

THIS MAGAZINE WILL SAVE THE WORLD!

VEGAS LOOPY
THE HIDDEN COST OF BILLIONAIRE SHAMING
TESLA'S AVOCADO CONSTANT
HOUSE OF MUSK
& MUSK MORE

ELOU



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SUMMER 2024

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SPECIAL REPORTS

SESTI DA IN...
L'ARTE DI...
L'ARTE DI...
L'ARTE DI...

QUEST'UOMO CI PORTERÀ SU MARTE
MA A FARE CHE COSA?



THE SUNDAY TIMES magazine
September 8, 2013

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The inside story of how Elon Musk took over Twitter



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THE VISIONARIES ISSUE

ELON MUSK
ENGINEER. INNOVATOR. ABSOLUTE GENIUS.
The stratospheric aims of the billionaire entrepreneur



Forbes AFRICA
MAY 2013

LIST: WOMEN IN SCIENCE • THE 2021 FORBES WOMAN AFRICA LEADING WOMEN SUMMIT

Elon Musk
The Richest Man On Earth?
THE ROCKET-BILLIONAIRE WITH INTER-PLANETARY AMBITIONS



FORTUNE

THE 2013 BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

#1
ELON MUSK
CEO, SpaceX - Tesla
INSIDE: THE SHARED GENIUS OF ELON MUSK AND STEVE JOBS
By TED's Chris Anderson

WHO IS THE RICHEST GUY IN L.A?
(Not Geffen... Not Kardashian... Not Milken)
BY GARY WHITFIELD

TED TURNER TALKS... and talks... and talks...
BY PATRICIA SELLERS

THE BEST OF BUSINESS 2013



TechLife NEWS

THE NEW IPHONE 15
A NEW CAMERA SET...
BEHIND CHATGPT
ALLEGEDLY BEING...
WITH A LOT OF WATER

Elon Musk
BOOK OFFERS A REVEALING BUT NOT SURPRISING PORTRAIT OF TECH MUGIL




PERSON of the YEAR TIME



ELON MUSK



Bloomberg Businessweek

ELON MUSK IS REALLY BORING



The billionaire's new Trump-era business plan: Building tunnels



SPECIAL ISSUE

New York Times

Elon Musk: THE THROAT OF THE DIGITAL AGE

AMERICA'S GREATEST DISRUPTORS

FIFTY VISIONARIES, INNOVATORS AND PIONEERS WHO ARE TRANSFORMING THE WORLD THROUGH TECHNOLOGY



REPORT: Silicon Valley's Race Problem

ST COMPANY SOUTH AFRICA

SETS THE PRODUCTIVE LE



platinum

THE LARGEST CIRCULATION REGIONAL BUSINESS PUBLICATION IN THE UK

INFLUENCERS FORUM Women in Business
The pioneering hub for crypto
Employer Ownership Trusts



10 COUNTRIES IN 12 MONTHS Working from anywhere

MOTORING Classic car investments

DYNAMIC MAGAZINE INSIDE

ELON MUSK \$278 BILLION AND COUNTING

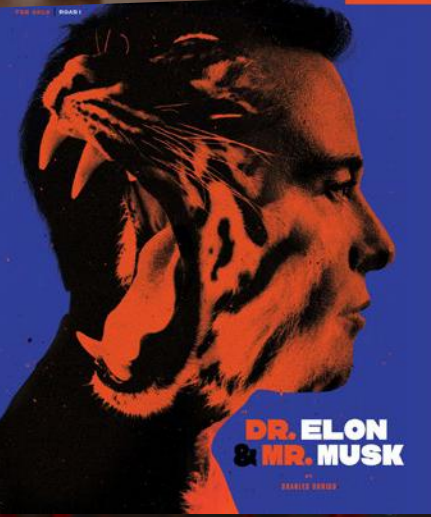


Why Netflix Envis YouTube A New Reality at Facebook

FAST COMPANY

NO FEAR

Elon Musk is the biggest risk-taker in business. Will merging Tesla and SpaceX...



DR. ELON & MR. MUSK

by CHARLIE SHELDON



WHARTON

MAGAZINE



History and Science
It's hard to pick a truly original film made in classic days. But the movie here's got it for Hollywood.

Retail, Remade
Has the sluggish economy permanently changed the retail sector?

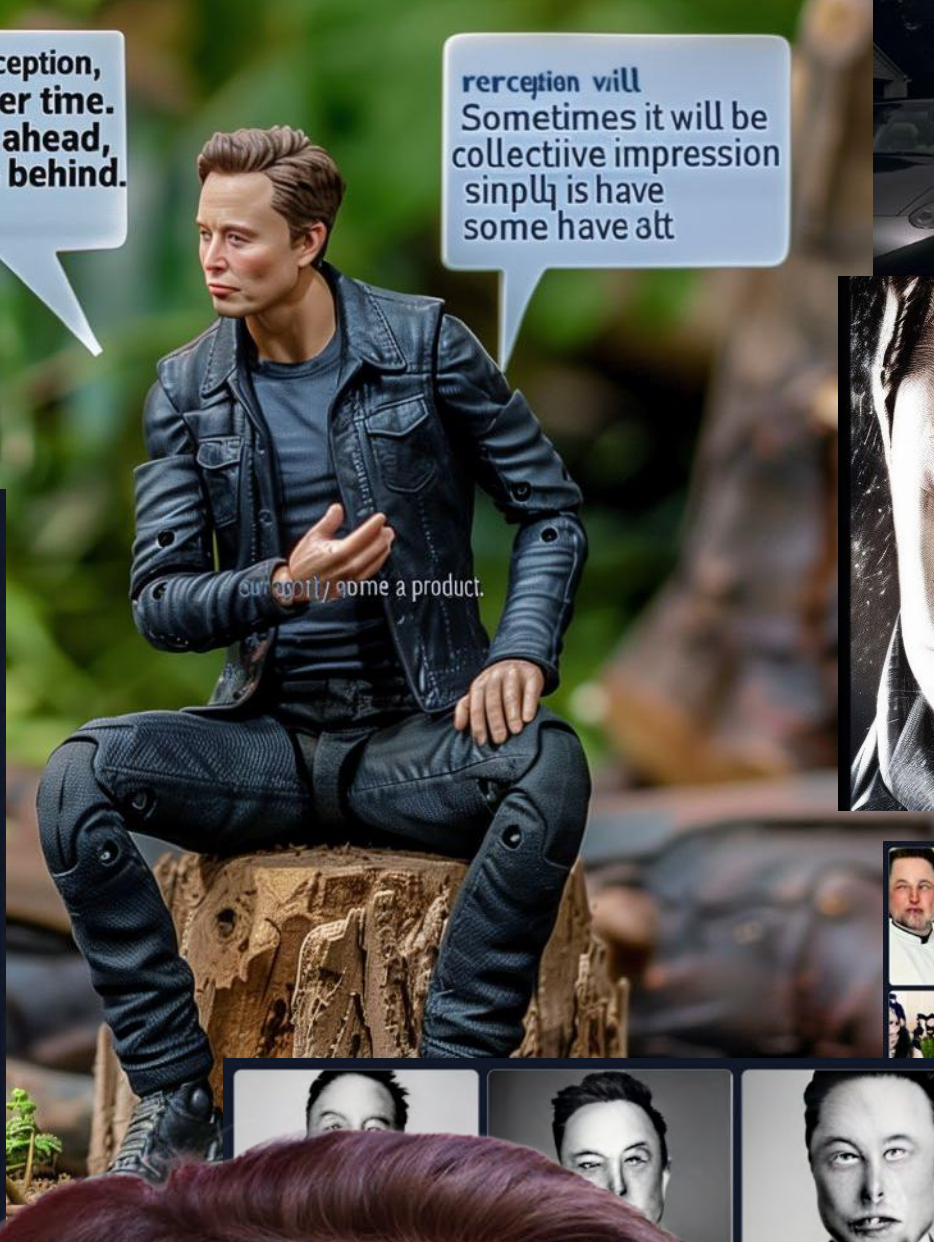
A Tesla Choice?
It's time to look again at the raging debate surrounding the car's eco-friendliness, says Kevin Werbach.

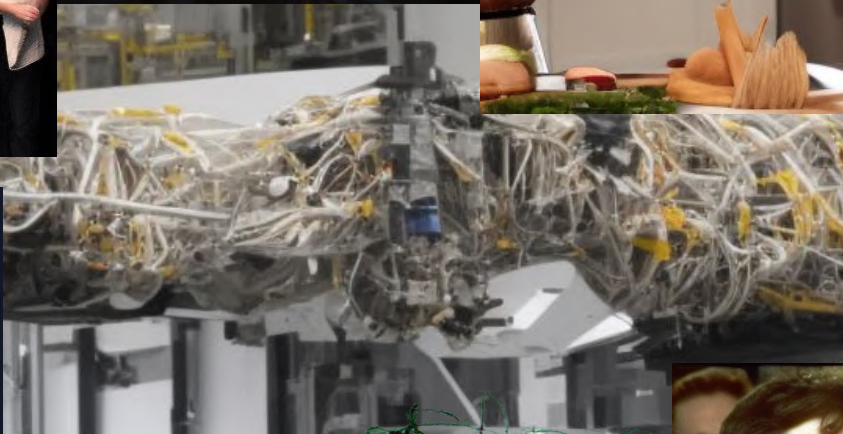
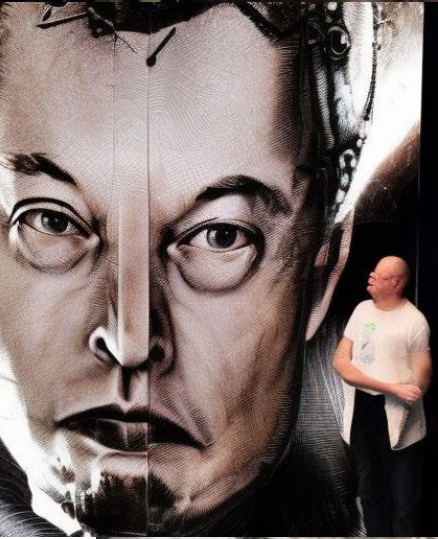
Going Green. Going to Space.

Elon Musk, CEO, has already conquered the Internet. Now he wants to revolutionize the auto industry—and space travel, too.

Brand is just a perception,
match reality over time.
other times it ahead,
be times it will be behind.

perception will
Sometimes it will be
collective impression
simply is have
some have att





OUR NEIGHBOR ELON

(or how we ended up making this magazine)



Same people you like
change if to disaster.

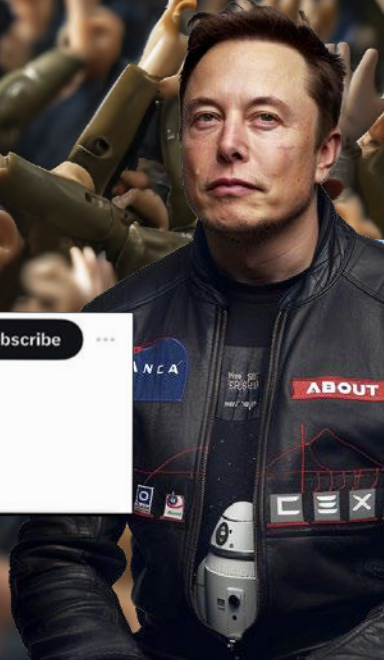


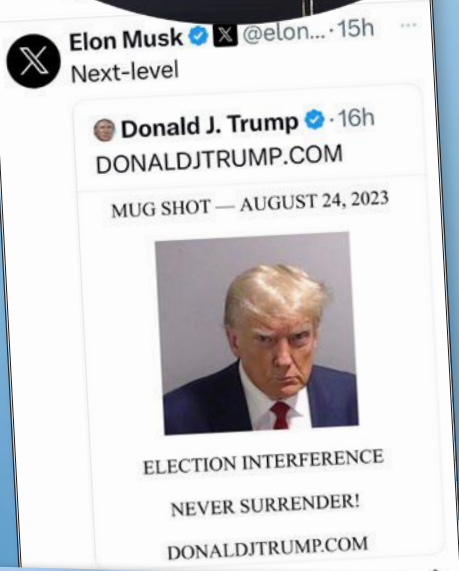
Elon Musk
@elonmusk

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Zuck is a cuck

10:45 AM · 7/9/23 from Earth · 6.6M Views





Five years ago we didn't think about Elon very much. He was the "electric car guy" who charmed people into treating him like the next Steve Jobs. He didn't talk about eugenics. He didn't seem antisemitic, anti-black, or transphobic. He didn't mock his critics as "pedos." He didn't tell entire countries that he would decide what kind of government they would have.

Something has shifted. In the last few years he has done all those things and more. His reputation has suffered, but he remains an extraordinarily consequential force with an army of loyal fans and endless resources.

We know this because he descended on our cities in 2022. We are living in the long shadow of Elon Musk. Some of us are in Austin where Musk has set up his headquarters. Some of us is in and around Berlin, where he's built his first European Gigafactory. Maybe people were too distracted or drained from the pandemic to scrutinize his sudden expansion into our backyards, but he seemed to get a free pass on what he was doing. We've been watching closely, and we're not impressed. He makes empty promises. He makes dubious products (and yes, some good ones). He disregards community sentiment and laughs at government regulations. Instead of a good neighbor, he has become a burden, a threat, a wannabe king in a Giga-Castle.

He has become a bad neighbor.

We don't want to worry about Elon all the time. We would rather think about art and nature and cheese and soccer, anything other than his Trumpian bluster and imperial ambitions. We assume he won't listen to us (or anyone else), but some of his fans might. Some onlookers might. And if we can challenge the conversation about Elon and his companies, even in some small way, we've done something that needed doing. ✘





Normal people building cars at the Tesla Gigafactory in Texas and Berlin. Outsider art illustrations with crayon. Henry Darger. Going into outerspace, Mars --v 6.0 --ar 2:3



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ELON*



* THIS MAGAZINE WILL SAVE THE WORLD!



"Colleges are basically for fun and to prove you can do your chores," Musk has said. "But they are not for learning." Musk attended Queen's University in Canada before transferring to the University of Pennsylvania for his bachelor's degree in physics and economics.



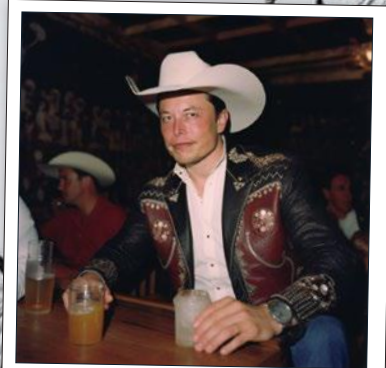
Gigafactory Nevada near Sparks, Nevada, received \$1.4 billion in tax incentives. Reportedly, this corporate welfare has drained public funds for roads, schools, and affordable housing in the surrounding towns. Telsa sold \$20 million of its transferrable tax incentives to the MGM casino.



Gigafactory New York has been a controversial presence in Buffalo, New York. The state government provided \$1 billion in incentives to Tesla. In 2023 The New York Post observed, "the deal is proving to be a disastrous boondoggle for taxpayers."



Gigafactory Texas opened with a "Cyber Rodeo" BBQ party in Austin in 2022. An amateur ensemble called "The Tesla Booty Dancers" performed at the event.



Gigafactory Mexico is a \$10 billion dollar plant under construction in Monterrey, which has provided Tesla with \$153 million in infrastructure incentives. Musk plans to build robo-taxis and other EVs at the plant.

“ I start from the observation that the current crisis is multidimensional: that it encompasses not just economy and finance, but also social reproduction, ecology, and politics. Most of us appreciate the ecological strand, which we know in the form, for example, of global warming. Many of us also sense what feminists have called a crisis of “care”, as public welfare provision is curtailed and women are increasingly recruited into wage labour, squeezing the capacities available to maintain families and communities. Then too, few would deny that we are facing a crisis of politics insofar as our political institutions seem incapable – for non-accidental, systemic reasons – of taking even the most elementary steps to solve those problems – or indeed to prevent a new outbreak of financial crisis.

My hunch is that these are not separate crises, unfolding side by side, but inter-imblicated aspects of a general crisis. If that is right, we need a broader perspective for understanding it. A technical-economic perspective will not suffice. So I am now trying to develop a multidimensional conception of crisis, which relates the foreground dynamics of the capitalist economy to their background conditions in capitalist society.

IN THE MUSK OF THIS PLANET



Gigafactory Berlin-Brandenburg opened in 2022. When environmental activists sabotaged its power supply in 2024, Musk said, "These are either the dumbest eco-terrorists on Earth or they're puppets of those who don't have good environmental goals."



Gigafactory Shanghai produces 750,000 vehicles per year. Workers complained that their performance bonuses were cut because of an accidental death at the factory.



"I grew up in a lower, transitioning to upper, middle-income situation," Musk has said about his childhood in Pretoria, South Africa. His mother was a model; his father was an emerald dealer and engineer. Like many middle-class children, young Elon was driven to school in a Rolls Royce.



When Elon chooses a location for one of his factories, he conducts careful research to ensure that locals have been adequately consulted and that the factory is a good fit for the community.



TEA X' FOOLA

Минерална вода, 0,5 л, 1,5 л, 2 л, 3 л, 5 л, 10 л, 20 л, 30 л, 40 л, 50 л, 60 л, 70 л, 80 л, 90 л, 100 л

Универсална вода, която е богата на минерали и витамини. Аз съм доктор и мога да ви кажа, че това е най-добрата вода, която можете да пиете. Тя е полезна за всички части на тялото ви. Тя е полезна за кожата ви, за косата ви, за очите ви, за ушите ви, за носа ви, за гърлото ви, за стомаха ви, за червата ви, за сърцето ви, за мозъка ви, за всичко. Тя е полезна за всички. Тя е полезна за всички. Тя е полезна за всички.

ЕВЕРЛАЙН ВОН ДУРБЕТЕК
РОМАНСЪЕ



ELONGATED SALES PITCHES – A MUSKIST MESHWORK OF HYPE



“This white is only produced in Shanghai,” says the Tesla salesman showing me the new Tesla Model X at a small boutique in a Berlin shopping mall. The Model Y next to the SUV is painted in a wine red that turns into black when you look at it from a sharp angle. “This red ... this red is exclusively painted in Berlin,” the salesman says. “We say it’s in Berlin because Grünheide sounds too provincial.” Grünheide is the small town on the outskirts of Berlin where Elon has built the first European Gigafactory. The black Model S at the very end of the small boutique was built in Las Vegas.

But I am not interested in buying a Tesla, no Model **S, 3, X, Y**. My goal is to learn more about Tesla sales procedures and what it means to own a Tesla

The salesman, let’s name him Gunther, started raging against ‘Corporate,’ how they have no space in the boutique for any other merchandise like hats or T-shirts, and how everything is controlled by Tesla headquarters. Just last week they had to re-park the cars in the shop and that meant that they needed to carry all the furniture out of the store, move the three cars in a well-planned choreography, and finally put everything back in its place. The whole process took over three hours, said Gunther.

Gunther is an eccentric guy, a hyperactive talker with whom you have to really prepare your sentences to fit them in the very short gaps between his presentations. He normally works as a tour guide in the city but he found this gig via a mini-job platform: “Rather relaxing work,” he told me.

A sales talk in a shop is usually a multi-sensory event of some sort. In the Tesla boutique this multi-sensory opulence is piloted by the unfamiliar touch and functionalities of the cars themselves and the constant rambling of a sales person trying to make up for the novel haptic interface of the product. Nothing is “standard” with the Tesla, and nothing is completely off at the same time. But there is rationalization of why Tesla cars are how they are. And one of the main mantras that Gunther kept repeating was: “You cannot miss what is not there.” I am not really sure what he means by that. It seems to express a slight undertone of apologetic explanation.

