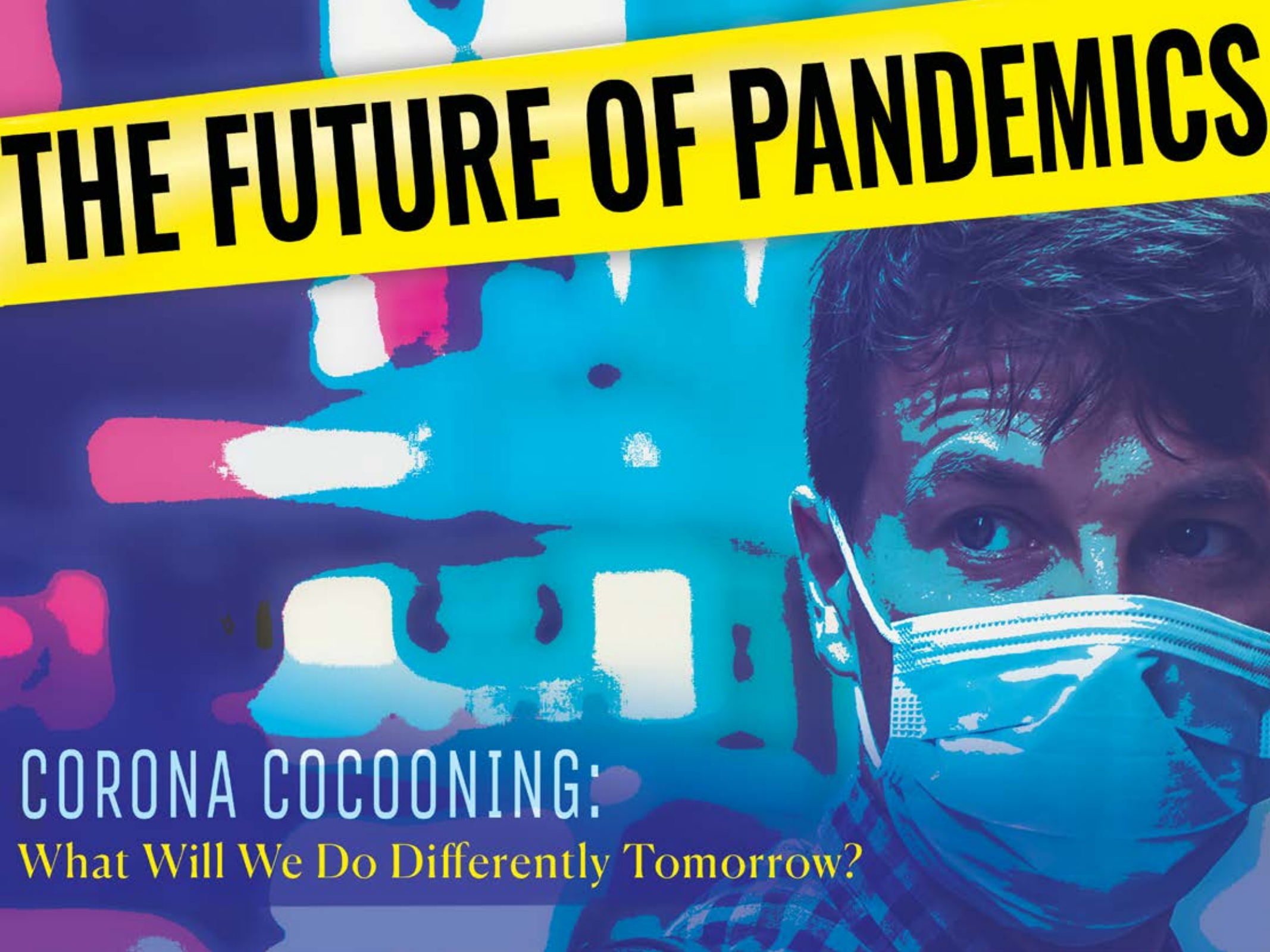



# THE FUTURE OF PANDEMICS

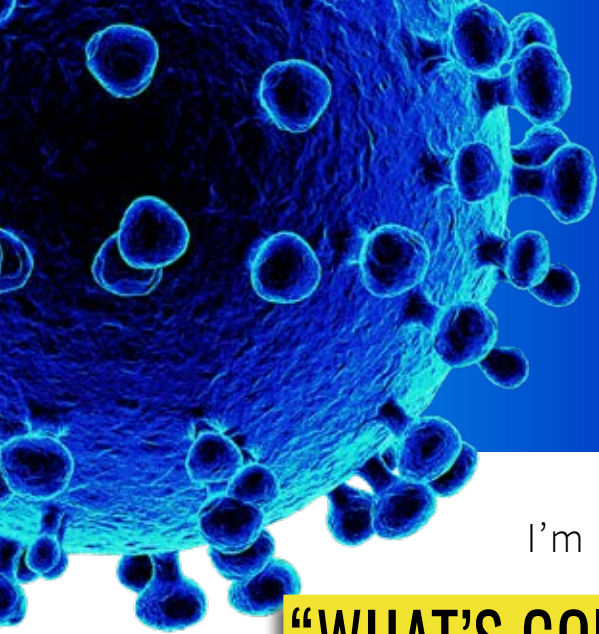
CORONA COCOONING:  
What Will We Do Differently Tomorrow?





The background of the entire page is a close-up, artistic rendering of virus particles. These particles are spherical with a textured, bumpy surface and are covered in numerous small, rounded protrusions, resembling coronaviruses. The color scheme transitions from a bright blue on the left to a deep purple on the right, with a pinkish-red hue at the bottom left. The virus particles are scattered across the frame, with some appearing larger and more detailed than others.

