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Computational Aisthēsis: The Ideology of Prediction in Algorithmic Text-to-Image Processing Models

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This research paper is established on theory and critical artistic thinking on the ontology of computational image processing, underlying discourse of their representation — between their content and context. The research is located on the axis between the image analysis and synthesis processes developed on machine learning-based tools. Examining modalities for understanding the *zeitgeist* of computational imagery offered in algorithmic models is needed to align and locate our own position — to draw the line where human agency stops and automation begins. Also, to determine if there is such a threshold at all - blending the feedback loop between the user and the machine. Automation is a collective effort, and claiming back the totality of our agency rather than dispersion into particularisation — *to see a world in a grain of sand* — we have to detect the structures of the network we are part of. This research extracts the visual aspect of the experience and agency in the production and contextualisation of automated image processing. In the pervasiveness of visual communication, visual culture should be equally important.

Keywords: Computational Image, Image Analysis, Image Synthesis, Automated Creativity, Ideology of Prediction, Colonised Imagination.

1. Intelligence as a Collective Effort

In computational image-making processes, both agencies, of *intent* and *automation*, participate in a production-prediction loop, a procedural optimisation through a theoretically infinite number of possible iterations, a power of the multitude. This combinatorial infinity in production gives us endless opportunities to project meanings, speculate the superiority of computational systems, while we are at risk of forgetting the collective efforts that were, and still are, essential for the development of these systems and tools. The relationship that develops between a human as a user, and a machine, as a tool — that *calculates* — is established on the mathematical logic of correlation and processing of binary values on a pixel grid, a statistical and combinatorial probability generator of data input. The topic is not about questioning the technological capabilities to produce an image, but human capabilities to disambiguate the meaning of an image that surpasses the ghost in the machine, that converges internet-sourced manifestations of cultural codes of exchange, through communication and visual representation, into discrimination, classification and [self-]optimisation.

We live among technologies of decentralisation as users of software as a service, that claims the extractivist principles of data crowdsourcing, *ascending* into 'cloud computing'. Seemingly immaterial or invisible, due to distributed re-localisation of storage capacities from remote data centres and pumped computing power, an architecture of new geopolitics is created as a planetary scale computation of obfuscated agency and accumulation of power dominated by the Global North. The main ideological framework of making the power centres invisible is to mystify and abstract the agenda and the accountability for profit acquisition, through the strategies of social engineering that provide the accumulation of attention and consumption = influx of capital for service providers. The same service providers that have the computing capacity and data access [*ownership*] do develop tools such as, most recently, DALL-E or Stable Diffusion and Midjourney. Presenting them as a novelty, as they are powerful tools that require powerful sources — to some extent they are available so to justify the means and principles of data accumulation, promises of intuitive and intelligent systems that mimic understanding of our world. For artists, it is an authorship paradox, in a condition where the use of these tools can be appropriated for artistic expression and experimentation in computational art, digital montage, and quick mock-ups, yet it can serve as promotion, or endorsement of the tool and the provider of the service, whereas the outputs often start to look alike, the tool has its own aesthetics or rather a visual identity constructed by its pre-made form and code — so tool turns into a product and artist becomes a user. As being surrounded by systems that claim an invisible structure, the possible ways to grasp a broader picture of their functions and purpose are through differentiation

of what *we see* and what the machine *sees*. At its core, we teach the machine how to see, but the problem is what we want to teach the machine to see, and what is being left out. This is a two-way communication, as Vilém Flusser wrote:

> This feedback enables the images to change, to become better and better, and more like the receivers want them to be; that is, the images become more and more like the receivers want them to be so that the receivers can become more and more like the images want them to be. (Flusser 2011)