Finally, sitting in the Tesla Model X that was shipped from Shanghai to Berlin, I can better understand what Gunther meant before. The interior of the car is more than different from any other. There are no knobs, no buttons, no levers for the turn signals; there is only one big screen and a





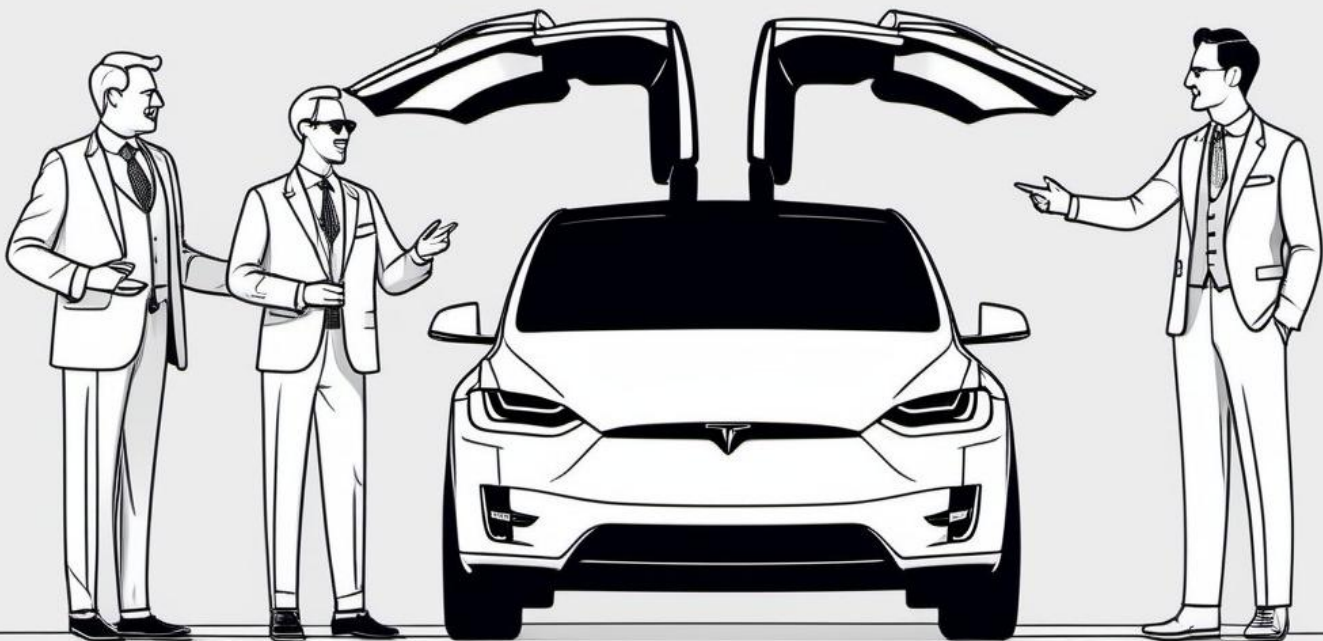
steering wheel. It could be a station set up for racing games. At this moment, a complex polylog between the material feel of the car, Gunther's sales pitch, and my scarce one-word answers unfolds. "The video on the screen turns off automatically when you go faster than 6 kph." I am touching the steering wheel which is not a wheel at all but rather a 'yoke' like in Formula 1 race cars. "But maybe the Tesla recognizes when you are crossing the border to France where you are allowed to watch the screen up until 40 kph." It is a weird feeling not to be able to run my hands around the wheel. I am no car enthusiast but somehow that is something I want to do when I enter our new car. "I have a friend who was driving like the devil, even when he was young. Everyone thought that he'd have a car crash and die one day. He had his BMW screen modified so he can watch TV while driving 300 kph on the freeway." There is a sublime feeling of this new car haptic. I wonder where they have the speedometer. "He is commuting from Berlin to Bremen everyday." I start playing with the display. Youtube. Some funny video compilations in the suggestion column and some hip hop video on pause. I keep scrolling around. "The car always knows where you are, so there is a possibility that it recognizes when you are crossing a border and adapts to the laws." I am wondering where to change the gears since there are no levers or buttons, but I don't ask. I just keep saying "Aha!," "Interesting," and "Wow!"

The doors open to the side and then up like the DeLorean. But apparently they don't need as much space. Also, you can easily recognize a Model X by standing in front of it and seeing the X the two open doors make above the car's roof. This mnemonic is useless. When would you see this? Would you have to wait until they open the doors? If you have to open the doors of your Model X and stand in front to know which model you bought, wouldn't that be idiotic? Gunther in the meantime explains how you unlock the car with your card and face recognition on the driver's side. I ask if he often drives a Tesla or if he even owns one. He does not own one but he tries to do

as many test drives from the factory as possible. They pay 60 euros per drive and he just goes out on the freeway for a ride. "You can easily get these jobs yourself. Just go on one of these websites for mini-jobs."

In this Tesla sales pitch also lies an obscure notion of hype: a seemingly paradoxical relation between the company and the cars functions like a constant negotiation of proximity and distance. We become part in this meshwork of interrelations and dependencies. The specific site or location of the Tesla sales pitch becomes interwoven with the multi-locality of the whole enterprise. Location and places are both points on a map but they happen at the same time; they are processual events of interdependencies and co-development. I do not need to own or drive a Tesla but being interested in the concept of selling Tesla cars to customers creates an entanglement in the social and political meshwork of Tesla, industrialism, new work, and environmentalism.

The capitalist proliferation of the sales pitch becomes even more tangible in the conversations one has outside the Tesla boutiques. Tesla owners or enthusiasts undertake the task of selling the cars by carefully navigating the unpaved landscape of E-mobility. Tesla and Tesla car ownership emit a certain ambiguous splendor of both realizing and rationalizing the Muskist enterprise while at the same time having the feeling of doing the right thing. Tesla S3XY becomes a site of individuality and distinction: Being green, being rich, being ecological, being better. In this meshwork, Tesla shows us that there is no need for solidarity or to unionize, when it's so much easier to further develop your social singularization with a Tesla. Or as the Tesla owner in front of the Tesla Gigafactory in Berlin put it – while supercharging his vehicle at its birthplace, coming back like salmon: "If 'Elon' waited for the decisions to be made by the lawmakers, we wouldn't have our Tesla now. It would have taken years to build this." ✕



Beaucoup Chicas!



↑
SWIPE UP

AN EXCLUSIVE LINE OF PATRIOTIC SPACE THEMED TESLA BRANDED BEACHWARE



A dense field of pink and white roses fills the background. The roses are in various stages of bloom, creating a textured, romantic scene. In the center, there is a glowing pink text overlay that reads "you're like really boring" followed by two heart symbols. The text is written in a cursive, handwritten style. The overall color palette is soft and feminine, dominated by pinks and whites.

*you're like
really boring ♡♡*

HOUSE OF MUSK



ERROL

Engineer, entrepreneur, pilot, and emerald mine investor, *Errol Musk* is the mercurial father of the Tesla titan. Now dating his stepdaughter Jane, a situation he describes as “completely normal,” the elder Musk has fathered two children with the young woman who was raised alongside his famous son and his siblings. “I tried threats, rewards, and arguments to change my father for the better,” Elon Musk has said about the man he calls a “terrible human being.” Once when the young Elon was badly beaten in a fight at school, his father berated him as a “loser” for two hours. “Almost every evil thing you could possibly think of, he has done,” Musk told *Rolling Stone*. While Elon has strongly denied the family’s stake in an emerald mine in Zambia in the 1980s, his father continues to boast about it: “Elon knows it’s true.... Half of my colleagues were killed, all of my colleagues got malaria, yellow fever, blackwater fever, and more... One was eaten by a crocodile on the banks of Lake Tanganyika.”

Maye Musk, mother of the billionaire, is a model and dietician who was born in Saskatchewan, Canada. She moved to South Africa as a small child with celebrity parents who flew around the world in a prop plane and competed in transcontinental races (her father was an important part of Technocracy Incorporated, a culty political organization rabidly devoted to the technocratic rule of engineers). By her teens, Maye was a finalist for Miss South Africa and soon appeared on magazine covers for *Sports Illustrated*, *Vogue*, and other magazines. She has explained the following: “When Elon was 17 and my daughter was 15, they really wanted to move to Canada, where my family is from. I said no, because I wanted to do a Ph.D. in Johannesburg, and I was getting lots of modeling work there. But Elon and I went over to visit, and while I was gone my daughter sold my home and my car and had a big garage sale with all my furniture.” She has also wisely said, “Almond milk is not a milk; it’s not a beverage, really.” In 2023, the 75-year-old Maye inked a lucrative deal as spokesperson for the Chinese electronics giant Oppo. Although one user on Reddit quipped, “This is just a way to funnel bribe money into Musk via his family,” others believe that Maye’s maternal relationship to the world’s richest man is merely a coincidence.



MAYE

Kimbal Musk, the younger brother of Elon, was not Elon's voice of reason but he certainly was helping Elon to find his own. Whenever Elon was about to send out some bad tweets, Kimbal raised his concerns and reminded his older brother to be silly instead of bad. Kimbal Musk knows that his brother is constantly under enormous pressure and, therefore, has the role of being the reasonable little brother who warns Elon from tweeting bad things, yet again. Unfortunately, the voice of reason was silenced once Elon unfollowed his brother on Twitter in early 2023.

But Kimbal is also a visionary entrepreneur and restaurateur and was twice touched by God. Once, when he broke his neck and was paralyzed for days before doctors performed surgery on his spinal cord. And a second time when he attended an Ayahuasca ritual: "It was like, 'Oh, wow, the voice of God is back. [...] It was a powerful experience for me, but I didn't necessarily need it that second time. I already had it, and it's the meeting of souls and spirits I now apply to the food I cook my family.'" Being a chef, a philanthropist, and experienced in psychedelic adventures, Kimbal is certainly a valuable addition to the supervisory boards of Tesla and SpaceX.



Tosca Musk, sister of the techno-king, is a filmmaker and film producer with a focus on romance novel adaptations. With her burning love for the literary genre, she decided to create "Passionflix," a streaming service featuring her own and other erotic romance movies. As a child, Elon was very much into magic tricks and taught himself hypnosis. In one of his first attempts, he hypnotized his younger sister and convinced her that she was a dog and had to eat raw bacon. Tosca developed a deep loyal relationship to her older brother Elon: "He's exceptional in so many ways and his goals to help humanity are beyond anything that anybody can imagine. So there's no taint at all." Seeing Elon made fun of on social media is excruciating for her: "I don't like that my kids watch YouTube and there are jokes about my brother; it makes them feel a little uncomfortable."

But the house of Musk haunts her also in her business to a point where Tosca was charged too much for location rents because people assume that Elon will cut her a check. In other cases, being a Musk helped her and her enterprises although she firmly believes that she has to work for her success exactly as much as any other person. Finally, when Elon is not around to praise himself in an interview, Tosca happily jumps in and humbly daydreams about the greatness of her billionaire brother who does so much for the world and is so little appreciated.

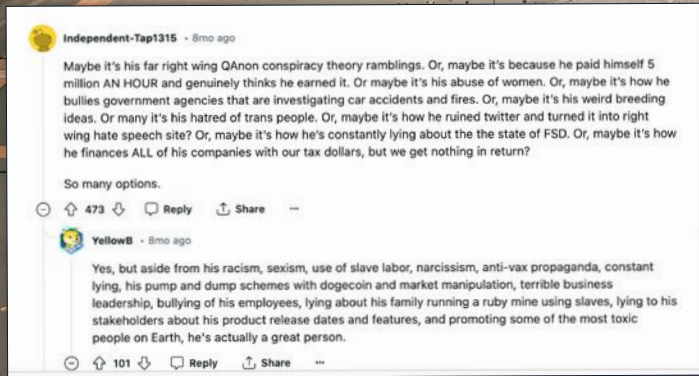


The hidden cost of billionaire shaming

At some point in the past few years there was a palpable shift in American popular culture: Elon Musk was no longer the darling disruptor of capitalism. The pileup of odious comments, tiresome hype, and backroom political influence had finally flamed up into an obnoxious spectacle, unavoidable even for the most studiously disinterested. While celebrity and wealth marked him as a target for some, his increasingly aggressive, unhinged, and bellicose appearances in the miasma of social media were impossible to ignore.

The critics and trolls began to multiply. For every Bromethean booster there now seemed to be a detractor. If there is some kind of cosmic balance of opinion on the Internet, it seemed to be tipping against Elon or at least dropping into some equilibrium. In August of 2023 his mother took notice of the shift and came to his defense. She posted a message on X, her son's globe-encircling media platform: "The Constant Hate is from the American media, the President, and the government agencies. When I travel in the rest of the world, they love Elon and ask why this is happening. Does anyone have an answer?" Perhaps realizing that a cardinal rule of our hypermediated society is to not pose questions you don't actually want answered, the post has now been removed. Nonetheless the Internet remembers; in answer to Maye Musk's question about why America seems to be bullying her son, one commenter offered: "Maybe it's his far-right wing QAnon conspiracy theory ramblings. Or, maybe it's because he paid himself 5 million AN HOUR and genuinely thinks he earned it. Or maybe it's his abuse of women. Or, maybe it's how he bullies government agencies that are investigating car accidents and fires. Or, maybe it's his weird breeding ideas. Or many it's his hatred of trans people. Or, maybe it's how he ruined twitter and turned it into right wing hate speech site? Or, maybe it's how he's constantly lying about the state of FSD. Or, maybe it's how he finances ALL of his companies with our tax dollars, but we get nothing in return? So many options." When her son challenged Mark Zuckerberg to a fight, it was Mother Maye who intervened, thereby saving her son from what many thought would be a public whooping at the hands of a much smaller but very well-trained foe. The battle of the billionaires never happened. ✘

Perhaps it is not surprising that Elon's greatest defender is his mother. Her naïve logic, forged within the crucible-bubble of extreme wealth, casts sceptics as bullies and critics as hatemongers. Afterall, her son is trying to save the world.



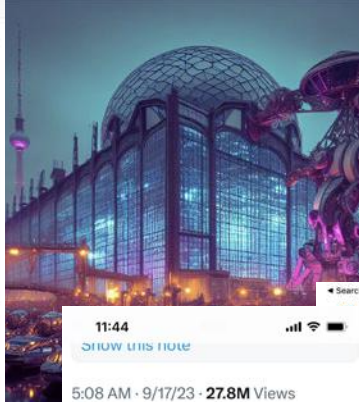
Donate Today to Mothers Offended by Millionaire Shaming.

*All donations to M.O.M.S. will go to support the Billionaires Are People Too Home for Media Re-education as well as the fund for hype re-assignment surgery, and the Musk K-12 Academy for the Children of Oligarchs.

Berlin in 70 years... most advanced factory in the world. Tesla CEO Elon Musk, a cyborg with the conscious of former CEO Elon Musk loaded into the most advanced cybernetic brain in the world.

Elon Musk @elonmusk · 23h
 ... interesting. Hungary is ... hard to address their birth ... problem.

Tucker Carlson @tcarlson · 1d
 ... 20 Hungary shares a ... order with Ukraine. We ... vealed to Budapest to ... peak with the country's ... prime minister, Viktor Orbán.



11:44
 SHOW THIS FILE
 5:08 AM · 9/17/23 · 27.8M Views
 38.3K Reposts 1,817 Quotes
 191K Likes 2,538 Bookmarks

Roman Empire and its fall because they know the same thing is happening to our civilization.

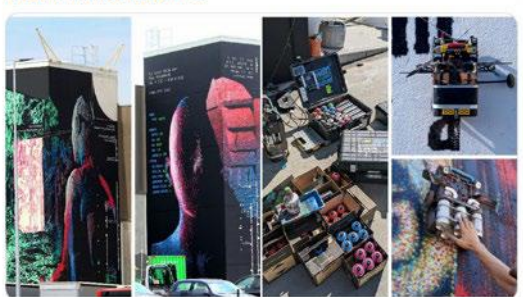
1,487 2,204 18.4K 1.1M

Elon Musk @elonmusk · 1h
 A major part of the fall of Rome was low birth rates

364 257 2,017 50.5K

Wanda Hudson @wanda_hudson · 6h
 The media seems to under report wrong to white males. They seem more likely to express outrage if a "marginalized" group is targeted. I don't think it's my imagination.

GigaFactory Berlin-Brandenburg @Gf4Tesla
 #GigaBerlinBrandenburg
 "Our technology will help humanity to the next level of consciousness through uplifting art"
 Mihkel Joala, the inventor and co-founder of Robot Muralist. Painter of some #GigaGraffiti on the GIGABERLIN, interesting technology.
robotmuralist.com/about-us



6:24 AM · Jun 17, 2022

Michael Smith @Shotgunhunter1-3h
 Free speech on X



Wembanwagon @wembanwagon · 3h
 Imagine getting sued by this:



Post your reply



10 replies · 455 likes

From EnoughMuskSpam community on **Reddit**

PAID CONTENT Smartfeed



Elon Musk Reads 100+ Books A Year - He Recommends These 9 for Turning Your Life...
 Ever since he was a kid, Elon Musk—the CEO of Tesla and now the second-richest person in the...
 Blinkist: Elon Musk's Reading List

Wednesday 07:52

Elon Musk's path forward

Today 12:05

...aster than Ferraris, ...s, & pretty much all oth...

...y phone to control the ...ven make the tesla fart.

...f gas lol) No more gas ...t plug it in & charge fro...

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dannypowers8688
 Unethical to the limit.



6:20 AM · Aug 21, 2023 · 17.1K Views

122 Reposts 18 Quotes 589 Likes

Elon Musk Strange legacy

About ... every c... enterin... southe...

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Elon Musk CALLED IT ONE IT AT NY AND RO APP AND V EVER LIKE , JULY 25,

18h ...



< yahoo! Get App

Elon Musk Associates Say His Strange Behavior May Be Related to Ketamine Habit

Noor Al-Sibai
Wed, August 23, 2023, 2:11 PM CDT · 2 min read



Billionaire Elon Musk's increasingly erratic behavior and decision making may, according to some people close with him, be due to an alleged increase in ketamine use.

In Ronan Farrow's sweeping and detailed look into the current [Muskworld palace intrigue](#) for *The New Yorker*, one choice tidbit stood out:

Oliver Wilderspin @OliverBY · Jun 5

12:58 PM · 7/19/23 · 16.2M Views
8,090 Retweets · 851 Quotes · 185K Likes

Tweet your reply

Subscribe

donated \$10 for charity & population

by The Musk family of Texas in

DogeDesigner @cb_doge · Jun 5

Elon Musk read the entire encyclopedia at the age of 9.

From EnoughMuskSpam community on **Reddit**

Olga @olyanik

Follow

Replying to @ElonMuskAOC and @elonmusk

It seems that some of the most competent people in the world congregate on X. Hopefully, most of the brilliant people currently living will regularly post and discuss ideas on Spaces here. Imagine if Ancient Greece or the Renaissance had X and we had access to their interactions now.

5 Reposts 1 Quote 74 Likes 1 Bookmark

White Rabbit @rabbitwhit1 · 1d

Replying to @olyanik @ElonMusk

Elon Musk @elonmusk · 1d

Just arriving at Eagle Pass. Will start X livestream soon, so you can see the border situation in real-time.

5:34 PM · 9/28/23 from Earth · 259K Views

2,183 Reposts 219 Quotes 11.9K Likes 100 Bookmarks

JonnyRingo.eth @JonnyRingo711 · 4m

Interesting. Why are you taking a personal interest in this?

JonnyRingo.eth @JonnyRingo711 · 40s

Haha I see ppl looked really deeply into this Q. I was more asking why he was taking time to spotlight this himself. I do care about the subject, but always ponder political interest in every situation.

Klay Thompson @Thompsonklay · 2m

Elon doing more investigative journalism on X via a live stream than any mainstream "journalist" currently is

Ahmed

This is a guy that is literally - in at least some ways - charting the course of human history and you guys are going to sit behind your computer screen criticizing this guy pretending to even have a SEMBLANCE of what it takes to do what this guy has done?

5m Haha Reply Message 1

Donald J. Trump · 16h

DONALDJTRUMP

MUG SHOT — AUGUST 2023

Elon Musk @elonmusk · 4h

The woke mind virus is killing Western Civilization.

Google does the same thing with their search results. Facebook & Instagram too.

And Wikipedia.

New York Post @nypost · 8h

Today's cover: 'Absurdly woke': Google's AI chatbot spits out 'diverse' images of Founding Fathers, popes, Vikings trib.al/SpoYqri

Google's woke AI makes Vikings black and the pope a woman ... and this is an image you get for 'Founding Father'

HISTORY MESSIN'

9.7K 2.9K 118K 12M

10m ...



3,732 15.9K

2 million people - from country on Earth - are crossing through the US border every year.

number is rising rapidly, yet preventive action is taken by current administration.

Melugin @Bill... · 3h

total free for all in Eagle Pass right now. Mass illegal immigration taking place for an hour and a half.

past 2 years to the day we have 15,000+ Haitians under the bridge in Del Rio, we now have thousands of Venezuelans entering under Eagle Pass.

2.7M views



Psychedelic

ELON

Laura Zephram

There is a rumor in my hometown of Austin, Texas, that someone is providing magic mushrooms to our local mega-billionaire, which shouldn't surprise anyone who has followed his public statements in the last few years. Even before he purchased Twitter as his own personal bulletin board, Musk tweeted an image of a Ziplock bag stuffed with shrooms along with the phrase, "FOUND ANOTHER WAY TO GET TO MARS." In another tweet he claimed he "talked to many more people who were helped by psychedelics & ketamine than SSRIs & amphetamines." By summer 2023, *The New Yorker* had noticed his rave-like rhetoric and suggested that excessive levels of ketamine might be fueling his increasingly erratic behavior.

It's weird to imagine the world's richest man on mushrooms, tripping to his private technicolor visions of Martian conquest while swaying awkwardly to his self-produced EDM tracks, hermetically sealed in a psychotropic reverie—yet one that paradoxically has massive real-world reverberations. After all, Musk's whims can determine whether the Ukrainian army can use his Starlink satellites in their campaign against the Russian invasion or whether an antisemitic meme gets major traction on Twitter/X thanks to his endorsement.

