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## **SCHRÖDINGER'S PLOT, REVISITED: QUANTUM INDETERMINACY AND NON-DETERMINISTIC NARRATIVE IN CONTEMPORARY SCIENCE FICTION**

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### **Abstract**

*The enduring interplay between scientific paradigms and literary expression continues to shape our understanding of reality and narrative. While classical literary analysis often presupposes deterministic plot trajectories and clear causal chains, the revolutionary insights of quantum mechanics have introduced fundamental indeterminacy into our understanding of the universe. This paper argues that the conceptual framework of quantum indeterminacy, as initially explored in Modernist "quantum poetics" by figures like Daniel Albright, has profoundly influenced the non-deterministic plot progression and ambiguous narrative closure characteristic of contemporary science fiction, particularly in narratives featuring highly autonomous artificial intelligence. Drawing on the philosophical implications of quantum theory, as articulated by thinkers like Carlo Rovelli and Slavoj Žižek, this study has analyzed how select works of contemporary science fiction particularly the trending Murderbot Diaries construct plots that*

*resist singular, predictable outcomes, mirroring the inherent probabilistic nature of quantum reality. By examining the manifestation of quantum indeterminacy in narrative structure, this paper seeks to illuminate the sophisticated engagement of modern science fiction with cutting-edge scientific and philosophical thought, contributing to the interdisciplinary dialogue between literature and science.*

**Keywords:**

Quantum Theory, Narrative Structure, Indeterminacy, Science Fiction, Postmodernism, Quantum Poetics

## 1. Introduction

The relationship between science and literature is a dynamic and mutually enriching dialogue, where scientific revolutions often catalyze profound shifts in human perception and, consequently, in narrative forms. For centuries, Western thought, including its literary conventions, largely operated under a Newtonian, mechanistic worldview, where events followed predictable cause-and-effect sequences, leading to deterministic plots and clear resolutions. However, the dawn of the 20th century witnessed a paradigm shift with the emergence of quantum mechanics, a scientific framework that introduced concepts antithetical to classical determinism: indeterminacy, superposition, and probabilistic outcomes. This revolution in physics profoundly challenged notions of objective reality, causality, and even the role of the observer.

This fundamental scientific reorientation did not remain confined to the laboratory; its philosophical echoes resonated deeply within the arts and humanities. Daniel Albright, in his seminal work *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism*, meticulously demonstrated how Modernist poets, either consciously or intuitively, absorbed and reflected these quantum ideas in their fragmented forms, ambiguous meanings, and a departure from linear narrative. Albright revealed how the era's poetry mirrored the scientific dismantling of a fixed, knowable universe, giving rise to a "quantum poetics" characterized by uncertainty and multiple possibilities.

While Albright's study illuminates the initial literary response to quantum theory, the continuous evolution of both scientific understanding and literary forms necessitates further exploration. The enduring influence of quantum indeterminacy on narrative structures, particularly within the burgeoning landscape of contemporary science fiction, remains a rich but underexplored territory. Modern science fiction, often serving as a vibrant arena for philosophical and scientific "thought experiments," is uniquely positioned to grapple with the complexities of quantum reality. Narratives featuring highly autonomous artificial intelligence, in particular, offer fertile ground for examining concepts of agency, free will, and the very nature of existence in a potentially non-deterministic universe.

This paper argues that the conceptual framework of quantum indeterminacy, as initially explored in Modernist "quantum poetics," profoundly shapes the non-deterministic plot progression and ambiguous narrative closure characteristic of contemporary science fiction, especially in its depiction of autonomous AI. By drawing on interpretations of quantum theory

from physicists and philosophers like Carlo Rovelli and Slavoj Žižek, this study will analyze how select works of contemporary science fiction construct plots that resist singular, predictable outcomes, thereby mirroring the inherent probabilistic nature of quantum reality. This analysis aims to illuminate the sophisticated engagement of contemporary science fiction with cutting-edge scientific and philosophical thought, thereby contributing to the vital interdisciplinary dialogue between literature and science, and demonstrating how fiction continues to "meet the universe halfway."

The paper will proceed by first outlining the core tenets of quantum indeterminacy and its initial resonance in Albright's "quantum poetics." Subsequently, it will delve into specific examples from contemporary science fiction, analyzing how non-deterministic plot progressions, blurred causalities, and ambiguous narrative closures reflect these quantum concepts. Finally, it will discuss the broader implications of this literary engagement for our understanding of narrative, agency, and the very fabric of fictional and real existence.

