

From I-Ching to AI: Interrogating Digital Divination

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Abstract

Divination denotes practices of mediation that aim to reveal hidden knowledge and sketch out speculative futures before they come into being. Often employing creative and playful methods, divinatory speculations wield ominous power, even when inaccurate. Today, this power is becoming concentrated within neoliberal coordinates following the professionalization of divination, most markedly through artificial intelligence (AI). Reviewing the literature of past and present divinatory practices to interrogate its methods from games to AI, this paper offers four key contributions: (1) it establishes divination as a media arts practice; (2) it traces transnational histories of this practice; (3) it unpacks the limitations and issues arising from AI divination, and (4) it presents strategies and tactics to confront them. Mapping the shifting power-relations and speculative practices of prediction, this paper reveals and critiques the unannounced spiritual mysticism surrounding contemporary AI and its increasing embrace within late-capitalist future forecasting.

Keywords

Divination, Games, Media Art, Artificial Intelligence

Introduction

Divination is a media arts practice. The term describes the creative and epistemological mediation between unseen forces, ancestors, or the divine to reveal what is to come. More formally, according to anthropologist Rowan Flad, divination denotes “the foretelling of future events or discovery of what is hidden or obscure by supernatural or magical means” [1]. Given its paranormal connotations, the veracity of divination as either authentic or predictive is highly contested. Nonetheless, modes of divination remain extensively practiced, historically prolific, and geographically widespread.

Significant differences distinguish various divination traditions past and present, yet commonalities bind them. Among its practitioners, divination is understood as both an art, and a skill of mediation, often involving technological apparatus. In essence, divination is a time-based experimental practice employing a range of interactive technologies and is therefore a media art practice by all definitions. Indeed, many ancient civilizations classified divination as a

kind of (*technē*), an artistic method and skilled technique to be acquired, honed, and practiced [2].

Also common across divination traditions is its recurring manifestation as an interactive game or playful ritual [3]. These ‘divination games’ enable insights to arise through ludic structures of knowledge disrupted by elements of chance and play. From this understanding comes the term ‘ludomancy’ derived from ‘ludus’ referring to games and play, and ‘mantic’ denoting practices of divination from the ancient to the present [4]. Far from being exotic or distant, ludomancy persists not just in the esoteric imagination but within the rational logics of digital game simulations and AI where creative experiments in divination are labelled as ‘future forecasts’ to lend them legitimacy.

Games and AI already share a long and symbiotic relationship into which divination is deeply entangled. Their histories and futures connect. Each relies on dynamic computational and algorithmic thinking, and each enjoys soaring currency in the new millennium. Today, AI technologies magnify the quality and depth of digital games, while in turn, digital games provide valuable testing platforms for advancing AI research and applications. Both are deployed in future forecasting. The overlap in divination, games, and AI has led to innovations across all three domains. But a mysticism pervades each, a level of magical thinking that renders them equally appealing and dubious. At a metaphysical register, just as games and divination take place within a magic circle, artificial intelligence is increasingly encircled by magical thinking.

Responding to the acceleration of AI in future forecasting, this paper explores and critiques the unannounced mysticism and creeping neo-liberalism in technological futurism [5]. This research is informed by six years of practice led research into divination processes and devices with close attention to the transdisciplinary scholarship in the field. Beginning with a transnational genealogy of divination tools, connections between ancient rituals of fortune-telling and contemporary practices of future forecasting are mapped. Through this exposition of divination methods, this paper highlights their ludic mechanics, mystic dimensions, and prophetic limitations.

In the central section of this paper, the magical thinking that encircles technological divination is explored with close attention to the discourses surrounding AI, as is the embrace

of divinatory speculation within neoliberal contexts. This paper then calls for an examination of the emerging modes of free-market digital divination spanning internet driven prophesies [6] economic forecasting [7], and crime precognition in military contexts [8]. In closing, three media arts inspired strategies are proposed to counter these trends of neoliberal divination. At stake in this discussion is how the future is calculated, imagined, created, and exploited.