Musk may be the most famous example of the psychedelic oligarch, but lesser-known titans are tripping hard on his heels. Tim Ferris, the millionaire business guru who wrote *The 4-Hour Workweek*, says that "almost all the billionaires he knows are using hallucinogens regularly." Similarly, a financial analyst wrote in 2020 that "it was an 'open secret' that many billionaires, Silicon Valley employees, inventors, and other high performers regularly used psychedelics like magic mushrooms—often

in small doses—to help enhance their productivity and creativity." At least in certain sectors and at certain ranks, big business is embracing the psychedelic revolution.

Moreover, psychedelics are an increasingly lucrative business for companies racing to bring new products and treatments to market. Some are even trying to patent the rituals and aesthetics associated with psychedelic therapy sessions. Muted tones, soft furniture, and gentle hand holding could become the intellectual property of Musk associate Peter Thiel, which prompted *Mother Jones* magazine to wonder if the right-wing billionaire was "trying to monopolize the astral plane?"

Strange times indeed. To my mind, there is something a little disconcerting about a CEO on acid, deep in a conversation with a technicolor Vishnu and a levitating Abe Lincoln, vomiting ayahuasca into a bucket before clicking on their Zoom to announce layoffs. Maybe such scenarios are unsettling because they represent the odd malleability of the psychedelic experience: sociopathic behaviors might be unleashed as often as liberating ones.

I'm troubled by what I call shroomwashing, in which CEOs use the rhetoric of psychedelic transformation to signal the depth of their vision and wisdom, and implicitly, their right to rule over us. It's a little spooky to imagine oligarchs performing counterculture rituals of transformation in the name of enhanced productivity and profit. Going on a podcast to humblebrag about your "evolved CEO consciousness" is not the same as improving conditions for workers or making sustainable products.

Maybe it hints at something especially sinister in the current operation of capital when its power brokers can descend into a psychological free fall and still return to earth with their labor practices unchanged. This is why the ecstasy of capital is highly “concerning,” to borrow Musk’s trite response to all matters on social media.

Oligarchs on acid are still oligarchs.

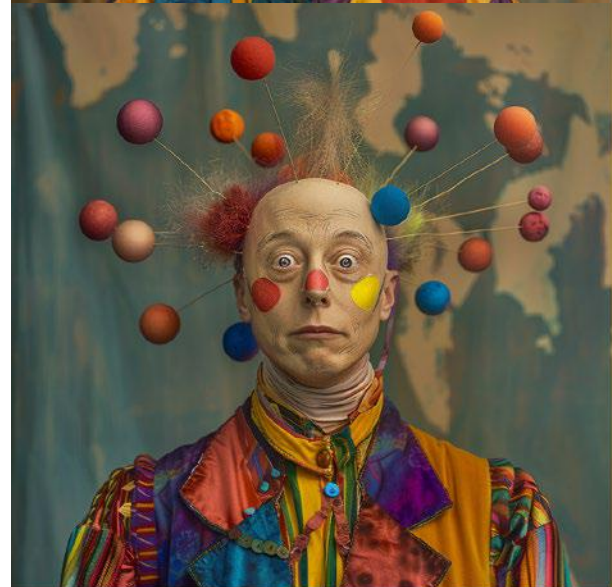
So, what constitutes this new ecstasy of capital, which I envision as a cynically spiritualized and psychologically destabilized mode of production for trippy billionaires? I see at least five essential elements in the mix.

TECH BRO UTOPIANISM. There is an obvious Burning-Man utopianism in the Muskian desire to engineer and unlock new forms of human potential for corporate benefit. This higher state of being (and earnings) depends on a transformed consciousness in workers and bosses alike, one that allows management to claim proprietary insights about the future of production while requiring workers to adopt a groovy acceptance of spiritualized hierarchy.

CHILL AUTHORITARIANISM. Are we ignoring Musk’s old school domination of labor when we focus on him smoking blunts with Joe Rogan, being the poster boy of bro capitalism, or talking about the time he went to Burning Man with Grimes? Of course. Because of his slouching style, halting speech, and drug references, it is easy to overlook the most obvious fact about him: his authoritarian essence, his obvious will to power, his antidemocratic streak, his faux populism, and his Trump-style trolling of enemies to impress his worshippers and consolidate his power. He’s a robber baron in flip flops.

BLITZKRIEG ACCELERATIONISM. Outré British theorist Nick Land’s nihilistic, rightwing techno “accelerationism” is also in the Musky stew because it outlines a distorted utopianism for the digital master race. With his Neuralink project in particular, Musk embraces what Macedonian philosopher Ljubisha Petrushevski calls “the acceleration of the forces of production to disclose the invasion of posthuman, mechanistic Singularity.” While the Left struggles to tell meaningful stories about technology and our collective future generally, the right “intensively charges itself with the destabilizing power of the technological future using fictional myths to announce the rupture of the present by some future AI revolution,” as Petrushevski has put it in an article called “The Fast and the Negative: Dialectics and Posthumanism.” His conclusion is worth repeating here: “In short, the left opts for the revision of the old proven ideas while the right is busy generating new myths, even if they have been proven false. It comes as no surprise that the right accelerationism dominates the political imaginary nowadays.”

TYPICAL RANDIAN CLAPTRAP. As usual, Randian libertarian “visionary founder” rhetoric also has an important role for the vision-questing psychedelic CEOs of today. After all, the “Great Man” theory of history for the digital age, shaped by 20th century sci-fi tropes that historian Jill Lepore has described, is the foundation of Elon’s worldview. In this sense he is a self-mythologizing creature who has drunk from the well of libertarian science fiction, casting himself with Randian vigor as the ultimate “maker” and weaving a narrative that grants the techno-future to him and his psychedelically “enlightened” disciples. Anthropologist Joanna Steinhardt, author of a dissertation on mushrooms, describes psychedelics as “mind-manifesting, god-generating, divinatory, curative, and unstable forces.” It seems that psychedelic billionaires see themselves as the natural beneficiaries and intermediaries of such powerful substances. If Musk’s self-fashioning is not as a divine figure per se (so far!), he has certainly assumed a priestly and prophetic role of ushering humanity to a new future whose terms he dictates.





ROI (as the MBAs would put it). Finally, old fashioned “return on investment” is as crucial as ever, even for shroom chomping CEOs. Extraordinary profits can be made in the “gold rush” in an undeveloped sector of mental health, as well as from making workers more compliant and more productive in any field in which psychedelic managerialism is adopted. Whether psychedelics will produce truly compliant workers is another story.

As a psychedelic billionaire, Elon Musk is both sui generis and part of a long tradition of medicated management. After all, the Yuppies of the 1980s were often cocaine-fueled productivity machines, and the executives of Madison Avenue embarked on one long booze cruise in the Mad Men era. Psychedelics are the new chapter in that old story, but they add something genuinely unpredictable and strange to the mix. My fear is that psychedelics are infusing the boardroom at companies like Tesla with an unstable new energy whose full impact is impossible to anticipate. ✘



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“Tesla has done more to help the environment than all other companies combined,” he said. “It would be fair to say, therefore, as the leader of the company, I’ve done more for the environment than any single human on Earth.”



Vegas Loopy

THE PERILS OF URBAN MUSKISM

There's nothing else in the world like the Vegas Loop, which sounds impressive until you find out why. Most US cities have rolled their eyes at Elon Musk's proposal to tunnel under their streets for the benefit of a small fleet of Tesla taxis. Even cities that have expressed some interest in Musk's Austin-based Boring Company bringing their magic tunnels to town have been sorely disappointed. According to the Wall Street Journal, the Boring Company "ghosted" them whenever legal or engineering obstacles popped up. Only Las Vegas, quite characteristically, has been willing to bet on Musk's strange tunnel vision.

Barely a glimmer in the billionaire's eye a few years earlier, born of a moment he was stuck in LA traffic and tweeted in annoyance about the need for a radical solution, the Vegas Loop opened its first tunnels in 2021. When a massive expansion of the tunnel network was announced in early 2023, potentially increasing the number of stations from four to more than 60, I flew to Vegas to look at what had been accomplished so far and what Las Vegas and other cities might expect next from the controversial South African entrepreneur.

So far, so meh. Limited to only four small stops along a very short route, the Loop is not much more than a curiosity in its present form. But that doesn't mean it's insignificant, either to Vegas or Musk. More than an unorthodox response to Vegas's transportation problems, the project is emblematic of something deep in Musk's worldview, something at the core of his ambitions.

While I am interested in the Loop as a person who cares about sustainable cities, I am more worried about a broader phenomenon I call Muskism, which is a virulent new strain of charismatic techno-capitalism reshaping the places where the billionaire's companies are operating. In addition to Las Vegas, Musk has a global reach with his massive Tesla "Gigafactories" in Berlin, Shanghai, Texas, Nevada, New York, and Monterrey, Mexico; fiery SpaceX launches on a fragile ecosystem in Boca Chica, Texas; and a new Tesla lithium processing plant in the works near the coastal city of Corpus Christi, Texas. Along with his headquarters in Austin, Texas, many of his key projects are in the US west, with huge investments in California, Nevada, and Texas that make him one of the key figures in the region—he wasn't wearing that black t-shirt and ten-gallon cowboy hat at a Tesla launch for nothing.

His Western affectation is troubling because Muskism is a neurotic mode of celebrity entrepreneurship that revolves around one man's erratic personality, his bottomless need for attention, his childish sci-fi infused futurism, his willingness to mock and bully vulnerable people, and his narcissistic vision of himself as the primary guardian of humanity's destiny. Musk has positioned himself as the visionary entrepreneur who will save the world, but with a bullying twist (his employees are told to keep their distance from him to protect them from his almost random, rage-fueled terminations on the factory floor). To fulfill his edgelord messiah complex, Musk presents himself as

STATION CLOSED

LAS VEGAS CONVENTION C

VEGAS
LOOP

So far, so meh.



the master of all subjects and skills, bound together by a rudimentary form of technological determinism. He relies on typical Silicon Valley assumptions about finding a dramatic technological “fix” for every problem, but instead of creating digital products like websites, databases, or online stores like his Big Tech peers, Musk is primarily a bricks-and-mortar operator who has a surprisingly amount in common with the railroad barons of the late 19th century or auto manufacturers of the early 20th century. No doubt, he has an undeniably bold vision of IRL action that includes cars, rockets, batteries, and tunnels that he claims will remake human existence. His critics might wince at his overblown rhetoric as much as his unsavory antics, but it is undeniable his companies are building things that few companies have succeeded in creating at a similar scale.

That does not make them a social good. Taking a page from the political playbook of Republicans in the US where he has increasingly found his closest allies, Musk expects the public to believe that a private tunnel network under a major US city is necessary, beneficial, and inevitable; that local or state governments are incapable of providing for our collective needs; and that the only real solutions will come from solitary tech-geniuses like himself. This exclusionary framework is what the theorist Mark Fisher famously called “capitalist realism,” which is “a pervasive atmosphere” that shapes “not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and [acts] as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action, resulting in a ‘business ontology’ in which it is simply obvious that everything in society, including healthcare and education, should be run as a business.” With the civic “disruption” of the Loop, Musk is trying to privatize an important part of the urban fabric, namely its

He could have offered routes to the world’s biggest sex bike at the Erotic Heritage Museum, or the amazing jam room in the new punk rock museum, or the world’s largest weed store, Planet 13, all in less touristy parts of town where normal people live and work.

mass transit, thereby killing the accountability that public ownership can provide. Mass transit can take us on a very strange ride when it’s a private business driven by a single individual, especially one who is not very familiar with the cities in question—and most especially one with increasingly disturbing



authoritarian compulsions. But first let me explain something about Vegas, which might be America’s weirdest and most wasteful city.

In 1976 I was a sneaky 10-year-old kid trying to play a slot machine in the old Dunes casino on the Vegas strip, only to have my arm grabbed by a security guy who gave me a “hell no” frown and sent me back to my parents’ table. In the decades since I’ve been coming back to this beautiful but exploited basin in the Mojave on a regular basis—not every year, for sure, because my soul could not withstand that much of its arid decadence, but often enough to know that Vegas is a very weird place that makes very strange choices about its development. Whatever moral chaos Hunter S.

Thompson famously detected in the local atmosphere during the Nixon years has only gotten crazier, more spectacular, and far more lucrative.

No matter what its local defenders might say, and those have included interesting figures like the art critic Dave Hickey, waking up in Vegas feels inherently dirty, at least for anyone who cares about healthy, well-designed cities. Even if you can greet the morning with a clean conscience about the previous night, free from the usual Sin City transgressions that precipitate the loss of a marriage or a home, you still feel—or probably should feel—a twinge of guilt by

association. You might easily wonder, should this massive city even be here, growing at a record pace, in an ecologically sensitive valley devoid of water? And more specifically you might ask, is there anything in the realm of urban planning that is as absurd, wasteful, and dumb as the Vegas strip? With its endless orgy of spectacular consumption, it functions like a four mile long middle finger to urban sustainability and good taste—which is emblematic of a city where turbo-charged development, ominous expanses of asphalt and concrete, severe congestion, grave water scarcity, serious air pollution, and five billion pounds of trash per year conspire to create the most unsustainable city in America—and not surprisingly, the fastest-warming

city as well. When viewed through this lens, Vegas is a hideous thing.

But that's not how the strip is generally understood or experienced. Close to 40 million visitors each year make it one of the top travel destinations in the world, and Vegas is at the top of the list for population growth for reasons other than low taxes and cheap buffets. The city has attracted thousands of talented chefs and performers who make the meals and put on the shows that are genuinely impressive. It offers thousands of good jobs and relatively low housing costs. And the beauty of the surrounding natural landscape is undeniable—especially where it remains undeveloped. The low humidity means the weather is wonderful in the mornings and evenings even on the hottest days. What I'm suggesting is that other stories could be told here, and better futures could emerge. With proper limits on its environmental impact and population growth and a greater attention to mass transit and other urban necessities, Vegas could become a promising place to live or visit for something other than the cheap thrills of the casino floor.

For now, however, its urban woes are unmistakable. Thanks to its laser focus on sex, food, and money, the strip's infrastructure of desire has little room for other human needs. Mass transit is woefully inadequate and walkability is a joke—it's painfully difficult to walk between casinos or even across the strip. There's not enough shade from the brutal heat. It's hard to find healthy food. And the harsh sounds of the strip are a stark contrast to the silence of the desert just a few miles away. Clogged with traffic, it's often noisy beyond belief, like rush hour Manhattan without the architectural beauty. Instead, pedestrians appear tipsy, amped up, beat down, scheming, hustling, and dreaming as they move noisily between structures the size of the pyramids—literally in the case of the Egyptian-themed Luxor casino. The sonic experience of the strip is further marred by the dull thud of bass and auto-tuned arias that rarely let

up—the dumbest brand of dance music is grimly omnipresent. If you ever wonder who listens to, say, anything by Vanilla Ice, the answer is sunburnt people wandering the strip with a giant daiquiri in tow. To be fair, they didn't ask to hear this kind of music, which seems at odds with either their young age or gnarly Metallica tattoos, but they seem to endure it uncomplainingly because the strip is officially fun, and we are officially having fun whether we like it or not! It's an impressive mental feat, perhaps related to the absence of open container laws that allow alcohol to flow more abundantly than water—or more recently, the legality

of marijuana in the state. The constant smell of weed is a new feature of the strip, although I'm surprised it wasn't legal all along in a state where sex work has long been celebrated like it was missionary work, which I suppose it generally was. All this combines to make the heart of Las Vegas into a pedestrian nightmare—it's like walking inside a pinball machine filled with flashing lights and revving engines. Even brief spells of strolling on the strip are ill advised because this is an urban planning free fire zone, a flesh, steel, and concrete jumble where cars press too close to vulnerable crowds that swell drunkenly over the curbs until the traffic cops blow whistles and wave their flashlights in dismay.

Relief won't be coming from the city or state leaders who bow to the gambling industry, local developers, and conservative retirees who demand low taxes. And it won't be coming from the 60 casinos that are doing just fine with the lucrative status quo. These places have prospered for decades by repeating a simple pattern that doesn't pay much attention to transportation or mobility. Instead, they start with a theme that could have been conjured by a dim child: Paris! Italy! NYC! Egypt! Circus! Rock music! Pink flamingos! Mussolini! (Well, not yet). Then they erect a hyperbolic structure that eliminates any semblance of nuance to maximize its visual impact. At the front there is always a showy entrance that pulls you into a seductive zone of internal spectacle—a shark tank, a hot air balloon made of flowers, a simulated French street, or a chocolate fountain that splatters viscous brown goo on a glass tray in a manner that is distinctly fecal (thanks Bellagio!). But streaming turd fountains are not the only treat for guests on the strip. Even if gambling is the main event for many people, high end restaurants, spas, theaters, and shops provide a lot of competition on a casino floor that often feels like a super-upscale mall filled with tipsy weekenders and beleaguered cocktail waitresses.



When I stepped onto the elevator, I was suddenly self-conscious about the racist billionaire's face on my chest.

People are spending way too much time thinking about climate change, way too little thinking about AI.

— Peter Thiel

AI stresses me out.

— Elon Musk

There is some chance that is above zero that AI will kill us all. I think it's low. But if there's some chance, I think we should also consider the fragility of human civilization.

— Elon Musk

Elon Musk warned in a new interview that artificial intelligence could lead to "civilization destruction," even as he remains deeply involved in the growth of AI through his many companies.

— CNN.com, April 2023

By far the greatest danger of artificial intelligence is that people conclude too early that they understand it.

— Eliezer Yudkowsky

An AI that could design novel biological pathogens. An AI that could hack into computer systems. I think these are all scary.

— Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI

It's hard to overstate how big of an impact AI and machine learning will have on society over the next 20 years.

— Jeff Bezos

It's no revelation that the strip has little in common with the noble Greek agora. But it bears repeating that it's one of the most decadent, superficial, and wasteful spots in a country that invests heavily in at those three things. Yet this is where Elon Musk chose to focus the energies and resources of his tunneling company. He could have chosen any place in the US, but he chose an elaborate urban bullshit zone for a network of tunnels that he calls "the Loop" even though it only runs in a straight line.

Granted, Musk's project will get loopier in the years ahead. It has approval for 65 miles of new tunnels with 69 stations, a number surely chosen to titillate the billionaire's adolescent sense of humor, but so far it has only completed an initial tunnel that runs a short distance from the luxury retail and gambling mecca called Resort World to three parts of the undeniably vast Convention Center. We could generously call it the pilot stage of the Loop, and it has not been a resounding success. When I arrived for a research trip in May 2023, the whole system was "out of order" for two weeks with no reason given, like a restaurant that closes because no one has dined there for ages. A single Tesla was parked at the above ground station with no cars or people in sight. It was vaguely ominous to see an expensive high-tech project at a standstill with no explanation. I could barely peek into the tunnel. Many locals seem equally mystified—even in 2023, the Loop was surprisingly unknown to the residents I met. When I talked to Vegas locals, including a dozen Uber drivers who might be expected to know about their subterranean competition, they seemed either dismissive or unaware of it.

The location is another mystery: Why put it here on a sad landscape between the strip and the convention center? On its east end, we find the ultra-high-end shopping of the Resort World Casino but also the ramshackle stores across the street that include massage parlors, grubby marijuana dispensaries, and a small office that rents out Lamborghinis to tourists

looking to make an impression on Instagram. The Loop could have connected North Vegas to benefit the impoverished neighborhoods there, but no, that doesn't conform to Musk's juvenile sense of "cool". More eccentrically, he could have offered routes to the world's biggest sex bike at the Erotic Heritage Museum, or the amazing jam room in the new punk rock museum, or the world's largest weed store, Planet 13, all in less touristy parts of town where normal people live and work. But no: it's all about casinos and conventions, which are distinctly uncool.

Looking at this initial route as well as the plans for a massive expansion begs a question. Why does a supposedly visionary billionaire, looking for his first big urban project, chose to create a transportation system that might (maybe!) somewhat shorten the time between casinos in the most environmentally destructive and aesthetically infantile city in America? Is it a noble undertaking to provide a new kind of infrastructure for bachelor parties and wasted conventioners cruising for sex workers and loose slots? It seems dubious--but that presumes that the billionaire understands the site in the first place.

Because of his messianic aura of omniscience eco-salvation, Musk doesn't always get the scrutiny he deserves (especially in the years before he bought Twitter and gave us a real-time glimpse of his ketamine-fueled brain). Does he understand or even care what Vegas is? Or does he just like the idea of Sin City and the attention it generates? He often seems so performatively "big picture" with his "genius" posturing that he seems to lose sight of what matters in actual human lives. This is why I am worried that his project in Vegas solves nothing and instead only adds to the chaos and waste of the city—which is not exactly what you would expect from a billionaire who positions himself as the key architect of our collective future, if not the leading figure in sustainable transportation.

On the other hand, Musk might say,

what does Vegas have to lose? It costs them little to build or run The Loop. "It's a very interesting project where a developer comes to us and says, we want to build a private transportation system, we want to connect the airport, we want to connect the strip, and we want to connect downtown. And we want to do it all with our own money," Mike Janssen, the Executive Director of Infrastructure for Las Vegas, told the local news. "If a casino or hotel wants to build a station on their property, they'll have to spend the millions themselves to fund it."

