OF FUTURES
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON FORESIGHT PROGRAM

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"In the quantum world, the future affects the past. In a very real sense, the future causes the present. The universe is built like a supercomputer, where future and past are calculated together."

**MICHIO
KAKU**



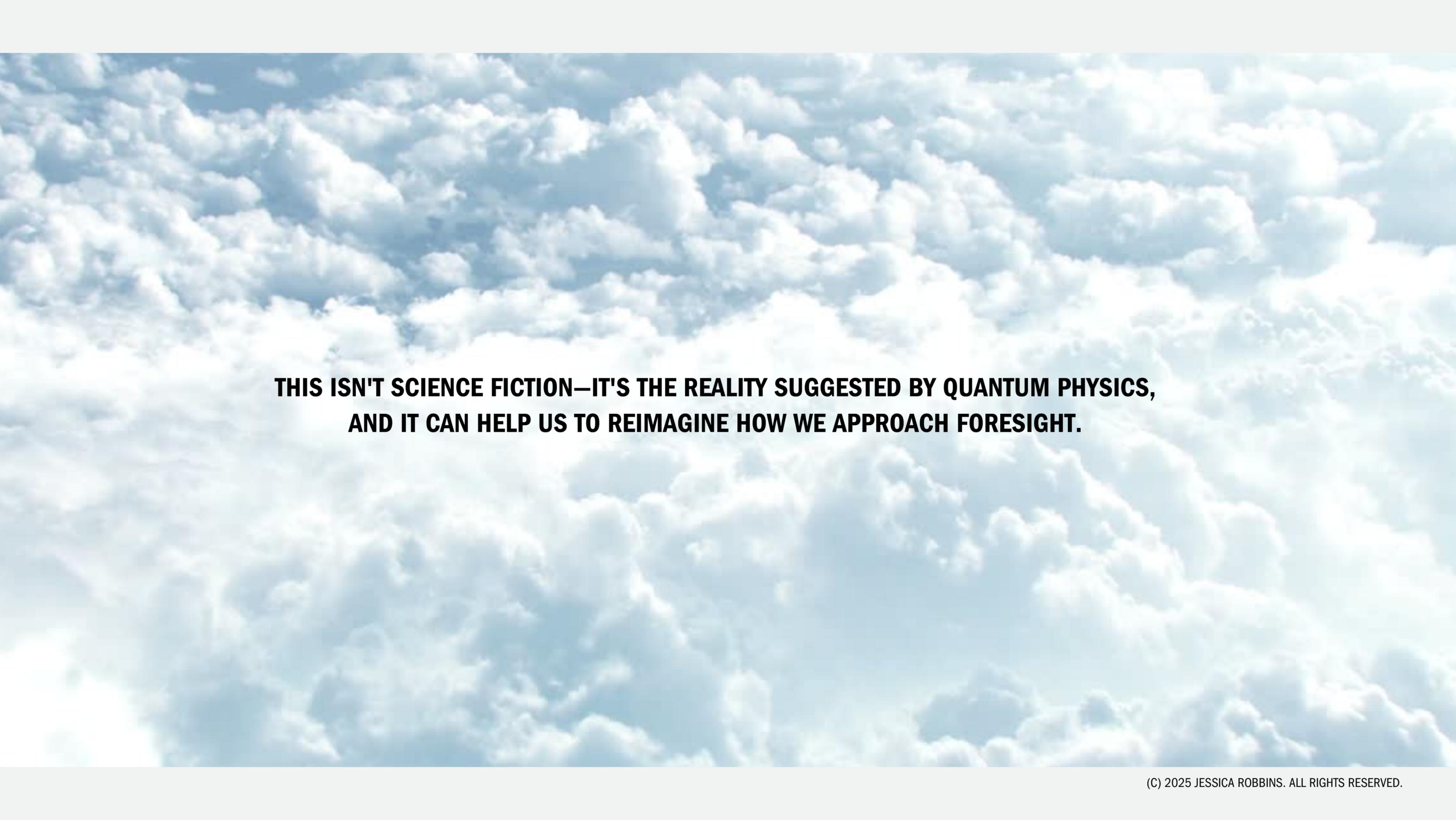
FORESIGHT PHILOSOPHY

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**IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE THE FUTURE ISN'T A DISTANT, PREDETERMINED
DESTINATION, BUT A DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE OF POSSIBILITIES THAT WE ACTIVELY
SHAPE WITH EVERY THOUGHT AND ACTION.**



