Twitter Thread by ■■■



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Software is eating the world -- the economy is dematerializing.
What are the physical effects on living human beings?
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The effect is that every year we spend marginally more of our waking time inert, staring at screens. Often in chairs, spines collapsed; or slouched on sofas, cpus heating our gonads.

No muscles of our exquisitely evolved bodies in motion except certain small muscles of wrists and fingers.

Our eyes, also, inert: perpetually focused on banks of LEDs flickering 60 times a second. Fooled into a perception of distance which lacks the proprioceptive feedback of eye movement.

For neither the tiny muscles of our eye lenses, nor the muscles that move our eyes in parallax to focus near and far are engaged.

Our minds enter an illusory space, a "matrix" we might say, composed only of vision and occasional sound, lacking the smell, taste and touch out of which our bodies evolved to construct a world.

This much we can see; but who benefits?

Our movement has been off-shored, to be sure, to places like Chinese prisons, the wheatfields of Ukraine, to migrant workers in the central valley of California.

Naïvely, we might imagine that we, dematerialized screen-starers, are benefiting at the expense of such workers; but our observations thusfar have suggested that it is our lives that are being stolen, our bodies ravaged by sedentarism

On the other hand we might naïvely imagine that it is the garlic peelers in Chinese prisons who benefit, as they, at least, are allowed to move, to focus their eyes on anything besides a screen.

But this foolish notion is quickly revealed to be absurd. For under this economic regime, the physical actions which formerly composed the very core of human life are abstracted from all joy, all variety, reduced to repetitive motions forced on unwilling slaves.

Who benefits? The rich are getting richer it is true; yet we should pause before applying reductionist material analysis and concluding that these changes in human life benefit the capitalist class.

For, while they may "own", in some abstract sense, art collections, yachts and mansions, their physical enjoyment of these things is as lackluster and constrained as our enjoyment of our apartments and shelters.

Both exploiters and exploited, under this regime of dematerialization, spend the majority of both "work" and "leisure" time inertly entranced, cortisol and dopamine spiking and receding, muscles atrophying, fascia stiffening,

eyes straining, all other senses decaying into disuse, breath shallow, atomized, solitary -- poised, in sum, between death and life, lacking all vibrancy, all energy, all delight.

This is the endpoint of technocapitalist dematerialization, for both capitalist and worker, in both work and play; and I ask again: Who benefits?