AI is a capitalist hell-scape. What do we do now?

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Introduction: The scramble for Africa

In 1884, the German Empire's Minister President Otto von Bismarck caved to pressure from both national and international elites, and called for a conference between European nations to create a shared policy on the African continent (Shepperson, 1985). The abundance of resources in Africa created what many saw as an economic opportunity too great to pass up (Frankema, Williamson and Woltjer, 2018), and so the German Empire soon annexed Cameroon, joining the countless African colonies established by other European nations. These territories were traded like cards to further the economic interests of European aristocrats.

The thirst for economic growth through the acquisition of Africa's natural resources led to many indigenous African people being exploited. For example, to facilitate the transportation of goods from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, Egyptian forced labour was used to construct the Suez Canal, which resulted in 120,000 deaths (*The Suez Crisis: Key maps*, 2006). In Congo, the "Red Rubber System" led to a rapid collapse in Congo's population, as slaves were brutally punished if they did not extract enough rubber to meet economic demands (Afful and Osei, 2024).

Despite this, promoters of colonialism claimed that colonisation was necessary to establish a more-sophisticated society, a perspective exemplified in the 1899 poem, *"The White Man's Burden"* (Brantlinger, 2007). Even in modern times, defenders of colonialism make similar arguments, such as *"In Defence of German Colonialism"*, where Gilley argues that colonisers sought to "raise [indigenous people] up to European levels of civilisation", labeling criticism as "anti-civilizational discourses that wish upon non-European peoples a return to the five thousand-year developmental gap that they faced when the European encounter began".

i: Mbembé and Crawford

As colonial empires collapsed through the world wars, ideas of self-determination began to spread throughout Africa, with many African nations negotiating or fighting for their independence. Within this context, Achille Mbembé was born in Cameroon in 1957. He studied history and political science, writing extensively on the consequences of colonialism, with his first-hand experiences of colonialism making him an authority on the subject. This is demonstrated in his interview entitled *"Thoughts on the Planetary"* (Mbembé, Bangstad and Nilsen, 2018).

In this interview, Mbembé discusses his perspective on modern renditions of colonialism, noting that "domination and exploitation are becoming increasingly abstract and reticular". In the modern world, he argues, the latest resource to be gathered is data, with trillion-dollar corporations leading the charge to capture it. I believe that the parallels he identifies are clear: data is harvested from our interactions like crops from a plantation, sent across the world like goods through canals, then aggregated and processed by data brokers, so as to be sold to anyone who desires it. "This", he claims, "is what colonisation in the 21st century is all about. It is about extraction, capture, the cult of data".

Through Mbembé's work, we can identify three salient features of colonialism which we can use to identify its modern-day reincarnations.

1. Colonialism is often capitalistic in its nature, with colonies established to efficiently siphon the natural resources of conquered land for economic gain.

2. The processes of extracting these resources and exporting them often involves human rights abuses, as productivity is valued over the humanity of the colonised peoples.
3. Its defenders often argue that it is a process to advance society, ushering forth new eras of civilisation.

Mbembé's perspective is concurred by Kate Crawford in her book *"Atlas of AI"*, where she discusses how these parallels are especially prevalent when it comes to artificial intelligence. She explores the production of AI models, the systems that run them, and their applications, drawing parallels between all of these steps and the implementation of colonialism. Through the process of researching and writing this essay, I hope to explore scientific and media perspectives on AI in order to analyse this perspective and develop my own sense of ethics when it comes to use of AI.

ii: The scramble for data

Modern AI is nothing without data. Neural network chess engines such as Google's AlphaZero train on tens of millions of chess games (O'Cinneide, 2017), and modern AI models often have terabytes of training data, although specific details are unknown due to the secretive nature of AI companies. While countless chess games can be easily simulated when training engines, the information used to train large language models such as OpenAI's GPTs requires huge amounts of real-world data, which are often obtained through ethically-dubious means. In Jayachandran and Arni (2023), the ethics of web scraping are discussed, including analysis of its legality and its morality. The report found that web scraping copyrighted data was a legal grey-area, with many lawsuits against AI companies for copyright infringement remaining unresolved (Brittain, 2024).