**THIS ISN'T SCIENCE FICTION—IT'S THE REALITY SUGGESTED BY QUANTUM PHYSICS,
AND IT CAN HELP US TO REIMAGINE HOW WE APPROACH FORESIGHT.**



QUANTUM FUTURES

In an age where change outpaces prediction and complexity defies simplification, we find ourselves ill-equipped. It's time for a paradigm shift. This thought experiment extracts my inner exploration and integration of much of my studies to date.

The application of quantum concepts to futures thinking allows us to hold multiple, even contradictory scenarios in mind simultaneously, increasing our flexibility and broadening our perspective. This superposition of futures helps us avoid premature closure on any single outcome.

Furthermore, by recognizing the entanglement of various futures and stakeholders, we may emphasize the importance of collaborative exploration and participatory foresight methods. This approach acknowledges that the very act of exploring futures changes both the explorer and the futures themselves, fostering personal and collective growth. We expand our shared understanding and create new possibilities by developing cognitive flexibility, systems thinking, and empathy. In essence, this quantum-inspired journey of co-creation offers a powerful toolkit for navigating the complexities of our entangled tomorrows.

VALUES-DRIVEN

A values-centric framework acts as a compass, guiding us through the complex landscape of potential futures and ensuring that our work remains meaningful and impactful. In a field often criticized for being too abstract or detached from real-world concerns, our approach grounds futures thinking in tangible human values, making it more relatable, actionable, and ultimately, transformative.



PURSUE EXCELLENCE

Striving for the highest quality in futures work.

+Knowledge



FIND WONDER

Maintaining curiosity and awe in exploring potential futures

+Learning



ENRICH LIFE

Ensuring our work contributes positively to individuals and society

+Wisdom

SUPERPOSITION IN FUTURES THINKING

Quantum concept:

Particles existing in multiple states simultaneously

Application to futures:

Holding multiple, even contradictory, future scenarios in mind

Benefits:

Increased flexibility, broader perspective, avoidance of premature closure

CO-CREATION & ENTANGLEMENT

Quantum concept:

Entangled particles influencing each other instantaneously

Application to futures:

Recognizing the interconnectedness of various futures and stakeholders

Approach:

Collaborative futures exploration, participatory foresight methods

MUTUAL GROWTH THROUGH FUTURES EXPLORATION

**THE PROCESS OF EXPLORING FUTURES IS
INHERENTLY TRANSFORMATIVE, ACTING AS A
CATALYST FOR BOTH PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE
EVOLUTION.**

As we engage with potential futures, we don't merely observe; we interact, shaping these possibilities even as they reshape us. This dynamic interplay fosters personal growth, honing our cognitive flexibility, systems thinking, and empathy—skills crucial for navigating an increasingly complex world. Simultaneously, it drives collective growth by expanding our shared understanding and creating new possibilities.

As diverse perspectives converge in the exploration of futures, we co-create a richer, more nuanced view of what could be. This mutual transformation—of both the explorer and the explored—underscores the profound power of futures thinking as a tool not just for prediction, but for active participation in shaping our collective destiny.

