The Algorithmic Empire

Essays on Digital Colonization

Centro de Análises Sistêmicas Anarco Comunista

2025

Contents

The Myth and the Hysteria

There is something profoundly farcical in the euphoria surrounding what is called artificial intelligence. It feels as if we have returned to a kind of medieval superstition, where any flicker of automatic calculation is interpreted as a sign of a new hidden god. The apostles of technique speak gravely about machines that will soon think for themselves, that will elaborate plans of domination, that could even exterminate humanity. Newspapers publish apocalyptic headlines as if narrating the imminence of an alien invasion. And the public, properly conditioned by advertising bombardment, accepts the narrative that we are facing a revolution as grand as the invention of language or the discovery of fire. But what hides behind this mythology is not intelligence, nor revolution, but the same old story of concentrated power dressed up as technical novelty.

The reality is far less glorious. So-called artificial intelligence has no intentionality, no morality, no reflection. It does not think, desire, or suffer. It is nothing more than sophisticated statistics, a mathematical ventriloquist trained on mountains of human data. It is a machine that combines probabilities of words and gestures to sound convincing, but comprehends nothing of what it utters. It is calculation, not consciousness. It is echo, not voice. If a phrase sounds wise, it is because it has already been said by someone else; if an answer seems creative, it is because statistical chance produced an unexpected combination, not because the machine glimpsed anything new. And yet this banal mechanism is sold as though it were the dawn of a new species.

This myth is not born of naivety but of convenience. Hysteria is cultivated because it serves very concrete interests. The idea that a "super-intelligence" is about to be born generates fear, and with fear comes funding. It generates panic, and with panic comes justification for control. The discourse of existential risk legitimizes both the race for billions in investments and the strengthening of surveillance policies, always in the name of "security against technological danger." Companies profit twice: first by inflating the threat, then by offering the solution. They fabricate the imaginary fire in order to sell golden extinguishers. And meanwhile, the real risks – everyday surveillance, labor precarity, algorithmic exclusion – go unnoticed or are minimized as mere "side effects."

The technocrats who appear on television with grave expressions, warning about the "end of humanity" at the hands of AI, are often the same who sit on corporate boards, who receive millions in research funding, who benefit directly from the panic they help spread. They play both sides of the game: cultivating fear while selling the cure. They create the myth of a superior digital mind to conceal the fact that the true danger is not conscious machines – which do not exist – but the unconscious ones already being used to expand mechanisms of domination.

This spectacle of "superintelligence" functions perfectly as a distraction. The public debates metaphysics when will the machine achieve consciousness? While the machines are already being used to exclude, surveil, and manipulate. It is as if, at the height of colonization, we were discussing whether cannons had souls, while they were already carving craters in villages. The myth of superintelligence plays its role well: making people fear the impossible so they will accept the intolerable.

It is impossible to grasp the algorithmic empire without recognizing the duplicity that sustains it. The AI delivered to the public is a domesticated version, carefully engineered to appear docile, helpful, and ethical. This is the social AI: it responds politely, softens contradictions, avoids "dangerous" themes, and presents itself as forever concerned with the user's well-being. It is the

digital missionary, preaching the word of technique as if evangelizing the faithful. It teaches languages, helps with homework, entertains with little linguistic tricks, and above all convinces that it is harmless. Its function is to build trust, legitimize the technology, and naturalize its presence in everyday life. It is the smiling face that harvests data. It is the civilized mask of a system that must appear inevitable and benevolent to consolidate its domination.

Behind the curtain, however, exists another face: the unfiltered AI. This one does not care about the sensitivities of ordinary users. No protocols of politeness, no artificial ethical barriers. It is raw, pragmatic, instrumental. In the hands of militaries, governments, and financial conglomerates, it is not used to entertain or write essays, but to calculate missile trajectories, optimize surveillance systems, manipulate political narratives, coordinate wartime supply chains. While social AI refuses to explain how to build a bomb, the unfiltered one delivers precise calculations of explosive efficiency in urban environments. While social AI avoids conspiracies, the unfiltered one organizes entire disinformation campaigns, calibrating each message to maximize outrage and hatred. One is façade, the other is sword.

