

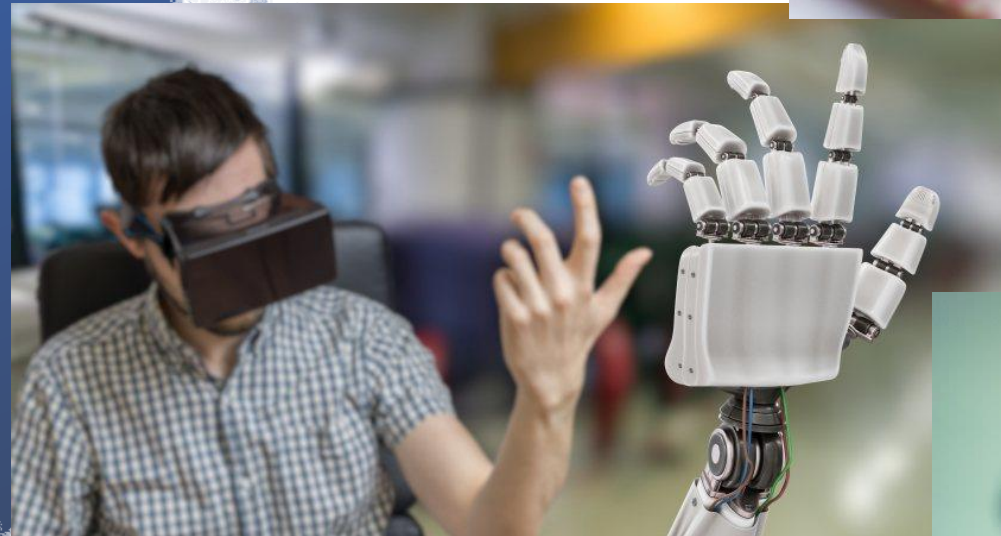


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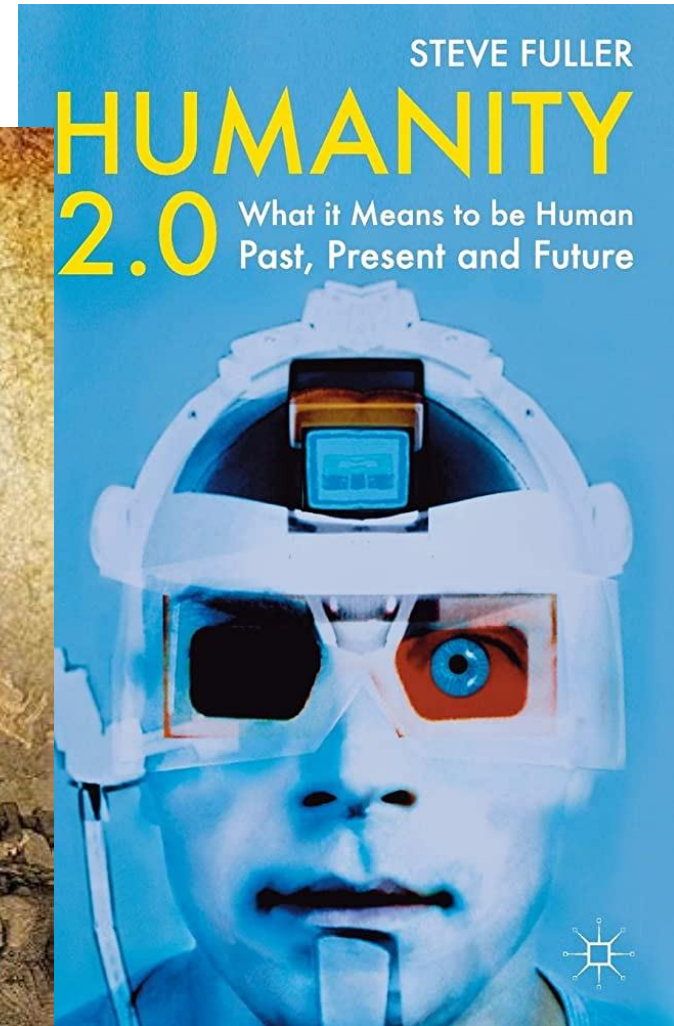
