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# I Will Rather Lose my Job to AI Than My Dad

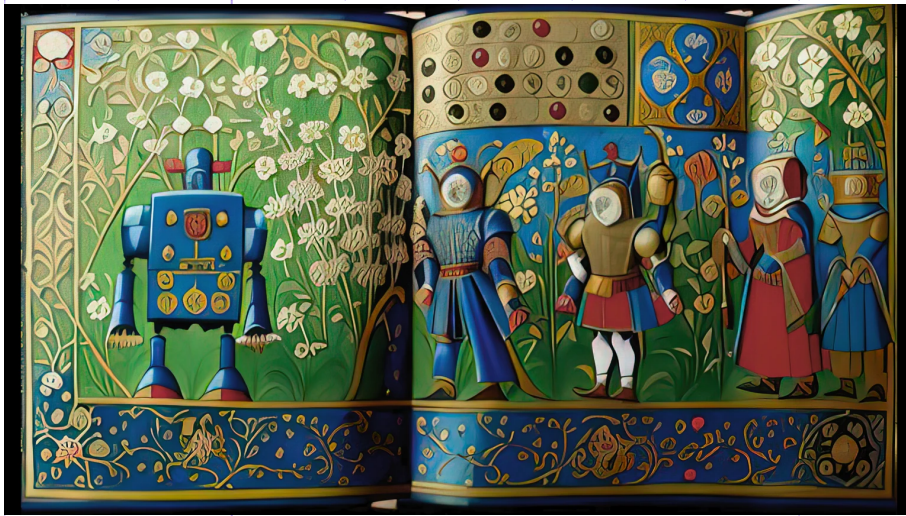
Dzennifer Zachlod

**Chunk 1** My father is employed as a truck driver. Neither as a long-distance truck driver who is required to drive for several days in a row, nor as a short-distance truck driver engaged in the delivery of parcels. He delivers forklifts to business customers, a role he has fulfilled for almost two decades. Additionally, he is a knowledgeable automotive mechanic, and growing up in a household with an individual who drives daily, either a car or truck, and is capable of repairing a wide range of motors, fostered at least some degree of technical interest in me. Consequently, I have always had a keen interest in developments in autonomous driving, particularly during the period of significant hype around 2015.

**Chunk 2** With the advent of generative AI technologies such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, and MidJourney in the early 2020s, I began to consider their potential impact on my profession as a designer. By 2015, the momentum around autonomous driving technology had increased, with industry leaders and media projecting a future where autonomous vehicles were commonplace. Uber's launch of a self-driving car pilot program in Pittsburgh in 2016 further underscored the rapid advancements in this field. The integration of advanced algorithms, machine learning, and sophisticated sensors enabled these vehicles to navigate complex environments, promising enhanced safety and efficiency.

**Chunk 3** A parallel technological revolution was unfolding in the realm of design discourse. Generative AI, driven by companies such as OpenAI and Adobe, began to transform creative industries. The development of AI-powered creative tools promised to augment artistic processes but also raised questions about the role of human creativity in an increasingly automated world.

II. p. 37, Chunk 1:  
Editorial: AI & Society  
II. p. 4, Chunk 3: Vorwort  
II. p. 37, Chunk 1:  
Editorial: AI & Society



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1: Dreyfus, H. (1965). Alchemy and artificial intelligence. Rand Corporation.

2: Wildenhain, M. (2024). Eine kurze Geschichte der künstlichen Intelligenz. Cotta.

3: Dreyfus, H. (1965). Alchemy and artificial intelligence. Rand Corporation.

4: Dreyfus, H. (1965). Alchemy and artificial intelligence. Rand Corporation.

As a philosopher, he was seen as an outsider for his fundamental critique. In short, as Michael Wildenhain in his short history of Artificial Intelligence summarizes his critique, Dreyfus suggests that human intelligence does not necessarily need to be explained in terms of the structure and function of the human brain. He argued that the condition of human intelligence starts from its situational context. A person is *in the world* from birth and is thus compelled to act, which means that the objects in this world are initially *ready-to-hand* for interaction.<sup>2</sup> Dreyfus compared therefore the early successes of the progress made in Artificial Intelligence to the early successes of the alchemists, where they managed to distill „quicksilver from what seemed to be dirt [and, t]hat after several hundred years of fruitless effort to convert lead into gold they still refused to believe that on a the chemical level one cannot transmute metals.“<sup>3</sup> Because of that he argued that „before we invest more time and money on the information-processing level, we should ask whether the protocols of human subjects suggest that computer language is appropriate for analyzing human behavior.“<sup>4</sup>

This essay does not aim to dive deep into the question of whether Dreyfus was correct in his assessment.