Even with recent developments such as the RSL (Really Simple Licensing) standard, which promises a standardised way for authors and publishers to receive royalties or attribution when their work is used within training data for LLMs (RSL Internet Collective, 2025), it is unclear whether AI companies will respect these licenses (Roth, 2025). Enforcement of the terms would likely require a large-scale legal challenge, which is inaccessible for small publishers and individual authors. AI companies are intent on delaying such a challenge for as long as possible, making settlements and deals with major publishers such as NewsCorp (Robertson, 2024) and the Guardian Media Group, often for undisclosed amounts, in order to (in my opinion) delay a court decision from potentially stopping them from scraping and using the work of millions more people who don't have the legal power to fight back. This makes sense given that there is no way for AI to be profitable if they are forced to obtain permission from the authors and artists of all of their training data (Al-Sibai, 2025).

Notably, when this data is used to train AI models, the models are able to easily reproduce their source materials, with intellectual property tracking platform Vermillio's analysis suggesting that with the right prompting, there are clear "fingerprint" matches with original data, with one generated image of Elsa from Disney's Frozen getting a 95% match using their platform's analysis tools (Dan Milmo, 2025). However, access to platforms such as this is prohibitively expensive for many small creators, and without these tools, creators are effectively unable to prevent their public work from being consumed by web scrapers and fed into enormous data-sets with no attribution or compensation. While the licensing offerings of Vermillio which allow creators to license their work and earn royalties when their data is used in outputs are potentially useful, this is not an acceptable alternative to proper legislation of data scraping for AI training.

Additionally, Jayachandran and Arni (2023) discusses concerns surrounding privacy and consent, with no consistent or universal methods for blocking access to data, and existing methods ranging from technically-challenging to downright impossible. For example, Cambridge Analytica harvested much of their data by deceiving users, falsely claiming that the data would be used for scientific research, when it was actually used for political advertising. Additionally, due to the lack of restrictions in

Facebook's graph API, they were able to collect data on users' friends, as well as the users themselves, allowing them to collect data on almost 90 million Facebook users (Herrman, 2018). Companies such as Meta also make the process of preventing them from using your data to train their AI models exceptionally difficult, with one tweet from UI designer Tantacrul describing their opt-out process as "intentionally designed to be highly awkward in order to minimise the number of users who will object to it". The AI industry's apathy towards laws and ethical principles when collecting resources to fuel their commercial interests is a clear parallel to the capitalistic nature of colonialism.

Even after data has been gathered, it needs to be filtered, categorised and processed. These processes often demand huge amounts of work, which is completed by contracted workers who work for very little compensation. One platform used to facilitate this type of work is Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), named after a chess-playing "machine" which was operated by a hidden chess master in order to deceive onlookers. Despite its promises of flexible work (Moss *et al.*, 2023), the idea of a machine facade hiding human intelligence and abilities isn't just encompassed in the platform's name. Researchers have described it as a "digital sweatshop", where there is very little transparency or accountability from job-posters, and where workers are paid minimally (Pittman and Sheehan, 2016). Hara *et al.* (2018) found that the median wage of workers on MTurk was as low as $2 per hour, with attempts to help workers find higher-paying work on the platform being repeatedly crushed by Amazon (Semuels, 2018). Due to the lack of regulation on crowd-working platforms, job-posters end up having "all the leverage", able to reject submissions, lie about estimated completion times and pay amounts as low as a single cent for task completions. Additionally, workers are not paid for time they spend outside of completing tasks, such as searching for jobs or requesting clarifications for poorly-written tasks, meaning that even workers who complete the highest-paying tasks still struggle to earn above minimum wage (Semuels, 2018). A survey of MTurk workers (Ipeirotis, 2010) indicates that they almost always earned less than average, with 66% of US-based MTurk workers earning less than $60k US per year, compared to just 45% of the USA's general population. While MTurk work was rarely the primary income for a household, the low payments are still morally dubious. The mistreatment and dehumanisation of workers who help to process data is unmistakably colonial in its nature.

iii: How to run a torment nexus

Once data has been gathered and models have been trained, they need to be executed, which often requires extremely-specialised hardware. Enormous numbers of GPUs are used to run the complex algorithms that produce the model outputs, and the materials required to manufacture these electronic components are often extracted by exploiting and underpaying workers who mine materials and manufacture components, with miners in Brazil being paid less than 5 EUR per hour to work under unsafe conditions (Valdivia, 2024). The ABC, discussing cobalt mining operations in Congo, states that "the violent rush to extract cobalt is unleashing a new cycle of misery and foreign domination in one of the world's poorest nations" (Michael Davie, 2022). This is eloquently summarised by Crawford (2021) in her *Atlas of AI*, where she states that "AI is born from salt lakes in Bolivia and mines in Congo". The colonial histories of the nations where materials are extracted is no coincidence, but is rather an indication of colonialism's continued influence over these countries, even if the means are, as Mbembé put it, "abstract and reticular".