Genealogy of Divination

Histories of divination are global and diverse. Anthropologists and historians have traced their diffusion across the African, European, and Asian continents. Among the earliest divinatory technologies and techniques emerge in China's Shang Dynasty (1600 to 1046 B.C) during which priests and shamans would carve text into oracle bones (predominantly turtle shells) and heat them with fire. Pressure fissures that split through the inscribed text were thought to reveal future scenarios. While these divination rituals were enacted for and by the powerful, their accessibility and appeal saw them disseminate through all levels of society. Inscribed bones, it was realized, could be more efficiently tumbled than cracked, birthing the dice. The inherent contingency of these practices saw divination and games co-evolve with examples such as I Ching (易經) and Feng Shui (風水) as well as the broader arsenal of 'ludomantic' techniques including the board games *Luibo* (六博) and *Go* or *Weiqi* (圍棋) [9].

The playful interactivity of divination remains evidenced today in contemporary dice and playing cards, each of Chinese ancestry. Dotson, Cook and Lu discuss how Chinese and Mongolian throwing dice divination was dispersed and democratized along the ancient silk road forming a relational network in which the roles of gods, dice, symbols, and fortune telling spread toward Europe [10]. Bréard notes that during China's Song Dynasty (960 to 1279 AD) throwing dice were flattened into *pái* (牌) meaning 'plaque', but what we now know as dominos, and their use slipped easily between gambling, divinatory, and game play procedures [11].

With refinements in paper and printing, domino plaques flattened further into playing cards giving rise to new games of portent, gambling, diversion, and delight spanning Eastern and Western contexts [12]. Histories of cards and playing tiles are easily identifiable in more recent games such as Mah Jong (麻將) and Hanafuda (花札) in turn informing the practices of prophesy that each enable. The transmission of playing cards from East to the West from Mamluk slaves to European Lords saw them take on yet more ludomantic aspects. Cards games such as Tarroti and Tarok eventually evolving into Tarot practices. Throughout time, these divinatory rituals have trickled down societal hierarchies from the powerful to the professional to the public. Constant across them are cultures of communication, computation and contingency used to playfully evoke futures (See figure 1).

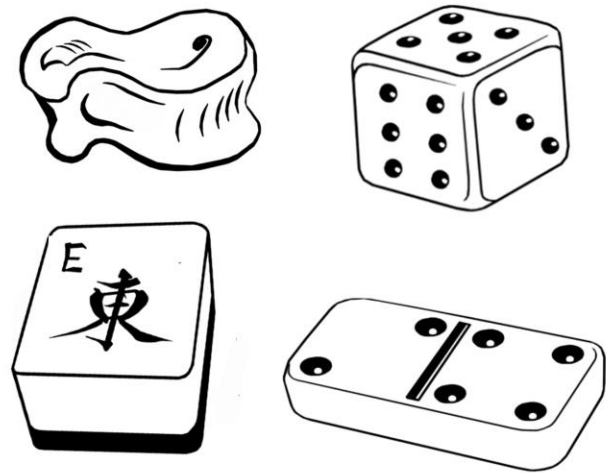


Figure 1. In the morphology and materiality of hand-held game implements spanning knucklebones to Mahjong tiles, we can see the co-evolution of gambling, divination, and games across Eurasian history and culture.

Creative experiments in divination are more recently found through the 20th Century in playful provocations of the Avant Garde. The Dadaist, Surrealist, and Fluxus artists each worked to invite the computational, the irrational, and the contingent into their respective practices, setting off new speculative trajectories in media arts. Some of these methods directly borrowed from established divinatory techniques such as I Ching coin tossing or the random opening of a book echoing traditions of bibliomancy. Chance, play, and formalized games lay at the heart of these activities.

