

# Debunking the Tech-bro AI Cult | Reading List v0.2

Workshop by Wolfie Christl | Brut Vienna, 17.1.2025

The workshop aims to be nothing less than a crash course in everything artists and cultural practitioners need to know about this strange thing called 'artificial intelligence'. What is it, where does it come from, and will it take over the world - or is it all fake? Who is in control, what are the real risks, and what about energy consumption, 'ghost work', privatization of cultural knowledge, and Silicon Valley tech fascism? We want to discuss how we can engage or play with 'AI' in artistic practice without feeding the industry hype. Or are the new Luddites right, and refusal/resistance is the way to go?

[check [archive.is](#) if a link doesn't work]

## Fake AI and the Hype Machine

Fake AI. Edited by Frederike Kaltheuner, 2021

<https://meatspacepress.com/fake-ai/>

AI Snake Oil: What Artificial Intelligence Can Do, What It Can't, and How to Tell the Difference. Arvind Narayanan and Sayash Kapoor, 2024

Watching the Generative AI Hype Bubble Deflate. David Gray Widder and Mar Hicks, 2024

<https://ash.harvard.edu/resources/watching-the-generative-ai-hype-bubble-deflate/>

Forty percent of 'AI startups' in Europe don't actually use AI. James Vincent, 2019

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/3/5/18251326/ai-startups-europe-fake-40-percent-mmc-report>

The rise of 'pseudo-AI': how tech firms quietly use humans to do bots' work. Olivia Solon, 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/jul/06/artificial-intelligence-ai-humans-bots-tech-companies>

"AI pioneer John McCarthy, speaking in 1973, confesses to have coined the term 'artificial intelligence' as a fund-raising gimmick". Video linked by Evgeny Morozov, 2024

<https://x.com/evgenymorozov/status/1801618105245831478>

The Language Labyrinth: Constructive Critique on the Terminology Used in the AI Discourse. Rainer Rehak, 2021

<https://www.fulcrum.org/downloads/rr172097s>

Artifice and Intelligence. Emily Tucker, Center on Privacy & Technology, Georgetown University, 2022

<https://www.techpolicy.press/artifice-and-intelligence/>

## AI Phrenology and Pseudoscience

The reanimation of pseudoscience in machine learning and its ethical repercussions. Andrews et al, 2024

<https://www.cell.com/patterns/fulltext/S2666-3899%2824%2900160-0>

Physiognomic Artificial Intelligence. Luke Stark and Jevan Hutson, 2022

<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1804&context=iplj>

## (History of) Computation, Classification and Prediction

**Origin Stories: Plantations, Computers, and Industrial Control. Meredith Whittaker, 2023**

<https://logicmag.io/supa-dupa-skies/origin-stories-plantations-computers-and-industrial-control/>

**How Our Days Became Numbered. Risk and the Rise of the Statistical Individual. Dan Bouk, 2015**

**The Panoptic Sort. Oscar Gandy, 1993**

**Against Prediction. Profiling, Policing, and Punishing in an Actuarial Age. Bernard E. Harcourt, 2006**

**The Impossibility of Automating Ambiguity. Abeba Birhane, 2021**

<https://www.upaya.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Impossibility-of-Automating-Ambiguity.pdf>

**Big Other: Surveillance Capitalism and the Prospects of an Information Civilization. Shoshana Zuboff, 2015**

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2594754](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2594754)

**Computer Power and Human Reason: From Judgment to Calculation. Joseph Weizenbaum, 1976**

**Weizenbaum's nightmares: how the inventor of the first chatbot turned against AI. Ben Tarnoff, 2023**

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/jul/25/joseph-weizenbaum-inventor-eliza-chatbot-turned-against-artificial-intelligence-ai>

**Historical Reflections. Between the Booms: AI in Winter. Thomas Haigh, 2024**

<https://cacm.acm.org/opinion/between-the-booms-ai-in-winter/>

**Broken Promises and Empty Threats: The Evolution of AI in the USA, 1956–1996. Colin Garvey, 2018**

<https://www.technologystories.org/ai-evolution/>

**AI and the techno-utopian path not taken. Evgeny Morozov, 2024**

<https://mondediplo.com/2024/08/07ai-cold-war>

## Automating Inequality, Discrimination and Despotism

**Weapons of Math Destruction. How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy. Cathy O'Neill, 2016**

**Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor. Virginia Eubanks, 2018**

**Algorithms of Oppression. How Search Engines Reinforce Racism. Safiya Umoja, 2018**

**Machine bias. Julia Angin et al, 2016**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/machine-bias-risk-assessments-in-criminal-sentencing>

**Algorithmic Profiling of Job Seekers in Austria: How Austerity Politics Are Made Effective. Allhutter et al, 2020**

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/big-data/articles/10.3389/fdata.2020.00005/full>

**Coming to Terms with Chance. Engaging Rational Discrimination and Cumulative Disadvantage. Gandy, 2009**

**Fairness and machine learning. Limitations and Opportunities. Barocas et al, 2023**

<https://fairmlbook.org/>

**Better, Nicer, Clearer, Fairer: A Critical Assessment of the Movement for Ethical Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Greene et al, 2019**