METHOD & MADNESS

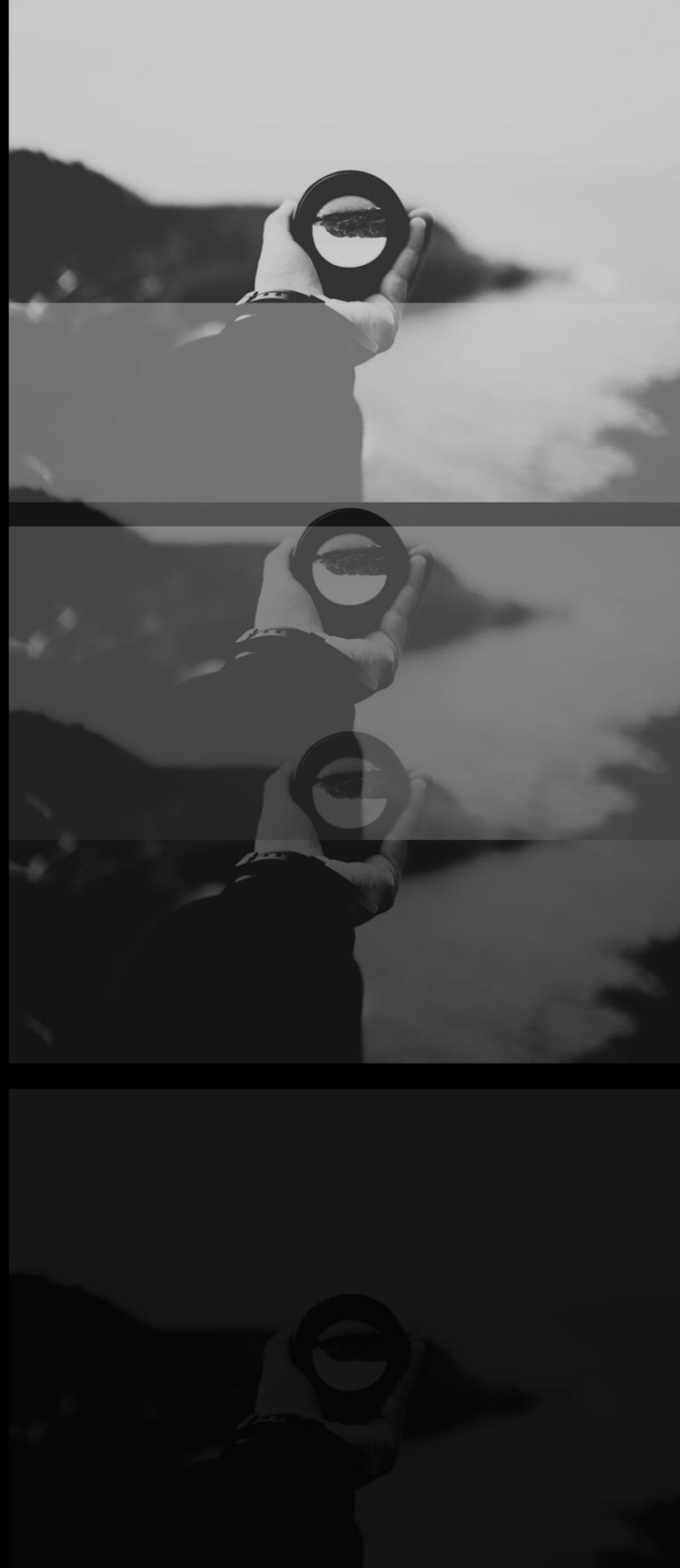
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INTEGRATING QUANTUM CONCEPTS WITH FUTURES WORK

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EMPATHY AND THE OBSERVER EFFECT

The Observer Effect in quantum physics parallels how our exploration of futures shapes those futures. This realization emphasizes the responsibility we bear in the co-creative process of envisioning futures. It calls for deep empathy in futures work, acknowledging our active role in influencing potential outcomes.

SYSTEMS THINKING AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Quantum entanglement serves as a metaphor for the interconnected nature of complex systems in our world. This concept encourages us to view futures as part of an interconnected web of possibilities. Embracing systems thinking in futures work allows us to better understand the ripple effects of decisions and envision more holistic futures.

CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING THROUGH SUPERPOSITION

The quantum principle of superposition offers a model for holding multiple, even contradictory futures in mind simultaneously. This approach fosters cognitive flexibility and innovative thinking in futures work. By embracing superposition, we can break free from linear thinking and explore a richer landscape of potential solutions and scenarios.