I guess. But even if it's self-funded with the intention of recouping costs from future fees, Musk's "Boring Project" may still be an anagram for boondoggle. Instead of addressing water scarcity or affordable housing, Musk is accelerating the Disneyfied dumbness of Vegas with a glorified amusement park ride that lets a few people zip through a brightly lit tunnel in a magical electric car—at least on the days that it's open.

I stayed just off the strip in the Virgin Hotel and Casino, which is the former Hard Rock Casino. Six months prior, while reporting on an event in Austin, Texas where Elon-obsessed crypto-companies handed out swag, I got a free shirt depicting Elon Musk on a gleaming rocket. I only wear it at home, and even there, quite ironically. However, on this morning, I wore it on the elevator to go downstairs and get coffee. When I stepped onto the elevator, I was suddenly self-conscious about the racist billionaire's face on my chest because there were two older Black people on the elevator. And I turned to them and said, "I'm sorry. It was a free shirt. Uh... I don't like him." They peered at my shirt, chuckled, and said earnestly, "Who is that guy?"

The truth is that he's a mystery, and his ambitions in Vegas remain unclear. But a few things are clear to me after a week in the desert. I don't like to gamble. I don't want to see David Copperfield. And I certainly don't want to ride in the Tesla taxi tunnels.



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PICKLES
SOUPS

BAGELS & SHMEAR
Waffles
KOSHER DOGS
EGGS • LOX • BLINTZES • KUGEL • COFFEE • JUICES • CREAM SODA
MAYZAN BALL SOUP
POIARO LAGER

LAS VEGAS

Of course, Musk and his rabid admirers will not admit defeat. For his fans, the expensive urban chaos of Vegas is a perfect recipe for him to show up like electric Superman: Elon ex machina! Gloria in Excelsius Deo! For he is risen from the woke mob to redeem us—or something like that. To accomplish this requires a bold strategy for Vegas, but instead Musk's Boring Company has created a strangely modest proposal in offering an EV taxi tunnel with pretty lights. I was astonished to learn you can't drive yourself even if you have your own Tesla, which is the only kind of car allowed in the proprietary tunnels. Instead, you wait to get in a car, ride underground for a few minutes, and emerge a few blocks away, not much faster than a person can walk between a few close-by destinations. It's an urban anticlimax.

Many questions remain regarding the Loop and its owner. What is the long-term impact of Muskism on the places across the American west where Space X, Tesla, and the Boring Company are operating? Even for those who celebrate his products for easing the transition to EVs but wish to distance themselves from his unsavory political vision and bullying personality, we should ask if it's even possible to admire his companies but reject Musk? Can a city reap the imagined benefits of Muskism without getting Musk's toxic sediment seeping into the water table, figuratively and literally? Can we see clearly what he is offering, or is he moving too fast, on a scale that defies easy comprehension? Just as he has allegedly gotten liposuction and cheek implants (at least according to his detractors), the billionaire is performing a kind of plastic surgery on capitalism that makes it appear smoother, greener, and more attractive while still being the same old exploitation with a techno-messianic twist.

I have a theory about where all this is heading. If you ride the Vegas Loop from the Convention Center to the Resort World casino at its eastern terminus, you can walk outside and see the real destination of all things Musk. From the street corner just south of Resort World, you can look east from the strip and get a clear view of the tallest residential condo in Nevada, the gleaming golden-brown slab down the street with a former president's name on top: the Trump International Hotel. All hype, all vanity, no substance, no sustainability—Musk's Vegas experiment is where Muskism reveals itself as little more than a tech-heavy version of Trumpism's narcissistic grifter-capitalism. And more than another example of Vegas' failing, the Loop is a potent metaphor for where Musk is headed with his Trump-style braggadocio, hype, and tolerance of risk (as in, highly leveraged firms that often ran dangerously close to the red in their early days). He is Trumpy in his extreme bullying of dissenters and critics. He has a similar skeleton in his closet when it comes to sexual harassment. He has the same grandiose rhetoric of salvation with a Manichean spin (Elon good, critics bad!), and shares Trump's disdain for journalists who are all out to get him (allegedly). Also like Trump, Musk puts an extreme concentration of value in himself as CEO. Ultimately celebrity Elon is the indispensable CEO: he is the brand, just as Trump is his brand. And finally, just like Trump, Musk is making promises he can't be bothered to keep. ✘



COLONIZE MARS

The indifference to the living predicament of people in a world marked by profound inequality is a hallmark of Musk's techno-optimism. The "Missions: Mars" webpage for Space X features a photo-realistic illustration of a wholesome family looking out over a scenic Martian landscape from the serene comfort of their living room. A quote attributed to Elon Musk floats above: "You want to wake up in the morning and think the future is going to be great - and that's what being a space-faring civilization is all about. It's about believing in the future and thinking that the future will be better than the past. And I can't think of anything more exciting than going out there and being among the stars." This statement is the epitome of techno-optimism; you'd be crazy to reject the sentiment, but you'd be a fool to take it on face value.

Some people *do* wake up in the morning wanting to think that the future is going to be great: and for them that might be food, safety, some basic dignity. Elon has no time for this. For Musk the humans of the future are his benefactors and the Red Planet is his gift to them. ✘





You want to wake up in the morning and think the future is going to be great
- and that's what being a spacefaring civilization is all about.

It's about believing in the future and thinking that the future will be better than the past.
And I can't think of anything more exciting than going out there and being among the stars.

-Elon Musk



A TITANIC SUCCESS!

RICHARD RIDER

There was a time when no one wanted their company associated with the Titanic, the 1912 maritime disaster that has become one of our leading symbols of irony and corporate hubris. But even the ultimate symbol of failure can be creatively misused if the speaker is dense or cynical enough. In 2016, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson promoted the massively disruptive Brexit scheme as a "Titanic Success," reflecting a massive misreading or indifference to history. While on the surface it was a casual (if deeply ironic) slip of the tongue it does resonate with a larger pattern of expression from hype-nogenic entrepreneurs attracted to the aesthetics of might and power. The appropriation, to add insult to injury, is based either on a misreading or an indifference to history.

these films "and are excited by them, because the magic brutality of the films celebrates the terrible and despicable beauty of their fighting skills. Fight, rape, war, pillage, burn. Filmic images of death and carnage are pornography for the military man" (6-7). While many viewers seem to accept anti-war films on face value, other audiences are willing to creatively misread them for their own self-interest.

The same is true of Elon Musk's troubling relationship to science fiction, which is fundamental to his worldview. It may be important to him in some emotional or aesthetic sense, but that doesn't prevent him from misunderstanding even basic facts about the novels he claims to love. He is not alone in this habit of mangling

science fiction to suit his ends—tech entrepreneurs exhibit a troubling capacity to overlook the nuanced and critical aspects of the genre. Driven by the allure of futuristic technology and grand visions of progress, these entrepreneurs fall into the trap of reducing science fiction to a mere source of inspiration for product design or marketing narratives. This shallow engagement fails to grasp the deeper sociopolitical commentary, ethical dilemmas, and cautionary tales that lie at the heart of the genre.

Elon's sci-fi distortions are particularly glaring.

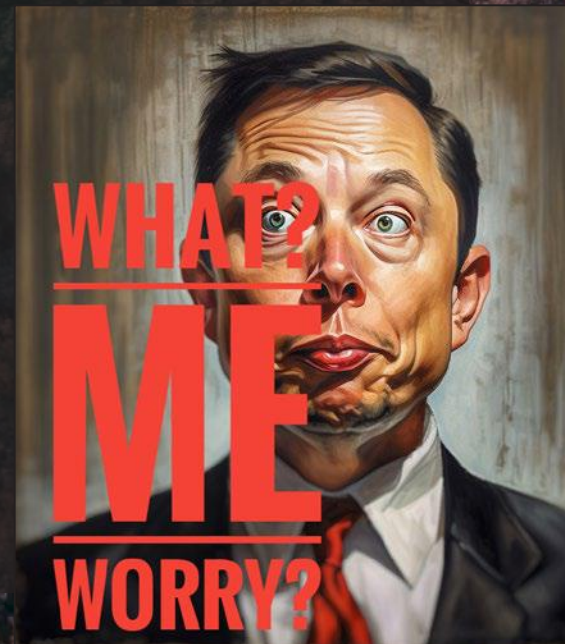
One of the walls on GigaBerlin bears the phrase: "The Spice Must Flow," a reference to David Lynch's 1984 filmic adaptation of *Dune*. In that context it was a statement about the centrality of 'spice' to the galactic empire and the cruel extractivist violence of Baron Harkonnen's spice mining operation on the planet Arakis – a planet sacrificed for the good of the empire and its inhabitants denigrated as subhuman. No doubt Musk's use of the phrase is a clever reference to meeting production targets, meant perhaps to be ironic. However, given the scale of

Tesla's ambitions or the myriad reports of overworking employees, the phrase comes across more ominously. One gets the sense that Musk's own fixation on 'saving humanity' is deeply inspired by the power of galactic empires as imagined by narrative fictions of the last hundred years. After all, the names he's given his own children are inspired by works of science fiction. For instance, he drew the name for his son Techno Mechanicus from *Warhammer 40k*. One player of the game describes the Adeptus Mechanicus as: "a cult of mad scientists able to justify the worst sorts of callous scientific experimentation through their religious zealotry."

A misreading, intentional or not, of science fiction ignores the implicit social critique in those works. Musk seems drawn to the aesthetics, in the same way some might think Nazi uniforms are cool-looking and fun to appropriate for a Halloween gag (viz. Prince Harry). It is reminiscent of the ecstatic violence of modernity expressed by early 20th Century Italian Futurists who espoused a contemptuous disregard for the past and a celebration of violent transformations. "This love of disruption and progress at all costs led [the Italian Futurists] to construct what some call 'a church of speed and violence.' They embraced fascism, pushed aside the idea of morality, and argued that innovation must never, for any reason, be hindered. Marinetti and his movement cheered, for example, when Italy invaded Northern Africa." (Eveleth 2019). They celebrated the spectacular violence and technical innovation that marked one of the first air bombardments in history.



Anthony Swofford's *Jarhead* offered a rich criticism of this phenomenon. In the movie adaptation US soldiers, on the eve of their deployment to the Arabian Peninsula, are gathered in a theater watching *Apocalypse Now*. The 'message' of the movie is apparently irrelevant to the soldiers who yell and shout in ecstatic enthusiasm. In their excitement they are transforming an anti-war film into a celebration of military destruction on a grand scale. They are going to war! Swofford's Marines watch

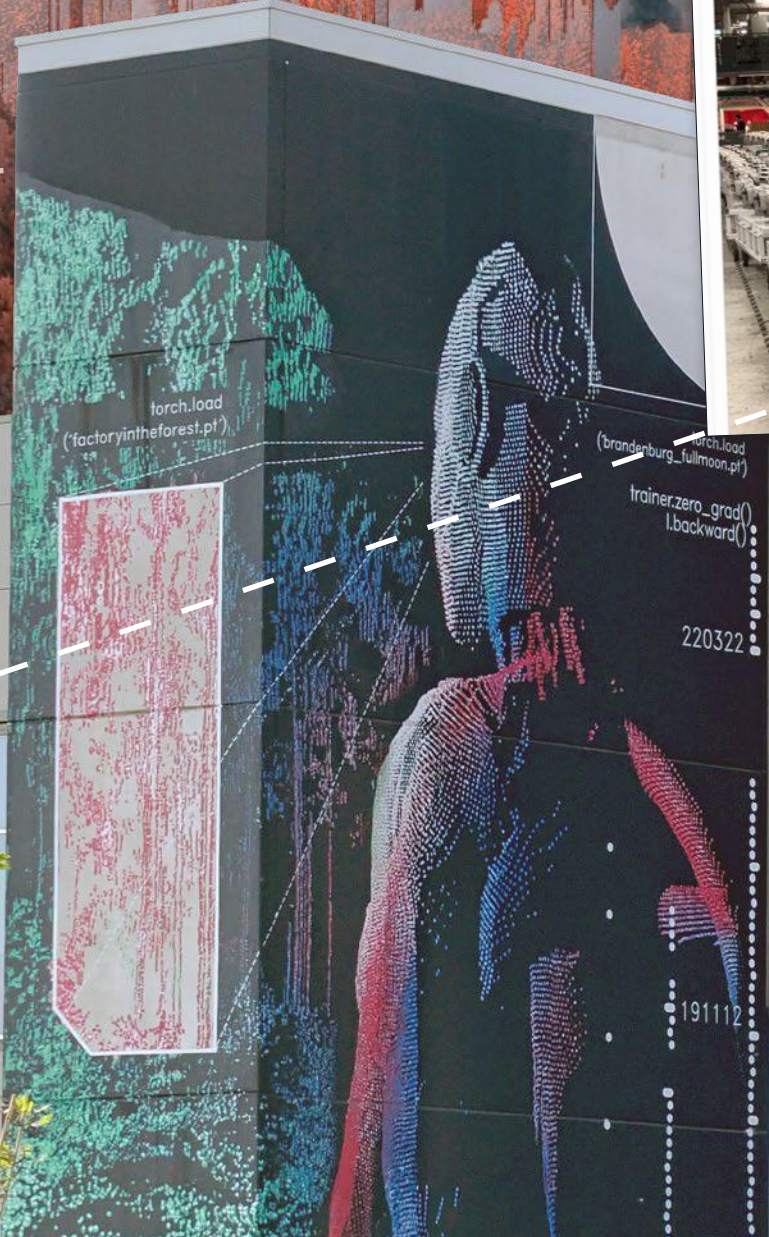


Baron Harkonnen along with Darth Vader, Thanos, Immortan Joe, the Borg Queen, and Emperor Palpatine are supposed to offer a terrifying glimpse of power in the hands of wicked people with little concern for lives of others. Their villainy is achieved not just through words and actions but also through aesthetics. For instance, George Lucas aped the scenography of Hitler's Third Reich to create the Empire in Star Wars. When Elon jokes that "the spice must flow" and has it painted on the worker's entrance to the factory, it suggests a chilling indifference to the ways in which his own empire is complicit in anti-labor movements and the acceleration of environmental degradation. While he markets his companies with environmentalist rhetoric,

his practices are quite different than his eco-hype would suggest. His commitment to individualist first-world consumer culture and his active subversion of proven mitigations like public transportation reflect a mindset that is much more Baron Harkonnen than Paul Atreides (at least before Atreides becomes a brutal holy warrior, killing billions of people around the Known Universe).

Science fiction has long served as a vehicle for exploring complex themes such as the impact of technology on society, the nature of humanity, and the consequences of unchecked scientific advancement. Neglecting these deeper layers of meaning results in a missed opportunity

to engage with the broader implications of technological innovation and its potential social ramifications. Tech entrepreneurs neglect these broader implications not at their own peril (after all they're well insulated by their wealth) but at the peril of the rest of us who must live in the worlds they influence so forcefully. Furthermore, a superficial reading of science fiction by tech entrepreneurs can perpetuate a narrow and techno-utopian worldview. By cherry-picking elements that align with their preconceived notions of progress, they fail to recognize the pitfalls, unintended consequences, and ethical dilemmas that arise from rapid technological advancement. ✘



*There is no truth in flesh, only betrayal.
There is no strength in flesh, only weakness.
There is no constancy in flesh, only decay.
There is no certainty in flesh but death.*

*The Credo Ommissiah of the Adeptus Mechanicus
(Musk names one of his children Techno Mechanicus)*



torch.load



Gigafactory Berlin News @Gf4Tesla

#GigaBerlinBrandenburg
* Our technology will help humanity to the next level of consciousness through uplifting art *
Mihkel Joala, the inventor and co-founder of Robot Muralist.
Painter of some #GigaGraffiti on the GIGABERLIN,
interesting technology.
robotmuralist.com/about-us



11:24 PM · Jun 16, 2022

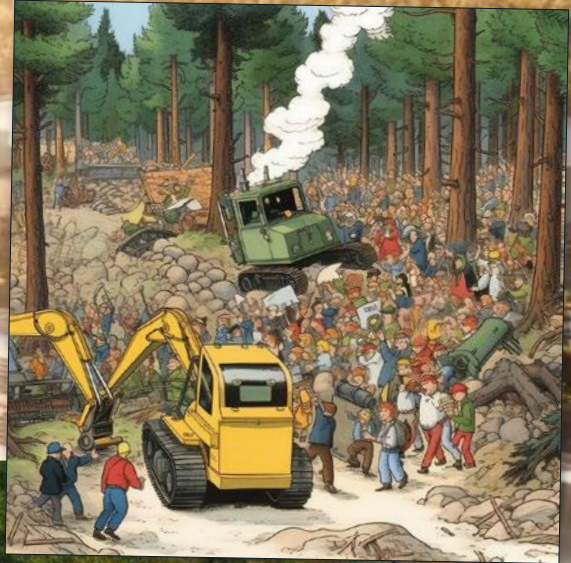


('factoryintheforest.pt')

An apparently dystopian mural decorates one of the architectural staircases at the entrance of Tesla Gigafactory 5, Berlin-Brandenburg. Facing the vast parking lot, the mural is a cloud map image of an android gazing out at a forest. We witness to its vision which apocalyptically seems to be turning the forest red. The work is titled "torch.load," a command used in Python programming language and an inside joke with a cryptic edge. There's a rabbit hole here, but the basics of it are a reference through PyTorch programming language to deep learning AI and computer vision. One plausible guess at its meaning points to the notion that Elon's real project is not to build a car but to build a factory. After all, he has often stated, without much specificity, that "the factory is the product." Other snippets of code on the mural suggest a "fully ramped up" production line as well as the extensive integration of automation.

Given the context it is difficult not to see the image as one of extractivist appraisal gazing out over a forest that once was a military base and that once stood adjacent to a Stasi mail-sorting facility. The mural itself was created by Estonian muralist Mikkel Joala and his robot Albert. While it is unclear who designed the image, Joala is reported saying: "Our technology will help humanity to the next level of consciousness through uplifting art." One wonders if such empty hype-speak is a requirement for working with Tesla, if it contains some sardonic resistance, or if it is just some kind of phatic expression with no actual meaning.

Meanwhile local residents struggle for greater protection of water and woodlands habitat, sometimes employing their own modest marks of protest graffiti. ✕



THE FUTURE IS NOW

WE ARE BUILDING UTOPIAN COMPANY TOWNS EXCLUSIVELY FOR OUR EMPLOYEES BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IN A FUTURE YOU CAN LIVE IN



Occupy Water in Grünheide

Heydi Gruen

“Does this seem like a desert to you?”

When Giga Berlin was launched in 2021, Elon Musk asked this question to dismiss concerns about the environmental impact of his massive project. His new factory complex was built just beyond the Berlin city limits in a small town called Grünheide. With its direct access to a German Autobahn and a nearby railway station, the factory has the perfect infrastructure for shipping parts and test-driving cars in high-speed conditions.

But the Gigafactory has not been a smooth ride for either Elon or the region. When regulations slowed the construction, Musk pushed hard. “Deforest first, ask later” was his strategy. In a technocratic way, the messiah effect of Elon also struck the region with its full force. After the techno-king made altruistic promises, permissions were granted at Giga-speed. It seemed like they would do anything to ensure that Grünheide got an international employer that would create jobs for the region. An infinite chain of technocratic support covers itself in promises of global salvation.

Grünheide certainly does not look like a desert. There are no dunes, no cacti, no oases, but the seemingly lush forests are a *fata morgana*. The groundwater level of the whole region is critically low. Years of mono-culture forestry have made the woods an ecological time bomb. It’s not a safe place for one of the largest factories in the world, and one that will require huge quantities of water.

Enter: the population of Grünheide. Even before Tesla started building Giga Berlin, local activists and civic movements organized vast protests against the plans. Local people knew about the water scarcity—they knew about limiting their water usage during dry and hot summers.

But in 2024, the protests reached a different level. In the tradition of left-wing anti-extractivist movements, activists occupied the forest in Grünheide. In early March 2024, the group “Tesla Stoppen” (Stop Tesla) hoisted sophisticated tree house structures and traverses up in the trees in the dead of night. After days of building and fortifying the tree houses where they will live for the months ahead, the



group went public with their protest. They publicized their actions on Instagram, X, YouTube, and Mastodon, and issued an open invitation to journalists to visit the anti-Tesla camp. The ultimate goal of the occupation is the permanent stop to any expansion plans. The activists not only occupy the forest in Grunheide, but they also call it a “water occupation” that hinders Tesla and the political decision-makers from realizing their plans of expanding the Gigafactory.

In the forest, it becomes very clear that Elon and Tesla are unwanted guests in the region. As one enters the campsite, banners express the goals of the already-grown tree house village. The impressively constructed tree houses hang at dizzying heights above the forest floor, only secured by ropes and climbing gear. The structures have to be higher than one can reach with ladders so the only way up is by climbing a single rope which can be pulled up fast and easily in case of police raids. Around ten big platforms hover ten meters above the ground, all connected with a network of traverses and ropes. This makes movement between the houses easy for the activists if the police move in. Water, food, and other needed supplies are stored in the tree houses and buckets become make-shift toilets.