The current  
pandemic is rocking  
our world, and our hearts  
go out to all who are impacted.  
But knowing that the human species  
has survived and will survive such  
threats, we look to Tomorrow  
to see what we can learn and  
how ***we will thrive.***



# AS A FUTURIST

I'm used to the questions:

**"WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN?"**

**WHAT WILL LIFE BE LIKE**

**IN A YEAR OR 2 OR 10?"**

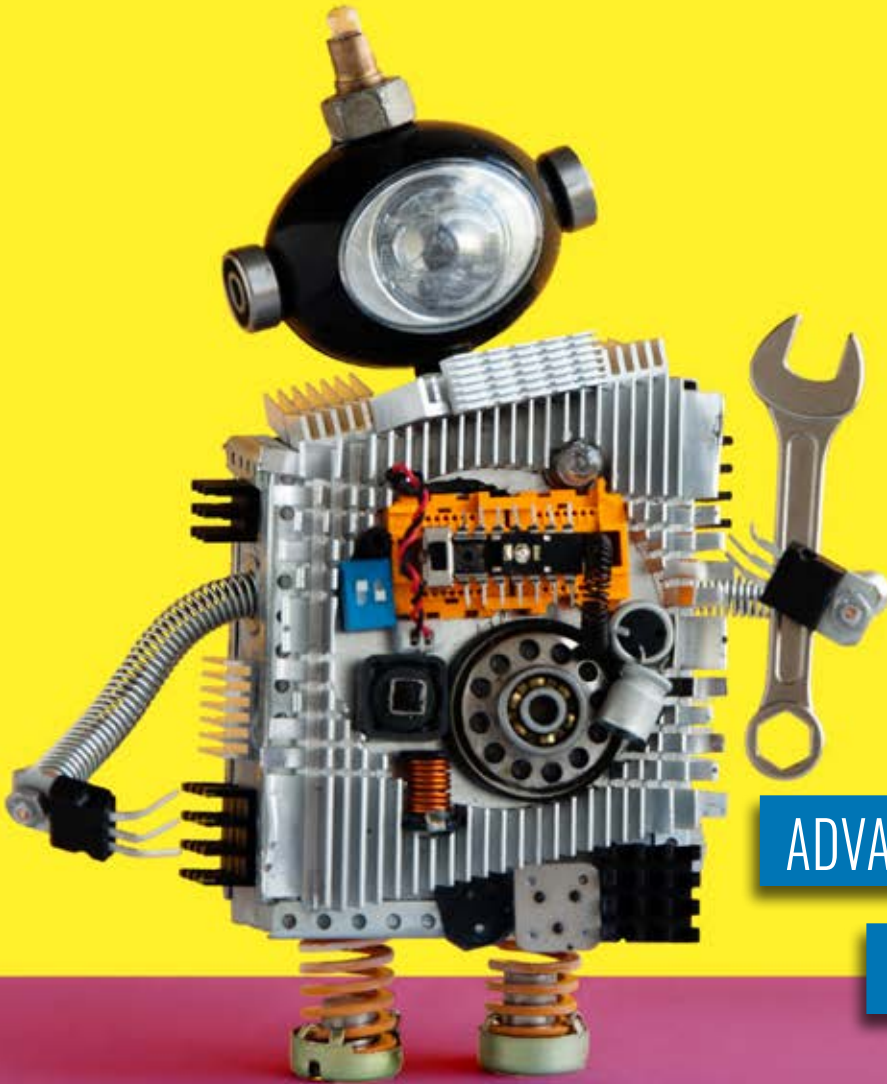
But I haven't heard those questions asked with such fear, desperation and urgency as over the last couple of weeks, as COVID-19 has spread around the globe, pushing us into a pandemic, making us feel sick even if we're not and sometimes causing



the heart-breaking loss of lives. Our species' survival will be made all the more certain, thanks to an aspect of our evolution:

**TECHNOLOGY.**





Many have bemoaned the pervasiveness of technology.

There has been much handwringing about the Oxford University stat that 47% of jobs will be robo-replaced in the future; the rise of AI and the Saudi Arabian citizenship of a bot.

But let's look on the positive side:

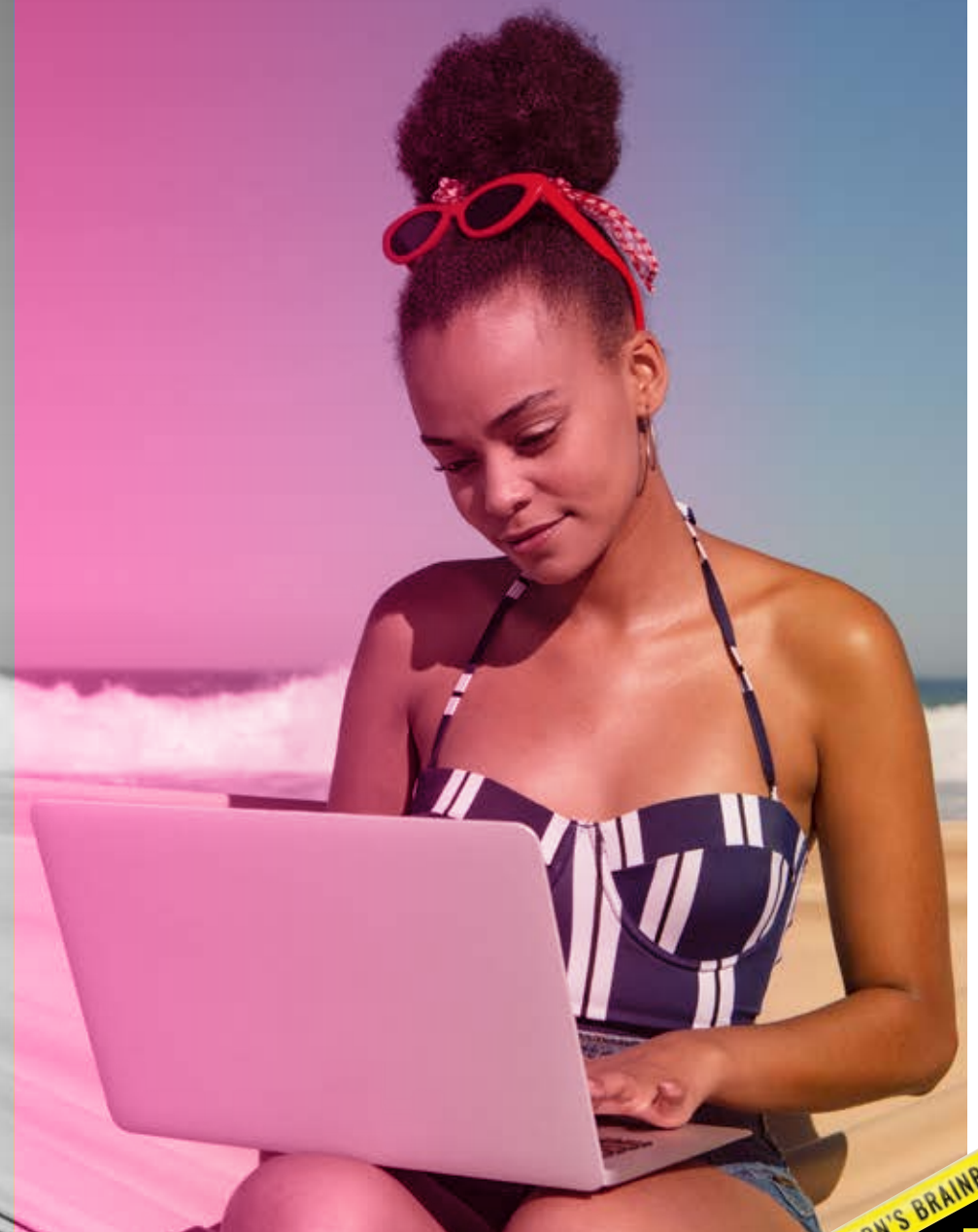
ADVANCES IN TECH WILL ENABLE US TO

THRIVE IN AN ERA OF PANDEMICS.