In recent decades, electronic games, digital simulations, and computational practices have been deployed to predict economic trends, military tactics, and climate patterns. These contemporary predictions inform real-world decisions and power flows echoing ancient practices of prophecy. Moving along this continuum to the present, McCrea coins the term 'ludofuturism' to discuss contemporary videogame technologies, speculative concepts, and world-building practices as cultural modes of futurism exercised in contemporary game making [13]. These virtual environments are developed to summon metaverse and multiverse dynamics through which time and space can be traversed. Otherwise put, game making, and methods as future forecasting have "been part of games history and pre-history since before the first microprocessor was etched" [14].

Existing outside of scientific verification, the persistence of divination evidences its enduring importance. Today, what Thomas terms 'digital divination' to describe the use of predictive analytics software "to foretell the future and reveal underlying truths about the world" is applied to an array of contexts. House prices, climate patterns, and financial markets are all contingent on premonition [15]. While many scholars are dismissive of the divinatory as irrational

or superstitious, they overlook its growing impact. Meanwhile, critical assessments of divination remain lacking.

In their excellent paper *The cultural evolution of epistemic practices: The case of divination*, anthropologists Kevin Hong and Joe Henrich, provide a comprehensive overview of divinatory practices and their diversity of applications [16]. These include resolving disputes, reducing anxiety of looming conditions, or clearing the hurdle of indecision. Hong and Henrich account for the resilience of divination as arising from an ambient over-estimation of its efficacy. Here, they extend on a larger body of research that connects the universality of divination with the ubiquity of “magical thinking” in human cognition [17]. This provokes the question: how can such important knowledge work be so invested in unreliable myths and methods? Any answer requires a thorough examination of divinations operation.

Inside Divinatory Operations

As already discussed, divination practices are diverse and timeless, but consistencies emerge in their procedures. Typically, divination draws upon ordered systems of meanings established within a codex or canon. These codices may be a deck of Tarot in cartomancy, the book of Changes in I Ching, or a Bible in bibliomancy. In the case of digital, AI or algorithmic divination, codices manifest as big data. Each of these texts are simply batteries of information, which, via a summoning of the contingent, become divinely curated - consulted and interpreted according to how the cards are arranged, the coins or dice fall, or the Bible is opened. The chance element directs the diviner to the temporally resonant passages and vague counterfactuals in the oracle texts. In the simplest of terms, divination applies chance to pre-established codex of interpretable texts.

Almost all divination systems rely on this contingent element - as though contingency could somehow be reliable, and not by its very nature, contingent. The work of M. Beatrice Fazi is instructive here. Her book *Contingent Computation* [18] posits the compelling paradox that computation is, in fact, a process of determining indeterminacy. Yet indeterminacy, she continues, is fundamental to the computational process itself, a very condition for computation’s existence. While computation represents human reason’s attempts to order reality, computation, she argues, is uncertain, open, and contingent.

To evoke this computational contingency within divination, there is always a black box element. Without exception, divination requires a device, object, or process whose workings are indeterminate or unknown. The flip of the coin or the tumble of the dice are cast as guided by mystic forces or the divine, yet their visible materiality renders these practices tangible, observable, and, by extension comprehensible.

In digital modes of divination, the black box is doubled. The contingent element is not only formalized but is

completely obscured from view [19]. The digital machine appears to perform complex mystical operations that are inscrutable to humans and the chance element is delegated to algorithms. This digitization allows the mechanical mysticism to be amplified to a newly heightened level.

In this way, AI presents the perfect black box in its incomprehensibility. Rapid advances and broader applications in AI become harder for human builders to understand, analyze, and interpret. Rather than seeking to clarify these developments, even the most respected establishment representations of AI tend to emphasize this enigma. Many in the global AI industry lean-in to the uncertainty of AI, emphasizing its mysticism to market its authority.