5: Armstrong, S., Sotola, K., & ÓhÉigeartaigh, S. (2014). The errors, insights, and lessons of famous AI predictions - and what they mean for the future. Rand Corporation.

Chunk 4

In 1965 Dreyfus published a paper called „Alchemy and Artificial Intelligence“<sup>1</sup> where he extensively scrutinized the idea of artificial intelligence. In the early 60s, while Hubert Dreyfus was teaching at the MIT, he came into contact with Marvin Minsky and was observing the inception and field of Artificial Intelligence closely. It was unimaginable for him, that through manipulation of symbols something like intelligence could be

Chunk 5

Such analyses already exist.<sup>5</sup>

Chunk 6

Rather, it seeks to explore the relevance of Dreyfus's ideas today, particularly in relation to the emergence of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), a concept that has replaced the broader term "artificial intelligence" in many discussions.

6: Pasquinelli, M. (2023). *The Eye of the Master: A Social History of Artificial Intelligence*. Verso.

7: Pasquinelli, M. (2023). *The Eye of the Master: A Social History of Artificial Intelligence*. Verso.

The metaphor of alchemy offers a compelling lens through which to view the pursuit of AGI by modern researchers and corporations. Historically, alchemy was a protoscientific and esoteric tradition that sought to transform base materials into gold and to discover the philosopher's stone, a symbol of mastery over nature. Today, this mystical quest can be metaphorically linked to the field of Artificial General Intelligence. While AI research is grounded in science and mathematical calculations, the comparison with alchemy appears when one is considering the lofty promises, speculative nature, and immense resources being funneled into achieving Artificial General Intelligence that, much like the philosopher's stone, remains difficult to catch. Mainly due to the fact that intelligence itself is something hard to define, considering the various layers of possible intelligence. Furthermore, one has to pose the question if the current form of AI system is even a basic form of Intelligence at all. If one takes into consideration the history and emergence of artificial intelligence as a science field, one cannot ignore the changes in the working methods of academic research at that time, which is that a lot of the mathematical foundations are largely based on psychometrics, a quantitative measurement of psychology and social science.<sup>6</sup> This was a significant turn of approach, where instead of taking measurements of physical performance, researchers focused on making statistical comparisons on cognitive tasks. Matteo Pasquinelli argues therefore that "the current form of AI, machine learning, is the automation of the statistical metrics which were originally introduced to quantify cognitive, social and work-related abilities."<sup>7</sup>

In this light, the leap from narrow AI to AGI mirrors the alchemists' ambition to convert base metals into gold—grand in scope, but fraught with uncertainty and potential failure. As Hubert Dreyfus noted, AI researchers must critically examine their assumptions: "Is an exhaustive analysis of human intelligent behavior into discrete and determinate operations possible?"

Chunk 7

Is an approximate analysis of human intelligent behavior in such digital terms probable? The answer to both these questions seems to be, 'No.'<sup>8</sup>

8: Dreyfus, H. (1965). *Alchemy and artificial intelligence*. Rand Corporation.

II. p. 163, Chunk 5: b10t - ELIZA bot



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9: Altman, S. (2023, October 3). Planning for AGI and beyond. OpenAI. <https://openai.com/index/planning-for-agi-and-beyond/>

10: Amazon Web Services. (n.d.). What is AGI (Artificial General Intelligence)? AWS. [https://aws.amazon.com/what-is/artificial-general-intelligence/?nc1=h\\_ls](https://aws.amazon.com/what-is/artificial-general-intelligence/?nc1=h_ls)

expand the boundaries of what is possible.<sup>9</sup> Seen through the eyes of OpenAI, AGI could serve as a significant force multiplier, granting people access to unprecedented levels of assistance across a variety of intellectual endeavors. At the same time, they state no roadmap or plan how to achieve this sort of AGI. This vision of omnipresent AI assistance, however, stands in stark contrast to today's reality where even specialized AI systems struggle with complex real-world integration. Companies like Amazon have outlined challenges related to deep learning, generative AI, natural language processing, computer vision, and robotics that must be overcome to realize AGI's potential.<sup>10</sup> They also highlight some of the challenges that each of these fields pose.

