**The Hidden Labour in AI Capitalism**

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Artificial intelligence exists in a state of crisis. Each iteration spins its own tone of alarm. There is the crisis of labour, the loss of human work and function. This is linked to the threat of AI beyond our control, the end of the human as we know it. Underneath it all lies the need to nullify the dangers of our own desires, to police what is the most forbidden and immoral about ourselves. The economy of crisis is the circuitry of capital; AI is our latest response.

The hidden human labour behind AI is easily encapsulated by the figure of the content moderator. Content moderation means patrolling online content for evidence of things deemed impermissible. These things often constitute hateful and abusive action, fake news or fraudulent material. Content moderation is one of the fastest growing jobs in tech.

Content moderators are the police of social media. Following the guidelines established by social media platforms they monitor content for violations. The data collected from the identification, categorisation and archiving of violations communicate to AI the parameters of order. Over< billions of clicks, AI learns what human violence is.

The labour of content moderators has been targeted by union organisers and labour advocates. Content moderation is outsourced and offshored to places far from corporate headquarters. Workers are required to make hundreds of decisions daily about what stays online, they are required to decide within seconds if the content breaches company policies and guidelines.

Even in heavily resourced workplaces, this work takes an extreme toll on workers' health as workers are exposed to multiple forms of violence under conditions of tight workplace surveillance. Moderators based in Manila told reporters that workers suffered nightmares, paranoia, and obsessive ruminations. Workers had mental breakdowns at their desks. One worker said he had attempted suicide due to the stress of his job. Along with confidentiality agreements, workers breaks are monitored down to the minute. The secretive and precarious nature of the work means that much of this goes unheard.

Content moderators are trained to respond to insurmountable crises that relay traumatic events. Under these conditions they train AI to identify and conceal content that we would rather pretend did not exist. Such concealment is typic\*al of this state of crisis - << this is precisely the state that AI is taught \*(with supervision) to deter. What is unsaid is that- <<the human itself as a function of capital is inextricable from crisis. All attempts to purge \*and police representations of the crisis (including the training of AI through processes of content moderation) are compromised because the crisis that is capitalism is itself circular and not vanquishable.

Through assisting content moderators on online platforms and automating their labour, AI becomes vicariously coupled with the human labour of its trainers. The hidden labour AI is programmed to perform -- is one of archiving, apprehending, and identifying traumatic human events (*some of what we call crime*) that are operations-and-consequences-of-global-racial capitalism. AI is tasked to apprehend and master the unknowable. This is a police function; AI becomes an operation of the force of the law, perpetuated intentionally, yet imperceptibly.

Capital pushes the fantasy of AI decoupled from human influence. But AI cannot work alone. Instead of speaking about AI driven capitalism we must speak about capitalist driven AI. Lest we forget how AI works.Even if capital intends for AI to replace or substitute content moderators at their jobs, humans are always needed at every level to supervise, teach, monitor, regulate, and manage its operation. This structure of human supervision –– what one might call automated Human-AI interaction –– is always mediated by relations of capital. These relations unfold through hierarchical regimes of programming, calculation and determinability. Everything that is happening through AI (or as a result of AI) is an imposition of the human. We can never undo the violence that it is to be human. And even when we attempt to transfer this violence onto AI, AI reflects this human violence back onto us.