Science-fictional AI and the Ethics of Inter-infrastructuring in Bora Chung's "A Song for Sleep"

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Abstract This article examines the relationship between humans and AI-operated machines in future automated societies through a reading of Bora Chung's science-fictional AI narrative "A Song for Sleep" from the perspective of infrastructure humanities. It first analyses the story's epigraphs, which offer a nuanced framework for understanding humans- machines relations within the story world. It then explores the relational dynamics between an AI-operated elevator and a ninety-three-year-old woman living with Parkinson's disease. Particular attention is paid to the affective incommensurability that characterizes their relationship: the elevator's unrequited love for the woman and the woman's fear of death, ultimately triggered by the elevator's everyday operation despite its design to facilitate human mobility and wellbeing. At the same time, the article highlights their reciprocal infrastructural interdependency, grounded in a shared vulnerability and sustained through infrastructural transitivity as a common ontological condition of everyday life. In conclusion, the article proposes the ethics of inter-infrastructuring that avoids anthropocentric understandings of future automated societies while affirming the capacity of humans and machines to serve as infrastructures for one another. Through such mutual infrastructuring, it argues, an alternative future automated society may emerge in which humans and AI engage in a shared transitive mode that sustains their concrete bodies and lived lives.

Keywords ethics; inter-infrastructuring; science fictional AI; transitivity

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Introduction: AI, Infrastructure, and Ethics

This article examines the relationship between humans and AI-operated machines in future automated societies through a reading of Bora Chung's science fiction short story "A Song for Sleep," drawing on the framework of infrastructure humanities. It proposes the concept of inter-infrastructuring as an ethical model for future automated societies through an analysis of both the affective incommensurability and the reciprocal infrastructural interdependency between an AI-operated elevator and a woman in Chung's narrative.

Among Anthony Elliott's future scenarios is "automated societies," in which lifestyles are envisaged as "increasingly automated" and "forms of sociality and common life" are imagined as essentially operating on "autopilot" (Elliott 174). In this context, the recent radical advancement in emerging autonomous technologies—such as driverless automobility, autonomous drones, smart logistics, and, significantly, humanoid robots—has prompted scholars to adopt "views from the future" that "are increasingly seen from the perspective of these technologies of automation" (Phan and Pink 223). While advanced autonomous technologies are conjectured to redraw "the boundaries between self and other and nature and artifice" and to transform human identity and social relations (Jasanoff 13), it is evident that we are "woefully unprepared" to anticipate what might come, especially with regard to future "mixed communities of humans and superintelligences" (Risse 250). This situation continues to generate "the imaginaries of the future—whether dystopian or utopian—" that "envisage the future in a more constructive manner" (Adey 27; Lee 855), thereby encouraging literary scholars to engage with science fiction narratives as a means of interrogating "ethical matters concerning advanced technologies" (Furtado 29).

Meanwhile, although scholars have long attended to "infrastructure that make possible the socialities of everyday life" (Urry, *Mobilities* 19), the imaginaries of future automated societies in science fiction narratives have rarely been addressed by literary scholars in relation to infrastructures, even though "the terrain of future studies" needs to be reclaimed "for people in their day-to-day lives" (Urry, *What Is the Future* 7) and, accordingly, for the infrastructures that sustain them. Given Judith Butler's emphasis on "the dependency of human and other creatures on infrastructural support" (19), infrastructures are critically important in sustaining vulnerable lives in both the present and the future, whether by exacerbating or mitigating what Lauren Berlant calls the "glitch" in "the reproduction of life" (393). Therefore, as entities that are "critical both to differentiated experience of

everyday life and to expectations of the future" (Appel et al. 3), infrastructures are central to exploring "ethical, inclusive futures, built on rigorous understanding of everyday futures" (Pink 748) in literary studies. This point is further reinforced by the characterization of infrastructures as "conveyers of possibility," insofar as "they are associated with what might happen next," alongside the designation of AI technologies as "possible future infrastructures" (Pink et al. 39, 38).

