Philosophers' Science Fiction / Speculative Fiction Recommendations, Organized by Contributor
June 8, 2015

Eric Schwitzgebel

In September and October, 2014, I gathered recommendations of "philosophically interesting" science fiction – or "speculative fiction" (SF), more broadly construed – from thirty-four professional philosophers and from two prominent SF authors with graduate training in philosophy. Each contributor recommended ten works of speculative fiction and wrote a brief "pitch" gesturing toward the interest of the work. In the past several months, seven more contributors have added lists, bringing the total to 41 (plus one co-contributor).

Below is the list of recommendations, organized by last name of recommender. Another version of the list is organized by author (for prose) or director (for film), with the most commonly recommended authors/directors listed first.

The recommenders, in alphabetical order below, are David John Baker, Scott Bakker, Steve Bein, Sara Bernstein, Ben Blumson, Rachael Briggs, Matthew Brophy, Ross Cameron, Joe Campbell, Mason Cash, David Chalmers, Stephen Clark, Ellen Clarke, Helen De Cruz, Johan De Smedt, Josh Dever, Kenny Easwaran, Simon Evnine, Simon Fokt, Keith Frankish, Steven Horst, Troy Jollimore, Eric Kaplan, Jonathan Kaplan, Brian Keeley, David Killoren & Derrick Murphy, Amy Kind, Pete Mandik, Ryan Nichols, Paul Oppenheimer, Adriano Palma, Lewis Powell, Ina Roy-Faderman, Susan Schneider, Eric Schwitzgebel, Mark Silcox Meghan Sullivan, Christy Mag Uidhir, Jonathan Weinberg, Dylan Wittkower, and Audrey Yap.

List from **David John Baker** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Michigan, and SF writer):

- **Dan Simmons, *Hyperion*** (novel, 1989). The best science fiction novel I've ever read, a treasure of the genre. It isn't philosophical throughout, but the chapter titled "The Scholar's Tale" contains a lot of interesting philosophy of religion.
- **C.J. Cherryh, *Cyteen*** (novel, 1988). Nature/nurture and personal identity questions are central to an absorbing plot.
- **Gene Wolfe, *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*** (novel, 1972). Revolves around a fascinating question at the border between philosophy and psychology. Revealing the question would spoil the plot.
- **John C. Wright, *The Golden Age* (and sequels *The Phoenix Exultant* and *The Golden Transcendence*)** (novels 2002-2003). A well-thought-out posthuman libertarian utopia. (Also a deeply sexist novel, I'm afraid.)
- **Stephen Baxter, *Manifold Time*** (novel, 1999). The plot of this book revolves around the doomsday argument! Also features some interesting detail about time and quantum physics, although much of it is distorted for fictional effect.
- **John Varley, *The Ophiuchi Hotline*** (novel, 1977). Hinges on some wonderful thought experiments about personal identity, free will and the nature of intelligence.

- **John Kessel, "Stories for Men"** (short story, 2002). Fascinating piece about gender. Examines a civilization in which women are privileged in something like the way our civilization privileges men.
- **Ted Chiang, "The Truth of Fact, The Truth of Feeling"** (short story, 2013). One of Chiang's most philosophical stories, which is saying a lot. Examines the unreliability of memory. If I had more room for a longer list, at least half of Chiang's stories would be on it.
- **Ariel Djanikian, *The Office of Mercy*** (novel, 2013). Recent novel by a first-time author. A utilitarian civilization ruthlessly acts out its principles on a grand scale. Hard to say if this is a utopia or a dystopia.
- **Greg Bear, *Queen of Angels* (and sequel *Slant*)** (novels, 1990 and 1997). Another morally ambiguous utopia. A civilization which treats violent deviants with therapy rather than punishment.

List from **Scott Bakker** (SF writer and **blogger** who did graduate work in philosophy at Vanderbilt):

- **Jonathan Glazer, *Under the Skin*** (movie, 2013).Terrifying meditation on different kinds of meat, alien and human, inhabiting different kinds of skin.
- **Spike Jonze, *Her*** (movie, 2013). The single most believable cinematic portrayal of the quotidian consequences of AGI.
- **George F. Slavin and Stanley Adams, "The Mark of Gideon," *Star Trek* original series** (TV episode, 1969). Wonderful example of the way manipulating frames of epistemological reference can drive human behaviour.
- **Frank Herbert, *Dune*** (novel, 1965). Famed meditation on individual exceptionality, politics, and religion.
- **Frank Herbert and Bill Ransom, *The Jesus Incident*** (novel, 1979). The real story of the real Pandora (as opposed to James Cameron's imperialistic pastiche), pitting organic and technological intelligences at multiple levels.
- **Paul Verhoeven (and Edward Neumeier), *Starship Troopers*** (movie, 1997). The fascistic tropes of American military narratives spoofed too well to be appreciated by American critics or audiences.
- **Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, *The Mote In God's Eye*** (movie, 1974). First contact, not so much between species, as between technical intelligences (corresponding to the angels and devils of our own scientific natures).
- **William Gibson, *Neuromancer*** (novel, 1984). Watershed novel credited with euthanizing the Myth of Progess in science fiction.
- **Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*** (novel, 2006). The culinary fate of intentionality après le Deluge.
- **Scott Bakker, *Neuropath*** (novel, 2008). Because everybody's gotta eat, Semantic Apocalypse or no!

List from **Steve Bein** (SF writer and philosophy teacher at Texas State University)

- **Ted Chiang, "Liking What You See"** (short story, 2002). A meditation on beauty, ugliness, and whether it is possible for them to be invisible.

- **Tom Godwin, "The Cold Equations"** (short story, 1954). Classic lifeboat ethics problem, but made very personal, not at all abstract.
- **Orson Scott Card, "Kingsmeat"** (short story, 1978). Another classic problem for utilitarianism, with a side order of tasty human steaks.
- **Nancy Fulda, "Movement"** (short story, 2011). A meditation on autism, time, perception, and beauty.
- **Daniel Keyes, "Flowers for Algernon"** (short story, 1959). A terrifying exploration of intelligence and philosophy of mind.
- **Ted Chiang, "Understand"** (short story, 1991). Coupled with "Flowers for Algernon," another exploration of intelligence, its limits, and its potential
- **Philip K. Dick, "Imposter"** (short story, 1986). Philip K. Dick at his best, struggling to understand the self and self-understanding.
- **Stanislaw Lem*, The Star Diaries*, "The Twentieth Voyage"** (story in a series, 1957, trans. 1976). A fun story of time travel, fraught with causality problems and problems of self.
- **Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five*** (novel, 1969). Vonnegut at his best, festooned with problems of ethics, causality, and free will vs. determinism.
- **Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, *Watchmen*** (graphic novel, 1986-1987). Free will vs. determinism, good intentions vs. good consequences, heroes vs. antiheroes; *Watchmen* is always the highlight of the semester whenever I assign it.

List from **Sara Bernstein** (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Duke University):

- **Fred Hoyle, *The Black Cloud*** (novel, 1957). Begins as an impending-disaster-for-earth story, but introduces a twist: the giant cloud approaching earth is conscious and is surprised to find other conscious beings in the universe. Consciousness, multiple realizability, the works.
- **Catherynne Valente, *Palimpsest*** (novel, 1959). A city is transmitted through physical touch and is only able to be visited by those who have been infected. Physicalism.
- **Ursula K. LeGuin, *Changing Planes*** (short stories, collected 2003). Airports are not just places for transportation between spatial locations; they also host people who want to change dimensions in between changing flights. Traveler stops over in several other exotic dimensions, including one in which everything unnecessary for human life has been removed ("The Nna Mmoy Language"). Possible worlds with foreign-yet-familiar features.
- **K.W. Jeter, *Noir*** (novel, 1998). The dead can be brought back to life if they don't meet their financial obligations, and must work to pay them off. Capitalism, ethics.
- **Italo Calvino, "All at One Point" from *Cosmicomics*** (1968). Everything exists at one spacetime point. Extended simples, conceivability, possibility.
- **Joanna Russ, *The Female Man*** (novel, 1975). Four women living in different times and places cross over to each other's worlds and are startled by gender roles and assumptions of worlds that at not their own. Feminist philosophy, philosophy of gender.
- **Haruki Murakami, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*** (novel, 1985). Narrator wanders around in his mind. Consciousness, physicalism.
- ***The Walking Dead*** (TV series, 2010-). Survivors of zombie apocalypse live out central questions of political philosophy in a Hobbesian state of nature: from whence does authority

originate? Is it better to band together for protection and subject ourselves to a ruling power? Is remaining on one's own a fundamental right?

- **Jac Schaeffer, *Timer*** (movie, 2009). Almost every person is outfitted with a device that counts down to the minute the wearer will meet his or her soulmate. (Not as cheesy as it sounds.) Some choose not to have timers, where others rebel and have relationships with people known to contradict their timers. Fatalism, free will, utilitarianism.
- **Andrew Niccol, *Gattaca*** (movie, 1997). Future society infused with pre-birth genetic engineering stratifies into genetically unlucky and genetically. Genetically unlucky rebel trades places with genetically lucky man to live out his dream of going to space. Bioethics, free will.

List from **Ben Blumson** (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, National University of Singapore):

- **Forest Ackerman, "Cosmic Report Card: Earth"** (short story, 1973). This short story condenses most of the characteristics of the genre into a single letter.
- **Edwin Abbott, *Flatland*** (novel, 1884). A novel set in spaces of different dimensions.
- **Martin Amis, *Time's Arrow*** (novel, 1991). The protagonist of this novel is a Nazi doctor who experiences time in reverse.
- **John Barth, "Frame-Tale"** (short-story, 1968). This metafiction on the theme of looping time has a twist.
- **Jorge Luis Borges, "Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius"** (short story, 1941). This short story is a beautiful illustration of a particularly strange form of anti-realism.
- **Roald Dahl, "William and Mary"** (short story, 1960). A non-sceptical brain-in-a-vat scenario.
- **Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*** (novel, 1979; trans. 1981)**.** It's hard to get past the beginning of this second-person philosophical metafiction, but you can get to the end.
- **Robert Heinlein, "All You Zombies"** (short story, 1959). A looping and incestuous time-travel story.
- **Ursula K Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas"**(short story, 1973). A purported reductio of utilitarianism.
- **Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*** (novel, 1943). This novel contains the most charming counterexamples to the sufficiency of resemblance for representation.

List from **Rachael Briggs** (Research Fellow in Philosophy, Australian National University and Griffith University):

- **James Tiptree Jr., "Love is the Plan the Plan is Death"** (short story, 1973). A sentient arthropod contemplates free will, but everything he wills happens to match the typical life cycle of his species.
- **Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*** (novel, 2003). Brilliant genetic engineer Glenn ("Crake") is disgusted with human beings, their violence, and their environmental destructiveness. So he destroys the human race, and replaces it with a new species, the "Crakers", which he has designed as a superior replacement. The story is told by the last surviving human, who was Crake's best friend before the apocalypse.

- **Ryo Hanmura, "Tansu"** (short story, 1997). A magical tansu, or chest of drawers, motivates people to sit on top of it all night, chanting mechanically. When asked, people transformed by the tansu unanimously describe the the activity as deeply fulfilling, yet the narrator finds something frightening in the idea of being transformed.
- **Joanna Russ, *The Female Man*** (novel, 1975). A woman is introduced to her counterparts from three different possible worlds, in which feminism has taken three different historical courses.
- ***Rattle* issue #38, Tribute to Speculative Poetry** (poetry journal, 2012). Poems that explore a wide variety of science fictional and philosophical themes, including the inner life of an android created to be a pleasing companion ("Elise as Android at the Japan! Culture + Hyperculture Festival" by Rebecca Hazelton), various kinds of transformative experience ("The Creature" by Aimee Parkison; "Stairs Appear in a Hole Outside of Town" by John Philip Johnson), the relationship between humans and their pets ("BLACKDOOG™" by Charles Harper Webb), and even the possibility of divine intervention in sports games ("One Possibility" by Marilee Richards).
- ***Doctor Who*, "The Aztecs"** (TV serial, 4 episodes, 1964). The Doctor, a time-traveler, takes his companions Barbara, Ian, and Susan to the Aztec Empire in the 15th Century. Barbara is mistaken for the goddess Yetaxa, and immediately put in charge of the empire. She tries to use her power to stop the Aztecs' human sacrifice, despite the suspicion that this policy creates among her subjects, and the Doctor's warnings that her inconsistent approach to time travel could endanger the universe.
- ***Dark Matter: A Century of Science Fiction from the African Diaspora,* edited by Sheree R. Thomas and Samuel R. Delany**(short story collection, 2000). This varied collection of writing by black science fiction authors addresses the nature and ethics of race, but also explores a range of other philosophical questions, including: "How can a vampire live ethically, given her dietary needs?" ("Chicago 1967", by Jewelle Gomez); "What would it be to borrow someone's eyes and see from their perspective?" ("Can You Wear My Eyes", by Kalamu y Salam); "How can human beings construct dignified lives in the face of an incurable terminal illness?" ("The Evening and the Morning and the Night", by Octavia Butler) and "Who owns the rights to Santa Claus?" ("Future Christmas", by Ishmael Reed).
- **Italo Calvino, *Cosmicomics*** (short story collection, 1968). Old man Qfwfq recounts the reader with stories of his youth, when he and his relatives witnessed the Big Bang, the formation of the galaxies, the time when the moon was so close to the earth you could jump from one to the other, the evolution of land animals, and other historic events.
- **Jose Saramago, "The Centaur"** (short story, 1978, English translation by Nadine Gordimer, 2004). An old centaur, oppressed by the human population, and frustrated by the struggle between his horse part and his human part, returns home to the sea.
- **Alex Temple, Switch: A Science Fiction Micro-Opera** (work of music, 2013, recorded in performance by the Cadillac Moon Ensemble). In a society that draws deep class distinctions between the left-handed and the right-handed, a group of "hand offenders" rebels against the social categories on offer.