[https://aisel.aisnet.org/hicss-52/dsm/critical\\_and\\_ethical\\_studies/2/](https://aisel.aisnet.org/hicss-52/dsm/critical_and_ethical_studies/2/)

**Robot Rights?: Let's Talk about Human Welfare Instead. Abeba Birhane and Jelle van Dijk, 2020**  
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3375627.3375855>

**The Black Box Society. The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information. Frank Pasquale, 2016**

**Re-Engineering Humanity. Evan Selinger and Brett Frischmann, 2018**

**Technologically Coded Authority. Aneesh, 2002**  
<https://web.stanford.edu/class/sts175/NewFiles/Algocratic%20Governance.pdf>

## Generative AI explainers and criticism

**Generative AI exists because of the transformer. This is how it works. Madhumita Murgia, 2023**  
<https://ig.ft.com/generative-ai/>

**Think of language models like ChatGPT as a “calculator for words”. Simon Willison, 2023**  
<https://simonwillison.net/2023/Apr/2/calculator-for-words/>

**The human decisions that shape generative AI: Who is accountable for what? Stefan Baack, 2023**  
<https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/blog/the-human-decisions-that-shape-generative-ai-who-is-accountable-for-what/>

**On the dangers of stochastic parrots: Can language models be too big? Bender, Gebru et al, 2021**  
<https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/3442188.3445922>

**Large Legal Fictions: Profiling Legal Hallucinations in Large Language Models. Dahl et al, 2014**  
<https://academic.oup.com/jla/article/16/1/64/7699227>

**ChatGPT is bullshit. Michael Townsen Hicks, 2024**  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10676-024-09775-5>

**AI models collapse when trained on recursively generated data. Shumailov et al, 2024**  
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-024-07566-y>

**Ethical and social risks of harm from Language Models. Weidinger et al, 2021**  
<https://arxiv.org/abs/2112.04359>

**Generating harms: Generative AI's impact & paths forward. Fergusson et al, 2023**  
<https://epic.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/EPIC-Generative-AI-White-Paper-May2023.pdf>

**The Myth of AGI. How the illusion of Artificial General Intelligence distorts and distracts digital governance. Milton Mueller, 2024**  
<https://www.internetgovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/MythofAGI.pdf>

**Anthropomorphism in AI: hype and fallacy. Adriana Placani, 2024**  
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43681-024-00419-4>

## The political economy of generative AI

**AI Generated Business: The Rise of AGI and the Rush to Find a Working Revenue Model. Brian Merchant, 2024**  
<https://ainowinstitute.org/general/ai-generated-business>

**Make no mistake—AI is owned by Big Tech. Amba Kak et al, 2023**

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/12/05/1084393/make-no-mistake-ai-is-owned-by-big-tech/>

**Foundation models are platform models: Prompting and the political economy of AI. Burkhardt and Rieder, 2024**

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20539517241247839>

**The great Transformer: Examining the role of large language models in the political economy of AI. Dieuwertje Luitse and Wiebke Denkena, 2021**

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/20539517211047734>

**The Steep Cost of Capture, Meredith Whittaker 2022**

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4135581](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4135581)

**Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence. Kate Crawford, 2021**

**The Billion-Dollar Price Tag of Building AI. Will Henshall, 2024**

<https://time.com/6984292/cost-artificial-intelligence-compute-epoch-report/>

**Large language models and data protection. Privacy International, 2024**

<https://privacyinternational.org/explainer/5353/large-language-models-and-data-protection>

## AI Sweatshops

**The trainer, the verifier, the imitator: Three ways in which human platform workers support artificial intelligence. Tubaro et al, 2020**

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2053951720919776>

**Humans in the AI loop: the data labelers behind some of the most powerful LLMs' training datasets. Privacy International, 2024**

<https://privacyinternational.org/explainer/5357/humans-ai-loop-data-labelers-behind-some-most-powerful-llms-training-datasets>

**'It's destroyed me completely': Kenyan moderators decry toll of training of AI models. Niamh Rowe, 2023**

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/aug/02/ai-chatbot-training-human-toll-content-moderator-meta-openai>

**The Exploited Labor Behind Artificial Intelligence. Williams et al, 2022**

<https://www.noemamag.com/the-exploited-labor-behind-artificial-intelligence/>

**Feeding the Machine: The Hidden Human Labor Powering AI. Callum, Muldoon and Graham, 2024**

**Ghost work: How to stop Silicon Valley from building a new global underclass. Gray and Suri, 2019**

## Energy Consumption

**The growing energy footprint of artificial intelligence. Alex de Vries, 2023**

[https://www.cell.com/joule/fulltext/S2542-4351\(23\)00365-3](https://www.cell.com/joule/fulltext/S2542-4351(23)00365-3)

**Power hungry processing: Wattsdriving the cost of AI deployment? Luccioni et al, 2023**

<https://arxiv.org/abs/2311.16863>

**On the (im)possibility of sustainable artificial intelligence. Rainer Rehak, 2024**

<https://policyreview.info/articles/news/impossibility-sustainable-artificial-intelligence/1804>