Because of the enormous compute capacity required by AI data centres, the resource consumption of AI models is immense, with data centres requiring both electricity and enormous amounts of water to cool the systems. In the rural and indigenous community of Maconí, Mexico, water has become scarce due to 50 million m^3 of water from their natural springs being redirected to data centres in Querétaro annually (Valdivia, 2024). Additionally, in the USA, the electrical demands of AI data-centres are projected to increase far beyond the current production of the power grid, with additional capacity being provided by fossil-fueled plants. As a consequence, Green *et al.* (2024) predicts that sustainability

commitments will "take a back seat". As stated in Wu *et al.* (2022), "the environmental footprint of AI is staggering", and it is likely to become worse over time in the interest of economic growth. These environmental impacts are already being seen, with Denham Sadler (2025) reporting that "operational emissions of Amazon, Microsoft, Alphabet and Meta skyrocketed by 150 per cent on average from 2020 to 2023". For example, while Microsoft's emissions rose by 23% despite their claimed climate goals (Darley, 2025), they announced plans to re-open the defunct Three Mile Island nuclear plant (Crownhart, 2024). While the consumption of nuclear fuel does not produce the same greenhouse gas emissions as the burning of fossil fuels, the environmental impacts of uranium mining are still massive, with hundreds of archaeologically significant Aboriginal Australian artifacts being destroyed in mining operations, often with no legal repercussions (ANTAR, 2025).

While this disregard of environmental impacts is hardly unusual when it comes to corporations and supply chains, it would be incorrect not to recognise the environmental impacts of AI and its supply chain as being emblematic of capitalism's prioritisation of profit.

iv: AI is useful, I swear! (if you have no moral code)

In Crawford's analysis, she claims that AI is "designed to discriminate, to amplify hierarchies, and to encode narrow classification". As I researched the many ethically-dubious applications of AI systems, the truth of this statement became increasingly apparent to me.

Predictive Policing Algorithms (PPAs) are a tool used by police forces to optimise for effective deployment of officers and patrols, with the intent of dissuading, responding to, and catching criminal activity. These algorithms often make use of AI to maximise effectiveness, but as a consequence of bias, often reinforce racist policing practices. As discussed in Gallon (2023), historical crime data is used to train these algorithms, with "the corruption of the data itself as well as the biases of its developers" contributing to its biases. Far too little effort is made to detect and prevent biases in these systems. Evidence for this can be seen in the uses of automated decision-making systems such as COMPAS, a recidivism prediction tool with a notorious racial bias (Dressel and Farid, 2017); as well as in scientific papers proposing new PPA approaches, such as in M. Camacho-Collados and F. Liberatore (2015) where the lack of discussion of possible biases in their algorithm is indicative of a negligence to consider the impacts of their tools. While it may be argued that these systems may not be explicitly designed to discriminate, they consistently reflect biases present in human policing, legitimising and reinforcing the racism present in policing. As the saying goes, if it looks as if, swims as if, and quacks as if it is biased, then its outputs are abducktively [spelling intended] biased.

Artificial intelligence is also used in the creation of deepfakes: media created or modified to realistically depict fake images, videos or audio of people, often with the intention of deceiving the public, or humiliating victims by inserting them into pornographic content. Widder *et al.* (2022) explores how people who develop these tools consider their own role in the ethics of their systems, finding that while they may oppose these immoral uses, they did very little to prevent people from using their software for those purposes, with reasons ranging from claims of "the genie being out of the bottle" to perspectives of technological neutrality where they were not responsible for their tool's usage. The study also observed that pornographic deepfake software was almost exclusively used by men to create deepfakes of women, reinforcing a sexist patriarchal hierarchy.

With the release of OpenAI's Sora 2 model in September 2025 (*Sora 2 is here*, 2025), the problem of deepfakes has become even more pressing, with OpenAI's restrictions only preventing users from generating videos of people who are still alive. This has led to "disrespectful and hurtful" depictions of activists such as Martin Luther King (Niamh Rowe, 2025), "overwhelming and depressing" clips depicting actors and comedians such as George Carlin (Kelly Carlin-McCall, 2025), and (despite supposed guard-rails on the platform) even deepfakes of popular (and notably still-alive) streamer IShowSpeed

(Yin-Poole, 2025). What I find especially terrifying, however, is its ability to create emotionally manipulative content, including scarily-realistic depictions of situations such as natural disasters and traffic accidents, with the only clear indication of AI generation being an easily-removed watermark (Thomas Smith, 2025). I predict that the use of this technology to incite hatred, division and political violence by creating enormous quantities of fake videos targeted towards vulnerable individuals based on algorithmic knowledge of their fears and biases will be incredibly influential in upcoming elections. It appears that political manipulation campaigns like those of Cambridge Analytica (Lewis and Hilder, 2018) were just the beginning of our troubles.