If we are training machines to 'see', what are we training ourselves to see? This is a continuous loop in which it is our role to recognise patterns of our relation to the computed digital image, so as to make it reciprocally efficient. The notion of *agency* between the human [cognition] and the automated [systems] in a feedback loop of computational image production is a blurred vision between authorship, combinatorics and interpretational discourse. In such intertwinement between human efforts, *big data* and computational processing power, the threshold within these production loops is often obfuscated. Deconstruction of the premise that an automated computational system can be *creative* is developed as a thinking exercise on the contextualisation of qualities of generative results-outputs, where understanding of meaning goes past the representational surface — contextualising the form, analysing software ontology, and philosophy of a coded, data-image and its semiotics. The context of *techno-ethics*, human responsibility and agency in the implementation and consumption of the tools in question is used to dismantle and deconstruct the theology of a computed image, question our belief systems, fascination and imagination that build the ontological spine of these image-making processes.

1.1. It Is Not About Technology, but About Ideology

The psychological, perceptual, and cognitive shifts in the visual culture and artistic practices, reflect the socio-demographic concerns and consequences of automation in contemporary algorithmic culture. In the public discourse, there are frequent instances of praising automated systems and algorithmic data processing as a form of *intelligence*, which obfuscates the purpose and the limits of implementation of these algorithms and tools for different systems and industries. Between the media~marketing portraiture, actual technological developments, and scopes of implementation of these tools, confusion and discrepancies often emerge — so the understanding of *how*, *why*, and *for whom* these systems work comes into question. That is, to differentiate the concept of AI as a cluster of various tools and technologies, and AI as an *ideology*.

The computational *aisthēsis* is a perspective on the ideological consequences of colonised imagination tied to a discourse on the creative powers of an automated system. The aesthetics of generative imagery explains a lot about the character of *AI making 'art'* as a concept, a discontinuous mashup of representations, styles, and references — discursively hardly separable from self-referentiality — their context that is dependent on the fact that *it was created by AI*. The referential point of historical sustainability of the concept of art of any kind is to not repeat itself [literally]. Generative imagery is never far from overfitting, misleading or deceptive image overproduction, which is, essentially, conservative, uniforming and, nevertheless, obsolete soon after the *new* tool passes the test and reaches its peak in development. The dispersion of subjectivity and consumption of image-generating tools greeted with the hype of experimentation, might and will soon become just another tool for inspiration or quick sketching, or for some advanced users — a *deepfake* generator. What keeps it running, is the anticipation of the new, which the combinatorial infinity can offer, but *sometimes the same is different, and mostly, it's the same*.

The ideology of AI as a human-made cognitive problem where data science paves way for social engineering in which agency has been dispersed and neglected, delegated to an abstracted authority, leading to a problem of "thoughtlessness" (Arendt 1958, 3-5) by automation. This is specifically addressed to the questionable implementation of automated decision-making tools as objective and unbiased, a marketing strategy to advocate and maintain the accumulation of power, that is a trick to the human psyche in need of a metaphor for an ideology or a control compass to navigate the mysteries and mundanities of life, to delegate the agency to the other, whether an *entity* or a *system*. In contemporary computing, algorithms are essential not only for procedural code-writing and human-made execution protocols, but algorithms can be self-improved via *machine learning* and *artificial neural networks*. These technologies reignited the discourse of systems developing *intelligent behaviour*, on a premise that they are self-optimising or self-regulating, being able to *learn* from the ever-faster processing of massive amounts of data. The promise of knowledge beyond human comprehension obfuscates the nature, logic and role of these systems. Also, the mathematical or statistical nature and logic of these systems do not make them *neutral*. Such anthropomorphised and techno-solutionist portrayals of a physical and infrastructural geopolitical and industrial shift on a global scale at the same time disperses the human agency and social, political, and ethical responsibilities, which is a perfect environment for the accumulation of the power of the corporations, industry magnates, and governments. Algorithms help us to understand the world around us, but human decisions shape the culture that we live in.

