

The standard narrative of capitalism is that the wealthy elite have earned their station because they are able to suss out the best strategies for maximizing profit gains and cushioning losses. More explicitly stated, the roles of C-level executives are essentially to act as department heads and answer to the CEO who (depending on the company) then answers to the board of directors, who ultimately answer to a gaggle of affluent gamblers and privileged pensioners otherwise known as investors. Ostensibly, C-level executives are supposed to act as glorious leaders of their departments, showing a cunning and shrewd business sense. In reality, it's just a bunch of bookkeeping and decisions they realistically know little about. Business-speak is a strange language of pageantry and theatrics, where such boring and debatably useful positions of esteem are praised like feudal lords or petty kings. Really anyone can do these jobs and getting one is not unlike the kind of mediæval politicking I joke about.

What's funny to me then, is how these princelings in bullshit jobs are the ones ultimately responsible for the appearance of AI in the media and the threat of incorporating it into automation. Neural networks capable of carrying out learning algorithms are already capable of doing fast and advanced mathematics for tasks like accounting, forecasting, and creative arts. Although the ability of networks to do these tasks is presently limited, executives are continually seeking to improve that ability.

We were promised a world where the robots would take over the drudgery and free up the humans to lead fulfilling lives of leisure, and yet it's the robots that are being charged with both. What of the surplus labor that comes as a result? Without jobs and income now that machines have replaced them, how are the masses supposed to fuel the bourgeois economies and systems of power? We can't buy their goods, we can't pay their taxes, and our debts become essentially meaningless. The leaps and bounds with which Artificial Intelligence is growing and realizing the potential to replace the rank

and file thus threatens the very foundation and operation of the capitalist consumer system while serving the bourgeois fetish for profit accumulation. Even a responsive manufacturing of bullshit jobs and make-work systems to maintain a working/consumer class would either fall prey to the desire for profit, or lead to a strategic stagnation that would ultimately undermine the system.

Neural network programs (the ones being used for these tasks) work by taking a digital brain and plopping it in front of a pile of data and situations called a training set, and teaching it to make sense of it all. Kind of like operant conditioning for all you psych nerds. With that in mind, all that is really needed for a bureaucratic or bullshit job to be automated is the right neural network structure and training set(s), some of which are already being developed using actual worker data¹.

Let's flip the script then, why are we who create the value and generate the profits so expendable that we should be the first on the chopping block, rather than the executives? The rank-and-file do some of the most nuanced and skill intensive work and face maximum risk of automation, while the top brass do very simple busy work with minimal risk. Their logic dictates c-level execs should be first on chopping block for automation, but they aren't. This illustrates that the rhetoric of those execs is hypocritical! The prevailing narrative held as almost religious doctrine by our society is illogical! so there's no reason for us to use their logic!

Let's review what executive officers do in exchange for their massive social control. A member of the executive board in a corporation acts as the Duke of a departmental fiefdom. They all answer to the King (their CEO) but within their department (operations, HR, IT, etc.) they have supreme authority. Their role in that

1 <https://www.wired.com/story/corporate-surveillance-train-ai/>

position is to execute the business plan laid out in the board meetings and by the CEO, maintain the records and information about the goings on in their department, and give orders down the chain of command. Really, what they are is just a manager of managers of managers of actual employees. They exist to act as a caste of dictators to those below performing the drudgery. The only reason they make any meaningful decisions at all is a consequence of titles and not really of qualifications.

In reality, anyone could do these jobs and it makes more sense for the AI to fill that role because they can do them faster, more logically, and use vast amounts of info from their training sets. Some examples of this automation are already being tested:

- Accounting and data analysis: AI can totally do this, it's a large part of why the field of Comp Sci exists at all. In fact, it's already being done by neural nets in large part for things like marketing and consumer facing functions. You know how sometimes you'll get an ad for something you were just discussing with someone in like the car or something? AI figured it out. No wiretaps, just math and location data.
- Business planning and decision making: With the right training set and neural net infrastructure, an AI can be trained to analyze market conditions, assess options, and ultimately make business decisions on par with Steve Jobs or Walt Disney. In fact, Walt and Steve would likely be in that training set in some manner.
- Management: AI can easily interface with other AI units that have replaced human proletarians to manage and document work, while also monitoring and delegating tasks with the remaining human workforce. Management is largely monitoring, meetings, and make-work, all of which can be automated away.

Of course, these AI models are still being tested and trained, but even if they aren't currently being deployed to this extent, there's no reason they can't be promoted in the near future. We could have a sophisticated enough neural net to do these tasks to the exact criteria required. 10-15 years before now, such technology that companies take complete advantage of today for tracking consumer trends and marketing were rudimentary. So too might current models appear to people of the equidistant future! Cutting the human element from the C-suite would save companies entire mountains of capital that would've been paid to executives, reducing overhead simply to server space and utility bills. Since this strategy would streamline the business, multiply profits and value, and free up capital to be funneled back into growing the company, then by the logic of capitalism as it's taught to us this is a very plausible and desirable future that would improve our society.

Yet, this isn't an option being discussed in tech circles. This is because the realities of capitalism and class interests conflict with the logic used to justify its actions and dominance to the masses. While there are grains of truth to the aim of accumulating capital and profit, of constant expansion and consumption, the interests of the business class in automation and accumulating wealth is for the sake of asserting power and keeping their place atop the social hierarchy.