List from **Matthew Brophy** (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, High Point University):

- **Richard K. Morgan, *Altered Carbon*** (novel, 2002): A deceased mercenary is "uploaded" into a technologically augmented body to solve a mystery, 500 years in the future.

- **Richard K. Morgan, *Thirteen*** (novel, 2007): A genetically enhanced soldier is tasked with hunting down renegade "thirteens" like himself.
- **Christopher Nolan, *The Prestige*** (movie, 2006): Dueling magicians each make the ultimate sacrifice to perfect an astounding trick.
- **Robert Venditti, *Surrogates*** (comic book, 2005-2006): When android avatars, remotely controlled by human users, start to be mysteriously murdered, one detective must unplug in order to stop a societal genocide of surrogates and humans alike.
- **James Cameron, *Avatar*** (movie, 2009): A wheelchair-bound marine finds new freedom and identity as a bio-engineered alien.
- **Christopher Nolan, *Inception*** (movie, 2010): A con-man transverses through layers of shared dreams in this mind-bending "heist" movie.
- **Rian Johnson, *Looper*** (movie, 2012): A hit-man for the mob "terminates" other contract-killers, who are sent back in time when their contract is up.
- **Duncan Jones, *Source Code*** (movie, 2012): A soldier repeatedly awakens on a train, as another man who has mere minutes to find and defuse a time-bomb that will kill them all.
- **Mike Cahill, *Another Earth*** (movie, 2011): The appearance of a duplicate earth brings hope to a promising young student that a tragic accident she's caused may have been averted on the twin earth.

List from **Ross Cameron** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Virginia):

- **Philip K Dick, *Ubik*** (novel, 1969). As with many of Dick's novels, his characters inhabit a disturbing world where appearances and reality seem to come apart, and out of multiple potential versions of reality, it's not clear what is real, if anything.
- **Alan Moore, *Watchmen*** (comic, 1986-87). An otherwise realistic world contains an almost omnipotent superhero. His perception of time raises questions about free will and evitability, and his presence raises difficult moral and political questions.
- **Guy Gavriel Kay, *Tigana*** (novel, 1990). A sorcerous dictator keeps his political enemies subordinated by making it literally impossible for them to express their shared sense of cultural identity.
- **China Miéville, *Embassytown*** (novel, 2011). An alien society that cannot speak falsely first learns from humans how to make similes, and ultimately learns how to lie, changing them irrevocably.
- **Robert Heinlein, "All You Zombies"** (short story, 1958). In a world where time travellers are responsible for going back to ensure that history happens as it did, a potential recruit is forced to grapple with the problem of other minds.
- **Neil Gaiman, *The Sandman: A Game of You*** (comic collection, 1993). A young woman encounters an imaginary character from her childhood, leading her and her female friends on a journey that causes them to examine their identity as friends and as women.
- **Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*** (novel, 1985). In a near future - and a very close possible world - a theocratic dictatorship has emerged in which women are severely repressed and must struggle to gain agency and community.
- **Joss Whedon, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Season 5** (TV series, 2000-01). Buffy goes from being an only child to having a teenage sister overnight. Various characters grapple with their

own identity, and what to do when duty seems to pull you in one direction and acting according to your nature another.

- **Melinda Snodgrass (writer),** ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*****, "The Measure of a Man"** (TV episode, 1989). The artificial intelligence, Data, is forced to go on trial to prove that he has the right to self-determination and is not the property of Starfleet.
- **Paul Verhoeven,** ***Total Recall*** (movie, 1990). In a world where memories can be implanted and erased, a man struggles to know who he is and what is real.

List from **Joe Campbell** (Professor of Philosophy, Washington State University):

- **Robert A. Heinlein, "—All You Zombies—"** (short story, 1959). Classic sci-fi story that involves an especially interesting paradox of time travel.
- ***Futurama*****, "Roswell That Ends Well"** (TV episode, 2001). An explicit example of the grandfather paradox of time travel, with shades of Robert A. Heinlein's "—All You Zombies—."
- **Richard Kelly,** ***Donnie Darko*** (movie, 2001). An example of the many-worlds interpretation of time travel, where time travel to the past requires travel to a different possible world that branches from the actual world. (See David Deutsch; J. Richard Gott; John Carroll et. al., *A Time Travel Dialogue*, 2014.)
- **Terry Gilliam,** ***Twelve Monkeys*** (movie, 1995). An example of the no-change view of time travel, where people travel to the past but there are no alterations of past events. (See David Lewis, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel" (1976); J. Richard Gott; John Carroll et. al.)
- **Andrew Niccol,** ***Gattaca*** (movie, 1997). Issues in bioethics, especially genetic determinism, free will, and moral responsibility.
- **Stanley Kubrick,** ***A Clockwork Orange*** (movie, 1971). Great for discussions about free will, moral responsibility, and punishment. One of the few films that asks the question: Can you be praiseworthy if you could not have done otherwise?
- **Stephen Spielberg,** ***Minority Report*** (movie, 2002). Covers the topic of pre-punishment: Can we punish people, or hold them morally responsible, for acts that they (arguably) will commit yet have not yet committed? (Based on the Philip K. Dick short story of the same name, 1956. See Saul Smilansky, "Determinism and Prepunishment: the Radical Nature of Compatibilism", 2007.)
- **Ridley Scott,** ***Blade Runner*** (movie, 1982). Covers issues in philosophy of mind: consciousness and the possibility of artificial intelligence. Also, an illustration of film as philosophy (Mulhall, 2008). (Based on the Philip K. Dick novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* 1968. In *On Film* (2008, 2nd edition), Stephen Mulhall contends that there is a philosophical debate about the nature of mortality between Leon (a replicant) and Deckard (a blade runner hired to "retire" Leon), Ch. 20, Director's Cut DVD. This is also discussed in the *Philosophy Bites* episode, "Stephen Mulhall on Film as Philosophy.")
- **Andy & Lana Wachowski,** ***The Matrix; The Matrix Reloaded; The Matrix Revolutions*** (movies, 1999 & 2003). Deal with a spectrum of philosophical issues, especially knowledge vs. skepticism, realism vs. antirealism, free will and determinism, and subjectivity vs. objectivity about meaning and value. (Compare Cypher's choice from*The Matrix* DVD, Ch. 19, with Robert Nozick's experience machine thought experiment, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, 1974).

- Honorable mentions (knowledge vs. skepticism): *Total Recall* (Paul Verhoeven, 1990); *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998); *Vanilla Sky* (Cameron Crowe, 2001).

List from **Mason Cash** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Central Florida):

- **Iain M. Banks, "The State of the Art"** (short story, 1991). The Culture (featured in many of Banks' SF/Space Opera novels), is a post-scarcity libertarian technological utopia, in which AI minds take care of just about all the heavy thinking and planning, and humanoid inhabitants can do and be whatever they want. The theme through many of these novels is how messed up people can still be in such a utopia. A Culture ship and its human crew discover Earth in 1977, at the height of the Cold War and on the brink of nuclear armageddon. Our narrator argues for contact. Another wants to defect to Earth (inconceivably to many of his colleagues). Another argues that the whole insane planet should be destroyed with a micro-black hole. The limits of utopia, the beauty of flawed humanity, the role of scarcity and risk and fragility in human life, and the possibility that important aspects of life might be lost when one can have and do whatever one likes, for as long as one likes.
- **Iain M. Banks, *Surface Detail*** (novel, 2010). Once any civilization develops realistic artificial realities, in which people can upload themselves and live, religious fanatics inevitably use this tech to make sure that there really is a Hell, in which "deserving" people can now be subjected to unending torture and torment. A war is being fought in a series of different virtual realities, to determine whether these Hells should exist. The anti-hell side (including the above mentioned Culture) is losing. Should the virtual war be brought into the real world, if it means saving millions of intelligent beings from eternal torment?
- **Ray Bradbury, *Dandelion Wine*** (a collection of connected short stories, 1957). Possibly the most charming existential novel you will find. Douglas Spaulding, 12 years old, living in Green Town Illinois in 1927, realizes that he is alive. But with that comes the realization that one day he also will die. A rumination about what it means to really live, love, and be happy. It's not obviously SF, but by an SF author, and includes a time machine, an attempt to build a virtual reality "happiness machine" (c.f. Nozick's "experience machine"), a tragic love story about a reincarnated lover, a ready-to-die great-grandma's thoughts on immortality, a 9 year old's inspiring thoughts on happy endings, a serial killer horror story and the need for scary stories that add danger to life, a mechanical gypsy fortune-teller who cries for help, and bottling all the joys of a summer day into a bottle of dandelion wine.
- **Mary Doria Russell, *The Sparrow*** (novel, 2008). Irrefutable proof of an alien civilization is discovered, and we could get there in just a few years' travel time. While the UN is deliberating about what to do, the Jesuits recognize a message from God in the circumstances of the discovery, and so organize a secret Mission to this world. But the mission ends in horrific disaster. A Jesuit priest and linguist is the sole survivor, rescued 40 years later, now broken, bitter, disillusioned, and reluctant to discuss the mission. Alternating chapters set at the beginning and end of the mission explore how this disaster happened. Themes of interspecies interpretation (and misinterpretation), what the existence of an alien civilization means for religion (is our God also their God?), interpretation of God's will (if He so obviously wanted us to go there, how could He let it become such a disaster)?
- **Neal Stephenson, *Diamond Age: Or, A Young Lady's Illustrated Primer*** (novel, 1995). A cyberpunk novel set in a post-scarcity (sort of) world in which any material can be

constructed by nanotechnology "compilers" out of "the Feed"; a supply pipe of energy and basic elements. A wealthy engineer creates an AI "primer" book that will provide the best possible education for his daughter, by telling her stories that teach her about life and help instill whatever skills she will need (the book is a combination of AI adaptive scriptwriter that learns what its person needs, and a remote human actor who gives the script real human voice and emotion). The primer falls into the hands of Nell, a slum dweller. Explores the role of education, the economics and class structure of a post-scarcity Earth, the power of those who control the Feed, and artificial intelligence and virtual reality.