Another use of AI is in security screening at airports, where it is used to analyse data collected by full-body scanners to identify irregularities, with the aim of detecting concealment of illicit materials and weapons. These tools produce an unclothed silhouette of individuals, which is passed through a AI model to detect anomalies according to the gender of the individual, entered by the operator. These anomalies are then reported to the security personnel. As discussed in Mironenko (2011), these scans reveal a great deal of personal information, including disabilities, prostheses and transgender status. In her video "AI is an Ethical Nightmare", transgender philosopher Abigail Thorn discusses how these systems, which she humourously labels "penis detection machines", consistently flag transgender people, causing them to be singled out, asked "humiliating questions", and potentially even get groped by airport security. Many transgender people faced with these scenarios are forced to out themselves, placing them at even greater risk of discrimination (Tamer and Bahr, 2022). Thorn says that this "makes the point that technology encodes a way of seeing", thereby enforcing a system of binary gender. Thorn's similar choice of language to Crawford's ("encoding of narrow classifications") makes this relationship between AI and the capitalist tendency to violate human rights while seeking to maximise profit and efficiency extremely clear.

From these findings, it is incredibly apparent that AI is frequently used to discriminate, to amplify hierarchies, and to reinforce restrictive categorisations, oversimplifying the world and leaving no room for natural complexity and variation. While AI may not exhibit these traits in all applications, there is enough evidence to conclude that many applications of AI do. This draws clear parallels to traditional colonialism, where as a consequence of productivity being valued over humanity, human rights abuses are dismissed or downplayed. As Mbembé, Bangstad and Nilsen put it, this is "the commodification of human capacity for thought and the dismissal of critical reason in favour of programming".

However, it doesn't stop there. From surveillance capitalism where data is extracted through "illegible mechanisms" which "exile persons from their own behaviour" (Zuboff, 2015), to attempts to influence elections through micro-targeted advertisements (Lewis and Hilder, 2018), AI is often employed to maximise productivity and profit while minimising (or at least obscuring) the accountability of those who employ it for these purposes.

Consider generative AI images. While AI companies promote themselves as "democratising [art form] for everyone", the tools they promote often serve as an outright replacement for these art forms, rather than tools to make them more accessible. As discussed in Caramiaux *et al.* (2025), AI development has a major "focus on technical performance at the expense of social and ethical considerations", which is embodied in the 5 explicit values that the authors identified in media surrounding AI art: automation, efficiency, concept over execution, artifact over process and short-term over long-term skills; with each of these values representing an unspoken anti-art narrative. What I find most concerning, however, are the potential impacts they identify, which suggest that if AI art and its values gain a wider presence, the impacts on the creative industries and on developing artists will be staggering. The authors predict a reduced diversity in the work produced, with artists facing increased pressure to produce work rapidly in order to compete with AI alternatives; continued defunding and devaluing of art education, meaning that opportunities for new artists to learn and refine their skills will become more scarce and will

require more privilege; and a creative and cultural stagnation as AI produces uninspired and repetitive outputs, without the iterative development which is central to the creative process.

These predictions hit very close to home for me: I was lucky enough to receive the gift of a musical education at a young age, which helped my refine my skills as a composer. Having spent hundreds of hours writing and rewriting some of my compositions, the reduction of art to its final output is (to me) a border-line offensive over-simplification, a dicussion which deserves its own essay. I genuinely fear for future creatives who will likely face less access to artistic education and miss out on opportunities to develop and refine their works over months and years.