The gap between theoretical AGI ambitions and practical implementation becomes particularly evident when examining specific use cases. When looking at this huge list, which encompasses everything from sensory input and data collection, to robotics, and better algorithms, we recognize this grand scope of factors and variables that must align perfectly.

11: Wedekind, K. (2024, October 3). Traum vom autonomen Fahren wohl vorerst geplatzt. n-tv. <https://www.n-tv.de/technik/Traum-vom-autonomen-Fahren-wohl-vorerst-geplatzt-article24752726.html>

12: Searle, J. R. (1980). Minds, brains, and science. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 3(3), 557-598.

do not only have to take into consideration if the car will navigate on its own the streets but also legal and moral considerations. As Ilja Radusch, a researcher at TU Berlin, argues achieving regulatory approval requires nearly 100% trust.<sup>11</sup> This microcosm of autonomous vehicle development illustrates why AGI remains at a distant horizon. If we struggle to coordinate AI subsystems for a single transportation task, coordinating AGI becomes exponentially more complex.

So far the neural networks and algorithms we have, are only approximating the statistical probability at hand. Concerns arise and revolve around whether large datasets, which are essentially inflated by vast amounts of internet data, can genuinely replicate or exceed human cognition. While AI may simulate intelligence, critics argue that human intelligence is deeply intertwined with our ability to navigate the world—something machines might struggle to truly emulate. To illustrate this distinction, one might consider the thought experiment known as the “Chinese Room.” In this scenario, a person who does not understand Chinese is able to simulate understanding by following pre-programmed rules.<sup>12</sup> While they may output correct responses, they lack actual comprehension.

This thought experiment highlights a weakness of AI systems, which often process and manipulate data without genuine understanding. Wildenhain argues that, just as a machine might, a person consider which word should follow next when composing certain texts, as it seems appropriate.

Chunk 8 In discussions surrounding the development of Artificial General Intelligence, proponents like OpenAI state on their website that such technology has the potential to revolutionize society. AGI could elevate humanity by increasing global abundance, stimulating economic growth, and enabling groundbreaking scientific discoveries that

expand the boundaries of what is possible.<sup>9</sup> Seen through the eyes of OpenAI, AGI could serve as a significant force multiplier, granting people access to unprecedented levels of assistance across a variety of intellectual endeavors. At the same time, they state no roadmap or plan how to achieve this sort of AGI. This vision of omnipresent AI assistance, however, stands in stark contrast to today's reality where even specialized AI systems struggle with complex real-world integration. Companies like Amazon have outlined challenges related to deep learning, generative AI, natural language processing, computer vision, and robotics that must be overcome to realize AGI's potential.<sup>10</sup> They also highlight some of the challenges that each of these fields pose.

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Chunk 9 Autonomous driving serves as a telling example: The question will be when we manage to create an apparatus that includes all the factors that can then be brought into the world to work in critical areas. For instance, until autonomous driving will be extensively used and not only in georestricted areas might take several decades. We

do not only have to take into consideration if the car will navigate on its own the streets but also legal and moral considerations. As Ilja Radusch, a researcher at TU Berlin, argues achieving regulatory approval requires nearly 100% trust.<sup>11</sup> This microcosm of autonomous vehicle development illustrates why AGI remains at a distant horizon. If we struggle to coordinate AI subsystems for a single transportation task, coordinating AGI becomes exponentially more complex.

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I. p. 89, Chunk 2: (dis-)embodied minds - creativity...

II. p. 178, Chunk 8: Editorial

Chunk 11 However, before this occurs, the decision is made to write that text for a specific reason and purpose.

Chunk 12 The establishment of this purpose, in the context of the world and individual existence, is determined not by the machine but by the user.<sup>13</sup> This intrinsic connection between human intelligence and our experiential engagement with the world might be the key reason why humans remain superior in working with certain kinds of knowledge.

13: Wildenhain, M. (2024). Eine kurze Geschichte der Künstlichen Intelligenz. Cotta.