2. Conditio Automata

The decision-making processes can by all means be translated into an algorithmic procedure. To some extent, many processes — once explained through an algorithm — *can* be automated. Yet the *Entscheidungsproblem*,[1] or the decision-making itself, is a non-computable task. Within the complexity of the dispersion of human agency, we delegate the combinatorial restructuring of the world to an abstract statistical probability of self-improving, rule-based computational systems that by no means can prove or disprove any decision. Algorithmic culture has its value in representations of dissemination, knowledge acquisition and evaluation, algorithms are procedural assets in proving and disproving a theorem, premise, or hypothesis, but it is human nature that understands the performance, that can stop, or affirm and constitute a specific condition, decision or definite outcome of a performed task. We amplify the notion of human agency within determining the scope of success of a generative output within the scope of creative production, intention and context of an image, arguing that the initial premise and the desired outcome selection and evaluation, respectively are still human responsibility. The epistemological scope of analysis of human-computer-*image* relation in a feedback loop rendered through media portraiture of artificial intelligence can only generalise techno-evangelist aspirations to build the price over their product — too often it is spoken about AI as a possible singular[2] *super*-cognitive intelligence. On the contrary, we can talk about the human condition within the operative scope of these systems, as Mihai Nadin introduces *Homo Turing* — "utilitarian, calculating, shallow, living by cost-benefit analysis. It seems that in reshaping homo sapiens intuition, spontaneity, empathy, compassion, and even judgment were traded for expediency" (Nadin 2017, 5).

These tools limit the possibility of criticism within themselves, whether by the principle of their improvement or by obsoleteness

1. The decision problem, a mathematical problem posed by David Hilbert and Wilhelm Ackermann in 1928, proposes a true-false challenge to the algorithmic processing of a question. The challenge proved that an algorithm cannot determine whether an input statement is universally true or false
2. The concept of singularity or technological singularity introduces a hypothesis of a point of time in the future where the 'explosion of intelligence' is being anticipated, as the computer or networked intelligence, mainly inscribed to the concepts of AI, will create a form of superintelligence — uncontrollable and irreversible, resulting in unforeseeable changes to human civilisation. In John von Neumann's words, singularity is "centred on the accelerating progress of technology and changes in the mode of human life, which gives the appearance of approaching some essential singularity in the history of the race beyond which human affairs, as we know them, could not continue". The concept and the term "singularity" were popularised by Vernor Vinge in his 1993 essay The Coming Technological Singularity. In the following context of the text, singularity might not appear as a superintelligence that is a centralised, visible agent: at this point, we are surrounded by accelerating technologies that do not execute their own demands, but we live in a statistically optimised sphere of industry, a swarming ideology of developing smart systems that aim to be globalised, yet are developed on the global north culture and reflections, representing another form of colonial extractivism whether in physical or data resources.

that overshadows the past hype. We all as users or producers, deliver unpaid or poorly paid labour towards celebrating novelty pushed by the *big tech*. Looking from that angle, we are sometimes not artists, but promoters. A new form of image-making comes with fascination, but after the peak of the new, the time has come to address the real characteristics of these image-making processes. Above all, through computer-synthesised images, we might be able to turn back to concrete experience, recognition, value, and action, away from the world of abstraction that comes as the first thing these images can offer. The computer-generated, machinic images are still an object of fantasy, admiration, and speculation. The human processes that are on, a psychological level, creative and inventive, capable of assigning meaning and power, to contextualise and associate, imagine and abstract the world into metaphors, they become a weak spot for understanding any novelty in technology out of the context of ideology or politics, utopia and fear. We project meaning, and another meaning is projected on us — therefore we have to choose our role between *automata* and *author* and demystify these power relations.