# WORK... FROM WHEREVER

Minimizing face-to-face human contact is critical to stopping the spread of pathogens. As traditional offices end, occasional coworking will be a new model — with most of our time spent solo in our deeply decontaminated spaces.

We're already on a path to this: Magic Leap bought Mimesys, a Belgian start-up that creates holographic teleconferences. Microsoft is paving the road to our virtual future with HoloLens technology — most recently showing off how holographic avatars can seamlessly speak foreign languages.



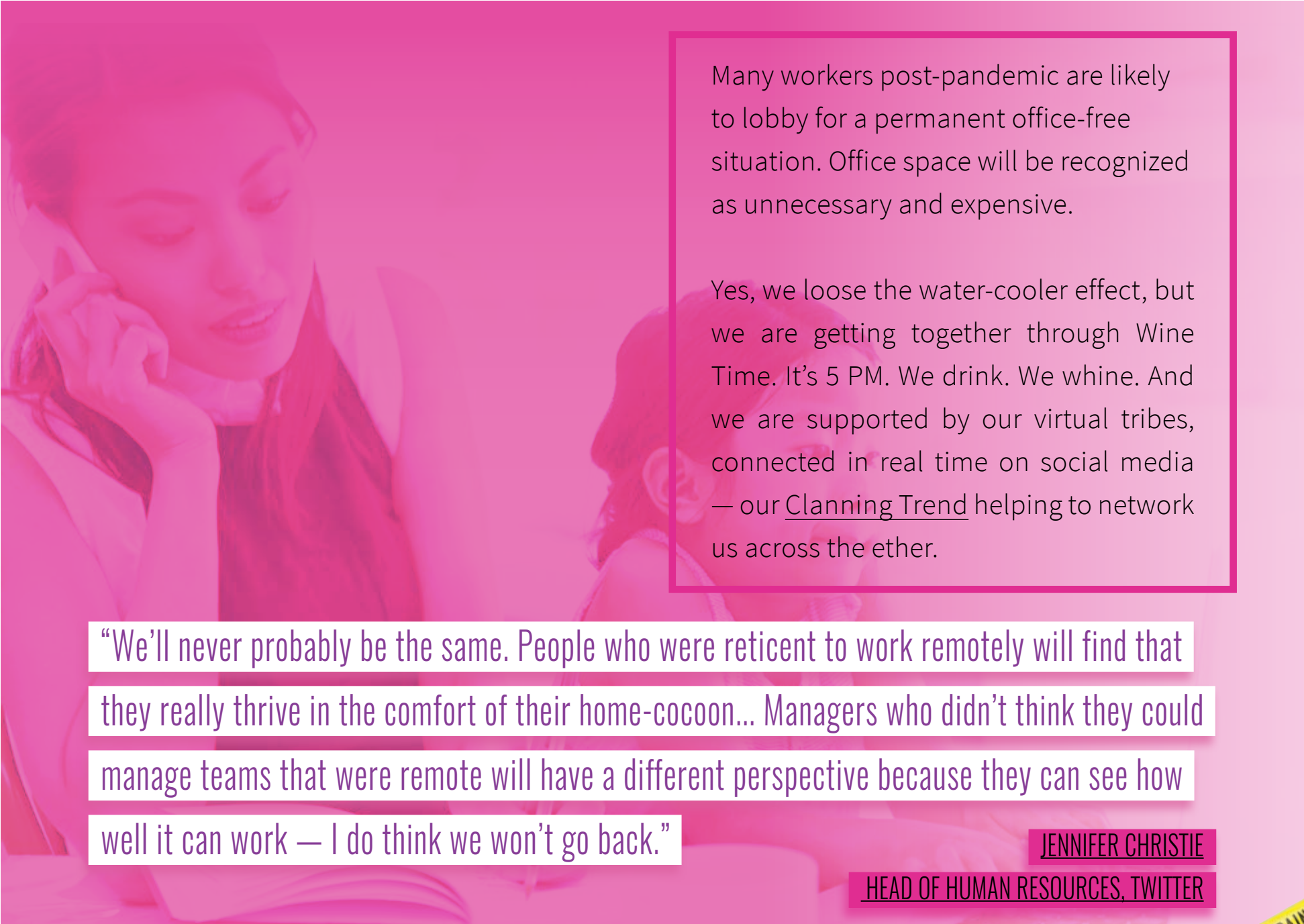
## THE OLD OFFICE STRUCTURE IS OVER

The current COVID-19 situation is seen by many as hastening this evolution — our Icon Toppling Trend in action.

Those past institutions have lost our trust. Just as we no longer can look to our governments to give us the straight truth and share facts and life-saving intel.

Tech and communications firms like Slack, Zoom, Microsoft, Google, and Comcast offer services for free for those currently sheltering in place, “in the hope that people who start using them in a crisis may carry on once normality returns,” according to The Guardian.






Many workers post-pandemic are likely to lobby for a permanent office-free situation. Office space will be recognized as unnecessary and expensive.

Yes, we lose the water-cooler effect, but we are getting together through Wine Time. It's 5 PM. We drink. We whine. And we are supported by our virtual tribes, connected in real time on social media — our Clanning Trend helping to network us across the ether.

“We’ll never probably be the same. People who were reticent to work remotely will find that they really thrive in the comfort of their home-cocoon... Managers who didn’t think they could manage teams that were remote will have a different perspective because they can see how well it can work — I do think we won’t go back.”

