# Chapter 2
# Imagined Futures:
## Science Fiction and Technology Collide

**Phylis Johnson**
*San Jose State University, USA*

## ABSTRACT

*This chapter offers a glimpse into the future through the lens of science fiction authors who have served as modern-day prophets. In that sci-fi books, short stories, films, games, popular music, and TV shows have informed global culture, the news media, too, has been influenced by these transformative narratives. From the turn of the 20th century, what was once considered preposterous or even blasphemous to contemplate became everyday reality in just one lifetime. For example, it would take just 67 years after French silent film director Georges Melies' "Le Voyage dans la Lune" (1902) depicted a rocket ship poking the "Man on the Moon" in the eye before CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite would take off his trademark black-framed glasses, wipe his tears, and exhale, "Phew . . . boy," as the Apollo 11 lunar lander softly touched down.*

## IMAGINE . . .

*Lavida, a striking Indian-American woman in her early 30s, jumped into the commuter shuttle that would transport her from New York to Tokyo in 30 minutes; she had little time to spare. Lavida was headed to Flight One which had a single stop in London before reaching its final destination. Comprised mostly of scientists and governmental officials, Flight One seated some people on important business and some private citizens as well. Lavida's agenda was full: an interview with the Japanese prime minister later that day and the grand opening of Japan's offshore ocean city. After the "ribbon cutting," the first 100 residents would embark to their new homes in a matter of hours. Lavida was expected to tour the offshore ocean city facilities and interview some of the scientists aboard.*

*As the day progressed, however, Lavida realized that she would need both an aerial and underwater drone to shoot B-roll visuals of the massive, new ocean city. She submitted a request to her news office in London to send one drone that functioned equally well in air and water to the Tokyo destination. When*

*she arrived, her visual assistant programmed the drone to capture images of each floor and the ceremony on deck. It even recorded Lavida's interviews which she conducted using her functional Japanese. After the shooting schedule wrapped and she completed a cursory editing of the story on her handheld, Lavida transmitted the text, the images, and a rough cut with an audio track to the editorial offices in London and New York for the finishing edits and the sound-sweetening.*

*Lavida jumped on the commuter shuttle where she met her partner for a late night dinner in London. The following morning, Lavida took the high-speed rail for a short jaunt to Paris where she covered an art exhibit at the Louvre in fluent French. She needed to be back in New York by midday which meant she was on the next commuter shuttle. Upon returning home, she relaxed for a couple days while doing some research for upcoming feature projects. The weather was visibly stormy through the city's UV covering.*

*Because Lavida's smart fridge was empty and she had numerous errands she didn't have the time or energy to complete, she waited for her automatic deliveries while sending out her surrogate to complete the rest of her tasks. Meanwhile, on a VR platform, Lavida met with a prospective, anonymous whistle-blower concerning verifiable proof to a story that several powerful politicians had retconned successfully so far. Lavida and her source rendezvoused in a rainforest; each chose humorous avatars for privacy.*

*When the storm front over the city had cleared, the climatological authorities had concurred the night skies were brilliant so the city opened the protective "dome" to safely showcase the stars for a while. This did not come without risks, but despite the light pollution, a clear view of space was always a morale booster for most "domies." Even though criminologists determined all illegal activity dipped when the dome was open, others became nervous if the dome were open too long, a phenomenon nicknamed "dome sickness."*

*So before the dome inevitably would close again, Lavida's girlfriend rushed over to ride along in her Ford FAV, a flying, autonomous vehicle. They toasted the unobstructed view of the shimmering moon with a glass of wine and continued cruising until the local alerts announced a closing time of 30 minutes. Together, they loaded in the news on her dashboard display to watch Lavida's Japanese ocean city story while hovering over the city skyline.*

*Lavina grew up a small-town girl so it was important to her to never miss an open dome when she could. As a multilingual journalist in pursuit of international stories that Lavida hoped would add to the global community, metro living was a necessary evil. Her sister, on the other hand, still lived near the family farm where she ran a drone service that gathered agricultural data for news services; she also had another revenue stream from an extended-reality documentary studio which produced freelance environmental features.*

*Lavida's brother-in-law, a storm chaser in his early days, was now a leading meteorologist and science news content-provider covering weather-related agricultural adjustments, water shortages, and crop fires. As storms became more dangerous, chasing them became more necessary—and problematic. Durable, sustainable, solar-powered drones took the human element out of those deadly situations.*

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