Chunk 13



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Chunk 14 „If a system is connected to a missile launch platform, it might be able to launch the missile. If a machine has the capability to open the airlock of a high-security lab, it might be able to open the door.

Chunk 15 And if a plane's faulty software doesn't relent and forces the elevator into a rapid descent, with the pilot unable to regain control, then the crash is inevitable.<sup>14</sup> Humans are the ones who program machines and provide input, and when problems arise, it is, and should remain, humans who bear the responsibility.<sup>15</sup> Many companies argue that they aim to protect humanity when releasing technologies like large language models.

14: Wildenhain, M. (2024). Eine kurze Geschichte der Künstlichen Intelligenz. Cotta.

15: The statement "A computer can never be held accountable, therefore a computer must never make a management decision" originates from an IBM presentation in 1979, and showcases the initial concerns about computer(-assisted) decision making. Apparently the original manual was not archived by IBM, but was found in the documents of a person's father. <https://x.com/bumblebike/status/1468346709994582020>

Chunk 16 However, it is essential to ask ourselves whether this is genuine concern or just corporate spin from profit-driven enterprises.

Chunk 17 This can be seen now for instance, in the planned transformation of OpenAI from a non-profit organization to a profit-driven company.<sup>16</sup>

16: Weiß, E.-M. (2024, October 4). Investments are donations: OpenAI wants to become profit-oriented. Heise. [https://www.heise.de/en/news/Investments-are-donations-OpenAI-wants-to-become-profit-oriented-9876410.html#:~: =Currently%2C%20OpenAI%20Inc.%20is%20a%20nly%20receive%20a%20certain%20return.](https://www.heise.de/en/news/Investments-are-donations-OpenAI-wants-to-become-profit-oriented-9876410.html#:~:=Currently%2C%20OpenAI%20Inc.%20is%20a%20nly%20receive%20a%20certain%20return.)

Regarding the question of who in the job market should be more concerned about job loss — people in traditional blue-collar roles like my father, or white-collar workers like us as designers — there are some logical conclusions to draw. Considering the factors needed to create an artificial general intelligence in the commonly understood sense of a conscious robot that can act and react in the world, traditional manual labor and blue-collar jobs will largely remain *untouched* for now. I emphasize *untouched*

because while these jobs aren't disappearing, the pressure to optimize performance through algorithms—such as faster route planning or more efficient techniques—has already made life harder for blue-collar workers.

17: TheProject. (2023, October 4). Oobah Butler on how he created Amazon's number one energy drink (which is urine) [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzb\\_wY1X0p8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzb_wY1X0p8)

Chunk 18 While my father's experience as a truck driver has not yet reached the extremes faced by workers in highly automated environments, such as Amazon, there is a broader trend toward the precarization of labor across industries. In these

cases, employees are subjected to highly demanding work environments, to the extent that they resort to unacceptable practices such as urinating in bottles<sup>17</sup> to meet stringent schedules.

Chunk 19 The novelty, however, is the quick impact on our field—design and the creative industries. Tools like MidJourney, DALL-E, and even ChatGPT can produce millions of images without resistance, offering a surreal, plastic-like allure that could leave any of us feeling overwhelmed. Creatives have to navigate the realm of the design industry, confronted with the challenges of precarious employment, including taking jobs for mere *exposure* and managing multiple job roles simultaneously. As AI development is unlikely to slow down in the coming years, and many AI functions will become indispensable in everyday applications, one possible strategy is to embrace the collaboration between humans and machines. As Hubert Dreyfus aptly summarized the gist of when or if AGI will emerge:

"We must think in the short run of cooperation between men and digital computers, and only in the long run of non-digital automata [...] in dealing with our informal world. Those who feel that some concrete results are better than none, and that we should not abandon work on artificial intelligence until some more flexible device for information processing comes along, cannot be refuted.

18: Dreyfus, H. (1965). Alchemy and artificial intelligence. Rand Corporation.

Chunk 20 The long reign of alchemy has shown that any research which has had an early success can always be justified and continued by those who prefer adventure to patience."<sup>18</sup>

*This text is an adaption of my bachelor thesis where I have produced a short experimental documentary. It is also separately published as ↗ 10.25358/openscience-11838.*