JENNIFER CHRISTIE

HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES, TWITTER



We'll be able to sit in our sterile spaces and interact in real time with anyone on the planet. All of the office and coworking space we have now will morph — some will become residential, some will become wellness clinics, and some will become a new kind of “fifth space” where IRL and digital interactions occur over food, entertainment and commerce — a wonderland of humans, bots and avatars engaging. Some will be bulldozed and replaced with parks.

The opportunities that await brands:  
Creating ever more realistic interactive

platforms for professional and personal engagement — and making these networks absolutely impenetrable from hacking and disaster-proof. Our future holds not only pathogens but intensifying, unsettling weather (tornadoes, hurricanes, tsunamis) and staying connected will be a basic human need. Whatever level of connectivity our most important resources have — government offices, hospitals — the average consumer will demand. They will not be forgiving if their provider of choice fails them.



## DOCTORS IN THE WALLS

Everywhere we go, our wellness will be managed and tracked to minimize outbreaks, an expression of our health-craving Being Alive Trend. Today your apps may share your daily steps and details on what's in your bloodstream. We've seen how the lack of virus tests has triggered panic and contributed to the spread of bugs. But tomorrow, IoT (Internet of Things) sensors will check our health basics, our temperature and our viral load, making sure that anyone who is infected or infectious gets the medical care they need without transferring their germs.



The next-gen version of that: Implanted chips in our flesh-and-bone bodies, that send out an alert if any dangerous microbe is detected. This could stop a pandemic before it starts.

**Big Brother is here, and he's got  
medical credentials.**

When someone is diagnosed, an automatic lockdown will take place.

People's front doors will be girded until a little driverless medical van — pleasant and full of aid and compassionate AI care — will zip over and treat you or transport you following the latest quarantine guidelines.

If you happen to be sheltering at home in isolation, it will deliver just what you need.

Perhaps some of those former office spaces will become second homes — micro-apartments we live in when infectious or ill, to be cared for by hard-wired hardware nurses (maybe the



next-gen Moxi robot) and robo-doctors. Our spirits will be lifted by AI therapy-bots, which are already proving more effective than humans, and apps that Happify us.

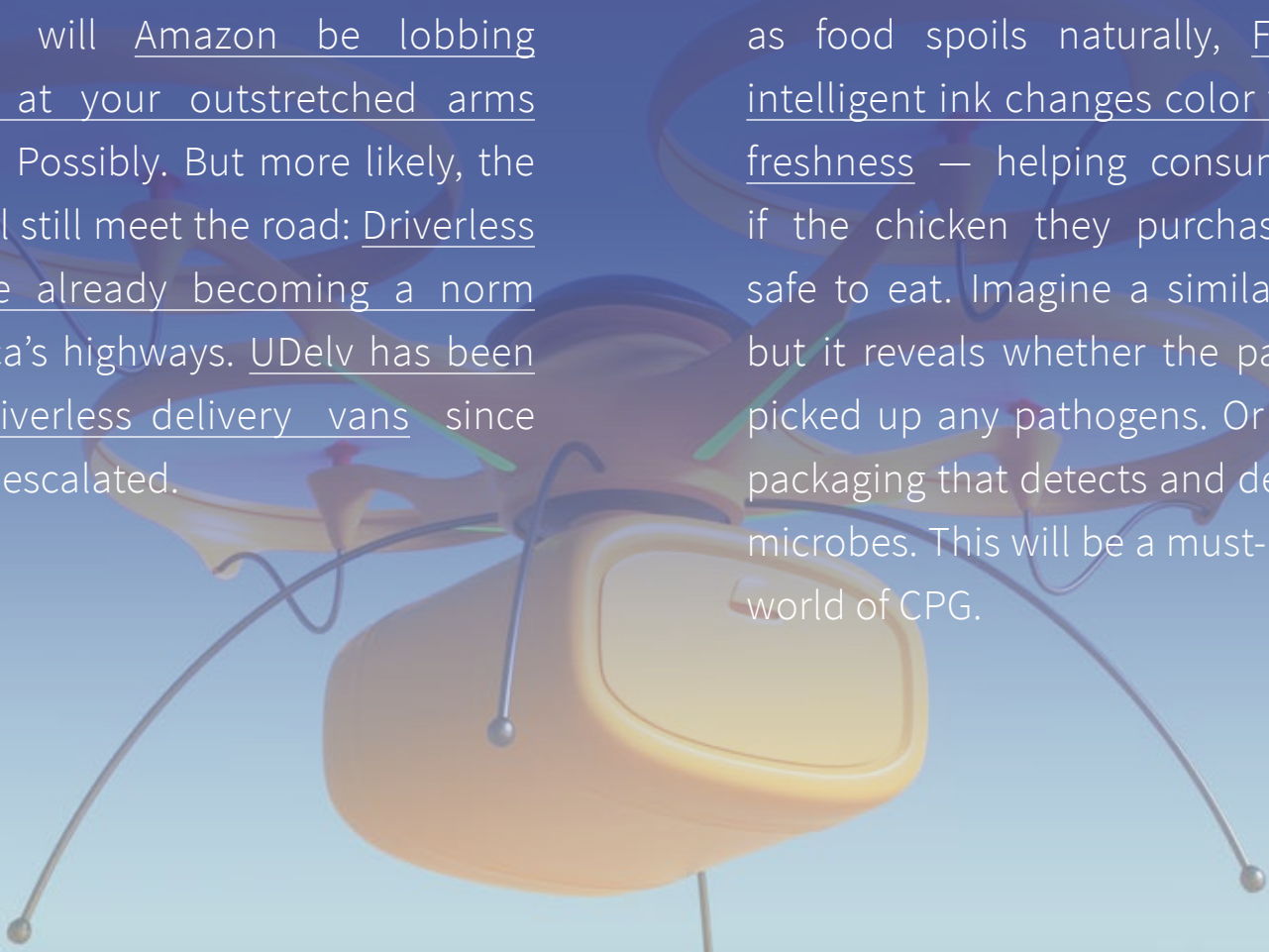
## NO HUMAN HANDS

Technology will also get us what we need with a minimal risk of contagion — our 99 Lives Trend tells us that life won't slow down much and convenience will still be sought. Dexai Robotics just raised \$5M for its robotic sous-chef that can also scoop ice cream; Basil Street secured twice that for its pizza vending machines; and Samsung's robo-chef will be ready to assist when you want home cooking with less slicing and dicing.

And there will be miniaturized versions of AI-activated robo-bartenders, like Yanu who will intuit your mood and mix you just what you need. Maybe with a sliver of LSD or nootropics on the side. It will even banter with you or roll you a joint with

some bot-delivered cannabis. Stressful times need lightening.