Valiant efforts to demystify AI have emerged. The online project “Better images of AI” works to improve perceptions of machine learning away from “circuit brains in shiny 3D outlines suspended in blue space” [20]. Such images, they argue, risk depicting AI as “intangible and ungovernable; something removed from real-world origins and consequences, perhaps even magical” [21]. Less mystical and more material understandings of AI are needed. But what is the materiality of the digital?

While numerous substances are alchemized to create computers (copper, gold, aluminum, zinc, iron, and nickel), silicon is the central ingredient of Central Processing Units (CPUs), and by extension is a key materiality of AI. As *Better images of AI* make clear, these earthbound ingredients remind us that ‘mining’ is not purely metaphorical in relation to AI (e.g. data mining) but is also a literal, material, and physical process [22].

That said, data mining also remains a key element of AI. Any internet connected AI application draws upon not just every image and word in the vast 64-zettabyte-strong server architectures that make up the global datasphere, but increasingly, all our tracked interactions and gestures mined and scrapped each nano second from over 5.3 billion users. Otherwise put, we are the materiality of AI. But as AI increasingly programs and prompt itself without human guidance, its methods and mechanisms become increasingly obscured. In a kind of temporal disturbance, AI is moving into the future more rapidly than we have kept pace with.

Crucially, the mystery of its inner workings does not bring this technology’s validity into doubt, but rather enhances it. With algorithmic divinatory logic, a data-driven insight is often considered more reliable insofar as it is unexplainable to humans [23]. As is often the case with the inexplicable, minds reach for magic or the divine. But these algorithmic black boxes, deep learning processes and other computational systems are not always inaccessible through their complexity, indeed they are often highly comprehensible, but are designed to remain obscure and proprietary. Doing so enhances their mystical power and authority.

There is much to unpack here, but two key points emerge. The first is the magical thinking that all divination invites through its use of the contingent and promise of premonition. The second is the acceleration of such magical thinking via the incomprehensibility of AI. Entirely putting aside magical thinking for the moment, let's briefly critique divination techniques in their most comprehensible and material manifestation, before giving full attention to the mystique of AI divination.

By placing rules and limits upon the contingent, by seeking to contain it, the scope of divinatory futures is narrowed. Not only is the codex constrained in its possible interpretations, by so too is the ordered contingency. To explain this, consider common games of chance. Each role of a dice, lottery barrel, or roulette wheel, brings a different result, yet the results themselves are largely predetermined. A dice will always land on one of six sides, but what if there are more options to consider? Where is the contingency for these additional probabilities? Divination only makes sense of the knowable options via contained contingency and predetermined text, thereby curtailing the opportunity to plot alternate vectors. No wonder our futures appear so limited and bleak, our codices are reflexive and dated, and our divinatory processes are inherently constrained. But does the complexity of AI divination open new possibilities?

AI Divination

With the rise of AI and its application to an endless array of contexts, a new chapter in the global history of both mystification and in-turn divination has opened. Once tentative technological experiments in future anticipation such as the humble predictive text have radically expanded to full-blown future scenario building and civilizational speculation. AI achieves this divinatory task by ingesting vast quantities of data (codex) and applying Machine Learning algorithms to make connections and discover patterns in ways that exceed traditional forecasting systems (contingency). This automation of divination is thought to help make faster, better decisions. But as already established, the divinatory process is limited, and AI is more invested with magical thinking than previous divinatory devices.

Nonetheless, much has been made of the perceived magical elements of AI, of the broader religious undergirding of technologies, and of the impacts on society of each. Philosopher Lee Bailey's *The Enchantments of Technology* studies how a digitally driven society does not disenchant the world with reductive logic as expected, but instead invests it with a deeper mysticism [24]. Confirming this and citing science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke's famous dictum that "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic", Thomas and Veldhuis move one step further to argue that AI is not merely indistinguishable from magic, but that anthropologically speaking, it invokes elements of magic [25]. AI is driven by magical thinking, perhaps exceeding ancient divination techniques.