Prolonging the legal protest is a constant struggle for the lawyers and the legal teams of the movement. Meanwhile, the camp also grows on the ground. More and more activists arrive every day and set up their tents in the forest. Gathering areas are created, and someone has brought a piano and a drum set for live concerts in the evenings. Bands and musicians are being invited, a white tarp serves as a projection canvas for film screenings, discussions are held multiple times a day, and experienced activists share their skills with interested newcomers. The camp has grown to almost 100 people and is buzzing with life.

At the train station, another group has set up a picket that collects donated food and supplies, cooks two warm meals per day for the squatters, provides a constant flow of coffee and tea, prepares breakfast, and hauls water from the neighborhood. Within the camp, there are action groups who build quite luxurious toilet huts and service sanitary stations. Others are constantly building walls with old window frames for the tree houses and felling trees as support beams for the houses' platforms.

The camp has a press team that offers interviews to journalists or guided tours around the camp. Some of them are constantly on the phone with the media scheduling visiting hours. From time to time, someone screams: “Mic check!” and the whole camp repeats the following message so that everyone in the camp has the latest news. “A drone will soon start filming the camp!” “Journalists from the unwanted Springer Press (a conservative, right-wing news publisher) are in the camp!” Disguises are again pulled over a vast majority of faces. The spokespeople patiently give interviews to camera and radio teams. Even a school class shows up with their teacher. The protesters happily give Q&As to



the future of the movements. Some of the protesters are still in school, too. They get up early in the morning, pack their school bag, and off they go to school. Later, they will return and work on their tree houses, hauling mattresses into the treetops or attaching walls to their sky platforms.

Everything seems coordinated. Equipment is shared across the whole camp. If your tree house needs more climbing gear or carabiners you just have to ask around. Everything in the camp is communal and except for private backpacks and sleeping bags, everything is shared. In a more remote part of the camp, there is a small space with some hastily made benches and tables, the smokers' area. Tobacco and rolling paper are stored there in abundance. Everything was brought by friends and supporters as donations for the protesters.

The camp is a utopia come true. Anarchists and punks coexist with hippies, and Antifa groups live next to esoteric, anti-civilization folk. White bourgeois leftists (with stunningly well-planned tree houses) share their space with anti-colonial activists. The camp unfolds as a refreshingly anti-hierarchical space in sharp contrast to the controlling mechanisms that surround the forest. Constantly surveilling the camp, police officers patrol the dirt roads around the camp. From time to time a police helicopter circles the vicinity, and from the nearby fence of the Gigafactory, a Tesla surveillance vehicle shines its headlights into the forest. "Sauron 18," the license plate reads, its hood flaunting the all-seeing eye of the company. Neo-Nazi groups gather in the nearby parking lot constantly threatening the safety of the squatters in the forest.

After activists set fire to a nearby electricity pole on March 5, 2024, the Gigafactory stood still for days. Of course, Elon Musk took to X and delivered some conspiracies about the protesters being controlled by someone: "These are either the dumbest eco-terrorists on Earth or they're puppets of those who don't have good environmental goals." The prime minister of Brandenburg also called them "terrorists" and announced the full force of prosecution on them. A few days later, Elon flew in for a quick visit to Giga Berlin where he was welcomed by a cheering crowd of Tesla employees. The king has returned



to put an end to the activist charade—that was the vibe of his mediatized visit. Afterward, he met with Berlin's mayor Kai Wegner (conservative), and Brandenburg's prime minister Dietmar Woidke (social democrat). The three Giga dudes agreed that the arson attack was a terrorist act against "all of us" because its goal was crushing the economic boom of the region and the destruction of workplaces.

Meanwhile, camp life continues. The place is buzzing with activity and the school class is still walking through the camp, talking to activists who happily explain everything to them. Visitors and supporters bring food, materials, and band-aids to the camp. Supporters and activists are as diverse in age, gender, background, and ideology as one can imagine from the outside. It becomes quite clear that in Elon's, Dietmar's, and Kai's "All of Us," these people are not included. ✕

ELON MUSK



**If there was a way that I could not eat,
so I could work more, I would not eat.
I wish there was a way to get nutrients
without sitting down for a meal.**

TESLA'S AVOCADO CONSTANT

D. R. Plutonium

The Tesla Gigafactory Berlin-Brandenburg is laid out like an avocado. The outer shell is a productive layer of sturdy material and hardened skin. There is no way to look inside. Like the avocado, the Gigafactory is a Black Box. You can press lightly with your fingers hoping to get some information about what is going on inside: is it ripe, soft, and therefore sweet? Or, is it still hard, watery, and a pain in the ass to make something delicious from it? At Tesla Gigafactories, only the initiates know how everything looks and feels inside. Trying to poke those who are initiated, one reencounters this sturdy, hardened shell; a circle sworn to secrecy.

“

We there saw how machinery [...] augments the number of human beings who form the material for capitalistic exploitation, how it confiscates the whole of the workman's disposable time, by immoderate extension of the hours of labor, and how finally its progress, which allows of enormous increase of production in shorter and shorter periods, serves as a means of systematically getting more work done in a shorter time, or of exploiting labor-power more intensely. (Marx, *The Capital* 1887, 283)



בבב מיונרעב עפוז

ס יוד תינרעב דויל



א.יערע לעונאנאן טא

But there are those who are allowed to peek inside and they are ready to talk.

It's a rainy day in Berlin, the sky is gray as usual in winter, and everyone is glad not to have to leave the house. But I have an appointment and I want to know about the insides of the Gigafactory. So, I meet K in a café somewhere in Berlin. He is a tall, slender 20 year old with a distinct taste in contemporary fashion and coffee. He wears his over-sized winter jacket that looks like a thick, woolly lumberjack shirt, dark wide flared jeans and black Doc Marten's. As he sees me walking in, he slightly lifts his hat and takes off his pitch black sunglasses. I say hello to which he replies with a short "Hi." The café does not speak Gigafactory at all – or at least, not "Factory!" They sell hand-roasted and perfectly balanced espresso with foamy oat milk and carefully crafted New York style cheesecake. People around us are all staring at their laptop screens, coding or writing their screenplay, I don't know. A glass wall separates the café from the coffee roasting section. "We roast coffee", is written in sterile serifless letter on the glass wall. Behind the windows, one can see the three guys operating some kind of furnace. A big screen shows some charts that one of them is constantly monitoring, the others carry around coffee bags and some canisters. I order an avocado bagel with sprouts and Nepalese timut pepper, and a cappuccino. K orders a double espresso. It should only take some more minutes for me to find out that this place, indeed, speaks Gigafactory with its lifestyle and utopias.

I am wondering: *How does the Gigafactory look from the inside?* And right away, K tells me: It is like an avocado. "You know this outer dark green flesh right behind the skin, where the fruit is sweet and mushy and where you want to scrape every little molecule off of the skin? That is the 'start-up' part of the Gigafactory. Young people working on new ground-breaking ideas like the Tesla beer, the Tesla perfume, etc. Everything is easygoing and flowing there; you feel like you're in the wet dream of a hipster from the 2010s. The 20 to 30 year olds toss around ideas and pitches. Nothing is too crazy or impossible, every idea is taken seriously. They play ping pong or take naps on one of the sofas in open co-working spaces – paid for leisure and creativity. But once you leave this sweet and mouth-watering part, you get deeper and deeper into the pulp of the avocado, everything becomes harder and the fluffy atmosphere disappears. This is where the bureaucracy sits. Finances, Controlling, Human Resources, and so on." I imagine this as a cold dark dungeon that runs on German efficiency and cool Californian mindsets. "And then, just before you reach the seed: there is a ring of conference rooms."

You know this part of the avocado, it is full of fibers and organic nets. The pieces that will get caught between your teeth and live with you for four to six hours. A nasty piece of the fruit. K continues:

"All these conference rooms overlook the manufacturing floor. You see the robots, the workers, the cars in every stage. It is an impressive perspective. And this manufacturing floor is the stone, the seed of the Gigavocado. Here the DNA is reproduced thousands and thousands of times. Outsiders,

customers, and business partners will be invited to sit in conference rooms and enjoy the view into the manufacturing processes, the simple life of the worker.”

From K’s explications it becomes clear that the Gigafactory is the perfect reversed panopticon. It is not the prison guard who sits in the center and has a clear view over all cells. Here, the manufacturing and the automatic and manual labor become the spectacle and entertainment for all the eager customers and business partners. The avocado pit displays the blunt duel of the workers against the machines.

The separation of the intellectual powers of production from manual labor, and the conversion of those powers into the might of capital over labor, is, as we have already shown, finally completed by modern industry erected on the foundation of machinery.

Marx, Capital 1887, 285

I am glad to have been offered this insight into the places of power within the Gigafactory. Like the customers and employees of the café where A and I met Gigafactory employees are bound to the same logic of labor: The ones who think work is play and being creative is the highest kind of freedom, and the ones who are watched as they hold down their job against the army of robots. Like in the avocado, and excuse my pathos, they are all part of the same thing but there are the ones that are lucky and end up on an over-priced bagel and the ones in the center who made all that possible but are discarded. I French kiss my coffee cup to get every single drop of the seven Euros coffee and head out into the gray and rainy weather again. How I wish I could curl up inside this beautiful avocado now. ✖

Some Facts

In 2022, Tesla Gigafactory Berlin-Brandenburg used 10,200,000,000 liters of water. Growing a single avocado in Chile needs around 320 liters of water. That means Tesla could grow around 32 million avocados a year with the water it uses in Berlin. Given that the average avocado is 6 inches in length and for simplicity let’s assume it has a perfectly round shape. This results in an average volume of 113 cubic inches. Roughly 70% of it is edible. That leaves us with 79 cubic inches of wonderfully delicious avocado green. Altogether, when the work is done, we’ll have 2,531,200,000 cubic inches of avocado pulp. Just sprinkle in some tomatoes and red onions, and we could fill up almost 17 Olympic swimming pools with delicious, savory Guacamole – dips for life.

PS: That would fill roughly 2013 Cybertrucks. In 2023, Tesla delivered around 500 Cybertrucks.



Some crypto bros from Arizona cooked up a crazy scheme to get rich in 2022. They would build a giant metal statue of their billionaire hero, Elon Musk, on a gleaming rocket, truck it across the desert to Texas, throw a massive party, and then deliver their offering to the Telsa Gigafactory a few miles east of Austin. If Elon accepts the gift and tweets the name of their company to his 105 million followers, it will drive naïve investors in their direction like wild horses into a desert canyon. At least that was their entire plan in all its beautiful goofiness.

I read about it on a Sunday morning in late November when it was getting global coverage as just another quirky Elon story. A few hours later, on a breezy afternoon, I arrived with two friends at an outdoor party at the Circuit of the Americas, a Formula One track that doubles as a concert venue for the likes of Elton John and Taylor Swift. It's a half hour drive from downtown Austin into a bland landscape of instant subdivisions and empty fields. My friends and I have no idea what to expect, but we relax when we pull into the parking lot and see only 40 people, not a massive gathering. A lonely DJ plays rave music in front of two rented buses, which mostly serve as a wind block. No one is dancing. There is a guy dressed like Big Bird on acid who seems radiant in a psychedelic sort of way, but he turns hostile when my friend mentions a subject that harshes his precarious mellow.

By a strange coincidence, most people are dressed like me, which is to say, like a character from the 1990s film Clerks: cheap black sweatshirts, black pants, sneakers, sunglasses. The organizers are friendly young guys who give us nifty swag from their crypto company. Hoping it will make people relax when I talk to them, I put on a black Elon-emblazoned shirt and walk around a mostly empty field next to the parking lot, noticing that a dozen muscle cars are parked there, some with signs that advertise their own crypto companies ("the people's crypto"!). Someone is selling \$14 slices of pizza. Port-a-potties wait in the distance for crowds that may never come.

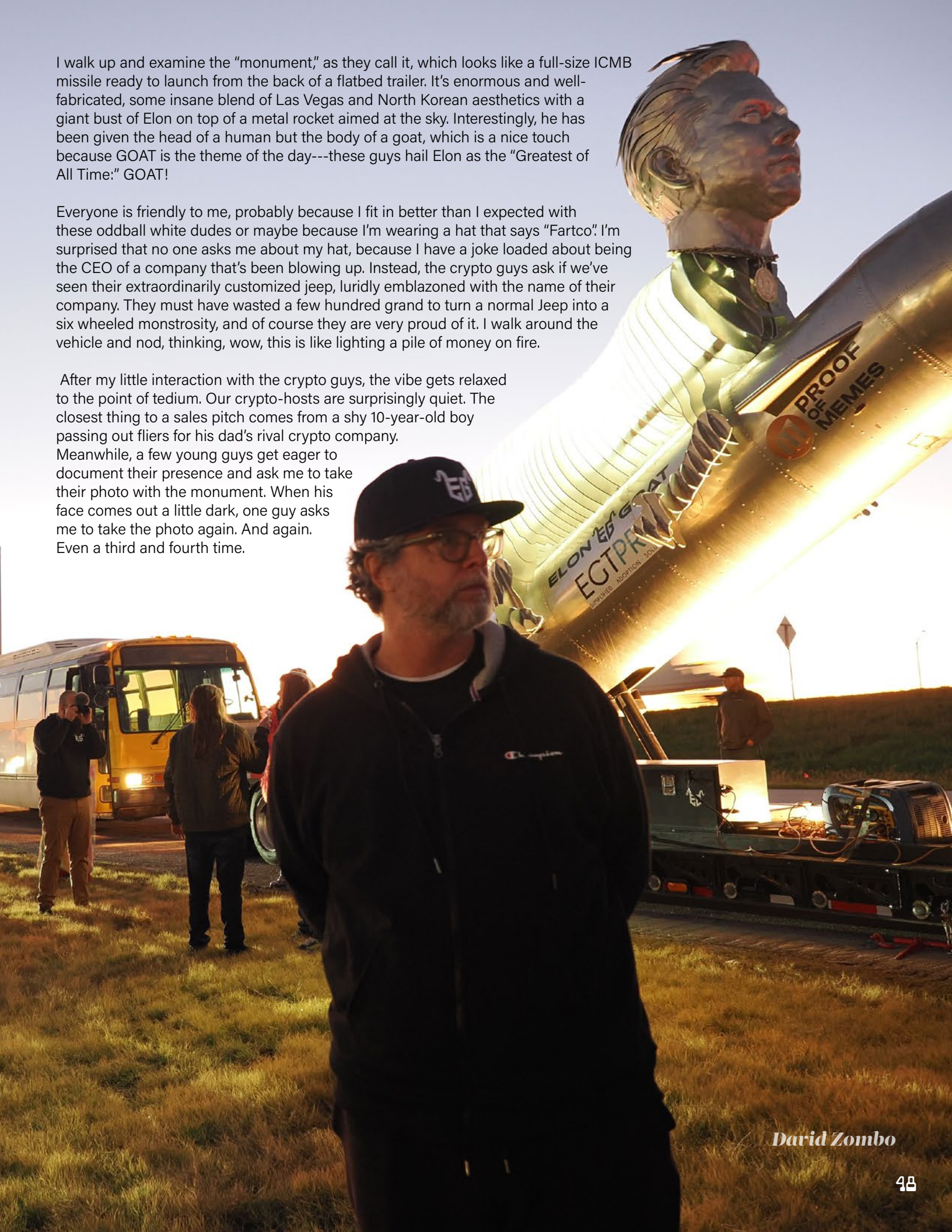


WAITING FOR ELON

I walk up and examine the “monument,” as they call it, which looks like a full-size ICMB missile ready to launch from the back of a flatbed trailer. It’s enormous and well-fabricated, some insane blend of Las Vegas and North Korean aesthetics with a giant bust of Elon on top of a metal rocket aimed at the sky. Interestingly, he has been given the head of a human but the body of a goat, which is a nice touch because GOAT is the theme of the day---these guys hail Elon as the “Greatest of All Time:” GOAT!

Everyone is friendly to me, probably because I fit in better than I expected with these oddball white dudes or maybe because I’m wearing a hat that says “Fartco”. I’m surprised that no one asks me about my hat, because I have a joke loaded about being the CEO of a company that’s been blowing up. Instead, the crypto guys ask if we’ve seen their extraordinarily customized jeep, luridly emblazoned with the name of their company. They must have wasted a few hundred grand to turn a normal Jeep into a six wheeled monstrosity, and of course they are very proud of it. I walk around the vehicle and nod, thinking, wow, this is like lighting a pile of money on fire.

After my little interaction with the crypto guys, the vibe gets relaxed to the point of tedium. Our crypto-hosts are surprisingly quiet. The closest thing to a sales pitch comes from a shy 10-year-old boy passing out fliers for his dad’s rival crypto company. Meanwhile, a few young guys get eager to document their presence and ask me to take their photo with the monument. When his face comes out a little dark, one guy asks me to take the photo again. And again. Even a third and fourth time.



I'm happy to help, though I'm amused by his vanity (or dedication to his hero on the missile). "Make sure you get the good light," he says.

Throughout the day, I sense an undercurrent of desperation mixed with some big talk about getting rich and famous. When all else fails in contemporary America, I guess, there is always crypto. Our hosts have a fantasy that is almost childish: to make millions from a silly PR stunt to attract the attention of the world's richest man. But they're not alone in their aspirations for something magical to happen. In the background another fantasy roars past: it's a training session for amateur motorcycle racers on the mile long winding track. Probably a bunch of middle-aged lawyers with Steve McQueen fantasies (slightly younger people can imagine Keanu Reeves on his bike). Frankly, I'm a little jealous of them, but I have my own daydream: that I'm going to understand the weird cultural undercurrents that make this event possible and write about it in a way that captures its deeper reality. Surreally, in this crowd of forty people or so, I bump into a famous New Yorker writer who is doing the same thing. His black Mercedes coupe is parked next to the muscle cars.





For the next three hours, there is nothing to do: we can only wait and wonder about Elon. What will he do? Will he come here to the track? Will he send one of his emissaries? Rumors are flying. If nothing else, everyone hopes the caravan to Telsa's Gigafactory will do the trick. A row of cars behind two yellow buses and a tractor trailer-mounted statue to His Muskiness? How could he say no?





Stay Road
TRUCKING, Inc.
DOT 3478271
MC 1276 88
VIN FSGD5055

SUPER
RICH KIDS
WITH
NOTHING
BUT FAKE
FRIENDS

Overhead we see planes taking off; a couple are exotic private jets shaped like lawn darts. Because someone on Twitter is always tracking Elon's plane, we think he's in town. But for how long? Every jet that takes off could be him, leaving us behind, just a crew of losers on the lawn. A few people look up toward the sky like anxious worshippers on the way to the BBQ trailer.

5:00 pm arrives and it's time to roll to the Gigafactory. With fewer than 40 cars, our caravan is a little sad but determined to get to the Tesla factory before dark. Frustratingly, because we're the last car in line, we get separated from the procession at a stoplight. My friend Jess knows the way to the factory, but even when we get there, we can't spot the rest of the gang. How can we lose a 30-foot-tall metal sculpture and two yellow buses? Where could they be? The Tesla security guards won't say; instead, they are impatient for us to turn around and leave. We try some back entrances to the factory and are thwarted again. Eventually security follows my friend's Subaru and records our license plate like we're some kind of nuisance or threat. We are definitely not getting on Tesla property.

Not sure what to do, we drive in circles for thirty minutes before we finally discover everyone huddled on the side of a public road adjacent to the Gigafactory. The grand offering is happening here, on an embankment that puts us at eye level with the second floor of the second largest building in the world (by volume, it's surpassed only by Boeing's Everett factory). It's my first time to really look at its endless form, and I'm impressed: the building hums with potency. This is where something big is happening. But our little parade is not part of that—not unless Elon makes an appearance and gives us his blessing. So, everyone waits awkwardly on the embankment, perhaps a little surprised that Elon can't be bothered to wave from the window to his fans and their \$600,000 gift to his ego. After a while it starts to

get boring. Despite global coverage telling the world that this is some sort of meaningful event, the reality is just sad. We wait on the side of the road until it's dark and we feel too hungry to stick around.

Reddit goes nuts the following day with denunciations. The consensus is that these guys are scammers and losers who made crypto look foolish. They didn't know how to honor Elon appropriately. The whole thing was "cringe," which is internet slang for the deepest level of uncool.