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EMPATHY, CO-CREATION & PARTICIPATORY FUTURES



Co-creation in futures work embraces uncertainty, fosters inclusive exploration of multiple futures, and recognizes that our participation actively shapes the outcomes we envision.

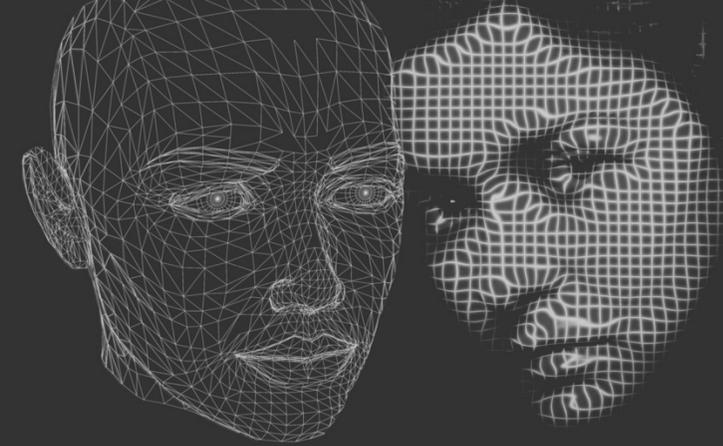
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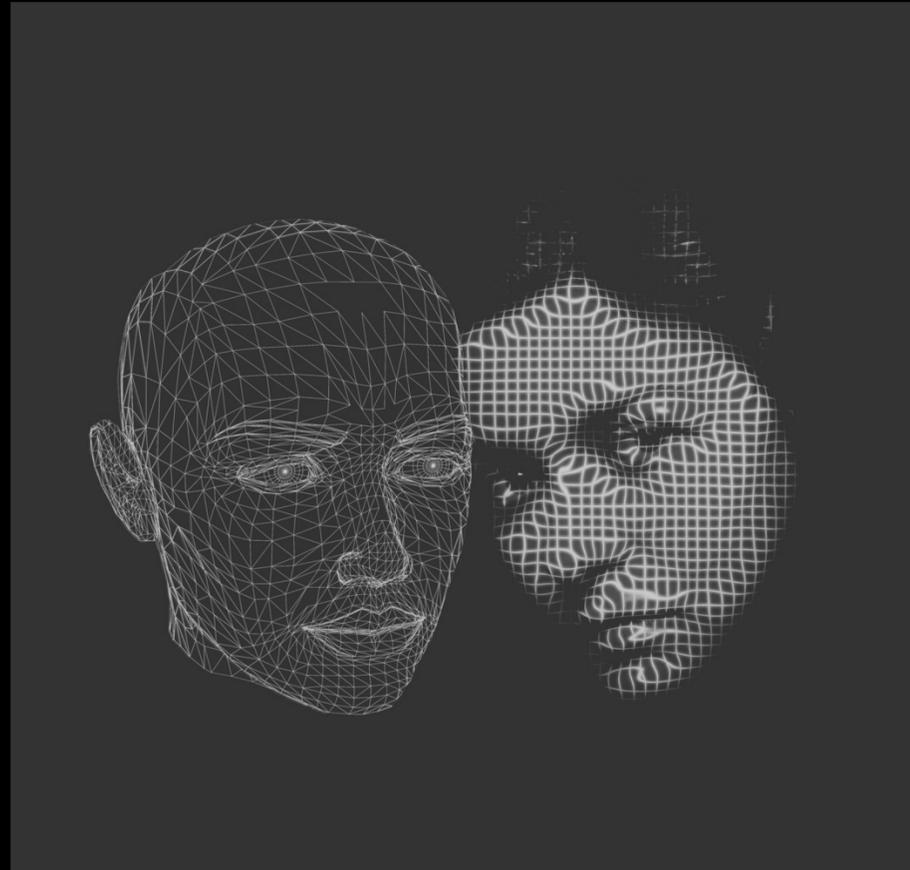
CREATIVE PROBLEM- SOLVING IN PARADIGM SHIFTS

Creative problem-solving in futures work is enhanced by superposition thinking, allowing us to hold multiple, even contradictory ideas simultaneously, which fosters innovation by expanding the landscape of possible solutions.