- **Neal Stephenson,** ***Anathem*** (novel, 2008). In this advanced-tech world, Arbre, "avout" academics are cloistered from "saecuar" society, living simple lives in monastic institutions ("concents") doing science, philosophy, and studying -- over thousands of years -- the way the civilizations outside their walls rise and fall. Many of the academics have views paralleling Earth philosophers and scientists. A recurring debate between advocates of platonic realism and mathematical formalism plays a role in solving a mystery/problem/potential threat of world-changing scale and significance. (Geek fun: identify the Earth philosopher/scientist whose views are paralleled.)
- **Ridley Scott,** ***Blade Runner*** (movie, 1982). Biologically engineered artificial intelligence "replicants" are indistinguishable from humans in almost every way. But they are not seen as "persons". Humans fear them, and have banned them from Earth, they are only used off-world slave labor. They also have a four-year life-span. The main character, Deckard, is a Bladerunner, whose job is to hunt and "retire" any replicants found on Earth. A group of them have returned to Earth, because they are nearing four years, and don't want to die. Are they really alive, and deserving of respect and autonomy? Or are they mere machines, that can be "retired" with impunity? Explores the important ethical dimensions of AI, especially critiquing the idea that humans are special as pure hubris, motivated by an unjustified belief in the "supremacy" of the biological over the artificial. (See also*Battlestar Galactica* (2004-9), *Bicentennial Man*, and *Star Trek TNG*'s "Measure of a Man" episode).
- **George H.R.R. Martin,** ***Game of Thrones* / *A Song of Ice and Fire*** (HBO drama 2011- / novels 1996-). An extended meditation on the nature of power, set in a mediaeval/magical world. Many aspects of political philosophy are explored here. Political power, military power, religious influence, wealth, the institutions of nobility and inheritance, the irrelevance of "fairness", the "soft" power of women in a patriarchy, the limitations of "honorable" conduct in a dishonorable world, the perceived importance (or not) of familial love and bonds, the military advantages of powerful weapons (dragons), the plight of the common people when "powerful" people go to war for more power, the horrors of war, what successful leadership requires, the distraction of human power-games in the face of a largely-ignored world-threatening common problem....
- **Douglas Adams,** ***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*** (five book "trilogy" 1979-92; also 1978-80 radio play, 2005 movie, 1984 video game, a comic book, and a set of towels). SF comedy classic; tells the story of a "wholly remarkable book" through the story of Arthur Dent, an Earthling whose planet is destroyed to make room for a hyperspace bypass and his friend Ford Prefect who turns out to be from a planet near Betelgeuse, and who writes for the book. (Ironically the story of Arthur Dent is often punctuated by excerpts from the book.) The book's entire entry on the planet Earth reads "Mostly harmless". Explores many philosophical ideas. See especially the Total Perspective Vortex, a proof of God's existence (which thus proves that He cannot exist), the End of the Universe, an ethical meat that wants

to be eaten, a virtual reality universe, and a supercomputer programmed to compute the Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything (philosophers threaten to strike if the machine does their job, until the machine proposes a better idea). Also reveals the true origin of the Earth and of Humanity.

- **Paul Verhoeven/ Phillip K Dick, *Total Recall*** (movie, 1990; very loosely based on a PKD short story "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale"). Themes of memory and identity; illusion and reality. Who are you really? and what is "real" anyway? Quaid dreams about Mars. He tries resolving this by taking a virtual vacation involving installing memories of a spy-themed adventure to Mars. Quaid emerges to realize he might be a spy who had had his memory erased, and who has mistakenly believed he was an ordinary guy. But is this really happening, or is the whole thing taking place in the virtual vacation? Who is Quaid "really"; a spy/assassin who thought he was an ordinary guy, or an ordinary guy who used to be a spy/assassin, or just an ordinary guy dreaming he is a spy (who used to be an assassin)? What matters more, who we "really" are, or who we choose to be?

List from **David Chalmers** (Professor of Philosophy, New York University and Australian National University):

- **john campbell, "the last evolution"** (short story, 1932): the first and still the best singularity fiction: machines design smarter machines in order to design even smarter machines.
- **isaac asimov, *the end of eternity*** (novel, 1955): most philosophers like "consistent" time travel with a single timeline, but i love the complex structure here with time police hanging out in metatime.
- **douglas adams, *hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy*** (series of radio shows and novels, 1980ish): the babel fish disproves god; the cow wants to be eaten; the total perspective vortex; time is an illusion, lunchtime doubly so; and 42.
- **robert zemeckis, *back to the future 2*** (movie, 1989): another complex model of metatime -- i set my students to work trying to figure out the model of time travel here, and they at least got close.
- **greg egan, "learning to be me"** (short story, 1990): permutation city is great even if it's philosophically incoherent, but this is a much tighter piece about consciousness and identity.
- **andy & lana wachowski, *the matrix*** (movie, 1999): still the best brain-in-vat and virtual reality movie, and it raises almost every issue in philosophy.
- **christopher nolan, *memento*** (movie, 2000): a wonderful depiction of the extended mind and pathologies of extended memory.
- **charles stross, *accelerando*** (novel, 2005): like most singularity fiction, the depiction of superintelligence is disappointing, but the exospecs get the extended mind right.
- **ramez naan, *nexus*** (novel, 2012): the philosophy doesn't run so deep here, but it's wildly entertaining neuroscience fiction.

List from **Stephen Clark** (Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, University of Liverpool):

- **John C. Wright, *The Golden Age*** (novels, 2002-2003). Set in a very far future capitalist utopia, about to be threatened by a very different form of society. Questions about identity, humanity, social control are implicit, and there are even clear and fairly compelling arguments, mostly drawn from Stoic sources, about the rational roots of ethics.

- **C. J. Cherryh, *Cyteen*** (novel, 1988). Issues about identity, cloning, slavery, enacted in part of Cherryh's Alliance/Union universe.
- **C. J. Cherryh, *Chanur sequence*** (novels, 1981-1992). Issues about biological or cultural roots of behaviour, represented through several well-imagined intelligent species in an interstellar, multi-species compact.
- **Lois McMaster Bujold, *the Vorkosigan sequence*** (novels, 1986-2012), especially *Memory* (1996). Importance of memory for stable identity, dealing with temptation, social structures.
- **Arthur C. Clarke, *Childhood's End*** (novel, 1953). The price of utopia, evolutionary leaps. Could an unchanged humanity be at home in the cosmos?
- **C. S. Lewis, *Ransom trilogy*** (novels, 1938-1945), especially *That Hideous Strength* (1945), which explores some of the ideas in his *The Abolition of Man*. Roots of morality, social pressures and wickedness.
- **Philip K. Dick, *Time out of Joint*** (novel, 1958) Not his best, nor yet his most disturbed, fantasy, but a neat demonstration of what it would be like to discover that one's entire life and surroundings are fake!
- **Clifford Simak, *City*** (novel, 1952). Tales told about humanity by posthuman dogs - conflicting values of individual and collective; robot intelligence; cross-species compassion.
- **George Effinger, *When Gravity Fails*** (novel, 1986). What would it be like to be able to load new characters or new talents via computer add-ons, set in a future dominated by Muslim (and mostly criminal) culture. There were two sequels, continuing the story, but without any final resolution.
- **Ruthanna Emrys, "The Litany of Earth"** (short story, 2014). Set in Lovecraft's cosmos - but turning Lovecraft's racism round entirely so that the followers of Cthulhu et al. are a persecuted minority who know and accept that humanity is transient.

List from **Ellen Clarke** (Postdoctoral Fellow of Philosophy, Oxford):

- **Octavia Butler, *Blood Child*** (short story, 1995). Men are forced to bear the progeny of aliens in a gory and powerfully emotional analogy of motherhood, portrayed as a paradoxically enjoyable form of abuse.
- **John Wyndham, *The Day of the Triffids*** (novel, 1951). Giant deadly shrubs ambulate around a London riven by a plague of blindness. Moody, scary, tense, dark. An early pioneer of biological scifi, Wyndham reminds us that plants can be evil too.
- **Larry Niven, *A Hole in Space*** (short stories, collected 1974). The master of 'soft' (sociological) sci fi, Niven was visionary at thinking through the human consequences of new technologies. Teleportation here acts as social lighter fluid, enabling the formation of dangerously volatile 'flash mobs', as well as adding new depths a to murder mystery challenge.
- **Philip K Dick, *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*** (novel, 1974). If Dick doesn't make you paranoid you're probably not real. Here he explores celebrity and identity via a drug which snatches the targets of a users thoughts into a parallel reality.
- **Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*** (novel, 1932). Noble savage meets techno-enhanced scientific rational future and comes off badly.

- **George Orwell, *1984*** (novel, 1949). A vivid polemic on the human cost of political authoritarianism, whose original ideas and phrases - Big Brother, Room 101 - are now firmly in the mainstream.
- **Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*** (novel, 1953). State-administered book burning, anaesthetised life, an eloquent hymn to the power of the written idea.
- **Kurt Vonnegut, *The Sirens of Titan*** (novel, 1959). A starkly beautiful spiral through loneliness, omniscience and the meaning of life.
- **J G Ballard, *The Disaster Area*** (short stories, collected 1967). A masterpiece of unsettling darkness. What happens if we switch off sleep? How does it feel to live in a towerblock of infinite height and breadth? What would life look like in reverse?
- **Raccoona Shelton, "The Screw Fly Solution"** (short story, 1977). We succumb to aliens as screw flies succumb to our biological controls.....a pitchblack feminist nightmare.

List from **Helen De Cruz** (Postdoc in Philosophy, University of Oxford, and **blogger**):

- **Ursula Le Guin, *Left Hand of Darkness*** (novel, 1969). Explores a society where its inhabitants do not have a gender.
- **Daniel F Galouye, *Dark Universe*** (novel, 1961). What's it like to be blind, not just to be blind but to live in a world where everyone is blind and relies on echolocation?
- **Daniel F. Galouye, *Simulacron-3*** (novel, 1964). There are several books and movies on the brains in a vat/deceiving demon theme (e.g., most famously, *The Matrix*), but if I had to pick a favorite, this would be it.
- **Roger Zelazny, *Lord of Light*** (novel, 1967). Features naturalistic versions of Hindu gods and reincarnation. Can the status quo be challenged by introducing Buddhism?
- **Robert Heinlein, *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*** (novel, 1966). Heinlein's lunar society exhibits his libertarian ideas, as well as the view that there's no such thing as a free lunch (expressed in the awkward acronym TANSTAAFL).
- **Robert Heinlein, "Jerry Was a Man"** (short story, 1947). Ponders the issue of human rights for nonhuman animals and what it means for someone to be human, with the protagonist, a genetically-modified chimpanzee.
- **Richard Garfinkle, *Celestial Matters*** (novel, 1996). Assumes that ancient science describes accurately how the world works - so we have things like Aristotelian physics, spontaneous generation, taoist Chinese alchemy, and geocentrism with real spheres in space.
- **Daniel Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon*** (novel, 1966). On personal identity and mental disability.
- **P.D. James, *Children of Men*** (novel, 1992). Social criticism and theological reflection focusing on the results of mass infertility.
- **Richard Matheson, *I Am Legend*** (novel, 1954). If you're the last surviving human in a vampire-apocalypse, does it make sense to want to survive? And who is the monster, to be feared, in a new world populated by vampires?

List from **Johan De Smedt** (post-doc in philosophy, Ghent University):

- ***Battlestar Galactica*: Home, part 2** (TV series, 2005-2006): What is the identity of beings (cylons) that always reincarnate upon death, and that have several clones living concurrently (some friendly to humans, others hostile to them)?
- **Jack Vance, *The Languages of Pao*** (novel, 1957): sketches a universe in which a strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is true.
- **Richard Cowper, *The Twilight of Briareus*** (novel, 1974): universal infertility and the fate of humanity/human cultures if there is no next generation, a trope that has been taken on by several other books (also P.D. James's *Children of Men*, Brian Aldiss's *Greybeard*).
- **Robert A. Heinlein, *Job: A comedy of justice*** (novel, 1984): C.S. Lewis meets David Lewis. A literalist interpretation of the Book of Job playing out across multiple actualized possible worlds.
- **Stephenie Meyer, *Breaking Dawn*** (novel, 2008): sketches the perfect postmortem human body as outlined in the hereafter of e.g., Aquinas.
- **Richard Adams, *Watership Down*** (novel, 1972): alien society at the bottom of the food chain (rabbits!), experiments in diverse political systems, and the role of religion (prophecy, adherence to culture hero) in political decision making.
- **Joss Whedon, *Serenity*** (movie, 2005): How far can a government go to enforce its ideals upon its citizens (follow up of the space Western television series *Firefly*)?
- **Joe Haldeman *The Forever War*** (novel, 1974): two species are sucked into an interstellar war against unknowable enemies with an incomprehensible psyche. Human veterans have to adapt to cultures with norms that are ever more remote from the society they originate from.
- **Daniel F. Galouye, *Dark Universe* (novel, 1961):** about perception in a post-apocalyptic underground world without light (some cultures use echolocation, others have adapted to infrared seeing).
- **Daniel F. Galouye, *Simulacron-3*** (novel, 1964): the ultimate brains-in-a-vat/evil demon story, superior to and predating *The Matrix*.