What about getting groceries or take-out meals delivered? Already, we are seeing delivery companies like Postmates offer “no-contact delivery” options during the coronavirus outbreak. To keep everything germ-free, will Amazon be lobbing packages at your outstretched arms by drone? Possibly. But more likely, the rubber will still meet the road: Driverless trucks are already becoming a norm on America’s highways. UDelv has been testing driverless delivery vans since COVID-19 escalated.

And Postmates’ adorable delivery bot, Serve, promises to speedily run small purchases to your door. Advances in the packaging of foods will also help keep us safe. By detecting the gases emitted as food spoils naturally, Freshcode’s intelligent ink changes color to indicate freshness — helping consumers know if the chicken they purchased is still safe to eat. Imagine a similar scenario, but it reveals whether the package has picked up any pathogens. Or better yet, packaging that detects and destroys any microbes. This will be a must-have in the world of CPG.

## SHUT-IN SOLUTIONS

While this may sound as if we are evolving towards a planet of house-bound humans, we will — when viruses dictate — find education, enrichment and excitement on our screens and in our headsets. Education will shift to become virtual — the post-pandemic classroom will be a VR headset. No kids coughing on one another; immunity will be managed by dosing and genetic tweaks.

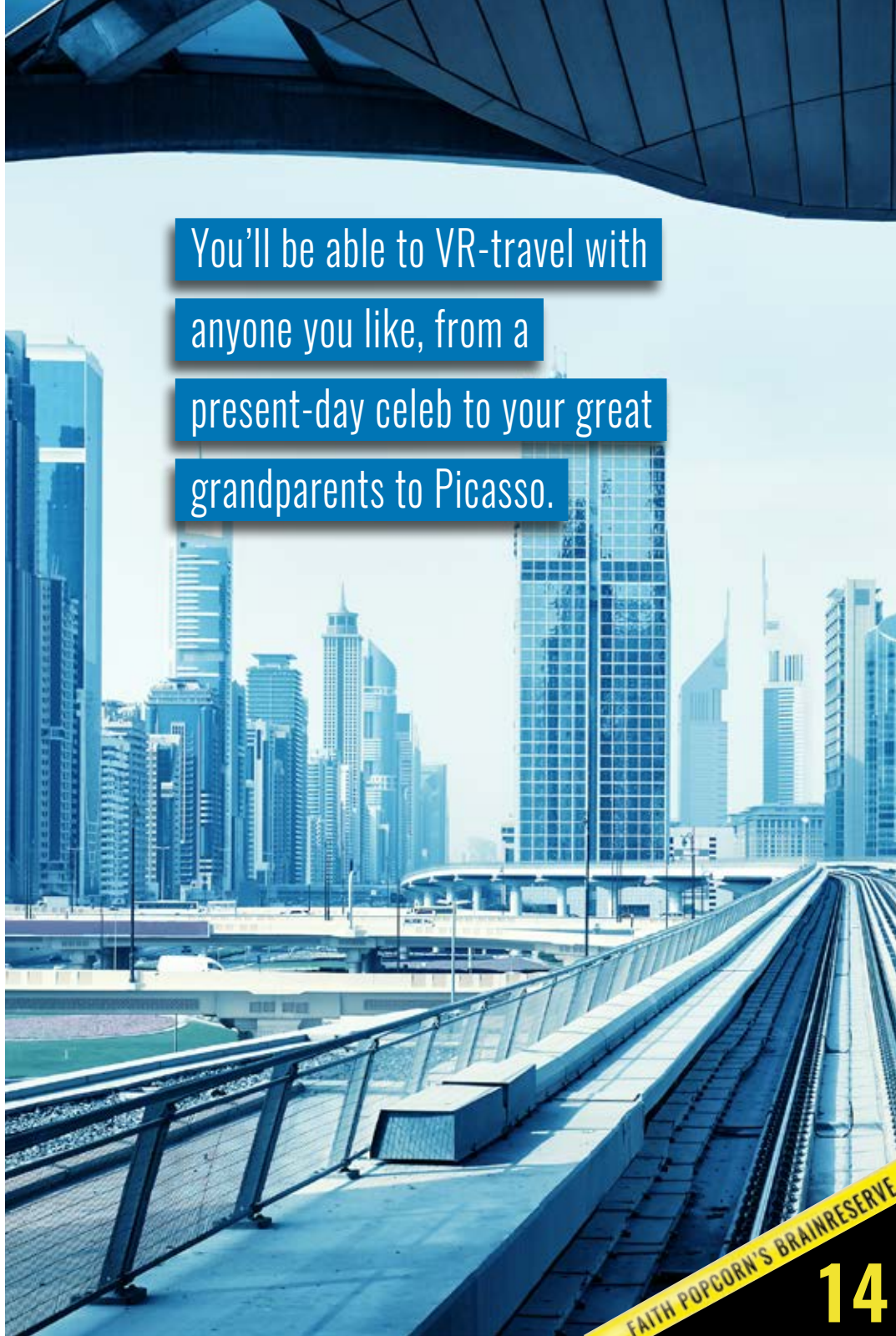
In Tomorrow's world, VR and AR will blend into deeply engaging and personalized lessons — like Clio's Cosmic Quest from Within — and gamification will make it socialized.

Kids will connect with others — whether teachers for guidance or a buddy to collaborate with virtually.



Currently the travel industry is reeling as airports, Airbnbs, hotels, restaurants and more sit empty. But wanderlust will prevail — again, in virtual form. A trip to Shanghai or the South Pacific will be possible via VR, even at the most anxiety-inducing points during a pandemic. Perhaps it will be our escape when times are tough. We'll even be able to enhance our walks around our dwelling with technological innovation.

Microsoft's Dreamwalker immerses the individual into a virtual world (cityscape, beach — you choose). Imagine it making your same-old, same-old home seem fabulously exotic and exciting. You'll be able to “travel” with anyone you like, from a present-day celeb to your great-grandparents to Pablo Picasso, thanks to AI plus VR simulations.

A blue-tinted photograph of a modern city skyline, likely Dubai, with a train track in the foreground. The image is used as a background for the text on the right side of the page.

