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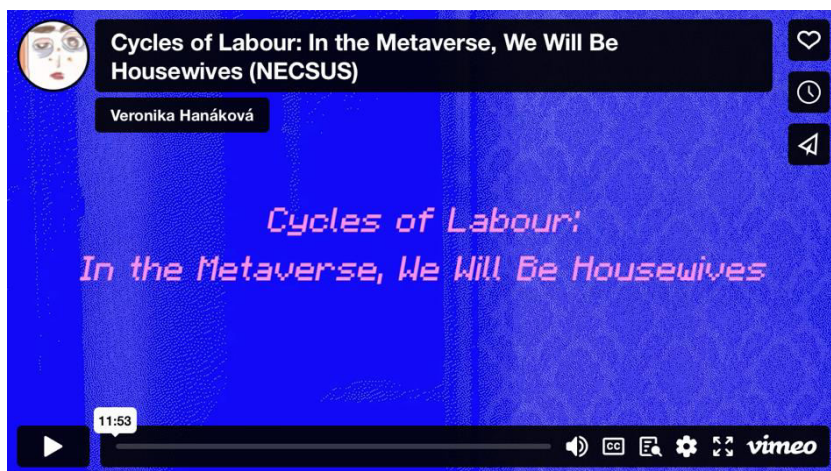
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During the twentieth century, housework has become an endless cycle of work that usually goes without social recognition. Even though housework became one of the building blocks of social reproduction, society at large treats it with very little regard for the well-being of the ones carrying it out. Since it has been secluded in the private sphere of the home, it has become practically and discursively invisible. The technological innovations within the household and the policy of a family wage individualised the reproductive workers and isolated them in the social form of the 'housewife'. The housewife then lives in an endless loop of daily routines of caring for the house and family.

These daily routines are captured in the film *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (Chantal Akerman, 1975) over a period of three days. Similarly, our videographic essay takes the viewer through three stages in the cycle of the extension of the housewife logic into the sphere of the digital. It proceeds from introducing the evolution of reproductive labour, to a playthrough that foregrounds the connections between reproductive and cognitive labour in the datafied society, to a demonstration of how this development of housework turns us all into 'digital housewives'.^[1]

Reproductive labour of housewives serves, according to media theorist Kylie Jarrett,^[2] as an exemplar for appropriating value in the digital sphere. Similarly, as the value created by domestic workers gets usurped without pay, the value created by digital media users is also not reimbursed but appropriated as a natural resource. Users' daily routines of content consumption and communication are tracked and analysed in order to categorise them into distinct populations targeted by advertisement.

However, capitalist structures of accumulation and appropriation are always bearers of their own demise. Therefore, the system is constantly shaken by cycles of crises. The twentieth-century model of the nuclear family with its family wage was deemed unsustainable towards the end of the last century, and women became encouraged to enter the workforce. Western women took their place in the emerging service economy, while women from the Global South sought employment in the homes of their Northern counterparts. Hence, the neoliberal era gave rise to a houseworker, a person who carries out the reproductive labour for a wage. This happens at the expense of their own families, who lack care and support.

Correspondingly, the digital sphere suggests new reorganisation, where many users are turned into wage-labourers being hired for minute tasks of maintenance and care. Think of Amazon's Mechanical Turk, a service that employs people to carry out microtasks that cannot be carried out by digital algorithms. These workers are effectively turned into NPCs (non-playable characters), providing a smooth experience for other users. These hired NPCs are once again stuck in a loop of constant waiting and working for a piece-wage. Like the houseworkers from the global south, the NPCs also become highly vulnerable. Digital labour thus follows the same cycle of individualisation and invisibilisation as domestic labour in the second half of the twentieth century. This process then results in delegating this labour to the most vulnerable populations, further adding to their precarity.

Altogether, our videographic essay demonstrates how the transformation of labour and housework in the recent decades can be performatively transcribed into the desktop interface. Making Jeanne Dielman perform her daily routines in a digital simulation, inspired by the videogame series *The Sims*, highlights that the heroine of Akerman's film is not alone in her repetitive endeavors. In the virtual space, we are all becoming digital housewives.

Authors

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Notes

[1] Jarrett 2016.

[2] Ibid.