The algorithmic processing of massive amounts of data paves the way to a control system that is abstract, accelerationist, structurally irreversible and therefore uncontrollable, but never independent from human intention. In the context of image-making and image-reading processes, we can reflect on the same limitations in the current use of machine learning tools for image production. As distributed as they are, they come with their own preset, that as diverse it may be, does not invite us to look behind, dismantle or question the structural principles on which they are developed. Even with a creative process such as image-making we are limited to the role of the user-*prosumer*, mainly interacting on a level of command-execution, at the point of no return — as the scope of operational information within a dataset of a model is the limit of its map of operation, we are also navigating that same map, therefore the use of these tools had established boundaries on the scope of the territory we are able to cross. Additionally, a computed image is not a dream — machine vision is vision without images — it is a data image.

3. Virtual Ritual

Boris Groys states that: “In the modern age, ritual, repetition and reproduction have become the faith of the entire world, of the entire culture”, that is, “the ritual of the modern age is a ritual of mechanical reproduction” (Groys 2019). In that ritual, according to Groys, we believe that “every visualisation of data is also a revelation of that data” (Groys 2008, 2), as it is believed that in every performance of certain rituals, there is a relationship with the *invisible*. The presence *within* the screen/image, which we experience as a space for personal expression, is seen by the computer as a binary record,

which it can use as statistical data. Florian Cramer describes the relationship between code, mystification and speculation:

> With its seeming opacity and the boundless, viral multiplication of its output in the execution, algorithmic code opens up a vast potential for cultural imagination, phantasms and phantasmagorias. The word made flesh, writing taking up a life of its own by self-execution, has been a utopia and dystopia in religion, metaphysics, art and technology alike. [...] From magic spells to contemporary computing, this speculative imagination has always been linked to practical — technical and artistic — experimentation with algorithms. (Cramer 2005, 93)

Between magic and rituals, the cultural obfuscation that comes with such invisible systems shall be exposed through the combinatorial reality behind them, while escaping the theology of information. To be conditioned to develop trust in a system that promises to provide the truth from true [false] permutations of data feedback loops is yet another form of human belief in the system. The more distant the system seems, the more magical and cryptic it becomes, and bigger are the chances to mystify and dream of it, to shape, form and visualise it by our own measurements. Simply put, to project ourselves into rituals of usage and consumption, abstract it from its initial form, and inscribe infinite meaning, hope, or desire into it (Nusselder 2009, 128). As for the algorithm, recurrence makes the content valuable, making the confidence of prediction bigger, whereas for us the confidence or recognition of the familiar shall not create comfort. Culture shaping through simulation of *creativity* — as a signifier for *intention* or *intelligence* — does not deploy its central discursive importance through evaluation of the generative content itself. It already makes its success and relevance by the fact that we immediately take it seriously, as part of our now, and as part of the future. It is part of the *truth* we accepted, that a computer *can do* something human.

3.1. To See a World in a Grain of Sand

That is the biggest magic in this discourse, a trick of deception where we already describe it as something *new and competent* to interfere in our reality. First of all, we should stop differentiating reality from virtuality, since the former created the latter — they are part of the same cognitive perception, and they are both corporeal. As automatic writing or dada poetry was a method, a combinatorial strategy — the possibilities of computational permutational processes are immense and supreme in that scope, but the selection and decision on where we find meaning or what we like, is ours, it is the same as it was with any analogue method of permutation, but also randomness. Italo Calvino wrote in *Cybernetics and Ghosts* about the machines that might become authors (Calvino 1986), where he spec-

ulated and hoped that such machines could delve into our algorithmic subconscious, repressed languages, and extended mythologies, opening up mysteries of thinking or knowing, to run a process that would be able to have the intent to deconstruct itself, to stop, cancel, negate, decompose and abandon any formerly given logic. From *generative adversarial neural networks* (GANs) where optimal approximation of a pixel value on a grid provided combinatorial infinity — causing aesthetically recognisable glitches, the most recent *diffusion* model architecture provides seamless hyper-veracious depictions of carefully navigated prompts, transcending reality by taking grains from it. This architecture has its own syntax and semiotics, based on language and taxonomy that create a rupture, engineering networks of relations, representations and hierarchies, that simulate the complexities of reality, yet they are a world of rendered collective data-past.