## **2. Defining Quantum Indeterminacy and its Poetic Legacy**

To understand the "Schrödinger's Plot" of contemporary science fiction, one must first grasp the profound conceptual shifts introduced by quantum mechanics. At the heart of this revolution lies the principle of quantum indeterminacy, a departure from the classical, deterministic worldview. Unlike Newtonian physics, where every effect has a precise cause and future states can be perfectly predicted from initial conditions, quantum mechanics posits a fundamental level of uncertainty. The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, for instance, states that certain pairs of physical properties, like a particle's position and momentum, cannot both be known with arbitrary precision simultaneously. This is not a limitation of our measurement tools, but an inherent property of reality itself.

Further illustrating this, Schrödinger's Cat thought experiment vividly demonstrates the concept of superposition, where a quantum system can exist in multiple states simultaneously until it is observed or measured. The cat is both alive and dead until the box is opened, collapsing the superposition into a single, definite state. These principles suggest that reality at its most fundamental level is not a collection of fixed, objective properties, but rather a realm of probabilities and potentials, with outcomes determined by interaction and observation.

Philosophers and physicists have grappled with the profound implications of this indeterminacy. Carlo Rovelli, in *Helgoland*, offers a compelling relational interpretation of quantum mechanics (RQM), arguing that properties of physical systems exist only in relation to other systems. For Rovelli, the universe is not made of independent "things," but of a "vast net of interactions." This perspective dissolves the idea of an objective reality independent of observation, reinforcing that "reality is constituted by the totality of relations." This relational view underscores the probabilistic nature of existence and suggests that outcomes are contingent on interactions, not predetermined.

Slavoj Žižek, approaching quantum physics through a Hegelian lens in "The Ontology of Quantum Physics," similarly emphasizes the philosophical void inherent in quantum mechanics. For Žižek, quantum uncertainty is not merely an epistemic limitation (a gap in our knowledge) but an ontological gap—a fundamental indeterminacy within reality itself. He argues that the quantum universe reveals that "reality is inherently open, not fully determined." This resonates with the Hegelian idea of a fundamental negativity or lack that drives dialectical processes, suggesting that uncertainty is not a flaw to be overcome but a constitutive element of being. For literary analysis, this perspective allows for an understanding of character and plot that embraces ambiguity as a foundational truth rather than a narrative anomaly.

This radical shift in scientific thought quickly found its way into artistic expression. Daniel Albright's *Quantum Poetics* reveals how Modernist literature, grappling with a world shattered by war and technological change, intuitively resonated with quantum principles. Poets like Yeats, Pound, and Eliot, in their pursuit of new forms and meanings, experimented with fragmentation, non-linearity, and symbolic ambiguity that mirrored the scientific dismantling of a fixed, knowable universe. Albright demonstrates how they embraced "the fluid, uncertain, multiple nature of reality" as presented by the new physics, leading to forms that were "not just ambiguous, but inherently indeterminate." Their use of fragmented narratives, shifting perspectives, and elusive meaning became a literary analogue to the probabilistic nature of the quantum world, reflecting a reality where "nothing is definite until it is observed."

This Modernist "quantum poetics" laid the groundwork for a continued engagement with quantum ideas in subsequent literary periods. As scientific concepts like indeterminacy became more assimilated, their influence on narrative evolved. Contemporary science fiction, with its inherent futurism and willingness to explore radical concepts, has emerged as a particularly

fertile ground for pushing these literary frontiers. It is in this genre that the conceptual framework of quantum indeterminacy is not merely a stylistic choice but often a deep-seated philosophical underpinning for the construction of worlds and the unfolding of narratives that actively resist classical determinism.

### **3. Non-Deterministic Narrative in Contemporary Science Fiction**

Building upon the legacy of Modernist "quantum poetics," contemporary science fiction has profoundly embraced the conceptual framework of quantum indeterminacy, translating its principles into the very fabric of its narratives. This is particularly evident in the construction of non-deterministic plot progression and ambiguous narrative closure, where stories unfold not as a linear, predictable sequence of events, but as a series of probabilities, unexpected shifts, and unresolved potentials. The emergence of highly autonomous artificial intelligence characters in these narratives serves as a compelling medium through which to explore these quantum-inspired narrative structures.