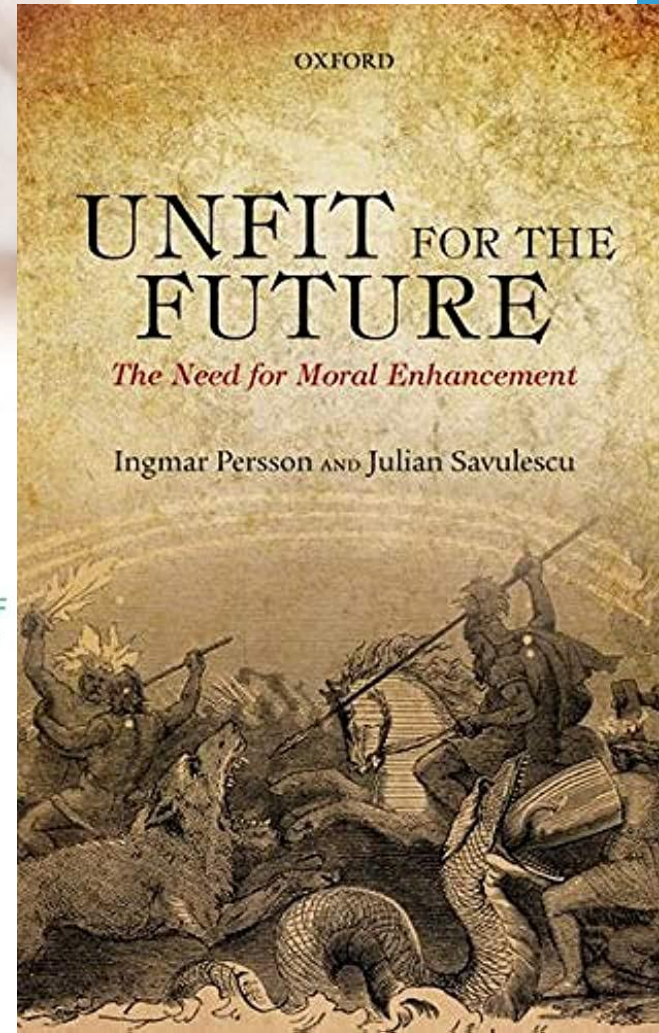
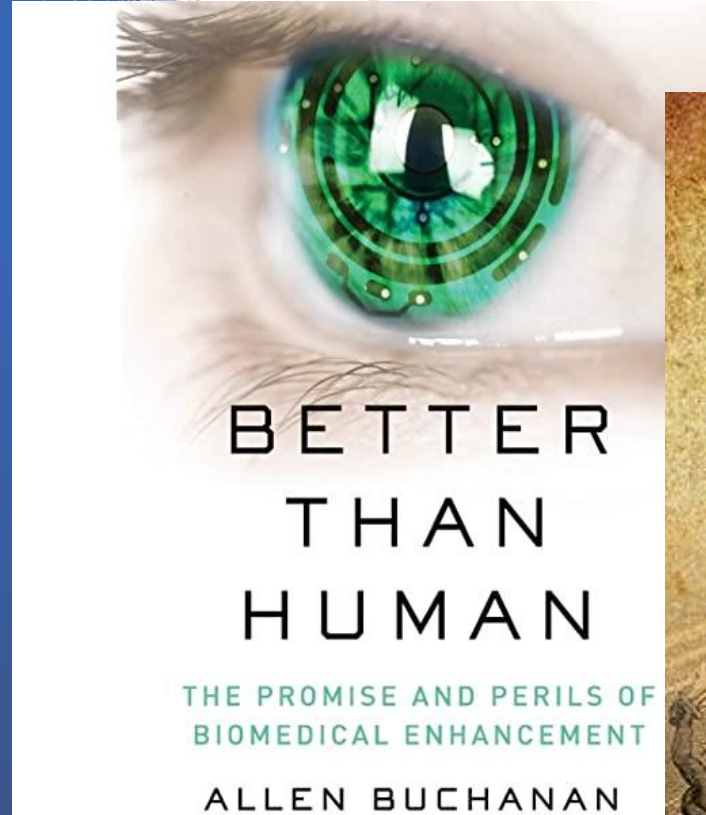
# ”Do Poor People Have the Right to Enhance Themselves?”

