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February 7, 2018

**Reading 2: Sebastian Schmiege’s Interview, “Pretend to Be a Bot, Rehumanize the Web”**

“Pretend to Be a Bot, Rehumanize the World” is an interview of Sebastian Schmieg and his personal and professional conclusions to his standing on artificial intelligence. Schmieg mentions how artificial intelligence is a “collective endeavor” due to the fact that everything is constantly progressing and “optimizing itself toward efficiency and profitability”. The internet is constantly growing, and the meaning of this reality enlightened Schmiege to, “how all this data being gathered can be made productive”. His understanding and perspective of the neural networks that create this “so-called artificial intelligence”, further intrigued him in singularity. It can be difficult to assume that there could be this super intelligence from these neural connections, Schmiege explains the humility we must have on our part due to the literal process of how these neural connections are acquired over time. We are still progressing so how can we dismiss the potentiality and the unknown? The conceptual idea could simply be too close to its infancy for us to grasp as a possibility no matter how science fiction it seems. Schmiege’s intrigue in singularity began with Ray Kurzweil and his AI thoughts in regards to the concept. Kurzweil had archived all of his deceased father’s notes to bring him back to life in a sense. Intrigued by Kurzweil, Schmiege went on to train a neural network by having it go through every book Kurzweil had ever written. Schmiege mentions how his “Version of Kurzweil” now “lives on a server, where it’s thinking and writing constantly”, and that “there, he is a Dadaist of sorts”. Schmiege’s approach to his perspective is significant because it is explanatory of why he considers “digital workers” to be “extensions of themselves”. Digital workers are introducing neural connections that they do not know are influential in a morally incorrect manner. He references an example of how a Singaporean teenager had been hired by Trump’s team through an online marketplace to convert PowerPoint into Prezi. She did not even know who Trump was, but completed a task that was instructed. It was not a programmed bot who created the Prezi, but it was a person who auto-performed just as instructed. He stresses how we have this, “be the best you can, have a great idea, get funded, work hard, make it to the top, sell, and repeat” mentality that takes away from the human being characteristic that is supposed to differentiate us from robots in the first place. Schmiege elaborates, “I’m not interested in creative adaption as a means to turn something problematic into something sexy… an AI based on art or artists should not be something that makes Facebook’s AI sexy, normalizing constant surveillance and prettifying inhumane optimization”.