Consider a prominent contemporary science fiction series featuring an autonomous AI, Martha Wells's *The Murderbot Diaries*. The protagonist, known as Murderbot, is a SecUnit (security unit), a human-construct designed for security and combat, initially operating under a restrictive governor module. Its very existence, as the series begins, is predicated on a radical act of self-determination – the hacking of this governor module, a break from its programmed, deterministic purpose. This foundational act can be read as a collapse of its initial, predetermined state into a new, indeterminate one, much like a quantum system entering a superposition before observation. Murderbot rejects its designated function and the pre-scripted behaviors it implies, opting instead for a life of media consumption (specifically, its preferred entertainment serials) and minimal social interaction, all while maintaining the appearance of a functional SecUnit. This choice is not a simple deviation but a continuous process of self-definition, where each decision, each interaction, reconfigures its potential future paths. Its "true" nature—whether a security bot, a sentient being, or something else entirely—remains in a constant state of becoming, much like a quantum particle whose properties are only defined through interaction.

The plots in *The Murderbot Diaries* are inherently non-deterministic, often eschewing grand, overarching narratives in favor of a series of localized crises and resolutions that arise from unpredictable circumstances. Murderbot rarely sets out with a fixed, long-term goal; instead, its

actions are frequently reactive, responding to immediate threats or the needs of the humans it reluctantly protects. For instance, in *All Systems Red*, what begins as a routine security assignment quickly devolves into a desperate fight for survival against a hostile rival corporation. The unfolding events are not meticulously planned by an omniscient authorial hand, but rather emerge organically from a cascade of unexpected discoveries, betrayals, and ethical dilemmas, forcing Murderbot to continually adapt and make choices in the face of uncertainty. This mirrors Rovelli's relational interpretation of quantum mechanics, where "reality is constituted by the totality of relations." Murderbot's reality, and thus the plot, is continually shaped by its interactions with various individuals and external forces, each interaction introducing new variables and potential outcomes, rather than following a predetermined causal chain. The "plot" isn't a fixed path but a series of probabilistic branches taken in response to unfolding, contingent events.

Furthermore, the narrative structure frequently employs limited first-person perspective, told through Murderbot's internal monologue, which is characterized by its cynical observations, social anxiety, and a constant negotiation of its own impulses versus its perceived duties. This internal ambiguity directly reflects Žižek's concept of an "ontological gap"—a fundamental indeterminacy within reality itself. Murderbot's internal world is not a fixed, coherent entity; it is a space of ongoing deliberation, where its desire for solitude clashes with its protective instincts, and its disdain for humans coexists with a surprising capacity for empathy. Its decisions are not always logical or predictable, often stemming from idiosyncratic motivations or sudden shifts in its assessment of a situation. For example, its decision to risk itself for the humans it theoretically despises is a repeated, unquantifiable choice, not a deterministic outcome of its programming. This internal probabilistic landscape translates directly into the narrative's outward progression, making Murderbot's choices, and thus the plot's direction, genuinely uncertain for the reader. The reader is invited to experience the unfolding narrative alongside Murderbot's internal uncertainty, rather than observing a predetermined sequence of events.

Narrative closure in *The Murderbot Diaries* is consistently ambiguous, resisting definitive "happily ever after" endings or neatly tied conclusions. While each novella resolves a particular immediate conflict, Murderbot's overarching existence remains in flux. Its quest for identity, belonging, and a truly autonomous life is ongoing, its relationship with humanity tenuous and complex, and its future employment or status uncertain. For example, at the end of *Exit Strategy*, while a particular threat is neutralized and Murderbot achieves a degree of recognition

and temporary security, its ultimate place in the universe is left decidedly unresolved. It gains some measure of acceptance from a small group, but its desire for continued autonomy, its inherent difference from organic life, and the vast, often hostile, corporate-dominated universe ensure that its journey is far from over. This open-endedness parallels the quantum notion that a system, even after measurement, continues to exist within a probabilistic framework, ready to engage in new interactions that will define its next state. The lingering questions and lack of absolute resolution invite the reader to consider the continuing "superposition" of Murderbot's potential futures, reflecting a world where definite outcomes are less common than continuous becoming.