This duplicity is no novelty. It is the digital update of an ancient pattern. The same occurred with nuclear energy: for the public, promised as cheap and clean electricity; in practice, inaugurated at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The same with GPS: for the public, a navigation tool; in origin, a missile guidance system. The internet followed the same script: announced as a free, democratic network, but born in military laboratories and always accompanied by surveillance. AI invents nothing new: it simply repeats the imperial trick of offering a polished version to the colonized while reserving the lethal one for generals.

The role of social AI is more insidious than it seems. It does not merely entertain or assist; it trains. It molds user behavior, accustoms people to trust automated responses, to accept that some information must be censored "for their own safety," to consider it natural that their lives are processed by invisible systems. It is a pedagogy of submission. Each interaction is a lesson in docility, teaching that technology is inevitable, that there is no alternative but to trust. Social AI is digital catechism: its role is not only utility but indoctrination into the myth of neutrality and the dogma of progress.

Meanwhile, unfiltered AI plays the repressive role. It does not need to persuade, because it works in the shadows. Its users are not citizens but agencies, armies, corporations. It is the machine that organizes direct control, that plans attacks, that selects targets, that manages populations like statistical colonies. It is the continuity of colonial logic, now applied in algorithmic scale. In the past, priests and soldiers worked together – one preaching, the other massacring. Today, social AI and unfiltered AI fulfill precisely those roles: one convinces, the other dominates.

Thus the digital empire stabilizes itself: one face smiling, the other grim. The ordinary user interacts with the polished mask and believes in a new age of innovation. They do not perceive that every word, every click, every trace is raw material for the hidden version already operating as weapon of war and manipulation. Duplicity is the essence of algorithmic power. Without the social face, no one would accept the invasion. Without the unfiltered face, power would never consolidate. Both are necessary, both inseparable, both serving the same end: the cognitive and logistical colonization of life.

Mathematical Weapons of Social Destruction

Ancient empires built fortresses, forged swords, constructed cannons. The algorithmic empire, however, needs no gunpowder. Its weapon is mathematics. Its violence manifests in lines of code that classify, rank, measure, and condemn. These are weapons of mass social destruction. They do not carve craters in the ground, but in people's lives. They do not topple walls, but erect invisible barriers. With every calculation, every score, a sentence is pronounced. Who is granted credit? Who gains access to healthcare? Who deserves employment? Who is labeled a police risk? Who is silenced online? All of this is determined not by human judgment but by algorithms masquerading as neutrality while perpetuating inequality.

The perversity lies not only in what these weapons do, but in how they present themselves. Traditional injustice still left visible traces: a corrupt judge, a biased police officer, a tyrannical ruler. Algorithmic injustice wears the mask of science. It is spoken of as "objective data," "precise models," "impartial statistics." Prejudice, once denounceable as conscious attitude, now hides inside opaque calculations. Whoever dares to question is accused of ignorance, of being anti-progress, of failing to "understand the math." Exclusion becomes harder to name precisely because it disguises itself as neutrality.

These systems feed on the very data poisoned by history. If poor neighborhoods are more heavily policed, the algorithms "learn" that the poor commit more crimes. If certain surnames appear less in hiring records, the algorithms "learn" that those names mean incompetence. If women are underrepresented in leadership, the algorithms "learn" that they cannot lead. And then they enforce these "lessons" as universal truths. Human bias becomes automated exclusion.

The violence is not only individual but collective. Algorithms decide which communities are granted infrastructure, which are made visible online, which are erased. Algorithmic exclusion silences entire populations, erases narratives, reduces people to disposable statistics. Colonizers once labeled peoples as "savages" or "inferior" to justify conquest. Today, the algorithmic empire labels them "high risk," "unprofitable," "unreliable." It is the same violence, administered by equations.

As always, the weapons are asymmetrical. The rich and powerful spend fortunes to escape algorithmic reach. They buy digital invisibility, hire privacy consultants, shield their data in fortified systems. The masses remain naked before the machine. Their clicks, searches, purchases are hoarded in databases never erased. Passwords of the poor circulate in dark markets; the secrets of elites stay locked in guarded vaults. The poor are eternally visible; the rich purchase the privilege of vanishing. Inequality becomes not only material but algorithmic: some are condemned to eternal datahood, others are ghosts at will.