List from **Josh Dever** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Texas at Austin):

- **Mark Danielewski, *House of Leaves*** (novel, 2000). The opening of chapter 4 is a beautiful test case in whether a tiny datum can drive a massive theory change.
- **Samuel Delany, *Dhalgren* and *Triton*** (novels, 1975 and 1976). Explorations of just about every imaginable alternative sociological and political structure and theory.
- **Philip K. Dick, *Radio Free Albemuth*** (novel, 1976). Time stopped in the first century AD, and restarted in 1945. Come up with a theory of time to make that consistent!
- **Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker*** (novel, 1980). Like that Star Trek episode "Darmok", except, you know, good. Also, best post-apocalyptic novel ever by a significant author of children's literature.
- **Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky, "Quadraturin"** (short story, 192-something). There's a superabundance of science fiction about weird physics and metaphysics of time, but a disappointing dearth of the same with space. This is an exception.
- **Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Author of the Acacia Seeds, and Other Extracts from the Journal of the Association of Therolinguistics" and "The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas"** (short stories, 1982 and 1973). The first: always nice when science fiction remembers that linguistics is a science. The second: a powerful counterexample, but note

only to certain forms of consequentialism. Think of it as an argument for good social choice theory.

- **China Miéville, *Embassytown* and *The City & The City*** (novels, 2011 and 2009). The first is a fun, if a bit clunky, bit of exploratory philosophy of language. The second is a particularly adventurous instance of exploratory metaphysics.
- **Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*, Episode 19** (portion of a novel, 1997). The story of the missing eleven days resulting from the transition from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. More fun metaphysics of time, plus a bit of philosophies of language and gender.
- **David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest*** (novel, 1996). Philosophy by virtue of mentioning "Montague Grammar and the Semantics of Physical Modality", science fiction by virtue of being set in the Year of the Depend Adult Undergarmet, fun by virtue of including basically everything in between.
- **H.G. Wells, "The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes"** (short story, 1895). The definitive counterexample to immunity to error through misidentification.

List from **Kenny Easwaran** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Texas A&M):

- **Charles Stross, *Accelerando*** (novel, 2005) - how much computer enhancement and dissociation of the self is compatible with remaining human? what are the differences between a software algorithm, a legal system, an organism, and a religion, and can all of them potentially be conscious?
- **Neal Stephenson, *Anathem*** (novel, 2008) - academics cut themselves off from causal contact with the world in order to develop theoretical knowledge independent of social and political fads. Trans-world communication plays an important role.
- **George R. R. Martin, *A Song of Ice and Fire*** (series of novels, 1991-present) - the main plot content is not especially philosophical, but this series raises questions of the extent to which families rather than individuals are the units of action, in a world that is more economically and historically developed than most fantasy.
- **David Gerrold, *The Man Who Folded Himself*** (novel, 1973) - how many roles can one person play in a time travel love story?
- **David Brin, *Kiln People*** (novel, 2002) - there is technology for creating clones that can live for a day, and which have most or all of the capacities of the individual. The novel investigates consequences for economics, privacy, politics, and health, in the midst of a noir set in future Los Angeles.
- **Greg Egan, *Axiomatic*** (short story collection, 1995) - each story in this collection develops a strikingly original idea. In "The Hundred Light-Year Diary", a method for sending messages to the past is invented, and everyone learns future history as well as past history, and is issued their life-long diary as soon as they can read. Rather than investigating free will and fatalism, the story investigates the political role of information. Several stories investigate computational alteration or replacement of biological brains and their consequences for moral responsibility and personal survival and identity. Some are more comedic.
- **P.D. James / Alfonso Cuarón, *Children of Men*** (novel 1992, movie 2006) - centers on themes that have recently been explored by Sam Scheffler about the role of the ongoing existence of humanity in giving meaning to the life of an individual.

- **Christopher Nolan, *Batman: The Dark Knight*** (movie, 2008) - classic puzzles from decision theory and ethics are given the twist of unreliability.
- **Duncan Jones, *Moon*** (movie, 2009) - explores issues of personal identity and the ethical issues of technology related to space travel for the purposes of dangerous work. (Easwaran)
- **Christopher Priest / Christopher Nolan and Jonathan Nolan, *The Prestige*** (novel 1995, movie 2006) - two different ways of performing the same magic trick raise very different worries about personal identity and one's moral obligations to oneself.

List from **Simon Evnine** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Miami):

- **Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*** (novel, 1993). Gender roles, and the significance of empathy in discharging our responsibilities for each other.
- **Michael Flynn, *Eifelheim*** (novel, 2006). Aliens appear in a medieval German village; a deep reflection on love and sacrifice.
- **Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker*** (novel, 1980). Hermeneutics: In the far future, a story about people trying to make sense of their distant past (us), told in an invented dialect that makes it equally a problem for us to make sense of them.
- **Liz Jensen, *The Uninvited*** (novel, 2012). The nature of the adult world, and its relation to children and the future.
- **Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Justice*** (novel, 2013). Having a divided mind, and the existence of social divisions, take on a whole new meaning when agents are composed of multiple people.
- **Ursula Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*** (novel, 1969). The meaning of gender is explored when a male protagonist comes to a planet inhabited by humans who change their gender naturally.
- **Doris Lessing, *The Fifth Child*** (novel, 1988). How do we deal with the intolerable when we have an obligation to care for it?
- **Vernor Vinge, *A Fire Upon the Deep*** (novel, 1992). A story involving a variety of kinds of minds, including transcendent minds, human minds infused by transcendent minds, and group minds.
- **Sarah Waters, *The Little Stranger*** (novel, 2009). How well do we know ourselves?
- **Gene Wolfe, *The Book of the New Sun*** (4 novels, 1983). A haunting work about the experience of finitude.

List from **Simon Fokt** (Teaching Fellow in Philosophy, University of Leeds), Polish SF from Lem and Dukaj:

- **Stanisław Lem, *Solaris*** (novel, 1961; trans. 1970) Lem explores issues related to limitations of knowledge and communication, philosophy of mind and the structure of radically different minds.
- **Stanisław Lem, *Fiasco*** (novel, 1986; trans. 1987) Another novel exploring the linguistic and cognitive limitations on understanding and communicating with truly different, alien life forms.
- **Stanisław Lem, *Golem XIV*** (novel, 1981; trans. 1985) A story from the point of view of an AI which achieves consciousness, raises issues in philosophy of mind, and questions human ethics.

- **Stanisław Lem, *The Futurological Congress*** (novel, 1971; trans. 1974) On distinguishing reality from hallucination; scepticism and issues in knowledge acquisition and justification.
- **Stanisław Lem, *Return from the Stars*** (novel, 1961; trans. 1980) Can humans live in a utopian society? What is the value of suffering, danger and risk, and what can happen if they are removed?
- **Stanisław Lem, *Wizja lokalna* (Local Vision)** (novel, 1982 – Polish, not translated) Raises moral issues related to artificial intelligences and immortality.
- **Jacek Dukaj, *Inne Pieśni* (Other Songs)** (novel, 2003 – Polish, not translated) An alternative history, starting from Alexander the Great's times, in which Aristotle's physics is actually true. There are five elements, form and matter, etc., and some people have the power to will form onto matter. Basically, what would the world be like if Aristotle were right?
- **Jacek Dukaj, *Lód* (Ice)** (novel, 2007 – Polish, not translated) The Tunguska Meteorite creates the Ice which freezes history and laws of logic in a part of the world. Under the Ice logic has only two-values, while outside it's many-valued. Issues in logic, rationality and cognition.
- **Jacek Dukaj, *Czarne oceany* (Black Oceans)** (novel, 2001 – Polish, not translated) Jacek Dukaj, Perfekcyjna niedoskonałość (An Ideal Imperfection) (novel, 2004 – Polish, not translated) Both novels explore post-humanism, the limits of human cognition and self, personal identity and persistence in the context of technology advanced enough to permit multiple physical realizations of a single consciousness, and blurring the lines between several simultaneous streams of thought and communication.

Simon adds: "Sadly, Dukaj's work isn't likely to be translated any time soon, which is unfortunate. Not because it's not worth it, but because of the difficulty – he's very interested in linguistic manipulations and neologisms, including not only making up new words, but making up entire grammar structures (e.g. some post-human-beings have no gender or location, so he creates an entirely new type of declination which is used when speaking about them). It must be a great challenge to translate that! Hopefully someone will, sooner or later."

List from **Keith Frankish** (Senior Visiting Research Fellow, The Open University, and Adjunct Professor, Mind and Brain Program, University of Crete):

- **Henry James, "The Jolly Corner"** (short story, 1908). Revisiting his childhood home, a middle-aged man confronts his monstrous alter ego and achieves a sort of redemption. Raises questions about choice, responsibility, character, and personal identity. (For a different take on the same theme, see Basil Dearden's 1970 film, *The Man Who Haunted Himself*, starring Roger Moore.)
- **George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*** (novel, 1949). In a grimy Stalinist state, thought is controlled, history rewritten, and the minds of nonconformists ruthlessly reshaped. Themes include collectivism, power, censorship, propaganda, and the relation between language and thought.
- **Nigel Kneale, *The Year of the Sex Olympics*** (TV play, 1968). Depicts a future in which an elite pacify and control the rest of the population through sensationalist reality television. Themes of hedonism, populism, and the role of the mass media. Parallels with Plato's case against the poets.

- **Alain Resnais, *Je t'aime, Je t'aime*** (movie, 1968). A man time travels through the last year of a tragic relationship, re-experiencing events in random order. Uses time travel as a metaphor for memory and the way we construct our identities through narrative.
- **Terry Nation et al., *Survivors*** (TV series, 1975-7). A plague wipes out most of humanity and the few survivors try to rebuild society. The series explores political and philosophical issues, including the relation between the individual and the collective, the trade-off between freedom and security, and gender politics. Highlights include the episodes "Law and Order", "Lights of London", and "Over the Hills".
- **Andrei Tarkovsky, *Sacrifice*** (Swedish: 'Offret') (movie, 1986). A man makes an irrational personal sacrifice in order to prevent a nuclear war. A poetic film that is open to many interpretations (including religious ones), but which is broadly about how we give meaning to our lives.
- ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "The Inner Light"** (TV episode, 1992). An alien probe causes Captain Picard to experience life in a long-dead civilization. A touching episode, which deals with identity, memory, survival, and the representation of time.
- **Greg Egan, *Diaspora*** (novel, 1997). A story of software-based posthumans, who can create their own identities and virtual environments. Explores what life might be like when completely freed from biology and massively enhanced by technology.
- **Peter Watts, *Blindsight*** (novel, 2006). An intelligent spaceship crewed by neurologically enhanced humans makes first contact with a terrifyingly alien species, while a narrator skilled in reading body language struggles to make sense of it all. Raises questions about the nature of intelligence and the function of phenomenal consciousness. This book is like crack cocaine for philosophers of mind.
- **Duncan Jones, *Moon*** (movie, 2009). A solitary moon worker discovers that he is merely a token of a person-type. (Or is he the type?)

List from **Steven Horst** (Chair of Philosophy, Wesleyan University)

- **C.S. Lewis, Space Trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet* /*Perelandra* / *That Hideous Strength*** (novels, 1938-1945). Notable for using the sci-fi genre to explore Christian ideas of the fall, intelligent aliens, angels, celestial intelligences, magic, and the dangers of totalitarianism wrapped in the mantle of science.
- **Neal Stephenson, The Baroque Cycle (*Quicksilver* / *The Confusion* / *The System of the World*** (novels, 2003-2005). Set as historical novels and developed around the core of interactions between Newton and Leibniz, explores the origins of modern systems of science and finance in counterpoint with alchemical memes.
- **Neal Stephenson, *Anathem*** (novel, 2008). At the risk of a major spoiler, this book explores ideas of the quantum multiverse, with the added bonus that some characters are stand-ins for the views of people like Husserl, Gödel, and Bohr.
- **Madeline L'Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time* / *A Wind in the Door* / *A Swiftly Tilting Planet*** (novels, 1962-1978). This may have been my first introduction to science fiction as a child, and while it is not the most intellectually challenging series about time travel (and dimensional travel, in the case of the memorable Cherubim that is both singular and plural), it is perhaps still the most memorable and endearing.
- **Andy & Lana Wachowski, *The Matrix*** (movie, 1999). Not only the most influential movie about virtual reality, but one that implicitly poses interesting questions about what counts as

"real", as the Matrix-world is both the world we assume to be reality and is thoroughly intersubjective.