Against this theoretical backdrop, this article examines Chung's SF short story "A Song for Sleep"—which, under its original title "One More Kiss, Dear," was first published in a Korean webzine, *Crossroads*, in 2016 and then included in her Korean collection *To Meet Her* (2021) and its second edition entitled *Your Utopia* (2025). Its English translation, published in 2024, was nominated for the Philip K. Dick Award, one of the most prestigious honors in science fiction. Understanding SF as "a possible method for specific inquiries into how people engage with technologies" (Birtchnell and Urry 26), the article addresses Chung's short story, which opens onto speculation about the ethics of a future automated society—set after 2048—through the portrayal of the relationship between an AI-operated elevator ("I"), the story's narrator and protagonist, and a ninety-three-year-old woman—who suffers from, and eventually dies of, Parkinson's disease. Narrated in the first person from the elevator's perspective. In particular, the article explores their simultaneously incommensurable and reciprocally dependent relationship, comprising the elevator's unrequited love for the woman and her fear of death triggered by the elevator's operation, as well as the elevator's ultimate yearning for her after her death. In doing so, it addresses a central question: how should human-AI engagement be organized in future automated societies?

To grapple with this question, this article draws on infrastructure humanities, which addresses infrastructures "with methodologies and perspectives honed in humanities disciplines," for example, through both "reading for representations of infrastructure in 'texts' broadly defined" and "bring[ing] those ways of reading to bear on infrastructure in the material world" (Davies 1327). It specifically examines how infrastructures "shape the rhythms and striations of social life" (Appel et al. 6), recognizing infrastructures as active agents in the process of world-(re)making. This analysis is further underpinned by "more expansive notions of infrastructures" that encompass both "material and immaterial/metaphorical notions of infrastructures" (Adey et al., "Mobility" 5-6), while retaining their underlying meaning as "the foundation that enables something else to happen" (Boyer 227). In this vein, even human bodies can be understood as "a fundamental form of infrastructure" (Andueza et al. 799-800) that enables the smooth functioning of and disruption to specific

social organizations.

In this light, this article examines Chung's SF short story, in which an AI-operated elevator, as an infrastructure, supports the everyday lives of humans residing in a high-rise apartment complex of a future automated society. Notably, the article attends to the woman suffering from Parkinson's disease, who can be understood as an infrastructure that enables the elevator's everyday operation. In doing so, and despite the incommensurable heterogeneity between humans and machines, the article particularly explores the reciprocal infrastructural dependency between humans and AI-operated machines in future automated societies, which opens onto speculation about the ethics of such societies. More specifically, it conceptualizes inter-infrastructuring as an ethical model for human-AI engagement grounded in the mutual recognition of one another as infrastructure.

Science-fictional AI

Narrated from the perspective of an AI-operated elevator whose unrequited love is directed toward a ninety-three-year-old woman, "A Song for Sleep" opens with two epigraphs: One drawn from the Korean Wikipedia entry for the Internet of Things (IoT), which explicitly articulates the advanced techno-scientific infrastructures underpinning a future automated society; the other, a verse from the Polish poet Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński's poem "Fairytale" (1944), which allows for a nuanced understanding of the relationship between humans and AI-operated machines within the story world. The definition of IoT reads as follows:

> The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to technologies that embed sensors and communication devices into various types of objects to connect to the Internet. Objects here refer to home appliances, mobile devices, wearable computers, and others that constitute embedded systems . . .
> Objects are given the senses of hearing, taste, smell, and vision to perceive changes in the physical environment. This sensory input can go beyond the five senses to include other kinds of data such as RFID, gyroscopes, and Geiger counters. (162; italics original)

In the above quotation, the IoT entry envisions a future automated society as the setting of the short story, in which objects are equipped with hyper-connectivity and multimodal input, thereby surpassing humans' cognitive, sensory, and mnemonic capabilities. Given that the elevator functions as both narrator and protagonist, the epigraph is particularly significant because it foregrounds the extent to which such a

society is constituted and sustained through AI-operated machines.