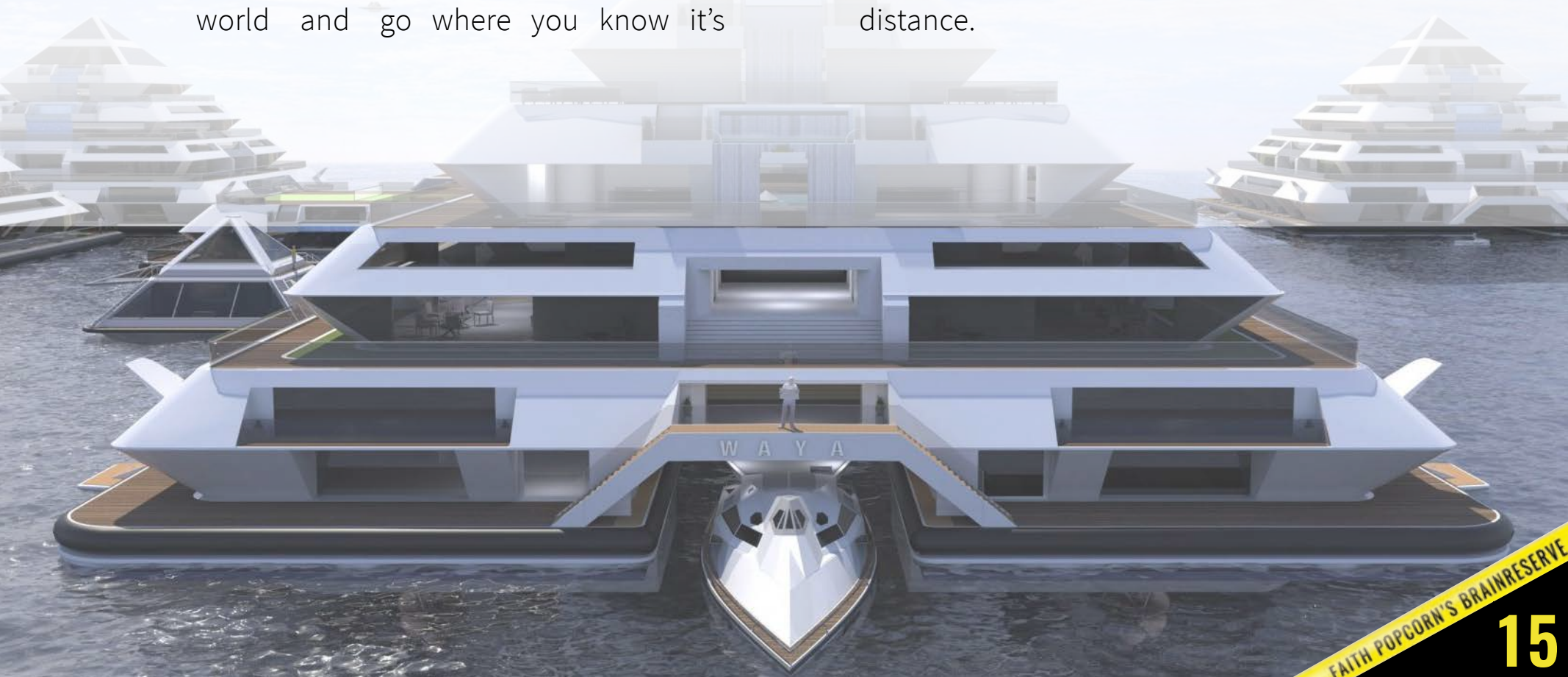
You'll be able to VR-travel with  
anyone you like, from a  
present-day celeb to your great  
grandparents to Picasso.



## Germfree floating pods will let us drift along and see the world, albeit from a distance.

For those who do want to travel, we'll enter a realm of beautiful bunker lodging. Not those underground lairs like The Survival Condo where one literally goes underground to protect one's self in the ultimate act of Cocooning. But instead, something that allows you to see the world and go where you know it's

safe. One prototype: Architect Pierpaolo Lazzarini designed a self-sufficient floating city-hotel of modular pyramids. These will be equipped with IoT devices to detect and eliminate germs; think of them as a perfectly sanitary way to float along and see the world, albeit from a distance.





We are already experiencing a beta test of fan-free sporting events, as Japan's baseball league recently played to an empty stadium and the Tokyo half marathon went on with a small group running and citizens told not to line the route. Soon, this will be the norm. Already, the VR sports industry is projected to top \$40 billion this year, and it's been adapted for training and seat selection at games.