Corporate executives can expect yearly incomes that exceed human comprehension and a single individual's ability to fully spend in a lifetime, nevermind a year. After achieving and maintaining a cushy standard of living for oneself and relations, what more cause is there to persist in expanding that income? No one needs a yacht within a yacht! They push the envelope for no other reason than expanding their power over others, and raising their position in the socioeconomic hierarchy.

There is one function of the C-levels and bureaucrats that AI cannot replace: the figurehead. The truth of the matter is that the only meaningful functions they serve

in the capitalist and hegemonic structure of the world is to provide a human face to the corporate body and act as a symbol of authority to maintain the illusions of capitalist realism. They sell themselves as geniuses and essential components because that's how they fool people into believing that productivity is impossible without hierarchy or a cult of professionalism. Without a character like ~~Lex~~Luther Jeff Bezos, it might be harder to sell the idea that people can build a behemoth company from a garage. Even through capitalist realism, he provides a useful function as a name behind the amazon logo for people to direct their hate into and dissociate in part from the actual business, greasing the wheels and making anticapitalists slightly less apprehensive about buying from them.

Elon Musk as well acts as a lightning rod of class antagonism as the CEO of successful companies despite being a very public moron. Even those detestable creatures that crowd the stock exchanges need a human CEO for this figurehead job, assuming they themselves haven't also been replaced by neural networks. The human qualities of a company's avatar allow investors to almost play poker with the market and other people's money. "Does this statement from Bob Iger give hints that Disney is staying afloat?" "Does it seem like he's not telling the whole story?" "Maybe he's hinting at a new show on Disney+?" Such a statement or interview with Artificial Iger might be too clinical or forthcoming to really sway investors, and a world full of them might lead to a stagnation of capital flow, investment activity, and business creation. A bubble of uncertainty or even over certainty that could threaten a fundamental crisis of financial capitalism. Yet again we see their own logic preserving their system.

It's at this point that the logic of capitalism as a benevolent force and perfect system either bends or breaks. Either they accept this conclusion of their own propaganda and version of reality, thus admitting that they've been lying to the world and that capitalism sucks, or (more likely) change the rules yet again and

gaslight us with newer propaganda to maintain class hegemony. Either all animals are equal and can be replaced by market demands, or some animals are more equal than others and are allowed to shirk the economic laws that they demand the rest of us abide by.

History has shown us that the latter is the world we live in. The logical and ethical solution to this dilemma of automation reducing the consumer class would be to institute systems of universal basic income (UBI) and to limit the extent of automation to maintain a middle class. Reformists and impotent academics will cite Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a potential solution to these contradictions, however the political climates and economic realities of the world will stop at nothing to arrest its realization. The state that would be charged with means-testing applicants, measuring allotments, and meting out payments is itself designed by those who benefit from exploiting a struggling working class. Were it so simple, existing social safety nets would be sufficient and yet countless people in need fall through the cracks. There would be no need to seize the state for ourselves. The solutions will not come from above. They must be designed from below to abolish the state apparatus that perpetuates social hierarchy and enforces its disparity.

The ruling class *could* allow UBI policies but press onward with AI roll outs. A consumer base *could* scrape by with each generation struggling to raise the income rates as rents and costs inevitably rise, much like we've seen this past decade with campaigns for \$15 minimum wage that have already been eclipsed by living costs. The rate of profit would see some depressing effects from taxation and lowered sales each quarter, but profitability would still be enormous. The next potentiality is a grim dark future of destitution. In this scenario, the capitalist class presses onward with full automation to maximize profit and without considering the long-term effects of their actions.

Corporations are terrible at long-term forecasting and strategizing. They prefer to boost profits and

minimize costs now and to make their earnings reports look incredible than to be more methodical and operate sustainably. Those in power, whose forebears designed the state that so many seek to use for salvation, are draining the world and will leave behind a barren husk after their exploitation of nature and worker leaves less and less behind to sustain ecosystems and communities. They would sooner liquidate the current proletariat consumer base and create a new consumer class from their own population, than allow their power to be threatened or abolished. With the state to impede systemic change, they protect themselves culturally and physically by clamping down on the vocal and fomenting growth of ethnonationalism, authoritarianism. They ramp up the policing powers of the state exponentially to contain a derelict mass of former workers committing both crimes of desperation and campaigns of class warfare.

These powers of hierarchy and privilege are themselves causes and must be abolished. Seizing policing power and the halls of the state will not eliminate the degrees of separation that authoritative hierarchies and influence create between the working masses and "the people's" party. The only feasible solution is to dismantle the systems of exploitation and enforcement of exploitation, abolish the power structures that divide us and allow abusers to form cliques and new ruling cadres, and expropriate the wealth usurped by the ruling elites who never toiled for it. We must build a new world based on horizontality instead of verticality, solidarity instead of selfishness, equality for all instead of division and strife.

Unless we eliminate capital and state, we have 3 potential futures: Cyclical neoliberal decay and strife where we are damned to repeat the same dances and struggles with each generation, Cyberpunk's grunge and permanent underclass, or outright slavery and police-state a la Half-Life 2. This is the world neoliberalism is building now and has been building for us since the 1970s. Like Strigoi, the capitalists and their

accomplices in the state siphon every bit of life and wealth from both the working class and our planet.

We can choose to accept this future they've pressed upon us, or we can create a new world, one that respects human dignity. One that embraces the kaleidoscopic variety of life and cultivates a garden world. A new world that brings freedom, prosperity, and autonomy to all who walk under the sun!

*The dilemma we face is anarchism or collapse.
Which will you choose?*

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