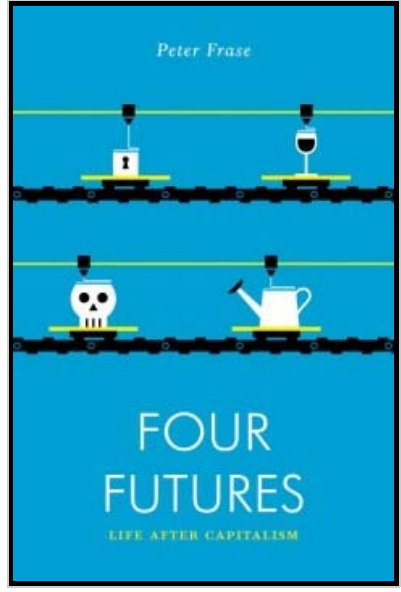




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## Four Futures

by Peter Frase

**Price: \$16.95**(Paperback)

Published: October 11, 2016

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From the Publisher: Capitalism is going to end

Peter Frase argues that increasing automation and a growing scarcity of resources, thanks to climate change, will bring it all tumbling down. In *Four Futures*, Frase imagines how this post-capitalist world might look, deploying the tools of both social science and speculative fiction to explore what communism, rentism, socialism and exterminism might actually entail.

Could the current rise of real-life robocops usher in a world that resembles *Ender's Game*? And sure, communism will bring an end to material scarcities and inequalities of wealth—but there's no guarantee that social hierarchies, governed by an economy of "likes," wouldn't rise to take their place. A whirlwind tour through science fiction, social theory and the new technologies already shaping our lives, *Four Futures* is a balance sheet...

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### About The Author

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

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### What We Say

In this absorbing thought experiment, author Peter Frase looks at two converging events and imagines four potential futures that might result. The events that he sees as broadly inevitable? Climate change and automation that eliminates the need for work, leading to a scarcity of jobs and possibly resources. The four futures? They toggle back and forth between increasing inequality or shared wealth, whether that wealth is broad or severely limited. So in one future, the very few Haves maintain power in a world ravaged by climate change. In another, society works together to share what little we have. In yet another, the Haves maintain their stranglehold on power even as technology makes it possible for all to thrive.

And in a final utopia, we all share broadly in the freedom from scrambling for necessities while society figures out exactly what we value and how we want to spend our days. P.S. Capitalism as we know it is dead. All of this makes Frase sound like a sci-fi author or futurist striving to predict how things will work out -- "Megatrends" for a new generation. That is decidedly NOT his intent. As he lucidly lays out these possibilities and why and how they might come about, Frase is always working with one aim: to drive home the point that where society ends up is not fated by microchips or human nature or the ineluctable forces of the marketplace but a matter of political will. While outside problems like climate change must naturally be tackled, our future is not fated; we are not stuck with the world as it is currently shaped by massive and grotesque inequality. What world do we want? That makes this highly entertaining book sound like work, but in fact it's fun. Frase makes casual but useful references to everything from "Star Trek" to various works by author Kim Stanley Robinson (a personal favorite of mine) back to Marx and John Maynard Keynes to show how the ideas he wrestles with have been pondered by philosophers, scientists, economists and yes sci-fi writers for generations. Frase's "Four Futures" is clear-eyed, stimulating and thought-provoking as it reminds us that of course we really have only one future and the choice of which one to aim for is very much ours to make. -- Michael Giltz

## What Others Say

"An engaging thought experiment on the intersection of technology and the environment. Indeed, as we ponder the interplay between digital abundance and physical scarcity, the digital industrialist solutions of most thinkers in this space pale in comparison to Frase's more open-minded, less deterministic understanding of the future unfolding before us."

—Douglas Rushkoff, author of *Program or Be Programmed* and *Present Shock*

"A remarkably clear-eyed view of the futures we're facing, bringing humor and intelligence to the lab of speculative fiction to create four smart and sharply lit early warning signals."

—Warren Ellis, author of *Gun Machine* and *Transmetropolitan*

"Are the robots eating our jobs? Will technology set us free? These questions aren't new, but Frase's approach to answering them is refreshingly inventive. *Four Futures* is a thought-provoking work of political speculation. This incisive little book offers the vital reminder that nothing is set in stone—or silicon—and that in order to fight for a better world we first need to be able to imagine it."

—Astra Taylor, author of *The People's Platform*

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