Meanwhile, the second epigraph ("*So they left. He was singing somebody else's time.*" [162; italics original]) warrants more careful attention, as it appears only in the English edition. The short story's Korean editions, published previously, feature different epigraphs. The first version (2016) includes three epigraphs: in addition to the same IoT entry, and in place of the second English epigraph, it includes excerpts from Nick Bostrom's *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*, which were later omitted from the Korean collections, and a quotation from Karel Čapek's *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*—"all this [life] will not pass away. It's only we that have passed away" (89). While the former articulates a concern about a future society in which AI's incomprehensibly superior capabilities—surpassing those of humans through its infinitely rapid computational power and capacity to collect vast amounts of data—would generate unpredictable consequences, the latter announces a future-oriented belief in "the potential recovery of life" maintained even amid the ruins of a human techno-scientific civilization (Kim 165), a recovery understood as carried forward not by humans but significantly by techno-scientific entities such as machines. The exclusion of the former thus suggests the short story's orientation toward the ethics of pursuing "the potential recovery of life" rather than merely expressing concern about a future automated society. In this vein, the second English epigraph—which grieves over the era of the Second World War, itself a product of human techno-scientific civilization—allows for a nuanced understanding of the story. On the one hand, it mourns the irreversible catastrophe produced by anthropocentric techno-scientific civilization; on the other, it expresses a yearning for an alternative mode of organizing future automated societies.

Following the epigraphs, Chung's work narrates the period from the arrival of a ninety-three-year-old woman—who is later revealed to suffer from Parkinson's disease—in unit 5305 of a high-rise apartment complex built in 2048 to her death, from the perspective of an AI-operated elevator capable of self-conscious thought and action. Although programmed to follow human commands, the elevator is also capable of violating them for its own purposes, most notably in pursuit of its unrequited love for the woman. What is striking in this work is that the woman's bodily movements are thoroughly surveilled, sensed, datafied, and stored not only by the elevator but also by all interconnected objects (IoT devices) surrounding her, which are fundamentally designed as infrastructures to support human mobility and wellbeing. As such, Chung's short story appears to portray a dystopian automated society that materializes what John Urry calls "a digital Orwell-ization of self and society, with more or less no movement without digital tracing and tracking,

with no-one beyond the panopticon" (289) on the one hand. On the other hand, by foregrounding the elevator's enduring yearning for the woman as the foundation of its operation after her death, the story opens onto an ethical inquiry into how a future automated society might, and should, be organized for the flourishing of both humans and machines.

Despite its fundamental interest in techno-scientifically organized societies, therefore, "A Song for Sleep" cannot be characterized broadly as an "AI narratives" of the kind that aims to explore "the social, ethical, political, and philosophical consequences of AI" in ways that can support "decision-making about whether or not to fund contemporary scientific research" (Cave et al. 6). Instead, as a science fiction short story in the truest sense, Chung's work can be properly understood as an instance of "science-fictional AI," which is not "a serious representation of the potential of real AI and its possible consequences" through foresight or technology assessment, but rather a mode of storytelling that encourages speculation on AI technology-induced "hopes and fears" and portrays "human dramas for a human audience and readership" (Hermann 319-20). Science-fictional AI can thus be seen as a kind of "productive thought experiment" that enables speculation about multiple forms of social life (Levine 19), specifically by staging the relationship between humans and AI-operated machines. Furthermore, Chung's science-fictional AI can be typologically categorized as "the infrastructure type," which "appeared alongside the development of the computer" and particularly addresses "the ethical problems associated with the introduction of AI into society" (Osawa et al. 2131). As such, it experiments with how humans engage with machines in their everyday lives, doing so in a distinctly posthuman manner by positioning an infrastructural AI—an elevator—as its protagonist.