- **Larry Niven, *Ringworld* and sequels** (novels, starting 1970). An enormous engineered world encircling a distant star provides a context for exploration of the variability of the human phenotype and contrasts with two alien species and a third that turns out to not be as alien as we first imagine.
- ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "The Measure of a Man"** (TV episode, 1989). The trial to determine whether the Android Data is a person or the property of Star Fleet provides the context for an engaging exploration of personhood and artificial life.
- ***Battlestar Galactica*** (TV series, 2003-2009). Over six seasons, we are drawn into an increasingly complicated dialectic about the original metallic Cylons, the Cylon "skin jobs", and by implication, the nature of humanity and personhood, as well as some teaser forays into shared virtual reality that were to be explored in the uncompleted prequel series *Caprica*.
- **Fred Hoyle, *The Black Cloud*** (novel, 1957). The late British astronomer's novel starts out looking like a novel about a disaster from deep space, but takes a turn to explore the prospects of communication with an alien intelligence very different from ourselves.
- **J.R.R. Tolkien, "Ainulindalë"** (in *The Silmarillion*, published 1977). Tolkien's Neo-Platonic creation myth puts the rest of the stories about Middle Earth in a distinctly different cosmic context, hints of which can be seen in the better-known works only after one has read the cosmic "backstory".

List from **Troy Jollimore** (Professor of Philosophy, Cal State Chico, and poet):

- **Don DeLillo, *Ratner's Star*** (novel, 1974): Human scientists confront an apparent message from the far reaches of space, and come up against their own very human limitations in doing so. Makes a great pair with Lem's *His Master's Voice* (and, to a degree, *Solaris*).
- **Terry Gilliam, *Brazil*** (movie, 1985): A very dark, very funny dystopian film that explores the individual vs. the state, and whose conclusion has some interesting connections with Nozick's Experience Machine. The excellent and very witty script was largely written by British playwright Tom Stoppard.
- **Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*** (novel, 2005): Chronicles the plight of cloned humans (who do not know they are clones) raised for the sole purpose of donating their organs to "ordinary" humans. Sensitive, beautiful, and far-reaching.
- **P.D. James, *The Children of Men*** (novel, 1992): What would life on Earth be like if human beings suddenly lost the ability to have children? This novel is a compelling and disturbing imagining of the extinction of the human race that feels, to me, much more vivid and real than nearly any other apocalyptic work of fiction I can think of. (Samuel Scheffler cites the novel in his book, *Death and the Afterlife*; reading the two in conjunction would be productive.) The 2006 film, directed by Alfonso Cuarón, is also excellent.
- **Charlie Kaufman and Michel Gondry, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*** (movie, 2004): A thoughtful, disturbing, and funny exploration of some of the possibilities, implications, and dangers of memory-altering technology.
- **Ursula K. LeGuin, *Always Coming Home*** (novel, 1985): A very nonstandard imagining of a potential human future, set in Northern California, in which humans have returned to a largely primitive and peaceful state of existence, turning their backs on consumerism and, for the most part, technology. A lovely act of anthropological imagination.

- **Stanislaw Lem, *Solaris*** (novel, 1961; English translation 1970): Astronauts on a station in a distant part of the galaxy confront a massive and deeply inscrutable alien being that may or may not be attempting to communicate with them, and people (or rather, reproductions of people) from their pasts, who may in fact be the alien's attempt to communicate. Unforgettable and genuinely profound. (The 1972 Andrei Tarkovsky film alters the ending and, to some degree, the thematic focus, but it is also fabulous and very beautiful in its own right, a true cinematic masterpiece.)
- **Stanislaw Lem, *His Master's Voice*** (novel, 1968; English translation 1983): A thoughtful and intelligent imagination of "first contact" girded by a deep pessimism about the possibilities of transcending the conceptual boundaries set by one's species nature. It would be interesting to read this (and/or *Ratner's Star* and/or*Solaris*) in combination with Davidson's "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," etc.
- **Boris & Arkady Strugatsky, *Roadside Picnic*** (novel, 1971; various English translations available). Yet another book about the difficulties of communicating with alien intelligences. (I seem to have a theme here – or an obsession.) Humans deal with the incomprehensible after-effects of an alien visitation. The novel was the basis for Andrei Tarkovsky's 1979 film, *Stalker*.
- **Kurt Vonnegut, *Player Piano*** (novel, 1952): A satire of industrial and cultural automation in the near future, where technology has rendered most humans superfluous. Still one of the most intelligent deep critiques of the dangers of technology to be found in fiction.

List from **Eric Kaplan** (TV writer and **blogger** who did philosophy grad work at U.C. Berkeley):

- **Olaf Stapledon, *Star Maker*** (novel, 1937) -- What is the purpose of life and history?
- **Gene Wolfe, *The Hero as Werewolf*** (novel, 1991) -- What is evil? What is the role of universalizability in ethics?
- ***Futurama*, "Why Must I be a Crustacean in Love?"** (TV episode, 2000) -- What's the relationship between ethics and sociobiology?
- ***Futurama*, "Hell is Other Robots"** (TV episode, 1999) -- Feuerbach thesis of the origin of religion -- is religion a human creation and if so what purpose does it serve?
- **Algis Budrys, *Rogue Moon*** (novel, 1960) -- What is personal identity?
- **Isaac Asimov, *The Gods Themselves*** (novel, 1972) -- What is personal identity?
- **Theodore Sturgeon, *Maturity*** (short stories, 1947-1958) -- What is the purpose of life? What is a well-lived life?
- **Lewis Padgett, "Mimsy Were the Borogoves"** (short story, 1943) -- Are other conceptual schemes possible?
- **Eric Rücker Eddison, *The Worm Ouroboros*** (novel, 1922) -- Nietzsche and the myth of the eternal return -- the heaviest thought.
- **G. K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*** (novel, 1908) -- Theodicy -- why would a good God allow evil?
- **Alice Bradley Sheldon / James Tiptree, Jr., "A Momentary Taste of Being"** (short story, 1975) -- biology and the purpose of life.

List from **Jonathan Kaplan** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Oregon State University):

- **Michael Coney, *The Celestial Steam Locomotive* and *Gods of the Greataway*** (novels, 1983, 1984). An adventure story in which various kinds of (post-)humans work together to achieve various ends, only some of which they understand. What is it to be human? to be a person? How should we think about choice and alternative possibilities?
- **Philip K. Dick, *A Scanner Darkly*** (novel, 1977). (The 2006 movie adaptation is quite faithful to the book.) An undercover drug enforcement agent loses touch with reality. Who are we, when we pretend to be who we are not? To whom do we owe loyalty?
- **Philip K. Dick, *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*** (novel, 1974). In a police state, a TV star wakes up to find he is now a nobody. What is "reality," and whose reality matters?
- **Harlan Ellison, "Shatterday"** (short story, 1980). A man discovers that he has split in two. What if there was another you? What if the other you was a better person? What is it to be decent human being, and why does it matter?
- **William Gibson, "The Winter Market"** (short story, 1985). A producer works directly with artists' emotions. Does this imply anything about consciousness? About the nature of our experiences? What is art? Some reflection on the potential for immortality.
- **Ann Leckie, *Ancillary Justice*** (novel, 2013). An embodied fragment of an AI seeks revenge. How should we think about personal identity and responsibility in the case of distributed entities? Does this have any implications for thinking about ourselves?
- **Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*** (novel, 1974). Follows a physicist from an "anarchist" society. Reflections on political systems, morality, political organizing. Do all great dreams fail? Is it the nature of all political systems to decay into bureaucracies, or worse?
- **Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Word for World is Forest"** (novella, 1972, later expanded to a novel, 1976). A logging camp on another world uses the native species as slave labor. Reflections on colonialism and responsibility, as well as on social change. What is it to be a person? How do (and how should) societies change?
- **George R. R. Martin, "With Morning Comes Mistfall**" (short story, 1973). A scientific expedition comes to debunk to a local myth. Is there a value in leaving things unexplored? Should we want science to answer even the all the questions it can answer? Is there any value in remaining willfully ignorant of what we could easily learn?
- **Dan Simmons, *Phases of Gravity*** (novel, 1989). The story follows an Apollo astronaut who walked on the moon, as he moves through a world that no longer seems to be moving forward. Where do we find meaning in our lives? How do we reconcile ourselves to the world we find ourselves in?

List from **Brian Keeley** (Professor of Philosophy, Pitzer College):

- **Jocelyn Moorhouse, *Proof*** (movie, 1991). A very early film of both Russell Crowe and Hugo Weaving (so, fun for that reason alone), in which Weaving plays a curmudgeonly blind person with real trust issues. Part of his worry about being deceived revolves around his lack of access to the visual world, so he has taken to taking photographs, having sighted people tell him what's in the images, writing that (in braille) on the back, and then checking those descriptions against what other sighted people report. An interesting exploration of epistemology as well as what epistemic standards are appropriate to what situations. DISCLAIMER: Fiction, but not really speculative fiction, but connects in interesting ways with the next piece, which is a bit more speculative.

- **H.G. Wells, "The Country of the Blind"** (short story, 1904). In this short story, Wells describes an explorer, Nuñez, who accidentally discovers a valley in the Andes separated off from the rest of the world containing a population of humans who have all lost their sight several generations earlier. As such, they no longer believe in the phenomenon of vision. The story follows Nuñez's frustrating attempts to first rule them (after all, in the country of the blind…) and then later even to convince them that he has access to a sense that they do not have. How would one go about convincing a group of extremely functional blind people, living in an environment that they have adapted to their needs, of the existence of the visual world? Wells argues that it would be harder than one might initially imagine.
- **David Cronenberg, *eXistenZ*** (movie, 1999). The story revolves around an virtual reality game in which you play a part in a story about a plot to murder the designer of a virtual reality game (and take a guess what the topic of the game within a game is!). This movie came out the same year as *The Matrix* and if you ever wondered what might have happened if they had explored the possibility of a Matrix running inside the Matrix, this is your movie. This film pairs well with Descartes' *Meditations* by asking how would you know that you were in "reality" as opposed to a well-designed immersive video game? It also explores a number of Sartrean themes (hence, the title) concerning the nature of free will and the roles we adopt in life.
- **Spike Jonze / Charlie Kaufman, *Being John Malkovich***(movie, 1999). A fanciful exploration of issues in personal identity. John Cusack's character discovers a portal that lets you experience the world from the perspective of actor John Malkovich. It's fun to get students to explore what's incoherent in how this process works, according to the film. Also, you can pair this movie with Daniel Shaw's "On Being Philosophical and *Being John Malkovich*, which explores the questions of whether and how a film can be "philosophical" or "do philosophy". Be warned that this film depicts violence towards women and animals. Further, one of the main characters (albeit not a sympathetic one) expresses trans-phobic views.
- ***Star Trek: The Next Generation* , "The Measure of a Man"**(1989, TV episode). Can an AI be a person, in the moral sense or legal sense? In this episode, a scientist wishes to disassemble the android (and Second Lieutenant) Data, a procedure that might kill him. The scientist goes as far as arguing that Data is not a person, but property (and hence, has no right to self-determination). A trial is held to determine Data's status.
- **Ted Chiang, "Liking What You See: A Documentary"** (short story, 2002). "Lookism" is the idea that how somebody looks -- that is, how attractive they are judged to be by society -- has an undue influence on the advantages and disadvantages a person experiences. If we were able to disable the part of the brain that judges the attractiveness of faces -- if we were able to reversibly induce the brain disorder known as prosopagnosia -- should we? This short story explores that possibility.
- **Daniel Suarez (Leinad Zeraus), *Daemon* and *FreedomTM***(novels, 2006 & 2010). Originally written as a single work, but eventually published in two volumes, these two books can be seen as an exploration of the implications of a number of technologies currently on the horizon (with some coming to pass even in the few years since they were written). Written in the form of a cyberpunk thriller, AI, drones, 3D-printing, self-replicating autonomous machine warfare, video games, & virtual reality are all thrown into the mix, as an AI begins to organize a conspiracy to control (or at least significantly change) the world. Many themes in philosophy of technology are at play.

- **Edwin Abbott Abbott, *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*** (novel, 1884). A classic work written from the point of view of 2-dimensional beings in a 2-D world (the "author" of the book is "A Square") upon their interaction with the 3rd dimension. Originally, it was renowned for its satire of hierarchical (Victorian) society, but after Einstein, how it handles the idea of there being more dimensions than those with which one is familiar became an important element of how it is read.
- **Bruce Sterling, "Swarm"** (short story, 1982). What is the function/advantage of intelligence? This story involves an encounter between a group of scientists and a (apparently) non-intelligent, superorganism species that resemble earthly social insects. Sterling's piece looks at other forms that intelligent life might take.