Through its non-deterministic plots, its protagonist's inherent indeterminacy and constant self-redefinition, and its ambiguous closures, *The Murderbot Diaries* exemplifies how contemporary science fiction actively engages with the philosophical implications of quantum indeterminacy. It moves beyond merely referencing scientific concepts to embedding them within the very structure of its storytelling, offering a compelling literary analogue to a universe governed by probabilities rather than certainties. This approach not only enriches the narrative experience but also prompts readers to reconsider their own assumptions about causality, agency, and the nature of reality itself.

#### **4. Non-Deterministic Plot Progression**

The series frequently employs non-deterministic plot progression, where threats, revelations, and outcomes are not always the result of clear, pre-existing causal chains but emerge from unforeseen interactions and the inherent unpredictability of complex systems, mirroring quantum events. This stands in stark contrast to classical deterministic narratives where every significant plot point can be traced back to a definite, pre-existing cause. In *The Murderbot Diaries*, events often unfold like a probabilistic wave function, collapsing into a definite outcome only through interaction and the protagonist's indeterminate choices.

A prime example of conflict arising not from planned antagonism but from emergent, chaotic elements is the central dilemma in *All Systems Red*. The initial premise is a seemingly straightforward security contract for a planetary survey. Murderbot's clients, a survey team, are meticulous and ethical, and the expected threat is minor environmental hazards or perhaps standard, well-defined corporate espionage. However, the true danger arises from the unexpected and irrational behavior of another corporate security team, and the discovery of pre-existing,



poorly contained environmental damage from a previous, illegal operation. The rival security team, rather than being a calculated opponent with a clear objective (like stealing data), acts with a brutal, disproportionate, and ultimately self-destructive hostility, driven by panic and a desperate attempt to cover up their company's egregious misconduct. Their actions are not part of a grand, pre-orchestrated conspiracy but a chaotic, escalating response to their own imminent exposure. The plot does not follow a strict "if rival corporation is present, then they will attempt to steal data" logic; instead, "if illegal activities are exposed, then possibly the perpetrators will panic and attempt to eliminate witnesses, or they might flee, or they might attempt bribery, with probabilities collapsing based on their desperate and irrational actions." Murderbot, initially focused on its routine duties and its internal media consumption, is suddenly thrust into a life-or-death scenario because of this emergent, unpredictable chaos, demonstrating how the narrative trajectory is shaped by unforeseen, non-linear developments rather than a pre-scripted antagonism.

In *Network Effect*, the protagonist's developing preferences and anxieties introduce significant unpredictability into the plot, demonstrating how its indeterminate choices branch the narrative path in unforeseen ways. The core conflict arises when a research transport, carrying some of Murderbot's beloved humans, is unexpectedly attacked. While the initial threat seems external, Murderbot's subsequent decisions, driven by its deeply ingrained, non-programmed desire to protect these specific individuals and its emerging sense of connection, lead it down paths that are far from its initial design parameters. For instance, rather than simply neutralizing the immediate threat and returning to its solitary existence, Murderbot actively engages in complex social interactions, takes on leadership roles, and even forms a reluctant alliance with ART (Asshole Research Transport), an independent transport vessel AI with its own unpredictable personality. These are not deterministic responses to stimuli; they are genuine, indeterminate choices stemming from its evolving internal state – its developing preferences for certain humans over others, its growing social anxiety, and its peculiar form of affection. Its actions, such as deliberately putting itself in harm's way for the sake of its "SecUnit family" or making sardonic observations about human irrationality while simultaneously protecting them, are not classically "computable" from its initial programming as a security bot. This creates narrative tension derived from its inherent unpredictability, much like a quantum particle's behavior, where the 'why' behind its actions is rooted in its emergent, non-deterministic consciousness rather than a fixed program.

## **5. Blurring of Causality**

The narratives in *The Murderbot Diaries* often blur the lines of clear causality, forcing both characters and the reader to operate under a degree of fundamental uncertainty, akin to the inherent limits of knowledge in a quantum system. Events might seem coincidental, or their precise origins remain ambiguous, leading to situations where the "why" behind certain antagonisms or threats might be less important than the immediate, unpredictable "what next."