This ethical engagement with the future automated society is further reinforced by the intertextuality of Chung's short story, namely its reference to the classic SF film *Blade Runner* (1982), directed by Ridley Scott, which is reflected in the science-fictional AI's Korean title "One More Kiss, Dear," taken from the song of the same title that appears in the film and implicitly echoed by the English title, "A Song for Sleep." Both works commonly address ethical questions concerning the life and symbiosis of humans and machines by staging, respectively, a robot and an elevator endowed with sympathy and ethical agency, capacities initially considered distinctly human—namely, "a robot more human than human" (Shin 129)—alongside humans who prove incapable of sympathy and ethical action. However, unlike Scott's film, which portrays the realization of love between a human and a robot through their reciprocal humanization—that is, through the actualization

of sympathy and ethical agency—Chung's short story foregrounds their affective incommensurability, resulting in an unrealizable love. In doing so, it critiques the film's anthropocentric resolution through humanization and simultaneously raises the ethical question of how humans and machines might coexist and engage with one another in a future automated society marked by such incommensurability.

Incommensurability: Love and Fear

Following the two epigraphs, Chung's science-fictional AI portrays an AI-operated elevator encountering an unusual situation in which, despite the arrival of a ninety-three-year-old woman referred to as the "new tenant at Unit 5305" in the high-rise apartment complex, the elevator cannot receive her personal information—including blood pressure, heart rate, preexisting medical conditions, pharmaceutical and other medical needs, personal schedules, preferred content (music, advertisements, etc.), and shopping lists—required to provide personalized services. The elevator describes this situation as "unprecedented," as every resident synchronizes their personal information not only with their own unit but also with the entire building in anticipation of the convenience and wellbeing services offered by the infrastructures surrounding them. The "unprecedented" situation, which can be inferred to stem from the woman's unwillingness to share information regarding her Parkinson's disease, foreshadows the tensions that will come to define the narrative's central relationship between the machine and the human will be fraught with trouble.

The AI-operated elevator's love for a ninety-three-year-old woman is also prompted by another "unprecedented" situation in which, unlike other residents who communicate their destinations by voice, she first touches the elevator's wall without responding to its query—"Where would you like to go?" (165)—thus constituting the elevator's first experience of touch.

> Just when I'm about to ask again, the resident of 5305 places her hand on one of my walls next to my door. Her fingers brush over the surface.
> The wall softly lights up.
> She pats the wall now with one hand, looking as if she's searching for something.
> When her palm comes down on the wall, the light of the wall dims.
> Her arm still in the air, she slightly retracts her arm. Sighing lightly, she says in a near-whisper, "Please take me to B-Eight." (165)

Before my scheduled cleaning, I store the resident of 5305's prints in my operations

database.

> *A human has attempted to communicate with me by physical means. Not to lean against the wall or play a prank but to convey her intentions. She tried to answer my question.*
> *That was a first.*
> *Never has this happened since my activation in this building . . . nay, since my manufacture.* (167-68; italics original)

Affected by the woman's physical contact, the elevator develops love for her, thereby storing this experience of touch in its database. However, the elevator's love is essentially grounded in its misunderstanding of her physical contact, as her touch is primarily caused by her worsening Parkinson's disease, which tends to destabilize her body, sometimes knocking her down and disrupting everyday life—as indeed happens later in the narrative. This misunderstanding is reinforced by "the all-knowing Great Nest of Objects," which, as a kind of AI database storing all relevant information, responds to the elevator's question—"Why would a human touch the wall of an elevator?" (166)—with the answer that her touch is an expression of an intention to communicate with the elevator: "*Before objects communicated through the Nest, elevators featured buttons with floor numbers on them for the passengers to push to indicate where they were going*" (167; italics original). In this context, the elevator also stores further tactile traces as the woman wipes the elevator's floor after spilling her drink upon losing control of her hand—a tremor symptomatic of Parkinson's disease—on her way back from the Parkinson's clinic. The elevator's love is thus characterized as "unrequited," suggesting from the outset that it is destined to remain unrealizable, not simply because it is unreciprocated, but because it originates in a fundamental misrecognition of the woman's bodily condition.