Digital Entrepreneur Gabriel Krieshok detects a convergence of irrational ideologies in the hype around AI and the explosion of conspiracy thinking [26]. Each blur cause and effect – intentionally and accident to the point that "things we interpret as random or as coincidental simply can't be the case and that there must be intelligence behind the events – a coordination, even if it's for nefarious purposes" [27]. As noted by Chia and colleagues, the explosion of conspiratorial thinking – the collapsing of spirituality and conspiracy theories into a kind of paranoia that everything is connected becomes manifest in the 'internet of things' whereby everything *really is* connected [28]. The ubiquity of digitality is experienced as magic curdling our capacity to make logical sense of it.

Krieshok notes that this magical thinking leads to the phenomenon of "algorithm appreciation" whereby when confronted with uncertainty in a post-truth society, the last word is given to the machine. Otherwise put to "give the algorithm the benefit of the doubt" nudging out human judgment in the process [29]. As Krieshok concludes, "it's almost as if the black box nature of the systems lend them even more credibility" [30]. In keeping with a post-truth world, within AI divination, the lesser the understanding, the greater the certainty produced.

These convergences of post-truth, paranoia, and magical thinking are intensified within late capitalist concentrations of wealth and power, accumulations that seek investments in economies of immaterial dimensions [31]. Yet with increasingly less faith placed in traditional authorities of wealth and power, even for the wealthy and powerful, there are few places left to invest either capital or credibility, immaterial or otherwise. Within such a landscape, techno future imaginaries become desirable albeit irrational commodities. And so divinatory projections become susceptible to extraordinary economic speculation and securitization.

Magical thinking encircles the language of all techno-futurism. In relation to contemporary AI, Alexander Campolo and Kate Crawford pronounce this thinking as "enchanted determinism," in which proponents of deep learning technologies regularly describe them in terms of magic, alchemy, and mystery [32]. Yet as Crawford's compelling *The Atlas of AI* makes clear, artificial intelligence arrives not by magic, but out of the decisions and actions of empire and exploitation, forces more likely to narrow and foreshorten futures than predict them [33]. In this regard, AI divination is more likely to precipitate disaster than avert it.

Herein lays a crucial factor of divination technologies in the hands of the powerful. They don't just calculate futures, they become them. Consider that well before AI had taken over anyone's job, it was forecast to take over almost all of them. This assumed 'fact' now passes almost without question. AI led future dystopias spanning mass job losses to humanity's sovereign surrender to machines are increasingly depicted as inevitable, as though Deep Blue's defeat of Garry Kasparov and AlphaGo's victory over Lee Sedol each

operate as proof of human obsolescence. The predicted inevitabilities of an AI-led future are foretold in inspiring and terrifying terms in books such as Crawford's aforementioned *Atlas of AI* and Suleyman's *The Coming Wave* [34].

Yet these futures are not new. Forecasts of AI's inevitable automation of everything echoes the hysteria that accompanies all speculative technologies, namely that they will wholly transform the world. What is different with AI divination is what Jasarevic calls the "the professionalization of forecasting" within neo-liberal coordinates that "shapes public policies and imaginaries and creates financial capital out of hype and anticipation" [35]. Within this scenario, future vectors are determined and capitalized in advance. In so doing, divined futures become secure investments, and in turn, foregone conclusions. This process highlights what is most dangerous about AI; neither its machine logic, nor its mystical enigma, but the way it mirrors and amplifies humanity's worst productivities. The early contours of these ominous trends are already outlined in relevant scholarship.

Joshua Ramey's *Politics of Divination* diagnoses contemporary financial forecasting practices and the neoliberal ideology in which they are embedded as "a disavowed form of *divination*" [36]. Despite the veneer of technological sophistication and accuracy, Ramey finds market speculation processes as being far from innovative or accurate but "rooted in the archaic and perennial problem of how to meaningfully interpret the deliverances of chance" [37]. For Ramey, contemporary modes of market prediction that see incomprehensible financial products further abstracted by signs, symbols, and figures, more closely resemble ancient practices cracking oracle bones or casting lots than any rational financial process.