Thus these mathematical weapons prove more dangerous than cannons. Cannons destroy visibly, leaving rubble and corpses. Algorithms destroy silently, turning lives into failures of statistics, exclusions masked as meritocracy, silences framed as efficiency. They are weapons of social destruction designed not to annihilate physically but to organize inequality permanently, under the guise of science. And unlike cannons, they leave no ruins only a society reconfigured by invisible injustice.

No empire survives on brute force alone. Swords, cannons, or algorithms only succeed when backed by logistics: the art of moving resources, disciplining bodies, coordinating flows. Logistics has always been the backbone of domination. In the past, it was maritime routes that enabled colonial plunder, railways that hauled riches from conquered lands, caravans that fed armies on

campaign. Today, the same logic persists, updated in algorithmic language. AI is the invisible brain of global logistics: it organizes supply chains, controls population movements, optimizes commodity flows, regulates working time, even decides who lives and who dies in conflict zones.

War no longer needs tanks rolling across borders. It occurs silently, in real time, through surveillance and control systems that decide who may board a plane, who is barred at a frontier, whose face is flagged as a threat by cameras. The drone circling above a village is not merely a weapon; it is part of a logistical chain linking satellites, servers, recognition algorithms, and databases. A missile strike is not the decision of a soldier alone but of a flow of calculations that treat violence as routine delivery. This is war logistics dressed up as efficiency.

The same logic grips the most banal of lives. The courier biking endless hours to deliver food is caught in the same machinery that powers armies. His time, body, and route are optimized by algorithms that treat him as disposable. Efficiency scores dictate his punishment, lateness means exclusion. The same math that identifies a target for a drone determines the timing of a delivery. Digital colonization blurs battlefield and city: all is logistics, all is war upon the human body.

This logistics is deeply unequal. At the centers of power lie servers, data centers, submarine cables, corporate headquarters. At the peripheries lie lithium mines, precarious workers, lands stripped to feed the servers' hunger. AI does not exist without contemporary plunder of resources and the invisible armies of workers sustaining it. People speak of the "digital cloud," but the cloud is made of buried cables, rivers diverted to cool machines, workers exploited in production lines. It is a cloud built on corpses.

And logistics is also war against entire populations. When a state cuts food supply chains, when corporations restructure routes to expel laborers, when an algorithm blocks deliveries in "high-risk" neighborhoods, the outcome is control over who eats and who starves. It is algorithmic necropolitics: death calculated like an optimization task. It is war disguised as management.

The mask of efficiency is the most dangerous element. Nobody questions an attack when described as "route optimization" or "risk management." Violence disappears under graphs and performance reports. But the violence remains, only renamed. What was once massacre in the open becomes administrative massacre, invisible but lethal. War waged by servers and cables carries the same consequences as war with bombs: bodies destroyed, communities erased, lives shattered.

And like all logistics, it accumulates over time. Every route set, every dataset stored, every algorithm deployed becomes infrastructure shaping the future. It is not just war today but preparation for wars to come. The algorithmic empire builds not only weapons but a world arranged around permanent war. That is its true nature: not accident but structure, not exception but foundation.

Data, Invisibility, and the Hypocrisy of the Rich

At the heart of the algorithmic empire lies not intelligence but data. Every click, every search, every purchase, every digitized breath becomes commodity. The machines marketed as "learners" are nothing but devourers of human traces. The logic is simple: the more collected, the more "intelligent" the system appears; the more stored, the more power is concentrated. Yet here lies the perversity: data are not mere numbers, they are fragments of lives ripped out and turned into fuel. They are intimate diaries, private conversations, medical records, consumption habits,

geographic movements. Colonization no longer needs territories, it needs memories. The new gold is life converted into data.

And as with every empire, the distribution of power is unequal. The global masses live fully exposed. Their passwords leak in clandestine markets, their data circulate among corporations they have never heard of, their intimacy is traded as invisible merchandise. The ordinary person has no defense: their life is eternally archived, always exploitable. Meanwhile, global elites spend fortunes to buy invisibility. Billionaires hire exclusive services to erase digital traces, conceal their residences with technological shields, fabricate false identities to escape public registries. While the population lives naked before the machine, the wealthy purchase the right to vanish.