This quantum-inspired approach enables us to address complex challenges by embracing ambiguity and leveraging the creative tension between different perspectives, ultimately leading to more robust and adaptive strategies for navigating paradigm shifts.

By applying these quantum concepts to foresight, we can transcend traditional problem-solving methods and unlock novel approaches to shaping our collective futures.



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EMBRACING COMPLEXITY & UNCERTAINTY

HOLDING MULTIPLE, CONTRADICTORY FUTURE SCENARIOS SIMULTANEOUSLY

Inspired by quantum superposition, we embrace complexity by maintaining multiple potential futures in mind concurrently. This approach enhances our ability to navigate uncertainty by considering a broader range of possibilities, even when they seem contradictory.

THE ART OF ALLOWING— BALANCING ORDER AND FREEDOM

We acknowledge the inherent uncertainty in complex systems by creating flexible frameworks that provide direction while allowing for emergence. This balance between structure and adaptability helps us navigate unpredictable environments more effectively.

AVOIDING PREMATURE COMMITMENT TO SINGLE FUTURES

Recognizing the dynamic nature of complex systems, we resist the urge to settle on a single future scenario too early. This openness to multiple outcomes helps us remain adaptable in the face of uncertainty and unexpected developments.

SYSTEMS THINKING & INTERCON- NECTEDNESS

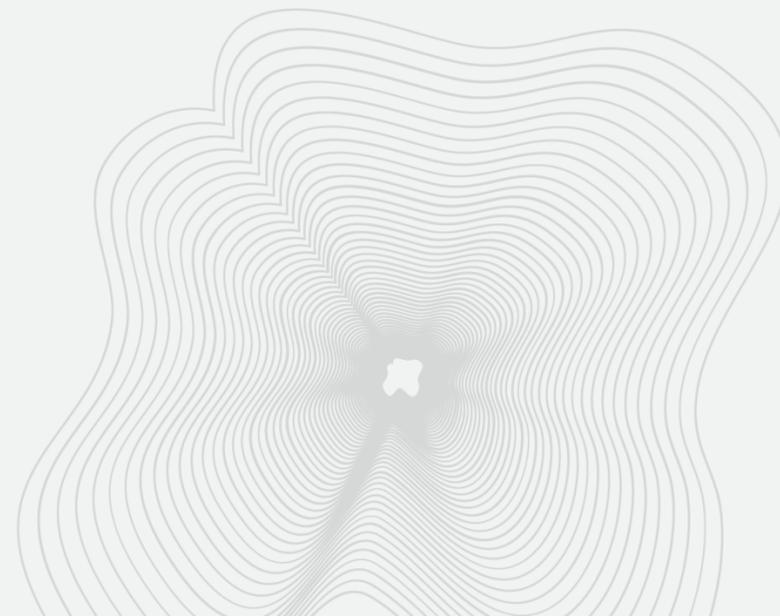
SYSTEMS THINKING IN FUTURES WORK DRAWS PARALLELS WITH QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT, RECOGNIZING DEEP INTERCONNECTIONS THAT RESHAPE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND COLLECTIVE PURPOSES.

Just as entangled particles influence each other instantaneously regardless of distance, elements in complex systems can have far-reaching and immediate effects on each other. The holistic nature of quantum entanglement mirrors the interconnected web of relationships in systems thinking, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of futures challenges us to reconsider our individual and collective identities in a broader, more interrelated context. This interconnected perspective encourages us to redefine our purposes and goals in terms of their systemic impacts and contributions to shared futures.

Wheatley notes in her book *Leadership and the New Science* that "In the quantum world, relationship is the key determiner of everything." This mirrors how entangled particles and elements in complex systems influence each other, emphasizing interconnectedness. Wheatley challenges us to "move from seeing ourselves as separate selves and see ourselves as connected to all others." This aligns with reconsidering our identities in the context of interconnected futures (2006).