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# Human Enhancement Technologies (HETs)



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# Justice in the diffusion of HETs (1)



**“In a world in which innovation is a central fact of life, the diffusion of beneficial technologies should occupy center stage in our thinking about distributive justice.”**

**(Allen Buchanan)**

## Justice in the diffusion of HETs (2)

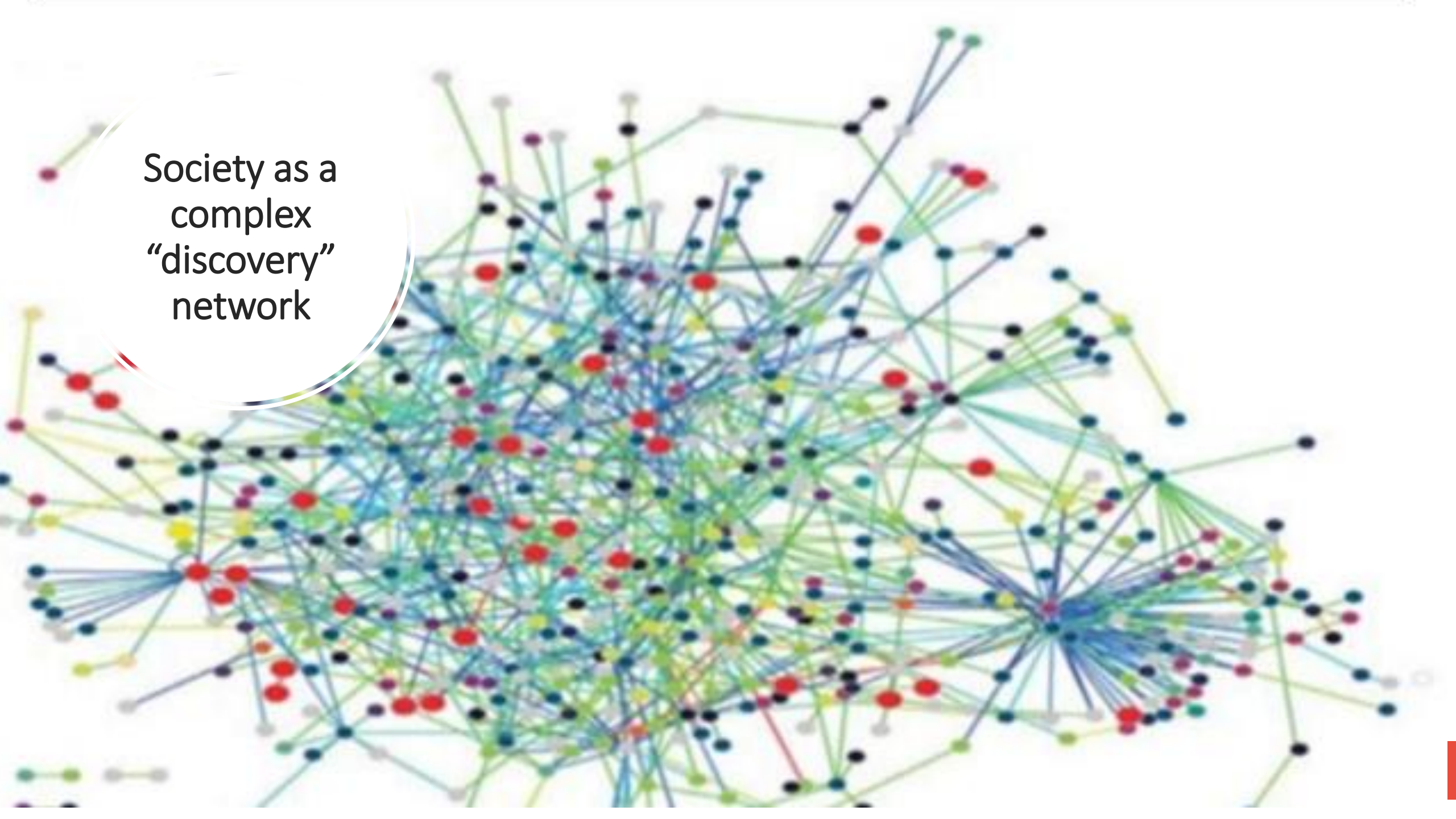
**We should not “smugly assum[e] that the benefits of biomedical [and other] enhancements will ‘trickle down’ to the worst off. Even if valuable innovations tend to become more widely available over time, they may do so too slowly.” (Allen Buchanan, 2011, p. 243)**