4. The Vampire of Time and Memory

Computer-generated imagery nowadays incorporates layers of information, big data and the entropy of context and syntax, that does become a reflection of a living system, this time even more intertwined with the representational simulacrum of the collective unconscious — much more than the ecosystem of cybernetics would predict — extracted by big data companies, clashing from micro — as all personal user input, to the *cloud* — as a macro-structure, from which another form of *computational living* is emerging as a form of consumption and aesthetics inclining towards photo-hyper-realism as an aim to claim creativity or aesthetic representational proficiency within the complexity of the systems of their production.

The database itself is a matter of the collective past and collective intelligence — it is the *prima materia*, the only knowledge that a computer system has, therefore the limitations of production always exist — a computer algorithm cannot generate or produce anything outside of the realm of the database it is operating on. It is the only truth for the system — operational information i.e., knowledge, does not exceed its limits, and the end of this universe is mutable but measurable, regardless of the combinatorially infinite number of outputs in performed permutations of an algorithm, and the ever-expanding growth of data collection. With the exponential acceleration of the world of *big data*, the improvement strategies for most of the machine learning models are premised on the logic that there is *no better data than more data*. The common rituals in the fast-paced sport of online information exchange — producing, sharing, multiplying — these wild transmissions are here and there cultivated, clustered, encoded, and so the archive is growing, and *too much is never enough*. Everything becomes an object of (or a subject to) quantification, which comes as a strategy to map the worlds, or rather, to create a map that is bigger than the territory, extracting sensory

and affectionate elements of human perception of reality, that are translatable into data. The scope of correlation when articulating that data, pattern finding becomes the culture-shaping model that boomerangs into suggestive consumption assets of the networked world's extractivist infrastructure, as it is right now — an infinite self-optimising loop, a mechanism of the accumulation of capital that is monopolised by tech-industry magnates.

The image-making tools established on massive datasets and latent diffusion models do not coincidentally resemble the exploitation of cultural capital as part of power accumulation, they are a literal continuation and manifestation of techno-capitalist colonisation of time, space and memory, collective histories, labour and attention, which I would like to compare with Mark Fisher's writing on the power of capitalist realism in the book of the same title:

> [The power is] ...that capitalism subsumes and consumes all of the previous history: one effect of its 'system of equivalence' which can assign all cultural objects, whether they are religious iconography, pornography, or Das Kapital, a monetary value. Walk around the British Museum where you see objects torn from their lifeworlds and assembled as if on the deck of some predator spacecraft, and you have a powerful image of this process at work. In the conversion of practices and rituals into merely aesthetic objects, the beliefs of previous cultures are objectively ironized, and transformed into artefacts. Capitalist realism is therefore not a particular type of realism; it is more like realism in itself. [...] Capitalism is what is left when beliefs have collapsed at the level of ritual or symbolic elaboration, and all that is left is the consumer-spectator, trudging through the ruins and the relics. (Fisher 2009)

Whatever mundane or original artwork content we offer to the cloud, its nutritive value comes in numbers, and we are going into a corporate machinic daydream dictated by the affordances and accessibility of images, regardless of our perception of the content, where this sea of data becomes a source for a model that is making optimised, and therefore, uniformed imagery, re-iterations of extracted cultural capital. From an ideological point of view — this is a very hauntological concept of recycling the past — before we would even think of our agency for the future, we speculate and fantasise over a technological promise of the *new*. In computational quantitative image processing, where the individual disperses into the collective unconscious, for which the responsibility, intention, emotion and memory, or nevertheless, authorship and privacy do not appear to be relevant anymore — neither for us, and certainly not for the machine learning algorithms — the proximity of the familiar becomes aesthetic value satisfaction within the automated rendering of representations.