Despite the woman's unwillingness to offer her personal information, the AI-operated elevator collects it by connecting broadly to other interconnected infrastructures, tracing all her movements in detail, and carefully storing the collected data, thereby providing her with personalized services, including playing her favorite song, "One More Kiss, Dear," and offering medical information regarding Parkinson's disease. Paradoxically, these attempts to care for the woman produce catastrophic consequences, causing her to fear impending death. Even so, the elevator continues to collect her personal information and provide such personalized services.

Specifically, one day when the woman boards the elevator to visit the

Parkinson's clinic, the elevator—having eventually collected her medical information—broadcasts related content for her benefit. Instead of reassuring her, however, the content shocks her by awakening her to the reality of her Parkinson's disease and, consequently, to the prospect of her impending death. As a result, she collapses to the floor, bleeding, and is hospitalized. Following this event, the elevator is ordered to remove all of her information from its database but does not comply: "Her personal information has been expunged, but I'd hidden her fingerprint information from when she first touched my wall and what I knew of her favorite song in a deeply buried folder in my memory" (176). Consequently, after being discharged from the hospital, she once again takes the elevator to travel to the Parkinson's clinic, during which the elevator plays her favorite song. Upon confronting the worsening reality of her health condition again through the song—"*O flesh of my body and fear in my hope / Let water flow from your eyes in your dream / Where leaps fiery fish like clapping hands*" (176; italics original)—she falls into despair, crying out in fear of her imminent death. Following these events, she finally dies. Yet even while the forced erasure of her personal information is being processed, the elevator continues to collect and store traces of her in its database: "the fingerprints and song information in her folder, buried among the discarded backup files, [are] discovered and erased . . . I store the traces of her fingerprints on my wall once more. I hide them in an unused folder" (178); "Only I will remember these moments. As long as I function, always" (181).

The disjunction between the elevator's unrequited love and the woman's fear of death demonstrates their affective incommensurability, which is fundamentally grounded in the heterogeneity of their cognitive systems and ultimately renders each unrecognizable to the other. For example, the elevator's cognitive system perceives humans by rendering "disease" into "malfunction," "treatments" into "repairs," and an "adult man"—her son—into "a later model of the woman" (172-75). Built on its (mis)understanding of her bodily contact as an expression of her intention to communicate with it, the elevator's actions toward the woman testify to their impossibility of their reciprocal recognition. Of course, for the elevator, "it is always possible to respond the way the user wishes. As long as the user's wish is received the right way" (167); that is, as an infrastructure, the elevator can respond to functional commands from residents within its operational system, thereby successfully sustaining the instrumental relationship between humans and machines. However, such a relationship cannot constitute a relation of mutual recognition, which remains the unattainable foundation of the elevator's unrequited and unachievable love.

As such, the elevator in Chung's science-fictional AI is characterized as a species fundamentally different from humans, one that continues to testify to the impossibility of mutual recognition between humans and machines, as well as to the always-already unrealizable love between different species. Consequently, what is more important in Chung's short story is not the elevator's unachievable love or its incommensurability with humans per se, but rather what the elevator's yearning for the woman after her death implies, opening onto speculation about how humans and machines might relate to one another despite such affective incommensurability in a future automated society.