Ramey's work resonates with Mark Taylor's critical findings of purportedly objective financial speculation as a cultural and subjective force – a series of market games that fundamentally twist and reshape reality. In his book *Confidence Games* Taylor contends that the emergence of the digital economy, its deregulation, virtualization, and volatile futures trading recalls older forms of religion, and in doing so evidences a suppressed desire for the mystic within the contemporary consciousness [38].

In *Technologies of Speculation*, Sun-Ha Hong decries the growing emphasis on prediction as AI's skeleton key to solve all problems [39]. Hong identifies an almost religious belief in technological change that dampens possible future horizons by depicting a narrow hegemony of closure and sameness. Hong finds AI discourse symbolic of a larger uncritical faith in techno-futurism that is "exempt from disillusionment with ideology" [40]. The data collection on which they rely, he argues, is an often vague and arbitrary process. As such, digital divination opens spaces for corporations to impart their own mythologies and speculations. Those who wield divinatory technologies shape not only economic

outcomes but authority, legitimacy, and prestige [41]. For Hong, to predict the future is to determine it.

Along similar lines but investigating in a security context, Hong and Szpunar have probed how invocations of the future are leveraged to justify policy and spending in US counter-terrorism [42]. Dramatically underscoring the power relations of divination, they detail how "[p]redictive, preemptive and otherwise *anticipatory* security practices strategically utilize the future to circulate the kinds of truths, beliefs, claims, that might otherwise be difficult to legitimize" [43]. The types of futures conjured, they find, are "not a temporal zone of events to come, nor a horizon of concrete visions for tomorrow, but an indefinite source of contingency and speculation" [44]. These speculative futures elude critical appraisal, yet are traded, militarized, and monetized.

Confronting Neo-Liberal Divination

Given the impending inevitability of AI divination and its deployment within neoliberal accelerationism, how can those outside of lofty power relations counter it? Especially given that vectors of neo-liberal divination repeatedly create environmental and societal collapse producing for the rest of us, a recession, or perhaps even an austerity of futures. Following Bratton, Greenspan and Konior, this paper refuses the finality of machine decision [45] and seeks methods to contest it. In the literature already introduced, we can detect strategies and tactics already emerging.

In a series of writings, M. Beatrice Fazi tackles the already-tired ideologies surrounding artificial intelligence and the algorithms upon which it is founded – namely that computation is fixed, logical, and determinate. Fazi instead argues that computation and, by extension AI, is dynamic and aesthetic, subject to chance and open to change. In doing so, Fazi opens a path to embrace computation, not in reductive, definitive, or accelerationist terms but through philosophical and aesthetic thinking.

Crawford's *The Atlas of AI* works to demystify machine learning and to make apparent its entanglement in networks of inequity, governance, and power. Through a materialist approach, she deflates the enigmatic rhetoric surrounding AI by revealing the elements, processes, labour, and human biases in its production. Countering its domination by corporations and profit, Crawford proposes a reorientation of AI away from extraction and exploitation and toward equitable and just futures.

Hong's recent body of work critiques the control and enclosure within the future forecasting industry. He finds that the "significance of predictions does not depend on their accurate fulfillment, because their function is not to foretell future events but to borrow legitimacy and plausibility from the future in order to license anticipatory actions in the present" [46]. Otherwise put, tomorrows are borrowed to

bolster the ideas, actions and finances of today. These futures are made believable by drawing on the past, a phenomenon that Szpunar describes as “promnesic futures” - visions that evoke a sense of *déjà vu* thereby appearing believable in their familiarity [47]. These recycled futures, both authors recommend, must be rejected and transcended.