5. Ideology of Prediction

To use and impose these tools as a discursive proof of a techno-evangelical future is mainly a gimmick to 'democratise' and justify the investment capital and resource extraction absorbed for the development of these tools for all other industrial, militaristic and surveillance purposes. This future is promising for a minority of the *big* and the *wealthy*, while in return we receive a creative tool as a glimpse of a technological achievement that will have success in many industries, yet shall not serve as a creative replacement for artistic intent where the characteristic of uniforming the forms of expression within the use of the tools in question reveals the conservative characteristics of the ideology of AI. The techno-menagerie instance of justifying the ideology of AI through the popularisation of automated image-making tools, rather reveals their restraints which should encourage artists, and programmers to go beyond the imposed *hype* of the new — as Marco Donnarumma sums up:

> AI art is, in my view, soft propaganda for the ideology of prediction. As long as it remains tied to the paradigm and politics of ever-large models, increasing capital and marketing hyperbole, its contribution to art practice will have little meaning, if any. (Donnarumma 2022)

In such a constellation, the automated condition is tranquillising human needs in focusing on the sole purpose of sustainability of a system that generates its own accelerating needs, the needs of capital and power. As Mateo Pasquinelli notes:

> What people call "AI" is actually a long historical process of crystallizing collective behaviour, personal data, and individual labour into privatized algorithms that are used for the automation of complex tasks: from driving to translation, from object recognition to music composition. [...] Machine learning emerges from grids that continue ancient abstractions and rituals concerned with marking territories and bodies, and counting people and goods; in this way, machine learning essentially emerges from an extended division of social labour. (Pasquinelli 2019)

To look back on the cybernetic premises of interconnectedness, these relationships are unequally distributed, since the algorithmic future is imposed as a seemingly decentralised, impersonal power structure, while the promise of the networked culture is reduced to user's echo chambers constructed as attention-grabbing, micro-labour data extraction factories — it is rather an extractivist master-servant relationship that renders collective global-scale people's labour, whereas intelligence comes as a collective effort. Collective labour and behaviour become privatised data, subjec-

tivity is dispersed and agency negated. To hold a *belief* that an automated system can perform tasks i.e., *recognition* better than humans obfuscates all the collective labour of humans creating this system, and at the same time imposes the credibility of automated decision-making.

The algorithmic protocols have to be engineered towards a desirable outcome and goal, so as to deliver a result – and that requires human intention. In the collective shift in the paradigm of industrial and social labour and production along with the surveillance in the global networked culture, the advancement of technologies that fit under the term *artificial intelligence* is used in specific areas, such as medical diagnostics, self-driving cars, autonomous weaponry, and surveillance, and accordingly, they also entered the pores of economy, justice, and so on, with ever-expanding ways of implementation. There is an interpretational issue revolving around the term artificial intelligence itself, confusing many different tools and systems for a concept of automated and, therefore, independent systems. The mysticism revolving around AI helps neither the development of the actual technologies nor the general understanding of what are the systems that are underlining the discourse around this anthropomorphic term. The acceleration of technological solutions being implemented into the pores of our lives and industries does not promise actual solutions to complexities of social systems, or ethical priorities. In need to reject automation as tagged, labelled co-existence in the sea of data, with no meaning but with heavy discrimination, we must not forget to create and search for meaning in images, that is personal, emphatic, and understanding outside of the realms of classification. The *confidence* of statistical prediction is constructed as a form of *objective truth*, whereas confidence and reliability of future predictions, or statistical [in]capability of predicting a new event still do not solve any decision-making problem themselves.

