

Imagining Better Futures

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Or, How Not to Ruin the Future



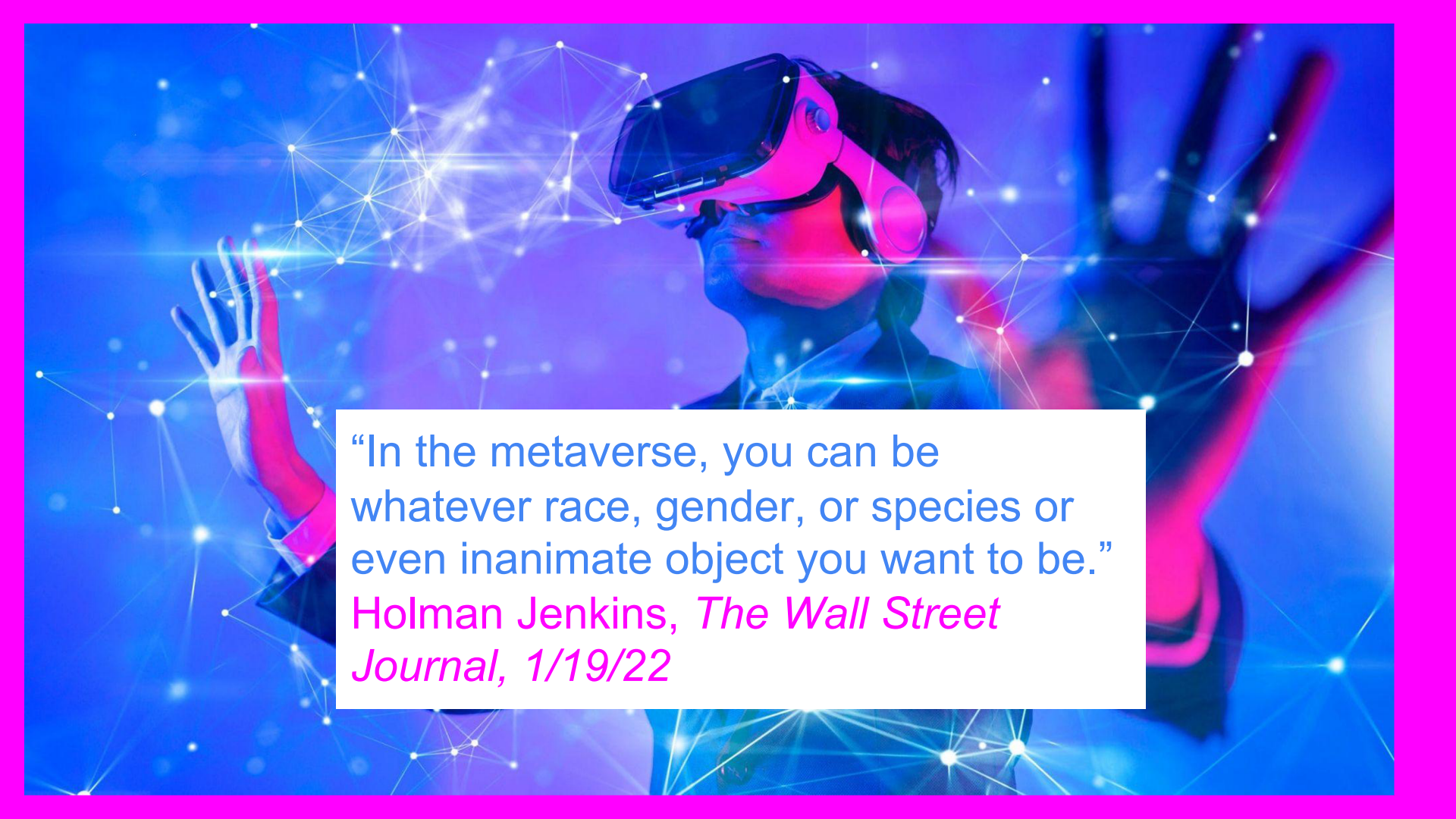


hopeful.

realistic.

responsible.

democratic.

A person is shown from the chest up, wearing a VR headset and holding two motion controllers. They are interacting with a digital environment represented by a network of glowing blue and white nodes connected by thin lines. The background is a vibrant blue with a bokeh effect of light points. The person's hands are raised, and the motion controllers are visible. The overall scene conveys a sense of immersion in a virtual world.