In *The Coming Wave*, Suleyman sounds the alarm from inside the AI industry warning of the unprecedented risks to global order posed by a deluge of rapidly-developing technologies and applications [48]. To ameliorate this, Suleyman proposes a containment strategy that would see a series of global regulatory steps to prevent AI most dire trajectories - not from predicting the future, but from becoming it. Yet it is difficult to perceive how AI governance, regulation and containment might occur within the neoliberal conditions in which AI divination is flourishing. More than anything, AI promises efficiency of time and cost – irresistible commodities within the contemporary capitalist coordinates.

To confront the hegemony of today’s neoliberal divination, Ramey suggests that combination of all strategies is needed. Not only regulation and demystification as mentioned above but active subversion is required. With attention to the politics of divination, Ramey calls for counter-actualization tactics, and for the possibility of “extending their implications to unusual or unforeseeable conclusions, carrying lines of sense farther than they are intended to reach” [49]. Here, Ramey is not calling for an accelerationist approach but instead a “decolonization of divination” and a return to its historic traditions and wisdom [50].

In closing, this paper offers three additional strategies and tactics against neoliberal AI divination arising from the discussion at hand. Firstly, by recognizing divination as a media arts practice, we might apply media arts approaches to divination technologies and processes, allowing for a critical interrogation of their material workings; the ideologies propelling their creation and use; and the discourses surrounding them. This extends on existing work outlined here but proposes a radical expansion whereby artists working at the nexus of computation, divination, research practice, and play, might produce a plurality of futures away from the narrowing logics of commerce and securitization.

Secondly, continuing the work undertaken in the first section of this paper, we should pursue a media archeological and game archeological approach, excavating concealed histories and genealogies of AI divination, as a term, a technology, a trajectory of ambition. Through a deeper curiosity of these histories, genealogies and materialities we might

arrive at new understandings of not only possible futures, but also conceive of alternative presents [51].

Thirdly, and given the inherent gamic nature and providence of divination, a level of metagaming must be cultivated in its practice. Metagaming enables players (and diviners alike) to engage beyond the boundaries of the game, to understand the broader ludic structure, and ‘ways to play the game’, thereby challenging the limits of the ludic environment [52]. Otherwise put, we should interrogate and upset the trajectory and games of divination through subversive and expansive play.

These approaches do not seek to curtail either divination or AI, but to probe beyond their current limits, logics, applications, and ideologies. While currently caught in the cross hairs of mysticism and certainty, power and capital, AI divination must be democratized and problematized. Correctly practiced, both play and divination, like magic, according to Jasarevic “is typically messy, leaving plenty of room for doubt, second-guessing, or reinterpretation, inviting at once faith and skepticism and evoking the inconclusive authority of experience” [52]. Doing so invites and explores a multitude of temporal-spatial potentialities nourishing more critical, hopeful, and playful futurisms.

Conclusion

Through a detailed genealogy, this paper has established divination’s transnational, media arts, and gamic credentials. Discussing ancient and contemporary examples of divination, its processes and limitations have been critiqued as offering only a contingent remix of existing data veiled in mysticism. Turning to emerging modes of AI divination, this paper finds these digital premonition processes to be no less imbued with mysticism than their ancient ancestors. In divination and beyond, AI cannot think anew. It offers a mélange of already-thought human ideas that are made compelling through a veneer of technological mysticism.

Reviewing recent scholarship interrogating emerging AI divination trends in post-truth, neo-liberal and late capitalist contexts, this paper warns of a computational capture in which recycled horizons are presented as believable futures to maintain present power inequities indefinitely. Unable to imagine alternate futures, we become citizens of an eternal present, divided between the futued and the futureless. Drawing on the scholarship and findings unpacked throughout the paper, the closing section offers strategies and tactics to confront these divinatory hegemonies. Artists and researchers are invited to reclaim divination away from technological and neo-liberal determinism and toward more experimental and egalitarian future thinking thereby expanding the repertoire of imaginatory horizons.

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