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“We are constantly creating the world – evoking it from many potentials – as we participate in all its many interactions.”

MARGARET J. WHEATLEY





NON-LINEAR THINKING & COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY

Non-linear thinking in futures work challenges us to move beyond simple cause-and-effect chains, recognizing that small actions can trigger cascading, unpredictable changes in complex systems. This approach cultivates cognitive agility, enabling us to navigate multiple potential realities and develop a 'quantum readiness' that transforms uncertainty from a threat into a playground of possibilities. In essence, futures work isn't about predicting a single trajectory, but about **preparing our minds to resonate** with the vibrating strings of multiple tomorrows.

DESIGNING FOR THE PLURIVERSE

-A. ESCOBAR

INCORPORATING ESCOBAR'S PHILOSOPHY INTO FUTURES THINKING ALLOWS US TO APPROACH OUR WORK WITH HUMILITY AND CARE, EMBRACING THE RICHNESS OF PLURAL, ENTANGLED TOMORROWS.

Relational Futures: Emphasizes designing for coexistence, interdependence, and mutual flourishing rather than universal solutions.

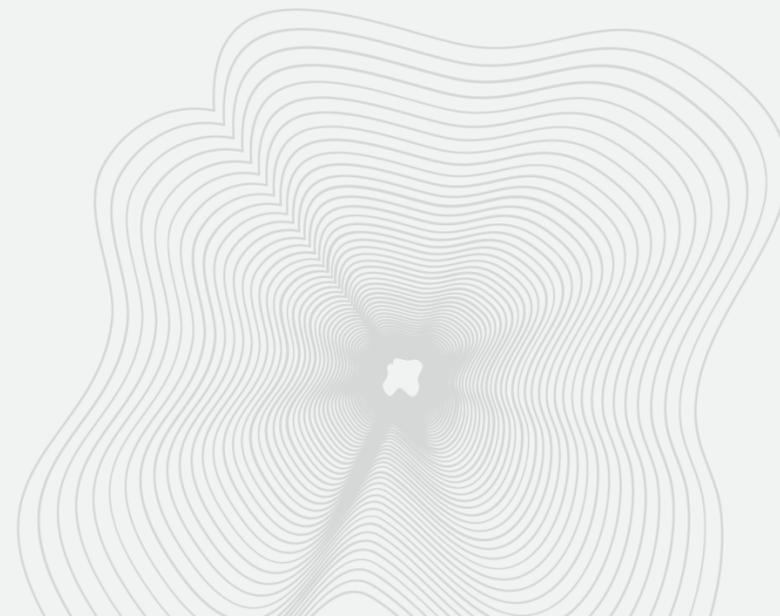
Decolonizing Design: Challenges dominant narratives of progress and modernity, advocating for diverse ways of knowing, being, and creating.

Autonomy and Plurality: Calls for embracing multiple worlds, cultures, and practices as equally valid pathways to shared futures.

Reworlding Futures: Envisions design as a tool to reshape relationships between humans, nature, and technology.

Living Systems Thinking: Focuses on designing within the context of ecosystems, recognizing their dynamic, interconnected nature.

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EMPATHY/IDENTITY PARADOX

Identity-Centered Resilience	Empathy-Driven Adaptation	Superposition
Emphasize the importance of core values as anchors during change	Recognize how our observations and interactions shape future outcomes	Explore how empathy can inform and strengthen organizational identity
Demonstrate how a strong identity facilitates exploration of multiple futures	Use empathy as a guide through paradigm shifts in futures work	Illustrate how a strong identity enables deeper empathy with stakeholders
Show how identity can be leveraged for meaningful, authentic adaptation	Create inclusive spaces for diverse perspectives and potential futures	Highlight the dynamic interplay between adapting to others and self-consistency

WOLDRDBREAKERS & TIMEBENDERS

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Martha Rogers & Alan Tough - 'The Future is Not For Wimps' (1996)

