

AI Philanthropy, a METR Counter-Read, and a Lesson on Attention

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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A small but high-signal set surfaced today: Patrick Collison highlighted Nan Ransohoff's essay on the coming scale of AI-driven philanthropy, Balaji pointed readers to a critique of the METR graph, and Jessica Livingston amplified Jon Haidt/Greg Lukianoff on why attention matters. The philanthropy essay stood out for having the clearest argument and strongest rationale to read.

What stood out

Three recommendations cleared the authenticity filter today. The strongest was Patrick Collison's endorsement of Nan Ransohoff's essay on AI-era philanthropy [1, 2]. Balaji's pick was the sharpest technical counter-read: a critique of the METR graph on coding work [3]. Jessica Livingston's contribution was the most timeless: a Haidt/Lukianoff piece she used to spotlight a practical rule about attention [4, 5].

Most compelling recommendation

The third wave of American philanthropy

- **Content type:** Blog post [2]
- **Author/creator:** @nanransohoff [1, 2]
- **Link/URL:** X post linking to the full piece [1]
- **Who recommended it:** Patrick Collison, who called it an "Important post" [1]
- **Key takeaway:** The piece argues that hundreds of billions of dollars in new philanthropic capital could soon become liquid. It points to the OpenAI Foundation's 26% stake in OpenAI, valued in the post at about \$220B, and to Anthropic's seven co-founders pledging to give away 80%

of their wealth; its central claim is that talent and organizational capacity may be the real bottleneck [2]

- **Why it matters:** This was the clearest recommendation of the day because it pairs a strong endorsement with a concrete problem statement: not just how much AI wealth may flow into philanthropy, but whether enough capable people and institutions exist to use it well [2]

“I had dramatically underappreciated the scale of the philanthropic capital that’s about to become available and the corresponding gap in talent and organizations that will be needed to make the most of it.” [2]

Two other clean signals

Against the METR Graph: Coding Capabilities, Software Jobs, Task AI

- **Content type:** Article [3]
- **Author/creator:** Linked on Transformer News [3]
- **Link/URL:** Transformer News article [3]
- **Who recommended it:** Balaji [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Balaji urged readers to read this critique of the “much-cited” METR study, highlighting its note that METR shows a sigmoid on the messiest tasks. He also framed the issue as a principal/agent problem in which human principals must exert strong control over expensive AI agents [3]
- **Why it matters:** It offers a direct counter-read to a widely discussed study on coding capabilities, software jobs, and task AI, and Balaji was explicit about the mechanism he thinks readers should notice [3]

What Jonathan Haidt Actually Said

- **Content type:** Article [5]
- **Author/creator:** Greg Lukianoff, as credited in Jon Haidt’s linked post about what they wrote in *The Coddling of the American Mind* [5]
- **Link/URL:** Article link [5]
- **Who recommended it:** Jessica Livingston [4]
- **Key takeaway:** Livingston highlighted the argument around *The Coddling of the American Mind* and especially the advice that paying attention shapes what you care about and who you become [5, 4]
- **Why it matters:** This was the only recommendation today that was not primarily about AI. Jessica focused on the advice itself, saying students were lucky to hear it [4]

“Paying attention is in fact one of the most challenging and meaningful things you can do. Because what you pay attention to shapes what you care about. And what you care about shapes who you become.” [4]

Bottom line

If you open only one item, make it *The third wave of American philanthropy*. It had the strongest explicit endorsement and the most developed argument [1, 2]. After that, Balaji's METR critique is the best technical follow-up, while Jessica Livingston's Haidt/Lukianoff pick is the one to keep if you want a non-technical rule for thinking and attention [3, 4].

Sources

1. X post by @patrickc
2. X post by @nanransohoff
3. X post by @balajis
4. X post by @jesslivingston
5. X post by @JonHaidt