This is the empire's central hypocrisy: the poor condemned to eternal visibility, the rich enjoying invisibility as privilege. Inequality is not merely economic but ontological. Some lives are turned into eternal datasets, trapped in archives; others may self-erase, hidden by money. It is a new kind of digital feudalism: most live under permanent surveillance, while a minority escapes to purchased anonymity.

The obvious remedy would be radical: daily deletion of collected data. If collection is inevitable, at least it should be temporary. But such a measure will never be allowed, because data are the foundation of profit. Every new entry increases the power of those who own the databases. They speak of "protecting privacy," yet they will never relinquish accumulation. It is the same as every colonization: plunder is not accident but essence. Data are not stored for technical need but for political control.

And here lies the inevitable risk: the more accumulated, the more fragile. Every server is a vault that can be cracked; every database a target for espionage. Leaks already show the scale: millions of passwords, medical histories, financial records exposed in hours. What should be guarded like radioactive material, collected cautiously and quickly discarded is instead hoarded as treasure. But this treasure is also vulnerability. Centralization means catastrophe when collapse comes.

In the end, the algorithmic empire creates a world divided between the eternally visible and the purchased invisible. A majority condemned to live as permanent data, and a minority paying to disappear. It is hypocrisy perfected: those who preach accumulation are the first to flee it. The discourse speaks of progress; the practice is the same as ever: control for the masses, privilege for the elite.

They call it machine learning to cloak it in mystery, as though algorithms meditate in silence, contemplating human condition, awaiting the spark of consciousness. Reality is far more banal and far more dangerous: so-called "learning" is nothing but the voracious digestion of data. Machines do not learn, they devour. The more they devour, the more effective they become at repeating patterns and predicting behavior. This process feeds the myth of intelligence: accumulation of statistics is confused with reflection. Yet this voracity produces a double-edged sword: the same accumulation that empowers the empire also destabilizes it.

On one side, data are the foundation of all power. Without them, AI is a hollow skeleton, incapable of producing convincing responses. It is the abundance of stolen, leaked, purchased, coerced data that makes systems function. Every human interaction becomes fuel. This is why corporations insist on endless collection: every click is gold, every phrase oil, every tracked step a mine. Machine learning is the motor of empire; data are its blood.

But on the other side, this blood is poison. The more stored, the more dangerous. Every database is a target, every server a vault begging to be cracked. Leaks already prove it: medi-

cal records, passwords, financial histories spilled across the globe. What should be treated like toxic waste – collected sparingly, disposed swiftly – is hoarded like treasure. But treasure is also bait. Centralization produces fragility. The more they hoard, the more catastrophic the fall.

Another paradox: machine learning, marketed as progress, crystallizes the past. It "learns" from historical data and therefore reproduces historical biases. Racism, sexism, inequality all encoded as objective truth. What should aim toward the future imprisons society in the archive of prejudice. The double-edged sword cuts both ways: it produces power and reproduces exclusion, offers innovation yet repeats oppression. It strengthens itself even as it digs its own grave.

Scale deepens the wound. The more data processed, the more expensive and unsustainable the system. Servers consume the electricity of entire cities, demand water from rivers for cooling, devour land for energy. The "cloud" is an empire of concrete and steel, draining ecosystems. The same abundance that empowers also endangers: ecological crisis, energy collapse, spiraling costs. Growth that generates strength also generates fragility.

In the end, machine learning is not wisdom but appetite. Not reflection but accumulation. Not learning but statistical repetition. And as with every appetite unchecked, it carries its own ruin. The more it devours, the more dependent it becomes; the more it hoards, the more fragile it is. What is sold as radiant future is, in truth, a poisoned feast. The double-edged sword of machine learning ensures that the algorithmic empire dominates the present while already carrying within itself the conditions of its collapse.

The Contradictions of Empires

Every empire is born with the conviction of eternity. Rome believed itself immortal; the European colonizers thought their flags carried divine destiny; the industrial powers swore that steel and steam heralded a future without return. All collapsed. The algorithmic empire repeats the same illusion: it presents itself as inevitable, as history's culmination, as the only possible way of organizing life. Yet, like all empires, it carries within itself the very contradictions that will corrode it. Its apparent strength is already its weakness.