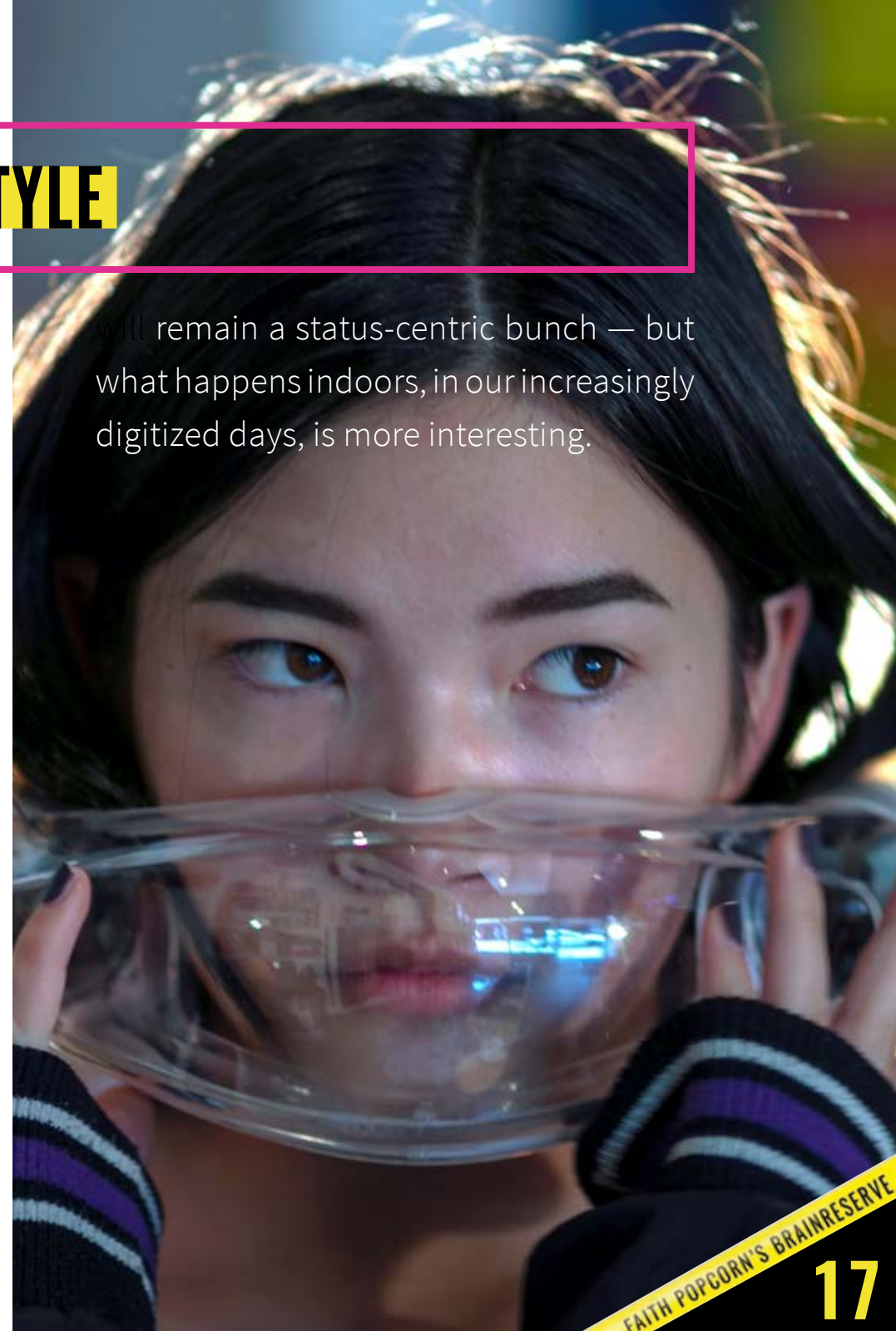
Sporting events will happen in studio-stadiums — spaces where the action can be filmed from all angles, but with no live audiences present. Why's that? Because we'll be in the game with the players, only virtually. We'll be able to watch a live game, cheer, buy souvenirs... or, on a minimal time delay, send our precision-trained avatars into the event to participate as we watch things unfold on our VR headsets. Instead of buying tickets for the bleachers, we'll be paying for the right to take the playing field with our heroes. Odds are, the athletes themselves will be replaced someday by avatars, too. Consumers and marketers will create endless permutations of elite athletes, displaying all kinds of personal charisma and off-the-charts abilities, to delight future sports lovers.



## STYLE FOR A NEW LIFESTYLE

The way we dress and present our primped selves to others will be turned on its head as our relationship with inner and outer spaces shift. With the COVID-19 outbreak, we have seen celebrities like Naomi Campbell in hazmat suits (she told her 8.6 million Instagram followers, “Safety first”) and Gwyneth Paltrow in a protective mask. In tomorrow’s world, when pathogens are detected, we will be cloaked in germ-impenetrable hooded jumpsuits and cloaks, the ultimate in disposable fashion and evidence of our Small Indulgences and Being Alive Trends being cross-pollinated. Some may have designer logos, of course — humans

will remain a status-centric bunch — but what happens indoors, in our increasingly digitized days, is more interesting.







Human creativity will flourish as we find ways to express our individuality in styles that may never hit the streets or be worn on our bodies. As our avatars rise in importance on holographic conference calls, in VR events and in tech-enabled interactions, we will enable them to express a sense of personal style. Look to the world's first virtual fashion show by Trashy Muse which featured “a cast of mostly digitally rendered avatars, including the world's first digital supermodel Shudu, virtual superhuman Dagny and Trashy

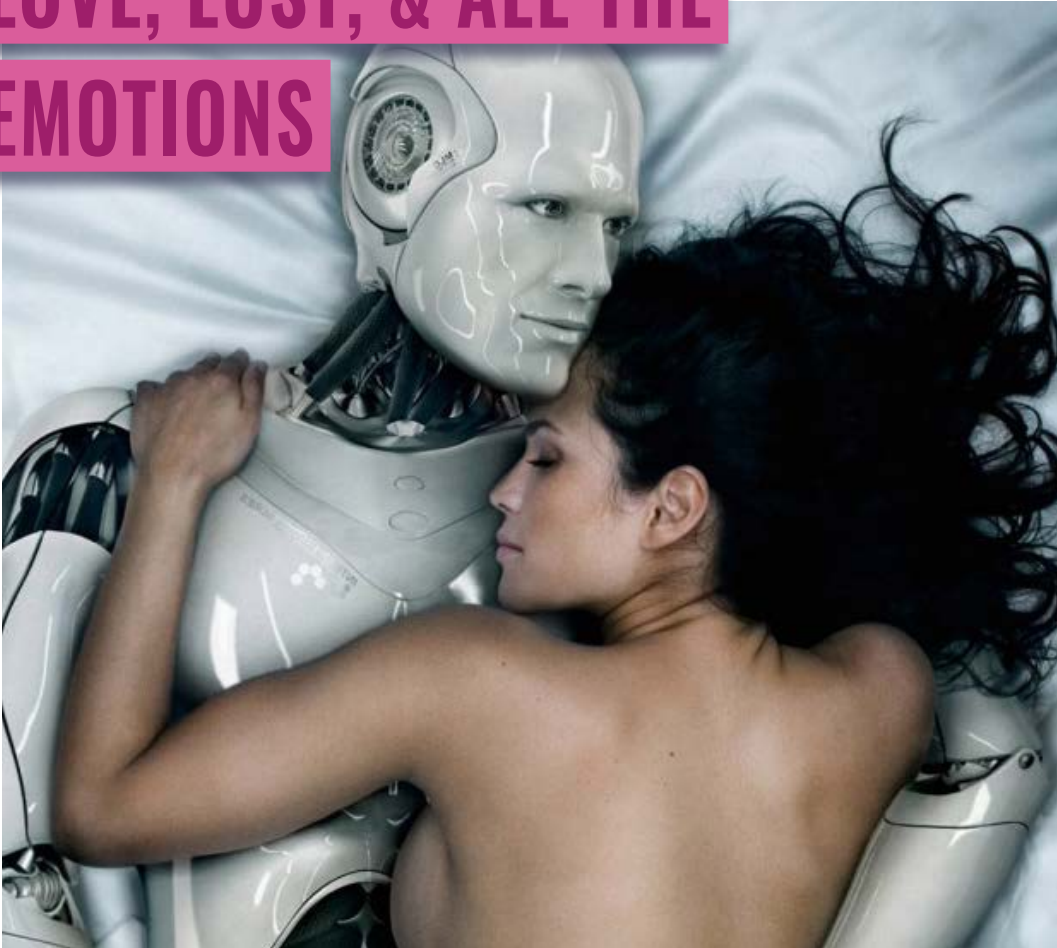
Muse's very own monogrammed influencer, Branded Boi” and offers the shape of fashion to come. Our culture has also already witnessed the sale of a \$9,500 virtual garment which is basically just an image you only can “wear” and share online. Owning these kinds of clothes will be the new grail – an elite example of our Small Indulgences Trend. As for what one actually does in their private spaces: It won't matter. Perhaps nudity will stage a comeback, bringing us back to our basic human roots.