**Electricity grids creak as AI demands soar. Chris Baraniuk, 2024**

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj5ll89dy2mo>

**Making an image with generative AI uses as much energy as charging your phone. Melissa Heikkilä, 2023**

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/12/01/1084189/making-an-image-with-generative-ai-uses-as-much-energy-as-charging-your-phone/>

## **Appropriation of Cultural/Creative Knowledge**

**AI Art is Theft: Labour, Extraction, and Exploitation: Or, On the Dangers of Stochastic Pollocks. Trystan S. Goetze, 2024**

<https://arxiv.org/abs/2401.06178>

**AI art and its impact on artists. Jiang et al, 2023**

<https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/3600211.3604681>

**How Hollywood writers triumphed over AI – and why it matters. Dani Anguiano and Lois Beckett, 2023**

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2023/oct/01/hollywood-writers-strike-artificial-intelligence>

## **Open Source AI?**

**Open (For Business): Big Tech, Concentrated Power, and the Political Economy of Open AI. Widder et al, 2023**

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=4543807](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4543807)

**Does Open Source AI really exist? Jürgen Geuter/tante, 2024**

<https://tante.cc/2024/10/16/does-open-source-ai-really-exist/>

## **The Californian Ideology and the Rise of Tech Fascism**

**The Californian Ideology. Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron, 1995**

[http://www.comune.torino.it/gioart/big/biggest/riflessioni/californian\\_engl.pdf](http://www.comune.torino.it/gioart/big/biggest/riflessioni/californian_engl.pdf)

**The Politics of Bitcoin. Software as Right-Wing Extremism. David Golumbia, 2016**

**Cyberlibertarianism: The Right-Wing Politics of Digital Technology. David Golumbia, 2024**

**Where J.D. Vance Gets His Weird, Terrifying Techno-Authoritarian Ideas. Gil Duran, 2024**

<https://newrepublic.com/article/183971/jd-vance-weird-terrifying-techno-authoritarian-ideas>

**The Tech Baron Seeking to Purge San Francisco of “Blues”. Gil Duran, 2024**

<https://newrepublic.com/article/180487/balaji-srinivasan-network-state-plutocrat>

**How a Start-Up Utopia Became a Nightmare for Honduras. Guillaume Long and Alexander Main, 2024**

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/01/24/honduras-zedes-us-prospera-world-bank-biden-castro/>

**The For-Profit City That Might Come Crashing Down. Rachel Corbett, 2024**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/28/magazine/prospera-honduras-crypto.html>

**The religion of techno-optimism. Paris Marx, 2023**

<https://www.disconnect.blog/p/the-religion-of-techno-optimism>

**The neo-fascist philosophy that underpins both the alt-right and Silicon Valley technophiles. Goldhill, 2017**

<https://qz.com/1007144/the-neo-fascist-philosophy-that-underpins-both-the-alt-right-and-silicon-valley-technophiles>

**The Enigma of Peter Thiel. There Is No Enigma – He's a Fascist. John Ganz, 2022**

<https://www.unpopularfront.news/p/the-enigma-of-peter-thiel>

**Against longtermism. Émile P Torres, 2021**

<https://aeon.co/essays/why-longtermism-is-the-worlds-most-dangerous-secular-credo>

**The TESCREAL bundle: Eugenics and the promise of utopia through artificial general intelligence. Timnit Gebru and Émile P. Torres, 2024**

<https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/13636>

**The cultural power of the anti-woke tech bro. Rebecca Jennings, 2024**

<https://www.vox.com/culture/373990/heterodoxy-anti-woke-libertarian-tech-bro>

**Neoreaction a Basilisk: Essays on and Around the Alt-Right. Elizabeth Sandifer and Jack Graham, 2018**

## Sam Altman's Startup Investments

**Startup Pitched Tasing Migrants From Drones, Video Reveals. Sam Biddle, 2021**

<https://theintercept.com/2021/12/13/brinc-startup-taser-drones-migrants/>

**Deception, exploited workers, and cash handouts: How Worldcoin recruited its first half a million test users. Eileen Guo and Adi Renaldi, 2022**

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/04/06/1048981/worldcoin-cryptocurrency-biometrics-web3/>

## Neo-Luddism and Beyond Actually-Existing AI

**Blood in the Machine: The Origins of the Rebellion Against Big Tech. Brian Merchant, 2023**

**The mechanic and the Luddite. A ruthless criticism of technology and capitalism. Jathan Sadowski, 2025**

**The AI We Deserve. Critiques of artificial intelligence abound. Where's the utopian vision for what it could be? Evgeny Morozov, 2024**

<https://www.bostonreview.net/forum/the-ai-we-deserve/>

**AI Has Already Taken Over. It's Called the Corporation. Jeremy Lent, 2017**

<https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/12/03/ai-has-already-taken-over-its-called-corporation>

**AI thinks like a corporation—and that's worrying. Jonnie Penn, 2018**

<https://www.economist.com/open-future/2018/11/26/ai-thinks-like-a-corporation-and-thats-worrying>