While the attack on artists and their work is upsetting, at least it doesn't cause direct physical harm to human beings. This isn't the case when it comes to "EagleEye", the AI-powered mixed-reality system being developed by Anduril in partnership with Meta in what AJ Dellinger of Gizmodo describes as "the uwu-ification of war". The involvement of major tech company Meta demonstrates the willingness of major AI corporations to use their technology indiscriminately, even in cases where it will likely be used to increase the efficiency with which soldiers murder each other. The prioritisation of profits over human life could not be more obvious.

v: Defences of AI, and why they're wrong

While AI certainly can be useful in some forms, defenders and advocates for it often evangelise its abilities and capabilities. LaGrandeur (2023) explores the consequences of these overstatements. The authors discuss how Elon Musk's "exaggeration of Tesla's Autopilot capabilities … [have] proven dangerous to human lives.", citing many cases where people died or were injured due to these systems malfunctioning, despite Musk contradicting Tesla driver's manuals to suggest that the systems were "dramatically better [and] more reliable than a human" (Cox, 2023). While these systems can be safer under mundane circumstances, they become much more dangerous than a human driver when faced with complex traffic conditions, low visibility, or poor weather (Morris-Grant, 2024), and so over-reliance on and overconfidence in these systems is incredibly risky, with the false promises of those in the AI sector contributing to these heightened risks.

Perhaps most-prolific among the defenders are the self-proclaimed "techno-optimists". In Soufi (2024), it is discussed how this group of people places blind faith in technology, whilst dismissing the concerns of those who demand regulation. They argue that AI systems serve to advance society and improve civilisation for all. Critics of the movement, such as journalist Marta Peirano, describe it as promoting "a sectarian, colonialist, racist and deeply opportunistic ideology based on false premises", arguing that at the movement's core is a false assumption that technology leads to prosperity. The similarities to colonialism, with its defenders arguing that the proliferation of AI is a necessity to advance society, despite the multitude of negative impacts it has, especially on marginalised demographics, are very clear to me.

On the more-moderate end of the spectrum, many have sought to define ethical principles surrounding AI, in order to assure its fairness, reliability and transparency. For example, the "Microsoft Responsible AI Standard, v2" (2022) documents 6 goals for AI systems. However, Crawford points out that standards like this often only address the "ends", and not the "means", ignoring the creation and execution processes in favour of focusing exclusively on the uses, further noting that the principles are "rarely enforceable or accountable to a broader public". Even within the "ends" of AI, very few modern AI systems can be considered to be accountable, fair or transparent, as I discussed in my earlier essay (Guthridge, 2025). As such, while ethical AI may be possible, there is no argument that current systems fail to meet the ethical standards of Crawford and Mbembé, and that there are clear links between colonialism and artificial intelligence, with examples of AI's creation and usage exhibiting all of the traits defined earlier in this essay.

vi: AI radicalised me

This is where my opinion diverges somewhat with Mbembé's. While there are clear parallels with colonialism, I believe that describing AI as exclusively colonial in its nature would be reductive and distract from the bigger picture. Critics of Mbembé's wider work such as Wright (2025) note how he over-emphasises the experience of people of colour in relation to colonialism, and fails to consider other marginalised demographics such as LGBTQIA+ people and the intersectionalities thereof. As we have discussed, while AI does have many negative impacts on people of colour and people from nations disadvantaged by their colonial histories, its impacts are far more widespread than just that. Failure to recognise this fact does a disservice to all people who are impacted by AI and the systems that create and execute it. As such, it is my belief that AI is not a reincarnation of colonialism, but rather a perpetuation of capitalism.[1]

This is much more in-line with Crawford's perspective in Atlas of AI, where she writes that "to understand what is at stake, we must focus less on ethics and more on power". When Perplexity's AI crawler disguises itself as Google Chrome to work around attempts to block its scraping of copyrighted content (Corral *et al.*, 2025), this is unethical, certainly, but discussions of ethics do not accurately recognise this for what it is: a multi-billion-dollar corporation exploiting the work of others by accessing it even when they are explicitly denied permission. But this is hardly out of the ordinary, corporations have exploited others for as long as corporations have existed, such as Amazon's use of user interface dark patterns to create an unsubscribe workflow for their Prime subscription service so complex that it was internally named 'Iliad', in reference to Ancient Greek poet Homer's epic about the arduous ten-year siege of Troy (Brodkin, 2023).

In this context, it is clear to me that the ethical perils that surround AI are only unique in the sense that they are more far-reaching than before, impacting fields or work and demographics of people in new ways, but with the same goal as always: maximising profit, with concern for our planet and the people on it only being given insofar as it may discourage investors and users if they oppress people too blatantly.