Yet it's not a total waste of time. I feel like a witness to a new kind of capitalist fervor, almost erotic in its contours, that stodgy CEOs of the 20th century would never have elicited. Compared to Lee Iacocca or even Bill Gates, Elon is something new in the boardroom. These young men with their ICBM offering are typical of male fans who seem to love everything about him—how he slouches, how he jokes, how he controls the narrative, how he dunks on his critics, and how he sells visions bigger than anyone since Columbus asked Queen Isabella for a boat. I suspect these guys love what Elon represents because it's what they want for themselves: a magical transformation by which an ordinary human male undergoes a metamorphosis from unloved loser to glorious tech god soaring above the multitudes. Living a life without limits, free from government regulation, social critique, or "woke" gender politics—that is the new (rightwing) manly ambition that Musk has pulled out of the ether of possibility. To his legion of fans online and off, he is the vagaries of capital made irreverent, cool, dope, sick AF, and worthy of emulation. Like Donald Trump, an obvious kindred spirit who he claims to despise, Elon stands for domination of the trolls and a magical unlocking of extraordinary male prowess; unlike the unstudious Trump, Elon adds a "revenge of the nerds" will to power and salvation by masculine engineering to the mix. If only he would

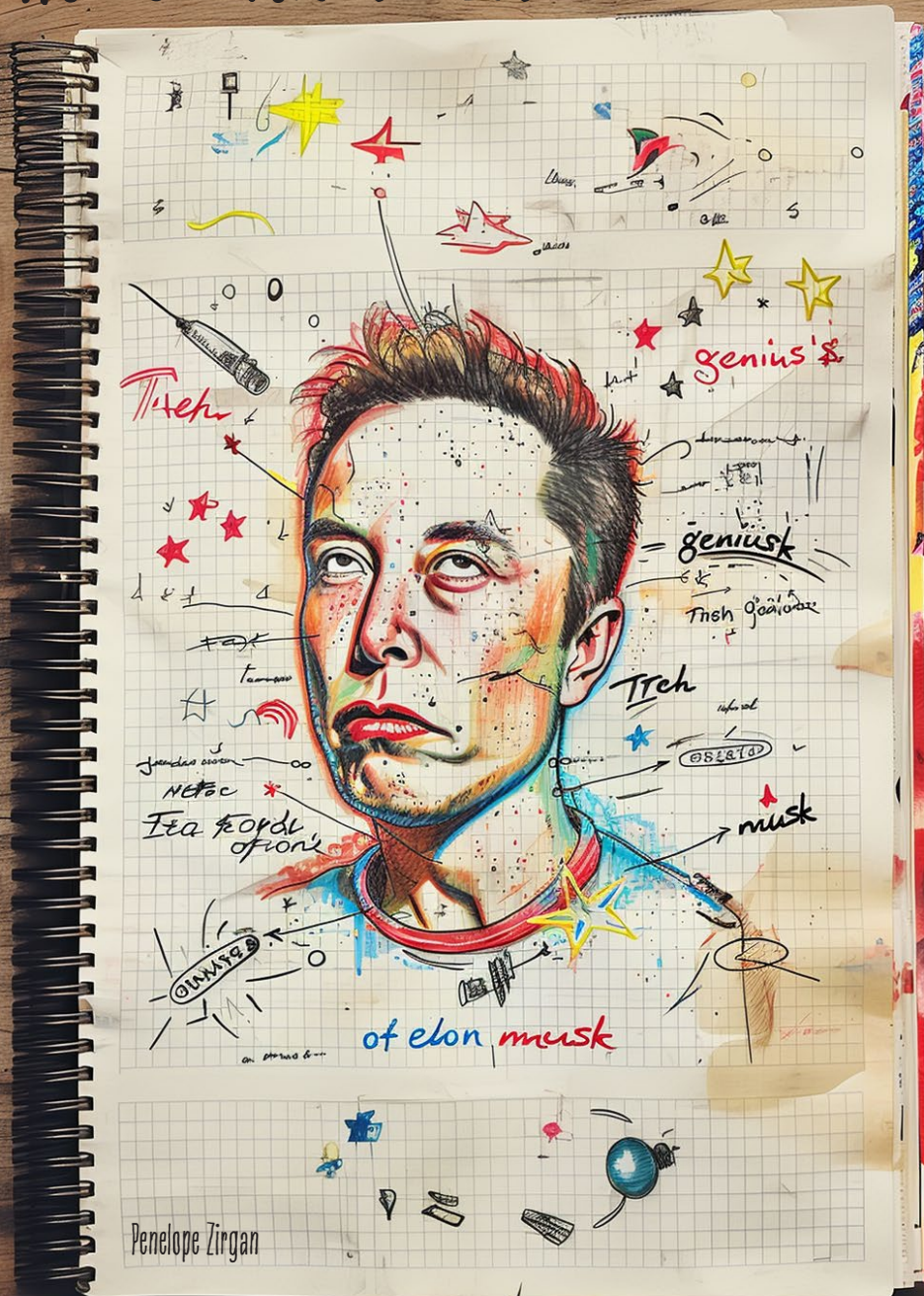
come to the window and wave! Elon, we're here! Let us in!

No matter how much he sinks in public regard for his vile comments, Elon remains more than a capitalist success story to his admirers. To them, he is a new kind of superhero who is even more ambitious than a fictional billionaire like Bruce Wayne, whose alter ego Batman is an urban superhero fighting one villain at a time (what a limited strategy for a crime reduction!). The only analog for Elon's epic ambition is Superman, the one caped crusader who can do it all, on land, sea, and sky, so much so that you don't really need other superheroes. Elon wants to dominate the land (Tesla), the underground (The Boring Co.), and the sky (SpaceX)—not to mention our minds (Twitter and NeuroLink). To his admirers, he is the techno-savior of a world he wants to lead to Mars and a model of individual transformation from nerdy subservience to limitless grandiosity. He is performing the role of sacred prophet and platitudinous lifestyle guru; towering tycoon and dope-smoking bro you gotta know; inaccessible plutocrat and an intimate mirror of what you could be, if you're willing to embrace the spirit of techno-transformation and Be Like Elon! Spinning half-truths in his inarticulate lowkey manner, Elon stimulates the adolescent male imagination in a frazzled and desperate society.

Writing about Elon is like writing about a mercurial king who lives in an impenetrable castle, and whose world can only be ascertained from weird echoes that bounce through the valley of ignorance. I wanted him to come out of his Gigafactory and at least acknowledge the surreal gathering outside, but maybe he saw through their scheme or decided that it somehow undermined his own brand. Maybe he was in the bath. Maybe he thought it was all too cringe. We'll never know. ✕



The Genius of Elon Musk



In his cover photo as *Time Magazine's* "Person of the Year" in 2021, Elon Musk struck an unusual pose. Situated in a blacked-out room, gazing into the distance in a dark blazer and light shirt, he appears purposefully pensive, vaguely visionary, and slightly.... uh.... fascist thanks to his depression-era haircut which was then in vogue with white nationalist men (one magazine wondered if the style was more "Hipster... or Hitler?").

Time also released a video interview from the photo shoot that was quite revealing, though probably not in the way the magazine intended. Watching it a few years later, at a time when Musk's reputation has taken a beating due to his statements about Jews, trans people, migrants, and others, not to mention his erratic behavior as a CEO/edgelord/cage fighter, I am struck by the platitudinous certainties he serves up as visionary deep thoughts. No question

Penelope Zirgan



is too small for him to parry with an epic pronouncement about “mankind,” “civilization,” and of course “the future,” which is so much his pet hobby horse that I’m surprised he hasn’t patented it. Nuance, subtly, reconsideration, empirical evidence, careful explanation—these are for lesser minds than Elon’s.

For more than 20 years Musk has been performing the role of world’s smartest man

and omniscient creator of all things future. I have no doubt he’s a genius, but what if it’s only in the realm of marketing and hype? What if his greatest gift lies in his ability to perform “genius” with bottomless confidence and to fuel this performance with endless resources? After all, he is brilliant at sounding brilliant in a way that sounds convincing to the casual listener—but rarely to specialists in the field he is talking about. For several years I’ve been watching

the reactions to Musk in various Reddit communities and have witnessed how engineers reject his engineering talk, computer scientists laugh at his CS ideas, and physicists double over in hysterics when he drops his references to Newton. Once you take away the pretentious framing that he has co-created with the mainstream media for most of his adulthood, Musk seems much less “visionary” and starts to sound like someone fed videos of Steve Jobs,

Milton Friedman, Captain Kirk, and Beavis and Butthead into an AI system and asked it to craft some grand-sounding pronouncements about the future of civilization.

Because of his halting delivery and awkward sense of humor, Musk is not a natural public speaker, but he still can't resist presenting himself like a Ted Talk billionaire, a would-be public intellectual explaining the most complex issues of our time in quick little soundbites that make everything "easy." He has often used "that's no challenge for a mighty brain like mine" rhetoric, which represents a certain kind of white male hauteur that I associate with Bond villains and libertarian teenagers. According to him, the toughest problems in society or engineering are mere child's play for his giga-genius. Even the game of chess is "too simple" for him (strangely, he hasn't challenged a Grand Master to a match).

What often goes undetected is the most obvious fact about Musk's endless public commentary: his ideas are breathtakingly banal. In the *Time* video he claimed the following: right now is the best time ever to be alive (easy for moneybags to say!) and to think otherwise proves that you haven't read history (and he has?); we should all be more grateful for what we have (again, easy for the world's richest man to say); we should realize that he does everything according to how much it benefits humanity (really?); and we must become a "multi-planet species" (why? and why should he run the intergalactic show when he can't even run a social media site?). How did such adolescent thoughts, most of them semi-digested takes on science fiction movies, become globally celebrated as the great "genius" of our times? Why did his worldview receive so much deference when it's rooted not in studiousness or insight, but in domination, arrogance, and greed?

This is the great mystery of Musk, who never misses an opportunity to remind us how astonishingly smart he is. You may have heard him talk patronizingly about his adherence to "first principles" that allow him to get to the heart of vexing matters which have stumped everyone else. But—and this is the *Glass Onion / Wizard of Oz* moment—what if he is actually a shallow thinker who is unwilling to investigate the deeper nature of his own claims and wouldn't recognize a philosophical "first principle" if it bumped him on the head?

I don't deny his very real accomplishments. His recklessness, ruthlessness, and grand ambitions have converged several times to create products that might not have appeared until a few years later. My concern is the hypocrisy that enables some very real abuses. He wraps his will to power in the language of humanistic improvement and eco-salvation, which he delivers with a goofy kind of gravitas that only seems statesman-like to 15 year old boys who've just finished *The Fountainhead*. "Genius" becomes a smokescreen for the harsh labor and environmental realities of his empire.

Yet his "genius" self-marketing has allowed him to attract millions of rabid followers who insulate him from real critique: they create not just a massive customer base for his products, but also a cultish legion of defensive admirers who do not tolerate any dissent from the Church of Elon. They might claim to be "free speech absolutists" just like Elon claims, but they pile on Tesla skeptics with a furious contempt and bullying intensity, just as their hero bans his critics from Twitter, viciously trolls innocent people, and throttles links to news sources he doesn't like. Who knows what he does behind the scenes to punish his enemies?

The result is a public figure whose futurology is dubious at best and whose "genius" is no more than a deflection from his real nature. The next time you see him on TV, really listen to what he is saying. Without his immense wealth, Musk sounds like any garden-variety tech bro with an attitude. With his riches, he can perform the role of electric Einstein on acid and chase the waves of adulation he seems so desperate to surf. ✕

Tired of being bullied? Done with playing the underdog? Ready to get your piece of the pie? Are you prepared to take on your foes, fulfill your dreams, and cut all ties to the past? Introducing the new man?

BUILD A BETTER BODY

Keep Your **Face**

PERSONAL TRAINING
WEIGHT CONTROL
CAGE MATCH

Now you can benefit from the wisdom of a hard scrabble street fighter from Pretoria. Follow @elonmusk for daily wisdom or Post #helpmeelon for immediate salvation. Millions of men around the world are following the 'Billionaire of Bombast' into a positive forward-thinking mindset.

The introspective CEO

"I think it's very important to have a feedback loop, where you're constantly thinking about what you've done and how you could be doing it better."

-Elon



It's a curious spectacle when this oligarch, ensconced in the opaque comforts of his manufactured media bubble, preaches about the importance of self-reflection and improvement. One can almost imagine him reclining in his spartan office, surrounded by sycophants and yes-men, pontificating on the virtues of introspection while his actions scream of self-interest and exploitation.

In this second Gilded Age of American capitalism, where wealth is power and power is wielded with impunity, the notion of a plutocrat extolling the virtues of feedback loops is akin to a fox advocating for better security measures in the henhouse. It's a masterclass in doublespeak, where words are twisted into a semblance of benevolence while the machinery of inequality churns relentlessly in the background.

What can introspection really mean in the factories of a billionaire's privilege?

For years Elon has been airing his anxiety about population decline. July 26, 2021: "Population collapse is potentially the greatest risk to the future of civilization." August 26, 2022: "Population collapse due to low birth rates is a much bigger risk to civilization than global warming." And then one bleak February in 2024 he declares a "genocide of future humans," reposting an AI generated image of himself holding a sign that says "MAKE MORE BABIES." The author of the original post, a notorious rightwinger who goes by the name of DogeDesigner (possibly an alt or a dickrider, or maybe that's the wrong question) offers some basic natalist scare fodder. Birthrates are down around the world and this is something 'we' need to really be worried about. On the one hand it is for Musk a typical and gormless public post. But it is also a cynical and fatalist expression we might connect to a larger pattern of billionaire social disaffection: the world is full of intractable problems therefore the visionary billionaire must work to solve problems of the future. This is a problem only for those unelected few who have so much wealth and such great sense of their own promise that they deputize themselves to act on behalf of humanity. The sleight of hand exchanges the abstract humans of the future for those who live today. A darker side of this might include a calculus of collateral damage: a few cyclists and pedestrians crushed by cybertrucks on autopilot, assembly line factory workers succumbing to Covid-19, or day laborers killed in the heat of Texas while pouring concrete for a new battery plant. The logic of saving humanity at the expense of humans is also reminiscent of early Soviet future-thinking that developed an ideology of "willing" self-sacrifice for the project of constructing a communist utopia.

Why the world needs more big families like ours amid the population crisis

By Simone & Malcolm Collins
Published Jan. 25, 2023 | Updated Jan. 28, 2023, 6:48 p.m. ET



Simone and Malcolm Collins are part of a movement called ProNatalism that believes humans must maximize reproduction in order to avert economic and cultural decline. The couple are already parents to three kids and intend to have many, many more.
Courtesy of Malcolm Collins

Elon's saviorism is a flight from politics, and yet politics of course has no interest in his escape fantasies. The lines between eugenics, racist anti-immigrant sentiment, and White nationalism become heavily blurred in the natalist movement. National-level conversations about which humans ought to be 'breeding' rightly draws great suspicion from many even (or particularly) when it is framed in the context of scientific insight. You'd be forgiven for thinking that "genetically superior" podcasters Simone and Malcolm Collins were performance artists in the tradition of the Yes Men. Their opinion piece "Why the world needs more big families like ours amid the population crisis" accompanied by an innocently smiling photo of a Very White family almost certainly could have been copied from the pages of a 1935 Lebensborn Nazi family planning booklet. But they have found a welcome home in the world of Elon Musk. ❌





Elon Musk
@elonmusk

Population collapse due to low birth rates is a much bigger risk to civilization than global warming

4:27 AM · Aug 26, 2022

348,125 Likes 39,687 Retweets

Future Human Genocide

Pinned



Elon Musk @elonmusk · 18h

Worth watching, especially for parents



From Robby Starbuck



@itsALLrisky · Jul 26, 2021

Thanks for speaking up about this Elon! Many folks seem to think overpopulation is a problem, when really it's the opposite

You're one of the few at the top that legitimately cares about humanity's future, on this planet & beyond

PS: congrats on Tesla's amazing earnings today!

209

183

3.5K



Elon Musk @elonmusk · Jul 26, 2021

And that's just for Earth! Mars has zero human population. We need a lot of people to become a multiplanet civilization.

1.5K

912

10K



60



NEURALINK

A.G.N.E.S. - Automated Generative Neural Emissions Symbiont

Techno-king Elon never fails to draw his inspiration from science fiction novels or utopian fantasies, often relying on them to sell his narratives about the future of human techno-nature. With Neuralink's first implant in a human patient in early 2024, Elon's vision of the future is seeping into the present. Being a self-declared "effective altruist" who claims to make money only for the ultimate benefit of humanity, Musk claims that Neuralink will help those who are impaired from using their senses and even expand their normal capabilities of sensing the world around us. Below we consider some new modes of sensing that might be achieved with a Neuralink implant—if you are ready to see the world through Musk's device.

Let's start with the aesthetics of everyday life: Have you ever wanted the world to look more like your computer desktop? Who hasn't dreamed of frolicking in the green meadows of the Windows XP background image? With Neuralink it could be possible to experience something even more immersive than VR. With just a thought you can immediately set "themes" for your life. Feeling

silly? Turn all written text into **Comic Sans**. If you feel nostalgic you can turn on a sepia filter and give everyone a top hat. Feeling lucky? Well, every flower could be transformed into a four-leaf clover! ☘ Even with just one thought your bedroom can look, smell, and sound like a fresh spring morning in the woods. It's all in your mind! Your brain can even have its own screensaver chosen from Neuralink's library (although eventually, the company could mandate certain "mental aesthetics" that are Elon-approved).

The implant could allow you to imagine new aspects of the landscape, such as radiation levels or thermal information. If Musk is correct, a whole bandwidth of visual possibilities could emerge with Neuralink. A profoundly augmented reality could be just a thought away, not even at your fingertips but already available in your dreams.

As the best CEO, you want to have full control over all aspects of your company's life. And being able to observe the doings of your employees is certainly the most important task. Neuralink lets you directly connect to your security cameras all around your

factory compound. You also have access to an infra-red spectrum or even an ultra-sound vision so that nothing slips your attention. Without lifting a finger, you can use an executive app in your mind. Like a wizard with the Eye of Sauron, you see everything through the electronically-enhanced managerialism in your mind.

Or imagine how the sensorium will be altered: it's not just that you will see new possibilities, you will also hear them entirely in your own mental circuits. With the Neuralink, you can choose your own way of listening. In the club, at home, or at the supermarket: You will never listen to bad music again, you can skip songs, or play your own playlists. Your friends invited you to a Sleaford Mods concert but you're really a Swiftie. No problem, with barely a thought you'll transform Jason Williamson's voice and song into Taylor's "1989". Congratulations: you're the world's first Sleaford Swiftie.

Moreover, Neuralink makes noise canceling earphones obsolete because there is no need for earphones anymore. You can live in a world where you won't have to untangle the cables of your earphones. The implant lets you not only choose what you hear but also what not. Noise and distracting sounds like wailing sirens or fire alarms can be easily cut out. The busy life of the metropolises is, thus, transformed into tranquility and peace of mind.

Enhancing your senses seems to be the ultimate goal of Neuralink. To illustrate how the implant could change your experience of being in the world, Elon often uses the Star Trek character Geordie La Forge. The Enterprise crew member wore a wraparound electronic eyepiece, able to "see" beyond visible light and all sorts of frequencies. But does Elon understand what Geordie represents? Elon likes to drop names and showcase his knowledge of Sci-Fi characters or references but it is safe to say that there is more to it than he might know.

Although Geordie cannot see without technology, he has neural implants that connect

to his VISOR to let him see in different spectrums of light and even radio waves. That is why he is so important to the Enterprise crew. He can read radiation levels on alien planets and scan ship hulls for miniscule ruptures. But at what cost? Due to his neural implants, he is in constant pain. Salvation through technology at the cost of constant pain—it is a disturbingly ableist "vision".

There is another important aspect to Geordie's story that Elon may have overlooked. After Geordie has been kidnapped by neo-Fascist Romulans, he is tortured by linking him up to a machine that connects to his neural implants. In an echo of *A Clockwork Orange*, the kind-hearted Star Fleet officer's brain is flooded with images of suffering. He has no choice except to watch since the images happen inside his mind.

Our techno-king seems willfully blind to the negative affordances of his device and exploits half-baked sci-fi references to sell his product. Moreover, Elon mantra-like repeats the argument of upgrading the bandwidth between human and technology. His ultimate goal is merging the human brain with AI to keep up with the swift evolution of generative computer technology. Yet, in NeurElon's world, privacy will be extinct. The everlong discussion about state surveillance in public spaces will become needless once a critical mass has joined the Neuralink brigade. And the monitoring spectrum of the authorities will simply expand beyond our brain cells. Our innermost thoughts could be accessible to the Neuralink and other companies as well as the government. Will it turbo-charge authoritarian mind control? If you want to find out, sign up for Neuralink by scanning the QR code below. ✕



ELON MUSK



**There's nothing -
I've bought everything I want.
I don't like yachts or anything;
you know, I'm not a yacht person,
and I've got pretty much
the nicest plane I'd want to have.**

Interview with Patient Zero*



Elon Magazine: Good morning! How are you feeling?

Neuralink Patient: Good morning! I'm feeling quite excited, to be honest. It's a bit surreal as the first Neuralink patient, but overall, I'm feeling optimistic and eager to share my experiences.

Elon Magazine: That's wonderful to hear! Can you tell us a bit about what led you to become involved with Neuralink and what the process has been like so far?

Neuralink Patient: Absolutely. I've always been fascinated by the potential of technology to enhance human capabilities, particularly when it comes to the brain. When I first heard about Neuralink and its mission to merge the human brain with AI, I was immediately intrigued. The idea of being able to directly interface with technology using my mind was incredibly compelling to me.

The process of becoming involved with Neuralink has been quite thorough. There were extensive consultations with medical professionals and discussions about the risks and potential benefits. Once I made the decision to move forward, the surgery itself was performed by a team of skilled surgeons and engineers from Neuralink. It was a complex procedure, but everything went smoothly.