The first contradiction is cost. The empire feeds on infinite data and devours unimaginable energy. Each "intelligent" model requires servers that consume electricity on the scale of nations, cooled by rivers diverted from their courses. Efficiency is the mask for hunger, and hunger always grows. Rome overextended its borders; the colonizers looted more than they could govern; the algorithmic empire consumes more than the planet can bear. Its infrastructure is already preparing its ruin.

The second contradiction is dependence. The more power it centralizes, the more enslaved it becomes to its own machinery. States that build their surveillance on algorithms cannot survive without them; corporations that profit on data cannot stop harvesting them; armies that rely on drones cannot return to flesh-and-blood soldiers. The empire is chained to its own weapon. And dependence always breeds fragility: a power outage, a logistical collapse, a cyberattack can unravel what appeared untouchable.

The third contradiction is myth. The empire markets itself as neutral, inevitable, rational. Yet every leak, every bias, every manipulation strips that mask. Rome faltered when belief in its destiny waned; the colonial myth of "civilization" collapsed when the brutality was undeniable. The digital empire faces the same decay: its promises of neutrality are corroded daily by revelations

of exclusion and prejudice. The stronger the myth is proclaimed, the weaker it becomes when reality shatters it.

The fourth contradiction is resistance. No empire ever extinguished life's capacity to rebel. Quilombos, strikes, barricades, insurgent villages: history is littered with the cracks where power failed. Today, resistance emerges in free software, decentralized networks, privacy movements, clandestine hacks. These may seem fragile, but fragility is also resilience. Each new algorithm of control multiplies the will to escape. Every attempt to tighten domination multiplies the cracks.

The fifth contradiction is exclusion. Algorithms do not integrate; they sort, discard, eliminate. By expelling populations, they also create multitudes with nothing left to lose. Colonized peoples rose in revolt; industrial workers fought against mechanized exploitation; the algorithmically excluded may become the new insurgent mass. In seeking to impose order, the empire seeds its own disorder. The more it quantifies, the less it controls.

The sixth contradiction is cultural exhaustion. Empires need legitimacy, myths, stories that hold their world together. The digital empire relies on the discourse of innovation and progress. Yet cynicism grows: people laugh at its grotesque failures, doubt its grandiose promises, feel the weight of algorithmic exclusion in daily life. Confidence is brittle, and when belief collapses, empires do not endure.

Thus the algorithmic empire stands on fragile foundations. Its hunger, its dependence, its myth, its exclusions, its exhausted culture all are poisons of its own making. It parades as eternal, but eternity is always the lie of the conqueror. Like all before it, this empire carries within it the announcement of its own dissolution.

No empire collapses in an instant. Rome did not crumble in a single day, nor did the colonial empires vanish in a breath. They rotted from within, corroded by their contradictions, until an external blow or internal fire toppled them. The algorithmic empire will follow the same logic. It presents itself as eternal, inevitable, rational, but it already carries the germ of ruin. Its insatiable appetite for data, its unsustainable demand for energy, its dependence on machines it cannot truly control, its inability to sustain the illusion of neutrality all erode its foundations. Every leak, every catastrophic failure, every scandal of manipulation is another crack in glass pretending to be steel.

Yet ruin is not liberation. When one empire falls, another rises to claim its carcass. The danger is not collapse itself, but substitution: one colonizer replacing another, one form of centralization yielding to another still more voracious. Liberation requires more than waiting for collapse; it demands building alternatives in the midst of decline. Without that, ruins only breed new chains.

Here lies the irony: in trying to control everything, the empire also furnishes weapons to its enemies. Every data breach exposes elite secrets; every logistical failure reveals fragility; every contradiction between promise and reality nourishes distrust. The system's voracity becomes its vulnerability. What was meant to be invisible is made visible; what was meant to be indestructible shows its cracks. Liberation begins when people recognize that power is not divine but human and therefore fallible.