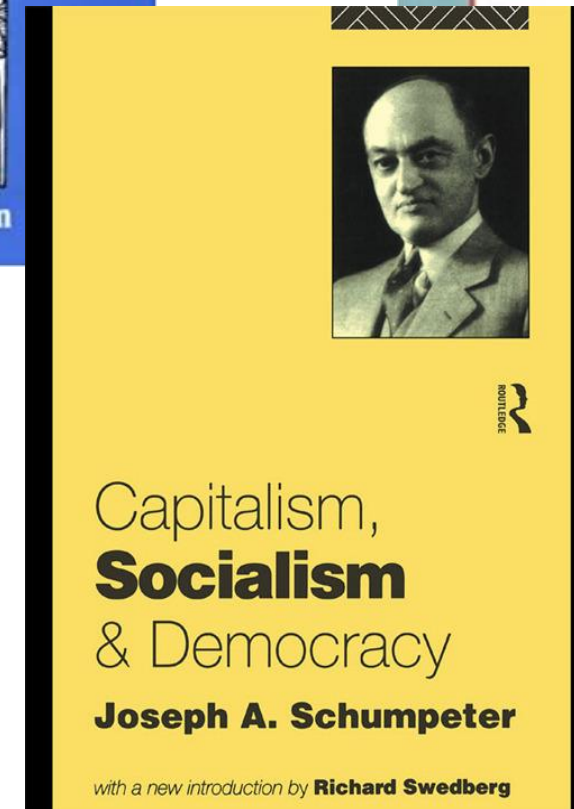
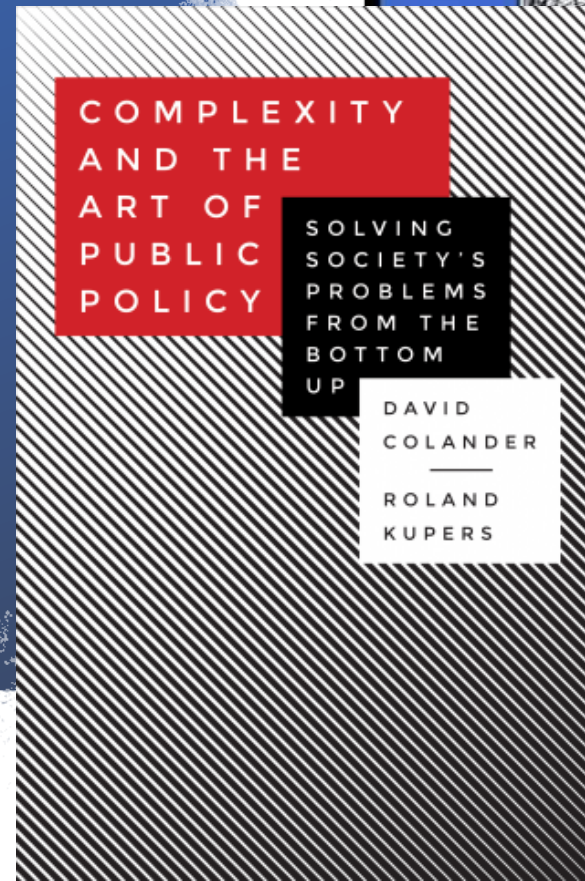