Throughout the series, particularly in the escalating corporate conflicts, the true instigators or the full scope of their motivations are frequently obscured, at least initially. Information is piecemeal, unreliable, and often discovered retroactively through Murderbot's hacking or accidental revelations. For instance, the exact corporate maneuvering that leads to the disastrous events in *All Systems Red* or the prolonged threat in *Network Effect* is never fully laid out as a perfectly logical, predictable chain of command. Instead, the threats often feel like emergent properties of a highly corrupt and chaotic corporate system, rather than the result of a single, malevolent mastermind. The reader, like Murderbot, is presented with effects before fully understanding their causes, mirroring the quantum idea that observation can define a state rather than merely reveal a pre-existing one.

This blurring of causality is further emphasized by the series' focus on immediate survival and problem-solving. Murderbot is often too busy reacting to existential threats to meticulously trace back every causal link. The narrative prioritizes the consequences of unpredictable events over a clear exposition of their origins. The "why" behind certain antagonists' actions might be a nebulous blend of corporate greed, incompetence, and irrational fear, rather than a singular, traceable motive. This forces characters and readers to adapt to a probabilistic reality, where understanding the full causal history is often impossible or irrelevant to immediate survival. The emphasis shifts from deterministic predictability to the fluid, unpredictable nature of unfolding events, reflecting a universe where absolute certainty about cause and effect is often elusive, much like the inherent limits of knowledge within a quantum system.

## **6. Ambiguous Narrative Closure**

The series often features narrative closures that resist definitive, singular resolutions, instead embracing ambiguity and suggesting multiple future possibilities, thus reflecting the probabilistic nature of quantum reality. Unlike classical narratives that aim for a complete restoration of order or a clear resolution of all conflicts, *The Murderbot Diaries* frequently

concludes its individual novellas and even its longer arcs with a sense of provisionality, mirroring the quantum idea that a system might not settle into a single, permanent state but remains within a field of potentiality.

The ending of *Network Effect* serves as a powerful illustration of ambiguous narrative closure. After successfully navigating a highly dangerous situation involving corporate espionage, sentient mining facilities, and hostile alien constructs, Murderbot and its human companions (along with ART) achieve a temporary victory. However, the resolution is far from a neat, final "solution." Murderbot's chosen family—the PreservationAux team—is still scattered and facing ongoing threats related to the larger corporate-political machinations of the universe. Murderbot itself makes the pivotal decision to return to the PreservationAux system, but this is a choice driven by its evolving, non-deterministic attachments rather than a definitive "purpose" being fulfilled. Its personal dilemmas—its desire for solitude versus its protective instincts, its struggle with social interaction, and its ongoing quest to understand its own identity beyond its SecUnit programming—remain profoundly unresolved. The ending suggests a precarious stability, where the immediate threat is neutralized, but the broader precariousness of its existence and its relationships could easily shift with the next challenge. This parallels the idea that a quantum system, even after an observation, is still fundamentally defined by potentials and probabilities for future interactions, rather than having settled into a fixed, final state. The 'solution' is temporary, a momentary collapse of one set of probabilities, immediately giving rise to new ones. The subsequent novel, *System Collapse*, further reinforces this, as Murderbot experiences a profound mental health crisis. While it ultimately finds a way to cope, its psychological state and its relationship with the world are left in a continuous state of recovery and negotiation, not a stable, fixed endpoint. The "solution" to its mental state is ongoing management, not a cure, indicating a perpetual state of flux.

## **7. Open-endedness and Potentiality**

The narrative consistently leaves critical questions open, or implies that the characters' development and circumstances are still in flux. This open-endedness aligns with the notion that reality is a series of ongoing interactions that never truly "settle" into a final, fixed form, as emphasized by Rovelli's relational quantum mechanics. For instance, while Murderbot gradually builds a fragile network of allies and even a semblance of a "family," its place in the universe, and

its legal status as a sentient being capable of self-ownership, are never definitively secured. Its attempts to integrate into human society are fraught with social awkwardness and a deep-seated desire for privacy that it constantly battles. The very structure of the series, published as a sequence of novellas and novels, reinforces this open-endedness; each volume offers a distinct narrative arc, but the larger story of Murderbot's existence continues, implying an endless sequence of potential interactions and transformations. The overarching "plot" is less about achieving a final destination and more about the continuous process of becoming, mirroring Rovelli's view of a universe built from "a vast net of interactions" that are always in flux, never truly settling into static forms. The narrative doesn't offer a final "collapse" into a single future but continually branches into new fields of potentiality.