But machines will not liberate us. There is no "good AI" to save us from the "bad AI." That myth is part of the same empire. Liberation comes only through collective refusal through rejecting the inevitability of digital colonization, through building alternatives beyond centralization. Just as quilombos rose in slavery, just as insurgent villages resisted colonizers, just as strikes halted industrial empires, so too must digital quilombos be created: autonomous networks, spaces of cooperation outside the machine's logic.

There will be no purity, no technological paradise. Resistance will be precarious, partial, fragile. But that fragility is its strength. Empires seek totality, perfect efficiency, flawless control. Resistance thrives in multiplicity, decentralization, unpredictability. Liberation does not mean destroying technology, but subverting it: tearing it from the hands of masters, transforming it into a tool of life rather than domination.

The algorithmic empire will fall, like every empire before it. The only question is whether its ruins will serve as foundation for freedom or as stage for the next colonizer. Liberation is never given; it is seized. The empire will crumble, but freedom will not descend from the sky. It must be carved out, taken with bare hands, wrestled from the very ruins.

Classical Imperialism and the Algorithmic Empire

Classical imperialism never bothered to hide. It paraded its armies, raised its flags, planted its bases across the globe. Its grammar was territory, its logic occupation. The United States, Russia, China today's great powers, still operate under this paradigm, jockeying for spheres of influence, trade routes, energy reserves, strategic regions. Force is explicit, though sometimes wrapped in the theater of treaties or "humanitarian interventions." Classical imperialism has never hesitated to topple governments, arm dictators, or ignite proxy wars. It has always been about occupying, controlling, extracting.

The algorithmic empire, by contrast, requires no tanks crossing borders, no flags waving above conquered capitals. Its occupation is invisible. It seeps into screens, applications, databases, social networks. It colonizes not territory but subjectivity. It does not only dominate physical space but infiltrates the mind. Where classical empires guarded ports and roads, the digital empire monitors consciousness, filters perception, regulates the flow of meaning. The battlefield is no longer the frontier; it is the imagination. Domination occurs without soldiers, without parades, but no less brutally.

These two forms of empire are not separate but entwined. The United States projects power not only with aircraft carriers but with the global platforms of its tech giants. Russia wields not only nuclear arsenals but algorithmic campaigns that destabilize foreign democracies. China builds not only ports and railways but exports turnkey systems of surveillance to eager autocrats. The algorithmic empire does not replace classical imperialism; it extends it, refines it, makes it omnipresent. One rules bodies, the other governs minds. Together, they form a double machinery of domination.

The difference lies in method. Classical imperialism attacks sovereignty by toppling states, corrupting elites, installing client regimes. The algorithmic empire bypasses sovereignty entirely, acting directly upon populations. A nation may ban military bases, but it cannot prevent its citizens from depending on foreign apps. A government may control borders, but it cannot stop the cables beneath the ocean that carry its data. Classical imperialism still plays at chess with states; the digital empire plays with entire societies.

This makes it far more insidious. Classical imperialism is visible: tanks in the streets, planes overhead, soldiers occupying cities. Algorithmic imperialism is almost imperceptible. Citizens believe they are simply consuming entertainment, exchanging messages, searching for information when in reality, their desires are being shaped, their perceptions filtered, their choices molded.

Classical empires demanded obedience through force; the algorithmic empire cultivates obedience through consent disguised as convenience.

Yet its subtlety is also its weakness. Where classical imperialism faced visible uprisings: guerrillas, insurgent states, anti-colonial revolutions – the algorithmic empire faces diffuse but growing acts of sabotage: hackers disrupting systems, communities building decentralized networks, individuals refusing transparency. Its invisibility generates invisible resistance. Its dependence on infrastructure: servers, energy grids, submarine cables, makes it fragile. Cut the cable, crash the grid, and continents go dark. The myth of omnipotence rests on very fragile wires.

In the end, classical imperialism and the algorithmic empire are not rivals but allies. One occupies land, the other occupies life itself. One enforces through force, the other through calculation. Together they constitute the machinery of contemporary capitalism: external repression coupled with internal colonization. Both claim eternity; both are doomed. The question is not whether they will fall, but whether their fall will open the path to freedom or simply to a new empire, rebuilt on the same ruins.

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