List from **David Killoren** (Ethics Fellow, Coastal Carolina University) & Derrick Murphy (Graduate Student, University of Wisconsin at Madison):
Philosophically interesting episodes of **The Twilight Zone** (original series)

- **"The Sixteen Millimeter Shrine"** (S1:E4, 1959). What is the ontological status of fictional worlds? Is it logically possible for an individual to move from the actual world to a fictional world?
- **"The Lonely"** (S1:E7, 1959). How can we know whether others have minds? What would an android need to do (or to be) in order to be a member of the moral community?
- **"Long Live Walter Jameson"** (S1:E24, 1960). Is immortality worth having? What moral obligations come with being an immortal who has to interact with mortals?
- **"The Eye of the Beholder"** (S2:E6, 1960). Is beauty a matter of stance-independent fact, or a social construction, or merely an illusion, or something else altogether? If a person is regarded as ugly by everyone in her society (including herself), does this mean that she really isn't beautiful?
- **"Shadowplay"** (S2:E26, 1961). What would I have to do to convince you that I am dreaming and that you're a figment of my imagination?
- **"Nothing in the Dark"** (S3:E16, 1962). Why fear death? What would death personified look like?
- **"Person or Persons Unknown"** (S3:E27, 1962). Is your identity in part constituted by others' knowledge of your life? If everyone forgets who you are, can you continue to be the same person?
- **"Four O'Clock"** (S3:E29, 1962). Is it evil to obsess about others' evils?
- **"The Old Man in the Cave"** (S5:E7, 1963). Do humans need to have a religion (whether that religion is true or not) in order to rein in our self-destructive impulses?
- **"Number 12 Looks Just Like You"** (S5:E18, 1964). Is homogeneity an aesthetic defect? Would a hedonistic utopia, in which pleasure levels are high and pain levels are low, really be all that great?

List from **Amy Kind** (Professor of Philosophy, Claremont McKenna College) (short stories only):

- **Isaac Asimov, "Evidence"** (1946). Probes the plausibility of the Turing Test.

- **Jorge Luis Borges, "The Immortal"** (1947). An intriguing exploration of why immortality may not be quite what we'd bargained for; pairs well with Bernard Williams' "The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality."
- **Octavia Butler, "Bloodchild"** (1995). Explores the nature of gender roles via a story about an alien race who need humans for procreative purposes.
- **Arthur Clarke, "The Nine Billion Names of God"** (1953). Could God's having a purpose for us provide our lives with meaningfulness?
- **Greg Egan, "The Infinite Assassin"** (1991). How are we related to our counterparts throughout the multiverse?
- **Lois Gould, "X: A Fabulous Child's Story"** (1972). What role does gender identity play in our lives? What would life be like without it?
- **Ursula K. Le Guin, "Nine Lives"** (1968). What is it like to be a clone? And more specifically, what is it like to have one's connection to other clones severed after having been raised together with them?
- **John Morressy, "Except My Life3"** (1991). Another story probing questions of identity via consideration of what life might be like when you're one of a set of closely connected clones.
- **Norman Spinrad, "The Weed of Time"** (1970). What would it be like to experience time in a non-linear fashion?
- **Roger Zelazny, "For a Breath I Tarry"** (1966). A beautiful depiction of a machine's quest to understand what it is like to be human. (See also Isaac Asimov's novella, *Bicentennial Man* and Kurt Vonnegut's "EPICAC")

List from **Pete Mandik** (Professor of Philosophy, William Paterson University, and co-host of **SpaceTimeMind**):

- **Peter Watts, *Blindsight*** (novel, 2006). Cogsci savvy tale in which assorted transhumans and extraterrestrials get by just fine without phenomenal consciousness...or do they?
- **Ted Chiang, "Understand"** (short story, 1991) Thorough and convincing first-person phenomenology of human super intelligence--you'll feel like you know what it's like to get your IQ quadrupled overnight.
- **Greg Egan, *Diaspora*** (novel, 1997) Living indefinitely long as a godlike digital posthuman is all well and good, and when you run out of physical universe(s) to explore, there's solace to be had in math.
- ***Black Mirror,* "Be Right Back"** (TV show, 2013) Digital simulacra of the recently departed may be exactly what the grief-stricken don't want but can't help but seek. (Mandik)
- **Bruce Sterling, *Schismatrix Plus*** (novel, 1995) Deeply weird political and economic turmoil in a solar system infested by post human factions (genetically engineered vs cyborgs) and, eventually, extraterrestrial investors.
- **David Gerrold, *The Man Who Folded Himself*** (novel, 1973) Exhaustive exploration of time-travel enabled narcissistic self-indulgence: meet, greet and *expletive deleted* your temporal counterparts.
- **Charles Stross, *Accelerando*** (novel, 2005) Nothing else that I've read comes as close to this in depicting what living through the technological singularity would be like; "mind-bending future shock" is an insufficiently hyperbolic superlative.

- **Warren Ellis, *Transmetropolitan*, "Another Cold Morning"**(comic book, 1998) Harsh and grim fistful of future shock depicting waking up from cryo stasis into an overwhelming future that has zero use for you.
- **Tom Scott, "Welcome to Life: The Singularity, Ruined by Lawyers"** (YouTube video, 2012) Everyone can have digital immortality, but not everyone can afford a version unsullied by direct brain advertising.
- **Roger Williams*, The Metamorphosis of Prime Intellect*** (novel, 1994) A virtual god, subservient to Asimov's laws of robotics, emerges from the technological singularity, and the ensuing cosmic paternalism puts every human into a heaven they desperately want out of, despite (or because of) all the sex and ultraviolence.

List from **Ryan Nichols** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, Cal State Fullerton):

- **Mike Resnick, "Kirinyaga"** (short story, 1988). The best and most fêted story — one dealing a deft touch to issues of race and gender, justice and moral relativism — from an author who needs to hire someone to carry around his treasure trove of awards.
- **Ted Chiang, "Liking What You See: A Documentary"** (short story, 2002). In the same vein as Vonnegut's 1961 "Harrison Bergeron," here Chiang offers us a brilliant semi-story in which a campus community takes seriously a pervasive but undiscussed bias — lookism.
- **Daniel Suarez*, Influx*** (novel, 2014). Justly compared to Crichton, Suarez's page-turning plotting does not come at the expense of intelligent protagonists and antagonists, thank God; but make no mistake, this exciting but thoughtful book is much more than aisle-seat fodder.
- **Timons Esaias, "Norbert and the System"** (short story, 1993). Imagine an app, dropped into the head of a Homer Simpson-like character, that uses an algorithm to instruct him — with microsecond speed — that if he wants her to like him, for example, he ought to tilt his head a bit more to the left and use the words "I feel" in the next sentence he utters. Written with wit and humor, this meditation on free will and compatibilism is more than the sum of its parts and foreshadows the **increasing lack of empathy of facebooking millenials**.
- **Greg Egan, "Reasons to be Cheerful"** (short story, 1997). Egan, in my pantheon of hard sf writers, plays with the psychology and philosophy of happiness with a protagonist, narrated in the first person, who of necessity gains the ability to adjust his mental well-being moment by moment.
- **Douglas Adams*, Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* &c** (various media, 1978-2005). This book and the series still delivers Mona Lisa-like smiles (and laughs) to thinking readers from the moment Arthur's first grabs a towel — and a pint — to the moment when Zaphod asks to "meet the meat" at the Restaurant.
- **Johann Kepler, "Somnium"** (novel, 1608). An incredible story by one of the most important scientists in world history, Kepler (1571-1630) represents a trip to the moon according to extrapolation from his then-current, accurate, and highly non-standard scientific knowledge. (The real-life story behind "Somnium" and what it cost Kepler personally is more gripping.)
- **Michael Moorcock, "Pale Roses"** (short story, 1974). While we think that post-humanity will override most of our base evolutionary motivations, this literary story raises profound questions about the meaning of a human life through a setting in which human-like characters are virtually immortal and have nearly limitless powers... but still desperately want to be invited to parties.

- **Kij Johnson, "Spar"** (short story, 2009). I fucking dare you.
- **Iain M. Banks, *Surface Detail*** (novel, 2010). If we plot ideas-per-page on the x-axis and quality of writing on the y, Banks' novels exist in an upper-right-corner world of their own, and this probing novel about punishment, religion and the state is no exception.

List from **Paul Oppenheimer** (Assistant Editor, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy):

- **Edwin Abbott Abbott (writing pseudonymously as "A Square"), *Flatland*** (novel, 1884). Conceptualization and visualization; imaginability, conceivability, and possibility; social class and gender structure.
- ***Star Trek: The Next Generation* (Peter S. Beagle, screenplay), "Sarek"** (TV episode, 1990). Dementia, social role, telepathy, telempathy, Stoicism, pietas, duty, honor.
- **Peter S. Beagle, *The Innkeeper's Song*** (novel, 1993). Gender, gender swap, revenants, romantic love, nature of true love, laws of magic and costs of performing magic; do things and people have essential natures? Loyalty and power.
- **Stanisław Lem, *Solaris*** (novel, 1961). Communication with aliens. What, if anything, is real? Politics of science and exploration. (Andrei Tarkovsky. 1972. film.)
- **Ursula K. LeGuin, *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia***(novel, 1974). Anarcho-syndicalism vs capitalism; scarcity and abundance; co-operation and competition; sclerosis of a revolution.
- **Doris Lessing, *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five*** (novel, 1980). Gender: are gender characteristics inherent?; gender essentialism; communication among genders. (Philip Glass. 1997. Opera.)
- **Paul M.A. Linebarger (writing as Cordwainer Smith), "The Ballad of Lost C'Mell"** (short story, 1962). Sex work, multiple grades of citizenship, civil rights, animal-human spectrum.
- **China Miéville, Embassytown** (novel, 2011). Philosophy of language! semiotics! impossibility of *falsehood*! simile vs metaphor!
- **Charles Stross, *Accelerando*** (novel, 2005). Uploaded minds; post-humanism; the singularity. What is a person, anyway?
- **A.E. van Vogt, *Slan*** (novel, 1940). Transhumanity/superhumanity, telepathy, genocide. Meta: fandom: "Fans are slans." The other. Mutual contempt and fear.

List from **Adriano Palma** (Senior Lecturer of Philosophy, University of Kwazulu-Natal):

- **Andrei Tarkovsky, *Stalker*** (movie, 1979). People are led to a place which is counterfactually something in which wishful thinking is successful. They need a guide (the 'stalker').
- **Doug Liman, *Edge of Tomorrow*** (movie, 2014). A mysterious brain controls a huge number of robots that occupy Europe. An American journalist finds himself in the position of being killed a number of times retaining the memory traces of the killings before his death. On what free will entails in terms of what (Borges &) H. Frankfurt would call "the alternatives".
- **Christopher Nolan, *Memento*** (movie, 2000). In the semi Nietzschean return, or the eternal return in reverse. It has a lot to show about attention & memory in the phil of mind areas. The protagonist has short term full amnesia.

- **Michael Chabon*, The Yiddish Policemen's Union*** (novel, 2007). An alternative reality, where Israel is not born (where it is now) but in the snow.
- **Andrew Niccol*, Gattaca*** (movie, 1997). The dude assumes the identity of a superior being in order to travel in time (space-time & the issues around the so called personal identity).
- **Thomas More*, Utopia*** (novel, 1516). Well, if you did not know it invented scifi, but it allows reflections on equilibria in the sense of Nash & co.
- **George Orwell / Eric A. Blair*, 1984*** (novel, 1949). An excellent scifi/fantasy comparison on what control is in education and social relationships.
- **Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*, Nienasycenie [Insatiability]***(novel, 1927). Excellent on mind control: an Asian army controls brains by murtib'ing a pill making pliant subjects. (Palma)
- **Stanislaw Lem*, His Master's Voice*** (novel, 1968). One of the best treatment of the untreatable theme of „translation" in the Davidson/Quine areas. People are asked to understand what an alien textmessage is...
- **Bernard le Bouvier Fontenelle*, Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes [Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds]***(novel/dialogue, 1686). In looking at the plurality he has the notion of the insignificance of the perspective of humans, thence entering the strange space in which one's imagination is smaller and not larger than what is known.