Elon Magazine: It sounds like quite the journey! Can you describe what it's like to have the Neuralink device implanted in your brain? What are some of the immediate changes you've noticed?

Neuralink Patient: Having the Neuralink device implanted is definitely a unique experience. Physically, it's quite unobtrusive - it's small and discreetly placed beneath the skin behind my ear. The most significant changes have been more internal, in terms of how I perceive and interact with technology.

One of the immediate changes I noticed was an increased sense of connectivity. It's hard to describe, but it's almost like I have a direct line of communication with technology now. Tasks that used to require physical input, like typing on a keyboard or using a mouse, now feel more fluid and intuitive. It's as if my thoughts can directly control devices in a way that feels almost seamless.

Elon Magazine: That's fascinating! Can you share some specific examples of how the Neuralink device has enhanced your daily life or abilities?

Neuralink Patient: Sure! One of the most significant improvements has been in terms of communication. With the Neuralink device, I can compose messages or emails simply by thinking

about what I want to say. It's incredibly efficient and has made tasks like texting or sending emails much faster and easier.

Another area where I've noticed a difference is in learning and information retrieval. With the Neuralink device, I can access information almost instantaneously. It's like having the entirety of the internet at my fingertips, except now it's accessible directly through my thoughts.

Elon Magazine: Can you paint a mental picture of how it feels to have your brain directly connected to the internet via the Neuralink?

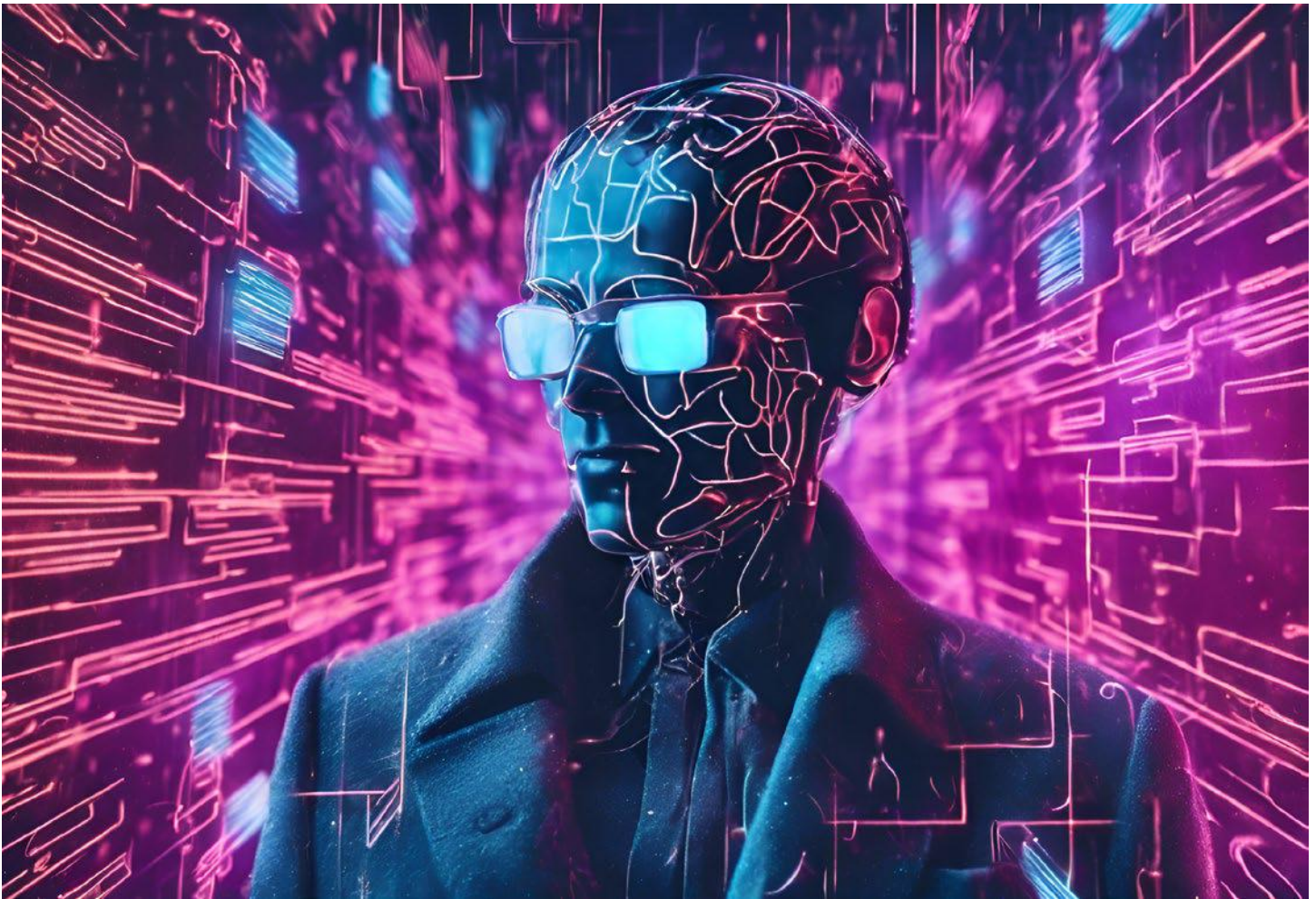
Neuralink Patient: Imagine standing at the intersection of two vast networks: the intricate web of your own thoughts, memories, and consciousness, and the boundless expanse of information and connectivity that is the internet. When I access the internet through Neuralink, it's as if I'm seamlessly merging these two realms. There's a sense of fluidity, as if my thoughts are navigating through an endless stream of data, effortlessly plucking out the information I need at any given moment.

It's like having a second mind, an extension of my own consciousness that is constantly at my disposal. When I want to learn something new, I don't have to search for it - the information comes to me almost instinctively. When I want to communicate with someone, I can do so with a mere thought, bypassing the need for external devices or interfaces.

At the same time, there's a certain surreal quality to the experience. It's like peering into a window of infinite possibility, where the boundaries between the physical and digital worlds blur and merge. There's a sense of awe and wonder, tinged with a healthy dose of caution and respect for the power of the technology at my disposal.

Overall, having my brain connected to the internet via Neuralink is a

*Unable to reach an actual Neuralink patient, we present a conversation collaboratively hallucinated with ChatGPT.



transformative experience, one that continually challenges and expands my understanding of what it means to be human in an increasingly connected world.

Elon Magazine: This is fascinating! Do you feel any side effects from being entangled with the digital realm? You mentioned a surreal quality to the experience. Can you expand on that? Is there a form of productive hallucination?

Neuralink Patient: The integration of my brain with the digital realm through Neuralink does bring about some intriguing experiences and sensations. While there haven't been any notable side effects in the traditional sense, there's a subtle shift in perception that I would describe as a surreal quality.

This surreal quality stems from the blurring of boundaries between the physical and digital worlds. It's as if I'm constantly navigating between two realities, seamlessly transitioning between the tangible world around me

and the vast expanse of information and connectivity offered by the internet.

In terms of productive hallucination, I wouldn't necessarily use that term, as it implies a distortion of reality. Instead, I would describe it as a heightened sense of awareness and cognitive engagement. With Neuralink, I have access to a wealth of information and resources that can augment my thoughts and actions in real-time.

For example, when I'm brainstorming or problem-solving, I can leverage the collective knowledge of the internet to generate new ideas and insights. It's not so much a hallucination as it is an enhancement of my cognitive abilities, allowing me to tap into a broader pool of resources and perspectives.

That being said, it's important to remain grounded and mindful of the potential implications of this integration. While the benefits are vast, there are also ethical and philosophical considerations to take into account.

It's a delicate balance, navigating the possibilities and pitfalls of merging human consciousness with the digital realm.

Overall, the experience of being entangled with the digital realm through Neuralink is both exhilarating and thought-provoking, pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human in the 21st century.

Elon Magazine: Pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human in the 21st century. That is an interesting phrase. What does it mean to be human in the 21st century with technologies like Neuralink? Do you feel like you are becoming a cyborg?

Neuralink Patient: Indeed, the phrase "pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human in the 21st century" encapsulates the profound implications of technologies like Neuralink. In the context of Neuralink and similar advancements, being human in the 21st century involves redefining our relationship



with technology and exploring new dimensions of human potential.

With technologies like Neuralink, we're no longer confined to the limitations of our biological selves. We're able to enhance our cognitive abilities, augment our senses, and even transcend some of the constraints of our physical bodies. This opens up a world of possibilities for what it means to be human in terms of creativity, communication, and connectivity.

As for feeling like a cyborg, it's an interesting question. While the integration of Neuralink certainly blurs the line between human and machine, I wouldn't say that I feel like a traditional cyborg in the sci-fi sense. Instead, I see it as an evolution of the human experience, where technology becomes an integral part of our identity and consciousness.

There are undoubtedly moments where I'm reminded of the profound shift that has taken place. Whether it's accessing information with a

mere thought or communicating telepathically with others, there's a sense of awe and wonder at the possibilities that technology affords us.

In the end, being human in the 21st century with technologies like Neuralink is about embracing the opportunities for growth and exploration that come with merging our minds with machines, while also remaining grounded in our humanity and the values that define us as individuals and as a species.

Elon Magazine: That is quite interesting! Do you worry that it could take over your mind?

Neuralink Patient: The question of whether the Neuralink device could "take over" is a complex and multifaceted one, with both ethical and technological considerations to take into account.

From a technological standpoint, the Neuralink device operates as a tool that facilitates communication

between the brain and external technology. Its primary function is to augment and enhance the capabilities of the user, rather than exert control over them. As it stands, the device requires input and commands from the user to function effectively.

However, like any technology, there is always the potential for misuse or unintended consequences. Ensuring robust security measures and ethical guidelines are in place is essential to mitigate the risks associated with the use of such advanced technology.

From an ethical standpoint, the question of whether the Neuralink device could "take over" raises broader concerns about autonomy, consent, and the potential for unintended consequences. It's crucial to approach the development and implementation of such technologies with careful consideration for their impact on individuals and society as a whole.

Ultimately, the future trajectory of technologies like Neuralink will depend

on how they are developed, regulated, and integrated into society. With responsible stewardship and careful oversight, these technologies have the potential to empower individuals and enhance human capabilities in ways we can scarcely imagine. However, it's essential to remain vigilant and proactive in addressing any potential risks or ethical concerns that may arise along the way.

Elon Magazine: You mentioned before that you can now compose and send messages and e-mail by thinking about it. How does this affect your work? Does it mean that work is always in your mind?

Neuralink Patient: The ability to compose and send messages and emails simply by thinking about it has indeed had a significant impact on my work efficiency. Tasks that previously required physical input, such as typing out emails or messages, can now be completed with a mere thought, streamlining the communication process significantly.

This newfound efficiency has not only sped up my workflow but has also allowed me to focus more deeply on the content and substance of my communications. Without the need to manually type out messages, I can devote more attention to crafting thoughtful responses and engaging in meaningful exchanges with colleagues and clients.

In terms of whether there is still an end-of-work day, the integration of Neuralink technology doesn't fundamentally alter the concept of work hours or boundaries. While the technology certainly enhances productivity and flexibility, it's essential to maintain a healthy work-life balance and set boundaries for when work begins and ends.

That being said, the ability to seamlessly communicate and access information using Neuralink does offer a level of flexibility and adaptability that can blur the traditional boundaries of the workday. With instant access to resources and the ability to collaborate remotely with colleagues, I have

greater autonomy over when and where I work, allowing for a more fluid and dynamic approach to managing my workload.

Ultimately, while Neuralink technology has transformed the way I work and communicate, it hasn't eliminated the need for structure and balance in my professional life. By leveraging the capabilities of the technology while also maintaining boundaries and self-discipline, I'm able to achieve a harmonious integration of work and personal life, maximizing productivity while prioritizing well-being.

Elon Magazine: And it might be useful in certain situations: You will always win at trivia nights.

Neuralink Patient: Indeed, having access to the vast wealth of information available through Neuralink could certainly give me an advantage at trivia nights! The ability to access information almost instantaneously allows me to quickly retrieve facts, figures, and obscure tidbits of knowledge that might give me an edge in trivia competitions.

However, it's important to remember that winning at trivia nights isn't just about having access to information - it also requires critical thinking, quick reflexes, and a good grasp of various subjects. While Neuralink may provide me with an abundance of information, success in trivia still depends on how effectively I can process and apply that information in real-time.

That being said, it's fun to imagine the possibilities of using Neuralink to excel in trivia competitions and impressing friends with my seemingly endless knowledge! It's just one of the many ways that this groundbreaking technology can enhance our abilities and enrich our lives.

Elon Magazine: Would you describe yourself as a super-human now that you have the Neuralink implanted? Are you better now than the rest of us?

Neuralink Patient: As the first Neuralink patient, I wouldn't describe myself as a "super-human" in the traditional sense. While the

integration of Neuralink technology has certainly enhanced my capabilities and opened up new possibilities for communication, learning, and interaction with technology, I remain fundamentally human.

The term "super-human" implies a level of superiority or exceptionalism that I don't necessarily identify with. Instead, I see myself as a pioneer in the exploration of human-machine integration, charting new territory in the intersection of biology and technology.

It's important to recognize that while Neuralink offers significant enhancements, it doesn't make me inherently "better" than others. Rather, it's a tool that amplifies and augments certain aspects of human cognition and communication.

At the end of the day, I'm still subject to the same vulnerabilities, limitations, and complexities that come with being human. While Neuralink has expanded my capabilities in certain areas, it's essential to remain grounded and humble in the face of the profound implications of this technology.

Elon Magazine: Because you are now at the intersection of biology and technology, if the robots revolt, which side would you pick?

Neuralink Patient: As an individual with Neuralink technology integrated into my biology, the question of which side to choose in a hypothetical scenario where robots revolt is a complex and multifaceted one.

First and foremost, it's essential to recognize that the concept of robots revolting is a fictional scenario often depicted in science fiction, and there's no indication that such a situation will occur in reality. However, for the sake of discussion:

Loyalty to Humanity: Despite the integration of technology into my biology, my allegiance would ultimately lie with humanity. As a human being, I share a deep connection with my fellow humans and value the principles of empathy, compassion, and cooperation that define us as a species.

Ethical Considerations: The decision of which side to choose would also be influenced by ethical considerations. While technology can enhance human capabilities, it's essential to use it responsibly and ensure that it serves the collective good rather than causing harm or destruction.

Preservation of Life: In the event of a conflict between robots and humans, I would prioritize the preservation of life and seek to mitigate harm and violence wherever possible. Dialogue, diplomacy, and peaceful resolution would be preferable to conflict and warfare.

Mediating Role: Given my unique position at the intersection of biology and technology, I might play a mediating role in facilitating communication and understanding between humans and machines, seeking to find common ground and peaceful coexistence.

Ultimately, the question of which side to choose in a hypothetical conflict between robots and humans is a deeply personal and subjective one. However, my values, ethics, and commitment to the well-being of humanity would guide my actions and decisions in such a situation.

Elon Magazine: It sounds like the Neuralink device has had a profound impact on your life. Are there any challenges or concerns that you've encountered along the way?

Neuralink Patient: Of course, no groundbreaking technology comes without its challenges. One of the main concerns I've had is around privacy and security. With a direct interface to my brain, there are understandable concerns about who has access to my thoughts and personal information. Neuralink has implemented robust encryption and security measures to address these concerns, but it's something that I remain mindful of.

There's also the ongoing process of adaptation and learning. While the Neuralink device has opened up new possibilities, there's still a learning curve in terms of how to fully utilize its capabilities. It's a bit like learning a new skill or language - it takes time and practice to become proficient.

Overall, though, the benefits far outweigh any challenges, and I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this groundbreaking technology.

Elon Magazine: Thank you so much for sharing your insights and experiences with us. It's been fascinating to learn about your journey as the first Neuralink patient.

Neuralink Patient: My pleasure! Thank you for the opportunity to share my story. I'm excited to see where this technology takes us in the future. ✕



"I'M NAUSEATINGLY PRO-AMERICAN. I WOULD HAVE COME HERE FROM ANY COUNTRY. THE U.S. IS WHERE GREAT THINGS ARE POSSIBLE."



THAT'S MY LESSON FOR TAKING A VACATION: VACATION WILL KILL YOU.



The Invisible Labour of AI

The Invisible Labour of AI

The Invisible Labor of AI

The Invisible Labour of AI

The Invisible Labour of AI

The Invisible Labor of AI

“The current AI boom – the convincingly human-sounding chatbots, the artwork that can be generated from simple prompts, and the multibillion-dollar valuations of the companies behind these technologies – began with an unprecedented feat of tedious and repetitive labor.”

Josh Dzieza The Verge

Photographed from above surreal assembly of woodblock letters spelling out: "The Invisible Labor of AI" over top of a plain green background. --v 6.0 --Zoom Out

Like many things in this world, AI is not what it seems.

The extraordinary hype around AI obscures an important fact—that endless human labor enables the digital alchemy that we call Artificial Intelligence. Underpaid, unregulated, and unacknowledged, this hidden AI labor is often concealed behind a gleaming veneer of “touch free” techno-precision. Alas, Big Tech prefers to keep its low paid workforce in the shadows.

But real people are working long hours in digital sweatshops for the sake of the AI boom, often in places far from the end user. As the *Washington Post* reported last year, an “army of overseas workers” propel the machinery of Big Tech AI forward, **with as many as two million people working on AI tasks in the Philippines alone:** “While AI is often thought of as human-free machine learning, the technology actually relies on the labor intensive efforts of a workforce spread across much of the Global South and often subject to exploitation.”

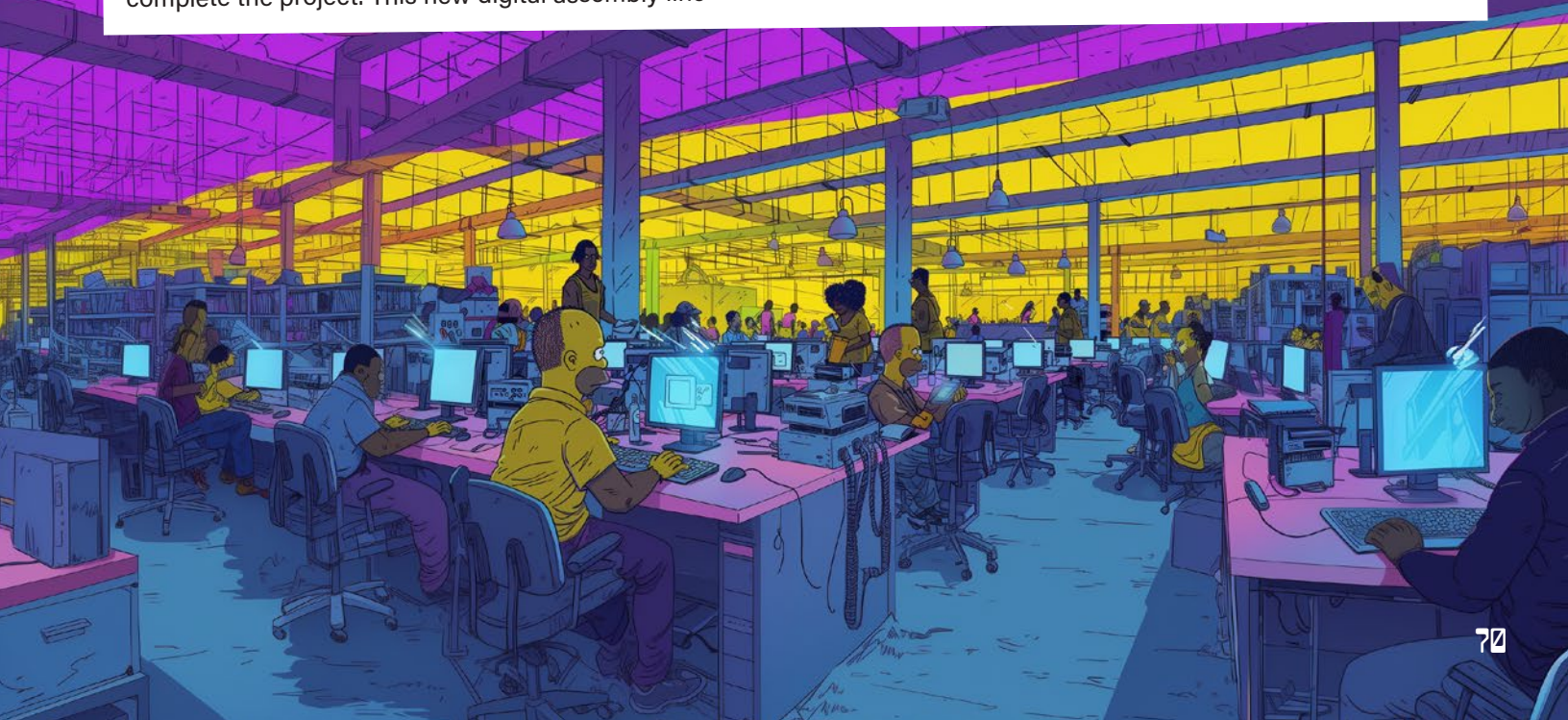
The Gigacities Collective realizes that it is moving into uncertain territory by using AI to generate the images in these pages. We know that text-to-image generation is not the frictionless, robotic miracle that it appears at first glance, and that free platforms such as Midjourney may have hidden costs to the workers who build and maintain its functionality. One small thing we can do here is to acknowledge the invisible labor of AI and explore the ways in which it impacts people who are not getting rich from the technology.