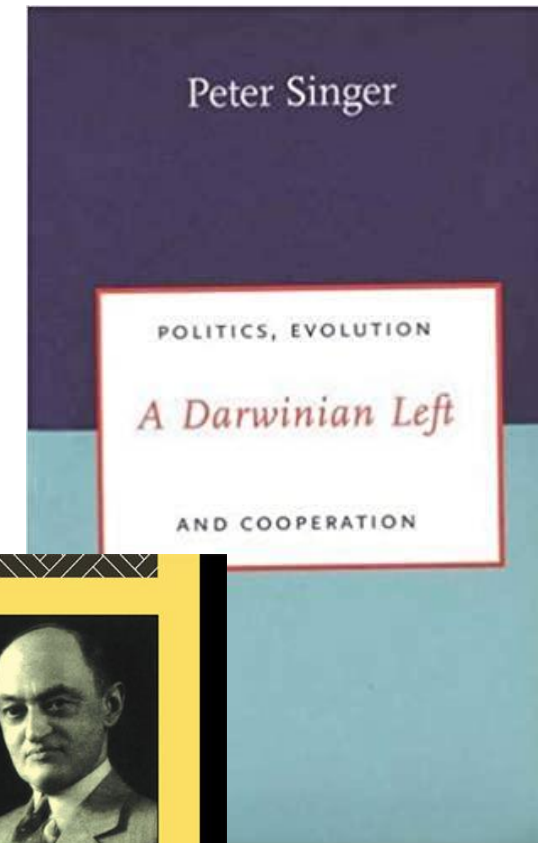
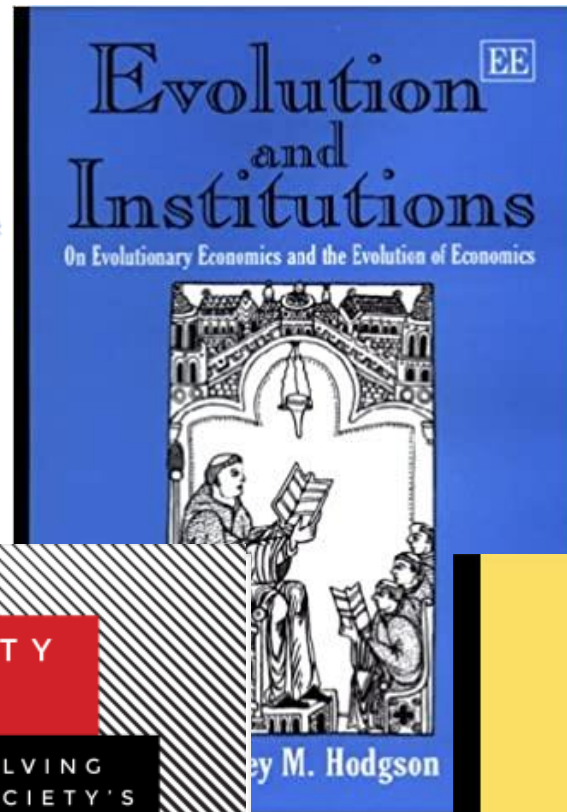
Relatively  
modest  
assumptions?