**"OUR IDEAS
LITERALLY TEAR
OTHER PEOPLE'S
WORLDS APART"**

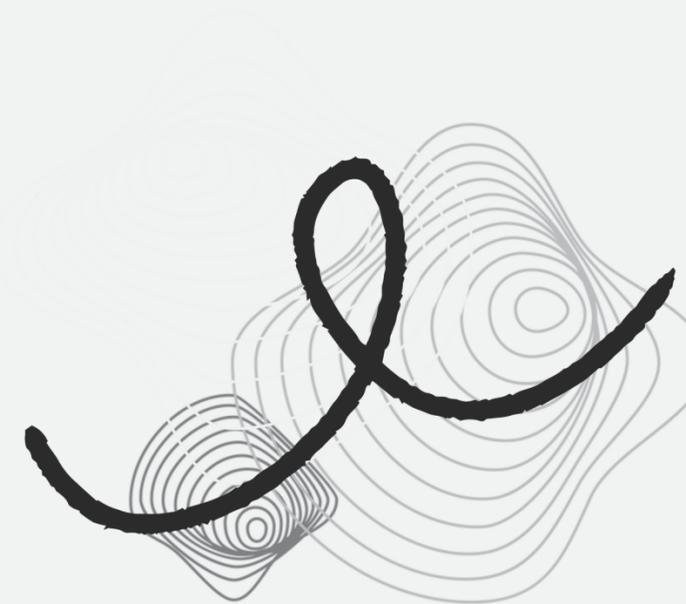
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As futurists, we are "Worldbreakers," introducing ideas that can fundamentally disrupt people's existing worldviews. This role comes with a profound responsibility to recognize the impact of our work and to approach it with empathy and care.



As "Timebenders," we challenge linear notions of time and causality, embracing the quantum-inspired non-linearity in futures work. This perspective allows us to envision and co-create more dynamic, interconnected futures that transcend traditional temporal boundaries.

WE MUST

CREATE WELCOMING SPACES IN PARADIGM SHIFTS

To balance our role as Worldbreakers, we must create welcoming spaces for others to explore and adapt to new paradigms. This involves using our empathy-driven approach and superposition thinking to ease transitions, allowing people to hold both old and new worldviews simultaneously as they adjust.

SYNTHESIZE QUANTUM CONCEPTS INTO A FUTURES FRAMEWORK

By applying quantum principles like superposition, entanglement, and the observer effect to foresight, we unlock new ways of thinking about and shaping the future. This synthesis offers a unique, powerful approach to navigating the complexities and uncertainties of tomorrow.

EMPOWER OTHERS TO NAVIGATE COMPLEX FUTURE SCENARIOS

Our role extends beyond envisioning futures to empowering others with the tools and mindsets needed to thrive in uncertainty. By fostering cognitive flexibility and adaptability, we help individuals and organizations become active co-creators of their futures rather than passive recipients.

QUANTUM TOOLKIT

Selection of Quantum-Aligned Foresight and Futures Thinking Tools



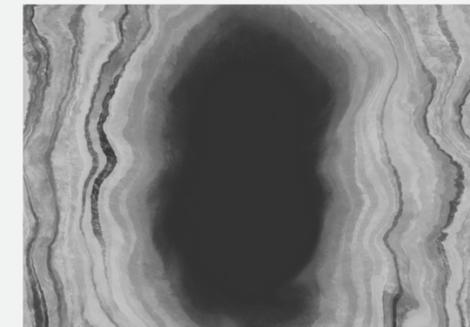
Causal Layers Analysis (CLA)

This method explores multiple layers of understanding, similar to the concept of superposition.



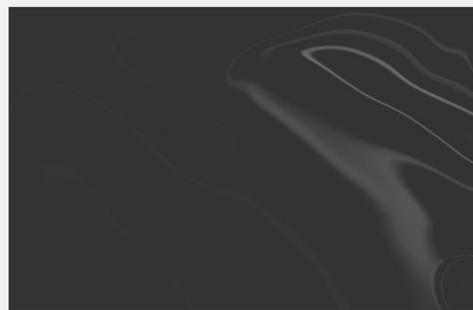
Scenario Planning with Wildcards

Incorporates unexpected, high-impact events, reflecting quantum unpredictability.