Statistical probability should not be the only interpretational category of human reality. The problem of trust and belief that the combinatorial permutations can (1) predict a new event, and therefore (2) be able to create something new or surpass human efforts. In both ways, we can conclude that the only prediction that a machine can make is based on previous knowledge [i.e., database] and never will be able to predict a new element, circumstance, or interruption. With excessive expansion and enlargement of training datasets, the map grows bigger, but the territory holds more entropy than the combinatorial permutation of probability can generate. The ideology of prediction delegates the agency of decision-making for us, and instead of us, to a self-referential, goal-achieving calculus of the optimal; all coming with a decorated discourse of the machine that gives solutions and answers, performing tasks such as creating essays, composing music, or creating visual art that is feeding the status quo of self-referentiality of these systems and the power

structures behind. The 'new' as much as any other older technology or invention should not be expected as the new methods to solve our problems, they rather translate our problems into a new medium — they can pave the way to the creation of new reflections or catalyse the visibility or urgency of particular problems to be solved making the environment for *us* to see it fit to use so to solve some problems ourselves. The problem is not in technology or in the lack of it, it is in us and we should not admire it, or be afraid of it, we must follow its anatomy while it is being built. We should put it under a therapy session: what if we are becoming too fascinated, and, yet, accommodated to all the shifts that our society has gone through globally? At the same time, we are training the machine to 'see', and yet we are not anymore teaching ourselves that.

6. Colonised Imagination

A dream machine is a conservative tool for optimised predictions, in the artistic sense, it can mimic and resemble, but it cannot give what drives art, an accident valued by intuition or experience, it cannot discriminate any other value than numerical, of the kind that it was instructed to discriminate. The example of visual art can be transposed into the need for creativity and intuition in any aspect of human life, development of societies, technologies, et cetera. To use the mimicry of creativity as proof of an independent intelligent system with its own agenda is insulting and dangerous for the cause of an ideological substitute for a society with a collective identity crisis, delegating responsibility for ethical and moral glitches in consumption to a non-agent, In a swarmed image-making world, such synthetic imagery recycles and reiterates stacks of our collective data-image histories. The living [world] makes the [living] data, it is the interconnectedness that is inevitable, yet it is exploited. The aim to break the phantasm of an aesthetic realm is to radically isolate and reappropriate these tools outside or beyond their intended purpose. They are tools, not art by itself nor in itself. As Jacques Rancière constitutes the condition of cinema as a medium:

> These tricks remain technical performances that impose the artist's skills onto the machine's capacity. For there to be art, there must be an aesthetic scheme that holds together the two kinds of savoir-faire — the material they act upon and the one they produce — and that makes them contribute to the production of a new sensible fabric. This is how the 'medium' of art always exceeds the distinct resources of an art. Cinema cannot simply become an art through its own material and instruments. Rather, it must rely on its capacity to adapt them to the new distribution of the sensible, at a time when a new art seeks to define itself through the discoveries of poets, choreographers, painters and theatre directors. (Rancière 2013)

A machine cannot imag(in)e new worlds — it can only optimise and reproduce existing ones, within its scope of database knowledge — it is limited by the scope of self-referential combinatorial infinity, the expansion of experience and knowledge is a human measure, it is still entitled to our entropic constellations of *being*. Commonplaces that are emphasised in the algorithmic culture of the *big tech* are not only the possibility of use of the technologies in question, yet those who acquire the power to improve it, hold the power for their own ouroboros of statistical significance as the referential point of value, as conservative and exclusive as it is: *repeat-reuse-score!* cycle. Hopes for an *Ars Combinatoria*, that would provide mystical knowledge of uncomprehensive logic and patterns, are neglected for the sake of the system, of accelerationist capitalist future as Wiener's ethical concern of intertwinement of scientific innovations, governments, and the military was in the right place. Every form of progress requires a form of belief. Every belief turned into a ritual can be consumed. Technology, as it is propagated and implemented in the structure of our networked lives today, does not provide a solution, it is a reflection or a projection of the world seen by conservative techno-evangelistic architects of the globalised society. The image phantasm of an aesthetic realm — *deepdream inceptionsim, combinatorial transcendence* and *simulacra of simulation* obfuscate the power structures that are the architects and sellers of these tools.