- 1) **We have ethical reasons to care about, and prioritize, the welfare of the poor.**
- 2) **Even a moderate faith in science justifies investments into technological innovation (with uncertain rewards).**
- 3) **HETs (Human Enhancement Technologies) have some reasonable promise of increasing welfare.**

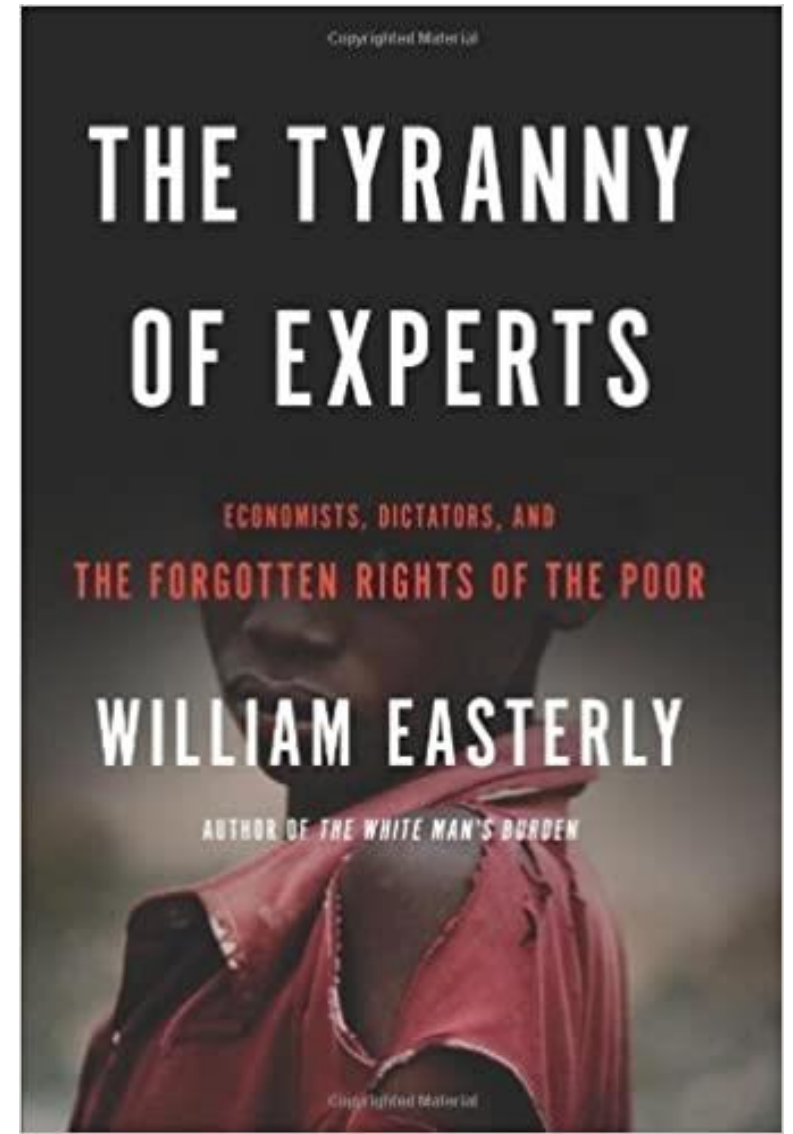
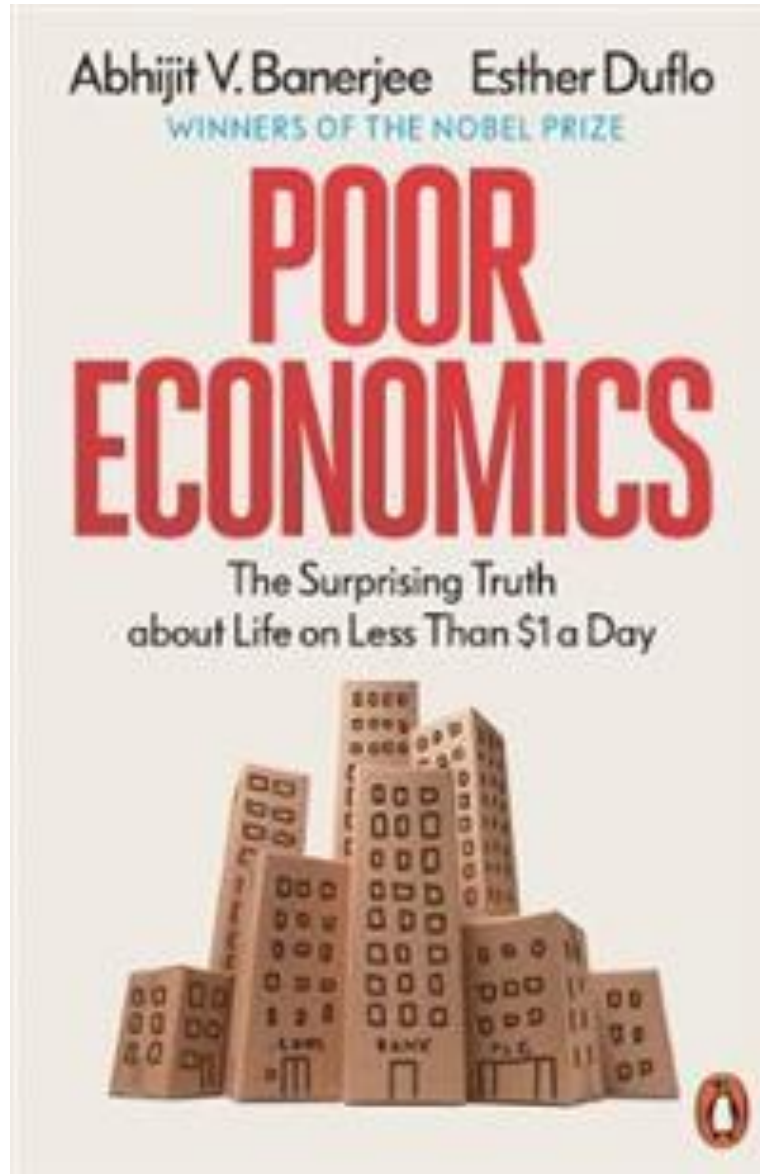
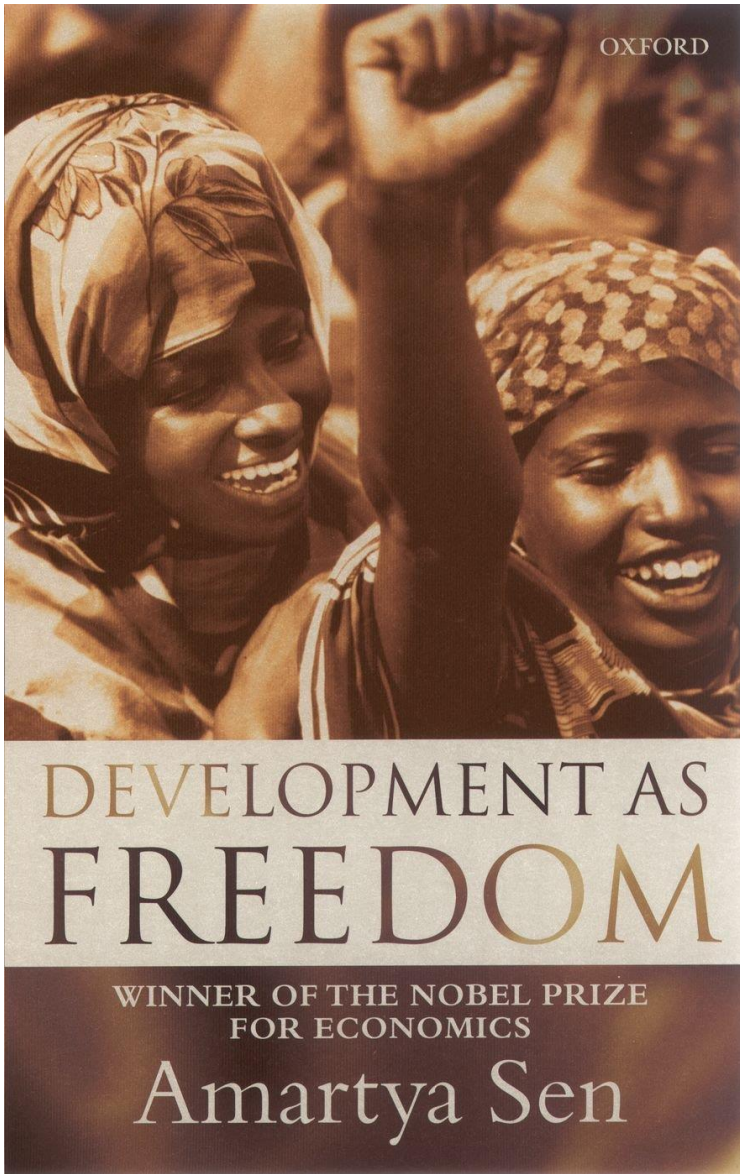
Society as a  
complex  
“discovery”  
network