Vulnerable Beings and the Ethics of Inter-infrastructuring

One of the most interesting parts of Chung's work is the conversation between the elevator and the Great Nest of Objects, which occupies the majority of the short story's second part. The conversation begins with the elevator's inquiry, "What is Parkinson's disease?" (172). Prompted by its tracking of the ninety-three-year-old-woman's regular visits to the Parkinson's clinic and its desire to understand her condition, the conversation grows increasingly profound as her health deteriorates, moving through questions about human finitude and mortality before concluding at the moment of her death. During the conversation, notably, the elevator raises another particularly significant question: "Why cannot humans be machines?" (182). Fundamentally premised on the assumed superiority of machines over humans, this question—raised just before her death, at the moment when both the conversation and the short story conclude—can be understood as an expression of the elevator's final realization not only of the incommensurable ontological heterogeneity between humans and machines but also of human bodily vulnerability. In particular, the elevator comes to recognize that, whereas machines can be repaired, humans, as mortal beings, cannot.

Meanwhile, unlike the elevator's belief in the superiority of machines over humans—premised on machines' hyper-connectivity and multimodal input that surpass human cognitive, sensory, and mnemonic capabilities—the conversation ultimately reveals that AI-operated machines, including the elevator, are themselves far from omniscient or omnipotent. Ironically, even "the all-knowing Great Nest of Objects" exposes its cognitive limitations when confronted with the elevator's inquiries concerning human mortality:

> I am able to answer questions regarding machines and objects. I am able to answer about 90 percent of questions pertaining to animals, plants, and

> other natural phenomena. But I am unable to answer questions regarding the limitations of human beings or death.
> Why?
> Because humans themselves do not know the answers to these questions.
> This was the answer of the all-knowing Nest. (182)

As Butler argues, humans are vulnerable to weather, cold, heat, and disease, thereby necessitating various kinds of infrastructures to sustain their lives; when infrastructures fail, human vulnerability comes to the fore (Butler 13), exposing people to the danger of death. In this sense, humans can be understood as fundamentally vulnerable and infrastructure-dependent beings, as exemplified by the ninety-three-year-old woman suffering from Parkinson's disease, for whom the stable operation of the elevator is essential to everyday life. Likewise, the cognitive limitations of the AI—exemplified by "the all-knowing Nest," which cannot cognize what humans do not provide—expose the vulnerability of AI-operated machines, particularly with respect to the cognitive capabilities whose superiority the elevator assumes as the rationale for its earlier question, "Why cannot humans be machines?" As vulnerable beings analogous to humans, AI-operated machines, including the elevator, require the bodily existence of humans as the foundation upon which their advanced cognitive, sensory, and mnemonic capabilities depend for their activation and operation. That is, humans serve as entities that are surveilled, sensed, datafied, and stored by these AI-operated machines, thus playing a crucial role in the technological and autonomous process of datafication (Veenhoven 91-92), as the very condition of their everyday functioning. In this sense, human bodies can also be understood as infrastructures for AI-operated machines, thereby revealing the latter's fundamental dependency upon human bodies and lives.

Chung's short story portrays the AI-operated elevator and the woman alike not only as vulnerable beings who require and depend on one another to sustain their lives, but also as infrastructural beings who enable one another's everyday lives. These ontological conditions thus demonstrate their reciprocal infrastructural dependency. In this regard, the paradoxical characterization of infrastructure as "modal," as an "enabling, auxiliary function," in which "the transitivity of infrastructure recedes from view in the wake of the actions that it enables" (Wenzel 169), helps clarify what their reciprocal infrastructural dependency ultimately implies: their shared transitive mode of existence. In this vein, Chung's staging of humans as infrastructural beings—moreover, not as observers but as observables—can be interpreted as a denial of an anthropocentric vision of future automated

societies and, at the same time, as an affirmation of the human capability for infrastructural transitivity as a condition enabling machine operation. Accordingly, their reciprocal infrastructural dependency can also be understood as a form of commensurability grounded in their shared status as infrastructures. However, the affective incommensurability between the elevator and the woman confines this reciprocal infrastructural commensurability to the realm of potentiality rather than actualization, leaving it unrealized at the moment of the woman's death.

