This track focuses on two kinds of dystopian concerns related to the possibility that humans will be eventually overpowered by our technological inventions by the end of the century.

The first kind has to do with the redirection of physical, social, and mental functions and energies of the human populace that increasingly serve technologies rather than other humans, which is already happening to some extent within the post-industrial world. Such redirection, already supported by powerful interests, leads to a loss of human cognitive and social capabilities and the fabrication of systems that lack human characteristics.

The second kind of concern that arises is that all humans, even the most powerful, could eventually be bypassed altogether and rendered obsolete by the activities of highly evolved, self-replicating technologies. Unlike previous technologies, the artificial agents of tomorrow have a kind of autonomy to reconfigure humanity and its environment without direct human intervention, to set into motion an uncontrolled networked chain of reactions outside the comprehension and control of even the most powerful humans. The central question related to this concern is whether even these humans will retain any capability to act to secure humanity's fate.

Relevant lines of inquiry along the first possibility include:

- The loss of most native human cognitive and social abilities to machine algorithms as humans turn over the management of broad swaths of human life, including memory, relationships, daily administrative functions to networked, data-collecting automation technologies such as smartphones, social media, digital assistant technologies, and the Internet of Things, inspired by thinkers such as Nicholas Carr and Sherry Turkle;

- The overpowering of human minds by artificial machine environments projected through immersive technological simulation generators, e.g., augmented and virtual reality technologies, extending ideas such as those found in Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*; and

- The near-total disappearance of the human aspects of postindustrial civilization in the service of system-level technologies and techniques introduced by the most powerful humans, including those created to sustain human involvement in the new virtual infrastructures, concerns expressed in an earlier technological era by Jacques Ellul and Lewis Mumford.
Lines of inquiry pertaining to the second possibility include:

- The creation of one or more coherent artificial intelligences that result in incomprehensibly complex and uncontrollable chain reactions, which subsequently render the physical world no longer capable of supporting human life, building on works such as Stephen Omohundro’s "The Basic AI Drives" and Nick Bostrom’s *Superintelligence*; and

- The advent of a fully-developed posthuman era in which humanity at large, outcompeted by autonomous AI more powerful than even the most powerful humans, is either squeezed out of its evolutionary niche, gradually surrenders it, or is dominated by it but is able to continue on as a subordinate species, as articulated from different standpoints by Francis Fukuyama, Ray Kurzweil, and others.

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300-word abstracts for individual papers should be submitted by Dec 1 at https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=spt2019. Please make sure to mention at the top of the page that the paper is for the special track “[Name of Track]”.

Timeline
- December 1st 2018: Deadline for the submission of abstracts
- February 1st, 2019: Expected notification of acceptance
- May 20th-22th, 2019: Conference dates