

## Quantum Computing and National Allegory – Liu Cixin’s Three-Body Trilogy and the Question of Postsocialist Modernity

**Qiaoyu Cai**

University of California

### Abstract

This essay examines the representation of quantum computing in Liu Cixin’s Three-Body trilogy, focusing on its allegorical significance that maps the questions of national identity and collective consciousness in the context of Chinese postsocialist modernity. Drawing upon Fredric Jameson’s concepts of “ideologeme” and “national allegory,” this essay explores the distinct conceptual and ideological roles of quantum computing in Chinese postmodernism, as manifested in Liu’s trilogy. These roles diverge from their representations in Western postmodernism, where quantum computing is often perceived as both a trope and the technological infrastructure for exploring contingent empirical realities, promising to deconstruct the reified logic of the digital and grant access to the unmediated “truth content” of modernity. From the postsocialist Chinese perspective instanced in the trilogy, however, quantum computing does not symbolize a quest for the fundamental truths of modernity; rather, it carries geopolitical significance of questioning the predetermined course of global neoliberal modernity and reimagining alternative telos of modernity.

### Keywords

Quantum computing, national allegory, Chinese postsocialism, machine learning, alternative computing, computational empiricism, contingency.