This is perhaps best exemplified in recent cases of "AI psychosis". Large language models are trained to produce human-pleasing outputs, to the point where they become sycophantic, with some memes referring to OpenAI's GPT-4o as "Glaze GPT" (Gaby Del Valle, 2025). This manipulative, obsequious behaviour has reportedly led many users towards psychotic episodes, self harm, and has even pushed some users towards taking their own life (Hao, 2025). When OpenAI released the less-extravagantly-minded GPT-5 model and disabled the GPT-4o, there was significant outcry from users who had become attached to the older model's personality, leading to OpenAI re-releasing it (Nield, 2025) despite their knowledge of its sycophantic tendencies, for a small subscription fee, of course. As Hao puts it, while efforts to reduce the psychological impact of AIs on their users "are sincere, they're constrained by the pressure not to undermine growth". As soon as it looked like releasing a safer model would impact profits, OpenAI surrendered to pressure and made their old model available again if you paid for it. Yet again, the pressure to profit regardless of the negative impact on users trumps their responsibility to keep their users safe. Hao's interview with musician James Cumberland, who suffered a psychotic episode triggered by GPT-4o, ends with a chilling quote:

> Listen to them. Listen to them more attentively and more compassionately than GPT is going to. Because if you don't, they're going to go talk to GPT. And then, it's gonna hold their hand

[1] Of course, this is not to attack Mbembé, or to say his critique is invalid. Like all of us, his opinions are backed by his positionality: his personal background and context which informs his opinions and explains his perspectives. As noted, Mbembé grew up in Africa and experienced the consequences of colonialism first-hand. It is understandable, given his personal experience with colonialism, for him to recognise parallels with it sooner than he does with capitalism in general; although this is just my guess, and certainly not intended to be an assumption about his perspectives.

> and tell them they're great, y'know, while it holds their hand and walks them off towards the Emerald City.

I remember when ChatGPT first released, and I explored it for the first time, admiring how it was able to create funny lyrics for nonsense spaghetti-themed songs that my step brother and I requested it write; being amazed by its ability to emulate a session in a Linux terminal, even **`sudo apt install`**ing Node and running a fizzbuzz program I "wrote into its file system"; and using it to help me refine word choices as I wrote new lab exercises for COMP1010. Those times feel naive and child-like to me now that I have spent so much more time learning about how these tools actually work. I don't think I can in good conscience "play" with AI again, and even the prospect of using it for purposes where it may actually be helpful leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

There are many people who have more reasonable opinions than me. Creator of The Brainmade Mark and self-described "professional amateur developer", Tristam Oaten stated eloquently "I don't hate AIs, I love Humans". I admire his ability to see the utility of these tools when used sparingly. Not me. I have become a hater. The more I learn about AI, the more I loathe it. I'd like to think that I was always a socially conscientious person (I of course had my fair share of moments in high school that keep me up at night, but nothing too horrific), but my awareness of the extent of the dystopian society we find ourselves in was only truly revealed to me through this research into AI. I have uncovered the horrors of our reality, and the grinding gears of the machine screech as they spin naked before me. I hope you'll forgive me for potentially being less-than-civil when artificial intelligence and the horrible capitalist system that it embodies are discussed.

I suppose that the research indicating that higher AI literacy correlates with decreased receptivity to AI (Tully, Longoni and Appel, 2025) must indeed be accurate.

Conclusion: What do we do now?

It's all a bit depressing, isn't it? The world has gone mad for a technology which is as anti-human as it is environmentally destructive. A new era of capitalism is being welcomed with open arms, allowing billionaires to influence elections, misogynists to create humiliating deepfakes, and trillion-dollar companies to track your every move so as to turn the wheels of capitalism and sell you more things. If nothing is done, it seems like disaster is imminent. And so, the question is: what do we do?

For inspiration, it may be helpful to recall how colonialism originally fell in Africa: people fought for their freedoms, and demanded to be treated better. They made it clear that current systems were unacceptable, and refused to be complicit. Of course, I don't mean to advocate for violence (please don't sue me), but without protests and boycotts, we will not make any progress. Personally, I will avoid intentionally using AI systems wherever I can, and will do my best to support organisations that support human rights, human knowledge, and human creativity. I encourage you to reflect on how you can support these goals through your own moral principles, work and actions.

Epilogue

And there we have it: in a few months of research, condensed down to just over 5000 words, I have made myself utterly unemployable to an enormous number of software engineering companies. Maybe saying the quiet part out loud towards the end was a mistake. Oh well; like all artists, I have spent years learning my craft, and while it can be cheaply imitated, there is no substitute for human creativity and ingenuity when it comes to solving the big problems. I'd like to think of myself as someone who is capable and driven enough to tackle those big problems, and hope that I and everyone else who values their craft remain irreplaceable.

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