“In the metaverse, you can be whatever race, gender, or species or even inanimate object you want to be.”
Holman Jenkins, *The Wall Street Journal*, 1/19/22

Mother says she was virtually groped by three male characters within seconds of entering Facebook's online world Metaverse

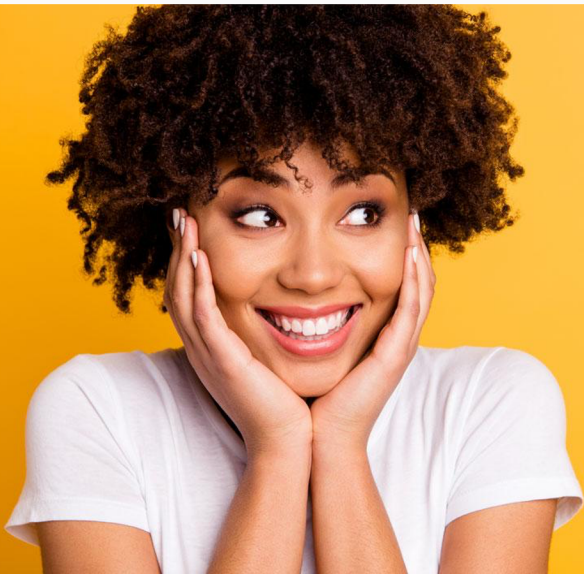
- Nina Jane Patel logged into Horizon Venues metaverse and created her avatar
- Her avatar was groped aggressively in attack by three realistic male characters
- She has suffered from anxiety since attack and fears for womens' safety online

By [MOLLY CLAYTON FOR THE MAIL ON SUNDAY](#)

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Idealism Leads, But Misleads

Optimism motivates but
can distort our thinking



Pessimism is rigorous but
depressing



On Trend: The Business of Forecasting the Future

70+ interview subjects from ten countries

Trend forecasters observe, explain, and package trends

Trend forecasting is a cultural industry

Trend forecasting impacts the future



How To Find Trends

Using trends is one way to forecasting the future (there are others)

Trends are broad cultural dynamics that move across a population

Basic trend forecasting involves looking for signals, identifying patterns, and coming to insights

Related to foresight, the general discipline of thinking critically about the future

Example: VIBE SHIFT



Trends can **take over** and **be** the
zeitgeist

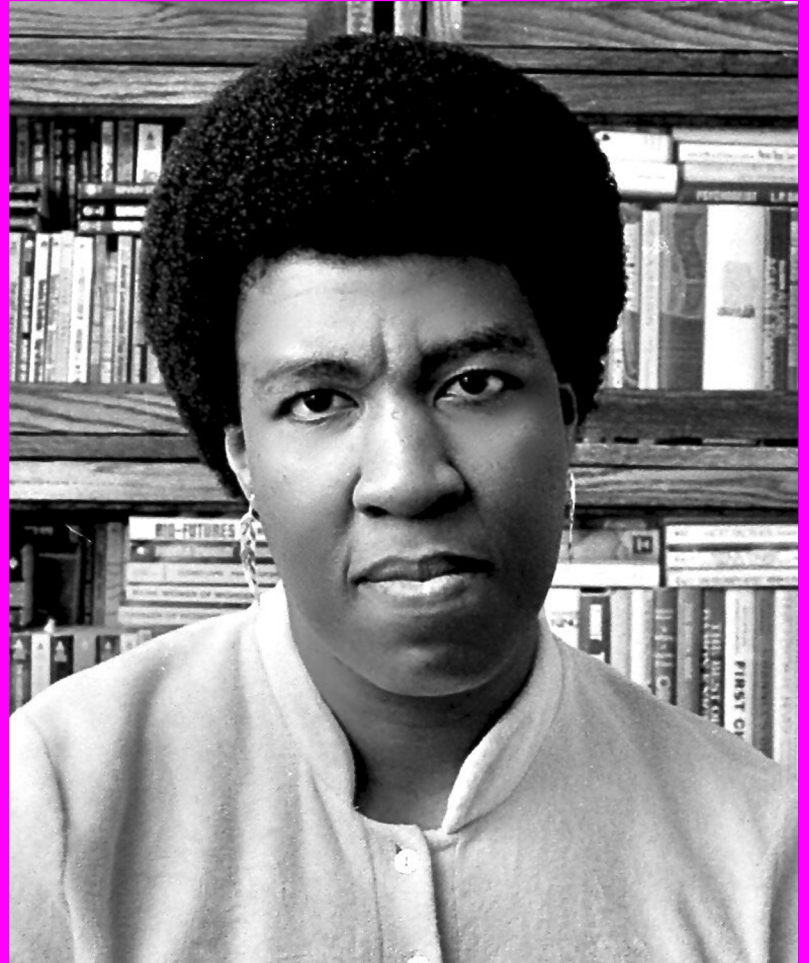
Trend forecasters don't
always take their influence
seriously

"At the end of the day, if I do a
project today on 2025, you're
not going to be in that seat in
'25, and neither am I"

Diversity



Example: Afrofuturism



Global





Solutions



Hopeful: Embrace Sober Optimism

- Terry Eagleton - “hope without optimism”
- Victor Frankl - “tragic optimism”
- Confronting the challenges of the future
- Embracing unintended consequences

Realistic: Learn Lessons from Afrofuturism

- Afrofuturism shows how the future can be both critical and inspired
- The past is part of the future - the future must address the past
- Difference has a place in the future - simply erasing difference isn't an option

Responsible

- We have a responsibility to the future, it is not just our plaything
- We should be held accountable for the future we construct
- Example: McKinsey

Democratic

- Sharing our practice
- Transparency in our methods
- Equity in our values

Thank you!
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