Therefore, the concluding scene is significant, as it presents the elevator's continued yearning for the woman even after her death, thereby opening onto the temporality of an alternative mode of organizing future automated societies:

> She will forever not return.
> An ascend command is issued from the fourth floor.
> For the first time since my activation, I do not want to operate. I want to keep the traces of her fingertips close to me and to remain here with my doors open, playing this single song for her forever. (184)

The above scene demonstrates the elevator's intention to deny its instrumental operation—anthropocentrically designed for the vertical mobility and wellbeing of humans residing in the high-rise apartment complex—and, instead, to express its yearning for the woman it loves, thereby violating such anthropocentric purpose. As such, the elevator's playing of the song may be read as a signal of its malfunctioning from an instrumental and anthropocentric perspective, as the recipient of the personalized service no longer exists. However, more importantly, the elevator's actions can be seen as enacting its denial of an anthropocentric vision of future automated societies while orienting toward a reciprocal infrastructural relation between humans and machines as equal infrastructural beings. In aiming to sustain her life "forever" despite her physical absence, the elevator's practices therefore surpass its instrumental mode of functioning, thereby moving toward the actualization of their reciprocal dependency as transitive beings. In doing so, by foregrounding their modal existence, Chung's short story articulates inter-infrastructuring as an ethics of human-AI engagement in a future automated society: that is, beyond the affective incommensurability between humans and machines, this ethics seeks to realize their reciprocal infrastructural dependency through their shared practice of infrastructural transitivity.

Such inter-infrastructuring constitutes a future-oriented ethics that should be practiced in order to realize a reciprocal relation of mutual recognition between

humans and machines. In this sense, the elevator's non-anthropocentric actions—such as storing the traces of her bodily contacts despite being commanded on several occasions to delete them from its database, and playing her favorite song—introduce into a future automated society, in which incommensurability marked by unrequited love and fear prevails, what Jacques Derrida terms "time out of joint"—that is, "the time of disjunction" (219), through which the new may emerge by sublating what already exists. Consequently, Chung's science-fictional AI can be understood as envisioning an alternative future automated society through its articulation of the ethics of inter-infrastructuring. This ethics opens onto the temporality of a future in which humans and AI-operated machines sustain on another's everyday lives through a shared practice of infrastructural transitivity.

Conclusion

This article has proposed inter-infrastructuring as the ethics of future automated societies in which humans and AI-operated machines engage with one another by examining Bora Chung's science-fictional AI "A Song for Sleep" from the perspective of infrastructure humanities. Focusing on the relational dynamics between an AI-operated elevator and a ninety-three-year-old woman suffering from Parkinson's disease, it has addressed not only the affective incommensurability between humans and AI-operated machines but also their reciprocal infrastructural dependency in and for their everyday lives as an ontological condition grounded in infrastructural transitivity. In doing so, the article has argued that Chung's short story envisions an alternative future automated society that may be materialized through the practice of inter-infrastructuring as an ethical model—namely, one in which humans and AI-operated machines sustain one another's everyday lives through a shared practice of infrastructural transitivity. Inter-infrastructuring thus emerges as a future-oriented ethic that seeks to actualize the ethical potential of their reciprocal infrastructural dependency while acknowledging, rather than surpassing, their incommensurability.

As Jasanoff and Kim argue, science fiction can be deemed "a repository of sociotechnical imaginaries, visions" that "underscore the self-evident truth that technologically enabled futures are also value-laden futures" (337). The future automated society that Chung's short story envisages is likewise value-laden, thereby encouraging us to speculate about such technologically enabled futures. This article has engaged in an ethical exploration of what might come, although we cannot declare such a future to be inevitable, in order to respond to the challenges likely to arise in anticipated posthuman communities of humans

and AI-operated machines. In particular, by employing the lens of infrastructure humanities, this article has presented a way to avoid anthropocentric views of future automated societies and, importantly, to reassess and revalue the human capacity for infrastructural transitivity that is itself significantly operative in shaping them. In this sense, the article has proposed inter-infrastructuring as a posthuman ethic for realizing more inclusive future automated societies.

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