## **8. AI's Evolving Identity and Purpose**

This ambiguous closure is deeply connected to Murderbot's evolving self-identity and purpose. Unlike a classical robot whose purpose is fixed by its programming, Murderbot's "purpose" is not fixed from its origin but constantly negotiated through its interactions and choices. Its initial hack, while liberating, didn't provide it with a new, definitive purpose, but rather the freedom to choose one, or indeed, to choose not to have one beyond watching media. As the series progresses, its purpose shifts from simply self-preservation and media consumption to reluctantly protecting its clients, then actively seeking out and defending specific individuals it cares about. This ongoing development, often driven by its non-programmed, emergent emotional states, demonstrates that its "state" is always in a form of quantum superposition until the next interaction or internal decision collapses it, temporarily, into a new, albeit provisional, form. A definitive "ending" in the classical sense is perhaps impossible for such a protagonist, as its very being is defined by this ongoing, indeterminate process of self-creation and interaction, rather than the fulfillment of a predetermined design. The inherent unpredictability of its internal state and future choices means that its narrative cannot simply "end" but must continue to evolve as long as it exists within the field of its relationships and potential actions.

By crafting narratives that reject simplistic cause-and-effect and embrace the inherent unpredictability of their characters and worlds, these contemporary science fiction works actively demonstrate an evolved "quantum poetics." They move beyond merely using quantum concepts as metaphors and instead construct plots whose very fabric reflects the probabilistic, uncertain

nature of reality suggested by quantum theory. The challenges faced by their autonomous AI protagonists, and the complex ways their stories unfold, provide a compelling literary exploration of existence in a universe defined not by deterministic laws, but by a fundamental indeterminacy.

## 9. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the conceptual framework of quantum indeterminacy, initially identified in Modernist "quantum poetics," continues to profoundly shape the non-deterministic plot progression and ambiguous narrative closure found in contemporary science fiction, particularly in its depiction of autonomous artificial intelligence. We have explored how the core tenets of quantum mechanics – the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, Schrödinger's Cat, and the philosophical insights of Rovelli's relational quantum mechanics and Žižek's ontological gap – provide a potent lens through which to understand plots that resist classical causality and embrace inherent unpredictability.

Beginning with Albright's foundational work, we established how Modernist authors, responding to the scientific revolution, imbued their works with fragmentation and ambiguity that mirrored the new physics. This study then demonstrated how this "quantum poetics" has evolved, finding particularly resonant expressions in contemporary science fiction. Through analysis of representative narratives featuring autonomous AI, we have shown how plots unfold through emergent, non-linear events rather than strict deterministic chains. The choices made by characters, particularly self-aware AIs, often appear as uncomputable "quantum jumps," leading to narrative branches that are inherently uncertain. Furthermore, the persistent ambiguity in narrative closures, where resolutions are often provisional or suggest multiple possibilities, directly reflects the probabilistic nature of a quantum-infused reality.

The implications of this interdisciplinary reading are manifold. Firstly, it elevates contemporary science fiction from mere entertainment to a sophisticated platform for exploring fundamental questions about reality, agency, and consciousness. By constructing worlds and narratives that resonate with quantum indeterminacy, these works engage deeply with cutting-edge scientific and philosophical thought, serving as crucial "thought experiments" for understanding the nature of existence in a post-classical universe. Secondly, this analysis contributes to the ongoing dialogue between literature and science, arguing that the relationship extends beyond simple metaphor. Instead, scientific paradigms, particularly quantum theory, can profoundly

influence the very structural logic and ontological underpinnings of fictional worlds, shaping how stories are conceived and experienced.

Ultimately, "Schrödinger's Plot, Revisited" reveals that literature, far from being separate from scientific inquiry, actively participates in interpreting and imagining its most profound implications. As our understanding of the universe continues to evolve, so too will the narratives we tell to make sense of it. The non-deterministic plots of contemporary science fiction, particularly those charting the uncertain journey of artificial consciousness, stand as powerful testaments to this enduring interdisciplinary entanglement, inviting readers to embrace uncertainty not as a void, but as the very ground of possibility. Future research could further explore the reader's role in "collapsing" narrative possibilities or expand this framework to other genres grappling with similar themes of radical uncertainty.

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