Beauty will similarly shift away from the products of today to the filters and projections of tomorrow. As everyday human contact fades as we try to keep ourselves safe from germs, filters for social media and virtual communications become the new makeup. The recent gleaming cyborg-style filter that stormed social media shows one way we'll alter our appearance for those viewing us. Creators will jump in and market an array of looks, expressing individuality in the new era of ongoing social distancing.



# LOVE, LUST, & ALL THE EMOTIONS



But what of human connection, matters of the heart and love (or at least sex) during times of medical crisis?

Again, technology will save us. It will connect us, comfort us, excite us and uplift us. AI can already scan our social media for signals of depression; next, it will swoop in and soothe us without our needing to emerge from our germfree Cocoons and head to a shrink's office. The Woebot app offers up short, shot-in-the-arm conversations to help people feel their best.

Virtual companions — like those developed by Gatebox — offer togetherness when real people are possibly contagious or just too complicated. (On a lighter note, this state of affairs is what the introverts have been waiting for: Social distancing. No more forced dinner parties or small, very small, talk.)

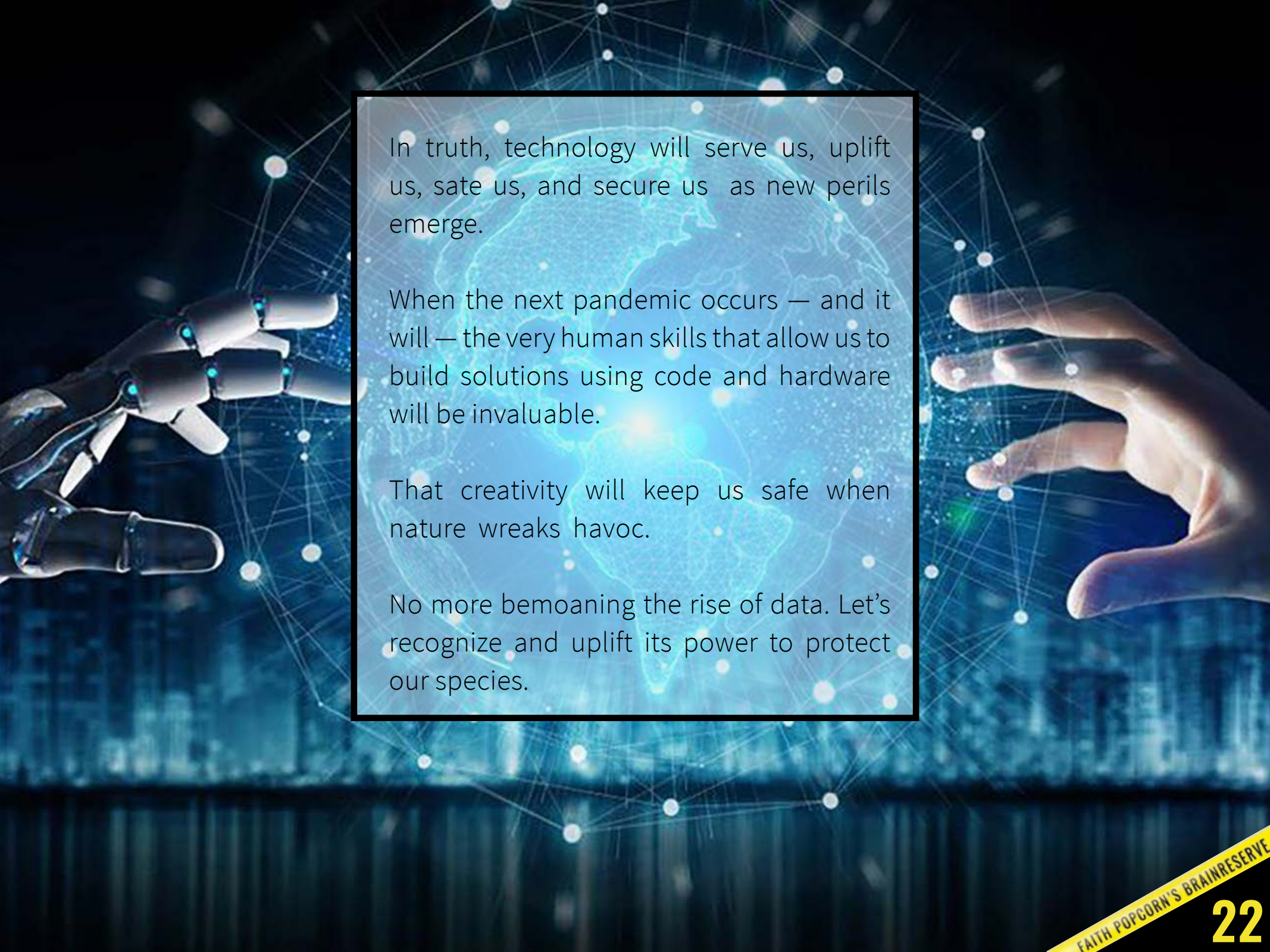


## AI-fueled sexbots will deliver carnal delights when we don't want to risk microbe-meshing with other humans.

Sexbots like Harmony by RealDoll — fueled by AI that allows it to converse with humans and “remember” past encounters – will deliver all kinds of carnal delights when we don't want to risk microbe-meshing during sex with another human.

As you might guess, this post-pandemic state will trigger a further descent in our already declining birthrate. People will be less and less willing to bring more children into this endangered world; another form of Icon Toppling as the goal of nuclear familyhood vanishes.





In truth, technology will serve us, uplift us, save us, and secure us as new perils emerge.

When the next pandemic occurs — and it will — the very human skills that allow us to build solutions using code and hardware will be invaluable.

That creativity will keep us safe when nature wreaks havoc.

No more bemoaning the rise of data. Let's recognize and uplift its power to protect our species.



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