List from **Lewis Powell** (Assistant Professor of Philosophy at University at Buffalo, SUNY)

- **Leonard Richardson*, Constellation Games*** (novel, 2012): Aliens make first contact, and Ariel Blum's first reaction is to hope that they'll let us play their video games. They do. The novel is much better than this premise would lead you to expect. Examines issues in social/political philosophy concerning scarcity of resources (and post-scarcity societies), anarchism and social organization, the (dis)value of immortality, and the role of art and games in human life.
- **Ursula K. Le Guin*, The Dispossessed*** (novel, 1974): A gripping story investigating a society that has embraced and internalized a full-blown communalism. Examines issues of privacy and property, and the individual's relationship to society.
- **Ursula K. Le Guin*, The Left Hand of Darkness*** (novel, 1969): first contact story about someone encountering a society with radically different manifestations of gender roles, sexuality, and social norms. Examines issues of gender and sexuality, as well as love and friendship.
- **Ted Chiang, "Hell is the Absence of God"** (short story, 2001): Story set in a world where everyone has concrete evidence of the existence of God and an afterlife, but no better understanding of why there is suffering. Examines issues in philosophy of religion, epistemology, the problem of evil and divine hiddenness.
- **Ted Chiang, "Division By Zero"** (short story, 1991): one of the few works I've seen of mathematical science fiction (rather than empirical science fiction), impressive treatment of the possibility that arithmetic is inconsistent.
- **Ted Chiang, "Story of Your Life" / "Evolution of Human Science"** (short stories, 1998/2000): These stories are very different, but both raise fascinating questions about the nature of science, the role of humans in science, and the consequences of dealing with scientific progress that exceeds the understanding of individual humans.

- **PD James/Alfonso Cuaron, *The Children of Men*** (novel, 1992/movie, 2006): While there are a number of plot differences between the film and the book, both do an excellent job of investigating reactions to an existential threat to humanity arising from total infertility.
- ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "Who Watches the Watchers" / "First Contact" / "Thine Own Self"** (tv episodes, 1989/1991/1994): The prime directive (non-interference with less advanced civilizations) is one of the most fascinating elements from Star Trek. These episodes do an excellent job of exploring the ethics of non-interference and undisclosed observation, and raise questions about the withholding of beneficial advances required by it.
- **Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*** (novel, 1818): It seems almost unnecessary to list this work, which is such a widely read classic. Shelley's tale of the "modern Prometheus" does an exceptional job of raising questions about the nature of humanity and the ethics of creating life.
- **China Miéville, *Embassytown*** (novel, 2011): A novel about people trying to interact with an alien race who think and communicate in a fundamentally different manner than us. A more sophisticated take on this concept than the TNG episode Darmok, and with considerably more interest for philosophers of language.

List from **Ina Roy-Faderman** (Instructor of Philosophy, Oregon State University, and poet):

- **Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*** (novel, 1932). Biotech isn't automatically a "good" or an "evil" for people and society. What are the repercussions of engineering people with enhanced and reduced capacities? Both positive and negative?
- **William Gibson, "Johnny Mnemonic"** (short story, 1981). What are the pros and cons of biomodifying humans and other intelligent organisms? How if at all should such practices be regulated? Is it even possible to regulate new technologies fully?
- **Theodore Sturgeon, *Venus Plus X*** (novel, 1960). What is gender? Is gender necessarily a binary? Why?
- **Margaret Atwood, *A Handmaid's Tale*** (novel, 1985). How does the role and treatment of women in our society affect society? What problems are there with persons of either gender being limited to reproductive purposes?
- **Connie Willis, *The Doomsday Book*** (novel, 1992). How does disease affect society and culture, particularly with respect to our moral and ethical standards? How do we understand the impact of our small actions on the future, and what effect should potential impact have on our current behavior?
- **Ray Bradbury, "A Sound of Thunder"** (short story, 1952). A start to looking at utilitarian analyses of possible consequences of our smallest actions. What are our obligations with regard to possible future consequences of our actions?
- **Kurt Vonnegut, "Welcome to the Monkey House"** (short story, 1968). What are reasonable responses to a population issue? In what situation, if any, is assisted suicide ethically allowable? What are the consequences of different attitudes towards sex and sexuality?
- **Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*** (novel, 2005). How important is how we're made to our personhood? What guidelines should there be to using reproductive technologies? What should the limits of these uses be, if any?

- **Daniel Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon*** (short story 1958, novel 1966). What are our obligations to organisms that are not human? is intelligence a good thing? What are/should be our responsibilities to persons who do are not neurotypical?
- **John Chu, "The Water That Falls on You from Nowhere"**(short story, 2013). Uses a strange phenomenon to make visible and concrete the emotional difficulties of coming out. A great way to start discussing what our obligations are to our family and what the importance is, if any, of genetics.

List from **Susan Schneider** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Connecticut):

- **Robert Sawyer, *Mindscan*** (novel, 2009). A fellow with an inoperable brain tumor attempts to upload his brain onto a computer and learns the hard way that uploading is no means of survival. Sawyer astutely depicts the metaphysical, legal and ethical challenges that arise. It is fun to assign this book with philosophical work on personal identity, such as Parfit on teleportation.
- **Ray Bradbury, "A Sound of Thunder"** (short story, 1952). Time travelers on safari change the past by being lazy and straying off the path. A consistent time travel story. Hilarious.
- **Eric Schwitzgebel and R. Scott Bakker, "Reinstalling Eden"**(short story, 2013). Your story in *Nature!* (Reprinted in the second edition of **my book**).
- **Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner*** (movie, 1982). This film, loosely based on **Philip K. Dick's classic novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep***, (also recommended) is a cinematic masterpiece. Set in the near future a dystopian Los Angeles it treats the topic of the sentience of androids with great sensitivity and features one of the richest endings in film (if you ask me). Dick's novel adds major elements to the story that the film does not capture. Still, the film is excellent in its own right.
- ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "Ship in a Bottle"** (TV episode, 1993). Professor James Moriarty is a sentient holodeck creature who demands to be free to live outside of the holodeck and cleverly generates computer simulations within simulations.
- **Isaac Asimov's robot stories** (short stories and novels, 1939-1985). Most of Asimov's robot's stories are situated at the beginning of positronic robotics and space exploration. Robots are programmed to follow the Three Laws of Robotics. The film ***I, Robot*** is also excellent.
- **Cameron Crowe, *Vanilla Sky*** (movie, 2001). A wealthy playboy faces a horrible accident and arranges to be placed in a cryonic sleep for 150 years, where he lives in virtual reality. The simulation is not without glitches, and the visit from the tech support representative in virtual reality is priceless. The film is a colorful illustration of external world skepticism.
- **Charlie Kaufman and Michael Gondry, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*** (movie, 2004). Clementine erases the memories of her relationship with Joel, so Joel tries to have the same procedure. But as his memories begin to disappear, he has a change of heart and tries to escape the procedure.

List from **Eric Schwitzgebel** (Professor of Philosophy, University of California at Riverside):

- **Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths*** (esp. "Tlön, Uqbar, and Orbis Tertius", "The Library of Babel", and "The Circular Ruins", short stories, mostly 1940-1949). Every story is

philosophically weird and interesting in multiple ways, with repeating themes of infinitude, temporality, repetition, and metaphysical idealism.

- **Greg Egan, *Diaspora / Permutation City*** (novels, 1994, 1997). If we could upload our minds into giant computers, including duplicating ourselves, backing ourselves up, radically altering our sensory experiences and personalities, what would be the consequences for personal identity and the meaning of life?
- **Vernor Vinge, *A Fire upon the Deep / Children of the Sky*** (novels 1992, 2011). Features small packs of doglike creatures who communicate constantly through high-frequency sound; only together do they have sophisticated intelligence.
- **Olaf Stapledon, *Sirius*** (novel, 1944). A dog endowed with human intelligence struggles to make sense of love, human irrationality, and the meaning of life.
- **Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*** (novels, 1865, 1871). Logic and metaphysics turn topsy turvy (time stops, memory runs backwards, Alice is only a figure in the king's dream, etc.) while social conventions (tea time, croquet, the monarchy) continue unabated but bizarrely transformed.
- **Linda Nagata, *The Bohr Maker*** (novel, 1995). Duplicates of your mind can be sent to segregated subportions of others' minds, reaching independent decisions before merging back into you (cf. Brin's *Kiln People*).
- **Ted Chiang, *Stories of Your Life and Others*** (stories, 1990-2002). One story features aliens whose language is visual and non-linear instead of linear and temporal; another features people who disable the part of their brain that makes beauty judgments about other people.
- **Charles Stross, *Accelerando*** (novel, 2005). Cyberpunk packed tight with wild technological and social ideas, especially regarding self-enhancement, duplication, reincarnation, and human inferiority to AI.
- **Amie L. Thomasson, "I'm Glad I'm Not Real"** (short story, 2012). What kinds of properties can fictional characters have – unmentioned toes? free will? understanding of their fictional nature? (cf. Unamuno's *Mist*).

List from Mark Silcox (Assistant Chair of Humanities and Philosophy, University of Central Oklahoma)

- **Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, *The Time Wanderers*** (novel, 1985; English translation 1987). Ever since Tolstoy, the greatest Russian writers have shown an almost supernatural ability to understand and dramatize the tragic sweep of their own nation's history. This short novel is a reflection on the limitations and paradoxes of planned societies, and the myths about human equality that can both sustain and undermine them. If Soviet censors had been paying any serious attention to SF when this was published, the Strugatsky brothers would certainly have been sent to Siberia. Small mercies!
- **Isaac Asimov, "Breeds There a Man?"** (short story, 1951). Before *The Matrix* and Nick Bostrom, golden age SF writers had more rough-and-ready ways to explore the idea that our whole reality is a vast experiment performed upon us by near-omnipotent beings.
- **Bruce Sterling, *Holy Fire*** (novel, 1997). An ingeniously constructed novel about youth, aging, and the ambiguous benefits of socialized medicine. The near-future that Sterling envisages is rich with interesting personalities and technologies, and his protagonist, who starts the story about half a century older than she is by the end of it, is a memorable character.

- **Adam Cadre (programmer),** ***Photopia*** (interactive fiction, 1998). Probably the most famous and influential work of interactive fiction. Not exactly a time-travel story, but the use of flashbacks makes it feel that way. A masterpiece of technologically-enhanced storytelling that's also humane and heartbreakingly sad.
- **George Alec Effinger,** ***What Entropy Means to Me*** (novel, 1972). Reflective consumers of genre literature often have an excessive respect for murky, vaguely Jungian ideas about archetypes, mythemes, and ur-narratives. This novel is a funny and merciless send-up of the whole daft worldview that also ends up being quite touching.
- **Wim Wenders,** ***Until the End of the World*** (movie, 1991). Compared to the usual orgies of explosions, light saber duels, and last minute races to save the galaxy, there's something about the laid-back, slightly spacey tone of this film that gives it considerable novelty value. It's also one of the earliest movies to depict a high-tech future in which the paint still sometimes peels off the walls and airplane engines still sometimes cut out in mid-flight. The last third of the story, in which characters become addicted to handheld devices that depict their previous nights' dreams, is curiously prophetic.
- **Harry Turtledove, "Getting Real"** (short story, 2009). In the near future, the USA is in the economic and cultural thrall of China because American citizens are hopelessly addicted to foreign VR technology. A very edgy, self-consciously allegorical piece of political SF.
- **Will McIntosh,** ***Soft Apocalypse*** (novel, 2011). An extremely pessimistic dystopian novel that manages to avoid the usual libertarian fantasies of noble individuals being persecuted by a demonic state. McIntosh's apocalypse is the kind can only be blamed on humanity at large.
- **Robert Reed, "A Billion Eves"** (short story, 2006). An imaginative take on some feminist themes. Gives the central conceit of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* and Pamela Sargent's *The Shore of Women* just a tiny extra nudge, with the help of Lewisian modal metaphysics.
- **Bruce Sterling, "The Beautiful and the Sublime,"** (short story, 1987). In this story's version of the future, scientific inquiry is the exclusive province of genius AIs. The protagonist is a harmless, but hyperbolic fop who spends all his spare time breathlessly theorizing about aesthetics, and can't quite manage to understand why some of his friends might find such a life unsatisfying. A very subtle and cheerfully malevolent piece of cultural criticism.

List from **Meghan Sullivan** (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Notre Dame):

- **Mary Doria Russell,** ***The Sparrow*** (novel, 1996). Jesuits in space! The main theme of the book concerns the protagonist's crisis of faith, but I much preferred the supporting characters, each of whom had a fascinating backstory which revealed quite a bit about the Earth culture in the novel.
- **Cormac McCarthy,** ***The Road*** (novel, 2006). Deeply moving story about the lengths a father will go to in order to preserve a sense of hope in his young son, even as the world around them crumbles. The greatest apocalyptic novel ever written.
- **Ted Chiang,** ***Stories of Your Life and Others*** (short stories, collected 2002). A collection of scifi short stories exploring diverse philosophical themes -- the problem of evil, the relationship between language and time, the ethics of beauty. Most of the stories offer an original and highly creative take on the issue at hand.

