

Oliver Roeder: Imperfect Information [C1]

Negli ultimi anni il poker si è evoluto da semplice gioco di carte a seducente impresa capitalista. Oliver Roeder intraprende un'esplorazione del poker durante l'era dell'intelligenza artificiale.



Poker has become a capitalist enterprise for the masses. With its promise of easy money, for many enthusiasts, it represents the American dream. We spoke to Oliver Roeder, author of *Seven Games: A Human History*, which explores the history and attraction of poker, among other popular games. He believes it to be emotionally tied to the US. **Oliver Roeder (American accent)**: I think poker is an essentially American game in the sense that I think Las Vegas is an essentially American city. Like, where else but the US? I think the appeal is capitalistic. This idea of the frontier and get-rich-quick. The 'almighty dollar' kind of thing.

BIG MONEY

That kind of thinking kicked off the most recent poker boom twenty years ago, starting with a fairy-tale story of an everyday person winning the big prize. **Oliver Roeder**: In 2003, Chris Moneymaker — this accountant from

nowhere — wins the World Series of poker, and millions of dollars. And it's broadcast on ESPN and the American viewing public is seeing this guy who paid like \$80 to get into a qualifying tournament, wins the World Series of poker on ESPN. And what are you going to think other than "Well, if he can do that, I can do that, too." And right around the same time, you could play poker online easily for the first time. And it was just like this [tinderbox](#). It's like this perfect storm. And created this unprecedented poker boom. And I was in college at the time with a fast internet connection for the first time in my life. And I'm not a great poker player, but I made a decent amount of money in 2003 because everybody was playing poker online.

A FAIRER GAME?

That boom has [ebbed](#), though poker remains popular. However, with the advent of artificial intelligence, the game's [flamboyant](#) era, with bluffing and 'tells' (a change in a player's expression or behaviour that may give away what hand they have), seems to have come to end. A new approach has emerged that is [geared](#) towards eliminating exploitation of [weaker](#) players. **Oliver Roeder:** This sort of more modern school, what's called 'game theory optimal, or GTO school, is all about making yourself [unexploitable](#). So rather than exploiting others, I'm trying to make myself [unexploitable](#) to eliminate my weaknesses via mathematics. And it's a whole complicated thing that sort of was brought to us by AI. But the game is [turning inward](#) from making yourself unbeatable, and then you'll win money in the process.

MATHEMATICAL TURTLES

Playing what Roeder calls "game theory optimal" means that individual style is lost. AI has, in effect, killed the poker face, creating a lonelier game, with players following the computer's direction. **Oliver Roeder:** All these young players with their big noise-cancelling head phones and their sunglasses, and their [hoodies pulled](#) over their head becoming these sort of mathematical turtles and just sitting playing their own game... And you see this. If you go to the World Series of poker in Vegas and you see all these top players with all this stuff that I'm describing... And then of course, what all

the amateurs want to do? Well, they want to look like the top people, so you see all these tourists with the big headphones, and the sunglasses and the [hoodies](#)... And it's just like this kind of crazy room full of Unabomber-looking people. That's the sense in which the game has turned inward.

Glossary

- **tinderbox** = polveriera
- **flamboyant** = esuberante
- **tells** = comunicazione non verbale
- **pulled** = tirare
- **almighty** = onnipotente
- **ebbed** = calare
- **geared** = orientare
- **unexploitable** = non sfruttabile
- **hoodies** = cappucci
- **kicked off** = dare il via
- **fairy-tale** = da favola
- **turning inward** = essere introversi
- **enterprise** = impresa, organizzazione
- **weaker** = più deboli