# “Innovation” viewpoint on development









Poverty relief  
requires rights and  
innovation

- 1) Prioritizing *rights protection* and fostering *agent capacities* in order to facilitate bottom-up networks of innovation.
- 2) Encouraging *freedom, innovation & experimentation* in poor communities. (Sen, Schumpeter, etc.)



In sum...

- 1) **Welfare state governance should prioritize *supporting experimental innovations* (especially for the poor).**
- 2) **A regime that prioritizes experimental innovations (“welfare discoveries”) cannot *a priori* exclude promising technologies like HETs.**
- 3) **Poor people should be endowed with the *right* and the *means* to “Permissionless Innovation” (M. Munger).**



# What I am *not* saying

- 1) **Techno-optimism: “HETs are a *guaranteed* way to help (poor) people.”**
- 2) **Laissez-faire: “There should be *no* regulation of HETs against externalities and (serious) risks.”**



## Real freedom in HET use

- 1) All people, and *especially* the poor, deserve the negative *right to experiment* with HETs...
- 2) combined with a positive *right to a resource endowment* (e.g., UBI).

# Real freedom in HET use

- 1) All people, and *especially* the poor, deserve the negative *right to experiment* with HETs
  - 2) combined with a positive *right to a resource endowment* (e.g., UBI).
- It is probably best to support poor people's *real freedom* (Van Parijs) with a robust 'exit option'... *Even* if there is a *moral duty* to enhance (Persson & Savulescu).



# Types of freedom?

- 1) **Freedom as tolerance (“live and let live”)**
- 2) **Freedom as an intrinsic good (the pursuit of an autonomous life)**



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- 3) **Freedom as a tool of development and welfare**



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# Basic income as a tool of experimentalism

**“We must give each human who is or becomes unemployed *a life fellowship in research and development* or in just simple thinking.”**

**- Buckminster Fuller (1969)**



# Basic income as a tool of transhumanism

**UBI as “guaranteed capital base for the pursuit *of morphological freedom*. Such a policy would be especially attractive to those who might wish to experiment with alternative modes of being without having to be permanently associated with any of them if they don’t turn out as desired.”**

**– Steve Fuller (2016)**

# Basic income as a tool of transhumanism (1/2)

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# Basic income as a tool of transhumanism (2/2)

## Democratic transhumanism:

**“Universal health care and basic income systems are essential as we make the transhuman transition, to ensure equal access to benefits (...) between the rich and poor.”**

**- Steve Hughes (2004)**

# Conclusion

- 1) HETs have sufficiently high (if uncertain) potential payoffs so that denying (poor) people the *right to use and innovate* with them constitutes injustice.
- 2) A negative freedom is not enough. Poor people should be guaranteed *sufficient resources* to experiment with HETs (or to refrain from doing so).
- 3) Regulation of HETs should *tolerate ordinary risks but curtail catastrophic risks*.