- **George Saunders, *Tenth of December*** (short stories, collected 2013). Like Chiang, Saunders offers highly original takes on philosophical problems---the best stories in this volume deal with the nature of conscious experience and subjugation.
- **Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*** (novel, 1985). I've re-read this book easily a dozen times. Kids in military school in space, learning to fight the war to end all alien wars. Totalitarian governments. Xenophobia. Military tactics. Blogging... What more could you want?
- **David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas*** (novel, 2004). There is a distinctive Mitchell-style---complex worlds where everything is secretly interconnected and paranoia is completely justified. *Cloud Atlas* is his best, especially in the middle chapters when he essentially invests a new dialect to describe life in a catastrophic time.
- **Karen Russell, Vampires in the Lemon Grove** (short stories, collected 2013). A collection of beautiful short stories, with elements of fantasy and horror used to draw out insights about very real emotions. The first two stories are fascinating. The last one, devastating.
- **Stephen King, *The Stand*** (novel, 1978). The world has been ravaged by a disastrous plague called Captain Trips. The novel charts the path of various survivors who must choose sides in an apocalyptic battle. But the description doesn't do justice to King's richly imagined characters and twisty plot.
- **Justin Cronin, *The Passage*** (novel, 2010). OK, I just never get sick of apocalyptic science fiction. The main character, Amy, is probably my all-time favorite protagonist in fiction. Is it a virus book? A monster book? A book about dystopian communities? A book about immortality? There are several great plot twists that it would be a shame to spoil, so I will rest the description there.
- **Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*** (novel, 1968). I read this for the first time in middle school, never having heard of *Blade Runner*. The android vs detective plot is great, and of course the book is an excellent meditation on human nature. But the best part of the story, I think, is the dark, dystopian society Dick portrays in the background of the novel.

List from **Christy Mag Uidhir** (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, University of Houston):

- **Gene Wolfe, *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*** (novel, 1972) A novella composed of three short stories that addresses the issue of personal identity through the Colonialist lens.
- **Gene Wolfe, *The Book of the New Sun*** (novels, 1980-1987) Four novels and a coda. Modern masterpiece of literature, science-fiction or otherwise. Difficult and at times seems impenetrably dense but, like much of Wolfe's work, the rewards for the careful reader are endless.
- **Walter Miller, Jr., *Canticle for Leibowitz*** (novel, 1959) A powerful tale both beautiful and tragic of Humanity and the light of knowledge.
- **Stanisław Lem, *The Cyberiad*** (story collection, 1965; trans. 1974) A collection of philosophically-themed short stories about the adventures of constructor engineers Trurl and Klapaucius trying to out do one another.
- **Frederick Pohl, *Gateway*** (novel, 1977) How time doesn't heal all wounds; some it leaves freshly open and raw forever.
- **Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War*** (novel, 1975) Haldeman's sci-fi Vietnam masterpiece. What war at relativistic speeds means for soldiers going home.

- **Jack Vance, *The Dying Earth*** (novel, 1950) Set millions of years in the future against the backdrop of a dying sun where mathematics has become magic and Earth a thing of terrible beauty.
- **Stanisław Lem, *The Futurological Congress*** (novel, 1971; trans. 1974) It's *The Matrix* on drugs (literally) but better written and utterly hilarious.
- **Connie Willis, *To Say Nothing of the Dog*** (novel, 1998) A thoroughly enjoyable time-travel romp with a surprisingly philosophically sophisticated ending.
- **Mike Resnick, *Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge*** (novel, 1994) Novella that uses stories from a single geographic location across time to weave together a portrait of humanity (and the rise and fall thereof) as an essentially ruthless and thoroughly evil blight upon the universe.

List from **Jonathan Weinberg** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Arizona):

- **Millennium-end movies about skepticism: *The Matrix* / *13th Floor* / *Dark City* / *Existenz*** (movies, 1998-1999). *Existenz* may be the best film of that list, but the middle two, though less well-known, each contain interesting sections dramatizing what it really would feel like to slowly come to think that a skeptical hypothesis may actually be true. Some exploration (though not particularly well worked out) of the relationship between memory and personal identity in *Dark City* as well.
- **Ridley Scott, *Blade Runner*** (movie, 1982). AI , the problem of other minds... does anyone really need *Blade Runner* glossed at this point?
- **Ursula K. LeGuin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"**(short story, 1973). The problem of evil; one aspect of it I particularly like is that it puts the problem in more human-sized terms, where the readers must ask themselves whether they would be the sort of person described by the title, or not.
- **David Brin, *Kiln People*** (novel, 2002). What if you could temporarily put your consciousness into a disposable copy of yourself, which could then run various errands for you, and whose consciousness would be re-absorbed by yours after 24 hours? The copies are self-destructing: if they don't re-absorb by 24 hours, then they disintegrate, so in general, the copies strongly identify *as* the person they are copies of, expecting to live on via the re-absorption. But then again... what if you were such a copy, and you realized that you are now in a circumstance where you won't ever get to rejoin the original? Really interesting exploration of fusion/fission and personal identity; it's written in what one might call the first-person-singular-plural.
- ***The Leftovers*** (TV series, 2014-present). (I confess I haven't read the book of that title by Tom Perrotta, who is also one of the makers of the show.) The premise is that all of a sudden, at a point about three years before the story starts, about 2% of the world's population just… vanished. Poof. It's kind of like the rapture, except it's clear that the departed people weren't any better than everyone else, and indeed, there doesn't seem to be any pattern to who did or did not vanish. It's maybe a borderline case of the SF/Fantasy genre. What I find compellingly philosophical about it, inter alia, is that it is an exploration of what it would be like to like in a world in which you had evidence that Humean worries about induction really were true. What if the universe did just throw us a massive, inexplicable, unprojectable curve ball? How would we conduct our lives? (For a much, much darker, weirder, and horrifying exploration of the unknowable in sci-fi form, I can recommend Jeff Vandermeer's "Southern

Reach" trilogy: *Annihilation*, *Authority*, and *Acceptance*. But I'm not sure I even know how to begin glossing it, frankly. So I'm cheating and helping myself to a parenthetical here.)

- **China Miéville, *Embassytown*** (novel, 2011). A member of a very small set of sci-fi books where the relevant science is linguistics. It centrally concerns the challenge of communicating with an alien race whose language, among other challenging properties, seems to be one in which one cannot knowingly express a falsehood. (Having learned about lying from the humans, the aliens have a kind of Olympic competition to see who can come as close to lying as possible.)
- **Neil Gaiman, *Murder Mysteries*** (short story, 1998; graphic novel, 2002). As Heaven enters into late stages of planning for the Creation, an angel is wakened to serve his purpose as Heaven's detective, to investigate the very first murder ever. It plays with both fantasy and noir genres, and is an examination of the problem of evil.
- **Neil Stephenson, *Anathem*** (novel, 2008). A sci-fi adventure book starring a philosopher-monk-hero, where major plot twists involve the manyworlds interpretation of QM, and debates over Platonism in metaphysics. No, really.
- **L. Sprague DeCamp, "Aristotle & The Gun"** (short story, 1958) - A man travels back to ancient Greece, to try to jump-start the scientific revolution by a millenium or so, with rather unintended consequences.
- **Susanna Clarke, *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*** (novel, 2004). Set in a version of early 19th century England and Europe in which the English have (re?)discovered magic. Both an interesting exploration of genre (fantasy? alt-history? pastiche of 19th century novels), and an exploration of the philosophical conflict between Englightenment and Romantic takes on modernity, made manifest in the different styles of sorcery of the two title characters.

List from **Dylan Wittkower** (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Old Dominion University):

- **Philip K. Dick, "Autofac"** (short story, 1955). A short story about the grey goo problem in nanotech, which is, um, a pretty interesting thing to find someone writing about in the '50s. Relevant to the difficulty of acting responsibly with regard to complex systems whose effects are hard to predict, and about the questionable value of autonomy when you don't have any particular rational determination of values that would guide what you would do with that autonomy.
- **Philip K. Dick, "The Defenders"** (short story, 1953). It forms a great counterpoint to "Autofac." In "Autofac," the machines mindlessly consume the planet to create consumer goods. In "The Defenders," -- spoiler alert -- the machines realize that the humans' mindless destruction of the planet (through war, this time, rather than production) is irrational, and instead they just fake massive destruction to placate the humans.
- **Nancy Kress, "Nano Comes to Clifford Falls"** (short story, 2006). Nano destroys scarcity, work is no longer necessary, society falls apart.
- **Pamela Zoline, "The Heat Death of the Universe"** (short story, 1967). Avant-garde writing, and genre-challenging, since it does not have most (any?) of the usual marks of science fiction. Concerns the uselessness of scientific knowledge in the face of existential despair and the experience of meaninglessness.
- **J.G. Ballard, "The Thousand Dreams of Stellavista"** (short story, 1962). A man drives his wife to kill him, also inadvertently (but foreseeably) programming his "psychotropic" house to later attempt to kill its new owners. Each chapter of the *Vermillion Sands* collection

(which this is from) uses science fiction to explore a different art form — this is the chapter on architecture.

- **Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*** (novel, 1968). There's the moral isolation from others through an "experience-machine"-like self-programming of emotional states, contrasted with Mercer as a kind of Levinasian Other; animal ethics, especially as connected to consumerism and environmentalism; AI stuff; etc. Wonderfully complicated, deep, and wacky — all of which will be surprising if you've only heard of it by way of *Blade Runner*. I'll also go ahead and plug one of my edited volumes, *Philip K. Dick and Philosophy* (2011), which has chapters on philosophical issues in a good number of Dick novels and films.
- **R. Scott Bakker, *Neuropath* and the *Prince of Nothing* trilogy** (novels, 2004-2008). Very philosophically informed. *Neuropath* is grounded in serious research in neuroscience and philosophy of mind. *Prince of Nothing* is high fantasy in the spirit, but not the style, of Tolkien, indebted to both Thucydides and Camus.
- **Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*** (novel, 1985). Issues include embodiment and phenomenology, philosophy of education, lying and consequentialism, just war theory, and virtue ethics. See my 2013 anthology, *Ender's Game and Philosophy*.
- **M.T. Anderson, *Feed*** (novel, 2002). Issues include extended cognition, transhumanism, and the internet of things.

List from **Audrey Yap** (Associate Professor of Philosophy, University of Victoria):

- **Nalo Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring*** (novel, 1998). This book has everything you didn't know you wanted in a book: three generations of kickass women, post-apocalyptic Toronto, and some Afro-Caribbean magic. That's all I need to tell you, now go read it immediately. I think it's one of the best and most underrated works of feminist speculative fiction out there.
- **Isaac Asimov, *I, Robot*** (short stories, collected 1950). Classic short stories in this book, having to do with the relationship between humans and non-human intelligences. It's not as utopian about technology as a lot of Asimov's other work, but despite several incidents of robots behaving badly, it's not all Skynet and doom either.
- ***Red Dwarf*, "Justice"** (TV show, 1991). The Justice Field makes it physically impossible for injustice to be committed!
- **Ted Chiang, *Stories of Your Life and Others*** (short stories, collected 2002). Short stories following through on the consequences of various ideas. What if arithmetic actually was inconsistent? What if we did live in a system of celestial spheres?
- **Robert J. Sawyer, *Hominids*** (novel, 2002; also *Humans* and*Hybrids*, 2003). *Hominids* is the first book in the *Neanderthal Parallax*trilogy, in which a doorway to a parallel universe opens up in Sudbury, Ontario. Yes, Sudbury. In the parallel universe, Neanderthals became dominant rather than us. It's interesting thinking through the differences in the family culture of each group, since Neanderthals in the other universe have two partners, one male and one female.
- **Christopher Nolan, *The Prestige*** (movie, 2010). It's hard to describe what makes this movie philosophically interesting without giving away the big plot twist at the end. But there are two very distinct explorations of personal identity. My personal favourite is the one that has to do with social identity.

- **Jorge Luis Borges, "On Rigor in Science"** (short story, 1946). I want to use this one-paragraph short story in a paper on idealization. It brings up an empire in which map-making has "advanced" such that the only acceptable map of the empire is one of the exact same scale as the empire itself.
- ***Futurama*, "Mars University"** (TV show, 1999). Gunther is a monkey who becomes super-intelligent but can then no longer fit in with his monkey community. Could we be better off ignorant if it means we can then enjoy the company of others?
- **Elizabeth Moon, *The Speed of Dark*** (novel, 2002). The protagonist is a scientist with autism in a near-future world in which there may be a "cure" for his condition. The quotation marks are there because one of the central issues has to do with whether autism is a condition that in fact needs curing. I don't think I'd heard of the idea of neurodiversity when I read this, but it strikes me as exactly the idea under consideration.