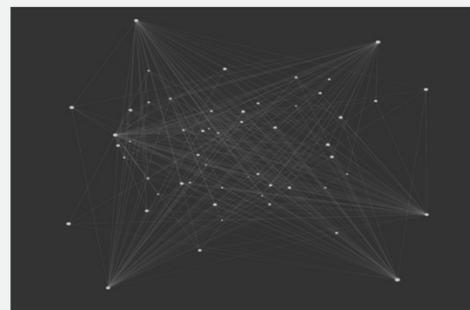
Manoa/Futures Wheels

Maps interconnected consequences of trends or events, mirroring quantum entanglement.



Three Horizons Framework:

Considers multiple time horizons simultaneously, akin to quantum superposition of states.



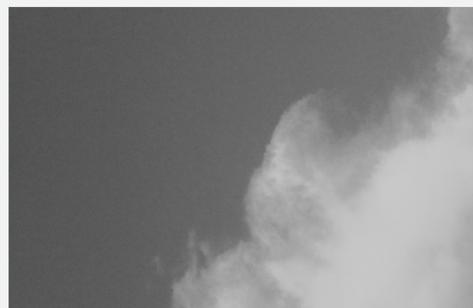
Appreciative Inquiry

Focuses on positive possibilities, aligning with the idea of collapsing wave functions into desired outcomes.



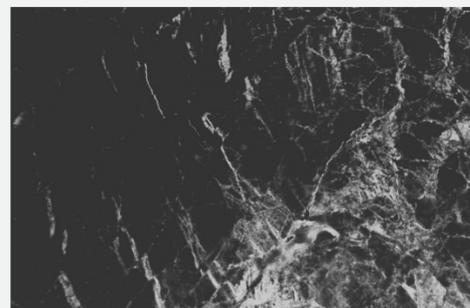
Integral Futures

Incorporates multiple ways of knowing, similar to complementarity in quantum physics.



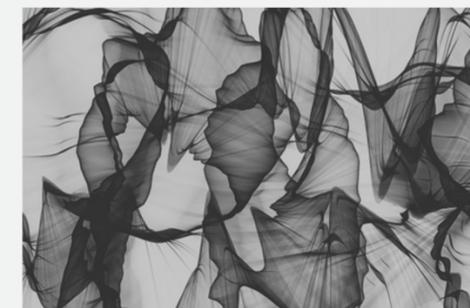
Theory U - Absencing/Presencing

Incorporates multiple ways of knowing, similar to complementarity in quantum physics.



Affective Foresight

Considers emotional aspects of futures, which could be related to quantum entanglement in terms of interconnected experiences.



Futures Triangle

This approach considers multiple forces shaping the future, which could be seen as analogous to quantum entanglement and interconnectedness.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

Participatory futures engagement called
the *Quantum Ad Lab Experience*

*Entangled Tomorrows and Quantum
Futures Thought Leadership*

Quantum Futures Toolkit

Development of the Empathy/Identity Paradox

Ongoing Research:
Quantum Futures
Future of Quantum

QUESTIONS?

**IS THE FUTURE QUANTUM,
OR IS QUANTUM, FUTURES?**

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JESS ROBBINS

Strategist

About the Creator

I've been working with teams for more than 16 years to anticipate and explore opportunities and capture value at the intersection of design, culture, marketing, technology, and business. I use my deep understanding of branding and experience to partner with technology and business experts to provide strategic consulting across innovation & growth, insights, brand experience, product management, digital strategy, and business and organizational design disciplines.

At the end of the day, I am a creative, curious human and futures enthusiast dedicated to making space for the ideas and transformative experiences that will shape our world.

I currently serve as the Managing Partner at Saxum, where I lead cross-functional teams in moving important work forward with emerging tech and disruptive, innovative strategies and the principal strategist at FutureJess, a design futures consultancy.

Entangled Tomorrows: Harnessing Superposition for a Dynamic Foresight is an original thought experiment produced by Jess Robbins for Psychology of Futures at the University of Houston Foresight Program (2024).



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