7. Conclusion

Our *now* and our future are inseparable from the socio-technical conditions. These conditions are based optimal score predictions, self-improving, accelerating and extracting towards exponential growth as only self-sustainable goal. Our *artificial intelligence* is a conservative surveillance machine, set to make an optimum behaviour score, it does not *appreciate* randomness, and neither does our *homo turing*. It observes and detects behaviour patterns, and classifies and categorises the world. Its fear and its *unknown* are exceptions, new events, and complexities of a holistic worldview. A machine or a human that does not recognise symbols, metaphors or meaning, can only simulate context and understanding. The claim of creativity being isolated from cognitive and causal relations, socio-cultural contexts or historical continuity is a bald statement that in return offers statistical re-modelling of all of those connections, heritage, and realities. Creativity cannot be a probabilistic approximation of a motif or simulation of a pre-existing artwork or style based on classification and categorisation. That is a statistical optimum of distribution within a pixel grid, cartography — data-image and a map of the territory we already conquered. As playful as it may be to experiment with the pre-produced models, the homogeneity of outputs makes them lose their *magic* as they are becoming a commercial tool, an obfuscated, opaque and biased product of global north culture and prejudice — a reference of industrial commer-

cialisation of data extraction, mass-media, Hollywood and CGI fantasy derivatives of collective past, individual and total, customised, yet optimised, discriminative and calculatingly f[r]actual.

In the *optimal* spirit of the ideology of prediction, there might be a possibility that these systems and tools for generating *creative content* will reach the point of oversaturation and overfitting. If they are the flagbearers of such a conservative system, they cannot provide more than they were given [by us] — if it is in not in *big tech*'s interest to cause illogical, random excess, an error. Even though they are appropriating the common intellectual possessions rendering all into a commercial product, software, tool, etc. while being objected to its self-referentiality score, prediction and control, this structure will not be interested in occupying possible new territories of creative expression, non-utilised labour, negation [as affirmation] — these loopholes are places to look for, keeping our eyes peeled, following our own needs, and to think critically. Another promising aspect of how to hack even such opaque structures — they project themselves in every fractal of *intelligence* that they offer, so if we cannot grasp the whole map, we can always start with one point — one particle stands for all, and as long as we can extract a single element or a problem, and humanise it, *deeply un-learn* it, transform it by our own measurement of the world, we are on a fine path of acknowledging and defining our own condition, with and against the other — defining the points of acceptance and resistance. If an artist-author can avoid the *hype*, appropriating and hijacking these technologies in a way that they are not *intended* to be used, they create an environment for us to feel, think and reflect; every misuse and disobedience is a tactic to claim back authorship and agency, and to deploy communication between the human and the machine, developing unexpected artistic languages through which we can possibly learn more about ourselves, and examine character of these tools. Such image-generators will keep being implemented in entertainment industries, appropriated for synthetic data processing, image augmentation, mock-ups and sampling, on the positive scope of the situation. On the other hand, these technologies are and will be challenged morally and ethically first by misuse such as deepfake — disinformation or fraud.

To claim the image-making tools and use them to provide a metaphor means to rip the projection canvas and step out of the spectacle, or dismal futures — that are, essentially, two sides of the same *horseshoe*. Aisthēsis is, therefore, a strategy of thinking and seeing the visual content that challenges the artistic work with responsibility to speak through the same medium and language, and to provide different examples of understanding, of communication about these tools. It is a human advantage to create a rupture against the *status quo* — that becomes a point of resistance, and a point of progress. Art as an act can radically refuse, pause, or rewind and extract phe-

nomena and poetics, problems and concerns, translate or dismantle them, so to accommodate them to more human, intuitive and empathic forms. As the dissemination and distribution of questioned models are progressing on daily basis, ever faster, it is only possible to predict that their use and implementation will go into every and any imagined way. Therefore, we can choose to have the condition of an image that can *and will* be used to translate the different modalities of our own cognition, dismantle and restructure it, rather than to be left only as a fast-prompted, flattened output, processed from a few, or a singular dictionary of a centralised worldview.

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