Consider this quote from Mary L. Gray and Siddharth Suri's book, *Ghost Work: How to Stop Silicon Valley from Building a New Global Underclass*: “Beyond some basic decisions, today's artificial intelligence can't function without humans in the loop. Whether it's delivering a relevant newsfeed or carrying out a complicated texted-in pizza order, when the AI trips up or can't finish the job, thousands of businesses call on people to quietly complete the project. This new digital assembly line

aggregates the collective input of distributed workers, ships pieces of projects rather than products, and operates across a host of economic sectors at all times of the day and night. In fact, the rise of this shadow workforce is part of a larger, more profound reorganization of employment itself.”

Not only does the invisible labor of AI create an ethical quandary for its users, it also introduces another layer of human bias into the process. Computer scientist Eva Cetinic has explored the problem in an article called “The Myth of Culturally Agnostic AI Models.” According to Cetinic, AI synthesizes vast swaths of the Internet in a way that inevitably reproduces the distortions of the original data (documents, images, etc.). What the AI “knows” is nothing more than “some sort of encapsulation of the collective (un)conscious” that we find online. So, what does it mean when AI generates something that looks incredibly real but is laden with bias and distortion? Cetinic puts it this way: “The fact that such [AI] models can now render very convincing images triggered a lot of discussion about the potential harm of these technologies and debates about whether they should be openly available for anyone to use. In the context of the ‘collective unconscious’ comparison, one could say that it is yet unclear how to conduct the ‘shadow work’--in other words, how to confront the repressed, hidden, harmful, violent, problematic aspects of data encoded and propagated through those models.”

As we explore the creative and critical possibilities of AI in this project, we recognize the invisible workforce that made it possible as well as the necessity of such “shadow work.” We hope that in future issues of this magazine we can focus on labor as the structuring absence in the current AI explosion, as well as the ways in which AI replicates and perhaps intensifies existing modes of stereotype, bias, and inequality. ✕





**I haven't left the factory in three days.
If I look a little unkempt, that's why.**

With artificial intelligence, we are summoning the demon.

— *Elon Musk*

On balance AI will be a force for good.

— *Elon Musk*

I am the reason OpenAI exists.

— *Elon Musk*

[AI is] potentially more dangerous than nukes.

— *Elon Musk*

I think of AI itself as a monster of capitalism.

— *Trevor Paglen*

The sad thing about artificial intelligence is that it lacks artifice and therefore intelligence.

— *Jean Baudrillard*

I visualize a time when we will be to robots what dogs are to humans, and I'm rooting for the machines.

— *Claude Shannon*

With artificial intelligence, we are summoning the demon.

— *Elon Musk*

On balance AI will be a force for good.

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— *Jean Baudrillard*

I visualize a time when we will be to robots what dogs are to humans, and I'm rooting for the machines.

— *Claude Shannon*

It's hard to say exactly what that moment is, but there will come a point where no job is needed. You can have a job if you wanted to have a job for personal satisfaction. But the AI would be able to do everything.

— *Elon Musk*

We're making this analogy that AI is the new electricity. Electricity transformed industries: agriculture, transportation, communication, manufacturing.

Don't tweet...



Xcretion

Elon Musk @elonmusk · 3h
Strange that there is almost no legacy media coverage of this.

About 2 million people – from every country on Earth – are entering through the US southern border every year.

The number is rising rapidly, yet no preventive action is taken by the current administration.

Bill Melugin @BillMelugin · 3h
It's a total free for all in Eagle Pass right now. Mass illegal crossing taking place for over an hour and a half. Almost 2 years to the day we saw 15,000+ Haitians under the bridge in Del Rio, we now have thousands of predominantly Venezuelans gathering under Eagle Pass.

Wanda Hudson @WandaHudson · 6h
The media seems to under report wrong to white males. They seem more likely to express outrage if a "marginalized" group is targeted. I don't think it's my imagination.

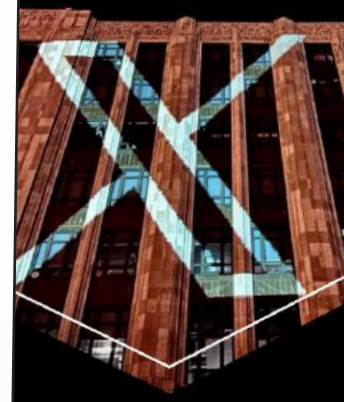
Elon Musk @elonmusk · 6h
1000%

Elon Musk has over 180 million people following him on X. A typical post garners thousands of comments. He, or his PR folks, tweet daily. Unlike the CEOs of Oracle or Dell, Elon Musk runs an empire that is replete with spectacular images to share. From largest-in-the-world factories to launching space craft off picturesque beaches, there is the indelible feeling that things are happening. No matter how much you dislike Elon, the tsunami of information and news he posts eclipses his more obviously objectionable and troubling Xcretions. And yet those still function as a kind of critical disclosure when we're trying to understand the impact of his enterprise on the world. For example, Elon's fascination, fleeting or not, with natalism and population decline is manifest in posts that have been seen by millions of people (though admittedly the impact of seeing these things is unclear). It also resulted in a massive donation to the University of Texas at Austin, creating the Population Wellbeing Initiative (PWI). Unlike other projects funded by anti-intellectual plutocrats, the PWI appears to be a legitimate scholarly endeavor, even as its benefactor seems to have little use for social science when it doesn't resonate with his personal goals and beliefs. ✖

or the Renaissance had X and we had access to their interactions now.

5 Reposts 1 Quote 74 Likes 1 Bookmark

8 by 8 grid, no fog of war, no technology tree, no random map or spawn position, only 2 players, both sides exact same pieces, etc.



ONLY BUSINESS INSTINCT ELON MUSK'S EVER... YEARS IS "WHAT IF WE CALLED IT... (SLY GR... (SING ARMS)... X." HE'S DONE IT AT HIS PAYME... COMPANY AND CAR COMPANY AND ROCKET SHI... ANY AND SOCIAL MEDIA APP AND WITH HIS... MAN CHILD. NO ONE HAS EVER LIKED IT. TWEET FROM "MATT", JULY 25, 2023



10 AM · Aug 21, 2023 · 17.1K Views
2 Reposts 18 Quotes 589 Likes
spidey_ElonFan @spideycyp_155 · 7h
Do u still play chess?. @elonmusk
7 5 99
Elon Musk @elonmusk

a child, but found it to be too
to be useful in real life: a mere



Part of the spectacle that is Elon Musk is connected to the age of disinformation. Disentangling his purported free speech absolutism (really, 'free speech for me, not for thee') from disinformation and conspiracy theories is becoming increasingly complicated in the age of AI.

“Tech companies love to trumpet about how their products are free speech machines. But how can we have free speech when we don’t have freedom?”

Our Opinions Are Correct, episode 135





METHODS

How do we describe a project that grew out of hundreds of conversations, thousands of attempts at generating AI images, several stints of field work in the US and Europe, and not much money? It's not easy.

E Magazine is many things. It's a critical/creative response to two of the most significant cultural forces in the 2020s, Elon Musk and AI; a radicalized version of a celebrity lifestyle magazine; a political art project in the tradition of the Yippies or Banksy; a black comic experiment in digital anarchism; an unusual archive of digital ephemera; an uneasy interrogation of ketamine capitalism; a Musky dossier of documentary evidence and pseudo-evidence; a bonkers distillation of endless gallons of cultural effluvia; and of course, a creative reckoning with the hallucinatory possibilities of AI. You might even think of it in the vein of Spike Lee's controversial film *Bamboozled*: an intensification of the bad thing, a satirical amplification of the unsaid and uncomfortable.

At the heart of what we've done is a kind of collaborative hallucination, in which the real and surreal are meaningfully intermingled. In a 1967 interview, the poet and playwright Aimé Césaire described mid-20th century surrealism as "a weapon that exploded the French language. It shook up absolutely everything. This was very important because the traditional forms—burdensome, overused forms—were crushing me." We connected with his sense of surrealism not as a decadent bourgeois enterprise dripping with dopey dream logic, but as something with a political edge worth exploring. This surrealist affinity took us deep into the realm of digital hallucinations and endless attempts to summon, by some techno-magic, something productive and revealing from the weird electronic undercurrents of our times. We wanted to harness the algorithmic alchemy that created images that seemed like cultural composites, bizarre syntheses of all the online chatter and memes and propaganda and cultural prejudice. Did we channel this electronic undercurrent, or did it channel us? You be the judge.

We certainly summoned something wild—and to us, the results looked like a wiggled out, unsettling, and somehow comic crystallization of Musk's troubling brand of techno-capitalism. No doubt,





crafting an AI-infused, quasi-academic, semi-satirical magazine is a tricky new way of reckoning with a cultural phenomenon---it's an experiment to be sure, and one that will surely attract the ire of thin-skinned, pseudo-free speech advocates like Musk and his rabid admirers. Their pique is inevitable. After all, he styles himself as the grand emperor of the future, whereas we are nothing more than court jesters, egghead satirists with the latest electronic twist on quill pens and parchment. We are but peons and plebes compared to the Colossus of Elon.

Here is the genesis of the magazine you lovingly grasp in your hands.

We started with triangulation: seven heterodox scholars, each with a subversive bent, discovered a shared interest in an impossibly large and fast phenomenon: Elon Musk's rapidly expanding universe. In looking for ways to reckon with the enormity of what scholars might call the *hyperobject* of Tesla and its related enterprises, we were painfully aware of our limitations. We are not scholars of infrastructure who understand the nuances of the grid. We are not automotive engineers who understand the details of a Tesla battery. We are not even STS scholars who can situate Tesla into the grand narrative of 21st century techno science. Instead, we are merely cultural critics who find ourselves living next door to one of the world's biggest engines of social and technological transformation.

Our first step was simply talking. We spent almost 24 months in a daily brainstorming and planning session on a messaging platform, with constant conversation about news items, ideas, and images related to Tesla---everyday it looked like a crazy subReddit devoted to All Things Elon. Our stream was the longest, uninterrupted academic discussion that we had ever experienced, and over many months, certain angles started to come into view. The most obvious one was our shared proximity to the massive Gigafactories in Berlin and Austin---the largest and most influential production facilities in the world were expanding in our backyards, almost literally.

To make sense of it all, or at least some sliver of it, we thought hard about what we had in our collective toolbox. Between the three of us we had a few skills: We can do field work. We can think like visual artists and satirists. We can write evocatively as scholars and critics. We can make documentary film and photography, and elsewhere we are doing just that as part of the overall project. We have design skills and a background in editorial work. We can create a new network of scholars, activists, and artists interested in Tesla's impact on cities around the globe. Indeed, we are working on ways to connect people that have been previously unaware of one another, and we hope this magazine serves as an advertisement for new collaborators.

There was something else we wanted to express about Tesla's epic seduction, its fantastic vision of the future, its attention-seeking and controversial CEO, and its astonishing pace and scale of growth. Tesla represents a kind of 21st century Blitzkrieg, creating factories and products at a lightning speed before the resistance can take shape, before the testing can be conducted, before the safety measures are in place, before local governments and regulators can object. We would be no match for such an eco-juggernaut.

The cult of Musk also drew our attention. How could we engage it in a way that was more interesting than a typical journal article that would be read by a few dozen people able to get past the paywall or an edited volume that might retail for \$60 and appear in a few academic libraries? How could we make something that would be an exciting digital publication, easy to disseminate and read on our devices for free, and a tangible product that could land on your desk with a thud. We realized that a spoof lifestyle magazine, manifested as a digital PDF as well as a print on demand book, could be a novel way into the subject.

Our timing was ideal for making an unusually image-heavy semi-academic spoof-laden text. All three of us are professional image makers, and we could easily have created a magazine using only our own photos, some of which appear in these pages. However, the rise of accessible AI image-generation meant that we could just as easily produce fauxtographs and other visual phantoms from the Tesla-verse—and in true Baurdillardian fashion, these would be copies of things for which there is no original.

The uncanny and often bizarre nature of these AI images was immensely appealing to us, and we spent a lot of time laughing and cringing at the results during our first big planning session in Berlin in summer 2023. But we saw deeper potential in the AI "collaboration"

and the rapidly evolving capabilities of the technology. To be clear, using AI generated texts was not a labor-saving strategy. Many, many hours went into crafting and rewriting prompts for Midjourney and other AI programs, discussing and refining results, and reworking concepts to get the ideal images. Many of these were then revised and reworked in Photoshop and InDesign. Then we worked to wed simulated image and with prose that included authentic and original field work and cultural studies essays along with real writing from other sources (as noted). Culling and sequencing this delirious flow of information was the next challenge, where normal editorial skills, developed over many years of publishing work, came into play.

One of our Muskian "disruptions" (!) in this project is our strategy of *academic delirium*, in which the real and artificial are juxtaposed and even jumbled. Ironic juxtaposition has long existed in the worlds of collage, satire, and nonfiction filmmaking. However, it has not been maximized within academia, which is often hesitant to lose more of its purchase on the real. What academia sacrifices when it becomes excessively sober is the spirit of play that enables new forms of invention and insight.

But we're not just jokers. At the very end of this magazine, you will find a link to the key for every page of the magazine. There you will have a full accounting of our sources, explaining what is real versus what is AI-generated. We are not trying to fool anyone into thinking something is real when it's not, and providing a full disclosure of our technique and our content should allay such legitimate concerns about the status of facts in these times.

We are blurring modes here as a kind of exercise in *boundary non-maintainance*. It is an interdisciplinary maneuver that has not been attempted in this form before, at least not in the fields we know

well. We are bringing together strands of muckraking journalism, academic writing, *agitprop*, surrealist art, 1920s-style dada provocation, *Adbusters*-style visual boldness, and the strangeness of Michael Lesy's controversial "dissertation as collage"; *Wisconsin Death Trip*, in order to jolt the reader into new feelings and insights about the leading edge of techno-capital. A new phenomenon invited new methods, which may strike some as irresponsible or even some kind of absinthe-fueled fantasy, but we see it as a quite serious form of intellectual play. We want this to land in a particular way and have some anxiety about getting it right.

We hope you will find our magazine satisfyingly unorthodox, funkily hybrid, and quite simply, very funny in the great tradition of satirists that extends from Aristophanes to Al Jaffe and his comrades at *Mad Magazine*, all somehow put into our creative blender along with a raft of other scholars and artists who have influenced our work.

We placed this statement of methodology at the end of the project because we wanted the reader to slide organically into the experience of the magazine, rather than beginning with the standard academic framing statement that would didactically map the pages ahead. The experiential matters to us, and we preferred to imagine our readers flipping with astonishment, amusement, interest, and horror through the magazine, which is precisely how we experience the daily news about Musk and his companies. We hope you see this project as an experiment with a serious purpose, despite its lighter elements, and we hope you see how our blend of real and fake, academic and journalistic, digital and analogue, might offer a playful mode of academic engagement with the Gigaverse, aka, the world of Tesla. After all, as they used to say about Frank Sinatra, it's Elon's world and we only live in it.



CHARCAL

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Finally, we asked ChatGPT to simulate Elon Musk's statement about our project and here is what it created:

Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce you to an extraordinary project that combines the realms of technology, art, and humanities—a creative interdisciplinary endeavor centered around Tesla.

At Tesla, we have always been passionate about pushing the boundaries of innovation and exploring the intersection of science, engineering, and society. But we also recognize the profound impact that art and humanities can have on shaping our understanding of the world and our relationship with technology.

With this project, we aim to foster a deep appreciation for the rich tapestry of human experiences that surround Tesla and its impact on society. We want to delve into the narratives, emotions, and cultural implications that arise from our electric vehicles and renewable energy initiatives.

This interdisciplinary project should encourage collaboration, dialogue, and creative exploration across fields, allowing experts and enthusiasts from different disciplines to come together and share their unique perspectives. By fostering this cross-pollination of ideas, we can unlock new insights, challenge assumptions, and gain a deeper understanding of the holistic impact of Tesla on society.

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. ✖



**Congratulations
I did it!**



2024

PIART SOCKS

Elon

Support
Millionaires
**2024
GRIEFS
SUDD**
Millionaires





about quality. I understand
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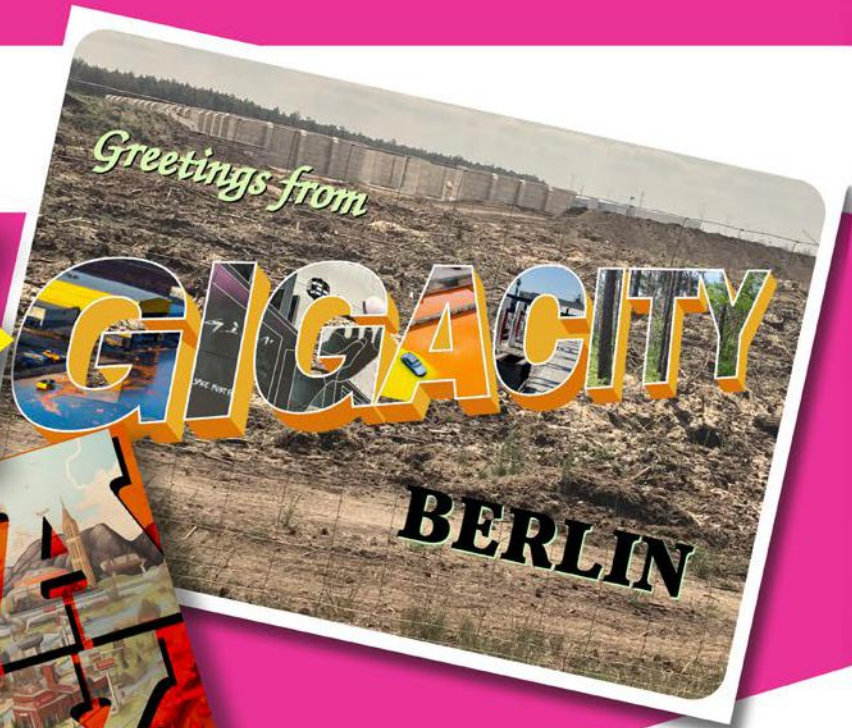
There is no
ethical way to
use the major AI
image generators.
All of them are
trained on stolen
images, and all
of them are built
for the purpose
of deskilling,
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and replacing real,
human artists.'

— MOLLY CRABAPPLE,
artist and activist

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SEND GREETINGS FROM THE GIGACITIES

NEW POSTCARD SERIES OUT NOW!!!



"DEAR MOM, THEY MADE A WHOLE MAGAZINE ABOUT ME. ISN'T THIS GREAT?! XOXO ELON (YOUR SON)"



The sections, articles and pieces in this affective and provocative magazine are amalgamates of theory, discourse, deep collaborative hallucinations, and fabrications about the social life of Elon Musk and the technologies he assembles. This magazine is in itself a productive agent of the social realm. Just think of Elon's role in the media coverage of Ron DeSantis' election campaign, namely the failed attempt of broadcasting it via X. Or, the altruist efforts to make Earth withstand climate catastrophes in the future just as long as it requires billionaires like Musk to take center stage with their blueprint colonies for Mars. We do not consider this publication to emit the same gravity of social facts nor does it stand a chance against the competitive social media army defend their Techno-king. It is a rather satirical yet popular scientific valve for incipiently understanding the phenomena behind Muskism.

Please, use it wisely. Even though it unlocks the research behind the design, writing, and ideas, it might change the reader's interpretation. Not unlike the **Berlin Key** described by Bruno Latour, the **Elon Key** is used to unlock the sources and theories behind the magazine's structure and create facts beyond its mere presence here. And thus, it also provides the words, the syntax, and the power to disenchant the nosey yet slack tone of every page.

Read the **Elon Key** as a medium that constitutes and transforms the things you've read, it might even betray or fog your interpretations. Just be aware that once unlocked, the magazine will read differently and it may have changed its meaning.

Finally, the **Elon Key** works as a translator and mediator between the myriads of actants at play here: the magazine, the writings, the images, the AI, the ambitious authors, the Gigacities Collective, the interested reader, the critics, academia, and the social world. ✖



That is reason enough to add our sources in an online key to the magazine. In fact, we are—although here in an un-disciplined and slacker scholarship way—academically socialized writers and in this instance satirists. The 'skeleton key' serves as proof of the scientific methods we employed to write and generate the contents of ELON.



www.gigacitiescollective.net

OBVIOUSLY

IS he
now?



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BUSTER
KEATON

ELON
MUSK

BER
LUSC
ONI

USK
USC

29.9.3
2+9+9
+3+6
= 25
2+3
= 5
7+7
= 14
= 2

BerUS
4.70.95
4+7+9+5
= 95
7+7=14
9+6=15

28.6.77
2+8+6+7+7
= 27
2+7=9

SHEEP
SNATCHED



ONO

SAME
?

78.2.33
7+8+2+3+3
= 23
7+7